Qualitative Project_Clare Churchouse
MSDV Major Studio 1 Spring 2018

1. Title: Where uncertainty falls, the incidence of the word 'uncertain' in The Met's collection

2. One sentence description: The visualization uses public domain images from the whole of The Met database using 'uncertain' and 'uncertainty' as a search term and organizing principle to view what is assessed in the text as "uncertain."

3. One paragraph description: This project incorporates ideas from Professor Aaron Hill's uncertainty project and research entitled, 'Seeking New Ways of Representing Uncertainty in Data Visualization: A Review of Fine Art.' We have assessed artworks from museum collections and galleries across several countries, selecting and analyzing pieces that indicate effective ways to visually communicate uncertainty, ambiguity, and vulnerability, across a range of approaches, and techniques, and categorized their depiction of uncertainty based on Jacques Bertin's visual variables. This project maps the word uncertain and uncertainty as it is used in the text of The Met's collection. The layout works with the relation between text and image, and the site opens with all of the textual descriptions obscured except for the words 'uncertain' or 'uncertainty.' The aim was to determine whether there is a correlation between the linguistic markers of uncertainty and a sense of visual uncertainty. What the project reveals is that the concept of uncertainty marks out a couple of different vectors having to do with artwork authorship, materials, dates, as well as function. Filters are added for time periods, and artwork medium (paintings, sculpture, textiles, clay, stone, glass, ink, paper) to explore correlations. Random reload resorts the images presented, hovering over the word 'uncertain' in an image's description reveals that description, and clicking on the word 'uncertainty' in the title enables the viewer to see all the text for every artwork.

4. Data sources: Text of The Met's collection: 425 works are returned when the words 'uncertain' and 'uncertainty' are entered. This list was culled down to occurrences within the title, date or website label description, and saved as JSON file. The api was used for the web label descriptions, rita used to select the sentence containing 'uncertain/ty.'