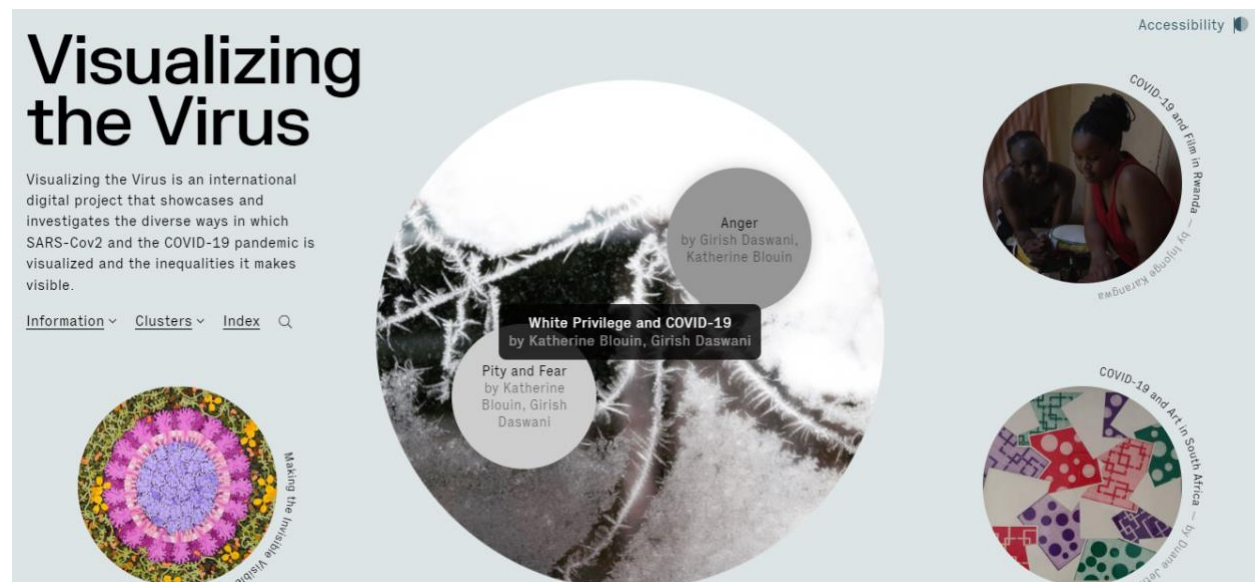# Visualizing the Virus

Reviewed by:
Dana Statton Thompson, Research and Instruction Librarian
Waterfield Library, Murray State University
dthompson29@murraystate.edu

Screenshot of Visualizing the Virus website, taken 6/24/2022

Visualizing the Virus is a cross between an online repository of original content and bibliography of existing resources. The purpose of the international and interdisciplinary project is to showcase both how the COVID-19 pandemic has been visualized and the inequalities it has revealed. The project was founded and is led by Dr Sria Chatterjee, an art historian and environmental humanities scholar who is the Head of Research and Learning at the Paul Mellon Centre in London. The project is made possible by a grant from DARIAH EU, support from the Institute of Experimental Design and Media, FHNW, and project partner Princeton Center for Digital Humanities. There are 75 individual contributors to the project so far with four ways to participate as an outsider: collaborating, curating a cluster, featuring existing work, and submitting new work.

This free-to-access project provides relevant information about 43 entries and counting, be it a summary of a podcast, explanation of artwork, or link to a peer-reviewed article. Entries range from original essays to summaries of other projects centered on visualization and the virus, are extremely diverse and include websites, films, poetry, and even a recorded conversation between two anthropologists with accompanying images. Each entry is included on the homepage and include such varied titles as "COVID-19 and Art in South Africa: The Voids of Thuli Lubisi's Apart," "Indian Migrant Workers & Lockdown: Trapped in the Inner Cities,"" "Smartphones and the Pandemic: Navigating care, surveillance, and Connection in Japan." Some entries are linked through two different types of 'clusters.' A 'curated cluster' is a group of individual entries by different contributors which have been linked by theme by a member of the project team or a guest-curator. Currently, there are 4 curated clusters: White Privilege and Covid-19 (2 entries); Visualizing COVID-19 as a Zoonotic Disease (5 entries); Covid Denialism (5 entries); and Covid-19 in the Context of Protests in Hong Kong (3 entries). Each curated cluster includes an introduction by the curator introducing the connecting thread between the entries. Somewhat confusingly, there are also 50 'themed clusters' which are entries that are linked by keywords applied to each entry such as activism, art, bats, capitalism, care, colonialism, data visualization, gender, labor, lockdown, public health, race, surveillance, and trauma.

The Index page can be organized in five different ways: alphabetically by title of the entry, by 'macro-cluster' (which refers to a keyword associated with the entry), by cluster (which refers to the entries organized into curated clusters), by date, and by contributor(s). The newly-introduced term 'macro-cluster' apparently refers to themed clusters which are broader in scope than intentionally-curated clusters, are not presented with any type of unifying context or introduction like the curated clusters, and are linked by keyword. .

Interestingly, the title of each entry on the homepage slowly circles the image representing the entry. Entries included in curated clusters bounce in between the confines of the image, also a stagnant image, also in the shape of a circle. It is possible to halt the motion of the animation by clicking the 'Accessibility' button included on the top right of each website page and selecting 'No Motion.' The Accessibility information included on the site states that they want as many people as possible to be able to site and includes inclusive practices such as alt text and navigating the site using speech recognition software. However, it is never clearly outlined why the animation is included, although the assumption is that since this is a project about visualization, movement creates its own type of interesting visual display.

Although several sites showcase visualizations about COVID-19[1] or have dashboards based on COVID-19 data,[2] this site is singular in that it is a collection focused on COVID-19 and inequality and injustice. The project centers entries, either directly presented on the site or introduced and

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[1] Wade Fagen-Ulmsschnedier's, of The University of Illinois, An interactive visualization of the exponential spread of COVID-19, Navid Mamoon and Gabriel Rasskin's, of Carnegie Mellon University, COVID-19 Visualizer, New York Times's COVID-19 World Map

[2] World Health Organization's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, John Hopkins' COVID-19 Dashboard, Information is Beautiful's COVID-19 Coronavirus Data Dashboard

linked to about COVID-19's impact, with a social justice lens. This resource is appropriate for the general public and serves as an excellent example of visually stimulating web design that foregrounds accessibility. However, the success of this is slightly minimized by the problematic navigation and naming conventions of the clusters.