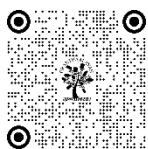


THE LANGUAGE OF VISION: EXPLORING LITERATURE'S ROLE IN VISUAL ARTS THROUGH BIBLIOMETRIC MAPPING

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the interdisciplinary relationship between literature and visual arts through a bibliometric analysis, highlighting how literature inspires, enriches, and contextualizes visual narratives. Using data from the Scopus database and advanced tools like Biblioshiny and VOSviewer, the analysis uncovers key trends, influential authors, and thematic patterns in the field. The annual scientific production reveals a significant growth trajectory, with a surge in research outputs post-2004, reflecting increasing scholarly interest. Sylvia Pantaleo emerges as the most prolific author, contributing substantially to the discourse, while journals like *Word and Image* and *Foreign Literature Studies* serve as prominent publication sources. Country-level analysis highlights the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia as dominant contributors, with emerging collaborations in Asia and Latin America. Trend topic analysis identifies a shift from historical inquiries to contemporary applications, with themes like mental health, art education, and virtual reality gaining prominence. The thematic map further highlights core themes such as "visual arts" and "literature," alongside emerging areas like "ekphrasis" and "creativity," which present opportunities for further exploration. Bibliographic coupling of documents reveals strong interconnections among seminal works, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Co-occurrence of keywords showcases clusters around education, mental health, and cultural studies, indicating diverse research applications. Global collaborations, although led by developed nations, point to the potential for broader international engagement to foster inclusivity and innovation. This comprehensive analysis provides a roadmap for future research, emphasizing the need to bridge gaps and leverage interdisciplinary approaches to enrich the evolving interplay between literature and visual arts.

Keywords: Visual arts, Literature, Bibliometric Analysis, Biblioshiny, VOS viewer



1. INTRODUCTION

Literature and visual arts have always shared a profound connection, intertwining to create layered narratives and enriching human expression (Baker-Smith, 2002; Landwehr, 2002). While literature primarily operates through the medium of words, visual arts convey meaning through images, forms, and textures (Landwehr, 2002). Both, however, aim to evoke emotions, provoke thoughts, and explore the human experience. The relationship between the two is not merely incidental but deeply symbiotic, as each medium draws inspiration from and contributes to the evolution of the other (Baker-Smith, 2002; Saracho, 2010). This interplay creates a dynamic realm where the boundaries between textual and visual storytelling blur, offering audiences a richer interpretative experience (Sborgi, 2007).

One of the primary roles of literature in visual arts is its function as a source of inspiration and narrative foundation (Feary, 2005). Many iconic artworks throughout history have been directly inspired by literary texts, transforming written words into vivid imagery (Becker, 2020). For instance, the works of Dante Alighieri, William Shakespeare, and Homer have provided fertile ground for countless painters, sculptors, and illustrators (Praz, 2023). Visual interpretations of these texts not only breathe life into literary characters and scenes but also allow artists to explore

deeper symbolic meanings, often reinterpreting the text for contemporary audiences (Baker-Smith, 2002). This reimagining fosters a dialogue between past and present, bridging cultural and temporal divides (Guite, 2023).

Conversely, visual arts have also played a significant role in enhancing the understanding and appreciation of literature (Giannouli et al., 2022). Illustrations in manuscripts, book covers, and graphic novels serve as visual guides, helping readers immerse themselves in the narrative world (Jusslin & Höglund, 2021). In particular, illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages demonstrate how visual arts can enhance textual meaning, using ornate designs and imagery to emphasize key themes and ideas (Leggett, 2009). This collaboration of text and image enriches the reader's experience, offering a multidimensional understanding of literary works (O'Toole, 2018).

Ultimately, literature and visual arts share a collaborative partnership that extends beyond aesthetics. Together, they challenge viewers and readers to think critically, interpret complex narratives, and engage with the creative process in innovative ways (Janelle, 2016). As artists and writers continue to draw inspiration from one another, the fusion of literature and visual arts will remain a powerful vehicle for exploring the complexities of human emotion, culture, and imagination (Landwehr, 2002). In this synthesis lies the enduring power of these art forms to inspire and transform society.

