

# NeoCon®

## **NeoCon 2026 Unveils Experiences & Activations Centered on the Power of Connection** *The 57th Edition Expands Immersive Installations and Events, Bringing Together People, Products, and Innovation*

(CHICAGO, IL – April 28, 2026) [NeoCon](#), the premier event for commercial design, June 8-10 at The Mart, unveils a dynamic schedule of events and experiences centered on the 2026 theme: “**Where Design Connects.**” Building on NeoCon’s legacy as a platform for discovery and dialogue, the 57th edition introduces an expansive lineup of engagement opportunities from immersive environments to new initiatives like the **Preview Day** and the debuts of ***Illuminate at NeoCon*** and **NeoCon Collab: Half Light**. Together with returning favorites, these activations create a layered program that unites the industry, engages the senses, and reflects the ever-evolving landscape of design.

“NeoCon remains a place and point in time where ideas are tested, relationships are built, and the future of the built environment takes shape,” comments Lisa Simonian, Vice President of Marketing for NeoCon. “The 2026 program emphasizes our commitment to experiential design and the value of in-person connection.”

### **New for 2026**

Providing more opportunities for professional exchange and development, NeoCon is adding three major moments to the show. The schedule begins on **Sunday, June 7**, with the introduction of the **NeoCon Preview Day** from **12:00–4:00 PM**, offering attendees early access across the exhibition floors and creating additional time for engagement ahead of the show’s official opening. Highlighting the vital role of lighting in design, ***Illuminate at NeoCon*** (7th Floor Exhibit Hall) premieres as a show-within-a-show dedicated to lighting innovation. This new specialized segment will feature more than 50 global and emerging lighting brands, alongside experiential vignettes and 14 programming sessions on the “Spotlight” stage, spanning topics from circadian health and human performance to adaptive digital environments. Further reimagining the seventh floor experience is the addition of **NeoCon Collab: Half Light**, a 2,800-square-foot, hospitality-driven installation designed by **Charlie Greene Studio**. Inspired by ‘Chicagohenge’—the alignment of the setting sun with the city grid—the space brings together Allseating, Foamcore Architectural Elements, Focal Point, KI, Kriskadecor, Luxxbox, Mohawk Group, Paul Brayton Designs, ROOM (an OFS company), and Simii Design within a unified spatial concept.

### **Outdoor**

**Art on The Mart** (The South Facade of The Mart) will transform the iconic building into a dynamic canvas of light and sound with **LOVE LANGUAGE**, a projection by **HDR** that explores art as a universal form of communication. Also outside, the **River Park**, presented by **Haworth**, offers an open-air setting for informal meetings, meals, and events throughout the show.

## Floor 1

**Paved States x DesignLab** (Suite 121 & South Lobby), presented by *Sixtysix Magazine* and Haworth, expands into a hybrid gallery and living environment. Jointly curated by Patricia Urquiola and Chris Force, the installation brings together emerging designers in a setting that blends retail, exhibition, and residential typologies. Nearby, designers are invited to **Make the Bold Buildable** with Armstrong World Industries (Suite 145), as the company unites its portfolio of design-forward brands in one showroom, including Turf®, 3form®, Zahner®, Arktura®, BÖK Modern®, Eventscape, Geometrik, Móz™, and Parallel Architectural Products. And **THE SHOWHOUSE @ THE MART** (Suite 137) offers a peek into the residential luxury with a selection of world-class kitchen, bath, and fine furnishings, open through September.

