

NeoCon®

NeoCon Announces 2026 Keynote Speakers and Registration Opening

Where Design Connects: Visionaries Explore Purpose-Driven Innovation, Strategic Foresight, and Creative Resilience

(Chicago, IL – January 28, 2026) Registration for NeoCon 2026 officially opens on **Tuesday, February 3**, at NeoCon.com. Hosted at The Mart in Chicago from **June 8–10**, with a Preview Day on June 7, the event stands as the world's premier platform for commercial design. Guided by the 2026 theme, **"Where Design Connects,"** the show will serve as an important nexus for the people, products, and perspectives driving the industry forward. Headlining the 57th edition are three provocative keynote presenters: entrepreneur and inventor **Jessica O. Matthews**, futurist **Nick Foster**, and digital prophet **David "Shingy" Shing**. Kicking off each day of the show, these diverse voices will inspire the NeoCon community with insights on innovation, foresight, and creative resilience.

Adding to this year's expansive offerings is the debut of [Illuminate at NeoCon](#), a new "show-within-a-show" spotlighting the critical role of lighting in the built environment. All seven exhibition floors of The Mart — 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 14 — will be open, underscoring NeoCon's unmatched scale and leadership.

Keynote Speakers & Addresses

Jessica O. Matthews – *Find Your Fight: The Power of Taking it Personally*

Monday, June 8 | 10:00–10:45 a.m. CDT | Presented by IIDA

Award-winning entrepreneur, inventor, and energy advocate Jessica O. Matthews will kick off NeoCon 2026 by examining how the most transformative innovations emerge when the impact is personal. Drawing from nearly two decades of work at the intersection of infrastructure and social impact, Matthews will unlock the power of a human-centered lens—and how purpose-driven pressure can spark breakthrough ideas. Best known for inventing an energy-generating soccer ball at age 19 and founding Uncharted Power, Matthews has spent her career reimagining how energy and infrastructure can better serve communities more equitably. Now the founder and CEO of O. Labs, an invention studio dedicated to expanding access to innovation, she will invite the NeoCon community to rethink who innovation is for, how ideas move from concept to action, and how personal motivation can drive meaningful impact.

"Innovation isn't just a process—it's a fight," says Matthews. "Like in any fight, when the stakes are personal, the innovation is more powerful. At NeoCon, I'm excited to share how taking it personally turns pressure into purpose and challenges into breakthroughs."

Nick Foster – *Resetting How We Think About the Future*

Tuesday, June 9 | 10:00–10:45 a.m. CDT | Presented by ASID

Notable Royal Designer for Industry—Britain’s highest accolade for a designer—and Former Head of Design at Google X, Nick Foster, is set to challenge assumptions about what’s ahead, evaluating the power of imagination, technology, and the human experience. Leaning on decades of work with the world’s most influential technology companies and his “Future Mundane” philosophy, Foster reframes the future not as a distant abstraction, but as an extension of the present—designed by people, for people. His address will dismantle conventional narratives of progress, offering frameworks to strengthen foresight, expand perspectives, and navigate the future with confidence, clarity, and purpose.

“Our collective ability to conceptualize what’s next with depth and rigor remains underdeveloped,” shares Foster. “Rather than forecasting outcomes, I want to offer a moment of intentional pause to help the NeoCon community become better critics and creators, as we all tackle the overwhelming tide of uncertainty that lies ahead.”

David Shing – *Designing for an Evolving World*

Wednesday, June 10 | 9:30–10:30 a.m. CDT | Presented by BIFMA

Creative advisor and cultural strategist David “Shingy” Shing will close NeoCon 2026, exploring how exponential technology and cultural acceleration are redefining the way people live, work, and connect. Formerly AOL’s “Digital Prophet,” Shingy is celebrated for decoding cultural signals and translating them into actionable strategies for brands and organizations leading rapid transformation. Tapping into his work across marketing, media, design, and technology, Shingy will unpack how organizations and design systems can keep pace with change, ensuring relevance in a world where yesterday’s breakthroughs quickly become baseline expectations.

“Every era normalizes what once felt impossible,” offers Shingy. “This talk is about helping designers and leaders build the creative and cultural readiness to evolve with accelerating technology—without losing the human core that makes design meaningful.”

Show registration is free for all attendees. To register, head [here](#). Keynotes will be delivered live on-site and will also be available for streaming on [NeoCon.com](#). Programming registration for Keynotes, Featured Presentations, Continuing Education Units (CEUs), Workshops, NeoCon Talks, and Inside Design tours will open on April 1.

For more news and real-time information, follow NeoCon on: [Instagram](#) (@NeoCon_Shows), [LinkedIn](#) (@NeoCon-Shows), and [Facebook](#) (@NeoConShows).

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: When does registration officially open for NeoCon 2026?

A: General attendee registration opens on Tuesday, February 3, 2026. This registration

provides access to the seven exhibition floors at The Mart. Attendees can register for free online at NeoCon.com.

Q: When can I register for specific Keynotes, Featured Presentations, CEU sessions, Workshops, and NeoCon Talks?

A: Programming registration—which includes reserving seats for Keynotes, Featured Presentations, Continuing Education Units (CEUs), Workshops, and NeoCon Talks—will open on April 1, 2026. You must be registered as an attendee first to add these sessions to your schedule.

Q: Who are the keynote speakers for this year's event?

A: The 2026 keynote lineup features three world-renowned visionaries:

- **Monday, June 8:** Jessica O. Matthews (Entrepreneur and Inventor)
- **Tuesday, June 9:** Nick Foster (Futures Designer, formerly of Google X)
- **Wednesday, June 10:** David "Shingy" Shing (Digital Prophet and Cultural Strategist)

Q: What is the theme for NeoCon 2026, and what does it represent?

A: This year's theme is "Where Design Connects." It highlights NeoCon's role as a central crossroads for the industry, linking diverse people, disciplines, and technologies to drive progress and foster meaningful relationships within the built environment.

Q: What is the "Preview Day" and when does it take place?

A: The Preview Day is a special pre-show event held on Sunday, June 7, from 12-4 PM. It will be open to all attendees for an early look at showrooms and installations before the show officially opens on Monday, June 8.

Q: Which floors at The Mart will be open during the show?

A: NeoCon 2026 will span seven floors of The Mart, including floors 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 14. These floors will feature a mix of permanent showrooms, pop-ups, and temporary exhibitors representing the full spectrum of commercial interiors.

Q: Is there a specific focus on lighting this year?

A: Yes. New for 2026, the show will feature *Illuminate at NeoCon*, a specialized platform and programming track dedicated to the critical role of lighting in design and commercial interiors.

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 into 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, 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](#)