The interdisciplinary relationship between literature and visual arts has long fascinated scholars and practitioners alike, offering insights into how textual narratives and visual imagery shape and influence each other. Exploring this dynamic through bibliometric analysis provides a systematic way to understand the academic discourse, trends, and patterns within this field (Agbo et al., 2021; Cobo et al., 2015; Herrera-Viedma et al., 2020). By utilizing tools like Biblioshiny and VOSviewer, researchers can delve into the vast corpus of scholarly literature, identifying key authors, influential publications, and thematic clusters that illuminate the role of literature in visual arts (Ejaz et al., 2022; Guleria & Kaur, 2021; Husain & Mustafa, 2023). This data-driven approach enables a comprehensive overview of the intellectual landscape, offering insights that traditional qualitative methods may overlook (Alsharif et al., 2005).

Biblioshiny, a user-friendly interface for the R-based Bibliometrix package, facilitates the exploration of citation networks, co-citation patterns, and keyword trends within scholarly literature (Racine, 2012; N. Salim et al., 2019; N. R. Salim et al., 2018; Waghmare, 2021). Its ability to generate detailed visualizations helps researchers identify emerging themes and the evolution of scholarly discourse over time (Huang et al., 2021). In conjunction with Biblioshiny, VOSviewer provides advanced network analysis and mapping capabilities, creating intuitive visual representations of relationships among authors, institutions, and keywords (McAllister et al., 2022; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Together, these tools offer a robust methodological framework for understanding the bibliometric dimensions of literature's impact on visual arts, highlighting interdisciplinary collaborations and areas of high scholarly activity.

Through this bibliometric analysis, key insights can be drawn about the intellectual structure and future directions of research in this domain. For example, mapping citation networks reveals how seminal works have influenced subsequent studies, while keyword analysis identifies recurring themes such as intertextuality, visual storytelling, and cross-disciplinary methods. These findings not only underscore the depth and breadth of the scholarly engagement with literature and visual arts but also provide a foundation for future studies to address gaps, explore under-researched areas, and foster interdisciplinary innovation. This analytical approach thus advances our understanding of how literature continues to inspire, inform, and enrich the world of visual arts.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We collected the scientific publications related to the investigation from the Scopus database. (Archambault et al., 2009; Harzing & Alakangas, 2016; Kawuki et al., 2020). We retrieve bibliographic data using a search query such as (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("visual arts") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (literature)). The search was not restricted to any particular language, and the data included articles from peer-reviewed journals, books, book chapters, and conference papers. We collected 1345 articles from 1147 different sources, spanning 1970 to 2023. To ensure accuracy, we screened the Scopus records to remove any duplicates. The results were saved as a "CSV" file, and we performed bibliometric analysis on the data using VOSviewer and Bibloshiny software.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

3.1. MAIN INFORMATION OF THE INVESTIGATION

Table 1 provides an extensive overview of the bibliometric analysis of literature's role in visual arts, covering a timespan from 1970 to 2023, reveals significant academic engagement and growth in this field. A total of 1,345 documents were analyzed, sourced from 1,147 journals, books, and other mediums, with an annual growth rate of 9.77%, reflecting increasing research interest. The documents averaged 8.014 citations each, with a total of 85,080 references, underscoring the scholarly impact. The dataset includes contributions from 2,063 authors, with 841 single-authored documents and an average of 1.63 co-authors per document, indicating a mix of solo and collaborative work. International co-authorship accounted for 7.88% of the output, suggesting moderate global collaboration. The analysis identified 1,400 unique Keywords Plus but lacked author-defined keywords, highlighting thematic diversity but limited specific tagging. In terms of publication types, journal articles dominated (718), followed by books (350), book chapters (226), and conference papers (51). This analysis demonstrates the evolving and multidisciplinary nature of research at the intersection of literature and visual arts.

Table 1. Main information of the investigation

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1970:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	1147
Documents	1345
Annual Growth Rate %	9.77
Document Average Age	8.38
Average citations per doc	8.014
References	85080
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1400
Author's Keywords (DE)	0
AUTHORS	
Authors	2063
Authors of single-authored docs	841
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	887
Co-Authors per Doc	1.63
International co-authorships %	7.881
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	718
book	350
book chapter	226
conference paper	51

3.2. ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTIONS

Figure 1 highlights a significant growth trend in research articles on the topic of literature's role in visual arts from 1970 to 2023. The early years, from 1970 to the mid-1980s, show sporadic and minimal output, with annual publications often remaining below five articles. However, starting from the 1990s, there is a gradual increase in production, with more consistent yearly contributions. The research output begins to accelerate significantly after 2004, marking a period of exponential growth. Notable milestones include a surge in publications from 2008 onwards, with an annual production exceeding 30 articles. The most dramatic increase occurs in the 2010s, where annual outputs rise steadily, peaking at 121 articles in 2021 and reaching a record high of 140 articles in 2023. This trajectory underscores growing academic interest and sustained efforts in exploring this interdisciplinary domain, driven by evolving methodologies and expanding global collaborations.

