

NeoCon show recap

2026



01. AESTHETICS

02. MATERIALS & TEXTURES

03. COLOR STORIES

04. HUMAN-CENTRIC DETAILS

Photo: neocon.com

NOTES FROM THE SHOW

NeoCon 2026 highlighted a clear evolution in commercial design, with a stronger focus on creating spaces that feel welcoming, flexible, and people-centered. Warm, expressive color palettes — including burgundy, rich clay, and soft lavender — paired with curved forms, tactile materials, and residential-inspired furnishings signaled a move toward comfort and connection in the workplace.



One of the show’s biggest highlights was the debut of Illuminate at NeoCon, a new lighting-focused experience that put light at the center of the design conversation. Through immersive exhibits, educational sessions, and interactive demonstrations, attendees explored how lighting influences color, materials, wellness, and the overall experience of a space. The new platform brought together more than 60 lighting brands and quickly became a standout destination on the show floor.

The response from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, contributing to a 9% increase in attendance over 2025. Designers, architects, and manufacturers embraced the added focus on lighting and the show’s expanded experiential programming, reinforcing NeoCon’s role as a leading indicator of where commercial interiors are headed next.

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01. AESTHETICS 2026

1. *Blurred Lines*
2. *Fluid Forms*
3. *Wellness at Work*
4. *Wood Drenching*

AESTHETICS

BLURRED LINES

Commercial and residential design aesthetics are increasingly converging, creating spaces that feel less like traditional workplaces and more like thoughtfully curated environments. Today's commercial interiors are borrowing heavily from the language of home—embracing nubby, tactile fabrics, warm wood tones, and soothing, layered color palettes that invite comfort and ease. Lounge-style seating, soft silhouettes, and intimate layouts replace more rigid, utilitarian arrangements, shifting the focus from pure function to lived experience.



This blurring of boundaries is giving rise to a new design ethos—one rooted in sumptuous, experience-driven spaces where functionality is seamlessly paired with comfort and emotional resonance.

AESTHETICS

FLUID FORMS

Commercial design is increasingly embracing fluid forms and soft silhouettes, moving away from rigid geometry to create spaces that feel more inviting and human-centered. This trend is amplified with the ability to 3D print materials in new and unique ways, like this concrete outdoor furniture from Mangrove. These forms are not purely aesthetic; they serve as an intersection of art and function. Curved, organic lines and sculptural fixtures often double as both practical elements and visual focal points, transforming everyday objects into artful experiences.



Designer: Spencer Hope

This fluidity extends beyond shape—it permeates how spaces are used and perceived. Pieces are designed to adapt, flow, and engage, creating environments where functionality and artistic expression coexist seamlessly.

AESTHETICS

WELLNESS AT WORK

Commercial design is becoming increasingly human-centric, with wellness serving as a driving force behind how spaces are planned, furnished, and experienced. Designers are looking beyond aesthetics to create environments that actively support physical, mental, and emotional well-being. From introducing more plants, natural materials, and nature-inspired palettes to replicating the rhythms of natural daylight through advanced lighting solutions, workplaces are being designed to help people feel healthier, more comfortable, and more connected throughout the day.

