

Collage techniques of cut-and-paste are integral to Hurley's work. Collecting textures and papers from old books and second-hand haunts, his portraits have a genteel, even antique, decorum and a childlike naivety. Not portraits in the usual sense, of accurately representing a person, his works are a carefully neutral approximation, given individual personality with a set of clip-art style accoutrements, or in the particular placement of a lock of hair. Even when working with paint on canvas, rather than with paper, Hurley's collage approach is visible in the curious accessories around his sitters.

The flat, matte areas of colour also reveal the way that Hurley's images are built of flat plans, carefully layered. With a nod to early cubist painter he contrasts those flat areas with carefully, almost mechanically shaded areas, which give an illusion of depth. The archival nature of Hurley's work is reflected not just in his choice of second-hand materials and motifs, but also in his subject matter. Invariably working with historical subjects Hurley's work is laced with a coded nostalgia, where history is reconstructed from fragments and left over relics.

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