

NeoCon®

THE FUTURE OF DESIGN TAKES SHAPE AT NEOCON 2024

The Latest Solutions Redefining Commercial Interiors Prioritize People & Planet

(Chicago, IL - May 29, 2024) The 55th edition of NeoCon, the world's leading platform and voice for commercial interior design, will be held June 10-12. An estimated 50,000 attendees will convene at THE MART in Chicago to experience firsthand the latest trends and innovations influencing the future of shared spaces. From fostering deeper connections and prioritizing sustainability to learning from neuroscience, NeoCon exhibitors are pioneering what's next in design with creative solutions for environments that are not only innovative and functional but also enriching and inclusive.

Below are just a few impactful themes shaping today's workplaces, hotels, restaurants, retail spaces, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities—alongside standout new products and solutions from NeoCon exhibitors that support these movements.

Community & Co-Creation to the Fore

The proverbial “water cooler talk” now takes many different forms, but community and culture are still cultivated through spontaneous encounters and casual in-person interactions. Designing built environments that promote these moments of connection, collaboration, and camaraderie is crucial to nurturing a positive company culture. Gensler's Design Forecast for 2024 notes that “creating human-centric workplaces that inspire purpose and demonstrate organizational values will help firms stand out to potential talent and clients alike.” To foster this sense of connection, designers are employing subtle social engineering by using spatial arrangements to create collaborative areas that complement private, focused workspaces. Additionally, they are providing more co-creation spaces, where collaborative learning is facilitated through various tools and resources, enabling teams to brainstorm, experiment, and innovate together.

An office full of co-workers is a strong source of motivation and energy. In their regular investigation of the future of work, leading architecture and design firm Corgan conducted interviews and surveys with executives, managers, HR leaders, and hybrid knowledge workers, and found that 76% of survey participants either strongly or somewhat agree that they feel more motivated working in a group or seeing others around them being productive. David Euscher, Vice President and Interiors Studio Leader at Corgan and ASID Chair-Elect, remarks, “Physically gathering in a place to work toward common goals and a shared purpose is a powerful way for humans to connect and feel a sense of belonging.”

New introductions from NeoCon exhibitors like GRVT by Ghent (1094), Collaborative Spaces by Global Furniture Group (1035), Sonrisa Lounge Furniture by KI (1181), Atmus Mobile Desk by Clarus (10-102), Pavilion O by Kettal (377), and Panigiri by Extremis (355) all present mobile, flexible solutions that can transform collaborative environments at a moment's notice. Boss Design's (359) Mews, a modular workplace pod system, strikes the right balance between focus

and collaboration with pods that can be specified for focused working, private, or open meetings. Spacestor's (11-113) Portals Huddle allows designers to curate private collaboration spaces, allowing for endless workplace reconfiguration and even relocation. Haworth's (312) aptly named Collaborate, a collection of adaptable accessories support meeting mobility and empower users to do their best work—no matter their workstyle.



GRVT by Ghent, Group Collaborative Spaces by Global Furniture, Sonrisa Lounge Furniture by KI, Atmus Mobile Desk by Clarus, Pavilion O by Kettal, Panigiri by Extremis, Mews by Boss Design, Portals Huddle by Spacestor, and Collaborate by Haworth

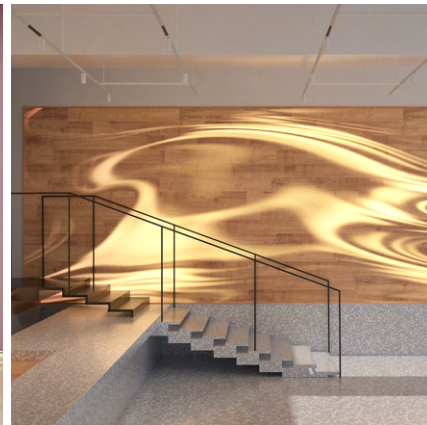
Colors & Emotions: The Rise of Neuroaesthetics

NeoCon exhibitors are blending form and function using the principles of neuroaesthetics, a nascent field exploring how environmental elements like color, sound, and art impact individuals' brains, emotions, and spatial experiences on a subconscious level. The notion that sights and sounds impact one's mood is not novel, but neuroaesthetics takes things a step further, harnessing these elements to promote well-being, productivity and enrichment. "Neuroscience-informed design shows us that science can guide us to good choices," comments Sally Augustin, PhD Fellow, American Psychological Association & Principal, Design With Science. Multiple studies have found that beautiful and functional design is at the root of people's happiness in the workplace. The Immersive Biophilic Garden by Garden on the Wall®

(7-3093) was born from this very human-centric desire, crafting indoor preserved gardens and moss walls that transcend the ordinary, elevating moods and stimulating minds. Egan Visual's (10-151) Sculpt Walls also emphasize a heightened sensory experience featuring 3D textured parallel lines, combining art and acoustic properties. CECOECO's (7-4094) ArtMorph is a luminous wall panel that combines lighting and display technology with captivating textures and customizable solutions, designed to seamlessly blend into various environments.

