

## Lesson 7: Shelved

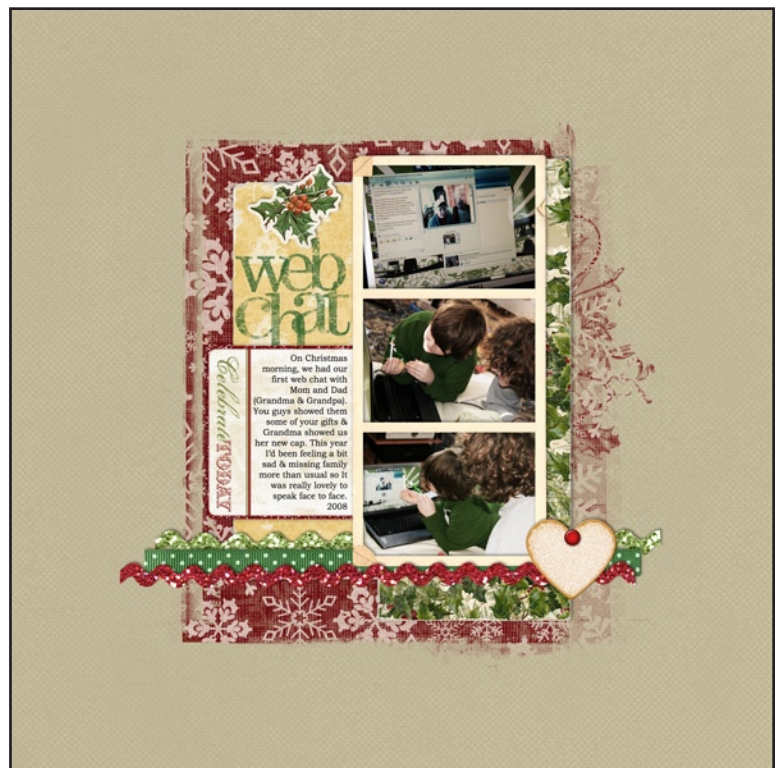
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### THE DESIGN

In the next six lessons, we will put all that we've learned in the first six lessons to work as we incorporate very specific elements on our pages. Today's approach? Ground your design on a "shelf." Think of using this "shelf" on your page as the equivalent of decorating a fireplace mantel. Decorating a mantel is an exercise in balance and proportion.

What will you make your "shelf" of? Here are a few options:

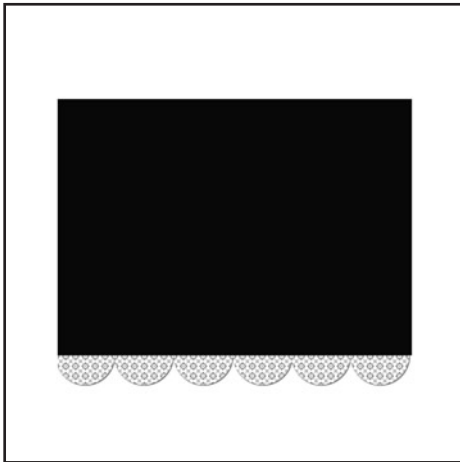
- words
- ribbon
- paper strips
- buttons or some other repeated embellishment
- edge of bracketed paper
- stitching
- scallop



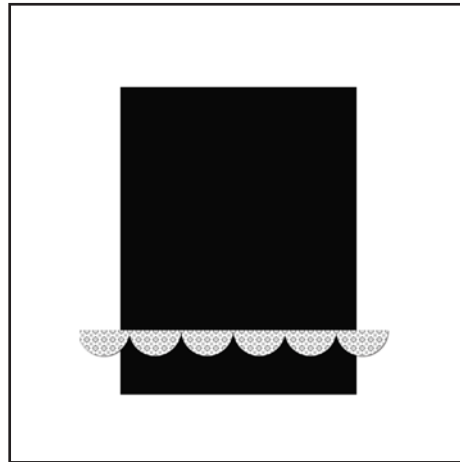
The elements on "Web Chat" sit on a shelf of ribbon and glittery ric-rac. The block is centered on the canvas, but the elements on the shelf are arranged asymmetrically.

## VARIATIONS

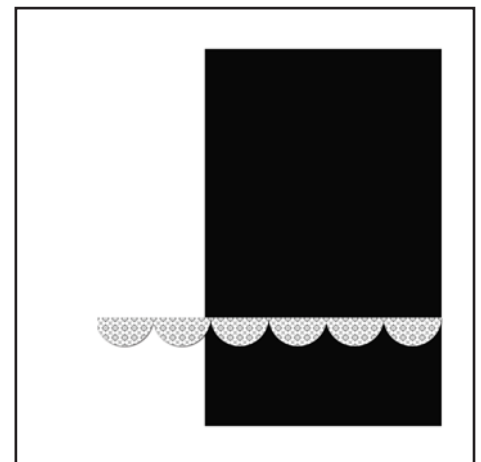
Several shelved variations follow. Look at them for balance and proportion. use them as starting points for your own designs.