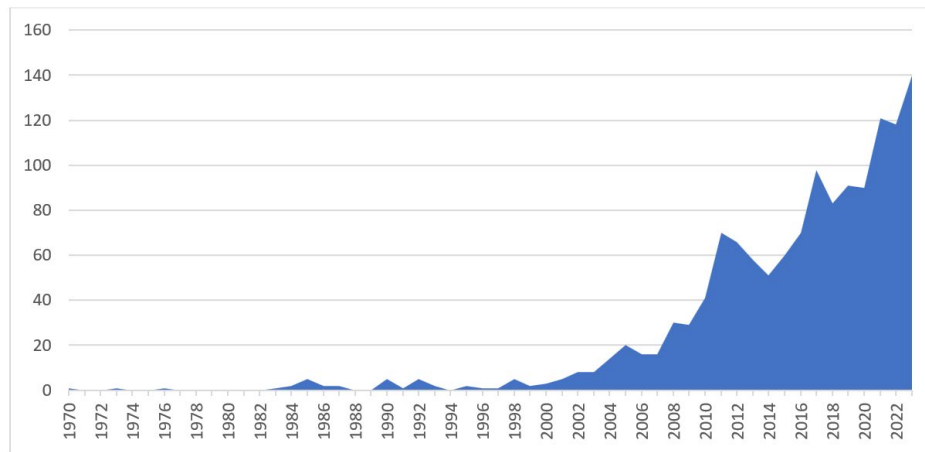


Figure 1 Annual scientific production

3.3. MOST RELEVANT AUTHORS

Figure 2 showcases the most relevant authors and reveals key contributors to the scholarly discourse on literature's role in visual arts. Sylvia Pantaleo emerges as the leading author with 11 articles, significantly ahead of the rest, indicating her substantial contribution and influence in this domain. Following her, Samuel T. Gladding has authored 4 articles, highlighting his active participation in the field. Several authors, including Wing K. Au, Liora Bresler, Radha Béteille, Margaret S. Chisolm, James Elkins, Alfred Hiatt, and Susanne Janssen, have each contributed 3 articles, showing a diverse array of voices engaging with the topic. Pantaleo's prominence suggests she may have either initiated influential research trends or consistently contributed high-impact works. The presence of other authors with similar output indicates a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach within the field, reflecting varying perspectives and methodologies. This distribution of contributions underscores both individual and collective academic engagement, shaping the evolving understanding of the interplay between literature and visual arts.

