





Eat, Sleep, Craft, Repeat

BY JULIE LEMEROND



A passionate crafter, Kathy Cano-Murillo has kindly shared her secrets and supplies for years, publishing how-to newspaper columns and books and developing products for national craft chains. She Tweets and blogs. She's appeared on two cable TV stations and hosted crafting cruises. And she just published her second book of fiction, set in real locations throughout the Valley of the Sun.



(ABOVE AND FACING PAGE)
NO SURFACE IS SAFE FROM
THE CRAFTY CHICA'S FLAIR
FOR EMBELLISHMENT.

"I'm sorry, I have paint all over me," she says with a laugh, and lifts her sleeve to show off a swish of blue paint on her forearm. "I've been crafting all afternoon."

It's a classic Kathy Cano-Murillo moment, a manifestation of her Crafty Chica character: the woman as author, artist, crafter, marketing guru, glitter lover, and all-around cheery lady spreading the love.

My first question is, naturally, "Do you sleep?"

"Yes, I do," she assures me. "My motto is 'Eat, sleep, craft, repeat.'"

Between penning chick-lit novels and crafting how-to books, creating her own product line sold at Michaels craft stores nationwide, and creating beautiful works of art on a daily basis, she's a busy gal. And, oh yeah, she also has a family to take care of.

She starts her days with coffee, the news, and joking with husband Patrick and children DeAngelo, 20, and Maya, 17. Then she saunters down the hall of their home in northwest Phoenix to the computer room, where she spends a good hour or so checking emails, posting links on Facebook, Twitter or her blog, and communicating with the outside world. She acknowledges that she has to limit this to an hour in the morning, maybe devote a little more time to it in the afternoon, and then go back to it again at night. The cyberworld constantly beckons, but she must be disciplined; she wants to spend most of her day creating.

A few years ago, she published her first novel, which she describes as "'Ugly Betty' meets 'Waiting to Exhale,' with a dash of Martha Stewart." A work of fiction about subjects she knows well, "Waking Up in the Land of Glitter" revolves around creating crafts and friendships, and stars a third-generation Mexican American living in, and loving, both her Mexican heritage and American culture.

Her newer novel, "Miss Scarlet's School of Patternless Sewing," delves a little deeper into the psyche. Between books, Cano-Murillo dealt with the death of her father, which caused her perspective to change while composing this novel.

"This book is a metaphor for our lives," she says. "So many times we have to crumple up and re-do things, looking at them from a whole new perspective. This book came from a different place within me and it changed the whole tone of my writing."

Both novels are based in the Phoenix area, and several local landmarks are mentioned often. The Rhythm Room, La Perla Mexican Restaurant & Lounge, Cerrita Candy Company and the holiday festival Glendale Glitters all get name-checked within the pages. The author says that she hears often from readers that they can't wait to come to Phoenix to visit some of these locales, or from people who live here, that they see their hometown in a new way.

