

## The Space Between: A Valentine's Day Art Project

Grades 1+

**Goal of the lesson plan:**

- Learn the ways in which artworks can inspire one another with artistic techniques. Understand the relationships between negative and positive space, and how those can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.

**Background:**

*The Space Between: Frank Lloyd Wright | Jun Kaneko*, on view at the Martin House, is part of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery's public art initiative. This series of ceramic sculptures, ranging from 3-11 ft. tall and weighing literally tons, are referred to as *dangos*, a Japanese term for dumplings. The pieces are finished with brightly-colored abstract shapes, marks, and drips.

This Valentine's Day, we are inspired to create notan art valentines. Notan is a Japanese design element which emphasizes the relationship between light and dark, referencing the harmony of objects in relationship to one another. Using the Kaneko sculptures as inspiration, we will create Kaneko-inspired notan valentine's cards.



**Discussion Points:**

- Examine some of the images of the Kaneko sculptures. Questions to ask yourself:
  - What kinds of shapes does Kaneko use to decorate the dangos?
  - What are the relationships between the shapes?
  - Are the shapes far apart, or are they close to one another?
  - Do they repeat in a pattern, or are they randomly placed on the sculpture?
- Think about the colors that are used.
  - Do the colors blend together or do they stand out from one another?
  - Are they contrasting or complimentary colors?

**Instructions:**

1. Think about what kinds of shapes you might like to include on your valentine.
2. Cut your colored paper to be smaller than your piece of white paper.
3. Draw a design on colored paper, making sure that each element of your drawing connects to an edge. Think about drawing half of an image, that way once your image is cut and laid opposite of the cut-out, it creates a full image.
4. Cut out each of the images that you draw.
5. Reverse them. The white space you reveal is called "negative space," and the colored piece you use as the reflection is called "positive space."
6. Glue each of your images down.
7. Include any other elements you want to make this a Valentine's Day card. Options include quotes, poems, lace, or dried flowers.
8. Mail your valentine to someone you love, or keep it as a wonderful art project for yourself!

**Vocabulary:**

Abstract	Harmony
Complimentary colors	Minimalism
Composition	Negative space
Contrasting colors	Positive space

**Materials:**

8 ½ x 11 piece of white paper	Colored paper
Scissors	Glue

Try other patterns that are symmetrical or asymmetrical!