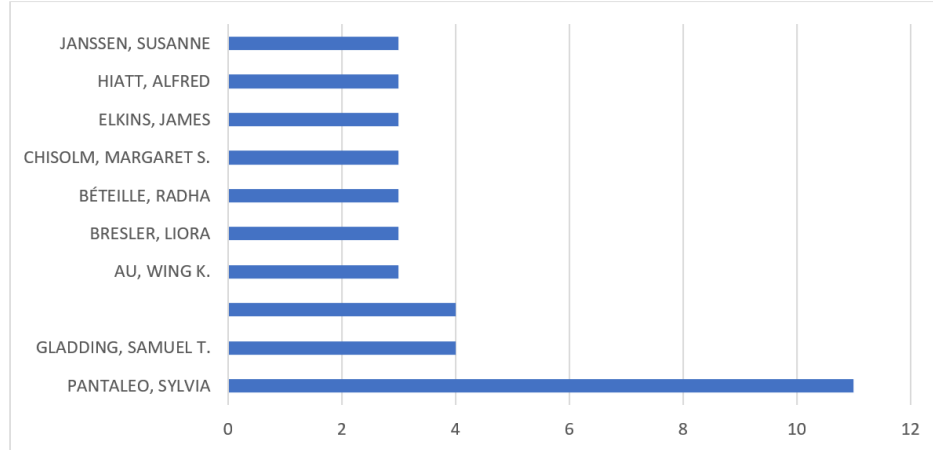


Figure 2 Most relevant authors

3.4. MOST RELEVANT SOURCES

Table 2 highlights the key journals and publications contributing to the academic discourse on literature's role in visual arts. The journal "Word and Image" stands out as the most influential source, with 13 articles emphasizing its central role in this interdisciplinary research field. Following closely are "Foreign Literature Studies" and "Frontiers in Psychology," each with 10 articles, reflecting a strong interest in the psychological and literary dimensions of visual arts. Other notable sources include the "International Journal of Art and Design Education" (6 articles), underscoring the educational perspective, and several journals with 5 articles each, such as "Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art," "Arte, Individuo y Sociedad," "Arts in Psychotherapy," "International Journal of Education and the Arts," and

"Lecture Notes in Computer Science." These publications indicate a diverse range of approaches, from historical and theoretical analyses to applications in education, psychology, and even computational methods.

Table 2. Most relevant sources

Sources	Articles
WORD AND IMAGE	13
FOREIGN LITERATURE STUDIES	10
FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY	10
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION	6
ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF THEORY AND HISTORY OF ART	5
ARTE, INDIVIDUO Y SOCIEDAD	5
ARTS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY	5
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS	5
LECTURE NOTES IN COMPUTER SCIENCE (INCLUDING SUBSERIES LECTURE NOTES IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LECTURE NOTES IN BIOINFORMATICS)	5
ARTS AND HEALTH	4

3.5. COUNTRY SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

Figure 3 highlights the scientific production by country, showcasing the global contributions to research on literature's role in visual arts. The USA leads with a significant output of 529 documents, reflecting its dominance in academic research and its robust infrastructure for interdisciplinary studies. The UK follows with 333 documents, emphasizing its strong tradition of integrating literature and arts in scholarly discourse. Australia (124) and Canada (105) also demonstrate notable contributions, likely influenced by their emphasis on cultural studies and creative industries. European countries such as Germany (76), Italy (48), Spain (38), and the Netherlands (37) feature prominently, reflecting the region's rich artistic heritage and ongoing scholarly interest in the intersection of literature and visual arts. China (59) represents Asia's growing engagement with this field, while Brazil (31) highlights contributions from Latin America, showcasing a diverse geographical representation in the research. This distribution underscores the global nature of the research, with significant outputs from North America, Europe, Oceania, and emerging contributions from Asia and Latin America. It reflects varying cultural perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of literature's influence on visual arts.

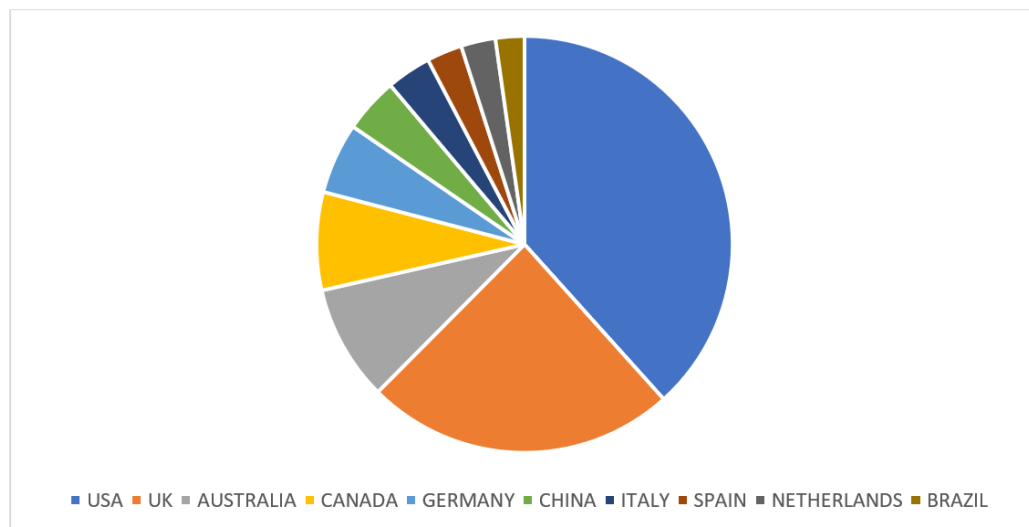


Figure 3 Country scientific production

3.6. TREND TOPICS

Figure 4, the trend topics visualization, illustrates the evolution and frequency of key terms in research on literature's role in visual arts over time. The chart shows the emergence of various themes, highlighting shifts in scholarly focus and the development of interdisciplinary connections. In the early years, terms such as "history, ancient,"