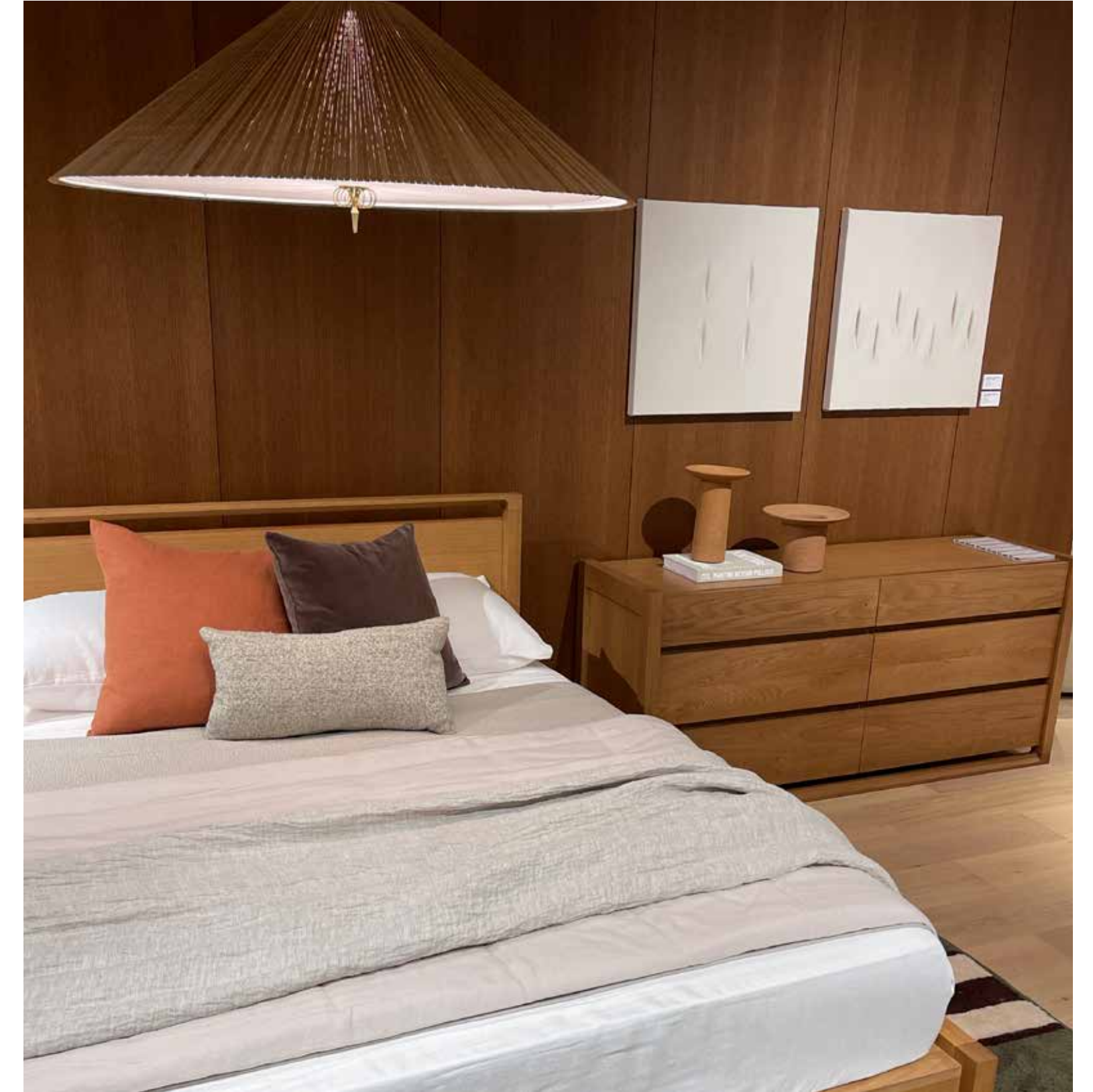
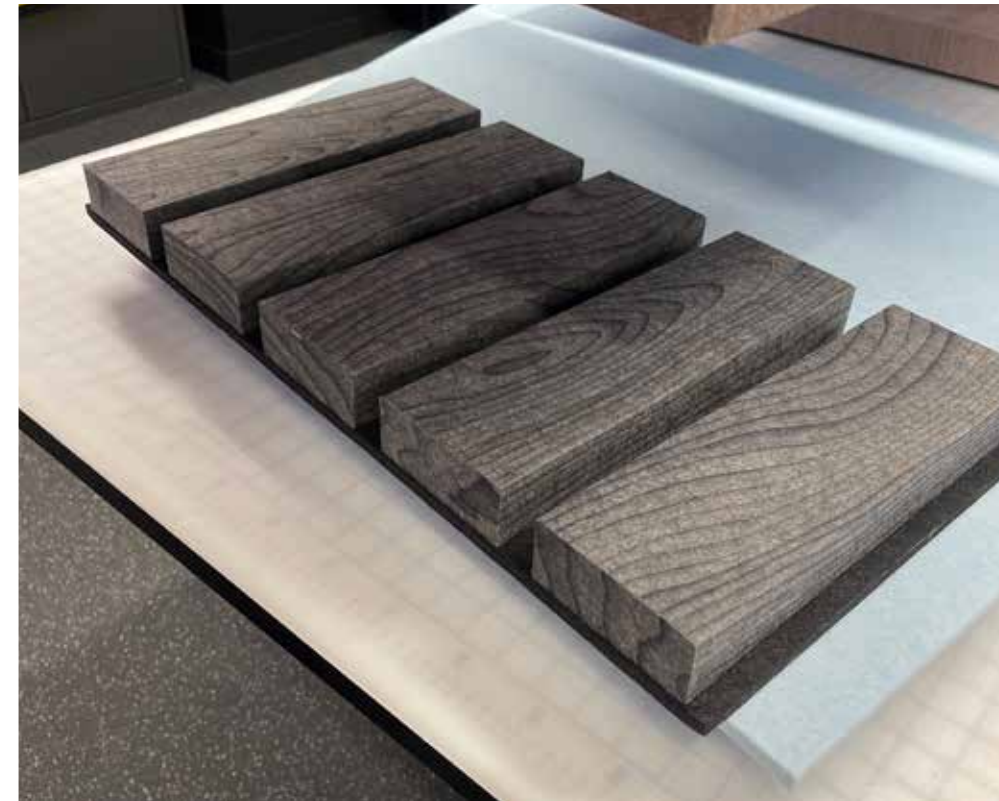


This focus on wellness extends to functionality and accessibility. Solutions such as vibrating desks that encourage movement breaks, and acoustically isolated focus booths are helping employees better manage concentration, stress, and productivity.

