



Machine Quilting

U N L I M I T E D

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Meet Colorado Quilters:

*Gwen Hatchette &
Kit Robinson*

Machine Quilting Frames
and Cabinets

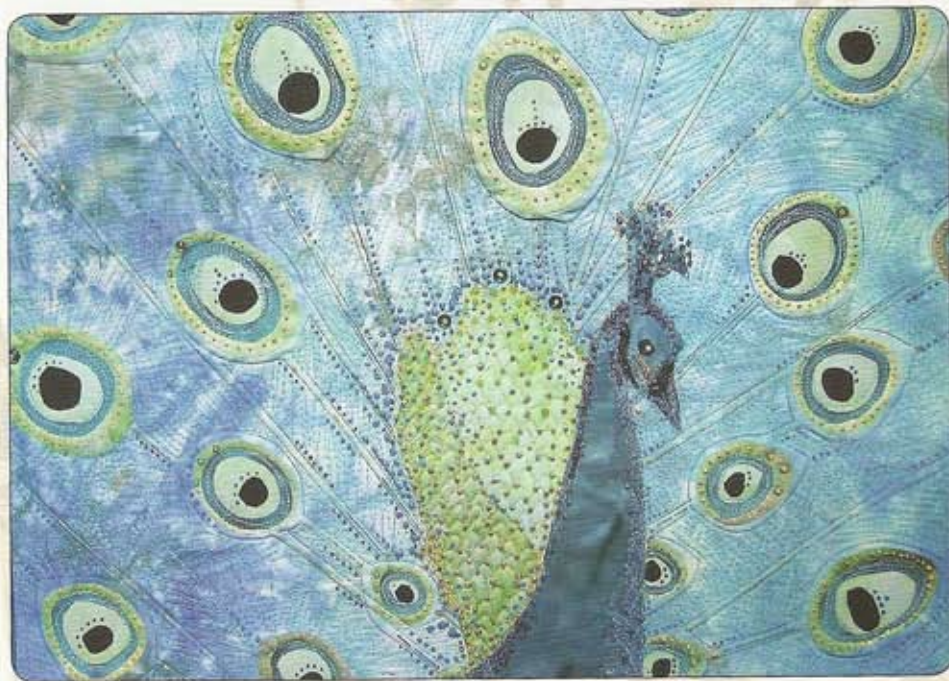
Loading a Quilt for Frame Quilting

Gwen Hachette

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Diva — The term was originally used to describe a woman of rare, outstanding talent. It derives from the Italian word *divina*, meaning 'divine' (feminine form), which, in turn, derives from the feminine form of the Latin word *divus/diva*, meaning 'divine one'.

— Quilt Diva



I have the good fortune of living in Colorado, where the ratio of outstanding quilters is higher than average. One of these quilters, and a dear friend, is Gwen Hachette. Gwen refers to herself as a 'Quilt Diva.' At first, I did not like that title. In today's entertainment saturated society, Diva is not always a complimentary term. However, when I studied the etymology of the word, I quickly realized that Gwen is indeed a Diva with her art—a rare, outstanding talent.

Gwen and her husband Charlie (she calls him the mad scientist) live and work in Fort Collins, Colorado, in a transformed Craftsman house that is a work of art itself. Gwen retired from a career in elementary education and pursued her dream of becoming an artist. She tried stained glass, weaving,

Peacock, close-up, auctioned to benefit the Alzheimer's Association. © 2007



Sideways — Hand painted cotton, stenciled, beaded and stitched. © 2007



water color and pastels, but found that she wasn't satisfied with the results. She felt that the colors in her paintings took on a muddy appearance. She loved the look and feel of fabric and took up quilting about 15 years ago. Gwen's grandmother was a quilter and crafter, and it's clear that Gwen inherited her passion.

Initially, Gwen made traditional patterns using batik fabrics. She found her true direction after classes with such inspirational teachers as Louisa Smith, Patty Hawkins and Melody Randol. The quilts she makes today have a collage feel, with lots of thread painting, embellishments, hand-dyed fabrics and modern themes and forms.

Gwen works in a studio converted from a garage behind her home and looks out over a garden that is an artist's dream. There are rock gardens and stony paths. You will find whimsical birds and animals, a tranquil pond occupied by a grinning alligator sculpture peering out from water lilies, and a frog fountain that spits water across the sidewalk into the pond. An ostrich, a heron, more frogs and many other creatures abound. Gwen's two dogs, Rose and Tucker, are clearly at home in this artistic environment, and can be found lying across your feet if you sit for more than a few minutes. It's Tucker's job to keep the real birds at bay and out of his territory, while Rose looks for handouts. She learned early on that when quilters gather, there is food!

Gwen donates many of her quilts for raffles and silent auctions supporting safe houses,



Gwen Hatchette with a commissioned quilt, *Poppy Gala* © 2008

schools, the Alzheimer's Foundation and the Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art. She is active in a contemporary quilt guild, and also belongs to a group creating more traditional work. Recently, she was filmed for HGTV and will be seen on their program *'That's Clever'*.

While she creates smaller art quilts on her sewing machine, Gwen also quilts bed-size traditional quilts for customers, using a longarm. She enjoys the interaction with her

customers as well. Whether a wedding or a baby quilt, one for a housewarming or something for the customer's own bed, she likes the stories behind the quilts and the collaboration with the piecer. Recently, a piecer brought Gwen a quilt and seemed to be a bit cranky. Gwen discovered that the quilter was dying. She finished the quilt and delivered it to the customer, placing it on the bed for her. A short time later, her customer died. Gwen had been able to give her that last finished quilt.



