



Michaels

2026

Creativity Trend Report

The Year of Creative Living

in the **AnaLog era**

In celebration of National Craft Month, Michaels is fueling the joy of creativity and celebration with its annual Creativity Trend Report, dubbing 2026 the Year of Creative Living — a cultural shift where more people are intentionally incorporating creative habits into their everyday lives, shaping their routines, relationships, environments, mindsets, celebrations, and sense of self.

Driven by nostalgia, digital fatigue, and a growing desire for authenticity in a world that feels increasingly virtual, people are turning to hands-on creating to reclaim their time from screens, reconnect “in real life,” celebrate the everyday, and build a physical record of who they are and what they care about.

As the leading destination for creating and celebrating in North America with nearly 1,400 stores, Michaels has leveraged exclusive sales and search data, consumer insights, and in-house trend and design experts to identify the eight biggest creative movements set to define the year ahead — and the motivations behind them.

For over 50 years, Michaels has evolved alongside cultural shifts — not just adapting to how people create, but helping shape what and why they create. As the largest arts and crafts, party, and balloon retailer in North America — with over 75% of the population living within 10 miles of a store and millions shopping on michaels.com daily — Michaels has an unmatched pulse on the creative trends shaping today’s culture.



“IN 2026, CREATIVITY IS NO LONGER JUST SELF-EXPRESSION – IT’S SELF-DEFINITION.

**IN A WORLD THAT FEELS INCREASINGLY
AUTOMATED, CREATIVITY HAS BECOME A NATURAL
CORNERSTONE OF THE CULTURAL RETURN TO
HANDS-ON, OFFLINE LIVING.”**

Heather Bennett, President & Chief Customer Officer at Michaels

The Data

All michaels.com search data and all historical sales data included in this report are taken from the last 12 months, compared to the same time the previous year, underscoring the increasing demand for each trend.

Michaels’ team of consumer insight experts regularly conduct surveys to keep a pulse on the creativity landscape and shifting consumer behaviors. All consumer insights data included in this report were taken from studies conducted within the last 6 months.

Touching Grass Crafts

Grounded, Intentional Creativity

Searches on Michaels.com for
"Analog" Hobbies
like knitting, crochet, needlepoint,
embroidery, sewing, cross stitch,
journaling, and painting

+136%
over the last six months

As screen fatigue reaches new highs, creativity is moving out of the house and into the real world. Enter Touching Grass Crafts — the rise of grounding, hands-on projects that help people unplug and reconnect with their surroundings. Instead of crafting only at home, people are bringing their projects outside: stitching on park benches, sketching at the beach, knitting on long train rides, or journaling during sunset walks. What began as Emotional Support Crafts is evolving into something more immersive — creativity that reconnects people to their environment, senses, and routines. In 2026, crafting isn't just about relaxation; it's about presence. Portable projects like mini watercolor sets, embroidery hoops, and compact knitting kits are becoming everyday companions, transforming idle moments into intentional creative rituals that pull people away from screens and back into the physical world.



Diamond Art Sales
+28%
from last year



Painting Kit Sales
+86%
from last year



As a result of the demand Michaels will increase space in stores for yarn by over
20%

Analog Bags

The "analog bag" has become a viral symbol of intentional creative living. Across social media, thousands of people have been showcasing what's inside their carefully curated craft totes — watercolor palettes, yarn skeins, embroidery hoops, sketchbooks, and tiny project kits packed for moments away from screens. These portable creativity kits are showing up on park benches, trains, coffee shop patios, and beach blankets, turning everyday downtime into something tactile and restorative. More than just a bag, the analog kit reflects a broader mindset shift: creativity is becoming an intentional ritual — something you plan for and bring with you, not something you promise you'll get to later.



Yarn Accessory Sales
— including knitting and
crochet tools —
+40%



Pro Tip:

Start an analog ritual. Keep a travel watercolor set, a mini stitch kit, or a compact knitting project packed and ready. To meet this demand, Michaels is even launching elevated on-the-go tote bag styles this summer, and increasing investment in miniature, portable craft kits, making it easier than ever to bring creativity wherever life takes you.

