

MetroABQ Real Estate Newsletter

Including Rio Rancho, Corrales, Placitas, Atrisco Valley, Los Lunas & the East Mountains.

Spring

The Floating Cubes Public Library

&

The Westside's Fabulous Marked Stones Canyon



Floating Cubes: The San Pedro Branch Library

A quirky building that's worth a visit sits along a busy residential street on South San Pedro, in the International District. (Probably) built in the mid-1960's, the San Pedro Library seems to consist of large rounded-corner rectangular cubes, all floating slightly above the ground. It's a fabulous Mid-Mod Brutalist style building; I'd passed by it dozens of times & never noticed it.

What brought it to attention is a recent ABQ Museum show that spotlighted photographs of people & places in the MetroABQ. The show, "[Let the Sunshine In](#)," featured images from the late 1960's. Among the dozens of excellent images on display, the Library stood out. Turns out, it's easy to find.

Above is a cropped version of "San Pedro Branch Library 1969," the image from the show. The photographer, [Robert McDonald](#), clearly had an eye for architecturally interesting buildings. Capturing on film a building that resembles gigantic salt-&-pepper shakers is a worthy endeavor...



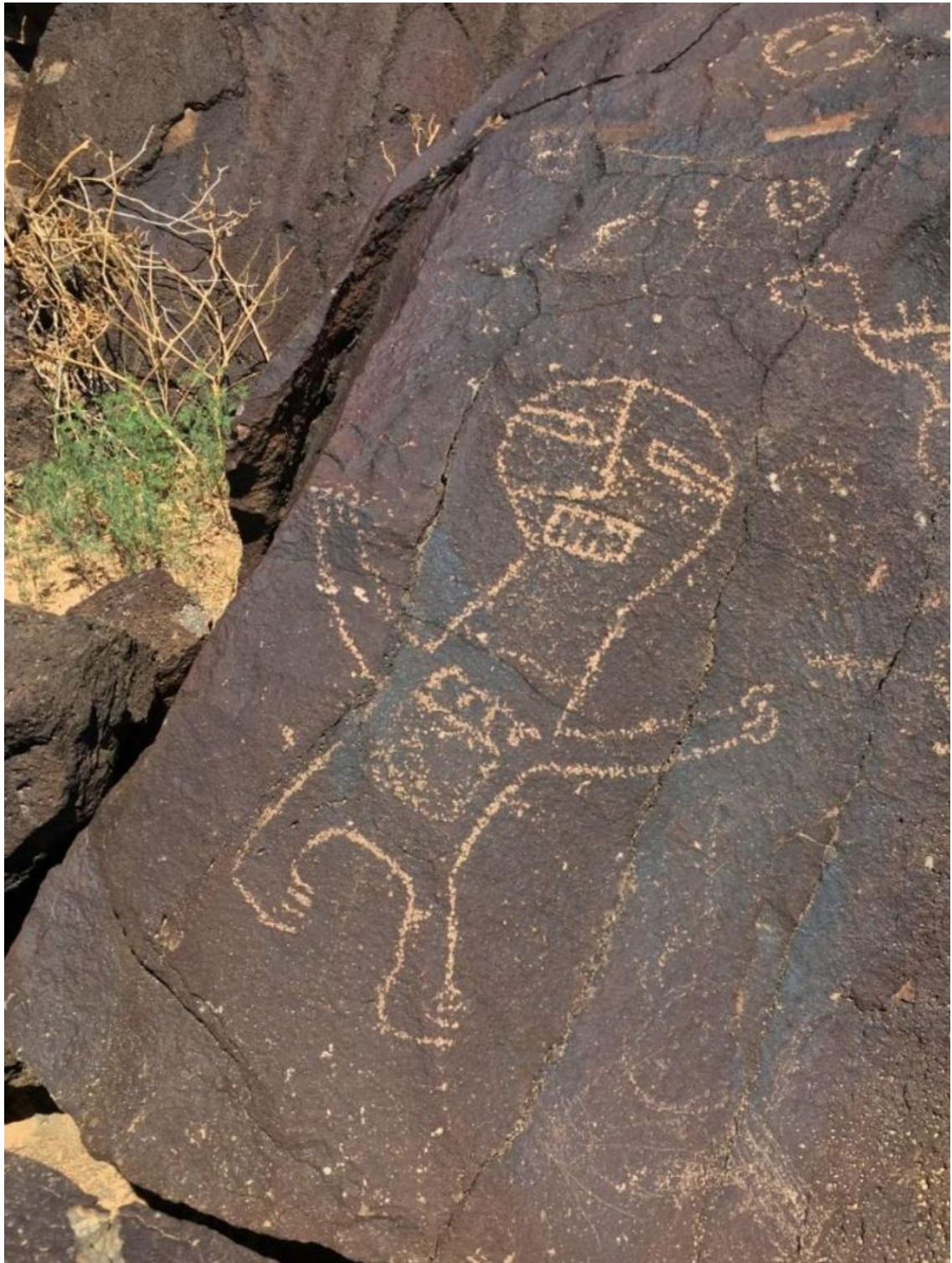
There was not much information to be found online about the architecture of the San Pedro Public Library. The Albuquerque Public Library's [Special Collections Library](#), in the Huning Highlands neighborhood, could shed more light on the building's origins. A local website [Modern Albuquerque](#) is also a great place to land for info on the subject.