AESTHETICS

WOOD DRENCHING

Material drenching has emerged as a defining trend in commercial interiors, with wood taking center stage as the material of the moment. Rather than using wood as an accent, designers are enveloping spaces in warm wood tones through wall paneling, ceilings, millwork, furnishings, and even lighting, creating cohesive environments that feel grounded, organic, and connected to nature. This approach introduces a sense of warmth and authenticity, helping commercial spaces feel more welcoming while reinforcing the growing emphasis on biophilic design.



As demand for nature-inspired interiors continues to grow, products are replicating the look and feel of wood on materials such as metal panels, acoustical ceilings, and other performance-driven surfaces.



02. Material & Textures 2026

1. Walnut
2. Exotic Woods
3. Tinted Metals & Glass
4. Tactile Wovens

MATERIALS & TEXTURES



WALNUT

Walnut emerged as a defining material direction in commercial finishings at NeoCon 2026, reflecting a broader shift toward authenticity, warmth, and biophilic design. Its rich grain character, deep tonal variation, and tactile natural finish brought a sense of permanence and craftsmanship to workplace environments increasingly focused on human-centered experiences. It was paired with soft matte metals, textured fabrics, and muted color palettes to create spaces that felt both elevated and approachable. As organizations seek materials that balance timeless appeal with emotional comfort, walnut stands out as a leading expression of premium, enduring design.

