

CHRIS CORSON-SCOTT
by Michael Fried

The photography of Chris Corson-Scott is masterly in a very quiet way. At twenty-nine, he already has a serious body of work to his credit -- not a large body, that would be asking too much, but work of an extremely high level as regards that elusive marker, "quality." Take for example a recent photograph, "Rain Over a Development on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula" (2014). Everything about it seems exactly right: the viewpoint, which brilliantly includes the red and white traffic cone at the left, effectively nailing down the left-hand margin of the image (important, because the drift of the image is to the right); the registration of the light (suggesting late afternoon, though in fact it is earlier, following a rainstorm, with a drizzle still falling), the clouds, the surface of the water to the right reflecting roseate sky (more water beyond the right-hand edge, of course, but the need to include the traffic cone meant that it had to be elided); the choice of distance, neither near nor far, from the cerulean excavator anchoring the composition even as it sits temporarily abandoned just below the center of the image; four mysterious dark fences running across the grass beyond the excavator from left to right, far to near (slow to declare themselves but providing an element of structure that turns out to be indispensable); trees, houses, a further development (a town or suburb), low irregular hills along the horizon; and in the near foreground the sharp-focus clarity of the road-in-the-making waiting for its tarmac as well as of the ungraded earth to the right. The sense of detail, too, is superb, yielding a wealth of visual and textural information that somehow never swamps the sense of a calm and confident formal imagination organizing the picture as a whole simply by the power of an intelligent, refined, and mature artist's gaze.

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