

A close-up photograph of a green plant with serrated leaves and a central flower bud. The image is framed by a dark green border.

Not Just for Art's Sake

Visual Literacy Across the Disciplines



About Me

- Nicole Fox
- Research and Instruction Librarian, Belmont University
- Author of *Digital Visual Literacy*
- nicole.fox@belmont.edu



Agenda


- 01 Define Visual Literacy
- 02 Why?
- 03 Finding Images
- 04 Evaluating Images
- 05 Questions



What is Visual Literacy?

What do you think visual literacy is? Please drop a brief (around 3 words) definition in the chat.



A photograph of a person's hands holding an open book outdoors. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and several gold rings. The book is open to a page with dense text. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some greenery. A teal-colored bar is at the bottom of the image.

What is Visual Literacy?

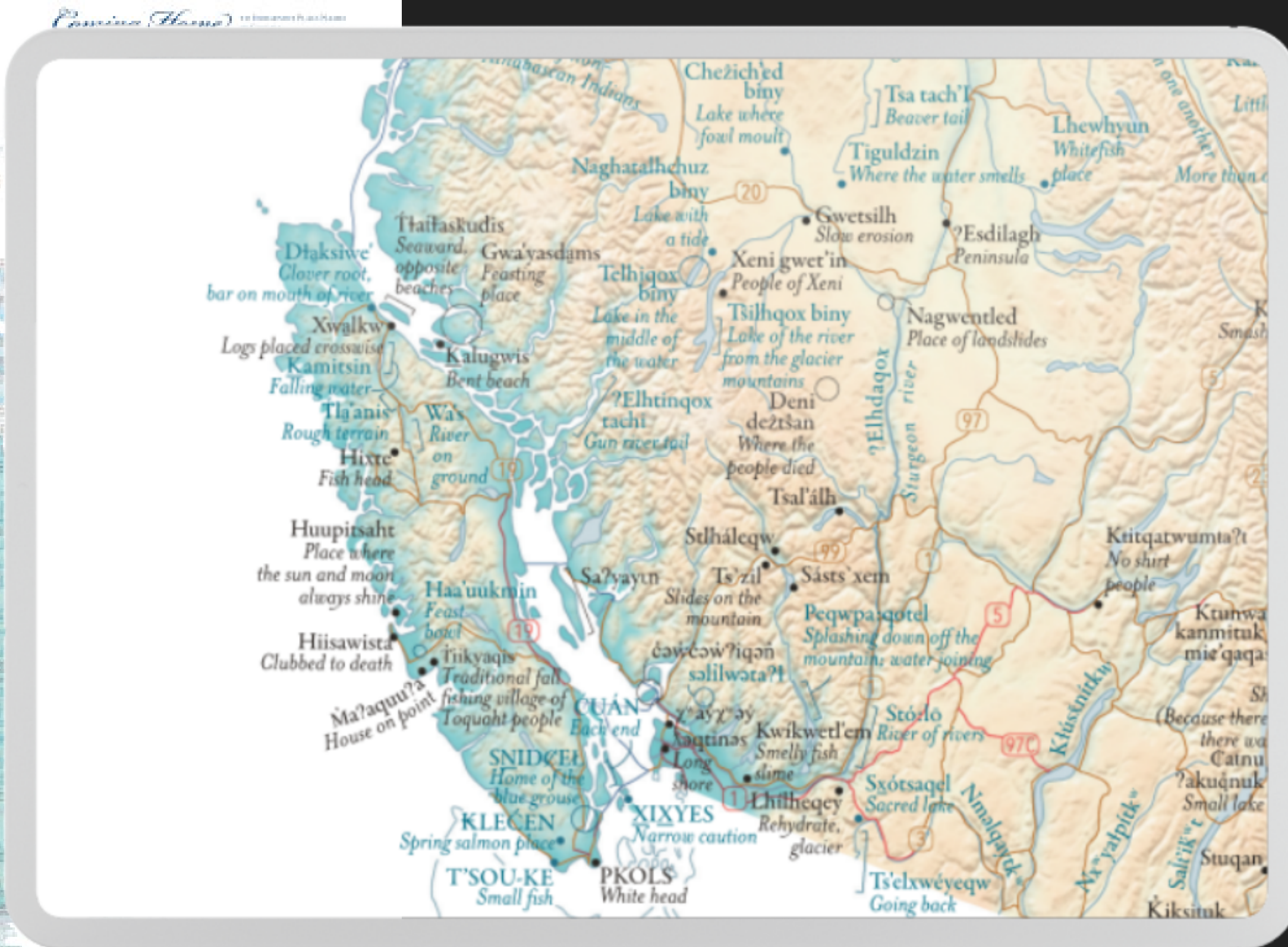
The ability to construct meaning from images or other visual forms of information.



Mount St Helens, photo. May 17, 1980. Photo from USGS.



Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names Map by Dr. Margaret Wickens Pearce. *Image via University of Maine*



Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names Map by Dr. Margaret Wickens Pearce. Image via University of Maine