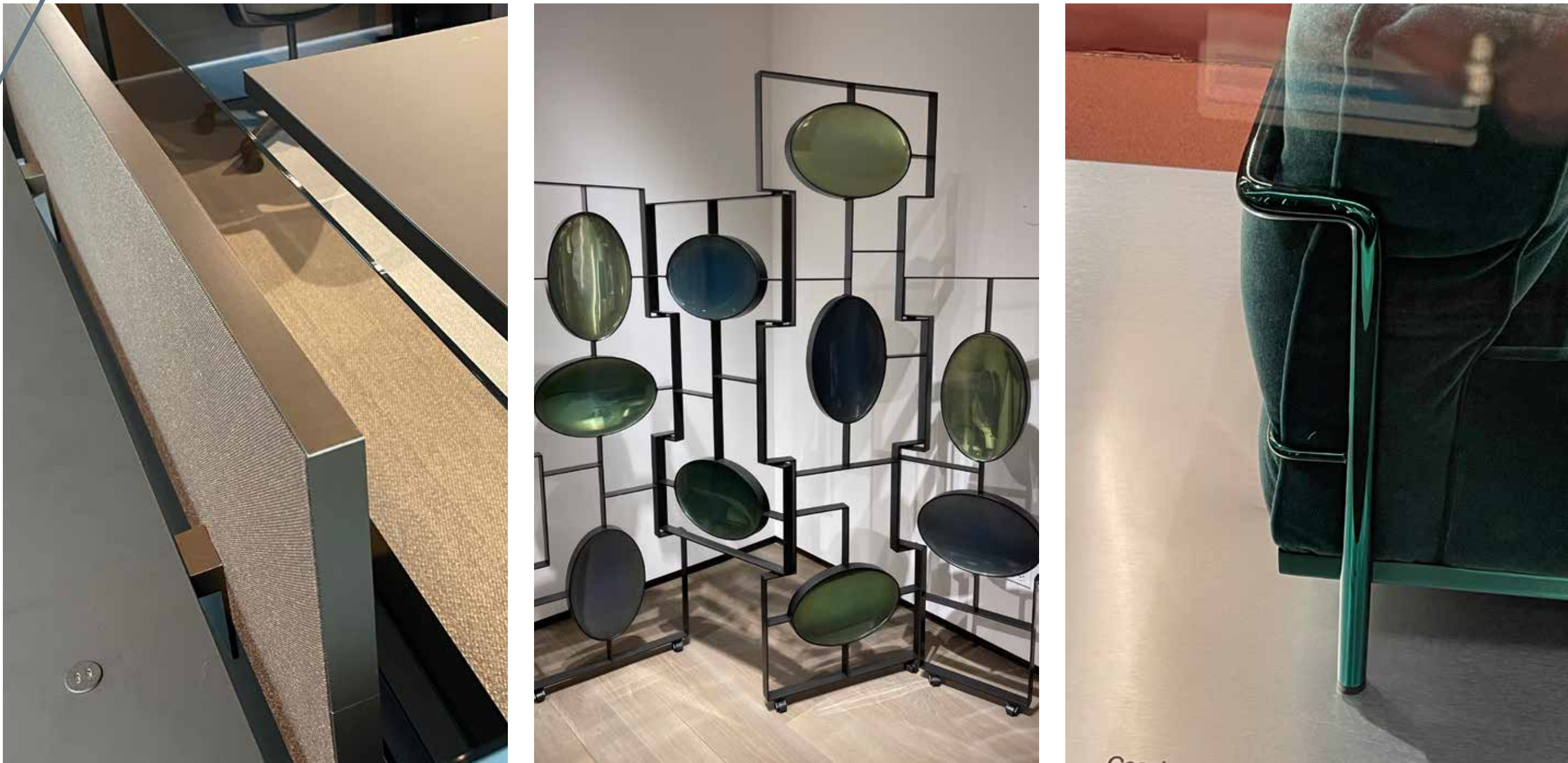
MATERIALS & TEXTURES



EXOTIC WOODS

Exotic woods are emerging as a compelling substrate story, offering richer storytelling alongside the authenticity consumers increasingly expect. Species such as Mozambique, Red Gum, and Pheasantwood bring distinctive grain patterns, tonal variation, and natural movement that immediately differentiate a piece from more common wood selections. They answer the growing demand for materials that feel rooted in nature and elevate material palettes, feeling crafted rather than manufactured.

MATERIALS & TEXTURES



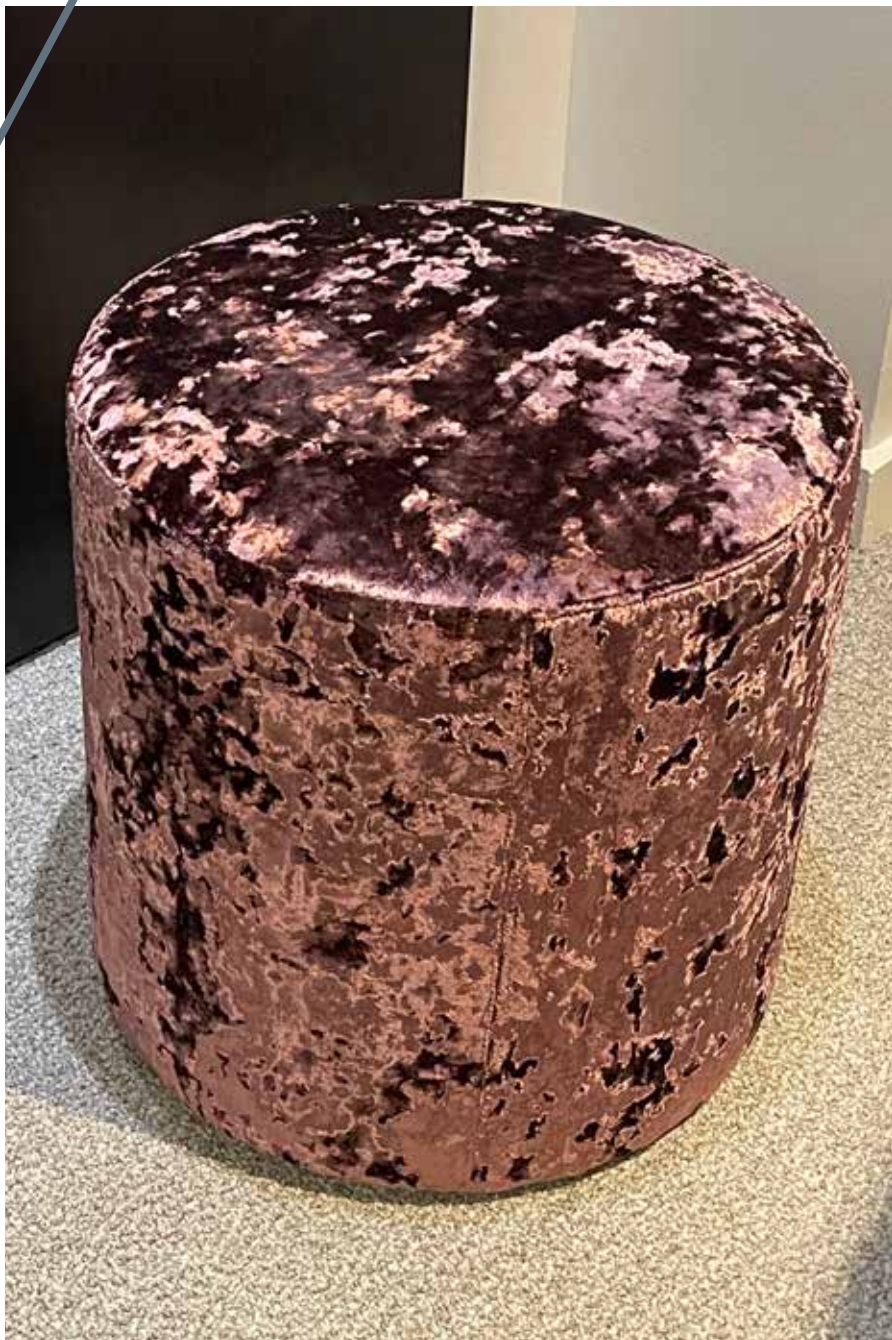
TINTED METALS & GLASS

Tinted metals and glass emerged as a sophisticated material language across NeoCon 2026, bringing depth, mood, and understated color to commercial interiors. Smoky matte metals, warm bronze tones, and colorful chromed finishes introduced subtle pigment and light play without overwhelming a space, while smoked and tinted glass added layers of transparency, privacy, and visual softness. Whether used as architectural partitions, storage elements, or furniture accents, these finishes elevated everyday applications through refined color expression.



