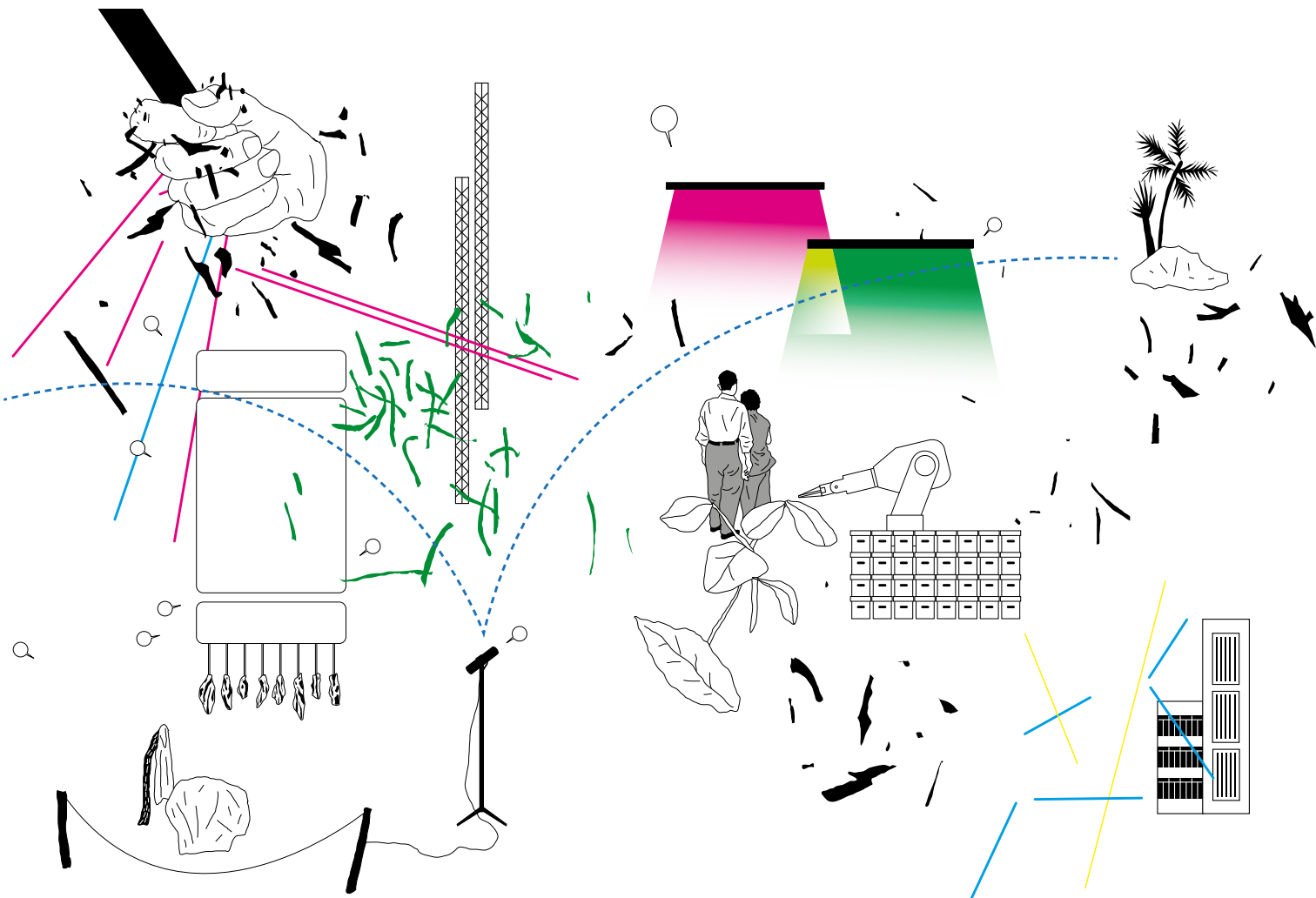


Alternative Knowledges – Communities · Creativity · Narration

Peter Benz
Huaxin Wei
Justin Chiu-Tat Wong

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Thomas Kuhn's (1962) *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and its subsequent extensions by others provided an initial theoretical grasp to frame and understand the parallel existence of different research approaches. In particular, Kuhn realised the importance of social context to any research practice, and how – as a result – the embeddedness in particular contexts could make the “languages” of different research approaches “incommensurable”, i.e. inherently impossible to translate strictly between different contexts.