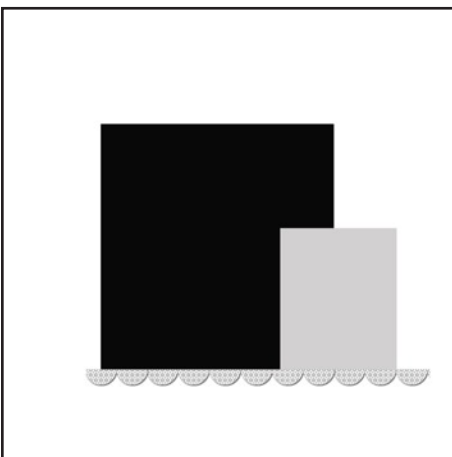
Place one element on a strong shelf and center the entire grouping on the page.



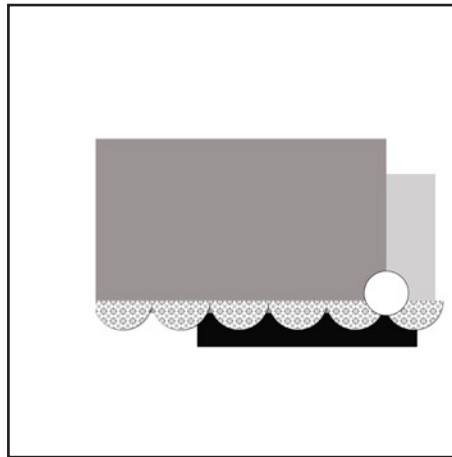
Support a tall block by running a bit of the block below the shelf



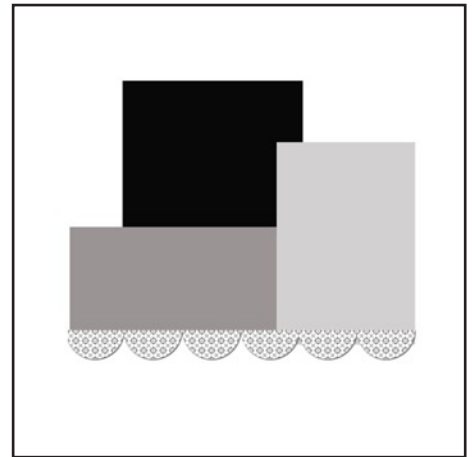
Place a shelf over a strong portrait-oriented rectangular foundation piece. This shelf can support journaling, title, or smaller layered elements.



Arrange items asymmetrically on your self. Compensate for the asymmetrical weight with off-center placement on your canvas.



Compensate for asymmetrical weight above the shelf by adding a bit of asymmetrical weight below.



Build an asymmetrical pyramid that can sit at horizontal center on your page.

**DETAILS**

Let's take a closer look at several balance and scale (or proportion) considerations to keep in mind.

***symmetrical***

A common design approach to decorating mantels is to place items symmetrically—think of a large, center-placed mirror flanked by identical candles. The block of photos on “Holiday Fairs” is the equivalent of that big mirror. Because of its heft relative to my shelf of ribbon, I extended it below the shelf to avoid a top-heavy feeling.



***asymmetrical***

Achieving asymmetrical balance requires placing items on each side that are different but that come close to having the same visual weight. The feeling here is looser and more casual than with a symmetrical arrangement. On “Sledding,” three photos are arranged in an uneven pyramid sitting on a ribbon shelf. The stamped background echoes the shape and runs slightly below the shelf. The title card at bottom right provides additional balance. The entire “weighty” grouping sits slightly beneath vertical center of the canvas.

**proportions**

Good balance will come out of a careful consideration of proportions:

- How big will your shelf be? Is it whisper-thin or does it have some heft? This determines how much “weight” it can hold and how much counterbalance you might need beneath the shelf.
- How many items will you put on your shelf?

There’s a strength in putting just one item on a fireplace mantel (think large art-piece) that results in calm and order.



Take a look at a very strong shelf.

A wide strip of red patterned paper combines with a slice of white bracketed paper to make a hefty shelf that contrasts strongly with the background canvas. It has no problem supporting this one large photo.

The bracketed paper is positioned off-center and affixed with a large, fun flower, which keeps the page from the formal (symmetrical) feeling it might otherwise have.

The addition of a perpendicular element (the word “document”) at one side adds additional support and strength to this shelf.

Alternatively you could go for an eclectic and appealing combination of many items. This requires using layers and looking at the arrangement from all angles. This is the kind of mantel arrangement you might find in a casual cottage-style room.



“Farmer’s Museum” features a big, busy grouping of framed photos from an all-day outing.

The strip of paper and the black bracket can barely support all that’s piled up here--but that’s sort of the point. This is a homey, eclectic compilation of sights.

A second black paper strip slides off to the right at the top of the grouping. This provides the bit of balance that keeps the whole thing from teetering the other direction.

- Where will you place your shelf on the page. In mantel-talk this would be the equivalent of considering how much space you have between the mantel and the ceiling, and between the mantel and the floor. Additionally are you working in a narrow space or a broad one?
- How will you use color? Consider color in a room of your house: when most of the darker colors are below eye level, the room feels anchored. Use color this knowledge to make sure your shelved grouping is grounded.



