

## **Unit:** Positive and Negative Space

### **Lesson:** Notan Collages

#### **Grade:** 8th

#### **Objective(s):**

The “Expansion of the Square” exercise is a Notan exercise designed to study the interaction of positive and negative space. In order for the exercise to be completed successfully, there must be a feeling of balance created in the design.

Create a cut paper collage with a composition where both positive and negative spaces are REVERSED. Use either Symmetrical or Asymmetrical Balance in creating your design. USE GOOD CRAFTSMANSHIP -BE NEAT!!!

#### **Intro:**

Space is the area: Above, Below, Between, Within, & Around the main objects in a piece of art. Space is present in 2D & 3D works of art. Positive Space is the shapes or forms (main objects) in an artwork. Negative Space is the space that surrounds the main objects. It is the empty or space between and around the main objects. Positive & Negative Space Reversal is the visual inverse of the positive and negative spaces.

Notan is a Japanese word which means “dark-light“. The principle of Notan as it relates to art is defined as the interaction between positive (light) and negative (dark) space. The theory behind Notan is: positive and negative areas should complement one another. They must coexist without one dominating the other. The Eastern culture from which Notan arose, seeks a more balanced view of the world. The classic yin/yang symbol is a reflection of this desire for balance.

Balance is defined as the equal distribution of visual weight in a composition. Central Axis is an imaginary dividing line that runs down the middle of a piece of art either horizontally or vertically.

Symmetrical balance means both sides of an axis line are the same.

Asymmetrical balance means each side of an axis line are different yet equal.

#### **MATERIALS:**

8×8 Colored Construction paper

16” x 16”, Duet Paper

18”×16” white, black or colored paper

Exacto Knives  
Cutting boards  
Glue sticks

**Procedure:**

1. Choose a color paper for your project.
2. Cut out an 8" square from the color paper.
3. LIGHTLY Draw your designs from the edges into the center of the square. Think of the designs as shapes. You MUST cut from all 4 sides. Do not cut off the corners & don't go past the center of the paper with any designs. Decide whether you are making a symmetrical design or asymmetrical design.



4. Begin cutting shapes from the sides of the square. Immediately put all shapes into your ziplock bag. DO NOT THROW ANYTHING AWAY!!
5. Once they're cut out, flip your square over to hide the pencil marks.



6. Glue down the main base in the middle of your background either straight or diagonally.



7. Trace you cut out shapes on a piece of contrasting color paper and cut them out.

8. Glue down in the mirror image from where it was cut. The basic idea is to cut out the piece, flip it out so that it mirrors the cut out space, and then glue it down onto the 16"×16" paper.



### **Vocabulary:**

Asymmetrical design

Symmetrical design

Positive Space

Negative Space

Composition

Notan Collage

**Student Examples:**

