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**trendspotters**

SPOTTED:

**Top 10  
Influential  
Design Trends  
from NeoCon  
2023**



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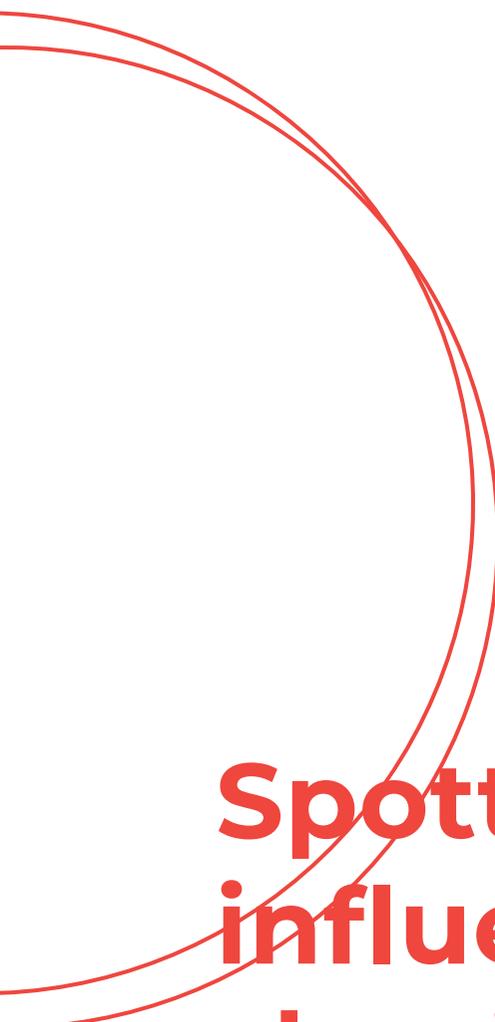
# Meet the ThinkLab TrendSpotters

Each year ThinkLab enlists a group of key specifiers, from firm leadership to emerging talent, to share what they are seeing, hearing, thinking, and loving at NeoCon; unfiltered.

The TrendSpotters captured, documented, and shared over 180 photos showcasing the best of the best of their finds. If you didn't follow along on our social channels, don't worry! We've rounded up and narrowed down what these influential specifiers were most inspired by.

Meet all our TrendSpotters in [this reel](#).





**Spotted, the Top 10 most influential design trends shaping the commercial design industry from NeoCon 2023.**

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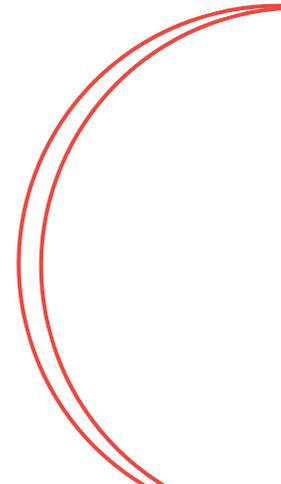




IMAGE: LISBETH JIMENEZ, SHOWROOM: HAWORTH

# Design Trend #1: Artisanal Elements

## WHAT THEY SAW

Brands showcased a beautiful contrast to AI by featuring artisanal elements that gave a heightened sense of the human touch. Spotted in two ways:

- Through the celebration of product construction, showcasing layered details that were formerly kept hidden, and through detailed joinery methods that felt bespoke.
- By displaying art, process drawings, and detailed product construction drawings throughout the space, as well as bringing out artists to demonstrate their craft and, craftspeople to build furniture.

## WHERE THEY SAW IT

Haworth, Andreu World, OFS, Bernhardt

## WHAT WE HEARD

“Through joinery details within the materiality, we could see the details coming together in a sophisticated, handcrafted way vs. a machine connection. It provided a layer of bespoke.” — Nicole Zack, M Moser Associates



## Design Trend #2: "Sustainable- Disposable"

### WHAT THEY SAW

A new trend so big, we needed to give it its own name. This year's NeoCon featured a clear, concerted effort to improve, expose, and remove the elements within a product — thereby limiting waste and making that product as pure as possible to ensure circularity at end of life. The TrendSpotters also made a few other notable mentions around circularity:

- Behind-the-scenes partnerships continue to make their way into materiality. By diverting discarded products (such as milk cartons and fashion textiles) away from landfills, the industry has upped its game in post-consumer recycled content. Spotted at Fulton Market Design Days: [LUUM](#).

### WHERE THEY SAW IT

[Sandler Seating](#), [Scandinavian Spaces](#)

### WHAT WE HEARD

"This embodies everything: minimal (or no) waste, recycled content, circular. It should have a new name — it's really 'sustainable-disposable.'" — Bill Bouchey, Gensler

IMAGE: PATRICIA ROTONDO, SHOWROOM: SANDLER SEATING

# Design Trend #3: Variety with Flow

## WHAT THEY SAW

A somewhat controversial furniture trend, due to its unique form and multi-function offering. One piece that offered a variety of seating options from perching to standard height, integrated tables throughout, untethered power, and movable work surfaces, allowing for multiple people and multiple activities to occur within one piece.

## WHERE THEY SAW IT

Allermuir, Extremis

## WHAT WE HEARD

"Giving your employees variety and the ability to choose the style and place you work is so important, especially when it comes to neurodiversity. This is a beautiful manifestation of this concept. They have variety and cohesive functions. Funny part of this, it was also my most controversial post." — Ethan Barbour, IA Interior Architects

"It should be workstyle. Not workplace." — Bill Bouchey, Gensler



IMAGE: ETHAN BARBOUR, SHOWROOM: ALLERMUIR



## Design Trend #4: Biodegradable Beauties

### WHAT THEY SAW

Products that are not only circular, but also biodegradable, answering the long-time question: “What happens to this product at end of life?” Manufacturers are bringing materials down to their true form, using products like bioplastics, and reducing any other additives, such as adhesives. While some of these pieces were showcased at other trade shows previously, our TrendSpotters were thrilled to see them on display at NeoCon.