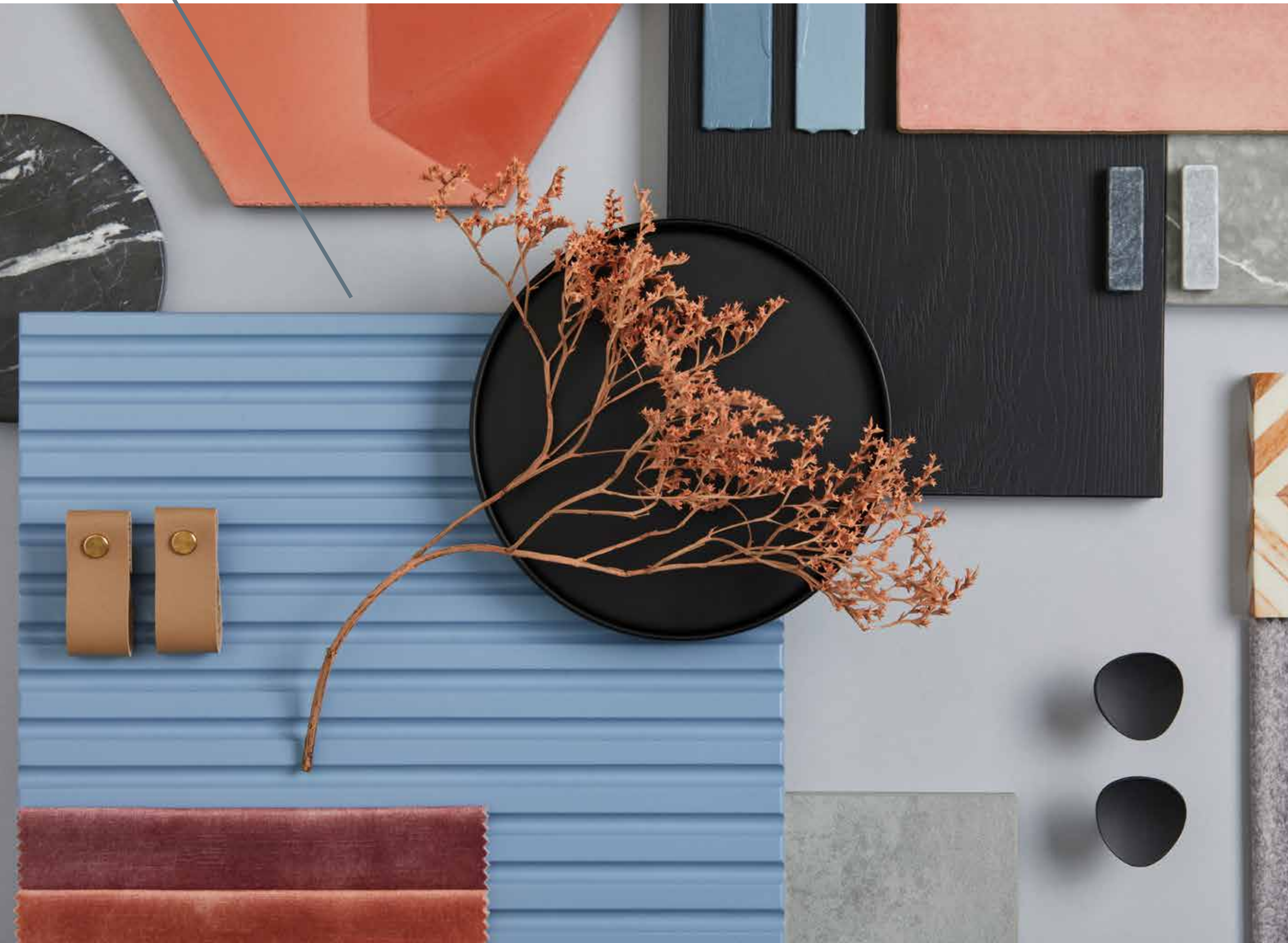
Jonathan Charles // Winsland Chest

MATERIALS & TEXTURES



TACTILE WOSENS

Spanning upholstery, drapery, wicker, and woven wood veneers, tactile wovens were featured widely to introduce both physical and visual texture throughout commercial environments. Crushed velvets, bouclés, Dutch cords, and handcrafted weave structures blurred the boundaries between residential and workplace aesthetics, creating spaces that feel more welcoming and human-centered. Beyond their sensory appeal, these layered materials added warmth, depth, and acoustic softness, reinforcing a growing industry focus on approachable tactility and emotionally resonant design.



