

PAGE LAYOUTS, Part II

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Last time we looked at page layouts from the physical layout aspect. As promised, this time we will look at layouts from the content layout aspect.

Normally, the material is laid out for an entire chapter at a time in order to make certain that 1) you have all the material that you will need for the chapter, and 2) to also know that you have not left out any material that you definitely want to include.

Using the ELEPHANTS worksheet mentioned in CC #3, ascertain if you also have a wide variety of elements to work with. The great advantage in using this system is that it will UNIFY your exhibit as a whole and create what has been referred to as "THE LOOK". The end product can be very effective.

Decide what are the key items, both thematically and philatelically, within the chapter and place them in the "ICE-PICK" areas on the pages that you assume they will be. Build the rest of the material around them, always keeping in mind the thematic story line flow of the chapter. Once you have the items thematically placed on the pages, then it is time to check more closely for elements and their widest use over the same pages.

Your key items will not all stay within the "ICE-PICK" area, but it is wise to start out with them there until the thematic story line on the page requires that they be moved somewhere else. Or, the philatelic sequence dictates a change in the placement.

George and I try to have at least two different elements on every page possible. A stamp variety (misperf, color, perf, watermark, printing, etc.) does not really count as the page will still have that "all-stamp page look" at first glance. Pages with all mint singles on them will hurt you as much as anything else. That doesn't mean that you cannot have one here or there, but there should be a very good reason why the second element is not on the page in question.

If a design is available in several elements, decide which will be best for the pages in that chapter. You might want to use the design for another thematic reason in another chapter in which case you would choose a different element of the same design to show in that other chapter.

For example: The set that started me collecting elephants is the 1968 Laos set of 7 stamps showing elephants doing a variety of things. I show parts of that set several times. 1) Chapter 4, 4.1 Taming and Training: 5 kip color trial & as issued. 2) Chapter 4, 4.1 Taming and Training: set of 7 on collective sheets (the only one of the proofs that when the stamps are perfed, they are valid for postage). 3) Chapter 6, 6.1 Species: 2 values on cover. 4) Chapter 6, 6.2 Differences: the 4 other values as mint singles over 4 pages. The net result is that I am showing the set for what the elephant is doing, for his anatomy, and for the part of the world he lives in.

I am certain that each one of you has a set or two that can be used in several places thematically. Do not be afraid to show an item again in another part of the exhibit as long as it is illustrating another thematic aspect. This is one of the advantages of buying items in several elements.

On the other hand, if you want to concentrate those several elements on one or more adjoining pages, they should be shown in production order as listed in the APS "Manual For Philatelic Judging" and followed on the ELEMENTS worksheet. This is frequently done when a thematic point needs to be made in the text is rather lengthy, and there are only one or two designs that can tell it visually. To the judges, the material will be judged as a small philatelic study also.

While philatelic studies should not dominate a thematic exhibit any more than any other element of philately, one or two of them somewhere in the exhibit will certainly help your philatelic points score (maximum 45). Just don't forget to include some thematic text on those philatelic studies pages.

No page is an island. It must be in harmony with all the pages around it. Not only for the physical layout discussed last issue, but also for the elements on the pages. As much as possible, we try to balance the elements look on one page against the others especially in the same row. If there are two covers on page 1, we try not to have two covers on page 2. Two covers on page 4 will help to balance the row. We also try to not have pages of two covers (or any other element) directly above or below the page under discussion.

To carry it even further, we try to not have "Bingo" rows, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. That means not having all the pages in any of those directions having the same general look. The "Bingo" look does not help the exhibit up in the frames for judging. Two pages for balance is one thing, an entire row is quite something else and should be avoided if at all possible.

No one or two elements should take over any exhibit. There should be that well-rounded blend of elements in every chapter and frame as much as possible as we have mentioned before.

That blend of many elements - major portion of the pages' contents - helps to make your exhibit look unlike any other exhibit, even on the same theme. Your appropriate text helps the viewer and judge appreciate all of the elements.

ART WORK, DRAWINGS, ESSAYS, PROOFS, TRIAL COLORS, SPECIMENS, PRINTINGS, PAPER VARIETIES, PERF. VARIETIES, WATERMARK VARIETIES, SINCLES, PAIRS, MULTIPLES, COILS, BOOKLETS, SOUVENIR SHEETS, MINIATURE SHEETRS, FULL SHEETS, DEFINITIVES, COMMEMORATIVES, AIR MAILS, OFFICIALS, POSTAGE DUES, REVENUES, POSTAL CARDS, ENVELOPES, AEROGRAMMES, MACHINE CANCELS, HAND CANCELS, METER SLOGANS, REGISTERED. COVERS, AIR MAIL COVERS, DOMESTIC COVERS, FOREIGN COVERS, CENSORED COVERS, SINGLE FRANKED COVERS, ERRORS, FREAKS, ODDITIES.

Which ones are you missing?