

Press release:

## **In the Light of Corot**

September 8-October 2, 2010

opening reception: Tuesday,  
September 14, 6-8pm

Shfap presents a group exhibition about the influence of 19<sup>th</sup> century French master Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875) on contemporary landscape painting. Corot may appear an unlikely model for contemporary painters, yet he possesses a mixture of technical virtuosity and reticence that inspired the painter Robert De Niro Sr to describe Corot's "carnival of understatements." It is his sophisticated mix of the classical, the painterly and the naturalistic that speaks to contemporary artists. The exhibition title refers to the 1996 National Gallery exhibition that explored Corot's early work produced during two trips to Italy in relation to other pre-impressionist practitioners of direct landscape painting such as Thomas Jones and Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes. Corot's early Italian works, brighter and blonder than his later work, often painted on paper are now especially prized and are particularly relevant to many of the painters seen here.



Lennart Anderson, *The Terrace*, 1964, o/c, 12 x 16 in

With his emphasis on *tone* in painting, Lennart Anderson has always considered Corot, as central to his scholarly conversation with painterly tradition. Indeed Anderson has painted in the Italian countryside small paintings of hillsides that evoke Corot's precise touch and light. Here, Anderson's 1964 painting from S. Dartmouth Massachusetts present a sparkling terrace alongside a bay broken by one lone tree that speaks directly and eloquently, particularly in its luminosity and the painterly shorthand of the tree, to Corot's paintings of Lake Como.



Israel Hershberg, *On the way to Orvieto*, 2009-2010, oil on linen mounted on wood, 7 1/2 x 13 3/8 in.

In recent summers Israel Hershberg who runs the Jerusalem Studio School leads a summer session in Italy. He tracked down and photographed spots where Corot worked just as John Rewald did with the Impressionists. Hershberg's own landscapes of Italy and Israel display a profound meditation on Corot's Italian period landscapes displaying perfect pitch of hazy atmospheric tone.

**steven harvey** fine art projects

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Kurt Knobelsdorf, *(From) Inwood Park*, 2009, oil on panel, 7 x 8 ½"

Kurt Knobelsdorf is a young painter who studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He is presently working in Miami. Knobelsdorf often starts his landscapes in front of the motif and continues them later in his studio working from photographs he take in situ. Knobelsdorf's synthetic approach to painting from nature, echoes Corot's complex intermingling of direct observation and studio work.



Sangram Majumdar, *Midday Sun*, oil on paper on panel, 19 x 21 7/8"

Sangram Majumdar whose work was seen in the 2010 American Academy Invitational, seems linked to Euan Uglow and Lennart Anderson. He has taken the idea of working from life into an ever more complex studio practice. Just as in Corot, memory and actuality are comingled into the ultimate reality of the picture plane.



Hank Pitcher, *Winter Solstice at Point Conception*, 2007, oil on canvas over wood, 36 x 48 in

Hank Pitcher is a California based painter who has made plein air landscape painting the core of his practice. In the virtuosity of his "blond" palette pictures he effortlessly recalls Corot's Italian period paintings transferred to Southern California.



Fairfield Porter, *Wareham, Rt.6*, 1959, oil on canvas, 17 ½ x 31 in

There is a feeling in Fairfield Porter's paintings from the late fifties, in their tamped down color and close values that feels kindred to Corot, despite the fact that Porter seldom mentions Corot in his writing. There is something as well in his unassuming approach to subject matter that echoes the pre-impressionist master.

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Seymour Remenick, *Manayunk from the Canal w. Figure*, oil on paper, 10 ½ x 14 ¼"

Seymour Remenick studied with Hans Hofmann in the late 40's. He said that after making modernist pictures he was drawn back to working directly from nature as Hofmann had encouraged him to do. Painting around Philadelphia, he moved from a darker almost Dutch palette in the 50's to a blonder *plein air* palette often with the same technique that Corot used in Italy -of oil on paper. Remenick is the perfect example of an artist who found in Corot a model for a purist painterly approach, poetically linked to direct experience.



Paul Resika, *Landscape Near Volterra*, 1967, oil on canvas, 45 x 79 in

Paul Resika who also studied with Hans Hofmann, also made a left turn after leaving Hofmann's school, removing himself from New York in the 50's hothouse of Abstract-Expressionism, to seek out alternative models. He went to Italy, to Rome and Venice in the 50's to learn technique that he felt he'd missed studying at Hofmann's. In the early 60's like Lennart Anderson, Resika was deeply influenced by Corot. In 1966 he went to Volterra in Italy to paint where Corot had worked. Producing small paintings of the mountains there, after returning to his Washington Square studio in the autumn of 1966 he made this large landscape.



EM Saniga *Landscape at Ostia Antica*, 2008 oil on panel, 9 1/2" x 11 1/2"

EM Saniga's paintings address Corot with their emphasis on the tonal mid-range. Closely valued, often muted and greyed, Saniga's still lifes and landscapes relate to Corot's later period landscapes with their elegant darkness and landscape of shadows.

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Stuart Shills, *White Buildings*, 2010, oil on canvas

Stuart Shills generally small scale landscape paintings, often oil on paper follow in the tradition of pre-impressionist plein-air landscape painting. Justin Spring has written, “These beautifully focused small works are intimate in scale, suggesting that they have been designed for domestic spaces. They are inspired by European art of nearly two centuries ago but they partake in the contemporary dialog of New York painting. In recognizing and emulating the genius of Corot and other European, pre-modern masters and by incorporating them into what is essentially a contemporary style, Shills an American painter, has suggested new ways to consider the politics and precedents of landscape in contemporary painting.”

With their soft-spoken eloquence, Corot’s paintings remains exemplary to a recent generation of painterly representational painters. His images are put up and discussed on Facebook. Prized by earlier painters such as Picasso, Matisse and Eilshemius, Corot continues his timeless conversation with the present.

Shfap presents exhibitions of contemporary and modern painting at our gallery space on east 73<sup>rd</sup> street and elsewhere, represents artists and estates and produces publications by and about art. It is run by dealer/curator/artist steven harvey who has curated exhibitions of James Lee Byars, Louis Michel Eilshemius and Louisa Matthiasdottir among others. Please contact Steven Harvey at 917-861-7312 for further information or photographs.

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