"medicine in art," and "paintings" dominate, reflecting a traditional focus on historical and artistic studies. As the field evolves, more contemporary and interdisciplinary terms, like "art therapy," "mental health," and "humanities," begin to appear, particularly after 2000. This indicates a growing interest in the therapeutic and societal applications of art, blending fields like psychology, education, and literature. From around 2010 onwards, terms such as "education," "creativity," "health promotion," and "medical education" show a significant rise in frequency, suggesting a broader application of visual arts in educational and health contexts. The recent emphasis on terms like "virtual reality," "empathy," and "arts computing" reflects the integration of technology and innovative methodologies into the discourse, pointing to the current trend of exploring digital and immersive technologies' role in connecting literature and visual arts. Overall, the figure demonstrates a dynamic research landscape that evolves from historical and aesthetic inquiries to addressing modern educational, psychological, and technological dimensions, highlighting the expanding relevance of literature and visual arts across diverse disciplines.

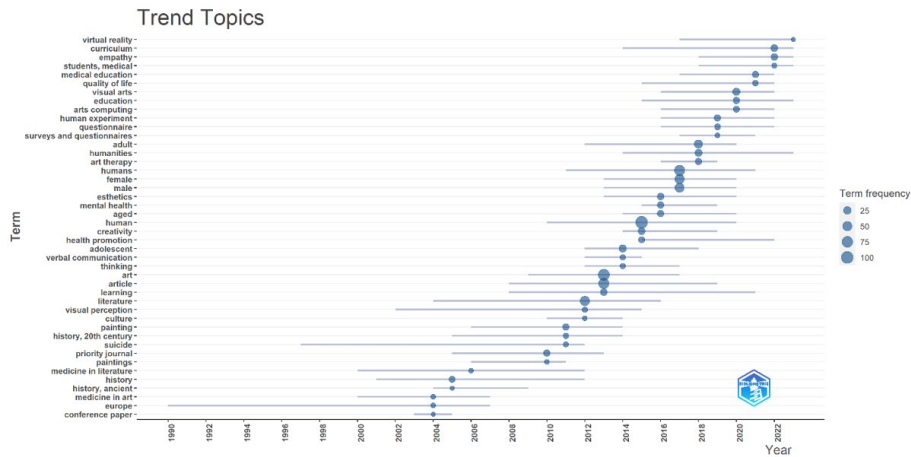


Figure 4 Trending topics in the realm of research

3.7. THEMATIC MAP

Figure 5 illustrates a thematic map that provides a comprehensive visualization of the key research themes related to the role of literature in visual arts, categorized according to their relevance (centrality) and level of development (density). In the Motor Themes quadrant (high centrality, high density), topics like "visual arts," "literature," and "visual art" dominate, indicating their pivotal role in driving the discourse forward. These themes represent the core and advanced areas of study, reflecting their maturity and centrality to the field. They form the intellectual backbone of research, providing foundational insights and frameworks that guide further inquiry.

The Niche Themes quadrant (low centrality, high density) features specialized areas of research, such as "narrative," "children," and "multimodality." While these topics are well-developed within their scope, they are less integrated into the broader academic landscape, suggesting that they cater to specific subfields. On the other hand, the Emerging or Declining Themes quadrant (low centrality, low density) includes topics like "art education" and "arts education." These themes are either nascent, indicating potential areas for future exploration, or declining in relevance, reflecting a shift in scholarly focus away from them.

In the Basic Themes quadrant (high centrality, low density), topics such as "ekphrasis," "intermediality," "colonialism," "creativity," and "dementia" are fundamental to the field but require further development to become robust areas of study. These themes suggest emerging interdisciplinary opportunities and research gaps that need addressing to strengthen their contributions. Additionally, intermediate themes like "mental health" and "modernism/postmodernism" act as bridges between niche and core areas, connecting specialized inquiries to broader research agendas. This dynamic thematic structure highlights both the established areas and the evolving frontiers of research, pointing to a vibrant and expanding scholarly landscape.