03. COLOR STORIES 2026

- 1. Rusty Reds*
- 2. Vibrant Primaries*
- 3. Muted Pastels*
- 4. Matcha Madness*

COLOR STORIES

RUSTY REDS

Rusty reds emerged as one of the most influential color stories at NeoCon 2026, bringing a sense of warmth, depth, and understated richness to commercial interiors. Appearing across everything from textiles and wall treatments to metal finishes and wood tones, these earthy hues ranged from soft terracotta and clay to deeper oxidized reds. The palette felt both contemporary and familiar, adding character without overwhelming a space.



GET THE LOOK



SWG018203



SW2802 Rookwood Red



SWG018562



SW7584 Red Theatre



SWG019216

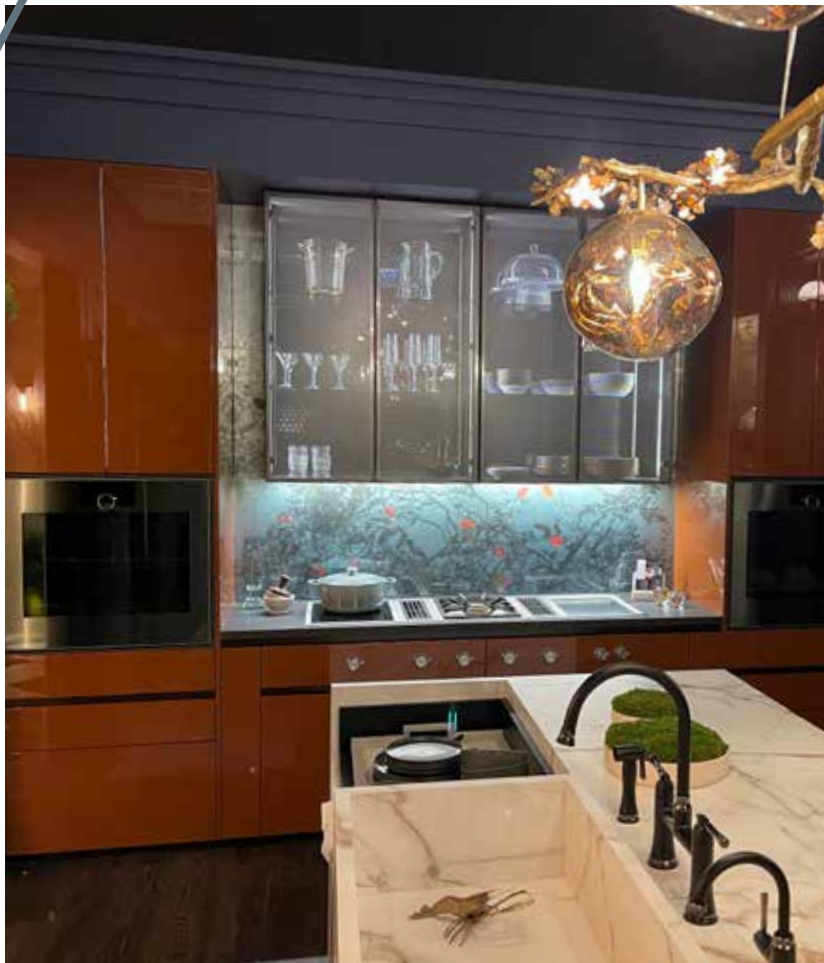


SW6328 Fireweed

COLOR STORIES

VIBRANT
PRIMARIES

Bringing a sense of energy, playfulness, and optimism to commercial environments, vibrant primary colors were confidently featured. Saturated oranges, sunshine yellows, vivid blues, and bold purples appeared across upholstery, accent furnishings, and art installations, like Qubes by Eliza Redmann of Folded Poetry, creating moments of visual impact. The result was a series of interiors that felt dynamic, engaging, and designed to inspire creativity.



GET THE LOOK



SWG018977



SW6967 Frank Blue



SWG018971



SW6615 Peppery



SWG018571



SW6677 Goldenrod

COLOR STORIES

MUTED
PASTELS

Muted pastels emerged as a fresh and refined color story at the show, offering a softer take on color in the workplace. Think sky blues, powder pinks, and mint greens, but washed down into desaturated, dusty hues that feel calm, sophisticated, and effortlessly contemporary. Frequently paired with light oak, ash, and other pale wood finishes, these colors helped create interiors with a distinctly Scandinavian influence—bright, airy, and understated.