More recently researchers like Tim Ingold (2009), in his chapter “Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge”, expanded this early take on the practice of research to consider the existence and validity of whole systems of alternative knowledge reflecting the existence of different knowledge forms that are informed, established and passed on within distinct communities, cultures, and/or contexts in other (non-academic) ways including language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, rituals and spirituality. Indigenous knowledge is most often cited as example for such systems as it has proven to sustain societies around the world for many generations, but other communities and (sub)cultures – various minorities, LGBT communities, professional guilds, social classes – may just as much have developed their respective distinct bodies of knowledge.

Many of these knowledge forms are predominantly practical in nature, thus aligning them with creative practices in the arts. Also the arts are alternative knowledge systems in their own right that by their very nature seek to act as agents to adequately capture, interpret and give access to non-conforming knowledge for a broader audience. Where the more conventional formats have exhausted their possibilities, artists, designers, and/or other creatives may create metaphorical spaces for exchange through an externalised conversation between the researcher/creative

practitioner and their subject. According to the painter and Bauhaus educator Paul Klee (1920) in his *Creative Confession*, “art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible.” This implies that creative production isn't about merely (re-)stating the preconceived but making accessible previously inarticulate knowledge by giving it form

The tactile and sensuous knowledge of line, surface, and material that has guided makers through their varied and heterogeneous endeavours since the dawn of humankind, over time became embodied in sets of technology (“science of craft”; from Greek *τέχνη*, “art, skill, cunning of hand”), collections of techniques, skills, methodologies, and/or processes, which the artist/designer – at occasion supported by machines – performs in pursuit of specific objectives. In this sense, technology becomes a methodology for de-constructing and re-constructing, for the coding of knowledge, forming articulations across and beyond specific media.

Albert Eisenstein's *Montage of Attractions* (1921) may be interpreted as an early modern expression of (re-)coding as a conscious creative practice, yet all technologies inherently depend on such codes, on categorisations of objects, preconstructed modules, and standardisation of rules and formula meant for manipulation and sharing between different disciplines. Christian Marclay' (2016) compositional piece *To be Continued* employs graphical comic books elements for his musical scores, thus relying on an underlying framework/system apparently shared by graphic novels and music alike. The discovery of such an analogy constitutes the foundation of his thesis; the musical performance of visual articulations in the scores render the discovery intuitively accessible.

It was with these considerations and examples in mind that we called the global creative community for contributions by summer 2020 in an attempt to map practices for generating and

sharing alternative knowledges across a variety of creative methods and forms.

Our call accepts that there may be an infinite number of equally valid, but possibly less accessible – or merely accessible by certain communities – knowledge systems, much like concurrent physics is considering the existence of a multiverse of parallel universes. If this were indeed our view, then obviously it would be a futile exercise articulating a comprehensive overview of all existing/possible systems. Instead, all we may attempt is articulating potential frameworks to qualitatively and/or quantitatively describe such systems.

Utilising creative technologies to articulate ‘other’ knowledge almost inevitably affects the narration of research by extending it beyond the confines of logical empiricism. Jerome Bruner’s (1991) *The Narrative Construction of Reality* argues how the narrative acceptability shifts from the exclusive hegemony of verifiable content to the persuasion of hermeneutic composition.

Picking up on this line of thought, within this issue we came up with three frameworks to “read” and interlink our contributions.