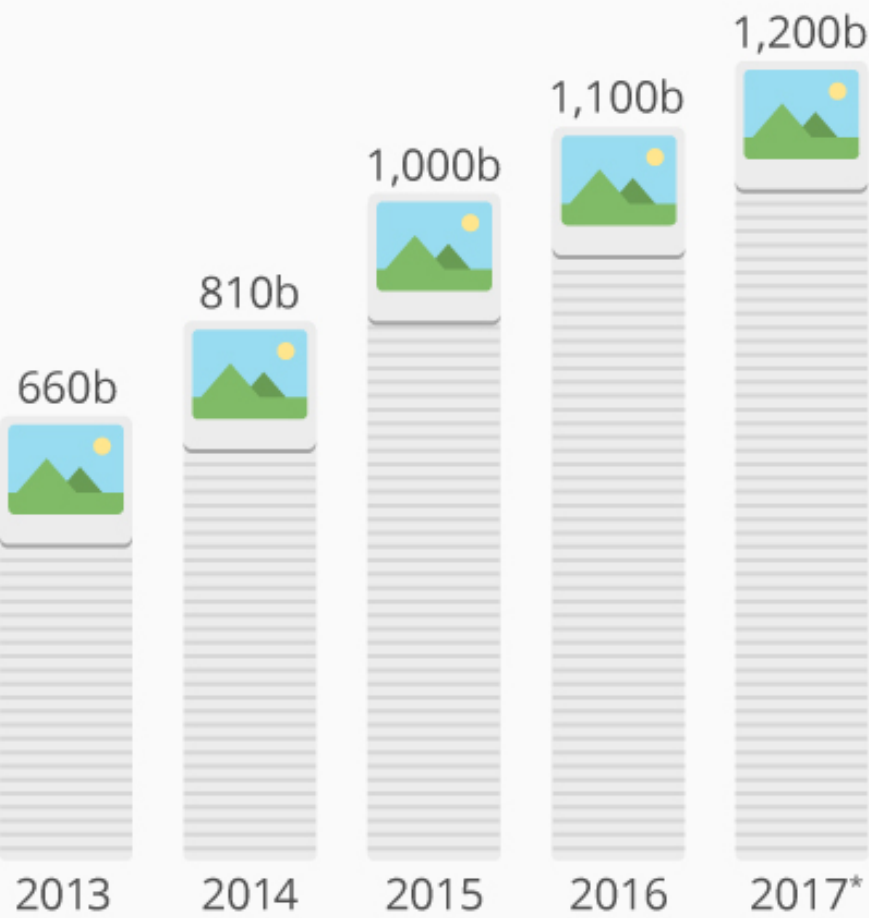


Why focus on visual literacy?