Main Character Maintenance

Creativity as Identity Building and Memory Keeping

In 2026, people aren't just documenting their lives — they're curating their "personal lore" in physical form. After years of digital curation and disappearing content, creators are craving something tangible: proof of who they are, what they've experienced, and what they value. Memory-keeping is no longer reserved for weddings and baby books. It's showing up in junk journals layered with found ephemera, vision boards framed as art, personalized charm collections, and shadow boxes that preserve moments that might otherwise vanish into a camera roll.

Creativity is becoming a way to archive the self. In an era where identity is constantly shaped online, people are building physical records that feel grounded, intentional, and deeply personal. Whether marking a milestone, honoring a season, or simply romanticizing everyday life, these projects transform experiences into artifacts worth keeping.

Patch Sales
+24%
from last year



Pro Tip:
Turn your memories into décor. Frame a vision board, design a personalized charm bracelet, or create a seasonal junk journal that lives on your shelf — and with expanded personalization options like a new Patch Bar coming to stores later this year and new all-in-one Junk Journaling kits, it's easier than ever to archive your story in style.



Searches for
Vision Boards
+61%



Personal Lore Projects

People are increasingly personalizing everyday items. These projects go beyond scrapbooking — they turn life into an artifact. Memory frames, custom jewelry, recipe books, wedding dress keepsakes, travel journals, and heirloom-inspired crafts become physical manifestations of identity.

Fabric Sales

have increased
3x
year-over-year as more people personalize clothing, accessories, and keepsakes that reflect their identity



Travel Crafting

Vacations are becoming creative retreats. Instead of returning with souvenirs, people return with paintings, pressed florals, stitched mementos, and journal pages created in real time. Travel crafting transforms a destination into an experience — something made, not just captured. The memory lives in the object, not just in a digital gallery.



Crafting Chemistry

Creativity for Deeper Connections

As social media shifts from connection to consumption, people are craving ways to be together that feel more real, less performative, and less phone-dependent. Crafting Chemistry captures the rise of project-centered connection — where creating replaces small talk, and shared focus builds faster intimacy than another night of passive scrolling.

A shared project changes the energy of a room. It gives hands something to do, lowers social pressure, and creates space for more natural conversation. Instead of just “catching up,” people leave with something tangible — and a memory tied to it. This isn’t about elaborate hosting; it’s about shared presence.

Guided Craft Kit
sales increased
86%
year-over-year, marking their biggest growth yet as customers look for easy, group-friendly creative experiences.

Pro Tip:

Make your next hangout hands-on. With expanded group craft kits, beginner-friendly embroidery and paint sets, and in-store events designed for social making, it’s easier than ever to turn connection into creation.



Knitflix & Chill

Movie night gets an upgrade. Instead of double-screening, friends knit. Couples paint. Roommates stitch. Crafting becomes the anti-scroll — a way to relax together without disappearing into separate feeds.



Group Craft Kit
searches are up
52%
year-over-year



Date Night Craft
searches are up
30%
year-over-year

Flow State > First Dates

A project quiets nerves. It reduces phone checking. It gives conversations somewhere to land. Crafting is emerging as a low-pressure way to connect — whether it’s a girls’ night, a creative club, or a modern date night.



Searches for
Girls Night Crafts
+242%
on Michaels.com

Christmas Diamond Art
sales are up
67%
year-over-year, as seasonal crafting becomes a shared ritual, and a key part of seasonal social gatherings.



Bestie Beach Painting!



Gilded Gifting

Gifts as Artifacts of a Relationship

51%

of Michaels's customers are turning to DIYing gifts as a way to save money¹

In 2026, gifting is less about the object and more about the gifter's imprint. People crave gifts that feel like keepsakes, not commodities — leading to the rise of curated, custom, aesthetic-forward DIY traditions. Social media has shifted toward “memory gifts” and micro-rituals created within relationships, where personalization isn't a detail — it's the point.

