

The Most Reliable Time Of The Year

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But while the traditions surrounding the holiday may be in flux, what's remained fairly constant over a century and a half of modern Christmas is what festivity looks like. Holiday décor and its many accoutrement orbits around the same set of ingredients: at home, you have your Christmas tree, your garland, your string lights, your optional tree skirt, your stockings, your ornaments. All in the standard red and green, with complements of white, silver or gold sprinkled in. Out in the world, the most recognizable symbolism chosen to bring the holiday to life includes Santa Claus, reindeer, snow-people, wrapped presents and elves. Brands want to convey togetherness and illustrate the warmth signified by this unique time and essentially shake each of these ingredients up and redistribute them in similar ways each year. The key question is how to continue to keep holiday storytelling compelling and modern while remaining true to the core elements with which we're most familiar.

Designers, creative directors, and stylists are exploring ways to reimagine the holiday color palette, incorporating deep jewel tones, pops of pastels, more muted Scandinavian-like neutrals or even a Millennial favorite, variations on playful holiday glitter. Major brands are thinking up ways to depict a Christmas holiday season that reflects the world we live in while retaining a focus on familiar themes. For example, the prominent UK retailer Marks & Spencer consistently owns the space in reflecting an inclusive world in their holiday ads. Their "[Must-Haves](#)" spot this year is no exception, centering the classic Christmas essentials while featuring real bodies in different shapes and sizes, multiracial families, a flip on the "impressing your in-laws" trope with a handsome man washing the dishes and so much more.

Skip back over to the US to look at holiday storefront displays and Macy's [window](#) this year features a new character, "Sunny the Snowpal," a space-age snowgirl with a gender-neutral name. Apple takes a different tack, animating familiar holiday moments with a tenderly illustrated [story](#) of a young woman sharing her creative gifts with the world during the holidays. The young woman is charmingly bushy-haired and freckled, her female friends outfitted in hockey jerseys and gender-neutral clothing and the little holiday village where she shares her story, full of people of different skin tones, ethnicities and ages.

These great examples demonstrate that the holidays aren't always about reinventing the creative wheel. It's one of the few times where we can celebrate clichés in fresh and contemporary ways, rather than do away with them. Embrace the magic of the familiar this holiday season!