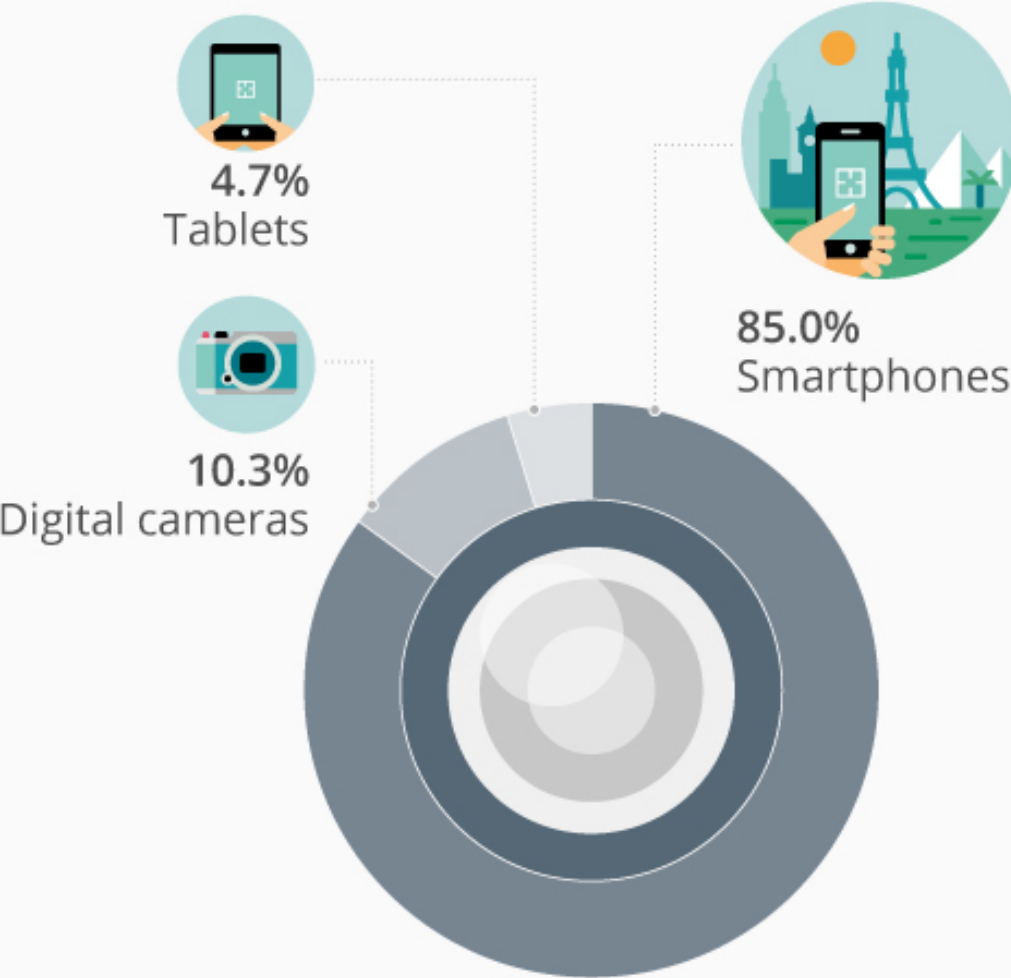


Smartphones Cause Photography Boom

Number of digital photos taken worldwide*



Devices used in 2017



CC BY ND
@StatistaCharts

* estimates
Source: InfoTrends via Bitkom

statista



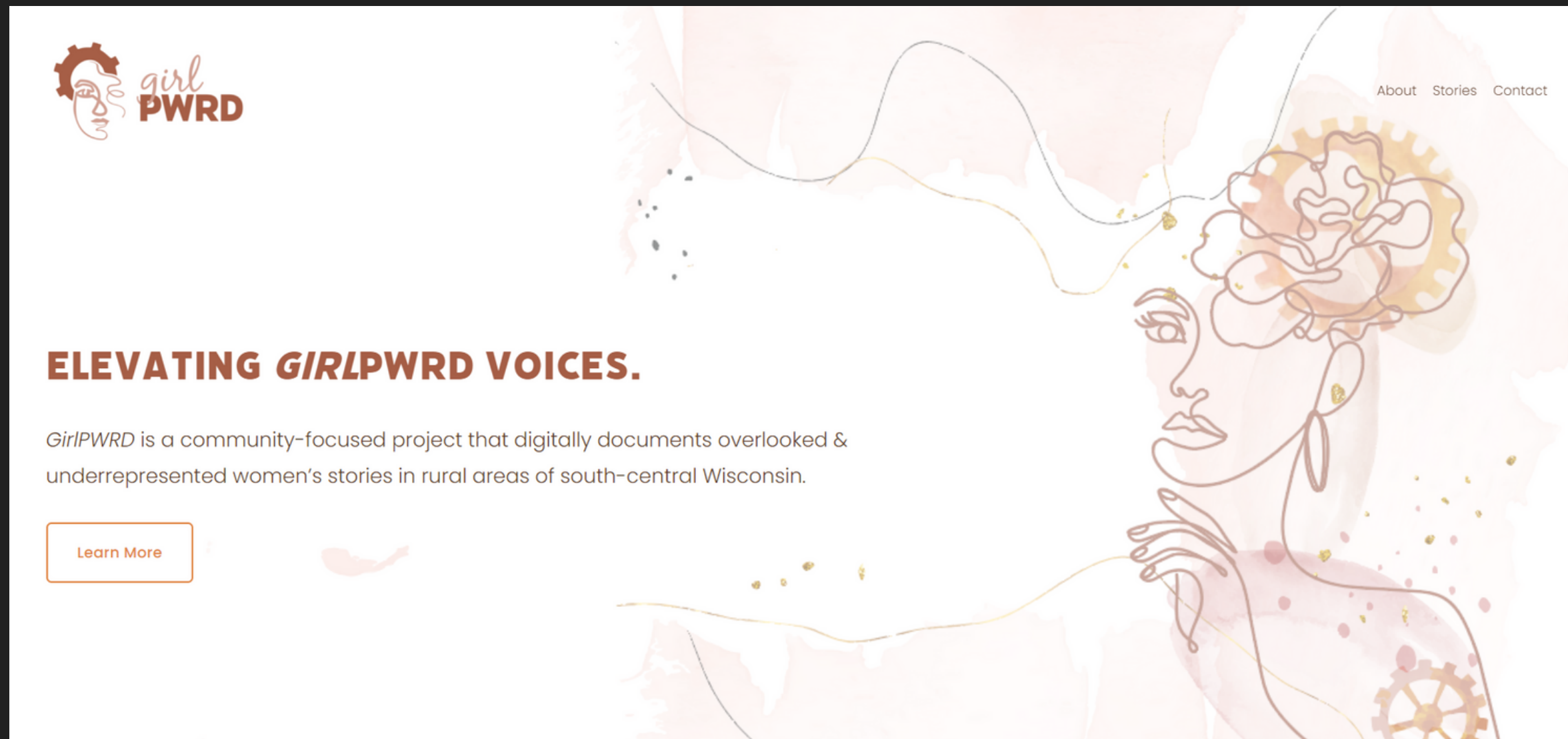


