

RETAIL

Neiman Marcus brings playful sense of exploration to holiday film

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A reality television star explores Neiman Marcus. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Department store chain Neiman Marcus is turning to a reality television starlet for its playful holiday campaign that takes in-store experiences to a new level.

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A creative collaboration with *Vogue*, the film follows Erika Jayne, a fixture on the reality series "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills," as she spends a night trapped inside a Neiman Marcus. Not only is the narrative tongue-in-cheek, but it also serves as way for the department store to reach new audiences who follow Ms. Jayne and the popular Real Housewives franchise.

"We wanted to create a whimsical seasonal video of every shopper's fantasy," said Theresa Palermo, senior vice president, brand marketing and public relations at **Neiman Marcus**, Dallas. "Who doesn't dream of being locked in a Neiman Marcus store overnight?"

"It's the ultimate fantasy," she said. "It's a magical feeling, being in one of our stores, and we love that Erika helped us bring that feeling to life."

Spending the night

"A Night At Neiman's" opens with Ms. Jayne contemplating her clothing choices inside a large, brightly lit Neiman dressing room. She calls out to a sales associate that she has made a decision, but no one answers.

Ms. Jayne steps out of the dressing room wearing a printed pink wrap dress, but only finds an empty sales floor. The store is subtly decorated for the holidays, with decorated Christmas trees and an abundance of luxe winter fashions.

The television star wonders aloud what time it is, and gets distracted trying on a wrap watch when she checks the time.

Reality television star Erika Jayne spends a night at Neiman Marcus

After Ms. Jayne realizes that the store is closed for the night, she waves off any concern and picks up a bejeweled telephone to call the police for help. It's not a working telephone and Ms. Jayne starts to panic when she sees a

decorative sugar skull and exclaims that she must've been trapped inside Neiman too.

Resigned to her fate for the evening, Ms. Jayne tells herself, "I have survival skills, I'll be just fine."

"It's playing off the pairing of a reality show celeb with the concept of a night at a museum," said Rony Zeidan, founder and creative director of [RO New York](#). "But instead of dinosaurs and bears, we are talking Baccarat-encrusted figurines, designer gowns, champagne and jewelry."

Riding a purple convertible power wheels, Ms. Jayne drives around Neiman looking for snacks. She loads the car with snacks from Sugarfina and other sweet goodies.

After searching the store, Ms. Jayne sets up camp complete with tent made with designer blankets, popcorn, a toy train set and a metallic French bulldog statue for company. She toasts herself with a glass of champagne.

Ms. Jayne's next priority is looking for more clothes. She dances through the women's clothing racks picking up an assortment of pieces, from sparkly blazers and bright dresses before getting comfortable in a matching set of pajamas.

In the next scene, Ms. Jayne is sipping champagne while playing a game of Checkers with butterfly figurines as the pieces. Her opponent is a mannequin she has named Judy and after getting into an imagined argument a reference to her reality show drama she pushes the mannequin and knocks her arm off.

[A Night At Neiman's Erika Jayne](#)



Erika Jayne sets up camp inside Neiman Marcus. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

The campsite is starting to fall apart, with boxes scattered everywhere and cookies knocking the toy train off track. Ms. Jayne is having a heart-to-heart with Judy the Mannequin and tells her she's her best friend.

Suddenly, a flashlight shines in their faces. A security guard asks Ms. Jayne what the mess is and she explains her plight about being locked inside.

"The store's only been closed for 15 minutes," the security guard deadpans. Ms. Jayne cringes and the scene fades to black.

"Erika is witty and playful, which perfectly aligns with who we are," Neiman's Ms. Palermo said. "She has a magnetic personality, and watching her discover the store through the film was a real treat."

Holiday campaigns

While many luxury retailers and labels are creating playful new worlds for their holiday campaigns, Neiman Marcus choose a more relatable direction.

Many consumers can relate to the idea of spending time in their favorite store, unsupervised. It is also another way to emphasize the unique experiences shoppers can have at department stores.

Department store Bergdorf Goodman used a similar strategy with the release of a short film that creates an intimate relationship with viewers through an authentic video style.

The film, airing on Instagram's IGTV platform, playfully tells the story of two young women who break into the iconic New York department store one morning and explore. Since the vignette has a "home movie" quality to it, Bergdorf Goodman aims to appear authentic and relatable to Instagram's younger audience ([see story](#)).

Nieman Marcus is undergoing management changes and focusing more on omnichannel and digital as it hopes to offset loss.

The department store chain is updating its management team, as it reports growth in sales but still sustained a net loss for the fourth quarter of the 2018 fiscal year.

For the fourth quarter ending on July 28, Neiman Marcus reported a 12.5 percent jump in digital sales and total revenues of \$1.13 billion. However, the company saw a net loss of \$75.3 million for the fourth fiscal quarter ([see story](#)).

Turning to a popular but unconventional celebrity could be considered part of Neiman Marcus's new strategy.

"[The campaign] plays off the aspect of ostentation, and having a wide selection of holiday gifting ideas for others and for yourself," Mr. Zeidan said. "Not sure it represents the luxury image of the retailer, but it is trying to play a smart marketing activation that attracts likeminded audiences that relate with Erika."

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