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 SOCIAL! at The Park Avenue Armory, the Broadway debut of David Byrne’s American Utopia (2019) as well as the 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 lives and works in New York City.