

David Graves
Artist Statement

INVISIBLE CITIES is a novel published by Italo Calvino in 1972 describing 55 "cities" supposedly visited by Marco Polo, as told to Kublai Khan. Each city is told as a fanciful parable; an existential meditation.

David Graves began constructing an audio/visual work for each of the Invisible Cities in 2018. Development of a "soundtrack" is followed by synchronization with its visual component. A minimum of three artists are involved with every City. David finalizes each video after consultation with the artists involved, and then uploads them to a website that houses the collection. To date, more than half of the Cities have been completed by an international consortium of nearly 30 artists.

The three works selected for submission to Arts Benicia's *Get the Message: Words and Images* are a representative group of Cities involving David and six other artists: Jorge Bachmann (San Francisco, California), Colleen Corradi Brannigan (Pescara, Italy), Joyce Graves (Eugene, Oregon), Jay Kreimer (Lincoln, Nebraska), and Maria Monsonet (Barcelona, Spain).

When the project began, the plurality of Calvino's prose poems attracted, bewildered and inspired each Invisible City. Each of them can be understood on many different levels; some literal, some not. However, they are especially poignant, given the current state of the world: Marco Polo and Kublai Khan are talking about varied human conditions embodied in each City.