The halls and spaces in-between will be infused with sound, technology, and wellness. **BIOS Lighting's Blue Sky technology** (Northeast Corridor)—developed from NASA research and used on the International Space Station—brings circadian-effective lighting indoors to support alertness, productivity, and calm through biologically aligned illumination. **Cisco: The Fourth Utility for Next-Generation Workplaces** (Center Pass-Through) showcases an interactive demonstration and exploration of data-driven workplace solutions. The **KFI Studios' Pop-Up Lounge** (East Pass-Through) invites attendees to pause, reflect, and examine how furniture supports connection in a playful exploration of workplace design. Offering wellness-driven seating, **Club Thinkspace** (North Corridor – Orleans) provides a sensory experience for relaxing and recharging. Tuuci's moody installation, **A Study in Expression** (Kinzie/Wells Entrance), blends multiple expressions—from structure and tactile contrast to layered relaxation and natural renewal. And the highly anticipated **Turf® Elevator Experience** (Freight 22) returns for the second year, transforming The Mart's freight elevators into different dynamic experiences, including a DJ-ed dance party. **Material Bank** (Starbucks Escalator, North Lobby Escalator, and throughout The Mart) introduces MTag, an NFC-enabled technology that transforms physical samples with a single tap—allowing attendees to explore product details and unlock exclusive content and prizes.

## Floor 7

The seventh floor serves as a hub for material exploration, culture, and immersive environments. **Material Intelligence: Destination NeoCon** (7-5079) presents a hands-on exhibition of finishes and components shaping commercial projects today, while **Neuroaesthetic Art: A Healing Journey to Self-Reflection** (7-2002), developed by ArtLifting and artist Eliza Reddman in collaboration with lighting designer Morlights and product provider Lighting Services Inc, combines art and lighting to explore perception and well-being. Curated by Associative Design, **Design in Context: Portuguese Design Shaping Contemporary Spaces** (7-7046) brings together Portuguese designers and brands, highlighting native materials, innovation, and craftsmanship.

Meeting spots and hospitality-focused spaces reinforce the show's emphasis on interaction. The **BIFMA Lounge** (7-10098) offers insight into industry standards and certifications, and **Astra Café** creates an elevated cafe experience with Spoonflower wall coverings and Emeco

furnishings. In the Center Pass Through, **The Café Lounge by Armstrong Flooring®** provides a retro-inspired diner setting for informal meetings and breaks.

### Floors 10-14

Filled with spaces for discovery, the upper floors offer opportunities to engage and connect. Highlights include the interactive, Gensler-designed **Sky Stories** (Suite 1035) from Project Color Corps; the **INDEAL Connection Hub** (Suite 1086), which provides hospitality, workspaces, and daily programming; and the **Education Pavilion by INDEAL** (Suite 1144), focused on learning environments. **DesignScene** brings together multiple SANDOW DESIGN GROUP brands on the 11th floor with dynamic activations: **INTERIOR DESIGN Playground** (1120), a vibrant hub for color, connection, and immersive installations created in partnership with leading brands; the **METROPOLIS Sustainability Lab** (1112), where sustainable design meets bold creativity to bring this year's theme, Good is Fun, to life; and **The NeoCon Podcast Lounge Powered by SURROUND** (1110), featuring live recordings with some of the industry's most influential voices, plus a special interactive space with ThinkLab.

### Events

The energy of the show is bolstered by a series of networking events and industry traditions:

#### Sunday, June 7 (Preview Day)

- **Interior Design HiP Awards (Marshall's Landing, 4:30-7:30 p.m.):** An awards ceremony recognizing innovation across product and workplace design.
- **Revel in Design, IIDA's Premier Design Celebration (The Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, 7:00-11:00 p.m.):** Where global design leaders gather to celebrate the winners of the Interior Design Competition and Will Ching Design Competition.

#### Monday, June 8

- **Best of NeoCon Awards Ceremony (Livestreamed at the Grand Stair and on [NeoCon.com](http://NeoCon.com), 7:30-8:30 a.m.):** Now in its 36th year, the program honors design excellence, innovation, sustainability, and business impact across 46 categories, with expanded lighting classifications introduced alongside the debut of *Illuminate*.
- **Paved States x DesignLab Cocktail Reception (Suite 121 & South Lobby, 5:00-8:00 p.m.):** An exclusive reception hosted by *Sixtysix Magazine* and Haworth celebrating the exhibition.
- **MRL NeoCon AfterHours Party (Tree House - 149 W Kinzie, 8:00-11:00 p.m.):** A high-energy night of networking and celebration in the heart of River North.