Image from GirlPwrdr



Image from the Met

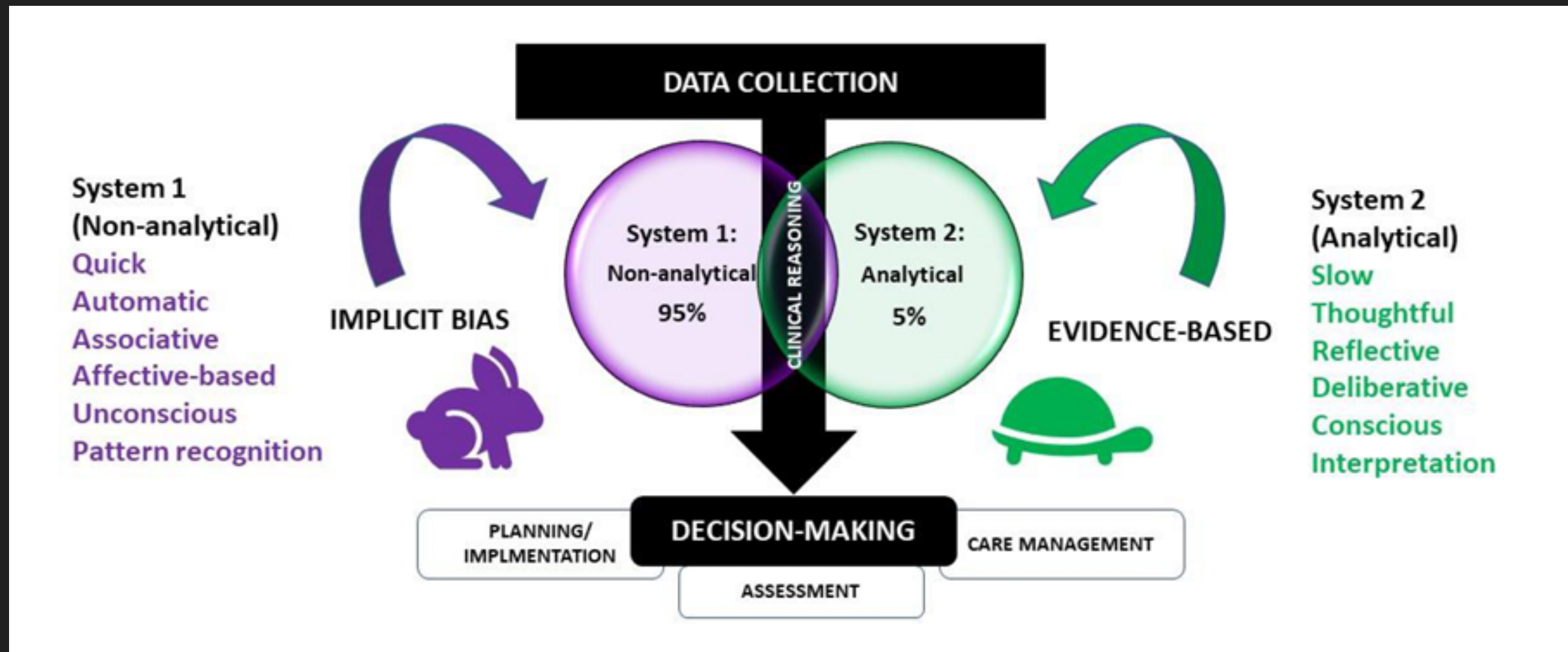


Image from BU Repository.

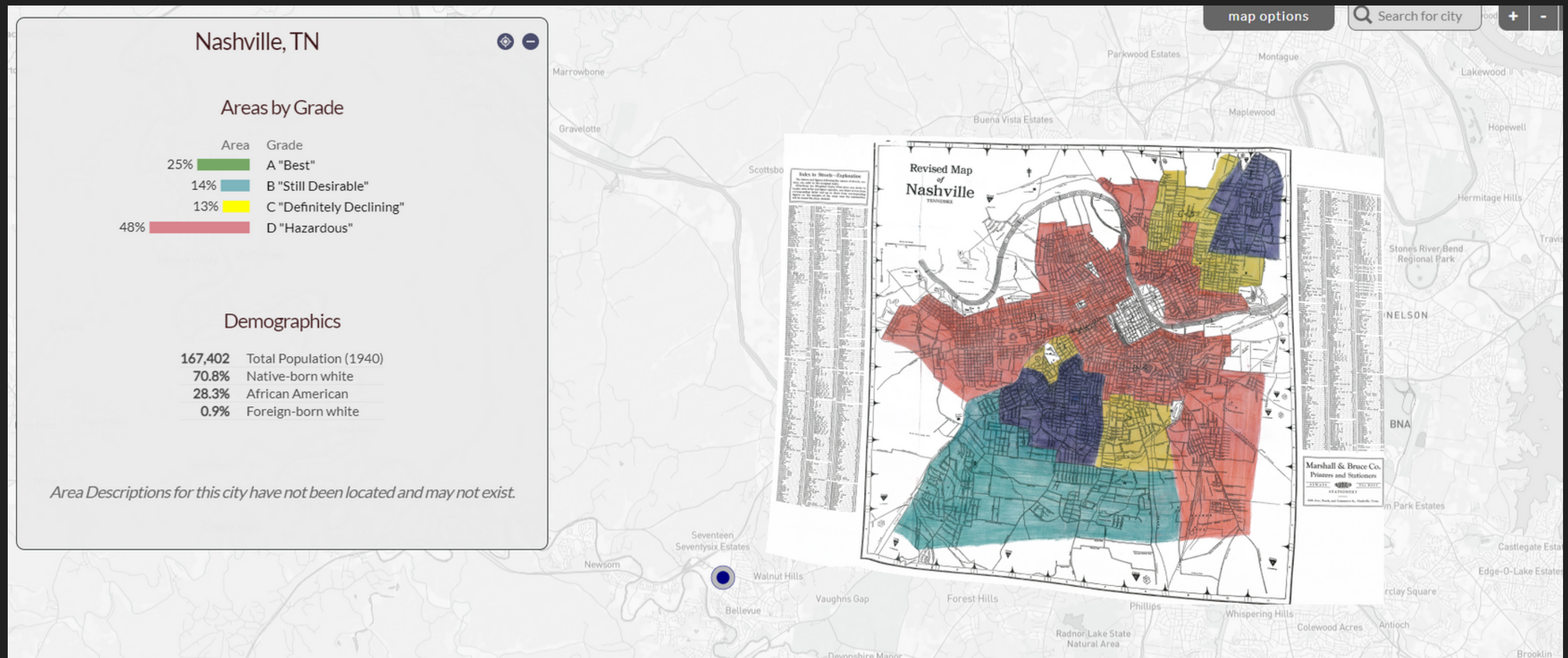
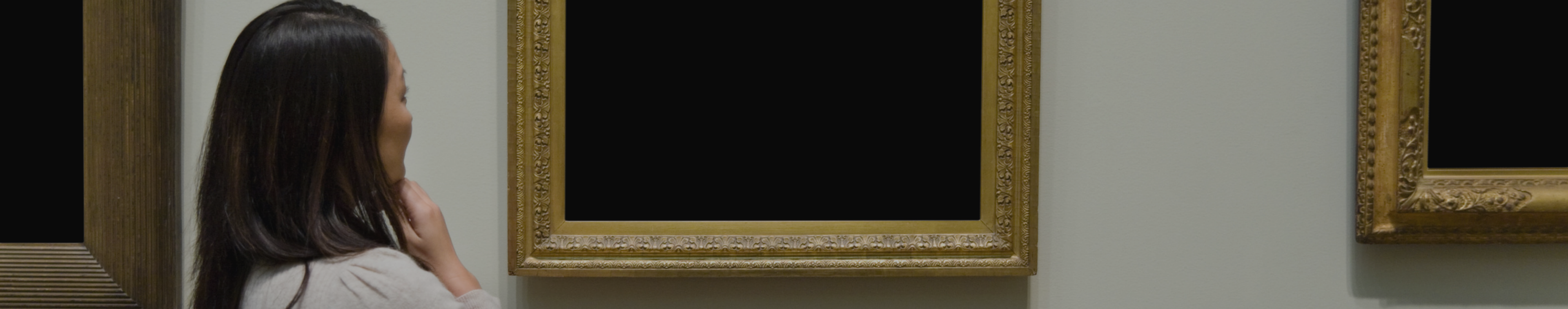


Image from Mapping Inequality.



