Riverbank/Memory bank, Nudibranch, Virtual Gardens and 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 replaying, retelling, and re-presenting these 'learnt' places results in their fictionalisation and 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 printouts of nudibranchs.

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.