

Tess E. McKenzie
Nettie crotch

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Nettie crotch
06.06.18—30.06.18

Dr. William Crotch penned 'View from Hurley Bottom' on the 30th of August, 1806 at 5pm. Throughout his career, he consistently notated the chorological details of the completion of a work. This practice was adopted by his friend John Constable whom he had met a year or so before Dr. Crotch drew this particular watercolour. A child prodigy and organist from the age of three and a half, who took to performing with the cajoling and support of his parents, Dr. Crotch is also rumoured to have composed the 'Westminster Chimes', the melody played by Big Ben when it strikes the hour. Later he graduated from Christ Church, Oxford with a Bachelor of Music, and in 1797 he was appointed Heather Professor of Music at Oxford University - during which time he appears to have made this drawing. Hurley Bottom is located (very approximately) half way between London and Oxford. The 30th of August 1806 was a Saturday. One imagines he made the trip to Hurley Bottom as part of a day trip from London, or as a diversion on his way home from Oxford. In Dr. Crotch's original image he depicts a small dip, expanding onto a view of a valley of sorts. It is a verdant but highly cultivated landscape, without many trees to speak of. There is a road, at least one building, the river of course, and a figure riding a horse along said road. The work is held in the Tate collection, reference number T08123, and is available to be viewed upon request.

In *Nettie crotch* (after William Crotch) there are two images collaged over the top of 'View from Hurley Bottom' – one taken specifically and one by accident. The accidental photograph is one taken through fingers, reflecting off a silver ring and beyond. White streaks between the webbing of the fingers suggest the leaves of a tree with light streaming through them. Failing memory leaves the possibility they could even be stars in the night sky. As in Dr. Crotch's painting, one perceives a join or webbing between two forms in the image. Background and foreground tussle undecidedly for prominence. The other image in the print depicts the crotch of a pair of trousers while seated. The anonymous floorboards slip into the background undisturbed. The shadows on the fabric are of the same phone with which the photo was taken. 'Nettie' or 'netty' or 'natty' - meaning neat and elegant - bely the fact that this photo could have been taken anywhere, seated and staring at the seam of one's trousers. On the toilet for instance. Seated in London, there is an awareness that 'netty' is Geordie slang for an outhouse. Extending further, there are also clear linguistic associations with the word 'net', and it is in these contexts that one must acknowledge how this work fumbles forwards (or with hindsight) towards its companions in the room.



Dr. William Crotch (1775 – 1847)

View from Hurley Bottom, 1806

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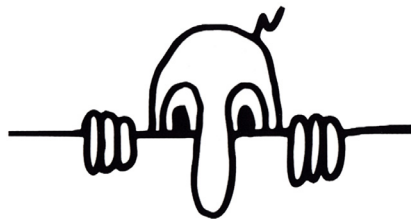
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/crotch-view-from-hurley-bottom-t08123>

SEASURE is secured to the wall using ‘webbing bridges’, employed to keep strapping tidy, predominantly on boats of all types. These particular bridges are manufactured by a sailing supplies company called ‘Sea Sure Ltd’, based in Hampshire. The pearlescent white webbing they hold is, again, often employed in a maritime context. This work acts as an inverted and somewhat perilous bridge across the space, a simulacrum of a valley in the country in which one stands.

Foo was here is a graffito originating during World War One, left behind by Australian soldiers wherever they were posted during the conflict. Encountering Foo's face on a wall or toilet door became an antipodean signature. In of itself the doodle didn't bear much significance, only the implication that someone had been there before you, in the exact same location. 'Foo' (potentially a backronym meaning Forward Observation Officer) then evolved into the American version 'Kilroy was here', or the British 'Mr Chad was here'. This simple scrawl evolved over time to suggest an abstruse relationship between the nationality of the illustrator, a historical (be it significant or arbitrary) incident and the cultural remnants of conflict.

Foo was here is a photograph taken in a valley on the border of England and Wales. Surrounded by two small hills, this area has been forested and farmed since the Bronze Age. Most of the vegetation is artificial. This fragile web was encountered in the early hours of the morning. Dew was still heavy across the valley. The field was in England, although one can't be sure. Nevertheless, the direction of gaze was clear. The photograph is now, quite pointedly, taped on a gallery wall in Australia.

A view from Hurley Bottom
Tess E. McKenzie
June 2018



Tess E. McKenzie is an Australian artist based in London, having graduated with a MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2016 and a BFA (Honours) from the Victorian College of Fine Art (2009). Her practice navigates elements of choreography or gesture, theatre design and a tenuous relationship between repetition and anxiety. Recent exhibitions include; Seventh Gallery (AUS), the Slade School of Fine Art (UK) and at the Hardwick Gallery (UK). In 2016 she completed residencies at the Sidney Nolan Trust and the Slade School of Fine Art.

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