Finding Images

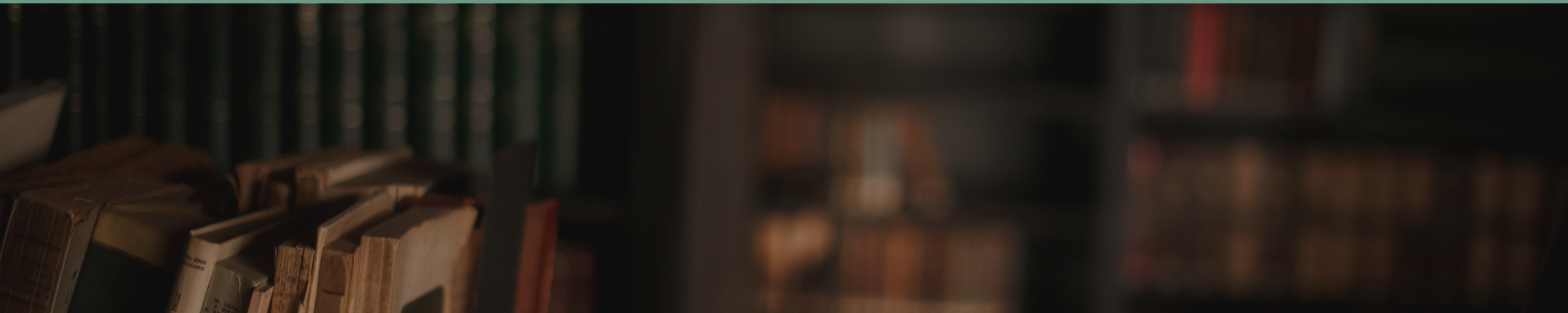
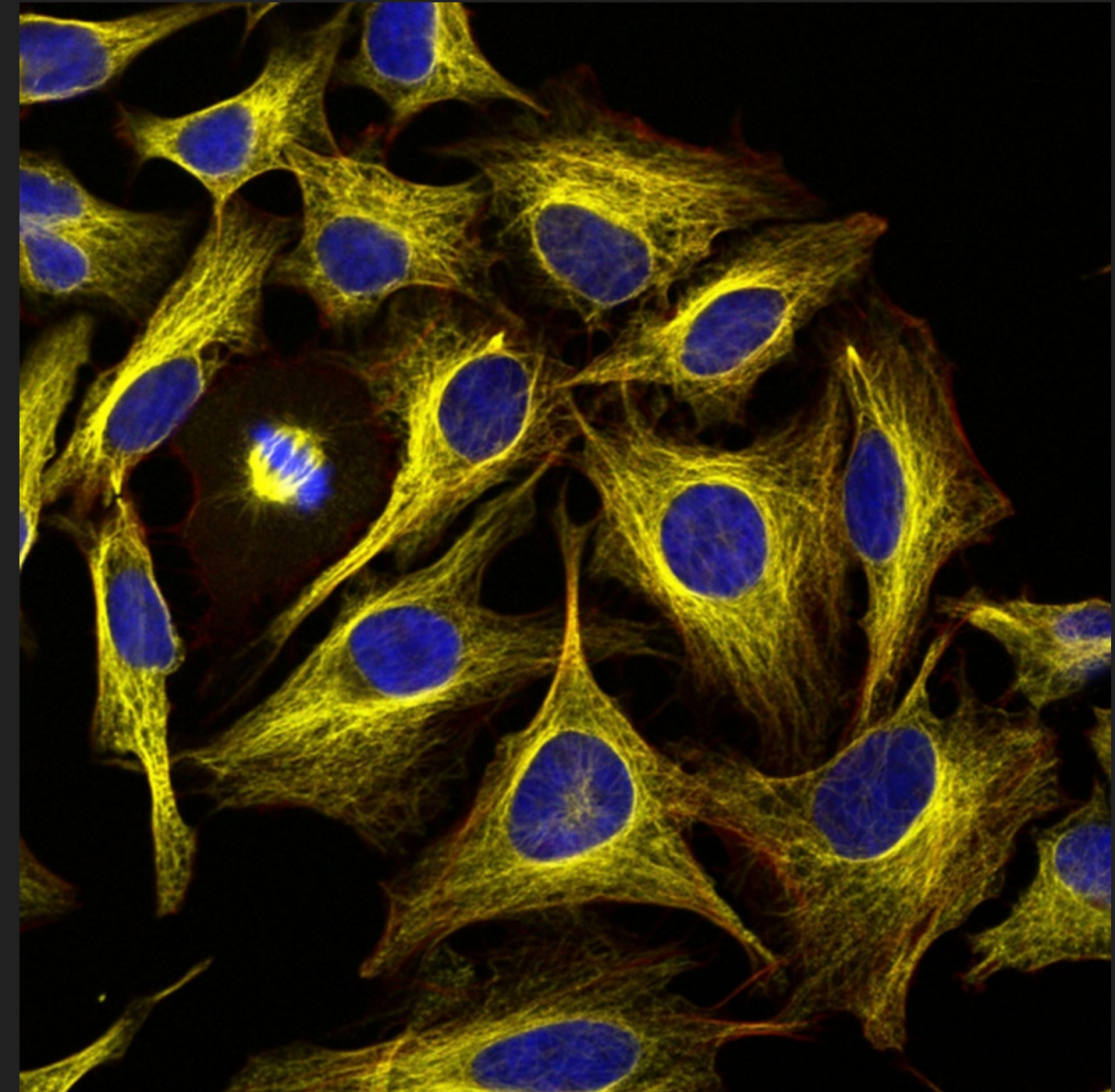


Image Sources

Where do you look for images for scholarly projects, such as lecture slides or publications? **Please drop a quick answer in the chat.**



Databases



Kevin Mackenzie, University of
Aberdeen. HeLa cells.

