

October, 2010 Seminar
layering



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October, 2010 Seminar: Layering

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with layouts by Amber Ries, Debbie Hodge,

Dina Wakley, and Lisa Dickinson

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Introduction

Layering on scrapbook pages is a great way to experiment with a variety of looks as well as to achieve a well-designed page.

Dina Wakley consistently mixes up and layers a variety of media on her pages. “Ohio 1978” is a layered mix of paint splatters, printed vellum, cut-out images, frames, photo, alphas, and journaling strips.

While the complexity of this page is appealing to many scrapbookers, there are others who like a cleaner or more classic look. Please note: clean and classic pages benefit from layering. Note, also, that layering doesn’t have to be complex and freestyle. It can be simple and precise.

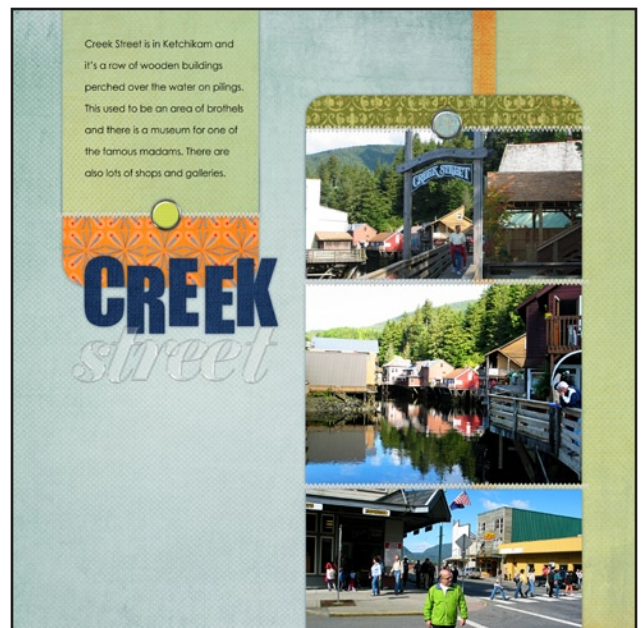
“Creek Street” incorporates three equally-sized and aligned photos. The complementing papers are precisely trimmed and arranged.

The simple layering here contributes to the strength of the design:

- a narrow strip of orange paper is layered over the large blue and green blocks, connecting them and adding visual interest and color repetition.



Layout by Dina Wakley.

