THE **IDEA**

Fine Dining is a video mapping installation featuring a fine dining setup (for one individual) and a takeaway box resemblant of the presence of food. The inspiration for this project is driven by the Milano Expo 2015's Japanese pavillon, which featured a futuristic restaurant with digital food, and by the surrealist work of Meret Oppenheim, *Luncheon in Fur*.

Whether online or offline, in reality or in the virtual world, the tech giants, Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon (GAFA) have taken over and gained an incredible amount of influence in today's world. While the GAFA offers a utopian future of convenience, an increased quality of life and interactions, many have already taken notice of their negative impact on the individual and the community. A major issue that is linked to the tech giants is consumerism, the driving force behind desire. In the consumerist world, the individual never gets the feeling of being fulfilled, of having enough. He or she always hungers for more. The GAFA, therefore, seemingly appears to be feeding us with food, that are new gadgets, applications and so on, but in reality our plates are and always have been empty. In other words, the tech giants have been giving us empty promises and prospects that will never fulfil the physical necessities of the human kind. The questions here to ask oneself are: what are we looking for in this present world? What is the ultimate goal? And last but not least, are we excessively dependent on the GAFA? It is important to note here that supply and demand is interlinked with one another. The fact that the GAFA supplies, may be connected to the fact that we demand.

In addition, the intention of this work is to metaphorically parallel our consumption and dependency of the Big Tech companies. Something as necessary as eating is comparative to our daily use of Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon. At the same time, the hierarchical setup of fine dining is comparable to the complexities behind our use of these softwares. The projection on the table hidden by the plates and cutlery suggests that we are ignoring the true facts on the table, which, for instance, includes the misuse of personal data by the GAFA. This is because we too illusioned by the consumption of our desires to acknowledge this dynamic.

Three myths are addressed in this installation: the myth of liberty, the myth of infinite space and myth of independency. The tech giants are appealing to us with infinite space, freedom and independence in order to pull on our ethos.

However, the more we use their service and products, the more bound and the more dependent we are to and of them. As demonstrated upon the use of the plates, we are forever in a limited space, confounded to where the GAFA is putting us. We are limited by a dependency we have today in using Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon. They are profiting off of our use of them in ways which can be perceived as unethical. We are also put in a difficult position when we lose access to them. The Big Four tech companies have created a market monopoly modern society depends on and can no longer function without, putting the consumer in a precarious position.

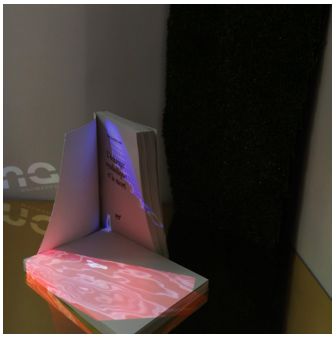
The merging of the four logos of the GAFA into one, creates a new brand that is representative of the concept of the tech giant.

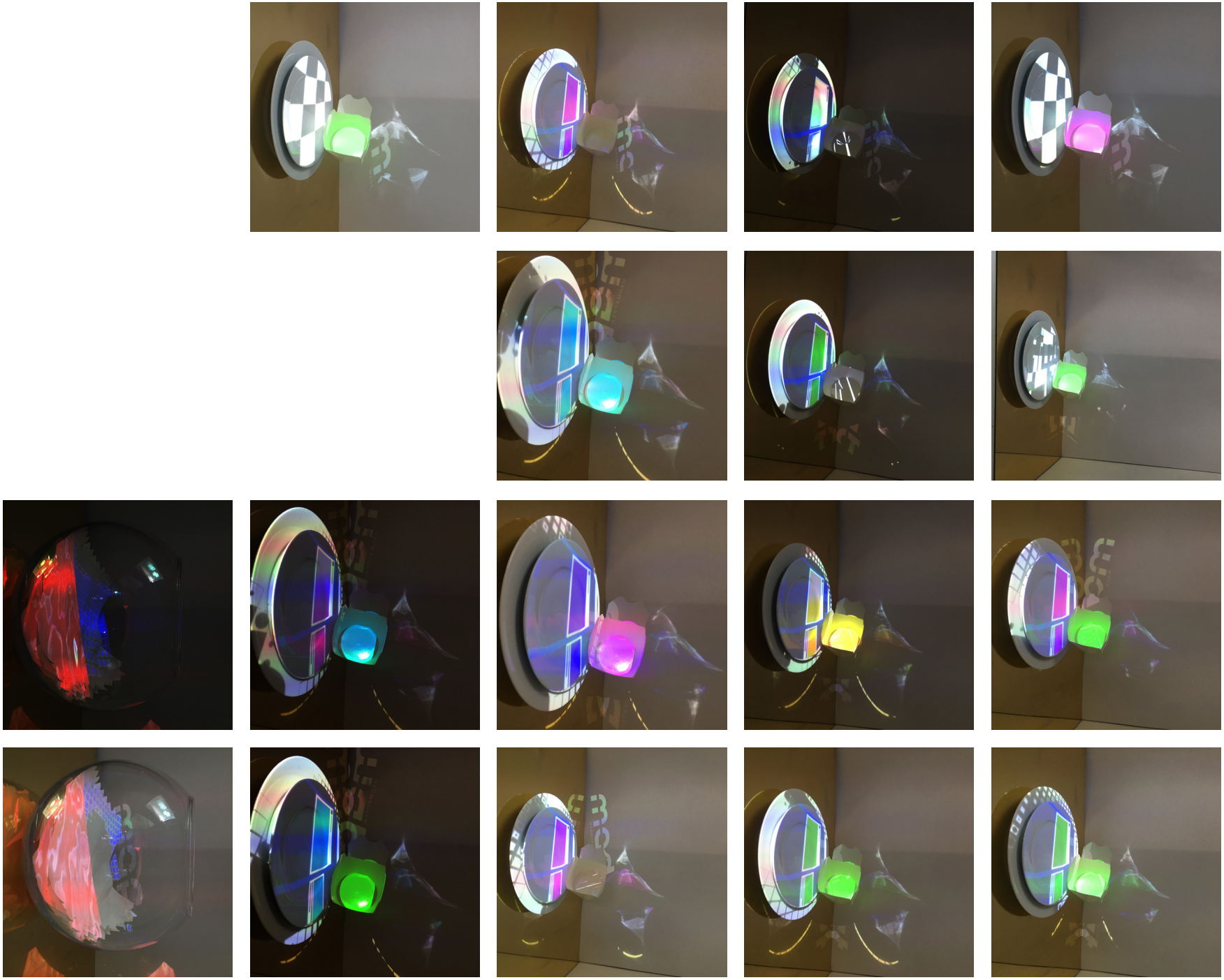
Furthermore, this installation suggests that we are buying into the idea that we are living a fine dining experience while we are really given the same ordinary treatment, as represented by the open takeaway box at the corner of the plate.

