

# NeoCon<sup>®</sup>

## NEOCON 2022 ILLUMINATED THE POWER OF DESIGN

*Vibrant Show Energized Community with Ground-Breaking Innovations, Enlightening Programming, Engaging Installations, & Meaningful Connections*

**(Chicago, IL - June 2022)** Last week, thousands of manufacturers, dealers, architects, designers, end-users, design organizations, and media convened at THE MART in Chicago for the 53rd annual NeoCon, the leading platform and most important event for the commercial design industry. With a strong attendance of close to 40,000 design professionals and more than 400 leading companies launching game-changing new products and services, the 2022 edition was a lively hub of activity and innovation. Daily keynote addresses by influential thought leaders from the broader design and cultural worlds, Nick Cave, Bob Faust, Bruce Mau, and Shashi Caan; timely and productive educational programming; and energizing activations and networking events rounded out the three lively days. Exhibitor information and recordings of on-site and virtual programming will be available via the NeoCon Hub through July 15.

Illustrating NeoCon and THE MART's continued role as a critical partner in the business strategies of leading companies, a number of new and expanded showrooms were unveiled at this year's show. Turf Design presented its latest acoustical innovations in an immersive and colorful new outpost designed by HDR Inc. on the 10th floor. On the 11th floor, iconic furniture brand Heller outfitted its new space with a number of high-profile designer collaborations, while adjustable desking systems leader LOGICDATA/JIECANG highlighted the brand's customized, made-to-measure inline adjustable solutions in their new showroom. Several brands expanded their footprints in the building including Enwork, Loftwall, Zgo Technologies, and Clarus Glassboards, which tripled in size. Pioneering new solutions and services were on display throughout showroom floors—from products in line with the latest movements, such as the merging of physical and digital (“phygital”) and “hotelification”, to introductions that support neurodiversity, biophilia, and wellbeing.

The 7th Floor Exhibit Hall featured nearly 200 leading and emerging companies from around the world and displayed products across a range of categories such as flooring, furniture and fabrics, interior building products, finishes and materials, technology, and more. NeoCon newcomers included i4F Patents & Technologies; AHF Flooring, OneFlorUSA; Küberit; Wescover; Calligarisgroup, contract; Egoe North America; Greenmood; Mizetto; Polyvision; Frovi, Artome Oy, and James Burleigh. First time exhibitor Mizetto launched Understand, a modular shelving system, while Polyvision introduced its new Interior CeramicSteel wall system. Tech-oriented exhibitors Airtame Inc, BIMsmith, Density, DYD Furniture, ERP Success Partners, and Luxer One unveiled a number of exciting innovations—from space measurement tools to contactless pickup and drop off solutions. Framery, Mantra Inspired Furniture and Behr returned to the 7th floor with product launches centered around responding to the ever-changing office

environment. Framery showcased Framery One, the world's first connected soundproof meeting pod, while Mantra displayed the collaborative yet private Lowe Loop Benching system, and Behr introduced their new COPPER FORCE interior paint which kills 99.9% of viruses and bacteria within two hours of exposure.

In addition to captivating in-person keynote speakers who explored everything from the art of collaboration, hybrid practice and design of life, to using entrepreneurial design to confront today's massive challenges, NeoCon 2022 also featured insightful special presentations: Todd Heiser (Gensler Chicago) and Lily Diego (Gensler Detroit) shared a sneak peek of the amenity-rich MART 2.0 renovation project and additional industry experts took the stage for a panel on Designing for Measurable Impact: ASID Outcome of Design, including Royce Epstein (Mohawk Group) and Karen McCallum (CBRE Design Collective). There was also a discussion with 2020-22 Designing a Better Chicago Grant Winners moderated by Tanner Woodford (Design Museum of Chicago), as well as an IIDA roundtable featuring the association's Equity Council led by Cheryl Durst. This year CEUs were once again virtual and remain accessible through the NeoCon Hub through July 15. Covering eight tracks, highlights included exploring how NFTs/the metaverse will evolve the design landscape, addressing neurodiversity and workplace inclusion, and growing the next generation of circular buildings.

The Best of NeoCon awards were back for their 32nd edition. After an intensive in-person evaluation by a jury of architects, designers, specifiers, enterprise clients, and facility managers, a total of 99 awards were given in 52 product categories as well as Innovation and Sustainability. The ultimate honor of Best of Competition was bestowed upon HALCON's HELM table, a ground-breaking new executive desk and meeting table designed by Jehs + Laub. The winners were announced on the first day of the show at a celebratory breakfast hosted by NeoCon habitué and *officeinsight* Editor in Chief, Bob Beck.