GET THE LOOK



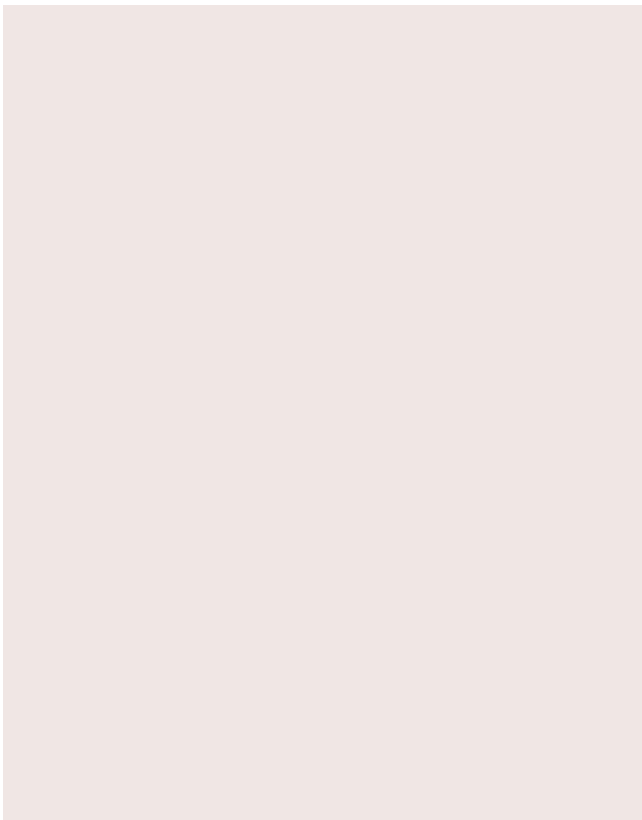
SWG018519



SW6176 Liveable Green



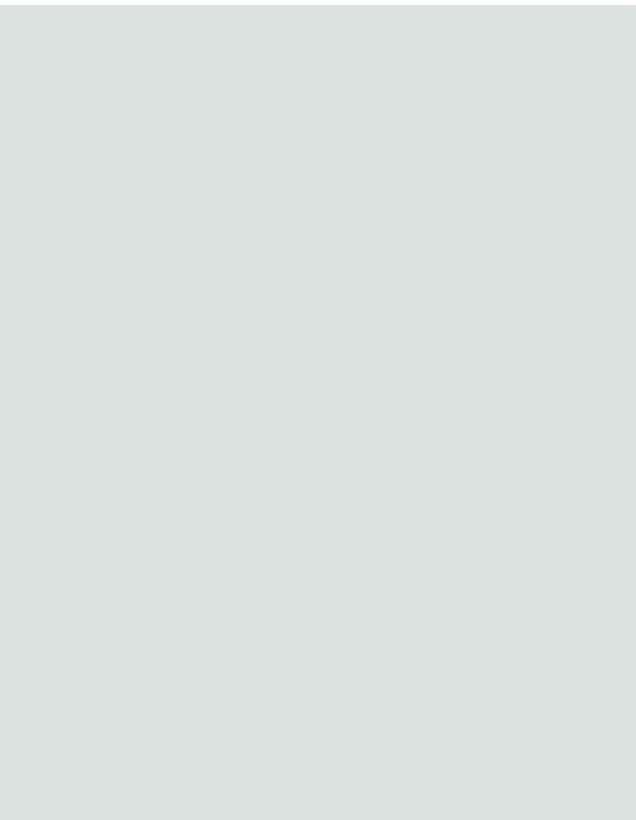
SWG019189



SW6028 Cultured Pearl



SWG018953



SW9631 Mantra

COLOR STORIES

MATCHA MADNESS

Soft pea greens, matcha tones, and dusty olives are gaining momentum as an alternative to more expected workplace neutrals. Rooted in the nostalgic warmth of 1970s interiors, these nuanced greens bring a sense of familiarity and comfort while still feeling fresh and contemporary. Paired with rich walnut and chocolate brown wood tones, the palette creates a grounded, lived-in aesthetic that softens the commercial environment with depth and balance.



GET THE LOOK



SWG018973



SW6416 Sassy Green



SWG018997



SW6410 Brassy



SWG018883



SW6424 Tansy Green



04. Human-Centric Details 2026

- 1. Limitless Lighting
- 2. Artful Acoustics
- 3. Elevated Charging

HUMAN-CENTRIC DETAILS



LIMITLESS LIGHTING

Lighting has become a defining element of the overall spatial experience, extending far beyond basic illumination. Across commercial, healthcare, retail, and hospitality environments at NeoCon 2026, innovations such as blue-sky circadian fixtures, integrated acoustic lighting, and luminaires made with recycled materials reflected a growing focus on wellness and sustainability. These human-centered solutions help enhance comfort, support well-being, and create more engaging environments, reinforcing lighting’s role as both a functional tool and a key design feature.

