TREND WATCH JANUARY 2026

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As we approach the start of a new year, the PANTONE Color Institute unveils its highly anticipated Color of the Year—a selection that often signals broader cultural and consumer shifts. PANTONE serves as the global color authority across industries including textiles, automotive, printing, publishing, and product design.

Each year, representatives from a wide range of industries contribute insight, drawing from lifestyle trends, economic conditions, art and exhibitions, global events, sports, and the collective mood of consumers worldwide.

For 2026, PANTONE has selected a soft white hue:
PANTONE 11-4201 Cloud Dancer.

True to its name, Cloud Dancer embodies calm, serenity, and quiet reflection. It encourages relaxation and thoughtful creativity, offering a pause in an increasingly fast-paced world. The shade evokes softness—think clouds, cotton, plush knits, rounded furniture silhouettes, and comforting textures such as fur and brushed textiles. It's a color that feels gentle and restorative.





CLOUD DANCER

PANTONE®
11-4201 TCX
Cloud Dancer

serves as a versatile backdrop, pairing effortlessly with a wide range of palettes, particularly powdered pastels.

As a clean slate, it reflects a collective desire to slow down, reset, and move forward with intention in the year ahead.



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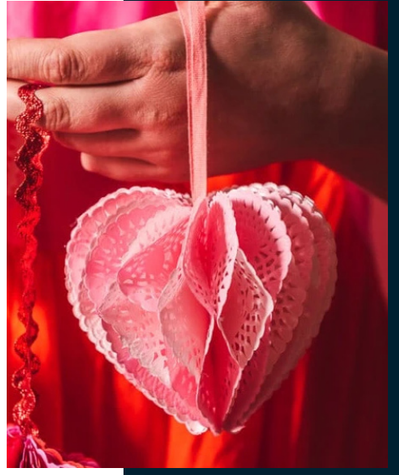






Looking ahead to VALENTINE'S DAY...

gift trends continue to lean into comfort, nostalgia, and romance. Traditional categories like candy, flowers, faux florals, and jewelry remain strong, as consumers enjoy dressing up their décor for the occasion.





This year's aesthetic is best described as cozy vintage with romantic antiquity influences. Lace trims, embroidery, floral prints, and soft textiles dominate, supported by a palette of sweet pastels.







Key icons include bows, scalloped edging, butterflies, stripes, and playful imagery inspired by decks of playing cards—a nod to the renewed popularity of classic games like Canasta.



Faux flowers continue to grow, now accounting for approximately 43% of offerings, often presented in kits or freehand craft formats using paper, textiles, ribbons, crochet florals, and artificial plants.



Their low-maintenance appeal resonates strongly with today's consumers. Standout Valentine's colors include **Deep Burgundy** (PANTONE 19-1522), **Cream** (PANTONE 11-0107), and **Clay** (PANTONE 16-1516).

Meanwhile CHINESE NEW YEAR...

running from February 17 through March 3, ushers in the Year of the Horse alongside the Lantern Festival.

Those born in the Year of the Horse are said to be energetic, optimistic, and strong-willed—qualities that feel especially relevant as social, experience-driven hobbies continue to rise.

This season is particularly notable due to the explosive popularity of **Mah Jongg,** now embraced by all age groups, from young adults to seniors. The game has become a social centerpiece, driving demand for giftable items such as specialty playing cards, racks, travel kits, tiles, score pads, and accessories.



Much like pickleball, Mah Jongg has expanded beyond gameplay into lifestyle products including totes, mugs, T-shirts, and tabletop décor. As more consumers learn the game, this category shows no signs of slowing and is expected to remain strong through **Mother's Day** and **Father's Day.**







Looking ahead, continued coverage of the **Toy Show,** along with gifts and boutique apparel, will be featured in upcoming **Trend Watch** reports.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and inspired New Year!