With increasing awareness of how design can play a major role in an organization's employee attraction and retention, and overall bottom line, it was an apt moment to launch the NeoCon Business Innovation Awards. Aimed to engage and reach key business media, the initiative's inaugural edition was a great addition to the show. As part of the program, a group of discerning enterprise-oriented journalists conducted in-person judging of the 2022 Best of NeoCon Innovation Winners. Jurors then determined which winners would receive the added honor of a Business Innovation award based on the products' contribution to a more successful organization and better built environments across verticals—from workplace to healthcare. Specifically, jurors considered how the innovations addressed Productivity, Health & Wellness, ESG/Sustainability Data, Employee Attraction and Retention, and Flexibility/Adaptability. The 2022 winners are: AMQ's Amobi, Haworth's Knit Lounge, Reseat's Reseat ID Enterprise Tool, Silen Oü Silen Space Hybrid Work Pod, Andreu World's MARIYA COLLECTION, AIS's PET Wire Managers & Enclosures, and OM Seating's Plot Twist.

Additional awards programs included IIDA's annual IIDA Showroom & Booth Design Competition, which challenges designers and manufacturers to create displays that are not only visually stunning, but also have a lasting impact on visitors. Winners included KI in the Large Showroom category, ERG International in Small Showroom, and Zintra for Large Booth.

Byron Morton, Vice President, Sales & Leasing, remarks, “The 2022 edition of NeoCon underscored the show’s critical role in the contract industry ecosystem. In addition to effectively connecting all the key players, it delivered unparalleled access to superlative industry education, cutting edge new solutions, services, and advancements, and spurred brisk business. There is no other place that offers the community and concentration of design that THE MART and NeoCon can offer.”

Attendees and exhibitors shared their NeoCon 2022 observations:

“NeoCon 2022 was fantastic! We definitely saw some threads weaving between manufacturers this year, some of which were no doubt harbingers of things to come. One of the things I was happiest to see was the number of manufacturers taking real steps forward with their sustainability obligations. This is something that I am confident will become the driving factor in designer specifications in the coming years. Another trend was colors—manufacturers fully embracing colorways that have an earthy feel to them. Lastly, it is interesting to see the contract market slowly follow the residential market with a move towards maximalism. More than anything, NeoCon 2022 was confirmation that no matter how much digital launch events and meetings may have evolved over the last two years, there is no substitute to being together and experiencing products in person. Looking forward to NeoCon 2023!” - Daniel Stromborg, Design Director, Associate at Gensler

“This year NeoCon was all about getting people back to the office. It was about creating the best places possible to entice people. Business owners know there is no substitute for in-person collaboration when it comes to creative problem solving, and the companies that get their people back to the office sooner will do better. Flexibility and personal choice are still big drivers as well as Biophilia and human health and wellbeing.” – Ken Wilson, FAIA, FIIDA, ASID, LEED Fellow, Design Principal, Perkins&Will

“From the pioneering exhibitors to the powerful programming headlined by design heavyweights, It was an amazing experience being surrounded by so much talent from around the world. NeoCon showcases that design is our passion. Thank you to the fantastic design community for bringing innovation to the forefront.” - Chen Hui Spicer, Regional Design Leader, Nelson Worldwide

“I learned so much at this year's NeoCon! It was so great to be able to experience the furniture - sit on it and touch it and all. I got a very different impression as opposed to just looking at catalogs. The big takeaway for me was all of the innovations exhibitors were launching to create more flexible and adaptable workplaces. We took a lot of photos and we plan to present what we learned to the office.” - Reema Farhat, Project Architect, STUDIOS architecture

“NeoCon 2022 was the perfect moment to showcase Bernhardt Design’s new gallery-like showroom, which was designed by Chicago’s award-winning Kuchar Studio and curated

by Venezuelan-born creative director Rodolfo Agrella. The radiant, colorful light installation drew attendees into the space, allowing our product launches from Claudio Bellini, Luca Nichetto, Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance, Claudia and Harry Washington, Cory Grosser, and Defne Koz to be viewed and experienced through an entirely different lens." - Jerry Helling, President of Bernhardt Design

"We've been delighted to be part of NeoCon 2022, discussing the new hybrid workplace with clients and exploring the concept of hybrid work neighborhoods." - Brad Doan, Global Vice President of Communications of Steelcase

"NeoCon this year has been an excellent showcase for sustainability and innovative design. Andreu World is happy to continue to be a part of THE MART and have the opportunity to promote holistic design through our sustainability mission and innovative craftsmanship." - Jesus Llinares, CEO of Andreu World