#### Tuesday, June 9

- **Start Your Day on 1 (Floor 1, 8:30-10:00 a.m.):** A guided tour of the first-floor showrooms carrying luxury contract-grade products.
- **AFTERNOON OASIS (Floors 6 & 14, 2:00-4:00 p.m.):** A moment to recharge with sound bath meditations and rejuvenating refreshments.

- **Happy Together Hour (River Park, 5:00-6:30 p.m.):** A festive celebration and opportunity to connect over complimentary drinks and live music along the Chicago River, sponsored by INDEAL with media partner *officeinsight*.
- **Designing a Better Chicago's NeoCon After Party (Secrist Beach, 6:00-9:00 p.m.):** An unforgettable awards ceremony toasting visionary projects that support and strengthen local communities, hosted by the Design Museum of Chicago in partnership with NeoCon and the Driehaus Foundation.

### Wednesday, June 10

- **BIFMA Breakfast (NeoCon Presentation Studio, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m.):** A lively discussion and networking event bringing together industry leaders.
- **Best of NeoCon People's Choice Awards:** Voted on by NeoCon attendees throughout the week—People's Choice will be announced online, spotlighting the fan-favorite products that captured attention across the show.

In addition to the official schedule, exhibitors throughout The Mart will host a wide range of events, including product launches, panels, and private gatherings. Details are accessible through the [NeoCon Exhibitor Directory](#).

For the full schedule of events and experiences, visit [NeoCon.com](#). 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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### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### **A: What is the significance of the 2026 theme, Where Design Connects?**

**Q:** The 2026 theme serves as the north star for the entire NeoCon program. It reflects NeoCon's commitment to the power of in-person exchange and underscores the show's role as the definitive platform where the global community gathers to share ideas, build relationships, and witness the future of the built environment taking shape in real time.

#### **A: What new experiences are being introduced at NeoCon 2026?**

**Q:** NeoCon 2026 introduces several new initiatives, including **Preview Day** on June 7, offering early access to showrooms and programming; **Illuminate at NeoCon**, a dedicated exhibition focused on lighting innovation; and **NeoCon Collab: Half Light**, a large-scale, hospitality-driven installation exploring materiality, light, and spatial experience.

#### **A: What is Illuminate at NeoCon?**

**Q:** *Illuminate at NeoCon* is a new, show-within-a-show dedicated to lighting design, located on the 7th Floor Exhibit Hall. It features more than 50 global and emerging lighting brands, along with experiential vignettes and programming sessions addressing topics such as circadian health, navigating lighting design and specification, and digital environments.

**Q: What types of activations and installations can attendees expect?**

**A:** Attendees can experience a range of immersive activations across The Mart, including large-scale installations, interactive technology demonstrations, wellness-focused environments, outdoor projections like **Art on The Mart**, and curated exhibitions that blend design, research, and hospitality.

**Q: What role do events play in the NeoCon 2026 experience?**

**A:** Events are central to NeoCon 2026, with a full schedule of networking moments, live content, and industry celebrations taking place throughout the show. These moments are designed to foster connection, knowledge-sharing, and engagement across the design community.

**Q: What opportunities are available for professional networking and celebration?**

**A:** The 2026 schedule is bolstered by industry traditions and high-energy networking events, including the **Best of NeoCon Awards**, the **IIDA Revel in Design** celebration, and the **Happy Together Hour** at River Park. These gatherings are essential touchpoints for the 50,000+ professionals who attend NeoCon to strengthen industry ties.

**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, CEU sessions, workshops, and tours offers world-class expertise and insight into 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, 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.

**Media Kit:**

Access the official show press kit [here](#).

**Media Contacts:** Novità Communications

[Sarah Claypool](#) / [Danielle McWilliams](#) / [Katie Fosdick](#)