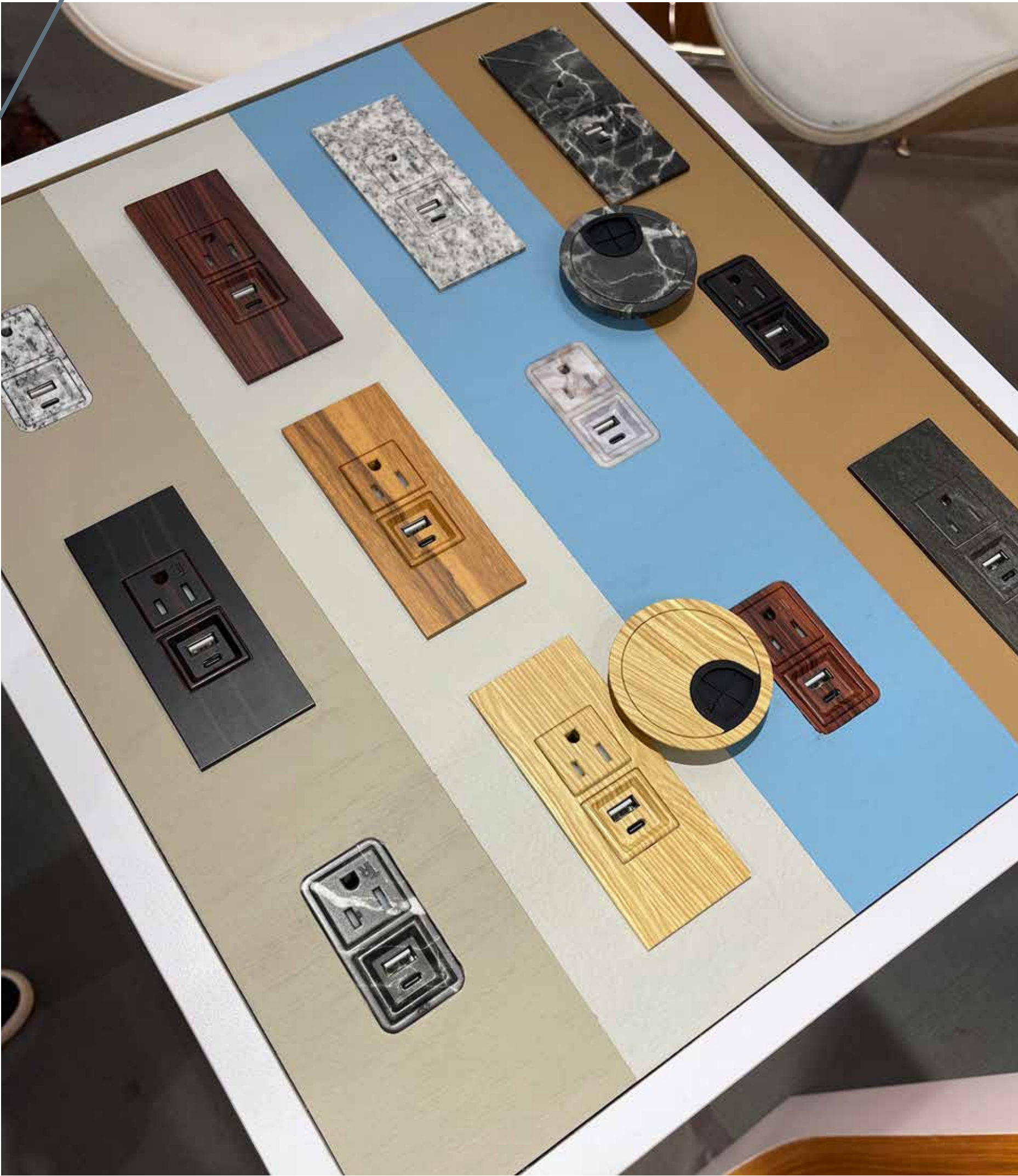
HUMAN-CENTRIC DETAILS



ARTFUL ACOUSTICS

Sound control is essential for creating workplaces that support both collaboration and concentration. As open-plan environments become more common, acoustic solutions help reduce distractions and create a sense of privacy while maintaining an open, connected feel. At NeoCon, acoustical products were increasingly customizable and design-driven, appearing as sculptural panels, artistic installations, and acoustic wraps integrated around desks and workstations. These creative solutions enhanced comfort and performance while adding visual interest without feeling bulky or intrusive.

HUMAN-CENTRIC DETAILS



ELEVATED CHARGING

Manufacturers are bringing a new level of design attention to charging solutions, transforming them from purely functional necessities into thoughtfully integrated features. Everything from seamlessly concealed power ports to charging stations housed in wood, stone-look, and other premium material finishes reflected a desire to elevate the user experience. Some designs discreetly blended into furniture, while others embraced charging as a focal point. The trend highlights how even the most technical elements are being considered through a CMF lens, where aesthetics, materiality, and function work together to create a more refined and intentional environment.



For more information about the DesignHouse, please visit: wood.sherwin-williams.com

To download our latest color forecast, the 2026 Industrial Wood Colormix®, click [here](#).

Feeling inspired? Visit our [Virtual Panel Studio](#) to discover more finishes and trending color palettes!

Due to variations in digital displays, colors are shown as closely as possible to the actual stain colors.