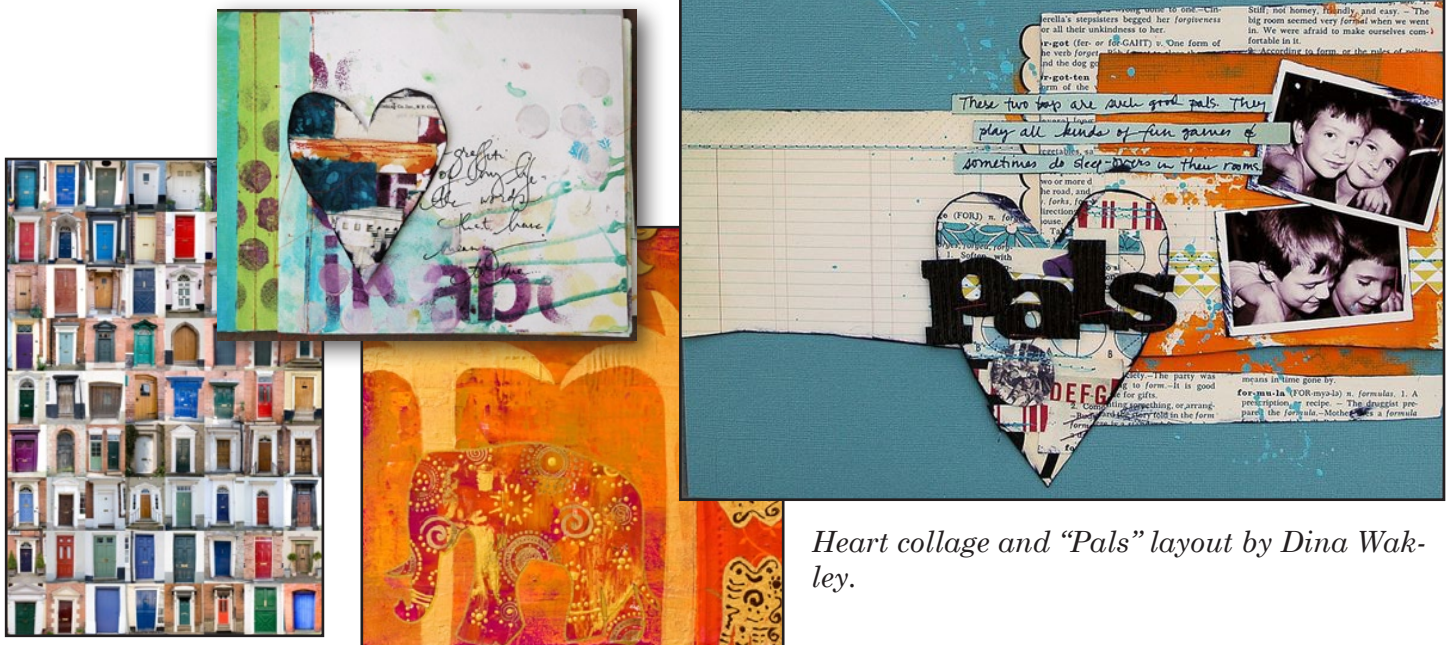


Layout by Debbie Hodge.

- zig zag stitching at adjoining photo and paper edges is a subtle details that connects the elements to each other and to the page
- brads overlap each intersection of patterned paper and photo, again connecting and grounding the elements.
- the title breaks just a bit away from the precision of the rest of the page with its “jiggled” letter placement and overlap of one patterned paper block.

The result of these touches is a clean page that packs punch and has plenty of visual interest.

Oftentimes, when people hear the term “layering” mentioned with regard to papercrafting, they think of collage and photomontage. For the purposes of this class, we’ll consider these to be techniques or elements that you can add to a layered page (rather than being the focus of our study themselves). Take a look at the collaged heart on “Pals” by Dina Wakley as well as the newsprint and painted foundation backing up her photos. Here is collage at work as an element on a layered scrapbook page.



Heart collage and “Pals” layout by Dina Wakley.

Part #1: Why Layer

Key point: Understand the benefits of layering and then work toward those as a goal when you make your element and placement choices.

Let's start with the reasons why you should layer (in addition to "just because I feel like it"). This is surely not an exhaustive list, but it's a look at some of the primary things layering does for your page design as well as for the experience you have while you make the page.

It's important to know these "whys" because they can serve as goals to guide your choices as you select and place elements on your layered pages.

Layer to add visual interest

See what Lisa's layers add to "Mexico." She begins with black stitched grids at diagonal corners as her foundation on a white canvas. The next layer holds her focal point photo, title, buttons, and journaling strips. Next comes a bingo card and then finally a stamped yellow butterfly. They all combine to make an appealing page that gives a real sense of this vacation.



Layout by Lisa Dickinson.

Layer to add texture and dimension

Why is texture and dimension a good thing? Because it's interesting! It's eye-catching. It can support your page tone and subject.



Layout by Dina Wakley.

Dina used an inked strip of cheesecloth on "Mine" to add lots of texture as well as dimension. Primitive cut-out stars are layered above and below the cheesecloth. Titling and casually-placed photos and photo mat give this page a loose, bright look with tons of appeal.

I'm not sure I have the courage to get this freestyle and I'm anxious to talk to Dina about how much fussing she did with this arrangement.



Layout by Lisa Dickinson

I love the dimension that Lisa achieved here with woven strips of kraft paper. It takes me back to elementary school art class -- and it's homey and comfortable which supports this round-up of family with their ages. Notice how she's kept her weaving casual, with uneven edges and lots of "lift" to the weave. It seems, in fact, to be picking the photostrip right up off the page.

