

# Gallery chronicle

by James Panero

The exhibition “In the Light of Corot,” organized by Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, considers how a selection of twentieth-century and contemporary painters has contended with this pillar of the Barbizon school.<sup>3</sup> “In the Light” not only considers Corot’s treatment of light, in particular during his early Italian sojourn, but also asks deeper questions about the continued relevance of landscape “in light of” Corot’s accomplishments. For a few artists who came of age midcentury and passed through the push-pull lessons of Hans Hofmann, the calling of Corot sent them in a new direction. In the 1960s, Paul Resika traveled to Italy in the footsteps of Corot. In this exhibition, Harvey displays a large, warm Resika landscape of a hillside road, one of the few to survive a fire in the artist’s studio. Here the title *Landscape Near Volterra* (1967) is literal. Resika locates us near Volterra, but still several miles away from the hilltop town that Corot depicted in his iconic 1834 landscape. Unlike the Corot, Resika’s landscape also plants our feet firmly within the world in front of us, where the country road leads off to the tiny town dotting the horizon. The grand painting is a knowing homage of its source material, “near” but not altogether “in” the mode of the master. Maybe “Near the light of Corot” would have been a better title for this show, with all of the paintings arrayed in a Venn diagram of various proximity to the plein-air master. An excellent Fairfield Porter from 1959, *Wareham, Rt. 6*, shares as much light with Corot as an overcast New England day shares with sunkissed Umbria. Yet the distance gives it a visual honesty, something I found lacking in Lennart Anderson’s seascape *The Terrace* (1964). Here an Italianate balcony replete with marble statuary in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts should have been returned cod to Bellaggio. Seymour Remenick’s Corotesque renderings of the warehouses around Philadelphia

likewise seem displaced, too plein-air sweet for down-and-out Philly. With *Midday Sun* (2008), the excellent young painter Sangram Majumdar seems to be working in the light of Dubrow more than Corot. The contemporary painter Israel Hershberg meanwhile turns a cool photorealist eye to the places of Corot’s Italy—here the grand tourist with an oil-on-canvas point and shoot.

“In the Light of Corot” opened at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York, on September 8 and remains on view through October 2, 2010.

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