



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street presents
Libby Black: The Way Things Also Are

The return of David Ireland's *Broom Collection with Boom* serves as an inspiration for new work by Berkeley-based artist Libby Black

September 10 - October 8, 2022

(San Francisco, CA, August 18, 2022) Berkeley-based painter, drawer, and sculptural installation artist Libby Black mines the everyday for meaning, charting a path through personal history and a broader cultural context to explore the intersection of politics, feminism, LGBTQ+ identity, consumerism, and more.

For her solo exhibition at 500 Capp Street, *The Way Things Also Are*, Black takes inspiration from late conceptual artist David Ireland's home, archive, art practice, and legacy to both reveal and propose unseen narratives within the House's domestic spaces and collection. Black unearths the women in Ireland's archive; offers her own queer/lesbian framework for the House; makes visible Ireland's often overlooked, early figure drawings, never before exhibited; and creates space for three rising artists to respond to them. The exhibition title, *The Way Things Also Are*, is a nod to the catalog title, *The Way Things Are*, that accompanied the first retrospective of Ireland's work in 2004 at the Oakland Museum of California.

Black shares with Ireland a deep interest in common domestic objects such as dishes, brooms, and chairs. Her sculptural works are to-scale recreations of these objects made of paper, pencil, hot glue, and acrylic paint. She places these in still-life arrangements, creating hybrids that mix the real and the imaginary. She also produces two-dimensional paintings and drawings based on imagery culled from disparate sources from her everyday life, as well as newspapers and books.

To highlight the artists' common interest in everyday objects, at Black's request, The David Ireland House is bringing back Ireland's much loved *Broom Collection with Boom*, 1978/1988, which will be on loan from SFMOMA for the duration of Black's exhibition and then beyond to the end of the year. The last time the work was exhibited in the House was for its public opening in 2016. Black is creating free-standing paper broom sculptures that will stand in formation in the front parlor room alongside the rare display of this Ireland work.

In the House's bedrooms, Black uses the mattresses as landscapes to explore a queer framework, creating a new narrative in the space alongside and in correspondence with Ireland's works. Paper buckets turned on their sides on the beds bring to mind orifices, intimacy, and the representation of two women in love while also referencing labor, women's work, and stereotypes of gender roles in the household.

From Ireland's collection of archived show announcements, catalogs, and magazines, Black has excavated those that pertain to women artists, bringing them out of the boxes to make them visible in the House through a series of paintings and drawings that incorporate the archived materials.

Black has also pulled from the collection several never-exhibited, early works by Ireland, a number of figure drawings that reveal a softer side to Ireland's oeuvre, such as a pencil sketch of a shirt hanging on a hook. Black writes of it, "So lifeless, but yet so full of life. Trying to be nothing else but a shirt hanging, surrendering, and offering its folds for one to see all its vulnerability."

Citing Ireland's role as educator and her own, Black creates space for three rising, local artists from San Francisco State University—Maryam Safanasab, AJ Serrano, and Nicole Shaffer. For Black, the inclusion of their pieces "grounds us in the present with the threads of the rich history of 500 Capp Street." She states further, "I chose these three artists because each deals in their own way with issues of location and identity which was important to me. I have grown to know them and their art practices through my work at SF State, and have wanted to share space with them and support them."

Curator Lian Ladia states, "The strength in Libby Black's exhibition lies in the critique of the masculine gaze that has been so ever-present in Bay Area Conceptual Art. She selects never-before-seen works from the House's collection and archives that make you reassess the many potentials that an archive can embody and become."

Black's exhibition this fall is part of a series, highlighting the work of three emerging Bay Area artists, who are each staging a solo exhibition of new work created in response to Ireland's historic home turned work of art, the House's archive, and to Ireland's distinct artistic practice. Black's exhibition is followed by conceptual artist Michael Zheng's *A tree is a tree*, on view October 22 to November 19, 2022 and artist Sherwin Rio's *As Above so Below*, December 3, 2022 through February 25, 2023.

The David Ireland House offers several such artist-led exhibitions annually. While artist residencies in all art forms are plentiful, few, if any, allow artists to experiment, learn, and interpret inside an environmental work of art, with access to a broad collection and archive, and with support of curators, staff, and the board. Artist projects begin with a research residency led by curator of exhibitions and programs Lian Ladia and archive assistant Justin Nagle.

“Artist-driven exhibitions are a signature program of 500 Capp Street,” says Cait Molloy, Director. “Through this unique curatorial model, we offer artists not just a place to show their work, but also a fluid, non-hierarchical support system that pushes their practice into new territory. This collaborative process with artists has become a hallmark of our work, one that informs the future of the organization and is an exciting opportunity to grow our support.”

The public has an opportunity to support 500 Capp Street’s growing community of artists and innovative programming October 13, 2022 when the House will be holding its first Benefit Auction, a lively evening of food, drink, festivities, and a live and silent auction of artworks and experiences. Tickets and information available at 500cappstreet.org.

About Libby Black

Libby Black has exhibited nationally and internationally, with such shows as *California Love* at Galerie Droste in Wuppertal, Germany; *Bay Area Now 4* at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; *California Biennial* at the Orange County Museum of Art; and at numerous galleries in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. She received a BFA from Cleveland Institute of Art in 1999 and an MFA at the California College of the Arts in 2001. Black is an Assistant Professor at San Francisco State University.

About David Ireland’s *Broom Collection with Boom*

Broom Collection with Boom, 1978/1988, is one of the most recognized assemblage and sculptural works by David Ireland. The work was a centerpiece at 500 Capp Street for nearly three decades before its acquisition by SFMOMA in 2007. It is composed of old salvaged brooms left behind by the House’s former owner, accordion maker Paul Greub. These are wired together into a ring and arranged in a clock formation. The brooms stand on their bristles and are arrayed from the least to most worn in a counterbalance, stabilized by a boom. Ireland considered this work a social sculpture because he felt that the brooms were a social instrument of Greub’s day to day existence.

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 or call (415) 872-9240. The David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street is located at 500 Capp St., San Francisco, CA.

Free tours of The David Ireland House (including *The Way Things Also Are*) are offered Fridays at 2pm and 4pm. Reservations can be made online. Free self-guided, drop-in visits are welcomed on Saturdays 12-5pm without reservations. Currently, masks are required.

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