Gilded Gifting captures the move toward hyper-personal, story-driven presents: embroidered initials, candles blended to match someone's exact aesthetic, heirloom-inspired pieces that feel like they were made for one person and one person only. Every detail — the color palette, the scent, the wrapping, the inside joke woven into the design — becomes part of the emotional value. People aren't just giving gifts; they're crafting artifacts of their relationships.

A handmade bookmark for a friend who loves reading. A custom necklace that references a shared memory. A keepsake ornament that marks a chapter. This is gifting as identity-sharing, not label-swapping — a creative ritual powered by nostalgia, intimacy, and the desire to make someone feel deeply known.



Crochet Kit by Loops & Threads®



DIY Jar Candle

Grandmacore 2.0

Last year's nostalgia wave is evolving into something more intentional and heirloom-driven. Instead of simply recreating “grandma aesthetics,” people are stitching timelessness into their gifts: embroidered tea towels, needlepoint pillows, hand-stitched linens, painted ceramic keepsakes, and crochet blankets that feel like modern heirlooms. These gifts blend old-world techniques with a fresh, personal twist, turning traditional crafts into meaningful, story-rich pieces made specifically for the recipient. It's nostalgia reimaged: softer, slower, deeply personal, and rooted in the desire to create gifts that feel timeless. Not to mention, these gifts are a gift to the gifter themselves, as they get to experience all the benefits of crafting with their hands while also making a meaningful gift.

Needle Crafting Kit Sales are up nearly 50% from last year



Coquette Pink Bow Mugs

Natural Yarn Sales +40%

supporting the rise in heirloom-style handmade gifts



Needlepoint Pillow Project



6" x 6" Needlepoint Kit by Loops & Threads®

Searches for Mini Loaf Pans with lids +919% year-over-year

Mini Loaves of Love

Small-batch baking is having a viral moment on social media, with thousands of creators sharing miniature desserts and “sourdough flights” individually packaged as thoughtful handmade gifts. Baked in mini loaf pans and wrapped in aesthetic packaging, these tiny treats turn everyday baking into a creative act of gifting.



Mini Loaf Pan by Celebrate It®

Pro Tip:

Think small but specific. With over 100 new seasonal needlecraft designs launching this year, expanded space for stitch and yarn in stores, fabric rolling out to nearly 90% of locations, and an increased assortment of sewing machines and notions, Michaels is making it easier than ever to turn meaningful gifting into a craft tradition of your own.

Charms for Jewelry Making Searches are up +433%

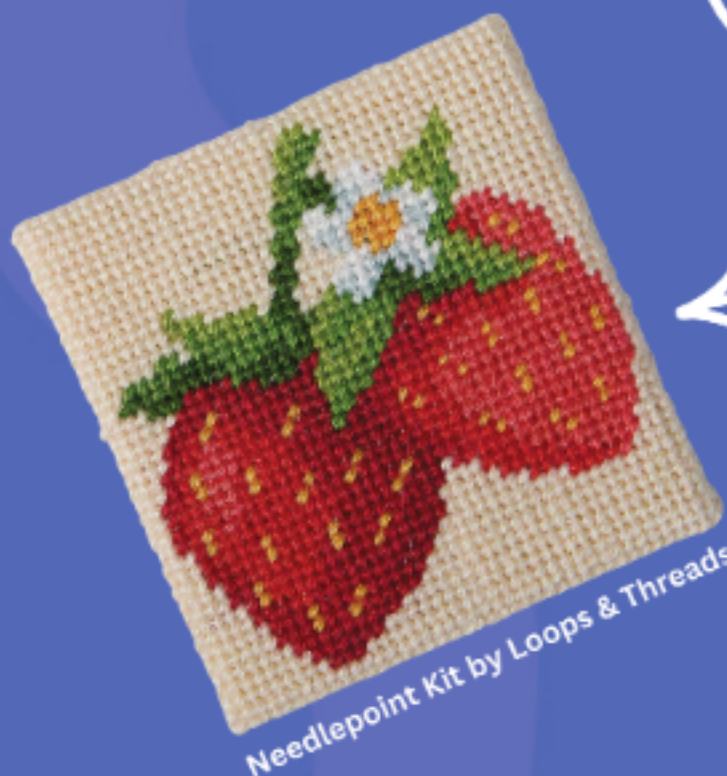
Skill Stacking

The new status symbol? Skill.



