

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE SPACE

The treatment of the “negative” space between motifs as *positive* is probably the single most important factor in determining the density of centers in a carpet. In a really good carpet there is no distinction between figure and ground. Every single piece of space, or almost every single piece, is a center, and the resulting density of centers is enormous, since there are centers everywhere, intertwining, interlocking, overlapping, and side by side.

It is an almost infallible rule that the presence of beautifully organized centers in the negative space is the clue to the beauty of a carpet. When the negative space is powerful and well-organized we almost always have a design of power and beauty. When the negative space is poorly organized, shapeless, and lacks centers, we almost never have a carpet of any value

From A Foreshadowing of 21st Century Art