



tahir hemphill



creative technologist. educator. radical archivist.
co-creator. artist in residence. research fellow. peripheral
visionary. rap enthusiast. native queens new yorker.

about tahir

- * "affinity between hip-hop culture and hacking"
- * engineering skills combined with cultural and political perspectives stemmed from hip-hop
- * "art, technology, social engagement, and interdisciplinary research"

(only some places) where tahir has worked

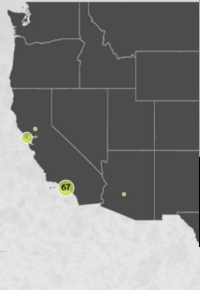
- * media artist in residence at spotify
- * fellow at web du bois institute at harvard university
- * resident at the rockefeller foundation bellagio center
- * itp something in residence at nyu tisch school of the arts
- ^ (taught `actual fact: visualizing hiphop lyrics as cultural indicator`)
- * autodesk pier 9 residency in san francisco
- * papamarkou chair in education at the john w. kluge center at the library of congress
- * founder of the rap research lab

“an artist who works in technology”

◀ ▶ Rhymes like dimes

1 Sampled text is
2 I sell rhymes
3 I got the start
4 I got the sun
5 And I'm pushin'
6 And they lookin'
7 the porch
8 And that round
9 I'm stuck in th

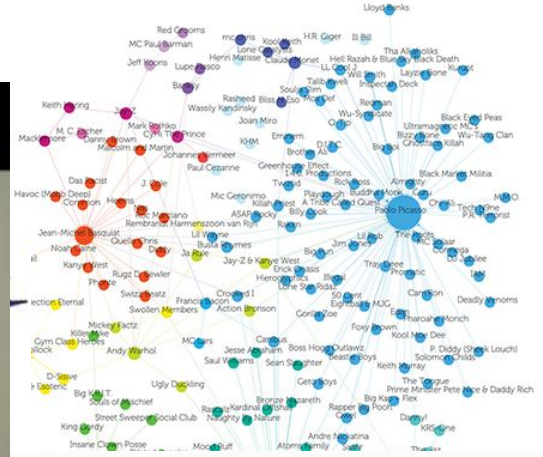
HII



775 Mentions

Ace Of Spades: 5
Astf: 8
Chandon: 5
Cold Duck: 2
Cristal: 297
Dom Perignon: 209
Moët: 249

1980 - 2010



rap research lab

- * founded by tahir in 2014
- * community-based creative technology studio
- * explore rap through educational, editorial, and creative means
- * worked with new york city parks and recreation department to implement their curriculum and toolkits in 10 sites across the city's five boroughs

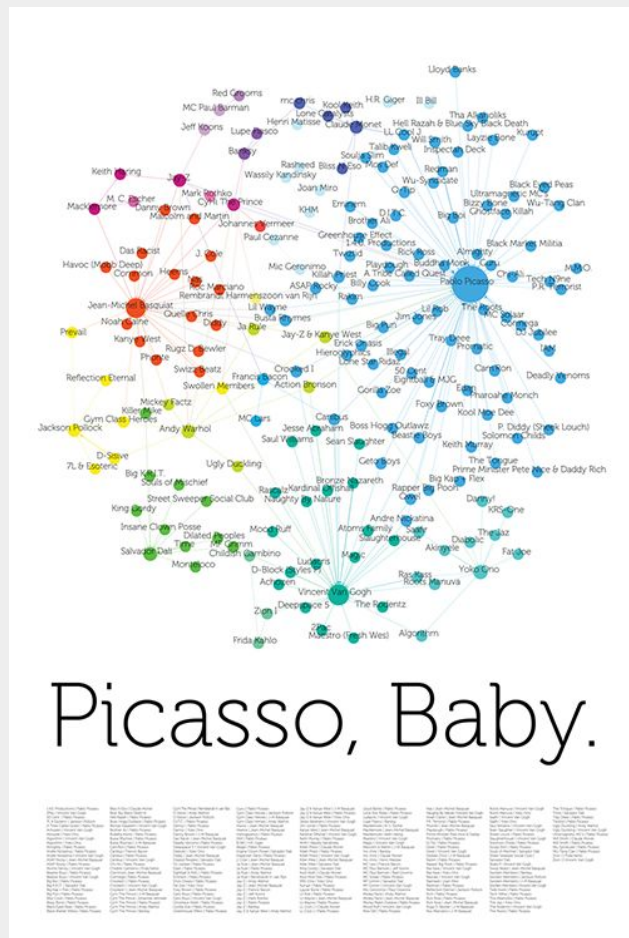


hiphop word count project, rap research lab

```
* NLP analysis + detailed metadata
from a giant corpus of hip-hop songs,
dating back to 1979
```

* artists are geotagged and dated
based on album release

* number of letters, syllables, etc
per word



picasso, baby!

