

# NeoCon<sup>®</sup>

## TREND FORECAST FOR NEOCON 2023

*Transformative Interior Solutions that Inspire Authenticity, Seamlessly Integrate Technology, Prioritize Stewardship and Well-Being, and Embrace a Global Perspective*

**(Chicago, IL - June 1, 2023)** NeoCon, the leading voice of the commercial interiors industry, opens for its 54th edition at THE MART in Chicago June 12-14, 2023, offering tens of thousands of attendees an insider look into the driving forces behind design progress and what will shape our shared spaces next. Through future-forward programming and with hundreds of exhibitors, whose ahead-of-the-curve research and commitment to understanding the changing needs and demands of an ever-evolving world, the NeoCon show floors will offer an immersive display of what designers and specifiers should consider when creating a better built environment—from generational design, ESG prioritization, to technology integration and global perspectives.

Below are some of the most impactful trends shaping today's offices, hotels, restaurants, retail, and healthcare facilities and a selection of product highlights from NeoCon 2023 exhibitors that underscore the impact of good design.

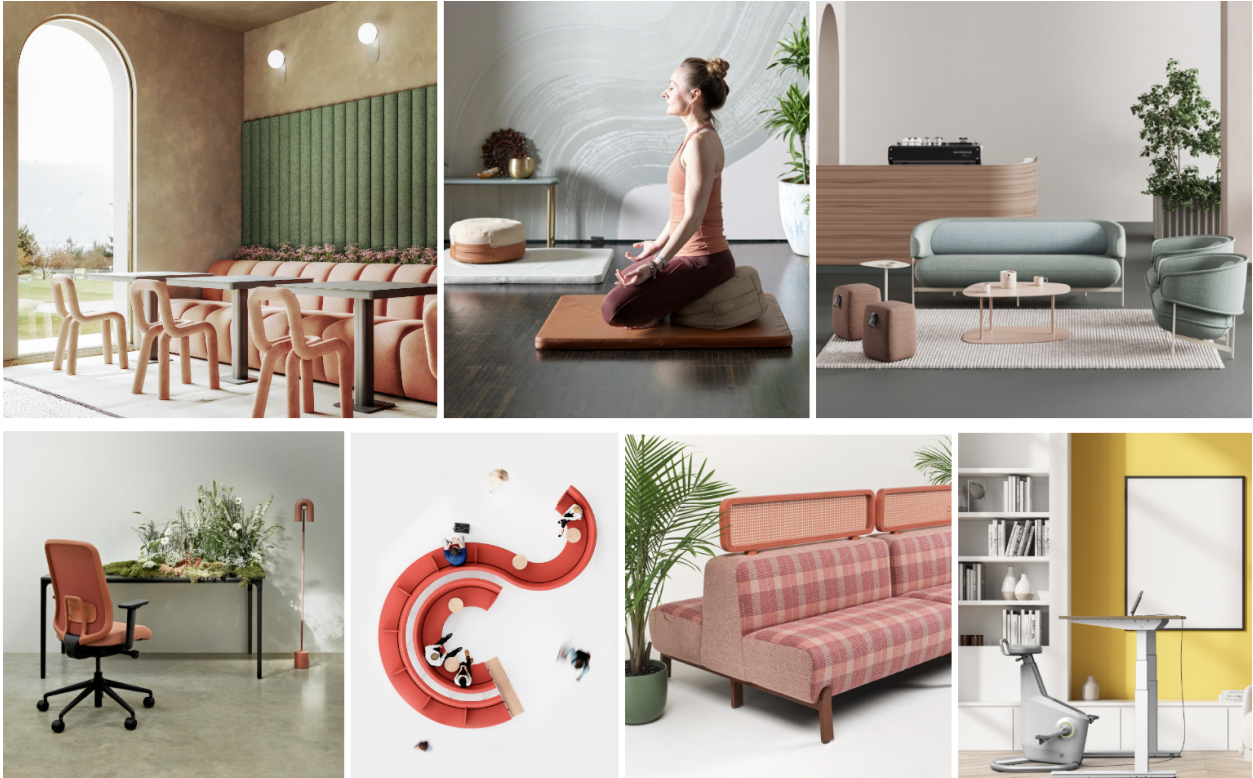
### **Designing Across Generations**

With Gen Z projected to make up a third of the workforce by 2025 (Manpower Group, 2023 Workforce Trends Report), and older generations retiring later, designers, facility managers, and other specifiers must cater to an expanding community with diverse needs and expectations. Human connection, well-being, and consistent comfort have emerged as priorities for both younger generations looking to establish smart habits and older generations seeking physical longevity as well as a vibrant and active career. As a result, there is a demand for spaces and products that offer opportunities to connect and collaborate while also allowing users to accommodate their personal wellness goals and feel more balanced.

