

Ray Beldner

Artist Statement

I first met David Ireland when I was as a graduate student at Mills College, during which time I brought my Sculpture class to his Capp Street home. After graduation, I would often run into him at different events and he always remembered me and was very encouraging. Although I knew his work well, his ideas and artistic legacy became even more evident to me during my time as a Headlands artist in residence and board member. There, with the labor of many young artists, he literally uncovered the history of those former military buildings by stripping away the many layers of old paint. At some point in the process, he fixed the walls with varnish, creating new spaces where the past and present could co-exist within those light-infused walls.

The genesis for David's work at the Headlands probably came in 1976 when he repaired the sidewalk in front of his home and had artist Tom Marioni videotape the event. Most people believe that this was the first deliberate act in David's simple practice of creating art during the process of living itself.

For this exhibition, I removed a square of concrete outside of the gallery and replaced it with fresh cement that I hand mixed and laid in myself. The square can be seen as homage, an act of labor transformed into a functioning work of art, and as a memorial, a headstone that commemorates an influential and humble man, using the means and materials that were his artistic signature.