Research also shows that it is easier for brains to visually process patterns and shapes found in nature, like Shaw Contract's (1014) Arctic Escape—a collection of rugs and broadloom inspired by the frost-covered and icy landscapes of the polar tundra. Similar studies suggest that warm colors—like Pantone's color of the year, Peach Fuzz—are associated with feelings of joy, while cool colors correlate with feelings of calm and contentment. The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)'s 2024 Trends Outlook notes that blue hues are becoming the dominant accent colors—from dusty and steely tones like Sherwin-Williams' (163) Upward, to bold and bright hues like Benjamin Moore's (6-131, 7-4054) Blue Nova. This shift may signify a collective longing for clarity, purity, and increased intuition, all reactions to the color blue as prescribed by color theorists. Bernhardt's (320) new Ice Collection of tables includes a striking cobalt blue.

Unexpected pops of color can also subconsciously stimulate positive distractions, serving as mental respites in stressful moments. Designtex's (303) Joy Collection embodies this notion with eight woven and coated textile designs centered on stimulating the brain's pleasure centers. The use of vibrant colors, engaging textures, and artful patterns bring a sense of clarity, connectedness, and delight, especially to healthcare environments. For Stylex's (337) new color palette, the brand joined forces with acclaimed European designer and color expert Carole Baijings to create a scheme infused with bold contrast, unexpected pairings, and refined layering.





Immersive Biophilic Garden by Garden on the Wall®, Sculpt Walls by Egan Visual, ArtMorph by CECOCECO, Arctic Escape by Shaw Contract, Ice Collection by Bernhardt, Joy Collection by Designtex, and Carole Bajjings for Stylex

Inclusive Innovation: Designing for Equity & Wellbeing

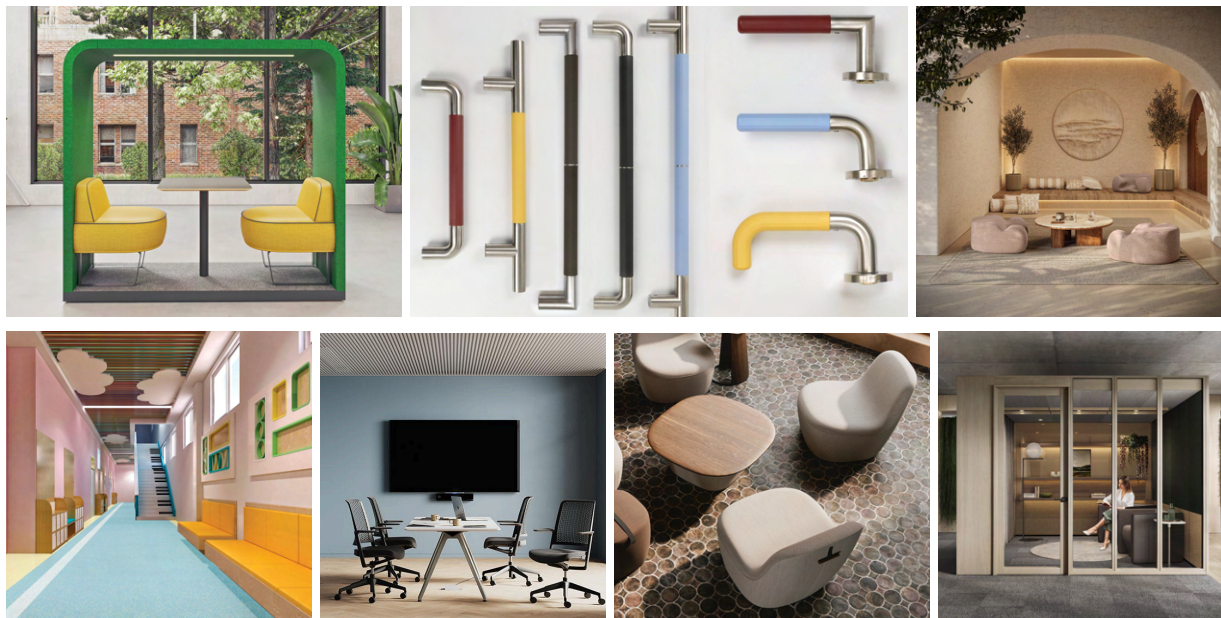
There is no such thing as a universal response to a space. Everyone has their own unique reaction to their environment due to many factors including, but not limited to age, wellness, race, sexuality, and overall personal experience. Research suggests that 15–20% of the world's population is neurodivergent, meaning their brains process information differently than what is considered “typical.” Accounting for neurodiversity and designing workplaces that cater to and celebrate difference has shifted from being a preference to an expectation. Designers are increasingly charged with creating wellness-inducing spaces and specifying products that are welcoming and beneficial to all. When designing with a human-centered lens, everything that engages the senses—from texture, sound, layout, and color, to the shape and function of the furniture—comes into play. Kay Sargent, Director of Workplace at HOK, notes, “When we design for neurodiversity, we create space that enables all individuals, neurotypicals included, to find suitable levels of privacy and concentration, connection and engagement.”