Websites

- Government organizations such as NASA, NOAA, Department of Agriculture, CDC/PHIL
- Museums (art, history and others)
- Library of Congress
- University digital repositories
- Wikimedia
- For stock photos: Flickr



Image from NASA



Search by image



Search Google with an image instead of text. Try dragging an image here.

Paste image URL

Upload an image 

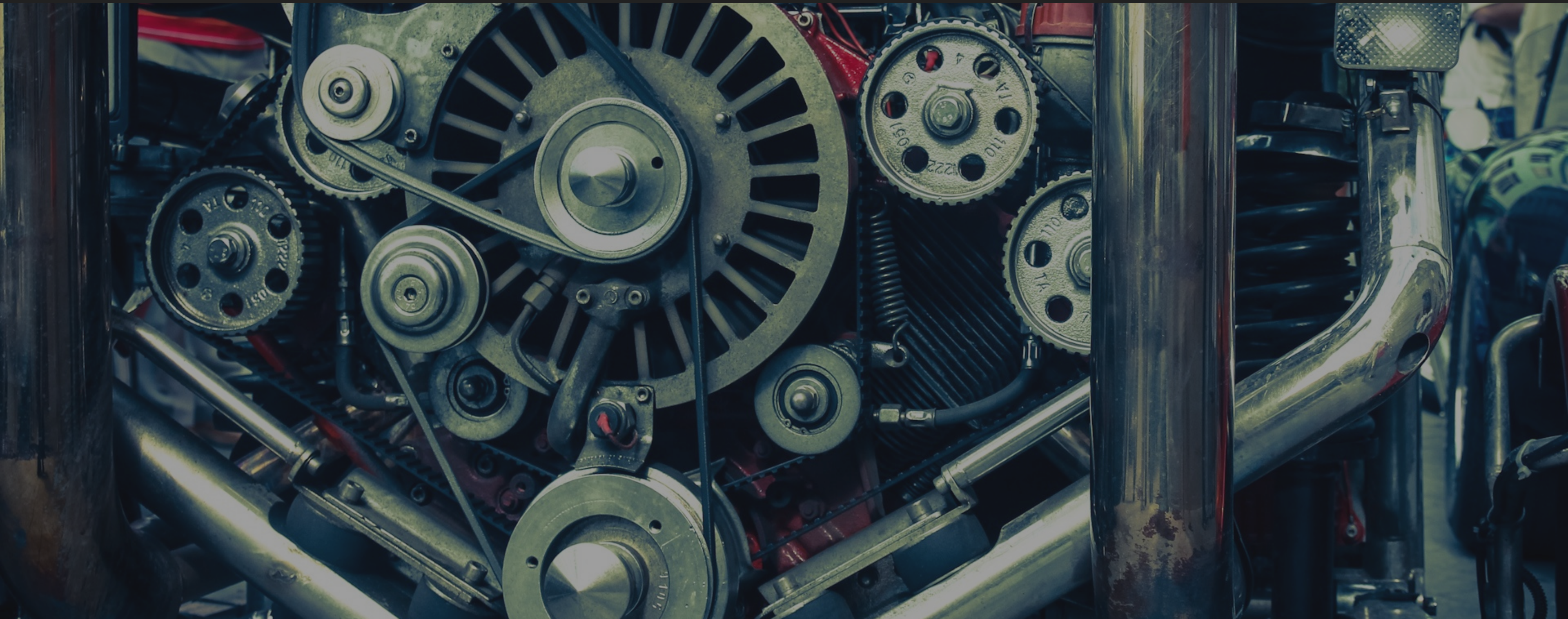
Choose file

No file chosen

How to search these places?



Reverse Engineering



Metadata

- Title
- Date
- Medium
- Creator
- Anything else that could be in a caption

Description

- Technically part of metadata
- A few sentences or a phrase that describes the contents of the image
- Part of accessibility standards



Title: Peasant Pushing a Wheelbarrow

Artist: Jean-François Millet (French, Gruchy 1814–1875 Barbizon)

Date: 1855

Medium: Etching printed in brown/black ink on chine collé; second state of four

Dimensions: plate: 6 1/2 x 5 1/4 in. (16.5 x 13.3 cm)
sheet: 16 5/8 x 13 3/8 in. (42.3 x 34 cm)

Classification: Prints

Credit Line: Gift of Theodore De Witt, 1923

Accession Number: 23.65.13



No

- Hard work
- Labor
- Farming

Yes

- French peasant
- Etchings from 1855
- Wheelbarrow
- Jean-François Millet



Image Interpretation and Evaluation



“

Seeing is believing.

”

A proverb we've all heard

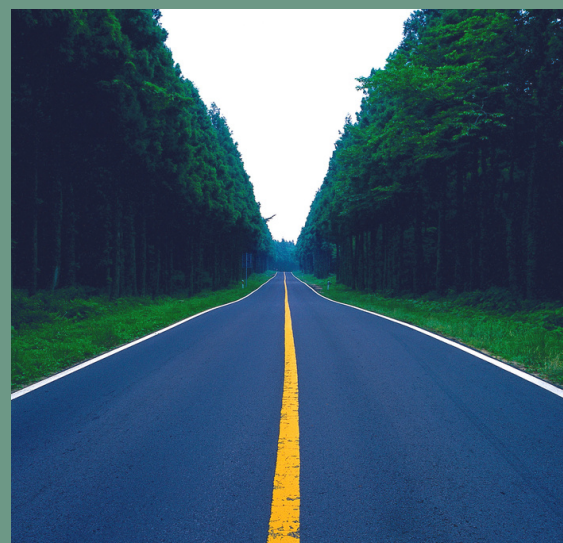
Two Methods

Consider both the image composition and the image's metadata.



