



Listen to Michael Braungart for an hour, and you'll feel primed to take on the planet. During his keynote address at IIDEX/NeoCon Canada this past September, the German chemist and co-author of Cradle to Cradle systematically challenged the green lingo that pervades the design industry, while displaying test results showing the toxin levels in some products. At one point, he swept his eyes over the exhibition hall and warned, "It's all guilt management," suggesting that we're a long way from getting it right. Seasoning his message with a keen sense of humour, he challenged listeners to up the ante on green initiatives, and look beyond mere sustainability to create a beneficial footprint rather than simply minimizing it.

So who was hitting the right green notes at IIDEX/NeoCon 2008? Canühome, an 80-square-

metre dwelling developed in part by the Institute Without Boundaries at George Brown College, brought eco-living out of the realm of theory and into reality. This emblematically Canadian, canoe-like structure features a passive bio-climate regulation system, a waste water system, and a modular structure that incorporates locally sourced materials and products.

Another pavilion highlight was the Green Patient Room. Spearheaded by Anshen + Allen and the IFMA Health Care Council, the full-scale concept room displayed a range of environmental and health innovations - from night lights by Cooper Lighting that don't disrupt users' circadian rhythms, to anti-microbial upholstered furniture by Davis Furniture - with the overall goal of demonstrating a less institutional, more ergonomic environment

designed to improve the well-being of patients, staff and visitors.

While the show still serves as a launching pad for new products, the next eco-friendly trend forecasts that companies are focusing on process over product. Shaw's EcoWorx broadloom - developed in collaboration with Braungart's cradle-to-cradle partner, William McDonough - can be repeatedly recycled, while Teknion announced that it will be the first furniture company to partner with Green Solutions, which connects used office furnishings and IT equipment with organizations in need. While the green message at IIDEX/Neocon continues to expand, it's important to have voices like Braungart's keeping the industry - and consumers - in check.

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↑ OFFICE WITH A VIEW

Toronto-based Tayco picked up a Bronze Innovation award for its Up Storage system of ergonomically arranged cabinet designs. Casters and height-adjustable features put everything within reach from a seated position, plus the low-lying design opens up overhead views.

↓ OUT OF SIGHT

NeatLinks - a simple cable management system introduced by Humanscale - supports up to four kilograms of equipment with an easy two-screw or adhesive tape installation. Proving that details get noticed, the design received a coveted Innovation award.



→ TURN IT OUT

Finnish designer Rane Vaskivuori's self-titled Rane chair, created for Nightingale, has a swivelling, adjustable backrest that's impossible not to fiddle with - a perfect fit for any lobby or meeting place that requires an extended stay.



↑ BRIGHT IDEAS

The lighting segment of IIDEX/NeoCon is now Canada's largest, and Go Lighting cleaned up in the LED category of the Innovation awards, earning three nods for their designs. The dimmable CO1 Round LED, the gold winner, can be fine-tuned in colour temperature to emulate skylight effects.



↓ PUT IT ON THE TABLE

Adding a high-end touch to the office coffee table, Gunlocke's Kenna combines a hardwood structure with aluminum accents, and tabletops in marble, granite and other surfaces. Designer Joachim Jensen worked with the company to create the collection.



LIGHTFAIR, NEW YORK

May 5 to 7 After two decades of presenting the most innovative architectural and lighting inventions, North America's largest lighting showcase isn't about to rest on its laurels. With such exhibits as the Daylighting Pavilion for product-specific manufacturers and the new European Light + Design Pavilion for cutting-edge European design, Lightfair continues to deliver in style. www.lightfair.com

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE FAIR, NEW YORK

May 16 to 19 Also in May, the Big Apple plays host to the largest contemporary design fair this side of the Atlantic, showcasing the newest furniture, flooring, lighting and more. Major players like Kartell share floor space with such local firms as Ducduc and Chilewich. www.icff.com

SIDIM, MONTREAL

May 21 to 23 A design show that continues to gain momentum, the Salon International

du Design d'Intérieur de Montreal gathers designers and manufacturers from all over the world. Features include the Série Limitée display of limited edition pieces by Québécois craftsmen, and the Design & Cie exhibit of collaborations between designers and furniture manufacturers. www.sidim.com

NEOCON, CHICAGO

June 15 to 17 This biggest-of-them-all contract trade fair is the place to find the most buzz-worthy designs for corporate hospitality, health care, retail, government, institutional and residential interiors. The show boasts over 1,200 exhibitors, including big-name draws like Allsteel, B&B Italia and Teknion. This year, the Light! expo debuts with cutting-edge lighting products for the hospitality, commercial and health care industries. www.neocon.com

INTERIOR DESIGN SHOW WEST, VANCOUVER

September 17 to 20 IDS's sister show features residential interiors for the West Coast crowd. Up-and-coming designers

strut their stuff at the Designers on the Block exhibit, while Stories Behind Design tells how some of the products on display came to be. www.idswest.com

ABITARE IL TEMPO, VERONA

September 17 to 21 Go to Verona for the romance; stay for the design. Furniture, kitchens, bathrooms, lighting, textiles and more can be found at the fabled city's interior design fair. Research exhibitions, debates and the Abitare il Tempo prize (which went to Vitra CEO Rolf Fehlbaum last year) round out the show. www.abitareiltempo.com

IIDEX/NEOCON, TORONTO

September 24 to 25 This Toronto expo celebrates its 25th year as Canada's premier trade show for the built environment. With an increasingly enviro-friendly focus, it presents a green pavilion and hospitality section with a decidedly eco-savvy twist. Marquee exhibitors include Shaw Contract Group and Nienkämper. www.iidexneocon.com

100% DESIGN, LONDON

September 24 to 27 Funky Brit flavour is in top form at this contemporary interiors fair, where such hip newcomers as Ryan Frank, Afroditi Krassa and rug company Cha Cha Supermarket have debuted new work alongside established designers like Tom Dixon. Plus, with tons of off-site events, there's always a party to dash to. www.100percentdesign.co.uk

CERSAIE, BOLOGNA

September 29 to October 3 Though Spanish and French companies are represented at this Bologna expo, the show really belongs to the Italians. Such innovators as Brix, Lea Ceramiche and Sisis present the latest trends, techniques and aesthetics in ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings. www.cersaie.it

GREENBUILD, PHOENIX

November 11 to 13 The world's biggest show dedicated to green building moves to Phoenix from Boston this year. Learn how buildings can actually protect and improve the health of their occupants. www.greenbuildexpo.org