

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Two upcoming solo exhibitions round out The David Ireland House's 2022 artist-led exhibition series inviting emerging Bay Area artists to respond to Ireland's legacy**

**Michael Zheng: *A tree is a tree*, October 22 - November 19, 2022**  
**Sherwin Rio: *As Above So Below*, December 3, 2022 - February 25, 2023**

**(San Francisco, CA, September 10, 2022)** This fall, 500 Capp Street presents conceptual artist Michael Zheng's *A tree is a tree* and Sherwin Rio's *As Above So Below*. Both artists were invited to submit proposals for solo exhibitions 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. Their exhibitions are part of a series highlighting the work of three emerging Bay Area artists. Libby Black's *The Way Things Also Are* is currently on view until October 8.

**Michael Zheng: *A tree is a tree*  
October 22 - November 19, 2022**

San Francisco-based conceptual artist Michael Zheng's work is influenced strongly by his Buddhist upbringing. Born in China, Zheng's mother found him a Buddhist master when he was little, and his artwork is an extension of his ongoing exploration of the intrinsic nature of all things. He often uses the spatial, historical, and other contextual characteristics of a site or situation as the formal materials to create his work.

The exhibition title, *A tree is a tree*, is a Buddhist aphorism that informs the works on view, all of which place emphasis on 'seeing' and 'noticing.' Zheng observes details within the architecture, history, and personal stories embedded in Ireland's House as a means of pointing to the transcendent moments inherent in daily life.

Planned works include the conversion of the living room into an enormous camera obscura. The immersive installation, entitled *As Is*, references the upstairs window Ireland blocked with copper and his accompanying audio recording that describes what can be seen outside. Similarly, *As Is* brings the outside in, but in such a way as to subtly critique how framing affects perception. "Life as it is, when framed in a particular way, can intrigue, can be art," writes Zheng.

Zheng also contributes *Wu Wei Drawing*, a large-scale work on paper created by tracing nail holes, smudges, and cracks on the House's wall and then repeating these over and over. For Zheng, this time intensive process is informed by meditation practice—a process of paying

attention to the task at hand and accepting accidents as they occur. “By relinquishing the subjective expectation of the resulting image and instead letting the process dictate the act of drawing, this paradoxically often produces mesmerizing images in the end,” he writes.

*A Root is No Branch* is a large installation of photographic panels that present fragmented views of roots and branches, hung in such a way as to allow the viewer, through their own experience, to question their perceptive process. “Our acquired knowledge makes us ‘presume’ many things, including perhaps that the roots are lower in the soil than the branches in the air,” writes Zheng. “In reality, it’s not necessarily so. A tree is a tree, regardless of how we perceive it.”

Several other works in various media are planned and will be installed throughout the House. An accompanying full-colored catalog will be published for the exhibition.

Michael Zheng’s work has been exhibited internationally including in the Vancouver Biennale, the Baltic Triennial at ICA/London, OSTEN Biennial of Drawing Skopje/National Gallery of N. Macedonia, and Macao Museum of Art/China, and nationally at the Berkeley Art Museum, Contemporary Jewish Museum, de Young Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Marina Abramovic Institute West, and in the Portland Museum of Art Biennial.

**Sherwin Rio: *As Above So Below*  
December 3, 2022 - February 25, 2023**

Sherwin Rio is an interdisciplinary artist working in San Francisco who makes site-specific and research-based work in sculpture, installation, video, performance, and audio. For his exhibition at 500 Capp Street, Rio is inspired by Ireland’s affinity for enclosure, particularly his deep interest in the House’s basement, a space Ireland called “The Grotto” where he sourced dirt for his work and spent many hours in solitude.

Framed by Ireland’s dual relationship to architecture above and below, Rio is creating works that provide alternative, inverse ways of experiencing a house—indebted to the past, the unseen, and the underground.

In one work, Rio opens up the floorboards to reveal a hidden stairwell and extends it, in plexiglass, into the Solarium room above. Rio also finds inspiration in Ireland’s basement, in the network of pipes and electrical conduit, and merges this with an artwork that Ireland made by recording the sound of the pipes and walls. Rio’s sculptural sound installation transmits and amplifies vibrational sound within the House—creaking floorboards, movement of doors, the thudding of feet on stairs. “I see these items—webs of ABS, PVC, unistrut, wood, and conduit—as the veins that bring lifeblood to the house, preserving its ability to function—a need that preceded Ireland and continues into the future,” writes Rio.

Rio also presents a video document of an installation in the House’s inaccessible attic. Responding to Ireland’s dining room—filled with problematic objects, photographs, and animal trophies from safari travels—Rio brings these archival materials to the hidden attic and fills it with household fans, clearing and re-circulating air as a gestural symbol. Rio writes, “The work

is a critical look at the commodification of nature and culture, dominance and violence as leisure, and a business that profited from and upheld ideas born of settler-colonialism, manifest destiny, and global capitalism.”

Additional installation works will be presented throughout the House as well. Rio will live at 500 Capp Street for 10 days in order to develop work for the exhibition.

Sherwin Rio is an interdisciplinary artist who makes visual metaphors addressing colonization, historical public amnesia, and intergenerational storytelling through a Filipinx-American lens. He has exhibited and performed as a solo and collaborative artist throughout the US in venues such as: de Young Museum, Asian Art Museum, Carnegie Museum of Art, Carlsbad Museum of Art, San Jose State University, Portland State University, Dominican University, University of Northern Colorado, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Human Resources, and Torpedo Factory. Awards include a 2019 Graduate Fellowship at Headlands Center for the Arts, the 2019 International Sculpture Center’s Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award, the 2018 Ella King Torrey Award for Innovation & Excellence in the Arts, and the 2017 Jack K. and Gertrude Murphy Fellowship Award.

### **The Exhibition Program at 500 Capp Street**

The David Ireland House offers several 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](http://500cappstreet.org).

### **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.

Free tours of The David Ireland House (including these special exhibitions) 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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