There is a small blurb about the library in the [MetroABQ Mid-Century Survey 2013](#), a City-sponsored research paper focusing on architecture during the mid-years of the last century. It read: *Many of the city's libraries built in the 1950s & 1960s were originally designed with prominent Modernist features. Unfortunately, several of these have undergone considerable architectural modifications since their construction, which have eliminated or masked many of their features. The survey identified two libraries that still retained their Modernist styling: the Main Library located downtown & the San Pedro branch at 5600 Trumbull Ave. SE.*

How does it look fifty+ years later? Above is the [San Pedro Branch Library](#) today. It's still interesting, albeit a different color & more ADA compliant; & it's been kept up nicely, mostly withstanding the tests of time. The library is worth a look.

Getting there: South of Zuni on San Pedro you are in the South San Pedro Neighborhood. The library is on the southwest corner of Trumbull Ave SE. The entire area sits in District Six, which stretches from the Silver Hill neighborhood at the University, east almost to Four Hills, as north as Lomas Blvd & south to [Mesa del Sol](#). The International District, home to the floating library, is one of the most diverse area of the city & boasts a large number of international restaurants & grocery stores.

A great [map of the District is here](#).





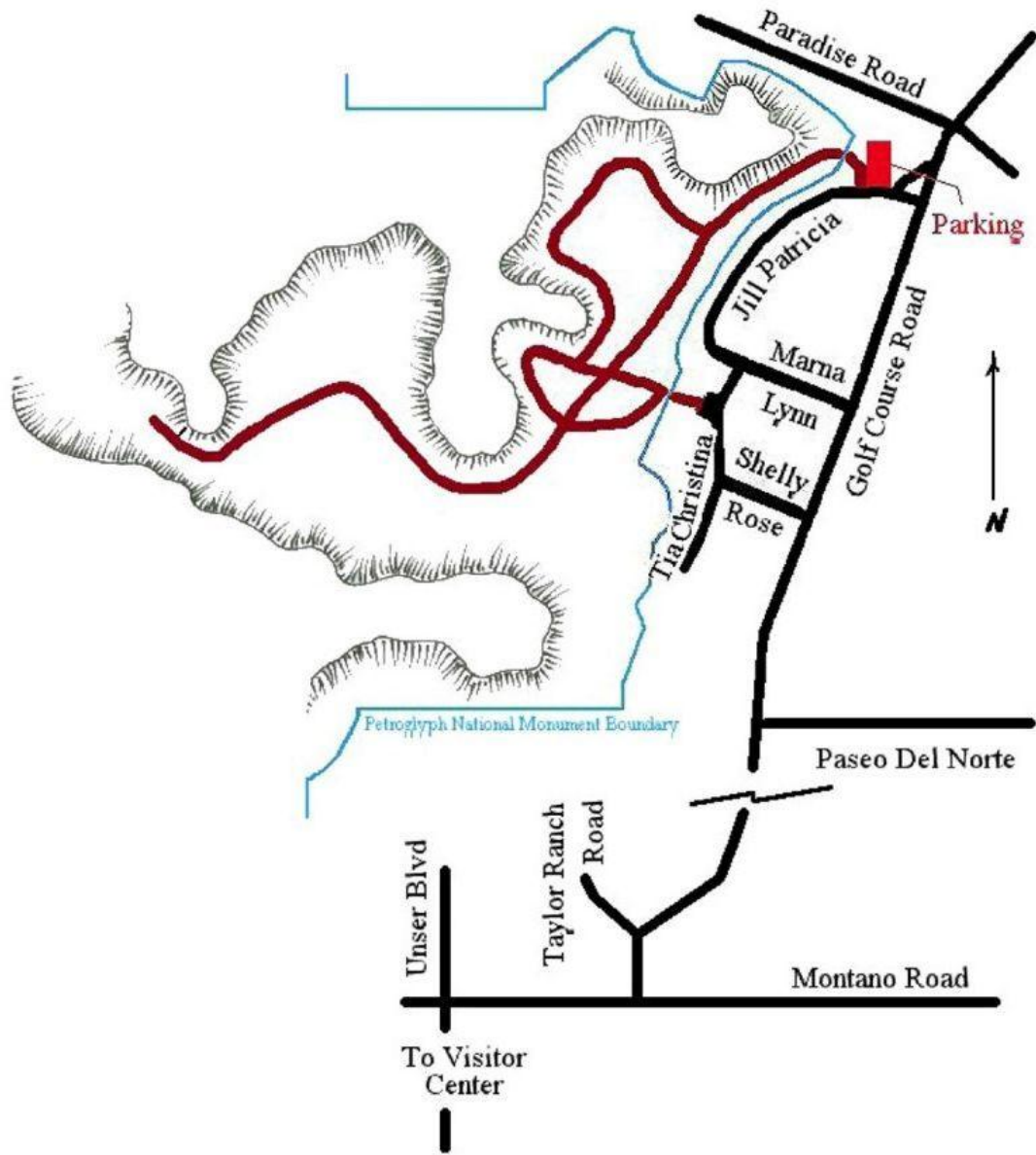


These images are a valuable record of cultural expression and hold profound spiritual significance for contemporary Native Americans.

The northernmost canyon formed by the escarpment is called [Piedras Marcadas](#), or Marked Rocks. An easy-to-moderate walk on the sandy trail follows along the base of the Escarpment deep into the canyon & past 700+/- year-old symbolic artwork. The array of geometric designs, & humanoid & wildlife images along the canyon rock walls is stunning. It's only about 3/4th of a mile to the back of the canyon; however, by the time you have been there & back, you feel like you've been witness to dozens of hundred-year-old adventures.

Among the over 400 petroglyphs, above are three humanoid images that can be found in the canyon; more are [here](#).

