

**'Kingfishing' by
Gavin Hurley**

**Boutwell Draper Gallery
11 March – 17 April 2010**

With his parade of personae, Gavin Hurley jumps into the ring with that prim convention of Victorian society, the official portrait, all dressed up, buttoned up and respectacle. But, in a purposeful counterpoint to the pomp, he applies the down-to-earthiness of folk art and the earnest craft of the home spun; in particular his technique of cutting and pasting. This choice might be the subversive comeback of the colonial boy at the back of the well-drilled classroom. It's a more subtle gesture than drawing a moustache on a Mona Lisa. The final product is an endearing mixture and it feeds the informed palette of the post-modern. The work has an immediate appeal. It is clean and desirable. That Victorian decoration has gone. The flat cut-out look comes with the 1950's charm and sensibilities of Warhol's early advertising work, with a debt to a restrained kind of comic. The work has fresh pop manners and it speaks softly about local stories, in an international accent.

'Kingfishing' is the title of Hurley's current series of paintings and collages. Subjects include portraits of John King (sole survivor of the Burke and Wills expedition), paired with an image of a Kingfisher bird, Captain Moonlite appears with a parrot appropriated from Illustrations of Governor Philip's voyage to Botany Bay. Also featured are Prince Albert and other bird portraits, symbolic of national identity.