

Dream Weaver

Karen Kimmel knows she is an artist—now she is out to help others discover the same about themselves.

When she was a child, reading and writing didn't come as easily to Karen Kimmel as it did to other kids. But when it came to art, she flourished. "I was always fascinated by systems and how things are organized," says Kimmel. As an adult, Kimmel is at the helm of a creative enterprise that encompasses everything from a children's line of art supplies (Kimmel Kids) to craft workshops for the developmentally disabled (Art Exchange) to a handful of high-profile interior design projects. Activities in her sunny studio in Los Angeles' Atwater Village range from color-coding thousands of pom-poms and hand-tying hundreds of dream catchers to building graphic teepees or sorting ingredients for dozens of mini-succulent gardens. "I wanted to create a place where it's safe to be creative," says Kimmel. Inspiration is found in the per-

fectly organized boxes, trays and cubbies that line the walls, filled with organically shaped stencils and brightly colored pencils and markers, the boxes hold nearly the entire Kimmel Kids archive. Kimmel currently is prepping for an event on April 27 called Crafting Community, where she will play host to families with young children at the Ace Hotel Palm Springs for a weekend of creative workshops. "As a mom, I'm passionate about finding ways to do activities with my kids and connect with the artist community," says Kimmel, whose events have proven so popular that she's been hired by heavy-hitting brands, such as J. Crew and the Hammer Museum, to stage similar workshops. "I love how a collective experience can also be original, because everyone leaves with something different."

Karen Kimmel, karenkimmel.com



1. Adorned with beads, feathers and cut-wood pieces, the vibrantly colored Kimmel Kids dream catchers enliven the studio walls. "Every one is done by hand, and each is completely unique," Kimmel says. 2. Kimmel and her team sketch throughout the day in the Atwater Village studio, and most of the new pattern ideas are developed organically. 3 & 4. An array of stencils and pencils from the Kimmel Kids stencil set. 5. Kimmel's teepee line began when blogger Zoe Schaeffer of Macaroon Original requested a personalized, eight-foot-tall indoor teepee for her daughter's birthday.

"I love finding new ways to be creative with my kids."



1



4



1. "My daughter and her friends love to come visit the studio," Kimmel says. "They love to stencil, make pom-poms and show us how this art thing is really done." 2. A scrap of what Kimmel calls "rogue needlepoint" made its way onto her inspiration board. 3. "Give me an opportunity to create a system, and I will happily do it," Kimmel says. "I relax by cleaning. I can tolerate a short window of messiness when I know we're making something, but ultimately it's got to be organized." 4. For her line of stencils, pencils, markers and canvas cases, Kimmel unveils new designs and new colors each season in themes inspired by nature, such as Forest and Marine.



3