* network graph

* visualizing
connections between
rappers and famous
artists they mention
in their lyrics

* 1979 - 2014

Tahir Hemphill


Picasso, Baby.

Rapper's mentions of modern artists and contemporary artists from 1979 - 2014.

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Best Viewed In Google Chrome

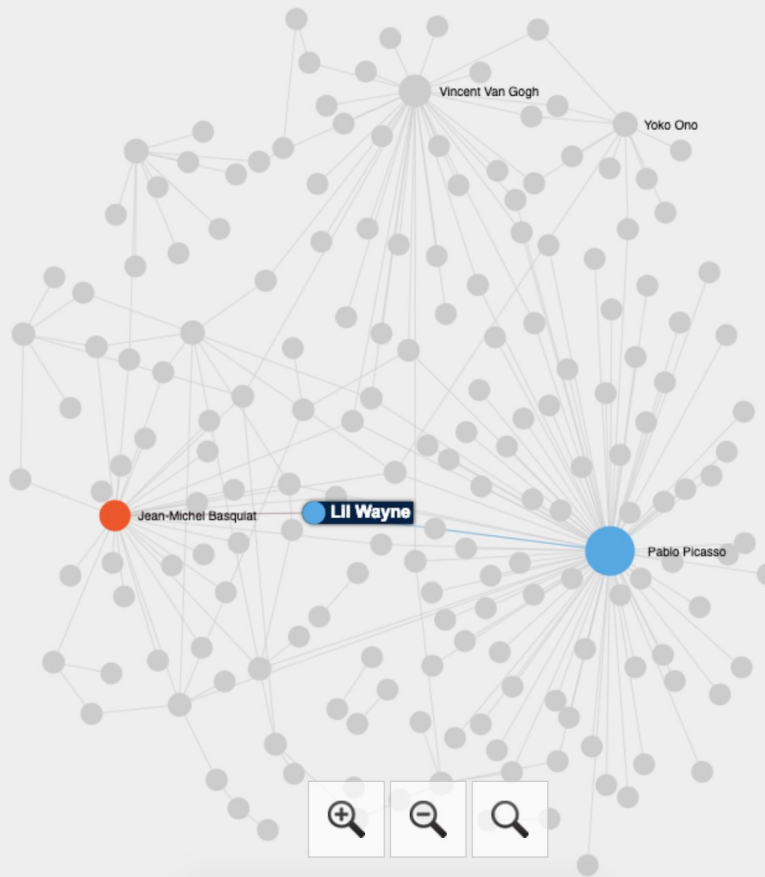
 [More about this visualisation](#)

Legend:

● Rapper / Contemporary Artist / Modern Artist

— Connections between Artist and Rapper found in Rapper's lyrics

Search:

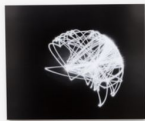
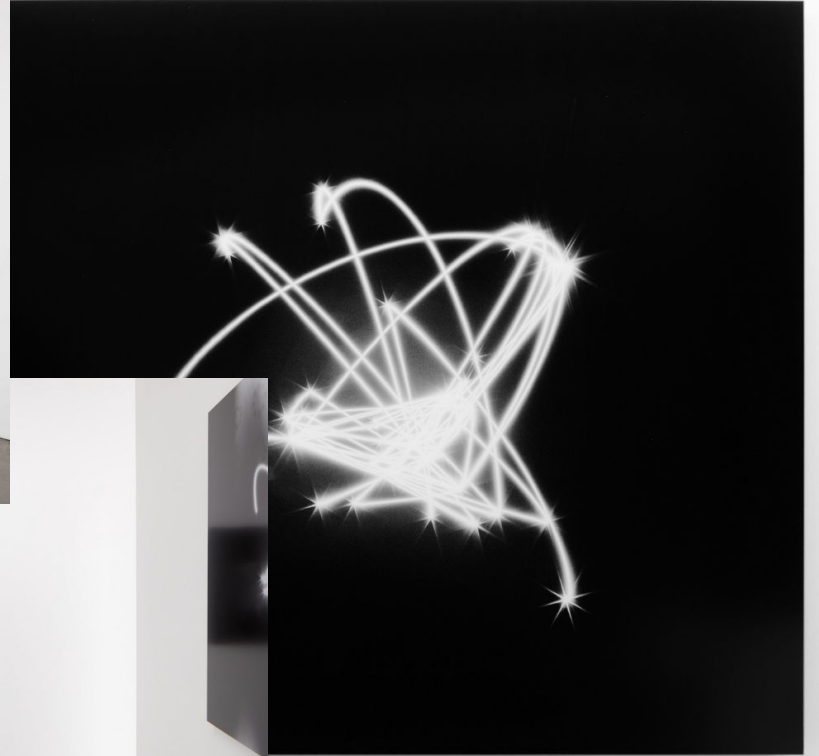


mappers delight vr experience

- * "global distances traveled by the lyrics contained in each rap artists' career"
- * engadget vr conference, eventually implemented as a classroom tool



