

Aboriginal Rock Art at Risk, Say Experts

By ARTINFO

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PERTH—Australia's aboriginal rock art is at risk of damage due to the country's boom in resources, reports *Discovery News* via the Agence France-Press. The 30,000-year-old etchings, which depict native animals as well as human faces and activities, are found on the rocks of the Burrup Peninsula in western Australia's remote Pilbara region; the peninsula is currently the only Australian entry on the **World Monuments Fund's** list of most endangered sites.

Anthropologist **Sue Smalldon** believes that the rock art has suffered since mining took off in Pilbara in the 1960s. She says the threat to the art has intensified in recent years as mining and energy companies have drained the region of iron ore, natural gas, and other resources. Another issue is the lack of management for the art works, which are scattered over 88 square kilometers around the peninsula. Visitors must scramble over boulders in order to view the rock art, and vandals have removed rock faces with power tools.

"Anywhere with this level of significance, you would have management in place, in my opinion," Smalldon said. "Somewhere equivalent like **Stonehenge** or **Kakadu** — all of those places have management in place."