Laura Leung, WELL AP and Designer for IA Architects, predicts that intentionality and authenticity will be key factors in designing for the younger generations, especially in the office. “When the two concepts of intentionality and authenticity are applied to workplace design, the result is an environment that encourages meaningful collaboration, camaraderie, and the organization’s key values, as well as the unique identities of its employees. The intentional workplace considers all aspects of the design—from layout to lighting to acoustics to ergonomics—ensuring an enjoyable, memorable, and healthy environment tuned to user needs and requirements.

Intentionality and authenticity are catalysts for each other at the heart of an organization.”

Products from NeoCon exhibitors like the communal, adaptable Bay Lounge by Poltrona Frau, a Haworth (300) company, and La Duna, a semi-private banquette and lounge series by Martin Bratrud (347) lean into this by offering seating that prioritizes both the user’s personal comfort needs while allowing groups of all ages to gather with ease. With its rich colors and undulating pattern, the Reed acoustic solution by Turf (1042), was designed especially to combat fatigue caused by loud noises, and as a result, promotes a soothing and energizing work atmosphere. With its inviting and curve-hugging seat, Hightower’s (1110) new Flote Lounge Collection was inspired by the ease of a pool float, giving users a product that combines relaxation with low-impact support. Ideal for ergonomic floor seating, the Tate cushions created by OFS (1132) in collaboration with Two Inches Beyond Black and Renita Woodson, serve as a versatile accessory in any environment, ready to use for a mediation session or for extra support in a lengthy meeting. Designed to ergonomically help its user, the Sia Task Chair from Boss Design (359) offers a combination of physical benefits while using natural, soothing colors to offer an aesthetically calming Task option. LifeSpan Fitness’ (7-4012) LifeSpan Ampera Office Bike allows users to continuously move and remain energized at work while simultaneously using the power generated from the movement to sustainably power their electronic devices.



*Reed by Turf, Tate by OFS, Flote by Hightower Group, Sia Task Chair by Boss Design, Bay Lounge by Poltrona Frau - a Haworth Company, La Duna by Martin Bratrud, and LifeSpan Ampera Office Bike by LifeSpan Fitness*

Gensler Chicago took these growing demands of wellness, community, and comfort into consideration when designing the transformation of THE MART, which will be unveiled to guests at NeoCon 2023 for the first time. The new spaces – including a centralized amenity experience featuring a state-of-the art health club, an intimate tenant-exclusive speakeasy lounge, a 21,000 SF conference center and more – were designed to welcome an expanding workforce that prioritizes flexibility and balance. Revitalizations were also added to THE MART’s South Lobby and River Park, one of the few green spaces available to the public along the North side of the Chicago River.

“The new experience at THE MART was designed to bring people together, creating spaces that are magnets for engagement and connection,” said Todd Heiser, Managing Director at Gensler Chicago. “These lifestyle-driven elements are key in addressing the needs of the whole human. Enabling people to design the day that works for them – taking their lunch to the River Park, breaking a sweat at the fitness center, or bringing a client to the lounge for a drink – gives the sense of choice and flexibility workers now expect from their workplace experience.”

Studies also indicate that individual space is just as important to Gen Z as the community focus in the workplace. For these emerging generations, the desire for personal workstations and more privacy-driven products is on the rise (Work Better Magazine, 2023 Hybrid Realities). Many examples of this will be on display at NeoCon 2023 including the relaunch of Watson Furniture Group’s (341) adaptable and multifunctioning Tonic Collection and the Uku Casegoods collection from Tuohy Furniture Corporation (3-123), which includes a cantilevered personal desk with a beveled base. Groupe Lacasse’s (1000) Lacasse Lockers offers a private and sleek storage solution to public storage and the Krossi desks by Schiavello (10-135) prioritize user well-being and productivity while simultaneously allowing for organic floor plans and natural collaboration. BOLD Furniture’s (1078) Fundamentals Storage Divider uses yin-yang capabilities to divide two personal, private workspaces with a storage space that features a whiteboard and corkboard to stimulate collaboration and creative thinking.



*Tonic Collection by Watson Furniture, Fundamentals Storage Divider by BOLD Furniture, Uku Casegoods Collection by Tuohy Furniture, Krossi by Schiavello, and Lacasse Lockers by Groupe Lacasse.*

## **Creating with a Conscience: Prioritizing ESG**

Increased education and visibility around not only humanitarian issues in production but also the harmful environmental impact of many companies' business practices, has led to an uptick in prioritizing ESG principles in what we build, purchase, and use. The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)'s 2023 Trends Outlook notes that the public does notice and care when a company does not uphold environmental, social & governance principles and ideals. A recent survey showed that a majority of respondents would actually take actionable steps against a company they felt was disregarding ESG issues. Manufacturers that demonstrate a sense of social purpose and a commitment to good stewardship of the planet take center stage over those whose design and developmental practices avoid these important humanitarian tenets.

