

David Byrne: *How I Learned About Non-Rational Logic*

January 13 – February 19, 2022
 540 West 25th Street
 New York



Left to right: David Byrne, *Who's a Pretty Boy Then*, 2021 © David Byrne, courtesy Pace Gallery; David Byrne, *Immersive*, 2021 © David Byrne, courtesy Pace Gallery

New York – Pace Gallery is pleased to present a selection of drawings created by the artist and musician David Byrne over the last 20 years. On view at 540 West 25th Street in New York from January 13 to February 19, 2022, *David Byrne: How I Learned About Non-Rational Logic* will include works from the artist's dingbats series of drawings made during the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of his tree drawings from the early 2000s, and a selection of his drawings of chairs from 2004–07. In addition, Phaidon will release a book of the artist's dingbats drawings on February 16, 2022. The drawings in Pace's presentation shed light on Byrne's distinct formal style and expansive visual arts practice.

Throughout his five-decade-long career, Byrne has nurtured a fine arts practice spanning drawing, photography, installation, performance, and design. In 2008, he was commissioned by the nonprofit Creative Time to transform the interior of the Battery Maritime Building in Lower Manhattan—the exhibited work, titled *Playing the Building* (2005), comprises an immersive sound sculpture. The artist has also presented public installations at Pace Gallery in New York in 2011 and Saks Fifth Avenue in New York in 2002.

This presentation follows Byrne's 2020 exhibition with Pace—an online showing of 50 dingbats drawings produced during quarantine—and it marks the artist's eighth collaboration with the gallery since 2003. Works in his dingbats series grapple with the attendant boredom, anxiety, and loneliness of quarantine as well as the inequities and injustices highlighted by the pandemic. The dingbats are Byrne's response to these conditions—an imaginative way of expressing hope, desire for connection, and the power of community.

Byrne often imbues his drawings with surreal, playful qualities. He once wrote of his lively, multifarious depictions of chairs, "Maybe they are portraits, maybe self-portraits, maybe portraits of my interior state. Maybe they are also possible practical furniture design. Maybe all of the above at once." He has described his tree drawings, in which the artist labels the expansive branches and roots of trees with varied signifiers, as "faux science, automatic writing, self-analysis, satire and maybe even a serious attempt at finding connections where none were thought to exist. And an excuse to draw plant-like forms and diagrams."

The artist's work can be found in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Byrne's recently reopened and acclaimed Broadway musical production *David Byrne's American Utopia* will continue its run throughout Pace's presentation. Phaidon's book on Byrne's dingbats drawings, being released on February 16, 2022, is skillfully designed and edited by artist and curator Alex Kalman and made in close collaboration with Byrne. *A History of the World (in Dingbats)* is a charming collection of more than 100-line drawings Byrne created while in quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic.

David Byrne (b. 1952, Dumbarton, Scotland) was raised in Baltimore where he briefly attended the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in 1971 after transferring from the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence.

Byrne studied photography, performance, and video production at MICA. In 1975 Byrne co-founded the group Talking Heads, who in the 80s introduced an innovative visual approach to their performances.

Byrne has been involved with photography, drawing, installations, performance and design since college and has been publishing and exhibiting his work since the 1990s. Like his music, Byrne's visual work has the capacity to elevate and transform ordinary elements into iconic ones and challenges our fundamental notions of what can be classified as art.

Recent works include the Broadway debut of *David Byrne's American Utopia* (2019) as well as the forthcoming Spike Lee directed film version (2020), the launch of his *Reasons to be Cheerful* online magazine (2019), and the solo album *American Utopia* (2018). Byrne co-founded the band Talking Heads (1976), for which he was the guitarist and lead singer, and established the record labels Luaka Bop (1988) and Todo Mundo (2008). Other artistic achievements include the theatrical piece *Joan of Arc: Into the Fire* (2017); a series of interactive environments questioning human perception and bias, *The Institute Presents: NEUROSOCIETY* (2016); the theatrical production *Here Lies Love* (2013); the public installation *Tight Spot* (2011) at Pace Gallery; the audio installation *Playing the Building* (2005); the public installation *Everything is Connected* (2002) at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York. Byrne wrote, directed, and starred in *True Stories*, a musical collage of discordant Americana released in 1986. For his contribution to *The Last Emperor's* soundtrack Byrne received an Academy Award for Best Original Score and in 2004, Byrne won the Wired Award for Art for his project *Envisioning Emotional Epistemological Information (EEEI)* that used the presentation software PowerPoint as an art medium.

Byrne's work belongs to numerous collections, including the Denver Art Museum and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C.

His book projects include *True Stories* (1986); *Strange Ritual* (1995); *Your Action World* (1998, 1999); *The New Sins/Los Nuevos Pecados* (2001); *David Byrne Asks You: What Is It?* (2002); *Envisioning Emotional Epistemological Information* (2003); *Arboretum* (2006) and *How Music Works* (2012).

Byrne lives and works in New York City.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

The gallery has also spearheaded explorations into the intersection of art and technology through its new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists cultivating advanced studio practices. Pace's presence in Silicon Valley since 2016 has bolstered its longstanding support of experimental practices and digital artmaking. As part of its commitment to innovative, technologically engaged artists within and beyond its program, Pace launched its own dedicated NFT platform, Pace Verso, in November 2021. The gallery's past NFT projects have spotlighted digital works by Glenn Kaino, DRIFT, Lucas Samaras, Simon Denny, Urs Fischer, John Gerrard, and other artists.

Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide including London, Geneva, a strong foothold in Palo Alto, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2020, Pace opened temporary exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach, with continued programming on a seasonal basis.

Press Inquiries

Adriana Elgarresta
Director of Public Relations
aelgarresta@pacegallery.com
+1 305 498 1649

Claire Hurley
Senior Public Relations Associate
churley@pacegallery.com
+1 703 901 1960

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