As occupants continue to prioritize mental and physical health, more thought must be put into how this translates in workplace environments, from interiors designed for all ages, to essential amenities like mother's rooms, spaces for prayer and meditation, and physical wellness areas and solutions. No longer are emotional and physical needs considerations only to be addressed off-site and outside of working hours, workplaces are starting to see the benefits of a more holistic approach. ASID's 2024 Trends Report notes a recent survey in which employees cited “noise and lack of privacy for focused work” among the major barriers to effective work. Designers are recognizing the need to provide both the opportunity for open collaboration at a variety of scales, as well as audio and visual privacy to minimize disruptions, thereby enhancing productivity and employee satisfaction.

This year at NeoCon, exhibitor solutions are igniting fresh discourse in the realm of inclusive innovation and human-centered design. The Silen Bridges Mobile, designed by award-winning Austrian Designer Kai Stania for Silen (10-155), is designed to be more of a “room uniter,” than a divider—meant to foster sustainable, healthy workspaces beyond desks and private offices through a simultaneously tranquil and collaborative seating solution. pba's TOCCO Collection is the first door hardware collection specifically designed to address sensory sensitivity and to meet the tactile preference of all users—the grip is made of Aquafil's (11-107) ECONYL® nylon. Oyster Wellness (7-9086) collaborated with renowned exercise physiologist Jesse Schwartzman to tackle the biggest worker's compensation injury among office workers—lower back

pain—and the result is an ergonomic office chair that ensures natural spinal alignment and engaged lower back muscles.

Armstrong Flooring's (7-2086) MedinPure is a calming flooring and surface solution that is simultaneously high-performing, sustainable, and durable. The colors, inspired by nature, are designed to support mental well-being and evoke a sense of calm. Keilhauer's (373) Foryu does exactly what its name phonetically suggests. The customizable ergonomic chair is designed to calibrate to each unique user through a fully integrated, self-weighted mechanism that automatically adjusts for different weights and sizes. The rocker models from DARRAN Furniture's (3-120) new collection, Liaison, appeal to a neurodiverse population, designed to promote relaxation and put the mind at ease. Schiavello's (10-135) collection of Focus Quiet Rooms offers purposeful and malleable spaces that accommodate the different ways in which people work, thanks in part to their impressive scale and ability to tailor. The latest iteration of the range will demonstrate further technology integrations, new functionalities to improve ergonomics, as well as boast new aesthetic features on the room's façade.



Silen Bridges Mobile by Silen, TOCCO Collection by pba & Aquafil, Oyster Wellness Seat by Oyster Wellness, MedinPure by Armstrong Flooring, Foryu by Keilhauer, Liaison by DARRAN Furniture, Focus Quiet Rooms by Schiavello

