Abstract
Pillow Top

**Embrace the positive and negative
in this unique pillow design**

Notan is a Japanese composition style that features the interplay between light and dark or positive and negative space. Here, it's applied to a sophisticated two-tone pillow-top design, which is then covered with topstitching. To learn more about notan, google it; you'll find many examples and a variety of designs. To make your own notan, cut paper shapes first, and experiment with their layout. When you find a design you particularly like, use the paper version as a pattern for cutting your fabric.
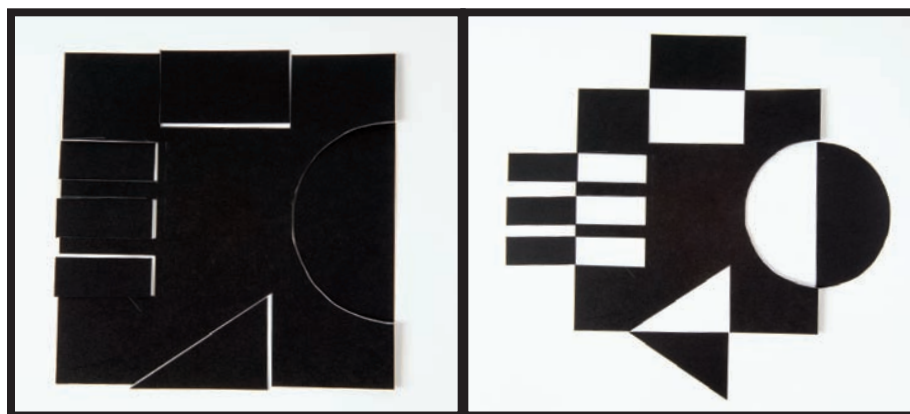
—JUDITH NEUKAM

How to make a simple notan design

To start a notan design, cut shapes at the edges of a square of paper, and turn them over so they mirror the voids created. For the pillow topper, make the pattern first in paper, and then trace it to fabric.

{1} START WITH A SQUARE. The size of your square depends on the size of your pillow. Choose a large pillow; one-third of its side should be at least 6 inches long.

{2} CUT THE SQUARE. Cut half of a symmetrical shape from each side of your square. Then "flip out" the pieces to form the entire shape—half paper and half void. Experiment until you get a design you like. For your first project, keep it simple because working with fabric is slightly trickier than working with paper. When you have a design you like, transfer it to fabric.

Transfer the design to a pillow top

Cut the pillow front and get ready to apply the notan design. Fusible web sheets such as Wonder Under and Heat 'n Bond, don't work for this appliqué technique because part of the appliqué is on the wrong side of the fabric. A spray-on fusible web lets you easily make your notan fusible. When choosing your fabric, remember the wrong side shows.

Copy the shapes onto the fabric.

Fabric (WS)