Tulip Frenzy — Fabric collage, fused, painted and stitched batiks. © 2008

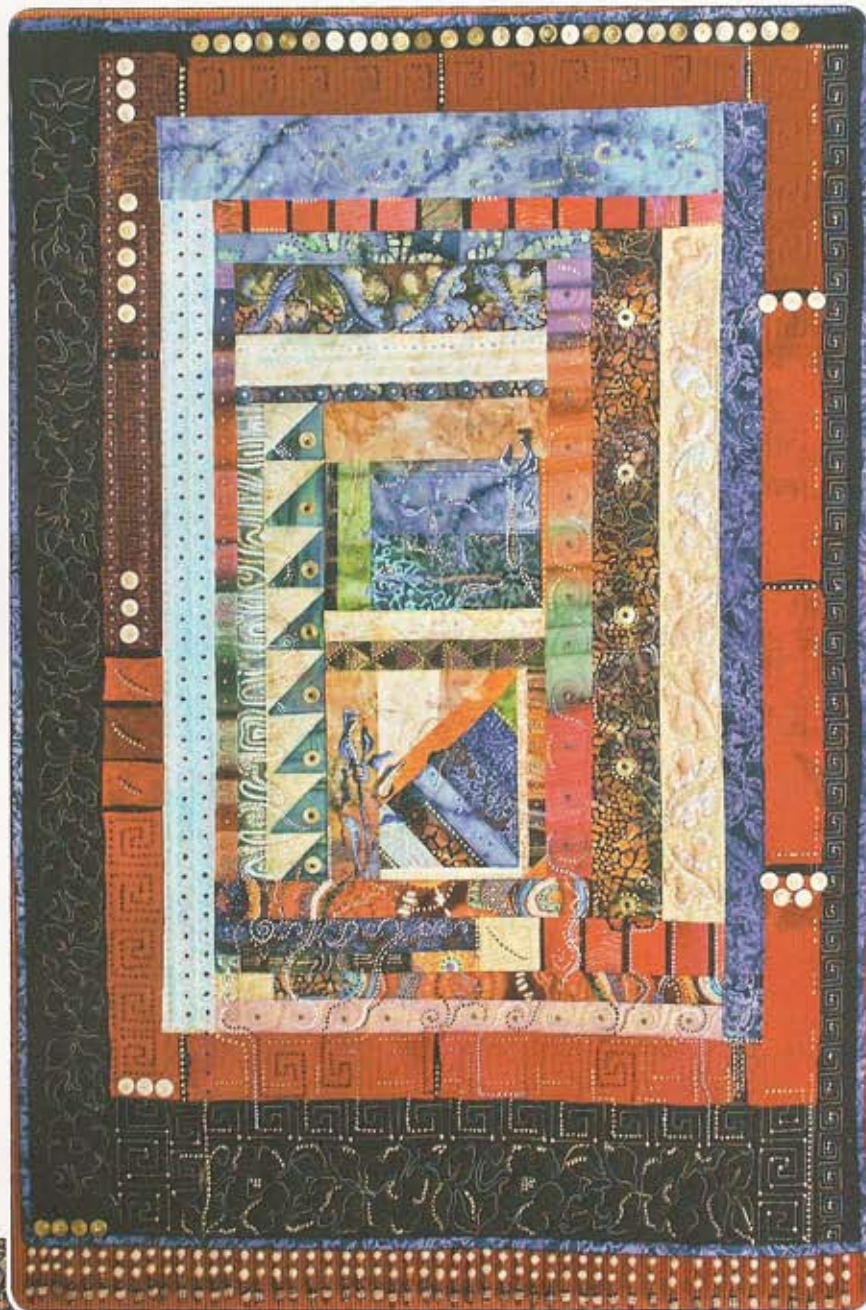




Gwen with Tucker (left) and Rose

Even though she loves wrapping up in a bed-sized quilt, she gets a lot of satisfaction from creating her wall art pieces, filled with embellishments, ideas and creativity. The personality in her art quilts comes from her choice of details and embellishments. She may paint a section, add thread-painting and top it off with buttons and beads. She makes paper collages as well, and often stitches on the paper and adds the same embellishment techniques as with her fabric creations. She often uses tulips as a design element in her quilts.

One favorite quilt is called 'Whatever Happened to That Wool Skirt?'. Gwen pieced it from wool scraps, added buttons, and then painstakingly painted rows of tiny fabric dots, adding texture and a new dimension to the quilt. She laughs at herself, claiming to have an illness—one that requires her to keep playing with techniques until the quilt tells her it is finished. Gwen



Whatever Happened to That Wool Skirt? © 2007

sometimes works in a series, creating prototypes of the same theme until she is satisfied with the final result. Her studio walls are covered with both finished works and various stages of current and completed projects. **MOCA**

Gwen is very active in the Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) and her work has been shown at the Lincoln Center, one of Colorado's largest and most diverse presenters of professional theatre, dance, music, visual arts and children's programs. Her quilts have been chosen for the Quilting Arts Magazine® 2007 calendar and the MoCA 2008 datebook. Visit her website at www.gwenhatchette.com