

What a Square!

Description

It all started with mandalas. Really. I've been fascinated with them as symbols, as maybe a garden maze, as a tool for meditation, and perhaps a placemat. I have learned mandala means circle in Sanskrit and it is usually used as a symbol for the universe. And since food is the center of *my* universe, a placemat is appropriate.

I participated in a class back in April of last year at the [DFW Fiber Fest](#) in Irving that was about making them in yarn. There were several reasons to be in that class, not just for the mechanics. I wanted to understand how to design them, what stitches to use; you know, the deeper *yarn* meaning of it all. So apparently it's a bit like gumbo, or couscous, or paella, or you get the idea. To each their own design.



Renee's first mandala

And it was a fun day. After introducing the course format and herself, the instructor, Molly Andries, pulled up a box and started removing awesome examples of the mandalas she had made. It was like a circus car or Mary Poppins' bag; they just kept coming out. And colorful and all different. I didn't take a picture of that but here's one I made in the class. One of the fun parts about making them is the different stitches. So many. So many I'd never used. Yippee! Different stitches in different combinations make for many different textures and visual effects. And I just looked at the class schedule for this coming April and another class is being offered!

Anyway, when I got home I started thinking about what I could do with them if I made a whole bunch. Google, Pinterest, Ravelry were all involved in my thought process. Somewhere in the middle of it all I stumbled upon the post from one of the crochet bloggers I follow. Or maybe this is how I started following her; I really don't remember. Tamara Kelly at [Moogly.com](#). Anyway, she does a CAL (that's *crochet-along* for those who aren't familiar with that acronym) every year and the goal is an afghan. That sounded like a great thing that I could build upon with my mandalas, except, they were round and for this project, they would need to be square. So. I kept reading; the post, the patterns, and then of course clicking on to the websites for the individual designers. Time Suck. But of the good kind.

She asks a number (twenty-four to be exact) of designers to come up with a pattern to share as part of the afghan. They are all squares and the ones I saw when I discovered this all looked sort of mandala-

ish. They started out round and morphed into squares. Then came the rabbit holeâ€”or in my case, the armadillo hole (theyâ€™re bigger). To join in here I would be playing catch up. The CAL began in January and it was now end of May. Of course.



Caron Simply Soft Acrylic

Step one, buy all the yarn, over 4000 yards in 6 colors. Totalâ€”not 4k each color. Done. Used the inexpensive stuffâ€”unbelievably soft and on sale so not as huge an investment as it could have been. Filled my car upâ€”well maybe not but it was a-lot. There was eye-ball raising when I came home from Joannâ€™s with multiple bags of yarn. And then had to go back for more. Oops. If you are interested in seeing my takes on the various squares in the CAL and you have a Ravelry account, you can view them on my [Ravelry project page](#). I will post some on my instagram feed as well for those who donâ€™t frequent Ravelry since I believe you have to sign in to Ravelry to view my page.



These are the first six of twenty-four

Step two, start crocheting. I had ten squares to make to catch up to the schedule. It took awhile. I had other projects in the works after all. I ended up finishing the last square on time in December but am still hooking them all together to make the afghan. I will post that on my instagram feed when I am done. Probably not until end of January.

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I did end up replacing some of the listed patterns (felt kind of guilty here but they didn't match my look) with others that I found online; many from some of the same designers I had already used from the CAL. All told I think I changed out eight of the twenty-four. The three above are part of those substitutions. And then I decided that, really, twenty were enough for the size I wanted to make, so I have four left over.

I did not use the original mandalas I made in the April class but now I know how to turn them into squares if I decide what to do with them. And, also, I need to come up with a plan for the four left over squares. Hmmm.

Category

1. Uncategorized
2. Yarn at home

Date Created

January 24, 2019

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