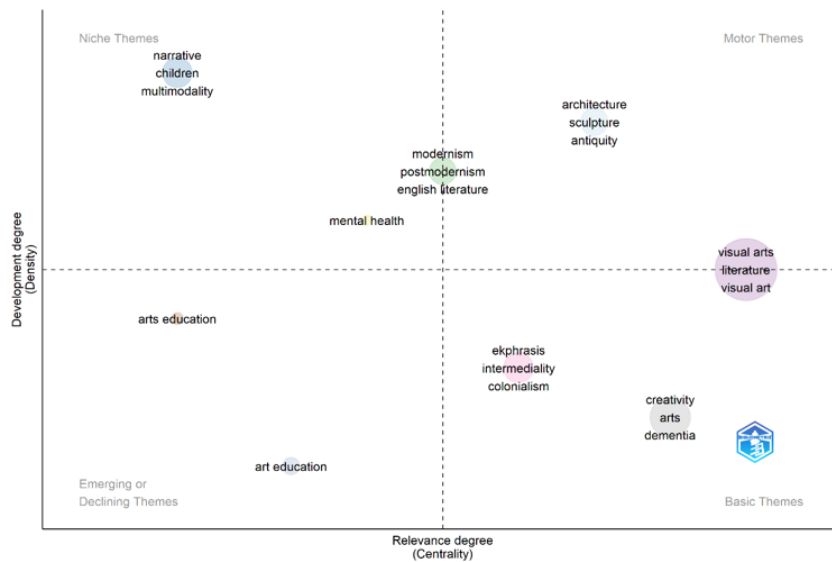


Figure 5 Thematic visualisation of author keywords

3.8. BIBLIOGRAPHIC COUPLING OF DOCUMENTS

Figure 6 illustrates the bibliographic coupling of documents, showcasing the interconnectivity and shared references among scholarly works in the domain of literature's role in visual arts. The analysis applies a minimum citation threshold of 20, filtering out less-cited works to highlight the most influential studies. From the 1,345 documents analyzed, 141 met the criteria, forming a network of 98 items distributed across 13 clusters. These clusters represent groups of documents that are closely related in terms of shared references, providing insights into thematic areas and collaborative trends in the field. Key nodes in the network, such as Sollors (2011), Stuckey (2010), and Janssen (2008), indicate documents with high bibliographic coupling strength, signifying their centrality and influence in the discourse. The larger size of these nodes reflects their prominence, suggesting they serve as pivotal works within their respective clusters. The colored clusters demonstrate distinct research themes, likely ranging from theoretical analyses and historical studies to practical applications in education, therapy, and technology. The interconnectedness of clusters highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the research, with lines between nodes indicating shared references that link various thematic areas. For example, connections between Stuckey (2010) and works by Camic (2010) or Noice (2014) may suggest overlapping interests in art therapy or the psychological dimensions of visual arts and literature. This bibliographic coupling analysis not only identifies influential works and thematic concentrations but also provides a roadmap for future research by revealing gaps and areas for further exploration within this dynamic and evolving field.

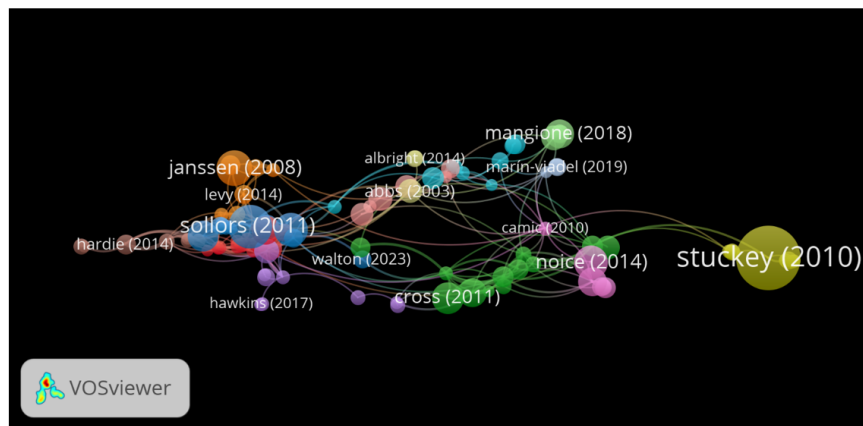


Figure 6 bibliographic coupling of documents

3.9. CO-OCCURRENCE OF KEYWORDS

Figure 7 illustrates the co-occurrence network of author keywords provides a detailed view of the thematic interrelations within research on literature's role in visual arts. With a minimum occurrence threshold of 5, 62 keywords