An initial review of contributions in this issue suggests a handful of approaches and techniques that warrant further exploration for their potentials towards more systematic structures in alternative knowledges. They articulate through:

1. Format “leaps” between research process and its outputs (e.g. by Chow, and/or Erdmann);
2. (Re)combination and repurposing of research materials (see Bogart), transferal of their principles (see Röller), and/or their comparison (as in Wei/Shek);
3. Experimentation with narrative forms (see Burge, Hasdell/Chen, and/or Hasdell/Kwok);

4. Integration of algorithmic principles for uncovering the unseen and unheard (again Bogart, but also Johnston, and/or McMullen/Winkler); and
5. Understanding, engaging, and representing public communities (as do Ustick, and/or Lee).

As many of our contributions rely significantly on images as means of knowledge communication, another framework could focus on purely visual data to draw out relations that may not be initially obvious. For example, current photo editing applications easily allow to calculate “average colours” of individual images. Pages 8–9 feature a comparative overview of colour palettes of respective contributions’ imagery. Despite at first glance the average colour palettes seem generally rather similar, a closer look does reveal colour “relations” between contributions.

Like most academic publications, also we asked contributors for keywords they would like to associate with their contributions. But, additionally we counted frequencies of nouns as used in introductory texts for respective contributions (listed on the opening pages of contributions next to the keywords). A comparison of keywords and most frequent nouns between individual contributions is often already quite revealing. Comparing noun frequencies across contributions, again suggests relations between contributions that were initially not apparent.

To consolidate all these observations in one comprehensive overview, we came up with the attempt of a map (pages 10–11), using our findings as trigonometrical touch points that could then be used to gradually develop a “topography” of our issue. Contemplating our issue’s “knowledge landscape” we came to realise that we originally called for submissions suspended between the axes of communities – creativity – narration; we ultimately achieved a collection spanning the dimensions of narratives – images – process/work.

