



Membership Year 2013
Volume 39, Number 1
February 2013

La Pintura

The Official Newsletter of the American Rock Art Research Association
Member of the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations

<http://www.arara.org>

Time to Register and Make Hotel Reservations for IFRAO 2013

IT is time to finalize your plans for the IFRAO 2013 Conference (and annual ARARA meeting) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 26-31. The Planning Committee is working to make this a memorable event, and the preliminary schedule is now posted on the IFRAO 2013 website.

Registering for the conference is easy: visit IFRAO2013.org, click on the word "Registration" in the menu near the top of the page, and follow the instructions for filling out and submitting your form and payment for the days you want to attend. You can use PayPal, which is a safe and secure method allowing you to use your credit card.

We are also urging you to book your room at the host hotel, the Marriott Pyramid North, as early as possible. This can be accomplished on the IFRAO2013.org website by clicking on the "Lodging" link near the top of the home page. Booking your room at the host hotel is both convenient and beneficial to the conference as it helps defray overhead costs. ✪

Sites to See To and From IFRAO

By Mavis Greer and Peggy Whitehead

TRAVELING to and from Albuquerque gives you the opportunity to stop and see public sites along the way. These periodic stops can refresh and revitalize you. There are rock art sites to see along your route from whatever direction you approach the city.

From El Paso, take Highway 54 north toward Carrizozo to visit **Three Rivers Petroglyph Site**, which is administered by

...continued on next page



Pre- and Post-Conference Trips for IFRAO 2013 and Airport Shuttle Service

By Peggy Whitehead and Mavis Greer

INTERNATIONAL week-long conferences provide a field trip for all full-time attendees on Wednesday to separate the four days of presentations, and IFRAO 2013 follows that format. In order to receive the field trip information and make your selection for your Wednesday tour, you must register for the conference as only then will the field trip descriptions and application be sent to you.

However, if Wednesday is not enough time for you to see the sights of New Mexico, and you do not want to explore the state on your own, another option has been arranged for you. We have contracted with two tour agencies to provide tours prior to the conference; daily during the conference for traveling companions of conference attendees or those who want a break from the conference; and post-conference. These tours are not sponsored by ARARA or IFRAO 2013, and you will need to book them with the tour companies and pay them directly.

The complete list of available excursions can be found on the IFRAO2013.org web site by clicking on Pre/Post Tours in the top menu bar to link you to **Tour New Mexico's** or **Destination Southwest's** web sites for detailed information on what they have to offer.

...continued on page 3

International Conference on Rock Art 2012—New Delhi, India

By Lawrence Loendorf

ON December 6-13, 2012, I was fortunate to be a participant in the International Conference on Rock Art in New Delhi, India. From the inaugural function to the valedictory final session, the conference was the best organized and managed international rock art event I have ever attended. This incredibly successful conference was sponsored by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA). The primary organizer was Dr. B. L. Malla, assisted by an extremely efficient staff.

The IGNCA is situated on a large museum ground with multiple buildings for meetings and displays. One large building had been transformed into an artificial cave-like atmosphere with regional rock paintings, some painted directly on the plaster cave-like walls and others set in frames within the exhibits.

A second building exhibited rock art images from Europe, Australia, Africa, North America, and South America. In an adjacent room, there was a large book sales area, mostly on the rock art of India, but representing other countries as well. In an adjoining room we viewed an exhibit of watercolors done by Dr. Yashodhar Mathpal, a renowned rock art scholar in India.

Yet another major component of the exhibits was a demonstration area where individuals from several regional tribes were completing paintings on canvas and paper. These included representatives of the Warli tribe from Maharashtra (southwest India) and the Bhil tribes of Gujarat state (western India). A section of this interactive area, organized by Dr. Meenakshi Pathak, allowed school children to try their skills at making rock art. I was especially interested in



Figure 2. An image that was part of an exhibit of Dr. Yashodhar Mathpal's watercolor paintings of India rock art.

the pigments and binders at one of the displays. The binders were resin or pitch from several native trees.

