

SANDRA HIGGINS

Independent Art Advisor and Curator

Press Release

JEANNE MASOERO

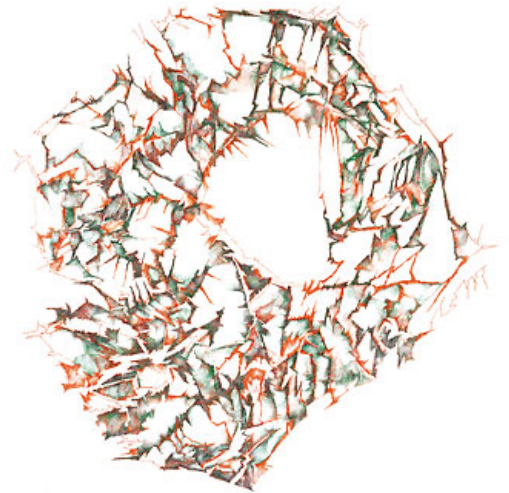
Invisible Cities: A Mayan Journey

Sandra Higgins Fine Art
Chelsea, London

17 June - July 1, 2015

Private View: Wed. 17th of June, 6 - 8.30pm

Illustrated: *Spiderweb City*, 1992, acrylic on canvas, 91.5 x 91.5cm



'A Journey...Take time for this journey, along winding paths leading to secret places and a subtle landscape of light and shadow, of ridges, crevices, where once cities existed.'

Jeanne Masoero

'The dramatic landscape of the Yucatan, the extraordinary architecture and echoing spaces of the great Mayan and Aztec sites had a profound effect upon her.' (Essay: 'Background to an Artist's Life' by Edward Rutherford in *JEANNE MASOERO: A SURVEY* by Sacha Craddock, Lund Humphries, 2002)

In the summer of 1977, Jeanne Masoero began one of the most important journeys for the development of her work, a journey through the Mayan sites of Yucatan in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, inspired by the writing of Italo Calvino. Throughout this personal journey she explored unexpected and surprising paths, both physically and emotionally. She discovered the ruins of Mayan architecture which became the basis for this show of '*Invisible Cities*'. As in Calvino, the names of the cities she depicted were inventions of her imagination and not the real names. For Masoero, it was a process of discovery, where the travel was more important than the destination. The canvas became for her the place from which the artist starts a journey, a map to lead us to those imaginary and invisible places that inhabit the self. Her work is not the image of the place but the experience of that place. 'I always loved maps, even as a child.'...

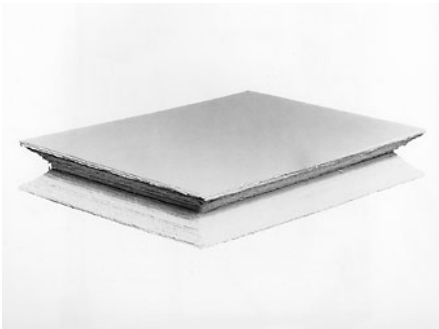
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The works in this exhibition divide themselves into three different series and periods of the artist's life:

The **paper reliefs** from the series *Basis for Light* - Works with paper, 1972-1979

'Jeanne Masoero uses paper in what might be called a painterly way. At a superficial glance, from a distance, her new works could be mistaken for textured white paintings in creamy oil colour. But closer inspection reveals that the light is reflected from them in quite a different way than from paint. They are in fact cotton-duck canvases on which torn or cut paper is very carefully layered and stuck down with PVA. Finally, part of the top surface of the paper is torn off to give the rich, creamy texture which can at first make one mistake these for paintings. The richness is the result of the way the light strikes the irregular surface of the paper.' (Paul Overy, Catalogue essay for '*BASIS FOR LIGHT*' exhibition at the ICA, London, 1977)

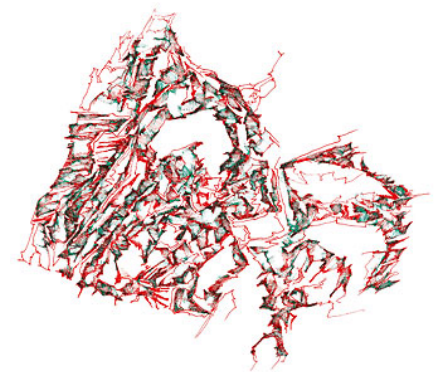


'One source of inspiration for these paper works lies in Jeanne Masoero's visits to the Mayan sites in Central America where she admired the temples and pyramids. She created a topography of light and shadow, of ridges and crevices, where the beholder's eye explores a rhythmic as if naturally grown pattern spreading across the canvas, or shaping a three-dimensional object from the stacked paper.'

(Catalogue essay by Carlotta Graedel-Matthai from '*WORKS WITH PAPER*' exhibition at Austin/Desmond Fine Art, London, 2005)

Layer and Form II 1978, Stacked paper, 28 x 20 x 4.5cm

The **paintings** and **coloured drawings** from the series *Figures and Light* from 1984-1998 (as illustrated by '*Spiderweb City*')



It was after the paper work, returning to colour, that Jeanne Masoero, in her continuing quest for structure, began in the early 1980's to experiment with the use of points of colour.

'The points of colour are most densely clustered at the centre of each canvas as though held there, like iron filings, by an invisible force. From there they fan out and infiltrate virgin territory, as though travelling along valleys and fault lines. References to landscape are inescapable. Names such as *Lacanha Valley* and *Comalco* refer to Mayan sites where the ruins of a lost civilisation linger, so encouraging associations with ancient places that exert a mythic hold on the imagination.'

(Sarah Kent, "*FIGURES AND LIGHT*", Catalogue, Mall galleries, London, 2003)

I 1986/87, pen and ink on paper, 42 x 42cm

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Masoero has exhibited extensively in the UK and throughout the world, including exhibitions at the Hayward Gallery, London; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; International Art Fair, Basel and as part of the Critics' Choice - New British Art show at Christie's, London. Her work can be found in public and private collections in the UK, Europe, America, Australia and Japan. She was awarded the Austrian Government Fellowship and was a tutor at the Royal College of Art, Goldsmiths and other art colleges.

A video of Jeanne Masoero at work in her studio can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/89177284>

For Masoero's full biography: <http://jeannemasoero.com>

Fact Sheet

Artist: Jeanne Masoero

Exhibition Title: "*Invisible Cities: A Mayan Journey*"

Exhibition Dates: 18 June - July 1, 2015

Private View: Wednesday, 17 June 2015

Location: 46 Harcourt Terrace, Flat 3, Chelsea, London, SW10 9JR

Opening hours: By appointment only

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