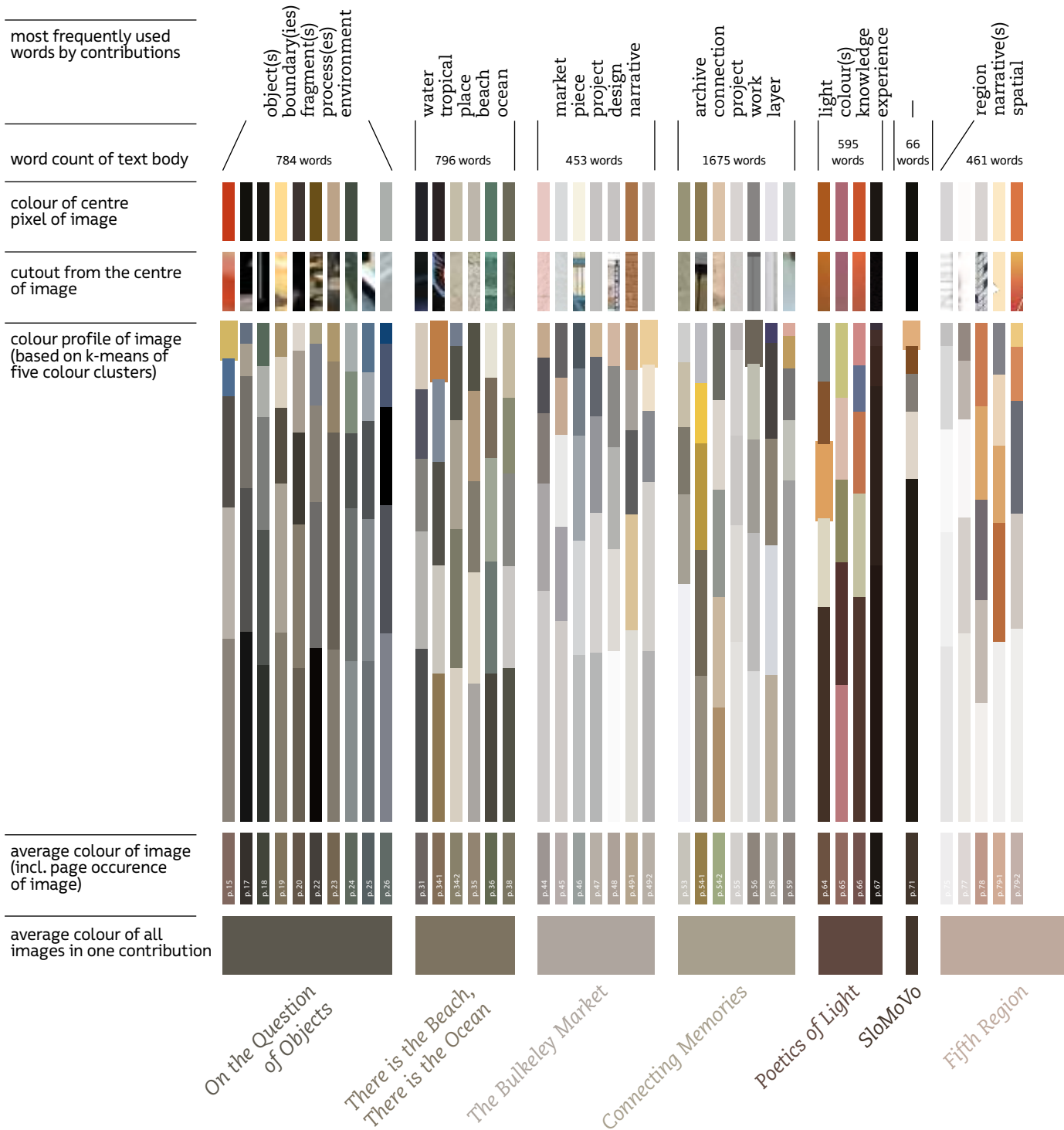
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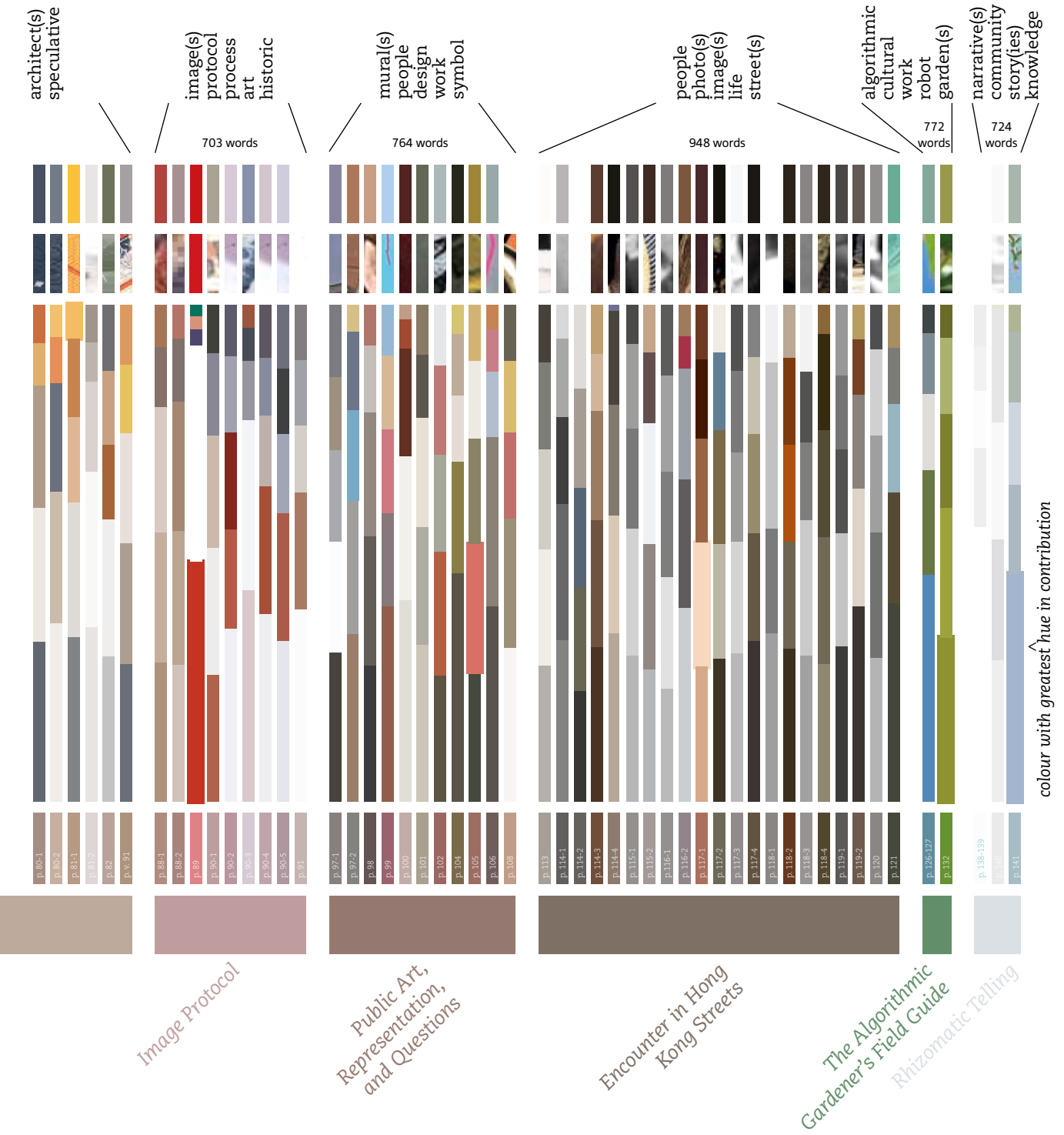
For this issue's editorial, it was our intention to comply to the same rules we imposed on our contributors: make your points by alternative means and merely allow maximum eight hundred words for introduction, positioning and/or contextualisation of the piece. Yet, as we come to the end of this production it does feel necessary to address the elephant in the room: the global experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As lives were unrooted and academic practices were turned upside down throughout constituencies all around the world, every step within the production of this issue was affected, ultimately delaying its publication by about eighteen months. While there was not much we could have done differently given the impact the pandemic had on the professional and personal lives of this issue's stakeholders – as well as societies around the world in general – we do wish to sincerely thank especially our contributors and reviewers, the Cubic Editorial Board as well as all the various supporters for their resilience, their trust, and ultimately their patience.


