Design Beautiful Pages— Compelling Clusters

Test Your Skills Challenge 1

by Jen White

Want to sharpen your design skills? Try taking our quiz to see if you can spot common mistakes often seen in scrapbook galleries! Use the Design No-no's PDF checklist to help in your search.

Take the Quiz

Using the list in the No Nos pdf, can you find 3–4 Design No-no's on this page? (Answers below)

1. **TYPE:** Type above 3D elements

   Explanation: Type should never travel across a drop shadow, even big heavy type like this title uses. To avoid this mistake, make it your practice to place your title and journaling directly above the background paper in the Layers panel.

2. **CLUSTER:** Missing drop shadow

   Explanation: I know how easy it is to forget to apply drop shadows. But, it's just as easy to make sure you haven't forgotten to apply them before you post or print. To keep this from happening to me, I look at my Layers panel and find any layers without shadows. Then I ask myself, should this layer have a shadow?

3. **PAPER:** Paper or elements from different color families

   Explanation: You also could have said that the paper was overwhelming or distracting. Either way, a bright yellow paper on a page with soft and beachy tones, is a no-no. Don't let your choice of paper distract from the focus of the page.

4. **EXTRA CREDIT—PHOTOS:** Lacking photo definition on overlapping or clustered photos

   Explanation: It's very common for a cluster of photos to run together if the photos are similar or very busy. This will make the cluster look like one big blob. Fix this by stroking the photos or adding a mat to one or more of them.

Quiz #2: An Eye for Design

Here's the above scrapbook page with all the no-no's fixed. See if you can spot the 3 design principles listed below. (If needed, refresh your memory by watching my Design Basics videos.)

Question One

Consider the Basic Design Principle of White Space. Does this page practice white space? What would be the benefit to white space on this page?

Solution One

- This page does contain white space, both at the top and at the bottom.
- Because there are four photos and lots of journaling all crammed together, allowing for white space in this design gives the eye time to rest.

Question Two

Consider the Basic Design Principle of Focal Point. In a photo cluster design, how can you determine the focal point (or focal photo)? Use your finger to draw a box around the focal photo, then draw the flow from that box.
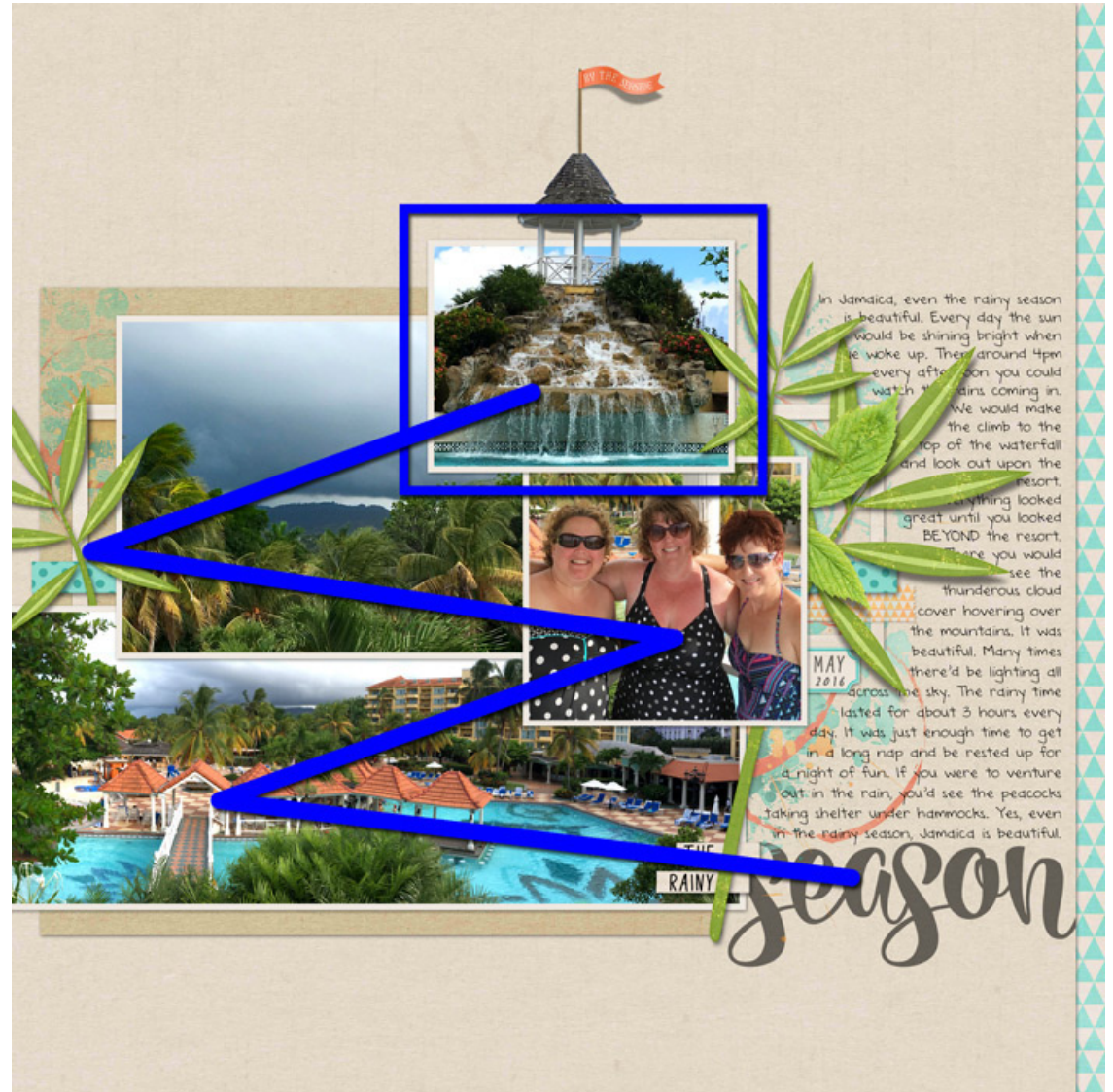
Solution Two

- The focal point (or focal photo) is determined by the top photo on the stack. Sometimes the elements help to determine the focal photo.
- The focal photo is the top waterfall photo. The flow is a zig zag. The flow could also be a line straight down to the title.

Question Three

Consider the Basic Design Principle of Rule of Odds. Does Rule of Odds mean 3 of something? See how many examples of odds you can find on this page.

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Solution Three

- Rule of Odds can mean 3 of something, but the number does not have to be 3. It can be any odd number, like 1, 5, 7, or 11.
- Here are a few things I found odd: three palm branches (notice how they have 7 leaves), one regular leaf cluster (which has three leaves), the color teal is represented five times: two ribbon ends, two paint places, and one patterned paper. I'm sure there are more!

Credits: The Rainy Season

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