

smart glass jewelry: as seen on MSCEO.NET
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KATHLEEN PLATE: REDEFINING 'BEAUTY IN A BOTTLE'
Eco-conscious entrepreneur shows off her creative genius

By Felicia Joy

It's a cool, dusky evening and chatty socialites are mingling in "environment," an eco-chic furniture store near downtown Atlanta. Though the sun has set it seems to still be shining in the form of Kathleen Plate. A tall and statuesque blonde, she comes across as a happy-go-lucky California gal, but says she's from Washington state.

An entrepreneurial artisan, Kathleen is the pioneering creator of glass bangles and other jewelry that she makes from recycled bottles. If you've been to any fashion forward boutique or clothing retailer lately you've seen her work—or knock-offs of it. Those shiny glass bracelets that sound like a million bottles clanking together once you put them on and wave your hand are everywhere; but many of those on store shelves are fake versions of Kathleen's work. Oh well. Imitation, some say, is the highest form of flattery.

At environment, cocktail-and-h'or doves passing hostesses are working the crowd adorned in Kathleen's jewelry. It's beautiful for sure, and she's been making it for 17 years, but that's not the focus this evening. Today it's all about her latest innovations: curtains, pillow shams, chandeliers, tabletop arrangements—even dresses—all made from glass.

A dress made of glass? How does one dream that up? "By trying to challenge myself," says Kathleen. "I always loved to make stuff. I grew up with one of those moms who often had crafts projects for us to do," she said. Her first ever creation wasn't jewelry though. "The first thing I can remember making is a cake in my Easy Bake Oven," she says smiling with a fleeting flash of nostalgia.

"Making stuff" has worked out well for Kathleen, who has been said to "mesmerize" audiences with her recycled glass works. She has traveled all over the states to show her pieces and install custom commissions. Her next sights are set on international showrooms. "I've flown everything to Los Angeles for a show and been many other places across the U.S.," she said. "But abroad is next. I think I'd love to do a show in Milan, Italy."

With too many sources of inspiration to name just one, Kathleen says she loves the simplicity of working with recycled glass. "I only have about three or four colors of glass to work with so I'm constantly stretching myself to make it look different."

She is also inspired by feedback from fans of her work. "I love it when people tell me that something I have made has become their go-to piece or good luck charm. Ultimately, it's not about my work. It's about what it means to the people who wear it or acquire it."

With Aveda, Coca-Cola, the Guggenheim Museum, Christina Applegate, Amy Smart, Sienna Miller—and numerous television programs—embracing her work, Kathleen is quite a busy artist and entrepreneur. To take a break and rejuvenate she likes to travel. "I love to go on a long trip. I'm probably the only person in the world who loves sitting in an airplane," she says. "When else do I get to sit on my butt for five hours and do nothing?"



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