{1} TRACE THE DESIGN. Trace the design on the wrong side of your fabric with a disappearing pen or erasable mechanical chalk. Carefully cut out the pieces and arrange them face down on a piece of cardboard or foam core.
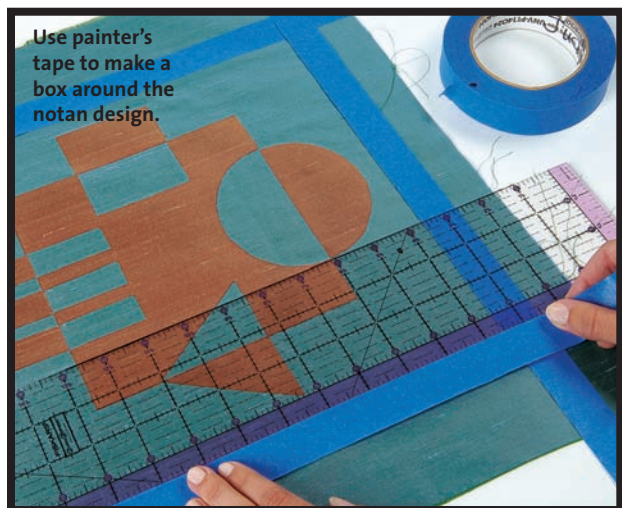
tip **CHOOSE A NONRAVEL FABRIC** When selecting fabric for this pillow top, choose something that has very little ravel. It will make your pillow easier to cut and stitch.
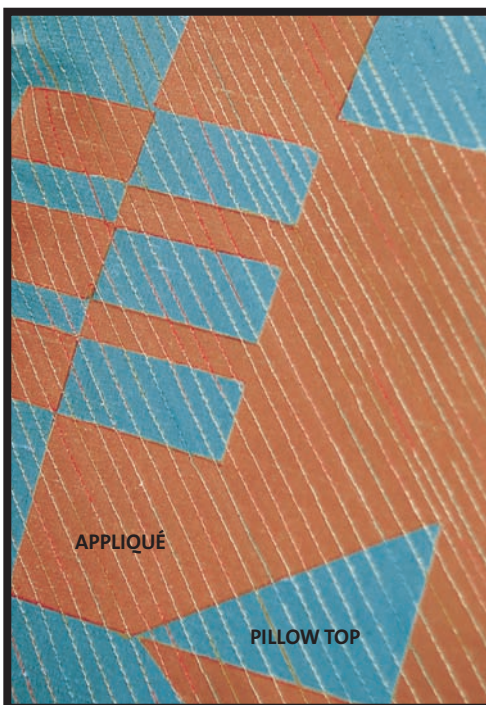
PHOTOS: SLOAN HOWARD; (P. 87) STYLIST: JESSICA SAAL

Pin the pieces to foam core.

Fabric (WS)

Turn the shapes.   Spray the wrong side.

{2} **SPRAY WITH ADHESIVE.** To make the fabric fusible, spray the wrong side of your design with a fusible web spray, such as 606 Spray and Fix, and allow it to dry.
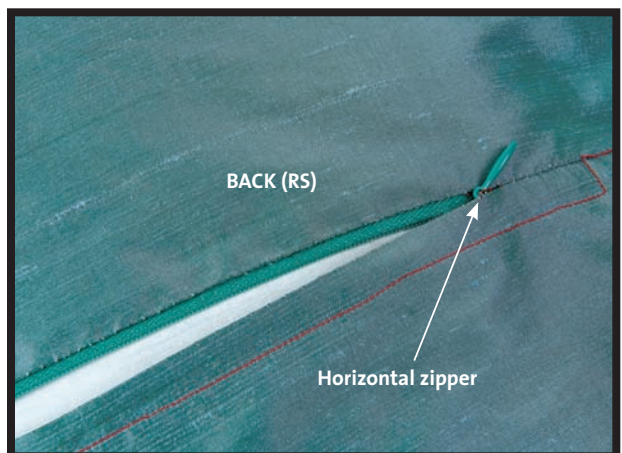
Place the design right-side up on the pillow top, and fuse it in place.

{3} **FUSE THE DESIGN TO THE PILLOW TOP.** Position the pieces right-side up on the pillow top. Follow the fusible-spray manufacturer's directions to fuse the design to the pillow top.

Use painter's tape to make a box around the notan design.

{4} **DRAW A BOX.** Draw a box around the notan design with a disappearing-ink pen or low-tack painter's tape. Make the box just large enough to surround all of the notan edges.

{5} **TOPSTITCH OVER THE DESIGN.** Thread your sewing machine with variegated metallic thread. Topstitch diagonally within the boundary of the box, or drop the feed dogs and free-motion stitch within the box shape over the appliqué. When you've finished, if you used tape to make the box, remove it.

APPLIQUÉ

PILLOW TOP

BACK (RS)

Horizontal zipper

{6} **ASSEMBLE THE PILLOW COVER.** The easiest way to cover a pillow is to cut the back 1 inch longer than the front. Then cut it in half, and insert a horizontal zipper in the center. Lay the back right-side up on your work surface, and lay the front wrong-side up on top of it. Align the edges, and stitch them with a $\frac{1}{2}$-inch seam allowance. Turn the pillow cover right-side out through the zipper opening.