Piedras Marcadas Trail Map





Selling a home recently in Ventana Ranch, the 20-year-old & growing community on the western edge of the city, I often passed the beginning of Piedras Marcadas Canyon. Then, previewing homes that backed up to the same canyon, I realized it was time to explore.

Deep in the open space of Piedras Marcadas Canyon, it's humbling to realize you are surrounded by [a quarter million people](#), all on the west side of the Rio Grande. Residential neighborhoods have grown up around the Petroglyph Escarpment on all sides, with place names that generally describe the terrain: Paradise Hills, Taylor Ranch, Richland Hills, Las Terrazas, Volcano Cliffs, Molten Rock, Ventana Ranch & Volcano Trails. The Petroglyph National Monument benefits these & other adjacent neighborhoods by creating forever-open-space--a huge & healthy greenspace in the middle of the Westside community.

With all the activity around the Monument, it can still be surprisingly quiet & peaceful walking in the canyon, amidst the ancient images...Above is a view of the south section of the Sandia Mountains, facing east from in Piedras Marcadas Canyon. Below is a cool geometric design petroglyph, then there is a scene of humanoid & animal-like images. A few more [geometric petroglyphs](#) are here.











Above are a few animal-like petroglyphs found pecked into the rocks. [More are here](#). I wondered what is the difference between Petroglyphs & Pictographs.

Petroglyphs are images carved, pecked or scratched into stone, while pictographs are rocks painted with natural pigments over stone, like a canvas.

All the rock art at the Petroglyph National Monument is in the form of petroglyphs.

Two additional petroglyph-rich Westside canyons are found along the escarpment further south. Boca Negra Canyon is a small image-dense section near Montañó & Unser Blvds, & Rinconada Canyon is close to the southern edge of the Monument, near Interstate 40. Both are on the Petroglyph National Monument map, above.



Unless otherwise indicated,
All photos are by Chris Lucas or [Rob Thalmann Photography](#).

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