

NOTAN

Notan is a Japanese term for a pattern of or an arrangement of two values, one light and one dark.

This pattern can be floral or in landscape form.

In floral the arrangement can be arranged realistically, as in the attached Japanese design or reduced to abstraction. The purpose is to set the shapes or lines in such a way to form a line-scheme on which there may be arranged into many notan patterns.

A small spray in the middle of a big oblong, or disconnected groups of flowers, cannot be called compositions, all the lines and shapes must be related one to another by connections and placing, so as to form a beautiful whole.

We want an irregular pattern of lines and shapes, not a drawing of a flower from nature. Make an effort to concentrate on the arrangement of the lines and shapes, not on the botanical correctness.

Many line compositions can be derived from one flower subject, but each of these in turn can be the source of a great variety of design.

This information on Notan was given to me by Thelma Donovan, California from a one hundred year old art book on composition and design. Many of today's artist use notan to design their paintings.



*Form
Shape
Size*

NOTAN
IX



NOTAN
IX



Shape



Japanese



Japanese



*Shape
of form*



Shape



Nº45



In the image below I have used notan to guide the eye around the painting. Establishing the darks in this photograph will guide me in where to hold the lights and where the darks will go to complete the painting.

This vignette is created with light and dark value, Line and shape are repeated numerous times in the pattern in my niece's sweater and in the bricks. I've used broken line to indicate lost edges or in combining a small shape with a larger shape. Notice the lost edges on the pants and shirt allowing the figure to become part of the background.

