

Negative Space- “Making something out of nothing”

In art, the space between things is called negative space. The theory is that we do better drawing negative space because we have no name for it, no preconceived notions of how it should look- no words like “foreshortening, curling, coming at me. It is just space.

We use negative space in different ways.

- ❖ The first is to help us draw things. Drawing the negative space, what is in-between, helps us to measure and see angles that we might not otherwise see or get correct. In the drawing of the Manzanita tree, there were many branches going in many directions. Concentrating on and drawing the negative spaces helped me to understand which branches were which, what direction they were going in and the size of the spaces in between them.
- ❖ Negative space is also very important in composition. The spaces in between objects in a painting can make us comfortable or uneasy. They can help objects to relate to each other. They can create rhythm. They can give our eyes a place to rest and show us what to leave in and what to leave out. They can point our way through a painting.
- ❖ Negative space can be a powerful tool in both drawing and composition. Whenever you are drawing a flower, continually check your negative spaces. If they are correct, chances are your drawing is. If they are not, correcting them will at least show you where you went wrong. As I started to focus on the negative spaces in between these branches and work on each one right to left, I discovered that my space on one was too thin. I had not gotten those branches in the right place which would throw off their relationship to the other branches.
- ❖ Start looking at what you don't see- the spaces in between. They can be quite beautiful.



“The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity.”
Walt Whitman