

YAVUZ GALLERY SYDNEY | PRESS RELEASE | 27 MAR 2021

short stories

Guy Maestri

Exhibition dates: 8 April to 1 May 2021
Location: Yavuz Gallery Sydney
86 George Street, Redfern, NSW 2016 Australia

Yavuz Gallery Sydney is pleased to present Guy Maestri in his inaugural exhibition with the gallery titled *short stories*. This exhibition also marks his first solo presentation in his hometown in six years.

With a practice that spans over two decades, the Archibald-winning Australian painter and sculptor is renowned for his highly textural, expressive works that explore painted materiality, gesture and observation.

Often beginning his paintings *en plein air*, Maestri will rework his canvases, finally pushing them to completion within the walls of his industrial Marrickville studio. Working within a strong tradition of Australian landscape paintings, Maestri embraces painting in the bush in the open air. He has embarked on many journeys across the Australian mainland to paint its vast and varied landscape.

It is over the course of frequent visits to the regional New South Wales towns of Hill End, Mount Victoria and Mudgee that Maestri commenced the paintings in this new body of work *short stories*. The exhibition comprises eight individual large-scale paintings and one diptych; all depicting a different view of the landscape in a notably portrait format. While alluding to native and introduced flora that is distinctly Australian, the simple forms and emotive colours directly references children books.

Maestri's new body of work is inspired by some of the mystical landscapes in the story books he reads to his son every night, some of which his mother read to him as a child. In the studio, the paintings depart from their *en plein air* beginnings to become imaginary, playful worlds that sway in and out of reality.

With this new body of work, Maestri departed from a more traditional earthy colour palette to embrace bold and strong non-naturalistic colours such as bright yellows, pinks and blues, some of them applied directly from the tube. By thick layering of flat blocks and patches of colour, the shapes are simplified to the point of abstraction. Maestri creates pictorial spaces that echo the two-dimensionality of the canvas.

Using an impasto technique, Maestri's gestural painting practice leaves brush or painting-knife strokes visible. The movement and energy that transpire from his fierce painterly mark-making reveal lush, dynamic and lively landscapes.

Playing with abstraction and loose brushworks has allowed Maestri to inhabit a new realm where he wanders about in his paintings; a process that he describes as both "automatic and meditative". It is, without a doubt, this newfound playfulness that has enabled him to move away from the reality of his subjects offering portals to surreal wonderlands.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Mudgee, a country town of New South Wales, Guy Maestri (b. 1974, Australia) is known for his highly textural, expressive works that explore the painted materiality, gesture and observation. Although he is noted for his *en plein air* paintings and strong connection to the Australian landscape, Maestri also employs still-life and portraiture to investigate the

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conventions of painting. Maestri's love affair with the Australian landscape has taken him across the mainland in search of new vistas to paint, covering areas including including the Tanami Desert, Northern Territory; Western Volcanic Plains, Victoria; Mutawintji National Park, New South Wales; Hill End, a former gold mining town in New South Wales. Recently, he has produced series' of vibrantly coloured cast bronze bust sculptures that are deceptively rendered to look like plasticine.

In 2009, Maestri won the prestigious Archibald Prize, Australia's major portraiture award. He has also been awarded the 2014 Kings School Art Prize (Australia) and the 2013 Premier's Plein Air Painting Prize (Australia). He is a regular finalist in the Wynne Prize for Landscape at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Australia). His works are collected widely, including institutions such as National Portrait Gallery (Australia), Art Gallery of New South Wales (Australia), Art Gallery of South Australia, and Fubon Art Foundation (Taiwan).

Guy Maestri is also represented by Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, Australia

For inquiries and more information, please contact:

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Selected Images



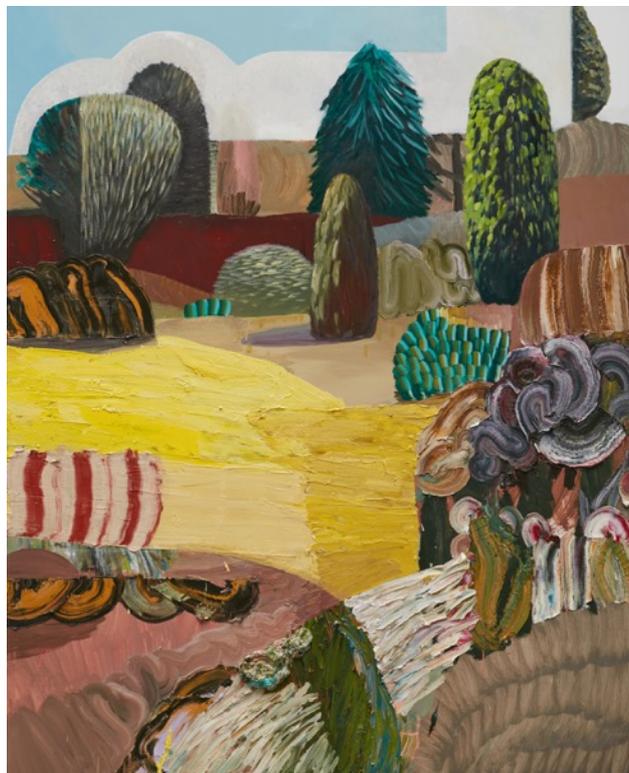
Test Pattern, 2021, oil on linen, 168 x 137 cm

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Berkele's Creek, 2021, oil on linen, 200 x 240 cm



Half Half, 2021, oil on linen, 168 x 137 cm

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