As academia is now grappling with the economic, political, social and cultural fallouts of the pandemic in a post-pandemic world, this issue has inevitably and involuntarily become also a review back into a recently disappeared time – that is captured in the knowledge landscape in our editorial map and we may look at with a bittersweet sense of nostalgia.

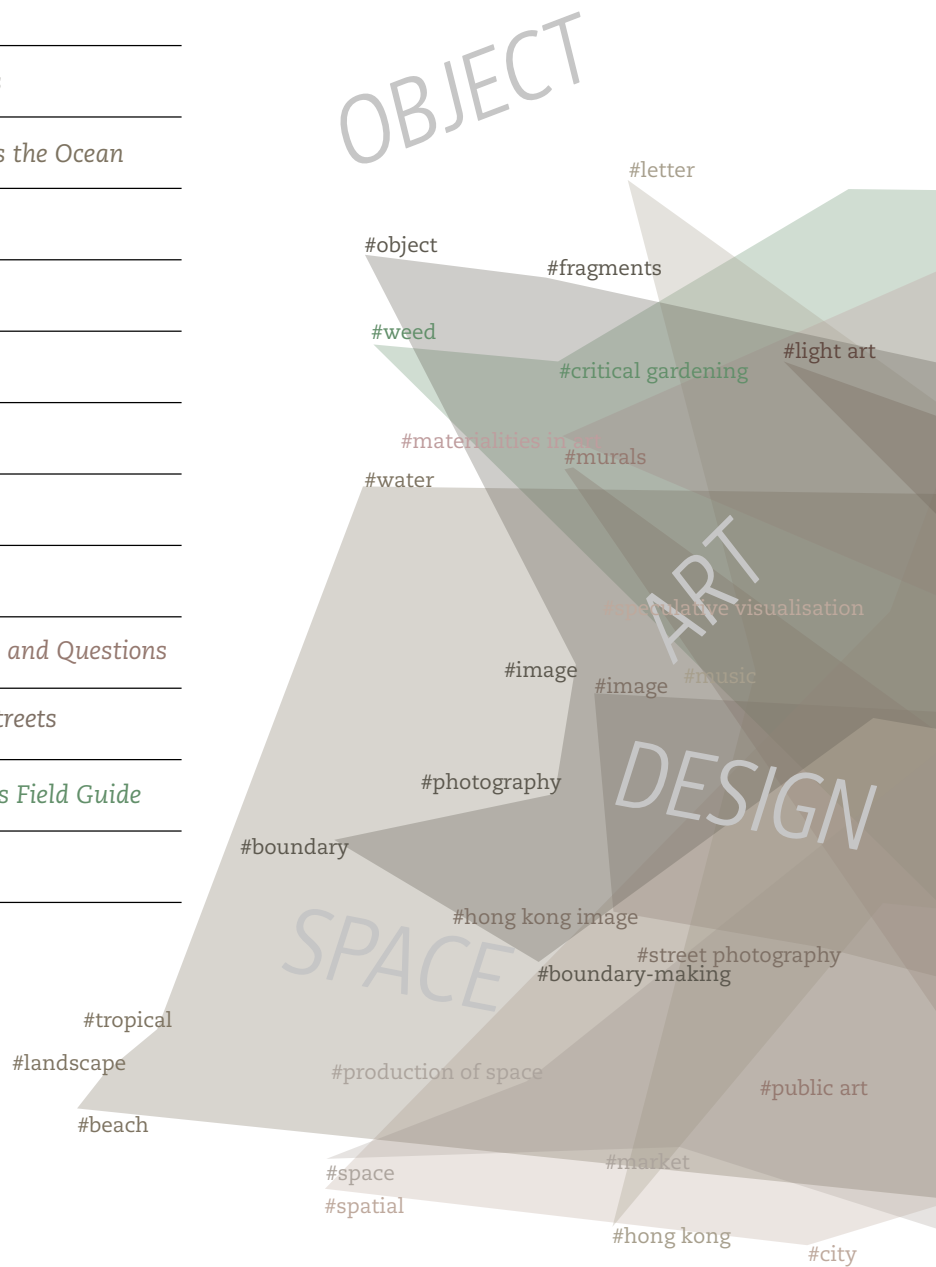
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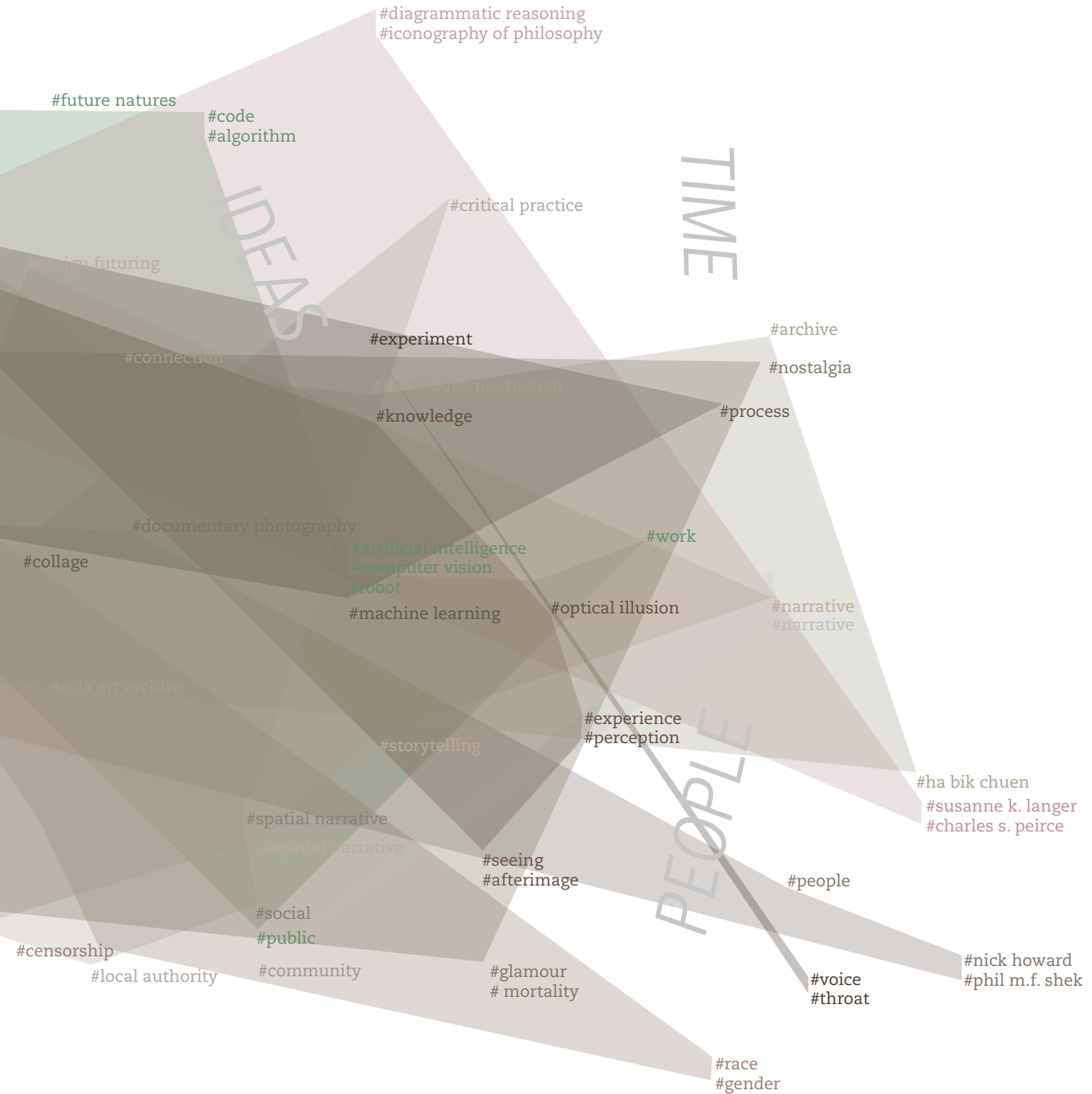




