

CANVAS PHOTOS EMBELLISHMENTS TITLE JOURNALING

## The Challenge: Asymmetrical Balance

### What is asymmetry?

Asymmetry means “without symmetry.” Nothing is mirrored or centered. You may have an odd or mismatched number of differing elements. Designing with an absence of symmetry, does not mean there cannot be balance. Since there is no formula for asymmetrical balance, you must achieve it by sensing whether it looks balanced or not.

### Why bother with asymmetrical balance?

While asymmetrical balance is more difficult to achieve than symmetrical balance, it is also more interesting. It requires more active involvement by your viewer and thus has more energy.



*A large block of photos bleeding off the top edge dominates the upper right area of “Big Hill.” This unexpected placement draws the eye in immediately. The block is balanced and supported by journaling and patterned paper that fill a smaller area but run from edge to edge. Page title and three buttons ground the photo block to the canvas as well as provide counterweight to the trim along the bottom in this asymmetrical page. The sketch for this 12” x 12” layout is on page 9 of the class sketch packet.*

**Are there at least some guidelines for creating asymmetrical balance?**

Why, yes! Yes, there are.

**consider:**

- as an element moves away from the center of your page it gains weight
- an interesting element has more weight than a less-interesting one
- an element on the right side of your layout has more weight than the VERY SAME element on the left side
- an element on the top of your layout has more weight than the VERY SAME element on the bottom
- the more you isolate an element the more weight it has
- regular shapes tend to have more weight than irregular shapes

**avoid:**

- putting anything in the center of your page (on ANY axis going in any direction, horizontal, vertical, diagonal)
- putting any element in the center of any other element
- putting any element in the corner of your page or in the corner of another element
- putting any element half-on any other element
- lining elements up on their center axes

*The photo and embellishment block in “10 Years Ago” is balanced against a larger area of white space. The block takes on weight with its placement to the right and its interesting content. Making it smaller than the white space and moving it closer to page bottom than page top reduces its weight and sets it in balance on the page.*



**Can I test for asymmetrical balance?**

Again: yes!

Ask yourself where your eye goes when you look at the page. Does it move around more or less evenly (which would signal balance) or is it always returning to an area that is not your intended focal point (which would signal you to rethink your design)?

**YOUR CHALLENGE:**

Create a layout with strong asymmetrical balance, consciously thinking about how you're achieving your balance. Post it in challenge gallery 1 and tell us what you were thinking.

*The border of patterned paper and journaling spots along of the right end of "My Mom is so Cool" take on substantial weight because of their position and density. The gem-laden tree cut-out at the left side is the most interesting element on the page and can, thus, counterbalance this weight. A large area of dark blue background canvas sweeps diagonally behind the rest of the page elements, and the photo-block is set off-center for added interest. Note that the photos within the block have unequal shapes, but their areas are generally in balance (i.e., the large portrait photo at bottom right is balanced with a similarly sized photo of landscape orientation at top right).*

