

Tip #66

Accentuate the ... Negative??

Yep, unlike the old song, when you learn to see-and accentuate-the negative shapes in your art, you free yourself of stereotypical thinking and discover new accuracy in your powers of observation.

How does that happen? It's magic! It's a brain-shift from our usual way of dealing with the world, left brained and logical, to the right-brain hemisphere that sees relationships and wholes...or in this case, *holes!*

The spaces between...those have always been magic! Tip #11 and Tip #29 were both on these negative shapes, but because they're pivotal we're going to look again at how to see and use them in your art. (Please feel free to scroll through the archived tips to check these previous ones!)

Art 66-1, The shape's the thing ...

Learning to look for the negative shapes and capturing them accurately makes it easier to see how things are placed in their spaces-but sometimes it's effective to concentrate on those spaces! This pencil drawing of my old cat, Westport, has more work in the areas that are NOT cat. This works especially well with a light-colored subject like this old champagne kitty.



Art 66-1



This may look like a fan, but at the cabin it's a lifesaver!

Art 66-2

Art 66-2, Making sense ...

Some things just don't seem to want to make sense to our logical brain. The odd shapes of the blades on this antique electric fan and its housing, distorted by perspective, were difficult for me to see properly-until I paid attention to the negative shapes instead.

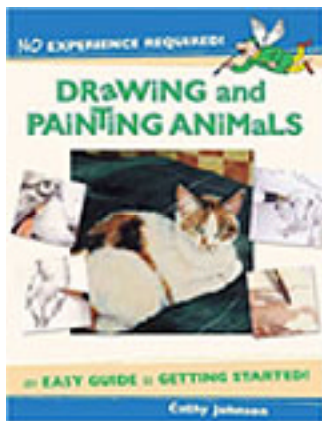


Art 66-3, Using negative shapes to create rhythm

The rhythm and flow between the various flowers, stems, and leaves in this illustration, originally done for Country Living magazine, were enhanced by paying attention to the negatives as I planned the final piece. I kept the shapes varied and interesting, and it enhances to overall impact. Use your awareness of these shapes to keep your work from getting boring or repetitive!



Art 66-3



For more on using negative shapes when drawing animals, you may want to see my North Light book, *Drawing and Painting Animals; No Experience Required*, available here or at a bookstore near you.

Be sure to look for my NEW CDs for artists in my Cafepress store, http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson, and watch for my fine arts auctions weekly on eBay, <http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/cathyjohnsonart>.