With such a well-planned series of high quality exhibits and events, it is not surprising the meeting was also exceptional. The inaugural function, like most meetings, included greetings and welcome speeches, but there were two presentations that made it a memorable event. One was from the Honorable Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari, who offered his hearty welcome to the meeting participants and then described India's rock art as a National Heritage. He was clearly aware of India's cave painted sites and a strong advocate for their protection.

The other inaugural speech that impressed me was by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan. Dr. Vatsyayan, a long-time supporter of India's rock art, who stressed the importance of working with the indigenous groups of India as a source of information about many of the rock art sites.

The meeting was set up with a series of professional papers over five days. These were interspersed by special lectures on each of the days. The daily papers were organized into morning and afternoon sessions where presenters sat around a conference table. In most sessions there was ample time for discussion, which at times was lively. The sessions included papers on Interpreting Rock Art, Concept and Methodology, Form, Content and Context, and Documentation and Conservation. A large number of papers were on topics related to India, but in every session there were papers by individuals from countries around the world. These included representatives from Australia, Great Britain, France, Italy,



Figure 1. Cave-like entrance to one building with interior exhibits that focused on the rock paintings of India.

Poland, Peru, China, Austria, Pakistan, Cuba, and Indonesia. In most cases these individuals talked about projects in their own countries while others talked about research they were doing in another country. An example of the latter was a fascinating paper by Andrew Rozwadowski of Poland, who talked about a site in Siberia.

I was very impressed with many of the papers and I learned a lot—not just about the kinds of rock art images at sites in India, but about the way different countries handle the conservation and management of rock art sites.

A paper by S. B. Ota, Regional Director for the Central Region of the Archaeological Survey of India, for example, discussed the efforts to manage India's World Heritage rock art site at Bhimbetka. He explained that there is an annual festival where local folks use the park for their festivities, producing large amounts of trash and litter. The park management diligently collected every scrap of litter to analyze. They learned that plastic water bottles were in large numbers, so the next year they brought in portable water tanks that were available for free. This action immediately reduced the amount of trash. I think what impressed me was the dedication with which they collected and analyzed the trash to learn if there was a way to improve their site management.

The special lectures were another important part of the conference. These were open to the public, and they included Rock Art of Asia by V. H. Sonawane; The State of Rock Art in North America by Lawrence Loendorf; Rock Art and Rock Art Research in Australia by Robert Bednarik; Indian Rock Art Research in Global Context by K. K. Chakravarty and Prehistoric Art in Europe: An Overview by Emmanuel



Figure 4. Rock paintings at one of the rockshelters in the Bundi area of Rajasthan, India.

Anati. In my presentation, I talked about changes in North American rock art research over the past quarter century.

The valedictory session was also good. I especially appreciated the remarks by Professor Jane Balme, University of Western Australia, who talked about efforts to date rock art and to work with indigenous peoples in rock art research.

I have left the best for last regarding the meetings. Every paper, including the special lectures, was written, duplicated, and handed out to participants before the presentations. More importantly, every session was video-recorded and put on the internet. This includes the cultural programs put on by regional Native groups. You will find every presentation online at ignca.nic.in/rockart_2012.htm or use an internet search engine to find the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, click on Media Centre, and then International Conference on Rock Art 2012. The only negative thing is that the images of the slides, an important part of any rock art presentation, are not really clear. This is a very minor complaint, however, when you consider that *no other* international rock art meeting has accomplished anything close to this endeavor.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the field trip. About 50 participants travelled by bus to the Rajasthan area to visit eight or nine rock art localities in the Bundi area. The trip, which included an overnight stay, was a fantastic adventure. Not only did we see some very good rock art sites, we were able to see the setting of canyons adjacent to a clean-flowing river with falls in the canyon below the rock shelters with the rock paintings.

All in all, it was a most-rewarding and professionally produced conference, and I am pleased to have received the invitation to participate. ◉



Figure 3. International Rock Art meeting in progress.

From left to right: Emmanuel Anati, B. L. Malla, Somnath Chakaverty, Mrs. Emmanuel Anati, and Yashodhar Mathpal. Cameraman in background is filming the session. The conference and all presentations can be watched on the internet (see links below).