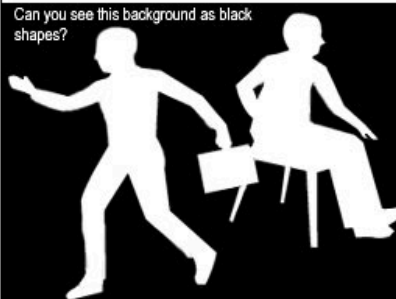
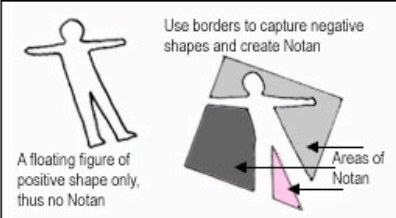


Notan:

Notan implies the equal importance of positive and negative shapes. "Seeing with Notan eyes" means being able to focus attention back and forth between positive and negative shapes.

Unlike undefined negative background space, strong negative shapes are as defined and interesting as positive shapes. They have a concrete, specific form.

Negative and positive shapes work together to create a complete image or layout. Strong negative shapes help to create interesting positive shapes because they share the same edges. Altering the negative alters the positive. You can't have one without the other.



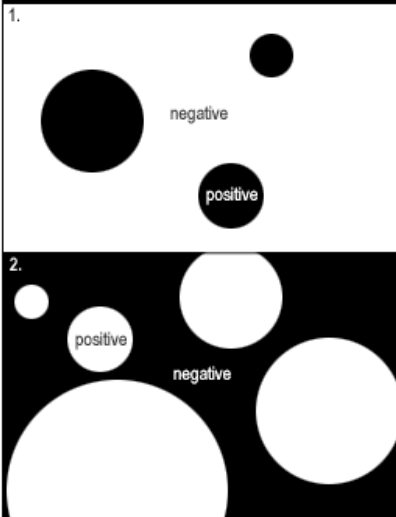
Examine the positive area, then the negative. Wait until you can see the negative area as a graspable, solid shape instead of just background space. Think of the negative shape as an iron sculpture and the positive area as empty space.

To produce Notan, the negative shapes must be sufficiently enclosed by the border. The borders create the edges that contain, and give shape to, the negative areas. (See Cropping-Points of Tension for ideas on how to achieve more interesting negative shapes.)

Positive and Negative Shapes:

The black and white circles are the positive shapes in these layouts. The background is negative space.

Negative spaces are also known as "white space," although a negative area may be either dark or light.



◀ 1. Negative Space:

This open, undefined white area is a negative space.

2. Seeing Negative Space as a Shape:

By enlarging the positive white shapes, the negative space is more confined and defined. It now displays characteristics of form and may be described as a shape. With its thick and thin portions, can you recognize the black area as an organic "shape"?