

The NSU Petroglyph Simulation

Petroglyphs are rock art that has been created by pecking or abrading away the darker surface of a rock face exposing the lighter stone below.

The gradual darkening of the stone face is called “patina,” and older Petroglyphs are often darker than newer carvings.

Creating a petroglyph is difficult and very time consuming.



“Newspaper Rock” Southeastern Utah

Petroglyphs come in a wide variety of designs. Some are obviously representational: humans, antelope, men on horseback, but others are not so easily deciphered: spirals, grid patterns, lines and hatch marks.

In our simulation we have tried to achieve the feel of creating a real petroglyph, but without the actual rock. You can use the mouse to chip a flake of patinated stone from the screen. With continued pecking (with the mouse) you can create a petroglyph. You can copy one or you can create one that is uniquely your own.

Over time the petroglyph you make will darken along with the stone face. Later carver’s glyphs will be lighter allowing viewers to use a *rudimentary relative* dating to establish the age of the individual glyphs. You are welcome to return and “carve” again and again.

This simulation was assembled using Flash by graduate student Aaron Johnson