

Matt Kavanagh

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Background

Graduating from London's Southbank University with a Bsc (Hons) in engineering product design in 1986, Kavanagh worked as a designer for a number of companies including Olivetti in Italy where he worked with Memphis founder George Sowden.

From 2000-2010 he collaborated with fellow creative Ashley Hall under the umbrella Diplomat. During this time Kavanagh developed a creative approach he called organic essentialism and launched some 50 products with furniture and product manufacturers in Europe as well as a number of bespoke and experimental pieces.

In 2009 Kavanagh began lecturing on the Innovation Design Engineering MA program at the Royal College of Art and later mentoring students from London's University of the South Bank. His experience in furniture design and craft making has fed his current practice of functional art.

Practice

Currently working as a 3d media artist, designer and maker, based in Second Floor Studio Arts, Deptford, Kavanagh's focus is on innovation and experimentation, leveraging his deep knowledge of craft processes and material experimentation to explore ideas and develop art, often based loosely around the typologies of furniture, product & lighting.

His practice is predominantly solo, with occasional collaborations, including Translocated Making with the Royal College of Art, research degree program.

Sustainability has been a recurring theme throughout his career and in 2019 he initiated a project using salvaged nitrous oxide canisters, which after a substantial development phase, was launched as NOS SPHERE in 2020. This was featured in the Financial Times and many publications and went on to win the prestigious European Product Design award and the Build Back Better Green award.

More recently he has been working on a collection of functional sculptures made from fallen trees in South London.

To date Kavanagh has participated in dozens of shows, both individual and group, across Europe and America and his work has been featured in books and press publications internationally.

Recent sculpture commissions

- 2025 Long drop 228 NOS chandelier installation – Private house, London
- 2024 Bespoke 348 NOS Sphere installation – Private home, Gloucestershire
- 2022 Free standing chandelier – Private collection, London
- 2021 Large Oval NOS chandelier – Private residence, Greenwich, London
- 2021 Purple 228 NOS Sphere - Germany
- 2021 Large Oval NOS chandelier – Apartment development, Mayfair, London
- 2021 Bespoke 348 NOS Sphere installation – Private home, London

Recent awards

- 2023 Build Back Better Green Award
- 2020 European Design Award

Shows

- 2025 Open Studios, Second Floor Studio Arts, London
- 2024 Open Studios, Second Floor Studio Arts, London
- 2023 Open Studios, Second Floor Studio Arts, London
- 2022 Open Studios, Second Floor Studio Arts, London
- 2021 Open Studios, Second Floor Studio Arts, London

- 2020 Open Studios, Second Floor Studio Arts, London
- 2019 Modern Makers, NoFormat Gallery, London (NOS Sphere)
- 2019 Second Floor Studio Arts, London (NOS Sphere, Iron, Carved bowl, Hoola)
- 2018 Tiny World, Studio11, London (artist models)
- 2016 Diplomat on the canal, Regent Studios, London (group show)
- 2015 Translocated Making, Royal College of Art, London (Lacquer tribal craft stool)
- 2013 IronMan, .IT All about Design Gallery, London (Iron Man)
- 2010 Salone de mobile, Milan (6 Gun – Officinanove)
- 2010 100% Design, London (Paper Clip – Zoefftig Supporto)
- 2009 Tent, London (Zuki, Ironman)
- 2008 Prima, Ansorg Gallery, London (Zilla)
- 2008 Tent, London (Zuki, Zilla, Omega)
- 2008 Multiplicity, Neuberger Museum, New York (Zilla)
- 2007 Tent, London (Zilla, Bronzeknuckle)
- 2007 Avverti, a dream come true, Milan (Micro furniture, Iron)
- 2007 Edra Showroom, Milan (Dip – Edra)
- 2007 Salone de mobile, Milan (Palm – Arrmet, Arc – Zeritalia, Bono – Artifort)
- 2006 Tower 42, London (Bronzeknuckle)
- 2006 Edra Showroom, Milan (Dip – Edra)
- 2006 Artemide Showroom, Milan (Dip – Edra)
- 2006 Cohabitations, St Etienne Biennale, Paris (Micro Furniture)
- 2006 Salone de mobile, Milan (Palm – Arrmet, Arc – Zeritalia, Bono – Artifort)
- 2005 Salone de mobile, Milan (Inglesina - Sintesi, Arc – Zeritalia, Bono – Artifort)
- 2005 Artemide showroom, Milan (Dip – Edra)
- 2005 Edra Showroom, Milan (Dip – Edra)
- 2004 Kolne messe, Cologne (Bono – Artifort)
- 2004 Promosedia, Udine (Smarter – Arrmet)
- 2004 Diplomat with Momentum, a retrospective, Momentum, Cardiff
- 2004 Salone de mobile, Milan (Bono, Artifort)
- 2004 Edra Showroom, Milan (Dip)
- 2003 Promosedia, Udine (Smarter – Arrmet)
- 2003 Salone de mobile, Milan (Austin, Sonny, Omega, Moore, Sweeney – Bart)
- 2003 Edra showroom, Milan (Dip)
- 2002 Salone de mobile, Milan (Lobe – Covo, Pocket & Parasite – RSVP)
- 2002 MACEF, Milan (Lobe – Covo, Pocket & Parasite – RSVP)
- 2002 Koln Messe, Cologne (Smarter – Arrmet, Plus & More – Origlia)
- 2001 Salone de mobile, Milan (Plus & More – Origlia)
- 2001 Saporiti Showroom, Milan (Micro Furniture)
- 2001 BBC Innovate exhibition, London (Mirco Furniture)
- 2001 Circline, NYC (Story or Ooh!)
- 2001 Annotomique, Paris (Iron)
- 2000 Salone Satellite, Milan (Micro Furniture, Story of Ooh!)
- 2000 British European Design Group, Berlin (Corian Hoola, Micro Furniture)
- 1999 Diplomat on Concorde, 100% Design, London (Micro Furniture)
- 1998 Diplomat at the Embassy, London (Concrete Hoola, Story of Ooh, Stalk light)

Books

- Avverti, A Dream Come True 2007, Fondazione Cosmit EventiDesign
- Design Furniture & Lights 2007, Oscar Asensio, ISBN 10: 0-8109-9294-9
- The International Design Yearbook 2007, Lawrence King ISBN 10: 1-85669-516-6
- ADI Design Index 2007
- 1000 New Designs and where to find them 206, Jennifer Hudson ISBN 10: 185669466 6
- Absolut Architectuur, 2005, ISBN 908085252X
- ZOO Issue 4 2000, Will Gompertz, The Friday Press
- The International Design Yearbook 2000, Lawrence King ISBN 10: 1856691802