

DESIGN PRINCIPLES ■ EXERCISES ● TIPS ●

LEE WALLAT DESIGN

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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.

Use borders to capture negative shapes and create Notan A floating figure of Areas of positive shape only, Notan thus no Notan

Can you see this background as black

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-NEGATIVE NOTAN REPETITION VARIETY FOCAL-POINT HIERARCHY BALANCE WEIGHT FAMILIES OF SHAPE GRIDS EXAGGERATION COLOR CROPPING UNITY

DESIGN PRINCIPLES ■ EXERCISES ● TIPS ● ABOUTUS ● CONTACT ● LINKS ● HOME ● LEE WALLAT DESIGN Positive and Negative Shapes: The black and white circles are the positive 1. Negative Space: negative shapes in these layouts. The background This open, undefined white area is a is negative space. negative space. Negative spaces are also known as "white space," although a negative area may be 2. Seeing Negative Space as a Shape: either dark or light. By enlarging the positive white shapes, ■ the negative space is more confined and defined. It now displays chacteristics of positive form and may be described as a shape. With it's thick and thin portions, can you negative recognize the black area as an organic "shape"?

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