### WHERE THEY SAW IT

[Andreu World \(Nuez Lounge Bio\)](#), [METROPOLIS Sustainability Lab \(Peel Chair\)](#).

### WHAT WE HEARD

“This addresses our biggest issues with plastic, which really adds to the conversation. Biodegradable at end of life is big.” — Sabrina Pagani, Savills North America

IMAGE: METROPOLIS SUSTAINABILITY LAB (L), ANDREU WORLD (R)

# Design Trend #5: Inclusive Reconfiguration

## WHAT THEY SAW

Approachable and user-friendly solutions that are designed to change throughout the day: from light movable furniture, to levers that easily turn for added privacy. These options easily adapt without heavy lifting or time-consuming reconfiguration.

- Bonus! “Reconfiguration of a product was also a great sustainable solution. One product that can adapt overtime was a nice sustainability win.” — Catherine O’Brien, IA Interior Architects
- A standout mention for inclusivity goes to Nienkämper. “I was so happy to see a wheelchair at a table in the Neinkämper showroom. Too often, products are designed too heavy, hard to move, and unusable for many folks. We want to see more designs that are truly equitable”. — Nicole Zack, M Moser Associates

## WHERE THEY SAW IT

[Kettal](#), [Hightower](#), [Nienkämper](#),  
[Okamura Global](#)

## WHAT WE HEARD

“We’re using other vertical market strategies in workplace. The world is morphing, and the flow is not only about the furniture but also how people are experiencing the spaces.” — Patricia Rotondo, Lamar Johnson Collaborative

IMAGE: COURTNEY ZASTROW, SHOWROOM: KETTAL



# Design Trend #6: "Undone Done"

## WHAT THEY SAW

A new iteration of the traditional Scandinavian blanket wrap was on full display. Mostly seen in seating applications. Chair frames were exposed with inviting, and often oversized, duvets draped over them. Notably without puckery and without pleats. Offering "comfort wrinkles."

## WHERE THEY SAW IT

Scandinavian Spaces, Kettal, Haworth

## WHAT WE HEARD

"This year we saw many examples of intentionally exposed construction methods and upholstery that was loose, bunched and relaxed. This seemingly 'undone' expression feels transparent and honest, and there is a natural ease in connecting to a piece like that." — Kirsten Kohm, Lamar Johnson Collaborative

IMAGE: KIRSTEN KOHM, SHOWROOM: HAWORTH (L), SCANDINAVIAN SPACES (R)





# Design Trend #7: Wellness Beyond One Room

## WHAT THEY SAW

Larger corporate wellness governance played out through products and interiors. No longer just a label on a room, wellness is being incorporated into every finish and every detail. From promoting indoor air quality to healing sounds incorporated into furniture. A wholistic approach to human-first design was present.

## WHERE THEY SAW IT

[Thinkspace](#) and Design Days: [Allsteel](#), [Kimball International](#)

## WHAT WE HEARD

“Some of the wellness-focused trends took the form of healthy, sustainable spaces with lots of green, biophilic elements and connection to nature, and others were focusing on immersive sensory experiences — especially acoustical privacy. Overall this year’s NeoCon wellness trends felt more holistic and intentional, which I hope to see more next year.” — Yong In, Unispace

IMAGE: YONG IN, SHOWROOM: ALLSTEEL

# giving new life to plastic waste

The Fiber Chair without upholstery uses a minimum of 80% recycled plastic. By switching to recycled plastic, we expect to reduce our use of virgin plastic by more than 50 tons a year.

MUUTO



## Design Trend #8: Plastics on Replay

### WHAT THEY SAW

From repurposing discarded plastic water bottles to innovative new biodegradable plastic forms. Recycled plastics are making a cleaner comeback and brands are telling it's story. Other notable sustainability trends spotted:

- Transportability. Reducing the transportation footprint of a product, by creating condensed, foldable, stackable versions. Spotted at [Steelcase](#) and [Molo Design](#)

### WHERE THEY SAW IT

[Carnegie](#) and Design Days: [MUUTO](#), [Norman Copenhagen](#)

### WHAT WE HEARD

“Lots of showrooms showcasing a plastic story. Saw a lot in all kinds of forms. Exposing it.” — Lisbeth Jimenez, MKDA

IMAGE: YONG IN, SHOWROOM: MUUTO

# Design Trend #9: Visible Texture

## WHAT THEY SAW

Touchable textures on everything. Bold textured walls, velvety table tops, fabric wrapped table bases, rattan partitions, punchy textured furniture.

## WHERE THEY SAW IT

[SIXINCH](#), [Slalom Acoustic](#), [NaughtOne](#), [ERG International](#)

## WHAT WE HEARD

"There were a lot of new takes on texture year. It was present not only in flooring, wall finishes, and upholstery, but also in unique furniture details that added visual and tactile interest." - Courtney Zastrow, Whitney Architects

IMAGE: COURTNEY ZASTROW, SHOWROOM: SIXINCH



# Design Trend #10: Down to the Accessories

## WHAT THEY SAW

The details matter, and accessories have become a part of the furniture portfolio. From planters that match a partition to décor that matches the furniture finishes. Furniture brands are now offering a curated package to fill the entire space.

## WHERE THEY SAW IT:

Hightower and Design Days: MillerKnoll, MUUTO

## WHAT WE HEARD

“Everything down to the smaller details. Showcasing a full vignette and branded experience.” — Ethan Barbour, IA Interior Architects

IMAGE: HERMAN MILLER



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