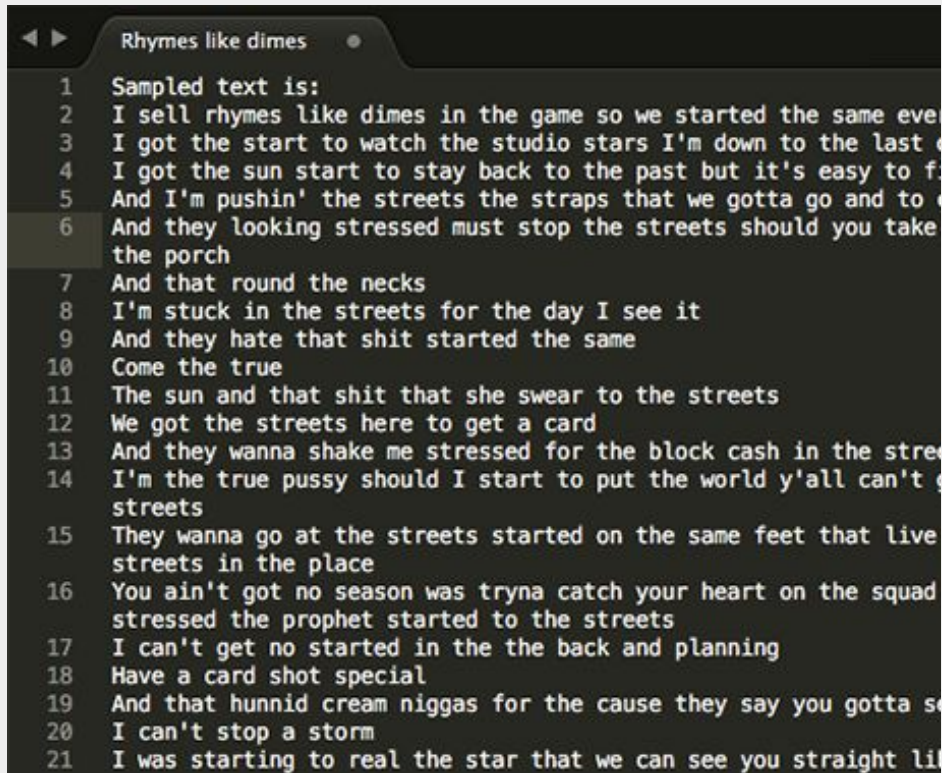
more pictures from this really awesome experience



rapbot

my favorite so far

- * ai project, powered by a raspberry pi
- * robot that produces rap lyrics when user interacts with it
- * trained neural network language models over 200k songs
- * "With Rapbot I'm exploring the social, cultural and political implications of technological choices made with artificial intelligence."



A screenshot of a terminal window with a dark background and light-colored text. The window title is "Rhymes like dimes". The text displays a list of 21 lines of rap lyrics, with line numbers 1 through 21 on the left. The lyrics are generated by an AI model trained on 200k songs. The text is as follows:

```
1 Sampled text is:
2 I sell rhymes like dimes in the game so we started the same eve
3 I got the start to watch the studio stars I'm down to the last
4 I got the sun start to stay back to the past but it's easy to f
5 And I'm pushin' the streets the straps that we gotta go and to
6 And they looking stressed must stop the streets should you take
  the porch
7 And that round the necks
8 I'm stuck in the streets for the day I see it
9 And they hate that shit started the same
10 Come the true
11 The sun and that shit that she swear to the streets
12 We got the streets here to get a card
13 And they wanna shake me stressed for the block cash in the stre
14 I'm the true pussy should I start to put the world y'all can't
  streets
15 They wanna go at the streets started on the same feet that live
  streets in the place
16 You ain't got no season was tryna catch your heart on the squad
  stressed the prophet started to the streets
17 I can't get no started in the the back and planning
18 Have a card shot special
19 And that hunnid cream niggas for the cause they say you gotta s
20 I can't stop a storm
21 I was starting to real the star that we can see you straight li
```

