

Inquiry Question

How can I create a symmetrical picture using positive and negative space (in the Japanese style of Notan)?

Name: _____ **Date:** _____



Notan is a Japanese art form that uses positive and negative space. Notan in Japanese means “the interaction between dark and light”. While Notan can be used to make symmetrical and asymmetrical art, this project will focus on symmetrical versions.

General Instructions

You are going to learn about positive and negative space, watch a couple of short videos of project options, then create your own example.

Step 1: Read.

In art, space can be described as **positive** or **negative**. Positive spaces are the main subjects of the work. Negative spaces are the spaces around and behind the positive spaces.

The black stool below shows the positive space or main subject:



The black background below shows the negative space, the area behind and around the stool:



The following examples show Notan created with two colours of paper. Can you see the line of symmetry for each one? It is right down the middle.



African Mask.
(from youtube: African Mask by Paula Rose)



Apple
(from youtube: Positive : Negative Art" by Krokotak)

Step 2: Watch two videos to see how to create symmetrical Notan images.

Positive : Negative Art" by Krokotak <https://youtu.be/JrEDpWAuOM4>

African Mask: <https://youtu.be/RsE0d0FMNx8>



Step 3: Choose and create a project.

Create your own symmetrical Notan-style image. You can choose a mask, an animal face, a fruit or vegetable, a symmetrical flower, or another design. Complete it like the videos you watched, using two colours of paper and creating positive and negative space.

Optional Extension: Not all Notan art has a perfect line of symmetry. If you enjoyed this, there are many more Notan tutorials on youtube with designs that are quite different from the ones in this project. Check them out and then create your own symmetrical or asymmetrical notan art.

Project submission:

Your completed project submission is photographs of your notan art.