

Holidays 2012

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It's a Colorful Life

Design mogul Jonathan Adler
shares his picks for the most festive
hues of the season

PLUS: "Modern Family" star **Sofia Vergara** shares how to create a glamorous holiday home



It's a COLORFUL LIFE



Joshua McHugh

Jonathan Adler has never shied away from bold color, and the holiday season is no exception. A design legend in the 21st century, Adler suggests unique color palettes to create a “happy chic” mood for the holidays

BY BETTINA CHANG
CTW Features

It's hard not to be happy when speaking with Jonathan Adler. In just a few minutes, the words and phrases he uses immediately conjure the kind of person who could inject Technicolor life into a black-and-white movie. He says things like, “Orange napkins never hurt,” and “As long as it twinkles, I'm happy.”

Adler, who first became famous for his iconic pottery that got him featured at Barneys New York in 1994 (and countless retail stores since then), launched into a wildly successful design career in home décor and beyond, all the while maintaining his commitment to “irreverent luxury.” He's also penned several design books, including the upcoming “100 Ways to Happy Chic Your Life” (Sterling Signature, 2012), and appeared at various design conferences and on countless television shows as a design expert.

For the holiday season, Adler says he doesn't go all-out to decorate. “I'm Jewish and my husband [Simon Doonan] is a gentile, so we don't do a Christmas tree,” he says. “But back when the Liberace Museum was around, which it isn't now, we bought two ornaments and kept them in the original boxes. Every year, we plop them on either side of the mantle. That's how we know the holidays are coming.”

After all, their home is full of furniture and décor that would make holiday decorating a “herculean” task. He says, “I believe that surrounding yourself with the stuff you love, no matter how stylistically eclectic it is, will make you happy.”

And Adler is an expert on creating happy spaces. His use of bold, graphic patterns and vibrant colors make any room look playful and elegant at once, which is embodied by his catchphrase, “happy chic.”

Of course, this is the kind of attitude you want to have during the holiday season, so read on to find out the color palettes that Adler recommends to create a bold, beautiful home for the holidays this year.

Josh McHugh / Sterling Signature



Pantone



Jonathan Adler



GOLD, SILVER, BLUE

For Adler, the holidays are all about the sparkle and twinkle. “Gold, silver, other metallics ... I like to mix them indiscriminately,” he says.

Plus, to add a punch of color, “I always think of icy blue as a fantastic holiday color that goes beautifully with gold or silver.”

In his own home, he displays a good amount of his own work in gold- and silver-luster pottery. “The metallic materials find their ways into my house,” he says. “I just made this groovy brass peacock table, and it looks perfect in my house.”

Of course, he recognizes it’s not so easy for those of us who don’t make a living by creating home décor. In that case, he says, “Add more lights” to create more sparkle in the home, and don’t forget the garland on the mantle to make it more festive.

“Obviously, that’s what the holidays are about. Sparkly is happy, and that’s why I go for the sparkle.”

Icy metallics: Adler’s pottery products (middle and bottom right) show his love of mixed metallics. To add a punch of color, try an icy blue used in Adler’s products (top right).

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Bold and unexpected: A neutral gray with bright orange accents can create a festive look. Bright orange napkins and natural décor like oranges and kumquats (above) add a punch of color to the tabletop.



GRAY AND ORANGE

This on-trend color combination takes some courage, but Adler says, go for it.

“If I’m feeling a little more neutral or subdued, I’ll do icy grays with pops of orange.” Leave it to this color guru to consider bright orange accents as a subdued palette.

“Orange is the color of happiness,” he says. “A lot of people have neutrals in their homes, on the furniture and walls, so throwing in some nice orange throw pillows is a great place to introduce color.”

Another tip is to keep a big bowl of oranges around. “It’s counterintuitive because it’s the freezingest out at winter time, but I always have it ... and I keep a lot of flowers around, the freshest ones, whatever is in season.”

Make sure it’s a bright, sunny orange that exudes warmth, and put it where everyone is bound to see it, like the dining table. “Your tabletop should be bright and colorful,” Adler says.

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How to 'Happy Chic' Your Holidays



Only the fantastical mind of Jonathan Adler could consider using the phrase “happy chic” as a verb. Yet somehow, that’s exactly what he teaches the reader in his new book, “100 Ways to Happy Chic Your Life” (Sterling Signature, 2012), which is packed with gorgeous photos of interiors, sketches, lists of recommendations and words of whimsy.

Here are some tips from this design/life guide, plus a last piece of advice from the man himself:

- Put tables under tables. “One can never have sufficient number of low tables and cubes at the ready,” he writes in the book. Nesting them keeps them out of the way for

when the chowing stops and the dancing begins.

- Try your hand at cross-stitch. Adler provides this as a year-round tip, but the nostalgia of thread and needles works perfectly for the holidays.

- Do something a little strange. Everyone will have snowflakes and candy canes. Put out something that people will remember specifically about your house. “Probe the inappropriate parts of your mind, then go public with what you find,” Adler writes of his knack for subverting the norm.

- When all else fails, bring a guest. Adler says this is his number-one tip for any family gathering. “Be sure to have at least two non-family members there. Then everyone has to act a little more civilized than they really are,” he suggests, fervently. “It’s something I learned over many years of trial and error.

This is the answer.” — *Bettina Chang*

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