



The 'Expansion of the Square' is an exercise which helps artists to study the interaction between positive and negative space.

You will need:

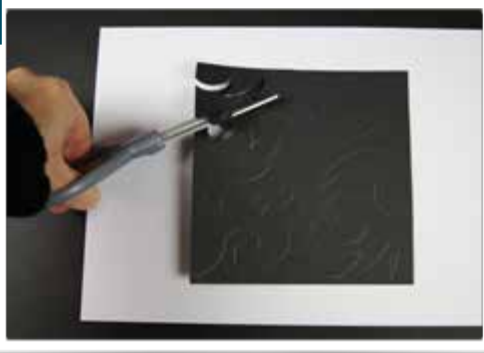
- 15cm square black paper
- A4 white paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue

1.



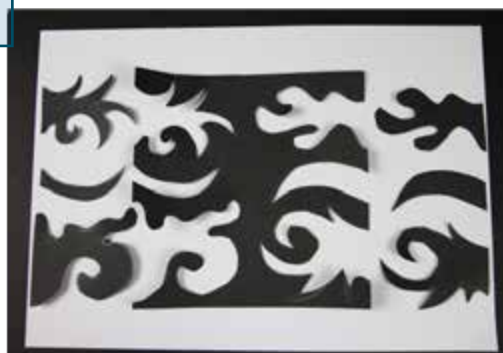
Draw a faint line of symmetry in the middle of the black square (vertical or horizontal). On either side, draw a selection of shapes. Each shape must begin and end at the edge of the square that is parallel to the line of symmetry. It must not touch the line of symmetry.

2.



Carefully cut out the shapes. They must each be cut out as one single piece. Aim to keep your edges as neat as possible, and try not to tear the paper.

3.



Keep each shape you cut out somewhere safe until you have finished. Rub out any pencil lines you can see on the black paper.

4.



Match up all of the shapes you have cut out with the area of the square they came from (just like completing a jigsaw puzzle!).

5.



Flip over all of the cut out shapes and align them with the edge of the black square. Stick all of the separate pieces onto the A4 white paper to complete your Notan design.

The 'Expansion of the Square' is an exercise which helps artists to study the interaction between positive and negative space.



You will need:

- 15cm square black paper
- 35cm square white paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Craft knife and craft mat (optional)

1.



Draw two faint lines of symmetry in the middle of the black square (vertical and horizontal). In each section, draw a selection of shapes. Each one must begin and end at the same edge of the square. It must not touch either line of symmetry.

2.



Carefully cut out the shapes. They must each be cut out as one single piece. Aim to keep your edges as neat as possible, and try not to tear the paper.

3.



Keep each shape you cut out somewhere safe until you have finished. Rub out any pencil lines you can see on the black paper.

4.



Match up all of the shapes you have cut out with the area of the square they came from (just like completing a jigsaw puzzle!).

5.



Flip over all of the cut out shapes and align them with the edge of the black square. Stick all of the separate pieces onto the 35cm square white paper to complete your Notan design.

Once you have completed your Notan, swap your work with a partner, and discuss the following questions about each of the artworks:



Is the completed Notan design pleasing to look at?

Is the design symmetrical or asymmetrical?



Is the light and dark within the design balanced?

Have geometric or organic shapes been used, or is there a mixture?



Once you have completed your Notan, swap your work with a partner, and discuss the following questions about each of the artworks:



Is the completed Notan design pleasing to look at?

Is the design symmetrical or asymmetrical?



Is the light and dark within the design balanced?

Have geometric or organic shapes been used, or is there a mixture?



Notan in Composition

A Notan drawing can help the artist to see more clearly whether the scene they want to draw/paint/photograph/sculpt has a good composition (placement or arrangement of the main shapes in a piece of artwork) by looking at the areas of light and dark, and whether they are balanced within the image. If they are not, the artist can rearrange the shapes and forms within the composition in the planning stages before they begin the piece properly, and ensure that the areas of light and dark will be pleasing to the eye.



Here are some instructions to help you see Notan in a scene and create a Notan drawing.

1.



You will need a Japanese Scene Card, a Notan Rectangle Card, a pencil and a thick black pen or marker.

2.



Looking at the Japanese Scene Card, roughly sketch the outlines of the main shapes and forms in pencil on your Notan Rectangle Card.

3.



Now, squint at the Japanese Scene Card (screw your eyes up as tightly as you can whilst still being able to see). The dark and light areas of the image should become more obvious. Start to shade the dark areas in on your Notan Rectangle Card.

4.



Continue to squint and look at the Japanese Scene Card until you have shaded in all of the dark areas. The areas left should represent the light areas in the image. You now have a completed Notan drawing.

Now try creating your own Notan drawings. Look carefully at each one: do you think the light and dark areas in the composition are balanced? If not, try moving around some of the shapes or forms to create an arrangement that is more pleasing to the eye.











