

Negative Space

Art & Design

Drawing the gaps around a subject instead of the subject itself.

The shape of the gaps between and around a subject. Drawing the gap bypasses the symbol you already hold for the object, because you hold no symbol for the gap.

DRAW
the gap

CHECK
gap shapes first

- The eye judges an unfamiliar shape more honestly.
- Every gap shares its edges with the subject.
- Between arm and body, between legs, around a chair.
- The frame edge closes an open gap into a shape.
- If the gaps are right, the subject is right.
- Useful when a limb is foreshortened past recognition.

LOOK FOR IT

A hand resting on a hip makes a clear triangle. Draw the triangle and the arm comes out correct.

Symbol knowledge is the enemy of observation. You cannot hold a symbol for a shape you have never named.