

Guido Maestri

Middle Brother Mountain

31 May – 18 June 2022

Jan Murphy is proud to present Guido Maestri's latest solo exhibition *Middle Brother Mountain*.

'I plant beds of flowers, pave custom paths, carve out cliffs and shape the flow of rivers. Exercising total control of the landscape means I can believe this space is uncomplicated—I don't need to look beyond the boundaries of my island'
Hannah Jenkins, From the other side of the horizon, Running Dog (2020)

Jenkins writes of Animal Crossing: New Horizons, a Nintendo game whereby you're invited to collect, curate, customise, and control your own personal virtual environment. This premise reminds me of the paintings that make up Guido's Middle Brother Mountain. Instinctively drawing on an archive or index of 'learnt' landscapes, both experienced and imagined, (of places such as Hill End, Cuttagee, Mount Wilson, Comboyne and Middle Brother Mountain) Guido constructs, composes, performs, and controls new ones. The works are inventive, personal, and historical. 'Historical in the sense that they are made from a collection of past parts' (as Stella rosa McDonald writes in her essay Paintings of Paintings, 2017).

Landscape is used here both conventionally and unconventionally, the traditional notion is implied thematically and compositionally, yet also challenged, transformed, and destabilised. Guido's act of replaying, retelling, and re-presenting these 'learnt' places results in their fictionalisation and furthermore, hybridization. Hues typical of landscape, such as blues and greens, are swapped out for colour combinations collected and informed by items in Guido's immediate, and carefully controlled, environment; his Marrickville studio. These items include past paintings of places, a pastel themed colour chart, photos of Gouldian finches and print outs of nudibranchs (sea slugs).

These new works signify Guido's eagerness to break out of what Hockney calls 'the trap of naturalism'. They exist somewhere between fantasy and fact, made inside of outside, they are familiar yet wildly unfamiliar and as Gombrich states in Art and Illusion 'The familiar will always remain the likely starting point for the rendering of the unfamiliar'.
Sally Anderson, 2022.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

A graduate of The National Art School, Maestri won the Archibald Prize in 2009 and is an eight-time finalist in the Wynne Prize (2012-2017, 2020-2021). In 2014 Maestri was awarded The Kings School Art Prize and in 2013 was the winner of the Premier's Plein Air Painting Prize.

He is a regular finalist in major art awards nation wide and his work is held in several public collections, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Portrait Gallery, the Art Gallery of South Australia, Artbank and Parliament House collections.

In 2021 Maestri was honoured with a major solo exhibition titled '*Stories from Homedale*' at the newly opened Mudgee Arts Precinct, NSW.