Layer to create interesting white space

Take a look at the quick lesson on white space in the sidebar here to understand why interesting white space is a good thing and how one goes about creating interesting white space.



Layout by Dina Wakley.

Layering is a key element of creating pages with interesting white space since most individual elements come in common rectangular and circle shapes.

See, though, how Dina has combined rectangles, triangles, circles, strips, and even flourishes for unusual white space on "London." Note that she's used several transparency or acrylic products to get this look.

White space on scrapbook pages is not always white. It can be any color—it can even be patterned paper. The term "white space" refers to an area devoid of photos, embellishments, journaling, and title.

White space provides a resting point for the eye and breathing room for the viewer taking in your photos and journaling.

white space has a shape that can be active or passive

when that shape is symmetrical:

- ◇ It's predictable.
- ◇ It's less consequential (than a symmetrical shape would be) to how we perceive the elements in the design; if it's noticed at all, it's noticed as background.
- ◇ It's passive.

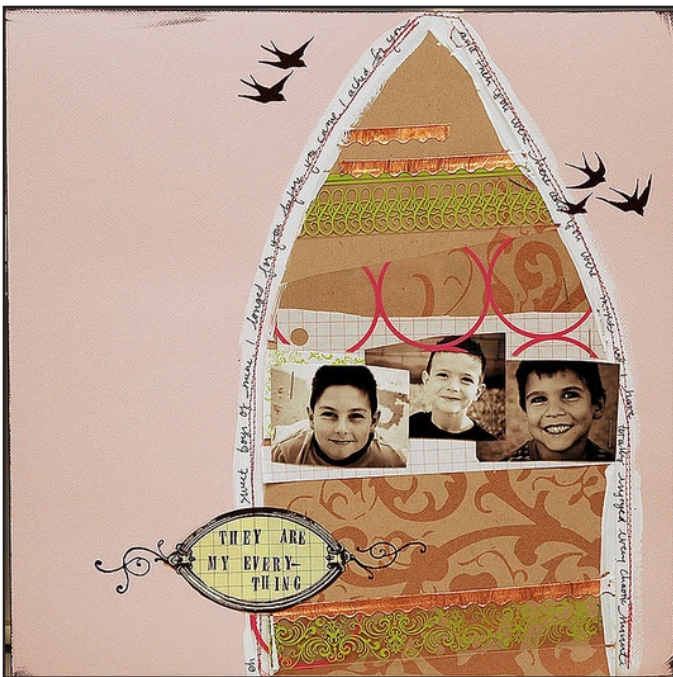
when that shape is asymmetrical:

- ◇ It's dynamic.
- ◇ It's unpredictable and requires active involvement from the viewer.
- ◇ It can make the parts on your page look great.

"Active white space is carefully considered emptiness."
- Alex White, *The Elements of Graphic Design*

Layer to reveal your personal style

When future generations look at your albums, they are going to get an understanding of what was important to you, of your outlook and even temperament. When you make choices of the elements to layer onto your page as well as the style in which to layer them, you're revealing your personal style.



Layout by Dina Wakley.

I have seen Dina create pages and her process is very “easy.” She doesn’t overthink things, and she’s got an instinctive sense of what to use and how to place it. Her pages convey that aspect of her, with inexact lines, casual handwriting and, always, the unexpected touch.



Layout by Amber Ries.

“Etc” is full of the kinds of touches I’ve come to expect on Amber’s pages. She tends to use roughed-up edges, stitching, color, and eye-catching and meaningful embellishments in lots of layers. I imagine her home to have colorful and even funky touches - a bit of the bohemian revealed through her pages.

What's your foundation piece? Choose it while keeping in mind the answers to the questions above.

Foundations are another topic covered extensively in Building Pages. When I speak of your page's foundation, I'm referring either to some kind of underlying grid structure, or the first one or two layers you put onto the page and then build from. That first element (or layer) is what connects the other elements to the background canvas. It affects the placement of each additional layer and element as you arrange them to achieve balance and unity.



Layout by Debbie Hodge.