were categorized into 7 clusters, each reflecting distinct yet interconnected research areas. The largest cluster focuses on narrative, children's literature, multimodality, pedagogy, and art education, emphasizing the integration of literary and visual media in educational contexts. Another significant cluster explores modernism, postmodernism, avant-garde, painting, and architecture, highlighting the intersection of literature and visual arts in historical and stylistic movements. Keywords such as mental health, art therapy, depression, and dementia form a cluster that underscores the interdisciplinary applications of visual arts and literature in mental health and therapy.

Other clusters delve into cultural and historical dimensions with keywords like migration, cultural history, education, and reception, exploring societal dynamics and heritage. Themes like ekphrasis, feminism, antiquity, and architecture reflect the blending of classical and contemporary issues, including gender studies and historical narratives. The prominence of central terms like visual arts and literature across clusters signifies their unifying role, linking diverse areas such as art education, mental health, and cultural analysis. This network reveals a vibrant and multidisciplinary research landscape, pointing to both well-established themes and emerging opportunities for future exploration.

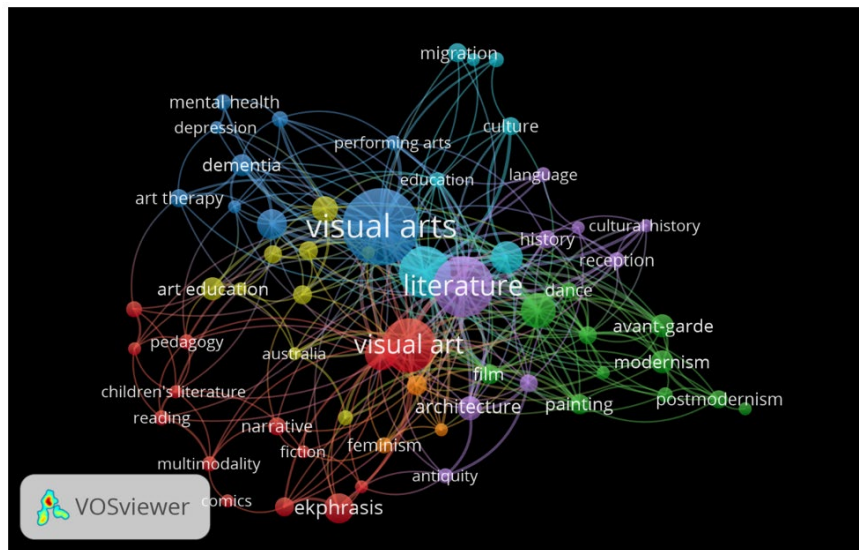


Figure 7 Co-occurrence of all keywords

3.10. COUNTRIES COLLABORATIONS

Figure 8 depicts a network visualization of the co-authorship network of countries and highlights the global collaboration patterns in research on literature's role in visual arts. Based on a minimum document threshold of 5, 45 out of 91 countries met the criteria, resulting in a network of 38 items grouped into 8 clusters. Each cluster represents a group of countries with strong collaborative ties, showcasing the interdisciplinary and international nature of the research field. The United States is the most prominent node, reflecting its central role in the network as a key contributor and collaborator. It forms significant connections with countries such as Canada, Australia, Ireland, and Spain, indicating robust cross-border academic partnerships. Other notable countries like Australia, Canada, and China also play prominent roles, forming their own clusters and linking with countries such as Malaysia, Switzerland, and Brazil. This demonstrates a widespread engagement with diverse research communities across continents. The presence of smaller but significant nodes, such as France, Poland, and Romania, suggests contributions from European countries that connect various clusters. These interconnections indicate that research on literature and visual arts benefits from global contributions, fostering diverse perspectives and methodologies. The eight clusters reflect regional and thematic synergies, where collaborations may arise from shared cultural, educational, or research priorities. Overall, the network illustrates a rich and interconnected global academic landscape driving forward the interdisciplinary study of literature and visual arts.