Ahead of NeoCon 2023, Wolf-Gordon and textile designer Dorothy Cosonas designed the Quiet Riot textile collection greatly considering both their social and carbon footprints and focused on keeping as much production as possible within the United

States, with streamlined and efficient production methods. Additional products at NeoCon this year that exemplify these principles of ESG include Frovi's (11-101) Blume Chair and BlockO Four and Six by BlockO.Design (7-7078), where for every Blume Chair purchased and every BlockO Four and Six made, a tree will be planted. Haworth's (300) Zody LX Chair illustrates the brand's commitment to circular design through research and innovation so that waste is reduced and products are made in the most efficient, user-conscious manner. Armstrong Flooring™ Natralis™ Collection from AHF Products (7-2086) uses light-reflective colors to naturally conserve energy and was inspired by North American landscapes.



*Zody LX Chair by Haworth, BlockO Four and Six by BlockO.Design, Quiet Riot by Wolf Gordon, Blume Chair by Frovi, and Armstrong Flooring™ Natralis™ Collection from AHF Products*

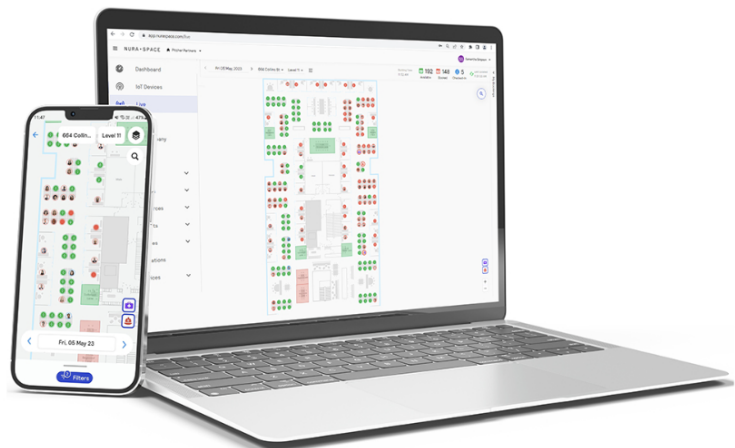
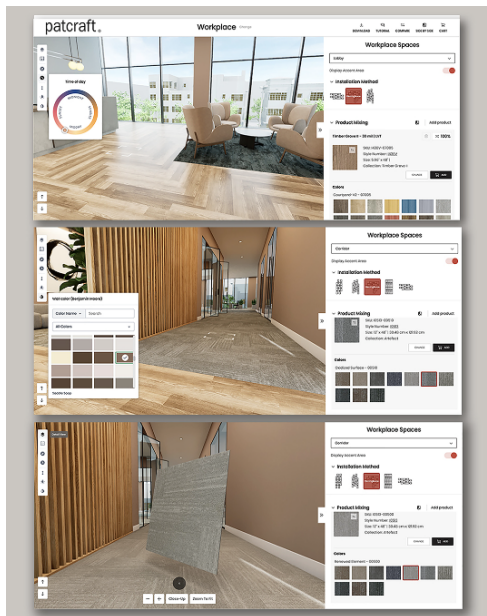
## **Technology to Provide Solutions**

As game-changing technologies emerge, companies across all verticals are leveraging these advancements to help improve their user experience, from customer satisfaction to employee engagement. The integration of emerging technologies within products has become increasingly crucial, addressing issues such as virtual fatigue, ergonomic

optimization, hybrid workspaces, physical well-being, productivity and creativity stimulation, and the creation of inclusive environments.

Gensler's 2023 Design Forecast noted that recent and projected technological advances in product development can improve accessibility and equity. "Products conceived with meaningful consideration for dexterity, body fit, and ADA compliance can significantly enhance workplace inclusivity. Touchless workstations, advanced display panels, and other tech-enhanced products will help write the next chapter for equity in the workplace. Concepts that used to reside only in science fiction are now real tools unlocking equal access where it once was impossible."

When designing the Ascari conference table for Nucraft (1166), which will feature a base enhancement at this year's show, the design team at Gensler considered relevant ADA guidelines and made sure to integrate other accessibility features — including perimeter power, illuminated power ports, and wireless charging. Thinkspace's (1099) Neuron Activation Pod transmits very low-frequency vibrations in the body which promotes natural healing abilities and helps to alleviate stress. QOR360 (7-4009) designed The Tilt! chair to combat detrimental passive-sitting and improve posture and core strength by making the seat slightly unstable. The chair comes with an app, the FitterSitter, that even measures the extra calories burned by sitting actively. Additional human-centered products that utilize emerging tech to improve physical and mental well-being include LINAK's (10-100) DPI desk panel which offers a smart height-adjustable solution with an intuitive operation using a tilt paddle and a built-in anti-collision sensor, as well as Sitonit Seating's (1150) HiQ's height-adjustable total benching solution. On the software innovation side, Patcraft's (10-160) 3D Visualizer within their TransFORM Studio and Design Services offers an enhanced virtual product configuration system that inspires more experimentation and creative expression, while Nura Space from Schiavello (10-135) introduces an integrated workplace management platform to better manage hybrid workplaces and optimize space.