The foundational layer on this page is a rectangle of paper that runs horizontally across the page, stopping a bit short of each side edge.



Layout by Amber Ries.

Amber's layers here work as a series of foundations. A 10"-square, distressed piece of paper is the first layer. It's centered on the background canvas. The next foundation layer is a smaller square of tone-on-tone patterned paper that has very little contrast with the layer below. Amber stitched a grid on this layer. Next is an untidy stack of rectangular papers, and then, finally, comes her content: three portrait-oriented photos.

Take some time to look at the embellishing bits layered at the edges of every one of the foundational layers.

Grounding is a key function/benefit you get when you layer.

“working” your motif

Using images and repeated motifs on your pages provides great layering and embellishing opportunities. Take a look at these pages and suggestions for “working your motif.”

- Repeat several images in a series (see the flowers on “He Loves Me”).
- Use your motif as foundation (see the cut-out heart backing up three photos on “Growing”).
- House your journaling in an image (see “Entertain”).
- Embellish with images.
- Cluster images.
- Make a collage within an image (Can you find this done on pages 4, 6, and 9?).
- Sprinkle images.
- Make a border of images.
- Use images on your background – stamped or in the paper design.



Layout by Dina Wakley

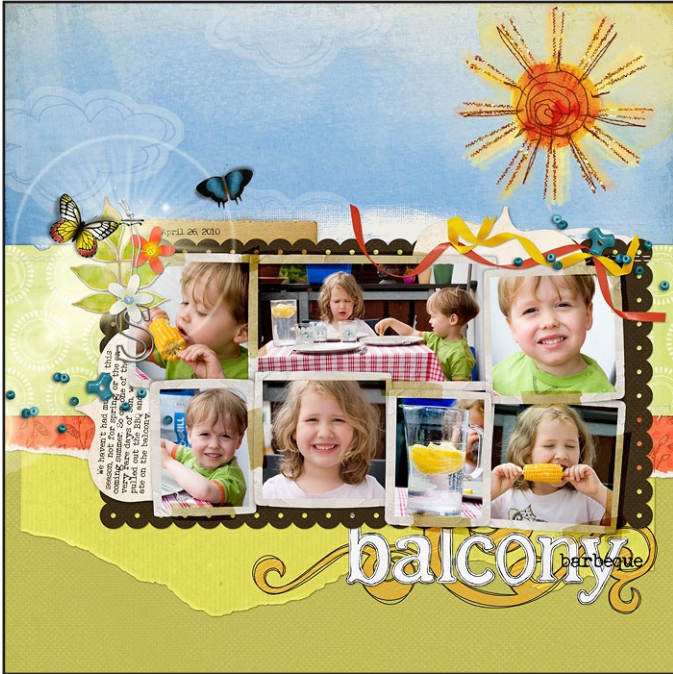


Layout by Dina Wakley



Layout by Debbie Hodge.

Inking, sewing, sanding, tearing . . . (and anything else you can do to the edges!)



Layout by Amber Ries.



Layout by Lisa Dickinson.

There are going to be times when you want to make sure your layers are distinct from one another. Edging treatments help you do this -- especially if two neighboring layers have a low level of contrast with one another.

On “Balcony,” Amber used torn edges, scallops, stitching and outlining to delineate her elements as they are layered together.

The foundation piece on Lisa’s “Flower Love” is roughed up around the edges and stitched in a dark thread. Check out the cut-out “love.” That too has been given an edge treatment: an outline in pen.



Now it's time to spend the month practicing and mastering layering

This lesson is the starting point for our month-long exploration of layering on scrapbook pages.

Watch the October Seminar tab on the home page as we add links to more reading, web resources and videos as well as galleries of layouts with designer notes.

Please, please, as you're reading this (and perhaps listening to the audio version), note your questions. There are so many things that each of the teachers for this class have done that could be talked about at length -- both with regard to technique and design. Post your questions in the forum --- i'll start a q&a thread so that as I do live interviews with the teachers we can delve into their process.

Thank you for your time!