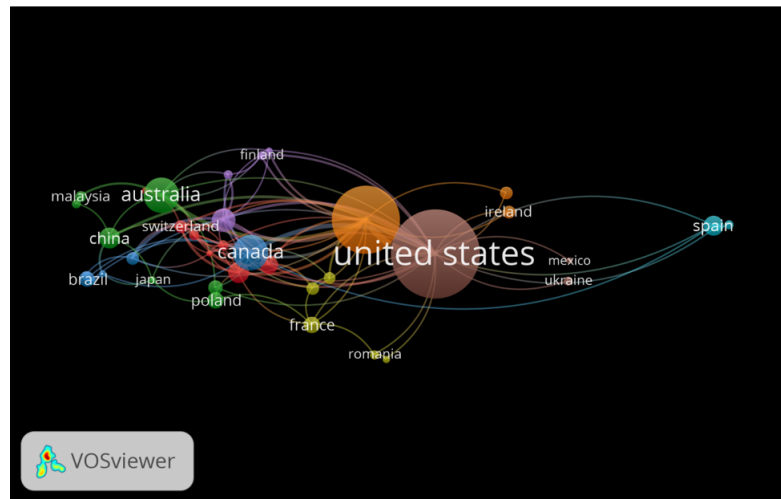


Figure 7 Countries collaborations

4. DISCUSSIONS

The bibliometric analysis of literature's role in visual arts uncovers significant growth and diversification in this interdisciplinary field, as reflected in the annual scientific production and thematic clustering. Over the years, research output has surged, particularly post-2004, with contributions increasingly focusing on contemporary topics such as mental health, art education, and the integration of technology, including virtual reality and arts computing. Thematic mapping further identifies core themes like "visual arts" and "literature," which act as central pillars driving scholarly discourse. Meanwhile, specialized topics, including "narrative," "ekphrasis," and "mental health," offer insights into niche areas, though some of these remain underexplored. This evolution highlights a vibrant landscape that bridges traditional aesthetic inquiries with modern societal and technological applications.

Despite the robust academic engagement, research gaps persist, particularly in emerging or underdeveloped themes like "art education" and "dementia," which lack centrality or density in the scholarly network. Moreover, interdisciplinary topics, such as "creativity" and "colonialism," represent opportunities for further exploration, as they connect specialized studies to broader academic conversations. Practical implications of these findings are vast, ranging from enhancing mental health interventions using art therapy to leveraging visual arts for educational purposes. Additionally, the growing intersection with technology, as evident in recent trend topics, presents opportunities for applying innovations like augmented and virtual reality in art education and cultural preservation.

Global collaboration patterns reveal the United States, Canada, and Australia as leading contributors, forming central nodes in international networks. However, the relatively lower levels of co-authorship from regions like Asia and Latin America indicate untapped potential for fostering diverse cultural perspectives. Strengthening these collaborations could expand the scope and applicability of research, enabling more inclusive and globally representative studies. The co-occurrence of keywords also highlights overlapping research areas, such as the connection between "art therapy" and "mental health," suggesting practical strategies for interdisciplinary applications.

This bibliometric analysis underscores the multidimensional nature of literature's influence on visual arts, highlighting established areas, emerging themes, and research gaps. Practical implications point to the potential for education, mental health, and technological integration to benefit from the evolving scholarship. Future research should aim to address underexplored areas and foster global collaboration to enrich the field further, ensuring that literature and visual arts continue to intersect in meaningful and innovative ways.

5. CONCLUSION

The bibliometric analysis of literature's role in visual arts underscores its dynamic and evolving nature, highlighting the interdisciplinary connections between textual and visual narratives. Core themes such as "visual arts" and "literature" dominate the discourse, while emerging topics like "virtual reality," "ekphrasis," and "mental health" present opportunities for further exploration. Despite significant scholarly growth, gaps remain in underdeveloped areas like art education and cultural applications in mental health. To address these, it is recommended that future research focus on

integrating advanced technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality, to innovate art education methodologies. Additionally, greater emphasis should be placed on fostering global collaborations, particularly engaging underrepresented regions like Asia and Latin America, to diversify perspectives and research outputs. Lastly, interdisciplinary studies combining art therapy, creativity, and cultural heritage should be prioritized to expand the practical applications of this field in education and well-being. By addressing these recommendations, future scholarship can bridge existing gaps, foster innovation, and deepen the understanding of literature's transformative influence on visual arts.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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