

*Infection Rate*

Digital montage, pen and ink

11" x 8.5"

July, 2020

Response to Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino

At the time I read this book, social situations amidst the pandemic had become confusing. While the CDC recommends staying at or close to home, the advertisements on television and radio suggest embarking on one-tank trips or even farther, posing the question: how many miles justify "close to home?" The CDC also recommends wearing cloth masks and staying 6 feet apart while actual situations from grocery store shopping to visiting a local park blatantly disregard this, creating more inquiries: does wearing my mask underneath my chin qualify for the CDC suggestion? As well as the mass confusion of how far apart 6 feet really is. I was finding it easy to get mixed up in the contrasting views, orders, and suggestions. It was in this frame of mind that I approached Invisible Cities.

The city (or cities) described in the book takes the shape of maps equally disjointed and chaotic but overwhelmed with emblems, signs, and connections. In the beginning there are fears and desires, and the sense that a person's past "changes according to the route he has followed." This then leads to the middle section, which acts as a mirrored replica, and encourages that "the form of things can be discerned better at a distance." In the end it is understood that we live in an inferno and we can either accept it, thereby making it disappear, or we can seek who and what are not inferno and give them space.

In other words, we can be ignorant to the situation or we can be understanding and knowledgeable. If ever these two positions were more relevant it is now.

Titles of images:

01 Desires and Fears

02 Changing Pasts

03 Language and Deceit

04 Happiness and Its Short Supply

05 Seeking a Form

06 Better at a Distance

07 Waste and Greed

08 Dirt Without Air

09 Harmony and Monsters

10 Infection Rate