



Inside the Lower East Side's “Edgy” Gallery, With a Pinch of Milan

A little chat with Totah Gallery's owner, David Totah, who tells us more about the place



Francesca Magnani



David Totah (ph: Francesca Magnani)

We met with David Totah, the owner of Totah Gallery on the Lower East Side and, fascinated by his very elegant and edgy space, at once New York and Italian, we asked him a few questions.

When you were growing up, what was the importance of museums or pictures in your home?

As a child, visits to museums and galleries were part of normal life. My father always took me around with him to see the exhibitions that were of interest to him. Then, having grown up in Milan until I was 14, there were always school field trips to the various museums in Italy. At home there was always a back-and-forth of paintings and sculptures, and I had become accustomed to the visual stimulus that they represented, and I think that's partly the cause of my continued pursuit of that stimulus.



Totah Gallery (ph: Francesca Magnani)

How did you get to NY? What brought you here?

I came with my father for the first time when I was 14 years old. I was fascinated by New York, everything seemed exciting and new. Four years later I came to study in Philadelphia, and from there I would always come to New York. I have been living here permanently since 1998.

What is the story of your gallery?

It's a mixture of family tradition and an idea of my own to want to create a meeting place for people bound by the same ethos, interest, a kind of portal to bring together artists and audiences inexplicably bound by the same energy.

How does your gallery fit in among those on the Lower East Side?

When we opened the gallery 7 years ago, it seemed to me to be the neighborhood that was most authentic and conducive to the spirit of the gallery and our artists. But New York is constantly changing, and so today I think with the gallery's identity now well defined, the neighborhood perhaps plays a smaller role than it did in the beginning.



David Totah (ph: Francesca Magnani)

What exhibition is currently on?

Melissa McGill, an artist who is heavily involved in ecological activism, through her work often exposes the way nature is not respected by humans. This exhibition is dedicated to water, seas, rivers and glaciers that are melting as far as the eye can see. She expresses herself with paintings, drawings, installations painted with an organic indigo ink and also with boxes containing footage of bodies of water. Melissa also has a strong connection to Italy, particularly Venice, where in 2019 she created the Red Regatta as a symbol of alarm to save Venice.

If you would like to meet her, she will be in conversation with Hadrien Coumans, director of the Lenape Center tonight at 6.

For more information and the RSVP: <https://www.davidtotah.com/exhibitions>



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Francesca Magnani scrive e fotografa e traduce e insegna italiano a New York dal 1997. Ha una formazio...