

## ***Two Voices In Tandem: Michael De Feo & Shira Toren***

### **Craven Contemporary, Kent, CT**

July 19 - September 14, 2025

Craven Contemporary is excited to announce, "Two Voices In Tandem" featuring work by New York painters Michael De Feo and Shira Toren. The exhibition opens on Saturday July 19<sup>th</sup> with a reception for the artists from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Two artists with different histories and practices intersect and converse in their same overlapped interests. De Feo and Toren create paintings that explore chaos and order, organic abstraction, and beauty in the ephemeral. The artists seek to create living objects that are imbued with these ideas and energy.

Their output is physically manifested predominantly in the medium of painting on canvas. Toren uses Venetian plaster, pigments, and acrylics whereas De Feo uses oils and oil sticks. Both artists activate their surfaces by layering and building with their chosen materials. They have developed unique lexicons within their work, languages that were born out of their individual process-driven studio practices that tap into memory and perception. Although both artists employ additive techniques of layering as well as utilizing subtractive methods to partially or completely alter their surfaces, Toren's paintings are a mostly smooth, slick texture whereas De Feo's have pronounced or course texture. Constant change is embraced.

Renewal, loss and growth are frequent themes for both artists. De Feo has said of his work, "The perpetual spinning of the cycle of life and the idea of the temporary are major influences on me." Of her 2019 series, *Stepping Stones*, Toren has expressed, "There is a latent tension lingering between presence and absence."

*Two Voices in Tandem* is a presentation of two passionate artists who recognize that letting go can be synonymous with creation and progress.

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**Reception:** Saturday, July 19, 2025 - 4:00 - 6:00 pm

### **Craven Contemporary**

4 Fulling Lane

Kent, CT 06757

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***Michael De Feo*** (b. 1972, Yonkers, NY) is an American artist based in New York City.

De Feo is widely known for his paintings which examine themes of ephemerality, play, growth, and the cycle of life. De Feo's use of, and inspiration from flowers has earned him the nickname, "The Flower Guy".

De Feo's monograph, *Flowers*, was published by Abrams Books in 2019 and was supported with a tour of museums and bookshops in both America and Europe. His most recent book, *Out of Fashion*, was published by Poster House New York in 2022. Michael's work has appeared in a variety of film documentaries including Alice Arnold's *To Be Seen* (aired on PBS/WNET and

screened at The Museum of Modern Art, 2006); and Banksy's Exit Through The Gift Shop: A Banksy Film (Paranoid Pictures, 2010) which was an Academy Award best documentary nominee. De Feo's work has been profiled in over 40 books, countless media outlets including The New York Times, aVogue, Forbes, New York Magazine and more. Michael has collaborated with fashion brands such as Neiman Marcus, Christian Louboutin, La Mer, and French luxury perfume house, Guerlain.

In addition to Craven Contemporary, his work has been exhibited at museums and galleries around the world including The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY; MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; Rice Gallery, Rice University, Houston, TX; Museo de Arte, San Juan, Puerto Rico; and most recently, Hexton Gallery, Aspen, CO.

**Shira Toren** (born 1957) is an American visual artist originally from Tel Aviv, Israel, currently based in the Gowanus section of Brooklyn, New York. She holds a BFA from Pratt Institute and an Associate Degree in Art Therapy from The New School. She also studied painting and printmaking at The Art Students League of New York.

After graduating from Pratt, Toren worked as a fashion designer specializing in knitwear and pattern construction. Her work led her to travel extensively throughout Asia and Europe. This experience-rooted in a deep understanding of materiality, structure, and color-continues to inform her visual art practice, which often weaves together Eastern and Western influences.

Toren is currently a resident artist at the Painting Space 122 Studio Project (2024-2025) in the East Village, New York City.

Her work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally at a wide range of museums and galleries, including: Thierry Goldberg Gallery (New York, NY); NYU Gallery (New York, NY); Front Room Gallery (Hudson, NY); Craven Contemporary (Kent, CT); Bernay Fine Art (Great Barrington, MA); Susan Eley Fine Art (New York, NY); Gallery Sitka (Newport, RI); Sweet Lorraine Gallery (Brooklyn, NY); The Arsenal Gallery in Central Park (New York, NY); The Painting Center (Chelsea, NY); Katonah Museum of Art (Katonah, NY); Islip Museum (Islip, NY); Galerie Bij de Boeken (Ulf, The Netherlands); and Galerie Schaeffer Gate 5 (Oslo, Norway), and more.

Toren participated in The Flag Project at Rockefeller Center, where one of her paintings was transformed into a large-scale flag and publicly displayed at Rockefeller Plaza. Her work was also prominently featured in the Amazon Prime Video miniseries *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (2024), where several of her paintings were selected for the interior set design of the show's central apartment.

She is currently exhibiting at Craven contemporary, PS122 Gallery and The Arsenal Gallery in Central Park, New York City. An additional exhibition is scheduled to open in fall 2025 at Elza Kayal Gallery .