Knowledge Landscape

	On the Question of Objects
	There is the Beach, There is the Ocean
	The Bulkeley Market
	Connecting Memories
	Poetics of Light
	SloMoVo
	Fifth Region
	Image Protocol
	Public Art, Representation, and Questions
	Encounter in Hong Kong Streets
	The Algorithmic Gardener's Field Guide
	Rhizomatic Telling





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Bio

Peter Benz is an associate professor at the Academy of Visual Arts, HKBU with an interest in the investigation and development of possibilities and methodologies for experience as a creative medium; everyday objects, in everyday products and 'un-designed' marginal spaces; and issues of economic livelihoods, gender inclusivity, social impact of creative practices which he explores through surveys, statistical analysis and mappings. Especially because of the latter preoccupation he's become increasingly involved with exploring alternative means, forms, and approaches for academic publishing.

Dr. Huaxin Wei is an associate professor in the School of Design of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research interests span across several fields including interactive narrative, game design and analysis, and interaction design, with a focus on meaningful interactive experiences. Her research on game narrative has resulted in a framework for analysing video games from a range of narrative perspectives.

Justin Chiu-Tat Wong, was an Assistant Professor at the Academy of Visual Arts, HKBU. His research interests include comics studies, generative comic, and the development of political cartoons in Hong Kong. He began his career as political cartoonist and illustrator in 2007 when he started publishing his daily political cartoon column *Gei Gei Gaak Gaak* in *Ming Pao*. Since then, several comics series such as *Lonely Planet*, *Hello World*, *This City / That City* were published along the years. His publications include *Lonely Plant*, *Hello World*, *New Hong Kong*, *Big Time*, and *Je préférerais ne pas*.