Vocabulary

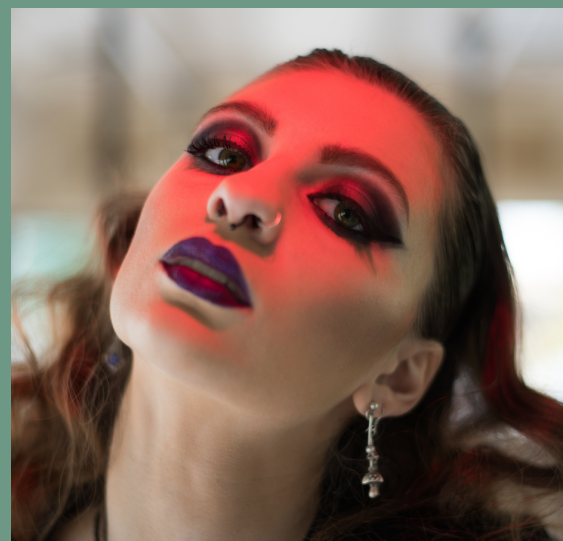
Line



Space



Hue



Value

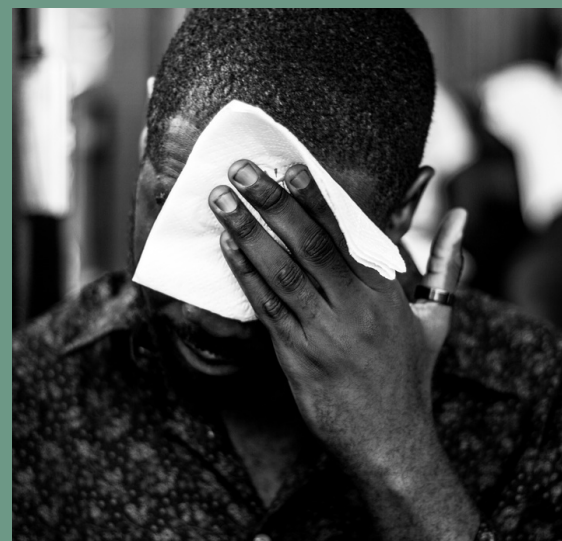
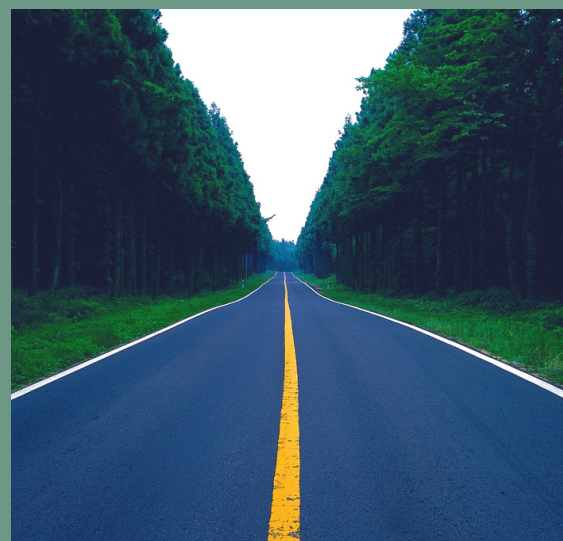


