

## BMC-S2-L2-el-Masks-transcript



A Beautiful Mess Simplicity Challenge  
Section 2, Lesson 2 - Mixing & Matching Masks  
Transcript for Photoshop Elements

Mix and match masks on your scrapbook page like a pro with the help of a few design tips and some savvy shortcuts. For this lesson, you will need two to three complex masks similar in design. I'll be using masks two, three, and four from the painted masks package from the Design Cuts mini bundle previously mentioned in this class. Notice how these three masks are all very similar, in that they look like they were all painted with the same kind of brush. Yet, they are all slightly different in exactly how the mask was painted. You'll also need two complex masks similar in design that contrast with the first group. This simple recipe is the key for making your challenge scrapbook page come together quickly. In my experience, when I dive into my folders and folders of scrapbook supplies, I can easily come out feeling defeated, unless I go in with a specific plan. So this is your specific plan. For my second group of masks, I'll be using mask 9 and 14 from the watercolor portrait package from the Design Cuts mini bundle. While the first group looked more like they were painted with oils or acrylics, the second group looks like it was painted with watercolors. This is what gives these two groups a good contrast to each other. This is where the beautiful mess part of my challenge comes into play. Can you imagine the fun it took to create these masks in real life and with real paint and real brushes? I'm glad we're sticking to digital aren't you?

If you're planning to use your own stash of products for this section of class, spend some time now searching for two contrasting groups of complex masks. Remember, keep it simple and try not to overthink it. When you go looking for your masks, keep in mind that it's not really the shape of the mask that gives it the contrast, it's more the medium that was used when the mask was created. These two examples of mask types are by Susie Roberts. The left appears to be inky in nature, while the right appears to be a mixture of watercolors and other media. On a side note, the masks you use don't have to start out black. The mask on the right used to be filled with a map until I neutralized it by filling it with black. You'll find instructions for doing this in the manual. For this exercise, starting with solid black elements will help to simplify the design process because it's less for your brain to think about, and

who doesn't need that, right?

Once you have your masks picked out, begin in Expert Mode of Photoshop Elements by opening the file you left off with in lesson one and open the masks that you plan to use on your scrapbook page. I don't normally use the Photo Bin in Elements, but when you have a lot of files open, it's useful for moving files between documents. Take a look at the two groups of masks that you chose. We'll start with the group that would work best for photos. In my case, I'll use these masks that look more filled in and painted with acrylic. From the Photo Bin, click and drag the three photo masks onto your document, then close the Photo Bin to get it out of your way.

These three masks are all similar in size, but I want them to be quite a bit smaller yet. Instead of transforming them one at a time, I can transform them at the same time. To do that, in the Layers panel, the top photo mask layer should already be active. Hold down the Shift key and click on the bottom photo mask layer. Now all three painted photo masks should be active. Press Ctrl T, Cmd T on a Mac, to get the Transform Options. Click and drag inward on a corner handle of the bounding box until the masks are about one third the height of the document, so a little under five inches tall. Then, click the checkmark to commit. In the Layers panel, click on the top mask to activate it all by itself, then get the Move tool. On the document, click and drag the mask into position on the right side of the page. I want my square mask in the center of the round masks, so I'll place it right there.

And here's a shortcut for moving layers around. As a general rule, in the Tool Options of the Move tool, I keep Auto Select layer unchecked. I like to keep that turned off because I think it's a little bit too bossy, but if you want to toggle it on just temporarily, you can hold down the Ctrl key in Windows, or the Cmd key on a Mac. Auto Select will stay on as long as you have that key held down. So instead of having to go back into the Layers panel to activate another layer, I can activate the next mask by holding down the Ctrl or Cmd key and clicking on the mask on the document. When I did that, you will have seen a different layer activate in the Layers panel. I'll click and drag this one to the top right quadrant of the page. Then using the same technique, I'll activate the last mask and drag it to the bottom right quadrant of the page. You can always adjust them in size or position later.

The second group of masks that you chose will be used for anchoring masks. Messy, messy masks are great for anchoring. And because they are going to be used to anchor the photo masks, we need them to be under the photo masks, so in the Layers panel, click on the textured paper layer to activate it. Open the Photo Bin again and drag one of the masks from the second group onto your document. If the layer of your new mask lands at the top of the Layers panel, you'll want to click and drag it down so that it's directly above the textured paper layer. I'll close the Photo Bin now to get it out of my way and then click and drag the messy mask so that it's directly behind the photo masks. If you're using these dark masks, you'll likely want to lower their opacity. A low opacity on a messy mask makes it tons prettier. Also, the lower opacity keeps the anchoring mask from competing with the photo mask. Anchoring masks should never steal the show away from photos. They are there just to add interest and pull the contents of your page together and make it more unified. I'm going to set the Opacity of this mask to 45%, but before I do that, in the last lesson I showed you how to scrub to change the Opacity setting. But here's another trick for speed. Since I have the

Move tool, if I just type in the number I know I want, the Opacity will instantly change. If I want 45%, all I need to do is type in 45. If the number you want ends in a zero, there's no need to enter the zero. So to get 50% you would just type in a 5. How cool is that?

That's already looking better, but I think I'll use the Transform Options again to get this to fill more space. The great thing about masks is that they can be stretched out of proportion, and here's another tip. If you have Show Bounding box checked in the Tool Options of the Move tool, which I do, then you don't need to use the transform shortcut. You can just click and drag on the side handles of the boundary that's already visible. In this case, I can't see the entire bounding box of the messy mask, but if I press Ctrl 0, Cmd 0 on a Mac, the zoom percentage will adjust so that I can see the entire boundary of the layer. Now I can drag to resize the mask, and then click the checkmark to commit.

Using the same process as before, I'll add the second messy mask to my page. Move it into position, lower the Opacity to 45%, resize it, and now that the bounding box is active, I can use another shortcut to flip the mask. Right click in Windows, or Ctrl click on a Mac, inside the bounding box and choose Flip Layer Horizontally. And then, click the check Mark to commit the change.

So maybe without even knowing, what you are seeing here is a great representation of several solid design concepts. We have the concept of flow on this scrapbook page because we put the photo masks in a row. We also kept the same design with the anchoring masks. Now our eye experiences no confusion and no chaos. It instinctively knows to start here at the top of the page and follow the path down to get the story that's being told.

Also, because the anchoring masks are only behind the photos, the concept of focus is readily found on our page. The anchoring masks tell us where to look for the main action that's happening, which should always be the photos.

I could also throw in the design concept of repetition. I've repeated the style of masks for photos and the style of masks for the anchors. There's already many more design concepts found on our simple scrapbook page, but we'll cover those later.

So that's how to mix and match masks for your Simplicity Challenge scrapbook page. In the next lesson, we'll utilize the power of a font duo. I'll see you there. This has been Jen White with Digital Scraper.