"The highlight of NeoCon 2022 was definitely the launch of our new Silen Space Hybrid range. It had been our vision for a long time to create universally accessible pods, so that everyone would feel welcome in the office. We were so delighted to see that people really care about the same topics in the US and that our vision was very well received. The launch of Hybrid range and the awards received confirmed that we are moving in the right direction and inspired us to go even further with our upcoming product developments by bringing silence to everyone." - Endrus Arge, CEO & Founder of Silen Ö

"This was our first time exhibiting at NeoCon and we did not know what to expect. We had a great start as we received an Interior Design HiP award and Best of NeoCon award for our product UNDERSTAND and our introduction EDIT was a HIP honoree. We were really pleased with the traffic that came through during the show days—and we received such a positive response for the design, playfulness, and quality of our products. As a Swedish-based company, NeoCon was a great show for us as we look to grow and expand in the North American market." - Malin Muskala, Mizetto

"Storytelling is a big part of how OM Seating learns about, and builds around, our customers' work and productivity seating needs. This year in particular, we were truly grateful for the opportunity to see so many folks coming into our StorySpace (as we like to call our showroom) to share with us their experiences, perspectives and storylines. On top of all that, the genuinely surprising, but welcome accolades and excitement revolving around our new collaborative work seating collection, Plot Twist™ (remember: it's not just a pouf or a tablet attached to a pouf—it's so much more!) was also great fun, and a valuable chance to engage even further with fresh ideas from both new and continuing customers." - Wilson Chow, President, OM Seating

"A few years ago, we had a tiny booth at THE MART for NeoCon. To have people walk through and see our growth from that little booth to this experiential showroom journey with our award-winning products and color palette Hues has been humbling. With each

unique experience in the many rooms of our space, we're happy to now offer an immersion into the aural and visual qualities of Turf. As a design hub during and after NeoCon, THE MART provided the perfect opportunity to showcase our offerings, and we're already planning for the next show to top the amazing response we received from attendees this year. NeoCon brings together all the facets of the design industry and gives us the chance to interact with people from all over the world and varying backgrounds that might not have known Turf before—we're excited to see Turf's growth and development as a result." - Rob Perri, President of Turf Design

Over the past two years, we have all changed how we work and adjusted our mindset around workflow—recalibrated what's essential in life, and of course, in our spaces. Our space at theMART addresses these differences and utilizes art - or ergonomic, sustainable furniture for the like-minded creative - to inspire originality. We provide products for the radical, changing office space. Our NeoCon 2022 showroom provided a perfect opportunity for us to portray the beautiful balance between work, play, and purpose, reflecting the Scandinavian way of life." – Thomas Jönsson, Co-Founder Scandinavian Spaces

"NeoCon was a great experience for us, it was our first time as an exhibitor and it was worth every minute! We had some great thought provoking conversations and made lots of new connections! We were so pleased to be a Gold winner of Best of NeoCon too – it made such a great start to the show." – Representative from Frövi

"NeoCon 2022 delivered the inspiration and community that we were all craving. It was a pleasure to see so many of our design community friends. Being able to tell the story of how we are all Better Together through our new Social Canvas collection, which was inspired by artwork from Charlie French, an artist represented by Artlifting, an organization that helps give artists with disabilities or housing insecurity a way to make a living from their artwork, was a highlight of the show for me." – Jackie Dettmar, Vice President Marketing, Design and Product Development at Mohawk Group

"NeoCon 2022 was another great event for Hightower. Not only did we see record-breaking numbers visit our showroom, but we also earned our first Best of NeoCon Award: the new Gimbal Jr. won Silver for Guest Seating! NeoCon 2022 was a positive experience for the Hightower team, our reps, and clients. We're loving the energy of being back at leading industry events!" – Natalie Hartkopf, co-owner & CEO, Hightower

Planning is already underway for NeoCon 2023, scheduled for June 12-14 at THE MART. Visit [www.neocon.com](http://www.neocon.com) and follow NeoCon's social channels below for more details on events and programming year round.

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

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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 close to 500 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 (formerly The Merchandise Mart), located in the center of the sought-after River North submarket, is interwoven into the fabric of Chicago as an innovator in business, technology, culture, art, media and more. It is one of the world's leading commercial buildings, wholesale design centers and the preeminent international business location in Chicago. Encompassing 4.2 million gross square feet, THE MART spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day and nearly 10 million people annually. Offering continuous innovation and creativity from leading manufacturers and design forward showrooms, THE MART serves as the home to Chicago's most creative and technologically innovative companies.