

# Brisbane

*On Painting*

Guy Maestri

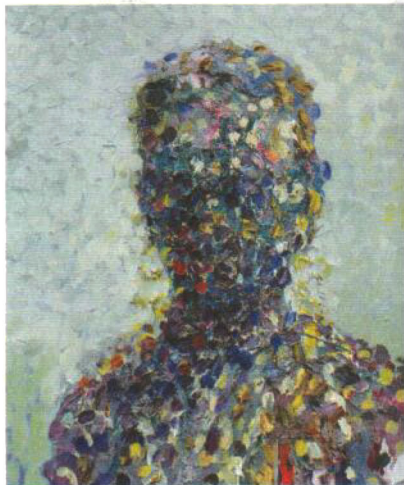
**Jan Murphy Gallery**

27 March—28 April

Guy Maestri is an award-winning painter. His curriculum vitae is long, impressive, and studded with accolades, including winning the 2009 Archibald prize for portraiture. Yet the Sydney-based painter is the first to admit that he still has a lot to learn. "Painting is something that I am endlessly challenged and fascinated by. And I struggle with it," Maestri says.

The results of Maestri's struggle, coupled with his endless capacity to learn, can be seen in his solo show, *On Painting*. In this body of work the artist decided to, as he puts it, "get back to square one." The motivation for the show, he says, was "really just about me breaking painting down and building it back up again." In a process which he likens to going back to art school, Maestri turned to the work of past masters Velázquez and Van Gogh.

"I started making copies of some of my favourite classical paintings. It really was as simple as that," Maestri explains. "You learn so much by carefully studying how somebody else put something together. And it's a kind of meditation too." *On Painting* includes some of these studies, which nevertheless have Maestri's



Guy Maestri, *Pointalist Self Portrait*, 2018, oil on linen, 61 x 51 cm.

distinctive flair, and also a number of self-portraits in which the artist turns his hand to various art historical styles. In these he says, "I look reasonably troubled," evidence of the challenges inherent in being on a perpetual learning curve.

*On Painting* also features some of Maestri's figurative bronze sculptures which start as clay busts. But the artist admits that these too are about painting. "Working with clay is very much a painterly thing. It has been a great extension of painting," he says. "Really, essentially, I think I will always be a painter." — TRACEY CLEMENT