Skill Stacking captures the shift from casual crafting to craftsmanship. In a culture shaped by convenience and digital shortcuts, people are craving real skills and are investing in techniques that build competence and confidence. Crafting is shifting from a casual pastime to meaningful capability — sewing, knitting, woodworking, needlework, and heritage techniques are being redefined as modern life skills.

Skill Stacking reflects a growing desire to understand how things are made — and to make them yourself. These projects aren't just aesthetic; they're functional, practical, and deeply rewarding. They extend the life of beloved pieces, transform everyday materials into something personal, and build confidence through visible progress. In 2026, skill becomes a form of self-definition. Mastery is the flex and progress is the proof.



Needlepoint
searches
+251%
emerging as one of the fastest-growing craft categories — a sign that skill-based, heirloom crafts are resonating with a new generation.

Upcycling

Repair culture is accelerating as people look to extend the life of meaningful items, personalize their space, and build skills that feel grounding and useful. Reviving, reworking, and refinishing pieces allow makers to express their identity, preserve memories, and create something entirely new from what already exists. Repair culture, slow fashion, and upcycling aren't niche anymore — they're the new "cool".

Sewing Patterns
searches are up
152%
year-over-year



Searches for
Mosaic Kits
are up
248%
on Michaels.com



72%
of Michaels shoppers
used creative
projects
to save money
in the past year



Searches for
Crewel Embroidery
+204%
year-over-year

Pro Tip:

Skill builds confidence. Start with a beginner-friendly kit, then graduate to patterns, machines, and advanced tools — Michaels' expanded Knit & Sew Shop, growing specialty assortments, and hundreds of FREE video-on-demand classes on Michaels.com, make it easy to level up at your own pace.

Sew Bros + WIP Wednesday Warriors

A new generation is embracing visible skill, process-sharing, and mastery as identity. From Sew Bros redefining tailoring culture to WIP Wednesday Warriors proudly sharing their needle crafting works-in-progress, the evolution itself becomes the content.



Wabi-Sabi Spaces

The Rise of the Imperfect, Lived-In Aesthetic

Visible Mending searches are up **144%** on michaels.com

After years of hyper-polished feeds and showroom-perfect homes, people are embracing the beauty of imperfection. Wabi-Sabi Spaces celebrate texture, visible brushstrokes, uneven stitching, and layered finishes. DIY décor isn't about replicating luxury perfectly — it's about creating something uniquely yours. Oil pastels, visible mending, plaster art, and mixed-media wall pieces add depth and personality that mass production can't replicate. Homes feel more lived-in, more expressive, and more human. The charm is in the irregularity. As design continues to democratize, high-end artistry and do-it-yourself creativity are converging — and consumers are leaning into that overlap. It's the décor version of smudged eyeliner and messy hair-intentional, cool, and a little undone.

Searches for **DIY Home Décor** are up **79%** year-over-year

Pro Tip:

Elevated doesn't have to mean expensive. In 2026, Michaels is partnering with a celebrated high-end designer to debut limited-edition, design-forward DIY and décor collections — giving customers a first-of-its-kind way to create high-end looks at home. Stay tuned.

Oil Pastel searches are up **31%** year-over-year

Vintage Revival

Vintage-inspired décor is expanding beyond holidays and into year-round living. Classic motifs, retro palettes, and heirloom-inspired textures are being reinterpreted in modern, personal ways — blending memory with contemporary expression.

37% of Michaels Shoppers created **DIY Home Décor** in the last year, signaling sustained interest in hands-on interior personalization.

Designer, But Make It DIY

As consumers grow more design-savvy, they're looking for elevated projects that feel intentional and art-forward. The line between professional design and at-home making continues to blur, as more people seek approachable ways to create gallery-worthy décor with their own hands.