*Neuron Activation Pod by Thinkspace, The Tilt! by QOR360, DPI by LINAK, HiQ by SitonitSeating, Ascari by Nucraft, 3D Visualizer by Patcraft, and Nura Space by Schiavello*

## **Globalization Brings Us Closer**

Technology has also allowed the world to feel more connected, and as a result, brands and companies are taking a more global perspective. Trends and news can now reach a wider, more international audience, and companies can now hire talent from all over the world. Improvements in Web3 technology have allowed design firms like IA Architects, Spaceform, and Decent Architecture, to build out virtual office extensions for workers to utilize around the globe and products are designed to reflect the changing demands of a more interconnected, digital age.

Brooke Horan, Principal at HDR, recently listed globalization as an important trend for the future of work, “With our increased ability to connect virtually across so many time zones and countries, companies continue to become more global. To future-proof their organizations and stay competitive, they need to stay on top of new technologies that help create consistent, supported workflows across continents and multiple cities. They need to offer flexible environments conducive to constant change, uncertainty, and the more diverse nature of multinational business practices.”

Co-developed by Steelcase (300 and 301) and Microsoft, the Ocular Table is designed specifically for a globally-oriented workplace with its curved shape, which encourages inclusivity and collaboration with more natural eye-to-eye contact between everyone at the table as well as colleagues calling in remotely. The aptly-named OPTIC Table by HALCON (10-121) also intentionally allows for more visual human connection through its distinctive shapes while also incorporating the latest technology to make virtual meetings more organic. Toko, Nienkämper’s (365) self-supporting modular workstation carefully integrates sound-absorbing panels to still allow natural light to flood in at multiple angles, making it an ideal solution for video conferencing hubs. With globalization expanding the potential to work with professionals from all over the world, many brands are continuing to source creativity at a global scale. Designed to accommodate a variety of needs and support mobile environments, Italian brand Arper’s (346) Ralik, by Japanese designer Ichiro Iwasaki is a fully modular system that offers structure and support while remaining highly adaptable. Many of America-based Davis Furniture’s (3-115) new launches for 2023 are collaborations with international designers, including the Vida Conference Table by German designer Hanne Willmann. All of the tables in the collection offer integrated power options within their sleek aesthetic, making them an ideal choice for a global office with many virtual meetings.





*Ocular Table by Steelcase, Toko by Nienkamper, Ralik by Arper, Vida by Davis Furniture, and OPTIC by HALCON*

NeoCon is open to trade, C-Suite executives, and other industry-related professionals and registration is free for all attendees. Register [here](#). Show details, including a full list of exhibitors and the line up for programming and events is available [here](#).

For showroom, exhibitor, and general NeoCon news, images, and real-time information, follow NeoCon on: [Facebook \(@NeoConShows\)](#), [Twitter \(@NeoCon\\_Shows\)](#), [Instagram \(@NeoCon\\_Shows\)](#), and [LinkedIn \(@NeoCon-Shows\)](#).

Media Contacts: Novità Communications  
[Danielle McWilliams](#) / [Alexandra Zwicky](#) / [Emma Reuland](#) / [Katie Fosdick](#)

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**About NeoCon:** NeoCon is the world's leading platform and most important event for the commercial interiors industry, held each year at THE MART in Chicago. Since launching in 1969, NeoCon has served as the annual gathering place for the commercial design world's manufacturers, dealers, architects, designers, end-users, design organizations and media. The three-day event showcases game-changing

products and services from more than 400 leading and emerging companies—providing unparalleled access to the latest and most innovative solutions. A robust educational program of keynote presentations and CEU sessions offers world-class expertise and insight about today's most relevant topics as well as the future of commercial design. [www.neocon.com](http://www.neocon.com)

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**About THE MART:** THE MART is the largest privately held commercial building in the United States: it encompasses 4.2 million gross square feet, spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day (or nearly 10 million people annually).

THE MART serves as the home to Chicago's most creative and technologically innovative companies, including Motorola Mobility, 1871, Yelp, PayPal, and MATTER, as well as Fortune 500 companies Conagra Brands, Allstate, Medline Industries, Beam Suntory, Avant and Grainger. It is also the largest and most important center for design in North America with more than 250 premier design showrooms offering the latest resources for both residential and commercial markets.