

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street presents**

## ***Sittings***

**A solo exhibition of work by Bay Area artist David Wilson  
developed over 4 months in residency at The David Ireland House in 2021**

**May 1 through July 31, 2021**

**FREE**

**(San Francisco, CA, March 8, 2021)**—Three mornings a week, Bay Area artist David Wilson climbs a hidden ladder through the attic of The David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street to the roof where he perches on the steep peak to draw the same eastward view of the surrounding neighborhood. Wilson, who creates observational drawings based on direct experiences with landscape and orchestrates site-based gatherings, is The David Ireland House’s first long term artist-in-residence. Given free rein to investigate the House on his own as it remained closed due to the pandemic, Wilson was immediately drawn to the roof. For Wilson, it is a place to contemplate the vacillation between the interior and exterior, a way to heighten his sense of where he is, and a means of situating artist David Ireland’s historic home turned work of art within the neighborhood.

This May 1 through July 31, 2021, the results of Wilson’s 4-month exploration of the House, its archive, and the streets around it will be on display in a new exhibition entitled *Sittings*. The free exhibition encompasses an installation of his work within the rooms of the House, often in conversation with objects of interest from the Ireland archive, and the transformation of the House’s garage into a street-accessible space where visitors can pick up maps to sites of neighborhood intervention where they are invited to sit, discover small artist-created offerings, and leave their own mark on the project.

In this way, Wilson offers a constellation of independent experiences that result in a shared intimacy—while remaining safely apart—as a unique opportunity to ‘convene’ in a time when gathering is discouraged.

On many levels, Wilson’s art practice shares kinship with Ireland’s. Informed by place and a process of discovery, Wilson engages in conceptual gestures and makes work to draw attention to everyday spaces and accidental places.

Particularly meaningful in the early days of his residency, which began February 1, was an encounter Wilson had with a small red notebook that Ireland titled *David Ireland’s House (1980)*. In it, Ireland writes about an epiphany he had after hearing an art history lecturer say of the work of architect Louis I. Kahn, “He wanted his buildings to look like they had not been designed.” “There it was and those words stiffened me in my chair,” Ireland wrote in the notebook. “I could test these words against everything that I had been thinking about in the past months. I could look at my work and ask myself if I had designed it or altered it from its existing perfection. Had I done more to it than simply give it fuel or a life of its own?”

“It was a perfect first encounter,” says Wilson. “It’s very personal and has stuck with me—this question of how you can reveal, excavate, and peel layers to pursue the intrinsic qualities of a thing. It’s what I aim to do in my work.”

Wilson’s days in the House begin with a ritual for which he writes various scores, such as:

*Sit on the floor in meditation*

*Take off both socks*

*Stretch*

*Rub and work the leg muscles that hurt*

*Rub and work in the leather of my new shoes*

*Replace brown shoe laces with pink shoe laces*

*\*while facing the window*

Then he ascends to the roof for another episode of drawing and often follows that with a walk in the neighborhood where he makes what he calls score drawings, marking quick individual impressions of the sidewalk while in motion, searching for potential sites to work into. “I think a lot about spots—particularly in between spaces,” he says. “I’m interested in finding places where you have the feeling of being held by space. Creating a score helps me define the physical parameters in the process of searching, drawing, and offering site engagements.”

Wilson’s score drawings from his walks and from the rooftop will be on display within The David Ireland House, along with more durational drawings and select items from the Ireland archive such as the musical score Ireland created in honor of John Cage by rolling heavy balls across an

etching plate (David Ireland, *A Variation on 79, Side to Side Passes of a Dumbbell, Dedicated to the Memory of John Cage, [1912-1992], 1993.*)

Wilson will also transform his walking scores into printed directions that can be picked up at The David Ireland House's garage for free and followed to several gently developed site installations in the neighborhood. Each will feature a place for sitting, and tucked away nearby, Wilson plans to leave an offering—copies of drawings and cassette recordings of musicians and poets—as well as a guest book in which visitors are invited to leave behind a trace of themselves.

“My maps are a way of bringing people together,” says Wilson. “Gatherings are a big part of my work, but given COVID, in this case, the group experience will be played out individually and over time. The shared experience will be what stimulates a sense of connection.”

Wilson also plans to engage The David Ireland House's Artist Guides, as well as musician and poet friends, in the creation of the site offerings. “To me, these different sites are an opportunity to invite collaborators to participate in a safe way. To give them a platform and lend richness to the offerings. I'm particularly excited to work with the family of 500 Capp Street.”

The House's garage will be the starting point for these directed walks, and the garage itself will become a site. Remodeled to provide street-level access once again, the garage will be a threshold space where visitors off the street can engage with the House and browse a take home reader that Wilson is putting together to give visitors a 'mixtape' experience of material from the Ireland archive—letters, catalogs, and magazines that serve as a time capsule of Bay Area Conceptual art history.

Wilson's generous sprinkling of takeaways for visitors throughout their exhibition experience extends to another favorite analog offering he loves to make—mail art. He plans to work with the House's Artist Guides to create a handmade piece of mail as a “first transmission” ahead of the exhibition opening. Followers of @500CappStreet on social media and newsletter subscribers will be offered an opportunity to sign up to receive a piece of free mail art by post.

Wilson will further be offering a workshop to the teen participants of Artivate, Public Art Now, a program of City Studio led by local artist Amy Berk, through a new partnership with The David Ireland House, and the House will be offering free public programs in conjunction with the exhibition in early summer.

“We are pleased to host Bay Area artist David Wilson as he activates The David Ireland House through our first long-term residency,” says Cait Molloy, Director. “Since February, Wilson has embedded himself into the life of the House, while also building on new connections into our greater community. In a time when we are searching for ways to stay connected, Wilson’s practice highlights the power that walking, sitting, observing, and listening have to do just that.”

### **About David Wilson**

David Wilson creates observational drawings based on direct experiences with landscape and orchestrates site-based gatherings that draw together a wide net of artists, performers, filmmakers, chefs, and artisans into collaborative relationships. He organized the experimental exhibition *The Possible* at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) and received the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) 2012 SECA Art Award. He has exhibited his work with SFMOMA, was included in the 2010 CA Biennial, and presented a Matrix solo exhibition at BAMPFA. Wilson has received grants from The Andy Warhol Foundation, Southern Exposure, The Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design, and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. He is based in Oakland, CA.

### **About The David Ireland House**

The David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street in San Francisco is the historic home turned work of art created by the late, pioneering conceptual artist David Ireland. The House presents exhibitions and educational programs celebrating Ireland's artistic legacy, and hosts collaborative events to strengthen San Francisco's cultural community—bringing together artists, scholars, teachers, students, and the public—as Ireland's home did during his lifetime.

The House is a member of the Historic Artist Homes and Studios program (HAHS) and has been recognized as a Distinctive Destination by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

### **General Information**

For more information, the public may visit [500cappstreet.org](http://500cappstreet.org) or call (415) 872-9240. The David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street is located at 500 Capp St., San Francisco, CA.

Visiting hours for The David Ireland House (including *Sittings*) are offered Wednesdays-Fridays at 2pm and 4pm; Saturdays 12-5pm. Free reservations can be made online. Snugly fitting masks must be worn and social distancing maintained.

Visitors can also drop by at any time during visiting hours to pick up a free map to David Wilson’s outdoor installations.

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