Most Everything You Need to Know About

MAD ADDERS

A Brief Background about Mad Adders
In the early 90s when I was a fledgling quilter, I started a mini-group within my St. Louis quilt guild. We named this activity *Mad Adders*. The group continued for many years. There were usually two six-person teams participating. The experience was fun and the results were always surprising. Over the years I had wanted to revive Mad Adders on a national/international scale. Current technology has made that possible and we now have two years under our belts. Anyone can participate by create a team to play along.

What Is Mad Adders?
The concept of Mad Adders is to create a wall-size quilt, primarily made using patchwork, in a round-robin fashion—but with a twist. Team members will each provide a starter piece and each participant adds to it—thus, Mad Adders! The originator doesn't see their project until the reveal party. After the reveal party, the originator may change, add, or finish it as desired. The size of the finished quilt is not limited, but they are not generally larger than 60" at the most quilts will likely finish in the 36" to 50" range.

Monthly Zoom Meetings
Each month, I will present a 30 minutes to an hour Zoom challenge which will include insights and techniques. Mad Adders is worldwide. Due to varied time zones and other considerations, not everyone can meet for the LIVE meeting. These Zoom sessions are recorded and can be viewed/reviewed anytime. These recordings are available forever. Email reminders are sent as needed.

Teams should set their own schedule and meet each month to enjoy some time together and pass projects. The time/date does not have to coincide with the Zoom meeting, but it could. There is no requirement to attend the LIVE sessions, but everyone will want to watch to see what the new twist/challenge will be. Each team must decide what is best for them.

What Mad Adders Isn't
Most round robin quilts are created by adding borders and more borders. The Mad Adders concept is completely different. The project that arrives in the tote bag can be changed, sliced, rearranged, or manipulated in any way—but the project should always be passed to the next person larger than it was when it was received. The addition

might be to just one side or two sides. The original unit might be cut and used as a new element.

The Manifest
A form will be provided so that each participant can create a manifest (a guide) that states some wishes or guidelines. These wishes could be things like: preferred size limitations (due to hanging space), landscape orientation, portrait orientation, or square. Other aspects such as a "theme" (leaves, triangles, water, Halloween, etc), could be suggested. It is vital that the originator does not request too many restrictions. The more freedom the team has, the more fun the process will be—and the greater the surprise will be at the end.

Letting Go
It is critical to state that all participants need to mentally prepare to relinquish any vision for what might transpire with their original starter piece. It is also vital to remember that the participants in each group will have different abilities and perhaps different skill levels. The goal is to be creative, innovative, and FUN! There will be lessons on various techniques. Skill-building and original design will also be part of the experience.

Create Your Team and Choose a Team Leader
There must be six people per team. Here are options:

    1. Create a team and choose a team leader comprised of members. The six participants would find a time/place to meet and pass projects. This could be at regularly-scheduled guild meetings. A final reveal party would occur at an agreed location.

    2. Members could live in the same town/area and meet privately each month to exchange totes. However, *there is to be no reveal of the starter piece or any subsequent progress until the Reveal Party.* Reviewing the lessons together and other discussion could be part of the gathering. Of course, quilters like refreshments (hint). Also, it could be that the meetings rotate to different homes for interest and variety. This is all the choice of the participating team. Work out what works best for your team.

    3. Establish a team of six quilters who live remotely and meet monthly via Zoom. With this scenario, each person will be required to mail/ship totes at the appropriate time. Naturally, this method would require additional expense as the totes would be shipped once a month over the course of six months. The Reveal

Party would be virtual.

4. Any other scenario that works best for your six-person team is acceptable as long as the work is done monthly and the totes are transferred at the appointed time without delay. There are no reveals, not even for the starter piece, until the Reveal Party.

The Commitment

It is vital that each participant makes Mad Adders a high priority and does not fail to miss a deadline for adding their portion, passing a tote, or finishing the project. The team is counting on each participant to meet those minimum expectations. Naturally an unexpected health situation or other crisis cannot be avoided and in those rare situations the team will have to determine how to proceed.

