

Slicing the Puzzle

Set-up: Use a 6" square of black paper and an 8.5" x 11" piece of white Bristol to make the puzzle.

Problem: Create a compelling composition that creates interest within the positive and the negative space. Cut up the black square into non-objective shapes of your choosing. Use ALL shapes, even the scraps, to arrange them into an interesting composition on the white groundsheets. Glue them in place as a completed "puzzle".

Consider cutting the black into geometric shapes such as squares, rectangles, and circles, or take a more free-form approach and make curvilinear, organic, and irregular shapes. Strive to achieve unity by including some repetition of shapes and changes in scale. Slight overlapping of shapes is fine, but don't hide shapes behind others. Play with different arrangements, then glue them in place on the page of 8.5" x 11". Decide on a preferred portrait or landscape view of your work and print your name at the lower edge on the backside of the project.

Objectives:

- * To create an interesting, non-objective composition that achieves balance and unity.
- * To explore the use of negative space as a supporting element of design.

Strategy: Consider these questions.

- * What is the effect of having shapes touch the edge of the picture plane?
- * How do shapes in the corners help or hurt the design?
- * How might the negative space (the white) play a role?
- * What is the relationship between the proximity of shapes and a visual tension or emphasis?
- * Does the arrangement achieve balance and unity?



This successful design shows unity with repetition of shapes and makes use of negative space to help support the design.



This design fails to show non-objective shapes.

Critique: Your grade for this exercise is based solely on critique.

We will have a formal critique during class. After our critique, each student will exchange exercises with another. For the grade, prepare a written critique of one to two paragraphs in your handmade book and attach a scanned/printed version of the image at half scale. The critique should include at least 3 positive comments about the design that are backed up by supporting statements. No design is perfect... also include in your critique ideas for improving the design.