A colorful grouping of ribbon and a doodled paper strip provide the shelf on "Soft." The result is a bright and strong horizontal line grounding the elements to the page

The elements are asymmetrically arranged with the heaviest to the left side of the shelf. This is counterbalanced by the placement of the entire grouping slightly to the right on the canvas.

The tall photo block extends a bit below the shelf to prevent a "toppling" feeling.

The entire grouping sits slightly beneath vertical center.



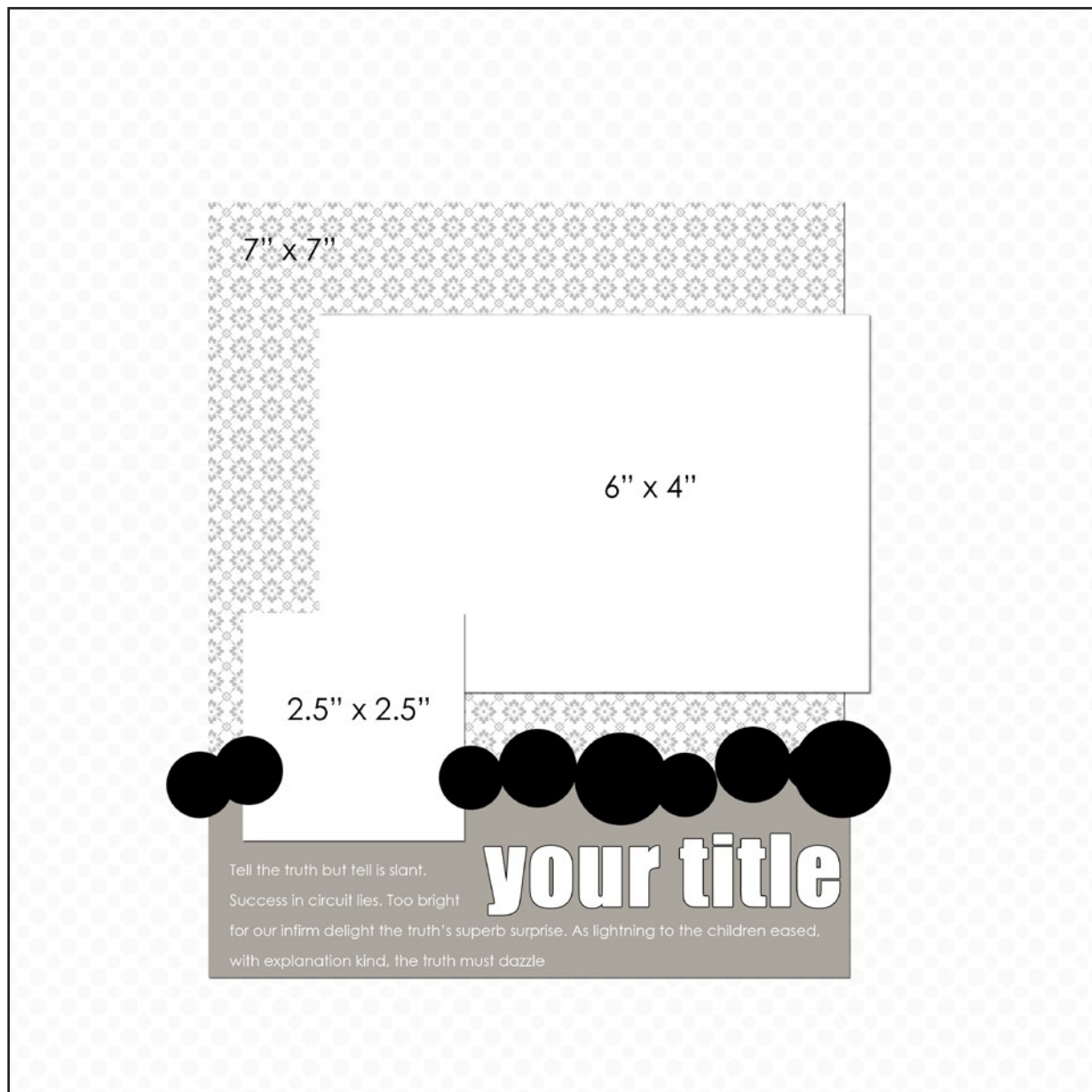
The shelf on "Family Tree" is a thick bold strip of ric-rac. This shelf gets its heft from both its size and its very strong contrast to the rest of the elements and the background canvas.

The asymmetrically-placed photo sits a bit off the shelf edge on left, but is kept in balance by several things:

- the ric-rac running off the right side of the canvas;
- the darker (blue) block on the background canvas supporting this extra weight; and
- the placement of the entire block quite low on the canvas.

SKETCH

This sketch uses a shelf of buttons A darker block beneath the shelf helps support the tall block and asymmetrical photos above. [Click to download layered psd file for digital pages.](#)



## **YOUR TURN**

Now it's your turn to create a scrapbook page with a "shelf." Use one of the variations on page 2 as your starting point and see where it takes you.