70% of Michaels shoppers said they **DIY-ed their own Halloween decor** reinforcing the shift toward handmade seasonal interior design

Diamond Art Tray Kit

Paint by Number Framed Mini Kit

Spring Floral Arrangement Project

Confetti Culture

The Rise of Micro Celebrations

Searches for
Balloon Arch
are up
28%
year-over-year

Searches for
**Party
Decorations**
+125%

Party
Banner
searches are up
100%
year-over-year

In 2026, people aren't waiting for big milestones to celebrate. They're creating their own: a mini cake for finishing a tough week, a themed night in after landing a new client, a decorated dinner table just because it's Tuesday. Creativity becomes the vehicle for marking meaning, turning small victories into rituals that feel joyful, intentional, and worthy of their own spotlight. As people crave more joy and presence — without waiting for weddings or once-a-year events — micro-milestones are being elevated into moments worth honoring. Wrapping a big project; Ending a draining job; Launching a side hustle; Simply surviving a chaotic week. These everyday chapters are now celebrated with handmade touches: intimate house gatherings, curated tablescapes, and even “party of one” rituals.

Confetti Culture isn't just about more celebration — it's also about more connection. These smaller, low-pressure moments give people an easy reason to gather, check in, and spend time together. Instead of saving togetherness for rare occasions, creativity becomes a way to weave celebration into everyday life — romanticizing the ordinary and strengthening real-world relationships in the process.

Accomplishment Cakes

Celebration cakes have gone hyper-specific — and they've taken over social media. From “I Quit!” to “Congrats on Your Breakup,” these message-forward cakes turn deeply personal milestones into bold, frosted declarations. Videos featuring accomplishment cakes have generated millions of views across platforms, with creators documenting everything from career pivots to friendship breakups to soft-launch celebrations — transforming private moments into something ceremonial and shareable.



Mini Stainless Steel
Insulated Tumbler

TINI BIT OLDER
Tini Bit Older Headband by Celebrate It™



Paper
Crafting Sales
are experiencing
Double-Digit Growth
as people opt for hand-made
banners and paper chains to
add a personal signature
to milestone moments.

Pro Tip:

You don't need a major milestone to make it special. With expanded Balloon Bars, baking tools, paper crafting, and celebration décor in The Party Shop at Michaels, Michaels makes it easy to turn any ordinary moment into something memorable.



Plastic Champagne
Flutes Set



KitschCraft & Charms

Tiny Trinkets, Big Personality

Searches for
Resin Charms
+115%
year-over-year on
Michaels.com

This trend captures the rise of playful, personality-packed projects made purely for joy. Think charm-covered bags, resin food trinkets, Shrinky Dinks®, jelly-inspired keychains, phone straps, novelty beads, and hyper-colorful desk décor. Utility is optional. Delight is mandatory.

Driven largely by Gen Z and Gen Alpha, this wave of making embraces maximalism, humor, and unapologetic individuality. Everything becomes customizable. Bags become canvases. Water bottles become charm holders. Phone cases become personality boards. These tiny creations function like wearable mood boards — small but expressive signals of identity.

Punch Needle Kit with Hoop by Loops & Threads®



Jellycore Revival

In 2026, glossy, translucent, candy-colored materials are everywhere. Resin charms that look edible. UV-finished frogs. Gummy-textured beads. Shrink art that feels straight out of a 2003 craft bin.

Searches for
Food Charms
are up
72%
year-over-year

Dolphins Painting Diamond Art
Kit by Make Market®

Felting Kit by Loops & Threads®

Shrinky Dink®
Kit Sales
are up
+40%
year-over-year

Iron-On &
Adhesive
Embroidered
Patch

Bag Charm
searches are
skyrocketing
912%

Amigurumi Crochet Kit

Wine Charm
searches are up
125%
year-over-year

Pro Tip:

Start small and layer up. With expanded charm assortments, resin kits, Shrinky Dinks®, and customizable accessories — including Michaels' new in-store Charm Bar launching this year — it's easier than ever to experiment, collect, and build your own joyful little ecosystem.



Michaels

Thank You

For interviews, data requests,
or trend insights, contact
prcontact@michaels.com