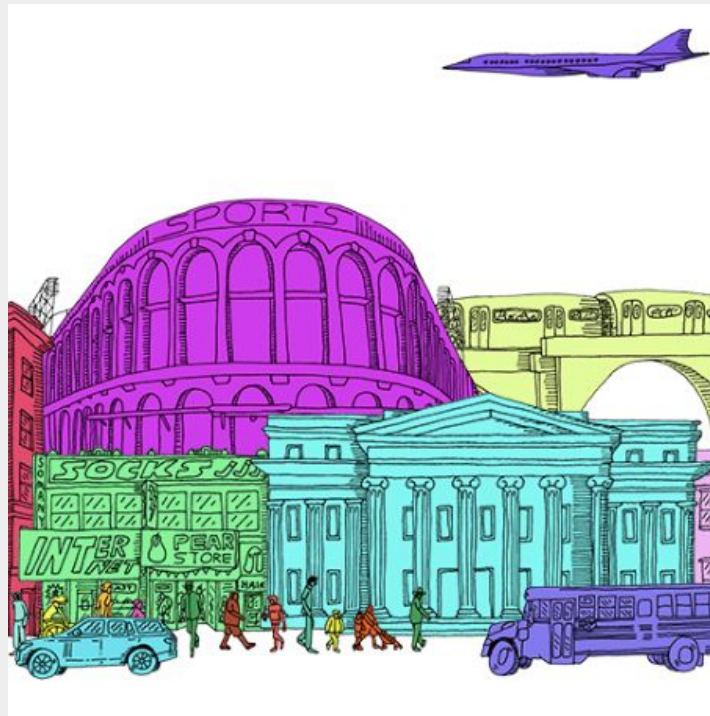
spotify city

i sadly cannot find a link, but i will tell you about this cool project

interesting convo about how projects die on the internet in between the lines here

- * builds a theoretical city where the size of buildings equates to data taken from songs that new yorkers stream

- * "an hourly, real-time, re-assignment of NYC's buildings and public space based on analyzed lyrics"



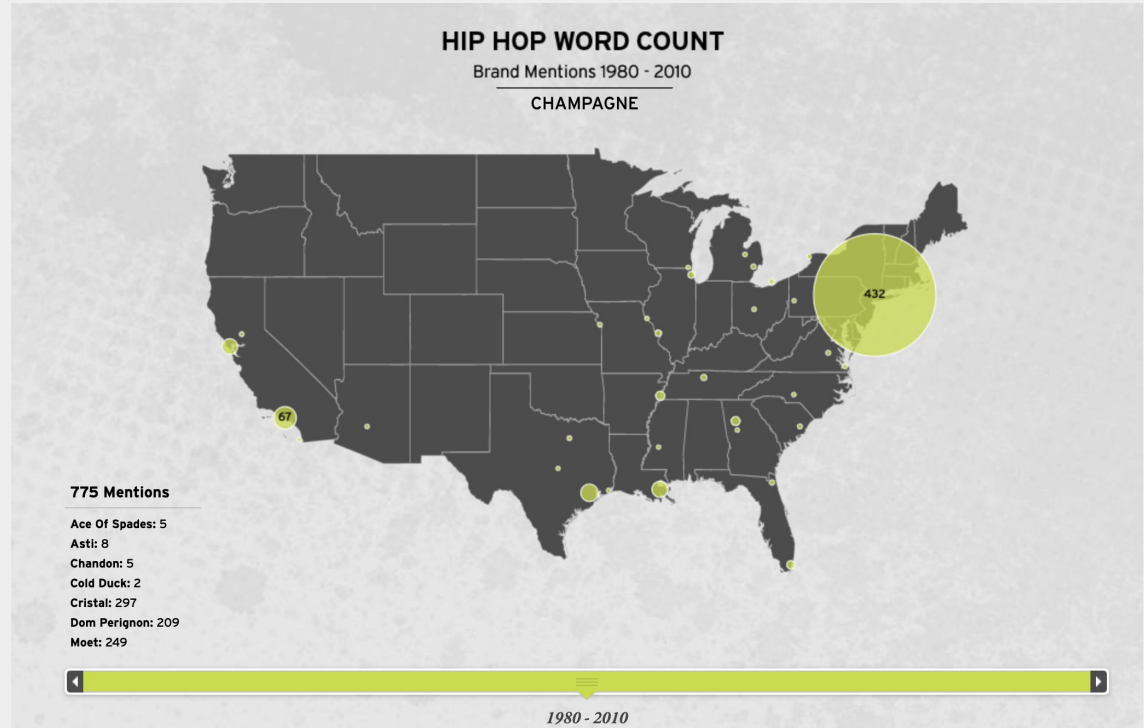
champagne always stains my silk

interactive visual history of champagne brands mentioned in hip-hop lyrics

* 1980 - 2010

* geographical layout

^ do you think
geography was
necessary here?



question time, fellow classmates

* if you could get your hands on everything in the hip-hop word count database, what would you do with it? what would you want to analyze? visualize?

* in the video, tahir says there's a misconception data makes ideas simpler—that there's straightforward answers to all questions. conversely, he believes it actually makes the world more complex, in an intriguing sort of way. do you agree?

* i've seen recent conversations about using data for "fun" topics. do you think data work and viz should have a more "serious" agenda? or does all (or most) secretly ☐ have an agenda, even if slightly veiled by a "lighter" topic?