Report on *Names of Names: A Treemap of the Center for Book Arts Subject List*
By Stephanie Naut

This piece connects with the overall project, as I wanted to explore the symbiotic relationship between text and art. With the Center for Book Arts, I aimed to link the field of artist's books and their influence through text, particularly their subject categories. These subject categories play a crucial role in shaping the text-art relationship. By employing a hierarchy treemap on Flourish alongside the Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus and The Open Artist Books thesaurus, the project highlights the intricate process of data cleaning and the complexity of categorizing language, especially in the context of book arts. Drawing from data visualization and book arts, this interdisciplinary approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of the text-art relationship. Omissions of certain subjects in the dataset were necessary to maintain clarity and focus, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensible presentation of the findings. This meticulous data organization underscores the interconnection between text and art, revealing how they shape and inform each other. The project demonstrates that artist's books serve as a medium where text and visual elements merge, creating a multifaceted narrative experience.

Text, Art, Books, and Names
Ulysses Carrion's manifesto on "The New Art of Making Books" opens, "A book is a sequence of spaces." (Support, 2024b) There are multiple possibilities for what constitutes a book. A bound codex, ketchup packs, or even an origami piece-- as Carrion follows, "A book is not a case of words, nor a bag of words, nor a bearer of words" (Support, 2024b). This demands that the writer/artist take an active role in conceptualizing their books/art. The book itself can be considered its own liminal space with endless possibilities for transformation and interpretation. This leaves room for creative possibilities by treating books and, to an extent, this project as an intermedial space between the book, the text, and its subject categories.

The interlink between text, books, and the arts involves considering the book's immaterial "idea" and how something like its subject list affects its language and interpretation. In the article "On bookworks," writer Amaranth Borsuk discusses Carrion's manifesto and highlights the book's materiality and transition to digital formats. She mentions, "As the material form of the codex threatens to disintegrate into the digital, works highly attuned to materiality give us a chance to think about and savor the physical artifact, precisely by asking us to reflect on the very immaterial "idea" of the book." (The MIT Press Reader, 2022b). The citation highlights the transition from physical books to digital formats, emphasizing the importance of appreciating the material aspects of books as physical artifacts. By engaging with the tangible qualities of books, we are encouraged to reflect on the broader, immaterial concept of what a book represents. This connection is crucial for understanding how the subject categories of books influence their design and interpretation, illustrating the symbiotic relationship between the physical and conceptual aspects of book art. As physical books transition to digital formats, the materiality of

books highlights the interconnectedness of text and art, emphasizing how subject categories shape and influence the interpretation and appreciation of a book's tangible and intangible aspects.

What is Text?

The concept of what constitutes text can vary widely. According to scholars, "the definition of text (e.g., text as semantic and intentional vs. text as a version containing specific graphemes; text as a complex visual sign vs. text as a linguistic utterance; text as a material document vs. text as a work or rhetorical structure) depends on how we look at it, on the aspects we are most interested in making explicit in our modeling efforts and the tacit knowledge invested in those efforts" (DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly, n.d.-b). This perspective sees text as an interlink between objects (such as books) and the reader's interpretation. The reader plays a central role in interpreting the text, making the process not just subjective but a deeply engaging and personal experience. "How we read, interpret, and engage with texts is intimately situated in the performative and eventful process of creating and confirming our own identity" (DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly, n.d.-b). Thus, text can be seen as a visual tool that simultaneously carries semantic information explicitly. This view aligns with the idea that "text aims at text—not as the creation of new text—but text as the reproduction of textual objects" (Sahle, 2013). The concept of text is not about creating new text but about reproducing and representing existing textual objects. It emphasizes the idea that text replicates and conveys these objects' meaning rather than generating entirely new content.

Overall, this project went a little meta, trying to capture the subject category within the concept of book arts and data visualization regarding text—creating a space (using data) to reproduce text within a new context and function. The findings of this project shed new light on the categories that can be looked at or interpreted with the CBA subjects, providing a deeper understanding of what can be done and interpreted with them, as well as what can be derived from the text. This new perspective enriches our understanding of text and its interpretation, offering significant insights into the field. Ultimately, the horizontal treemap visually and conceptually links the CBA, the concept of artists' books, and their respective subject categories, providing new ways to engage with and understand the material and offering practical applications in the field of book arts and data visualization.

Notes:

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