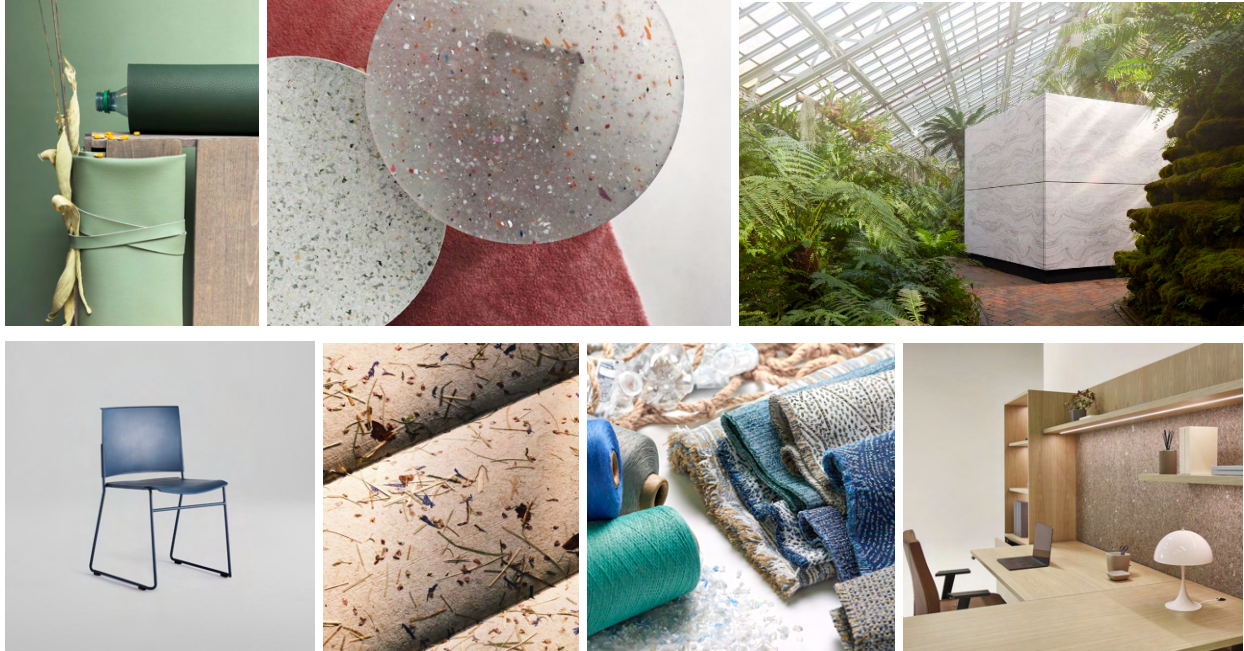
Sustainability: A Non-Negotiable

With the built environment responsible for approximately 42% of annual global CO2 emissions, sustainable design practices have shifted from being a trend to an essential expectation. The use of eco-friendly, circular materials and solutions in the built environment is the norm and companies are opting for materials that have a lower environmental impact, such as recycled plastics, reclaimed wood, and biodegradable composites. Production transparency to consumers continues to be a significant demand and more forward-thinking firms and furniture brands alike are putting their sustainability credentials on display—demonstrating their

commitments to environmental stewardship by reducing their carbon and physical footprints, decarbonizing their supply chain, and pursuing LEED, BREEAM, and other certifications and standards. On-site at NeoCon, Haworth's DesignLab, a collective of designers tasked with researching new innovations, will focus on circular design, which emphasizes sustainability at each step of a product's life cycle, from inception to recycling and reuse. Andreu World's (10-132) new Circular Design Challenge calls on industry professionals to join them in adopting greener practices such as ecodesign, zero waste management, carbon neutrality, adherence to industry certifications, and sustainable material selection.

The transformative power of biophilic design continues to gain greater adoption throughout the industry and also plays a role in promoting environmental awareness. Research shows that integrating elements like plants, natural light, and organic materials reduces stress and enhances creativity and clarity of thought. More people are recognizing the interconnectedness of individual health, community health, and environmental stewardship by blending wellness with sustainability. Solutions synthesizing these initiatives are on the rise along with advocacy for holistic health—physical, mental, social, and emotional.

Standout sustainable solutions from NeoCon exhibitors include Ultrafabrics' (7-8098) Volar Bio with a 66% mix of recycled, rapidly renewable, and bio-based content. The 100% recycled plastic tabletop on Scandinavian Spaces' (366) Best of NeoCon 2023 award-winning Tinnef is now available in even more rejuvenated colorways. Turf's (1048) new nature-inspired Stone Textures emulates the dynamic veining and intricate details of natural stone. Davis Furniture's (3-115) X50 collection by acclaimed Japanese eco-designer Taku Kumazawa combines comfort, functionality, and sustainability in a sleek, minimalistic design. The chair features polypropylene components made of 100% pre-consumer recycled content. Slalom's (7-5094) Bloom underscores the importance of acoustic wellness while utilizing bio-based materials derived from natural origins like flowers and grass. C.F. Stinson's (10-150) Sea Change is making waves with six, sustainable textiles crafted from 100% post-consumer recycled polyester containing SEAQUAL® MARINE PLASTIC. Nienkämper's (365) Vox Tambour uses a sustainable alternative to traditional acoustic panels called Eelgrass, an eco-material offering excellent acoustic, thermal, and moisture-regulating properties.



Volar Bio by Ultrafabrics, Tinnef by Scandinavian Spaces, Stone Textures by Turf, X50 by Davis Furniture, Bloom by Slalom, Sea Change by C.F. Stinson, and Vox Tambour by Nienkämper

Show registration is complimentary for all attendees. Register [here](#). For showroom, exhibitor, and general NeoCon news, images, and real-time information, follow NeoCon on: [Instagram \(@NeoCon_Shows\)](#), [LinkedIn \(@NeoCon-Shows\)](#), and [Facebook \(@NeoConShows\)](#).

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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

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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, PayPal, Avant and MATTER, as well as Fortune 500 companies Conagra Brands, Allstate, Medline Industries, Beam Suntory, IPG, 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.