All meetings are first Wednesday of each month, except June 2026 which is the second Wednesday of the month.

Schedule for the 2025-26 round of Mad Adders

Introduction with Ricky Getting Started on November 5th

1st pass to be exchanged on or before December 3

2nd pass to be exchanged on or before on January 7th, 9am

3rd pass to be exchanged on or before February 4th.

4th pass to be exchanged on or before March 4th.

5th pass to be exchanged on or before April 1st.

6th pass, **Reveal Party** to be exchanged on or before May 6th.

Final Showcase is June 10th.

Final Deadline for finished quilts, photos, and submissions is June 7th

Final Showcase

After the Reveal Party there will be time for the originator to finish their quilt top. The Final Showcase will show all teams and each quilt and the progress of each quilt from start to finish. The details and method for submission will be provided as needed.

Registration

1. Get your six team members and choose a name. Have fun – be creative.

2. Each person will register at **www.letsquilttogether.com**, which is Ricky's own online teaching website. It will be helpful for our organization if your team members all register on the same day. It's not required – but very helpful.

3. The cost for each participant is $75.00 and includes participation eligibility and access to all LIVE sessions and tutorials. Once the tutorials are posted, they may be accessed anytime—forever.

4. During checkout – go slow – and carefully look for a particular information field! There is a place to add the name of your team using the shop/guild/group field. Please state the name of your team leader. Adding your team name and team leader will enable us to sort you into the proper team and establish the roster for each participating team.

Photography

This is a vital aspect of the process. Back in the 1990s we added a disposable camera to the tote so that the evolution was documented. Now, each person will be required to take a digital photo their starter piece (smart phone photos recommended). Then, each person will take a digital photo once they finish their addition each month. Additional details and criteria about photography will be given once Mad Adders starts.

Photo Gallery

Photos will ultimately be uploaded to an online gallery. All Mad Adders participants (worldwide) will be able to see what all the teams have created.

Mad Adders is not meant as a competition... but...

There will be two awards at the conclusion of Mad Adders. The first prize team will receive $600 ($100 per person), plus free participation into the 2026-27 round of Mad Adders. Each participant in the second place group will receive free tuition for the 2026-27 round of Mad Adders. Only teams with all six completed quilt top submissions will be considered.

Commemorative Pins

Each person who successfully submits their finished works for the Final Showcase will receive a commemorative enamel Mad Adders pin. The pins change each year. Pins will not be awarded to teams with incomplete team submissions.

The Process

These quilts are primarily patchwork. While appliqué is permissible, participants should plan to add to each piece (making it larger) by creating patchwork and only adding applique when necessary or for added interest. Adding appliqué to the work doesn't enlarge the quilt. The goal is to grow the size of the quilt with each addition. Use applique sparingly and only after you have increased the size. Use it only when it seems like the best option for enhancing the project.

The Starter Piece

After the first LIVE session, each person will prepare their starter piece – keeping it less than 16" x 16", or 256 square inches. The starter piece can be simple patchwork (squares, triangles, regular quilt block), or it could be representational, such as a house, a tree, an animal, a scene, etc. Paper piecing is an option. Guidance for the starter piece will be given during the first LIVE session. Remember, future participants can dramatically alter the work to push forward the project. Having said that, participants are urged to use great wisdom and to have a clear purpose for making extreme changes.

Fabrics

Each person will assemble a tote bag that includes their completed manifest, a starter piece, and fabrics that were used (or that the maker would like to see used later in the quilt). Keep in mind, the subsequent Mad Adders will have full reign to do what they wish. Each Mad Adder should add to the piece using fabrics from the tote, but also consider using new fabrics and then adding some of the new fabric to the tote as well. These fabrics will assist the next person with coordinating the continuity and provide opportunity to unify the overall design.

How much fabric should be added?

That's up to each person and the availability of what that person has on hand. It can be a little or a lot.

Below: Mad Adders by Thangam-Shivdas, team Abu-Dhabi Doers (2025)