Image via the New York Times

Vocabulary

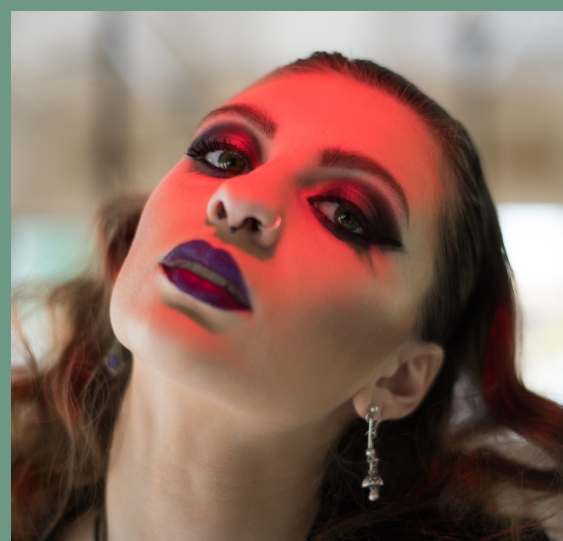
Line



Space



Hue



Value

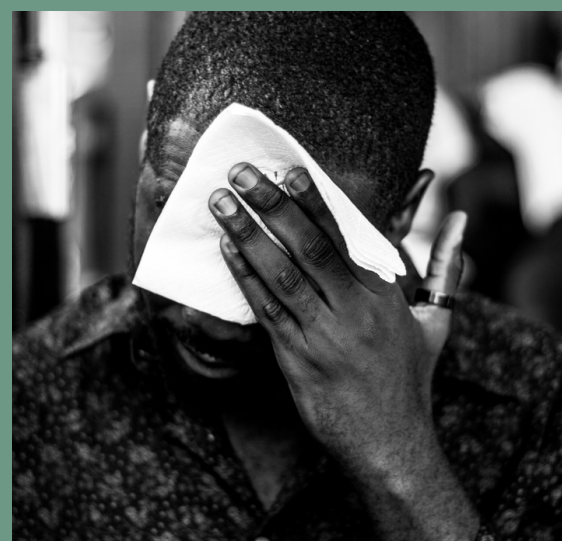


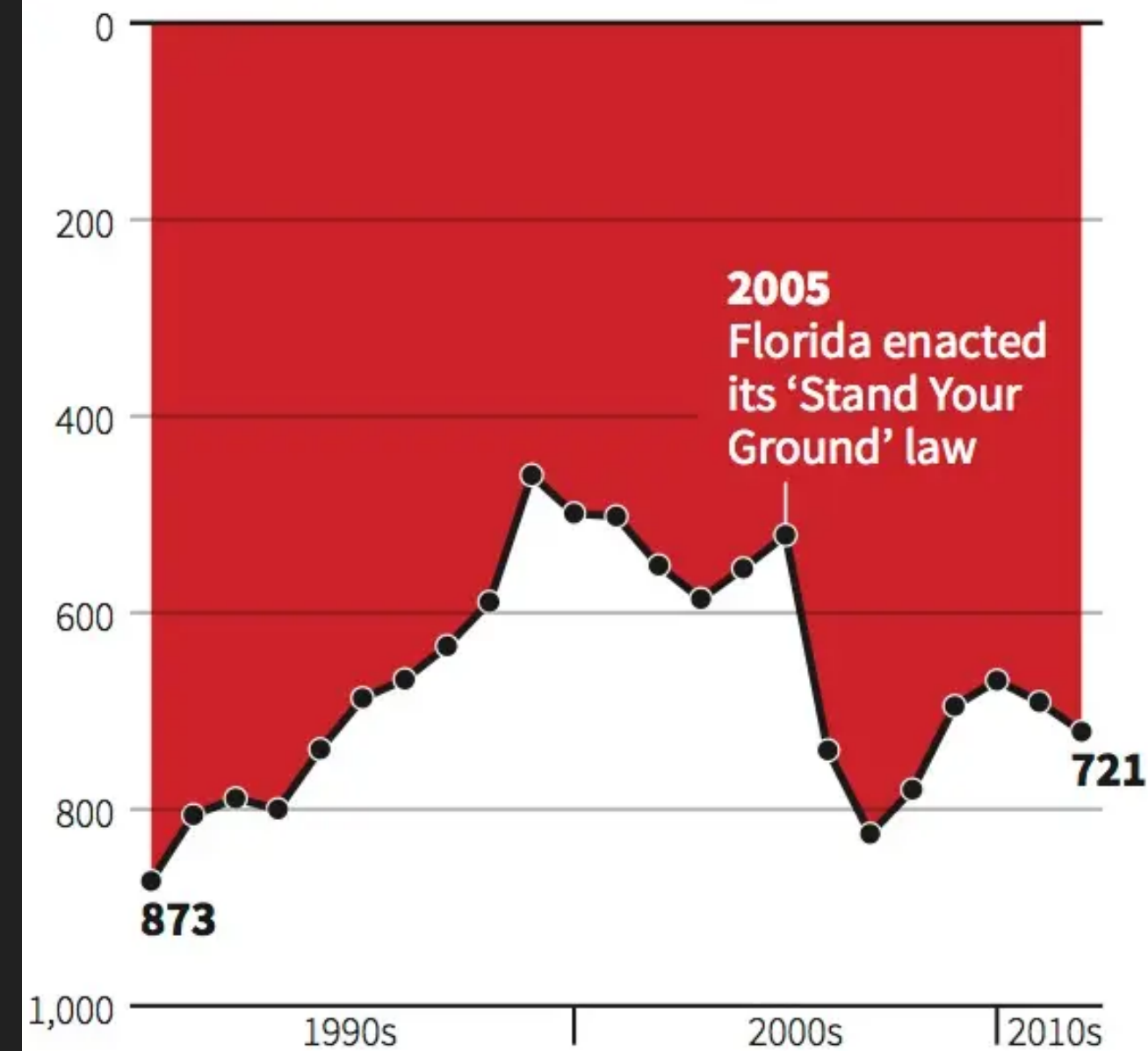
Image via the New York Times



Image via the New York Times

Gun deaths in Florida

Number of murders committed using firearms



Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement

C. Chan 16/02/2014

REUTERS

"Gun Deaths in Florida" chart by C. Chan, originally from Reuters, via businessinsider.com.



Image Evaluation

Currency

timeliness of the information

Relevance

how the information fits your needs

Authority

the source of the information

Accuracy

reliability and correctness of the information

Purpose

the reason the information exists

- **CREDIBILITY** – How do you know the information and author are authentic and reliable?
- **ACCURACY** - How do you know the information is up-to-date, factual, detailed, and comprehensive?
- **REASONABLENESS** – How do you know the information is fair, objective, moderate, and consistent?
- **SUPPORT** – How reliable, accurate, reasonable and well-supported are the sources for your resource?

A photograph of several orcas (killer whales) swimming in a blue ocean. Their dark, pointed dorsal fins are visible above the water's surface. The word "ORCAS" is overlaid in white serif font on the upper part of the image.

ORCAS

O – Originality

R – Relevance

C – Currency

A – Authority

S – Subject Matter

Originality

Image from Twitter



Relevance

Image from Healthline



Currency

Image from NPR



Authority

Image from Twitter



Subject Matter

[Image via Reddit](#)



OPINION
JAMELLE BOUIE

Biden Is Telling You That Trump Is a Threat, and the Proof Is Everywhere

Sept. 9, 2022



Image via the New York Times

Summing it up



Visual literacy is a necessary skill for everyone

All disciplines use visual data – from photos, to maps, to charts.



Consider image keywords carefully

Think about what words could be in the metadata or description.



Images must be interpreted and evaluated

Images are human created documents – not representations of truth.

QUESTIONS

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

Thank you!

Use code **NICHE** for 20% off
Digital Visual Literacy
through ABC-Clio's website!