THE RESEARCH & EXPERIMENTATION

Our research and experimentation lies in finding the right symbolic representation of our relationship with the GAFA but also in finding the suitable surfaces to video map on. The difficulties in our experimentations lied mostly on thinking of something suitable to sublimate on. We thought about ceramics and plates. In the end, we decided to go with sublimating on textile.

As for the video mapping, we enjoyed projecting onto books, a fishbowl, a shoe and several other objects. Some objects were better to video map on, some others more difficult. Our experiment of projecting into water and into an angled mirror did not comply to our expectations which is why we withdrew from the idea of using them in our final project. Finding the right balance between light and darkness was also a struggle, especially when we were trying to document our results.





THE RESEARCH & EXPERIMENTATION

THE SETUP

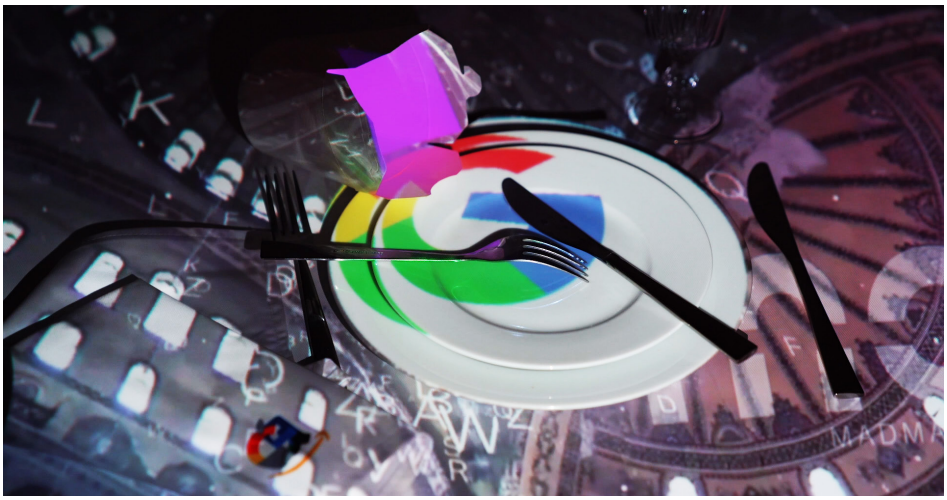
The *Fine Dining* setup features in order a napkin, two forks, a small plate on top a a bigger plate, a tablespoon and two knives. A teaspoon is placed horizontally just above the plates, the glass is placed at the top right corner and the open takeaway box is leaning against the plates at the top left corner.

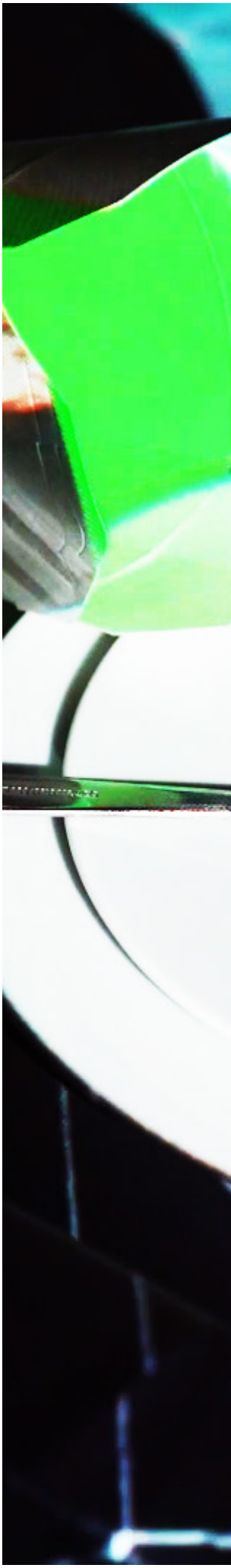
We filmed in a dimmed space and used the software MadMapper to video map onto the table, the plates and inside the takeaway box. Three different videos are used for this project (read more about it in the video and the logo section).

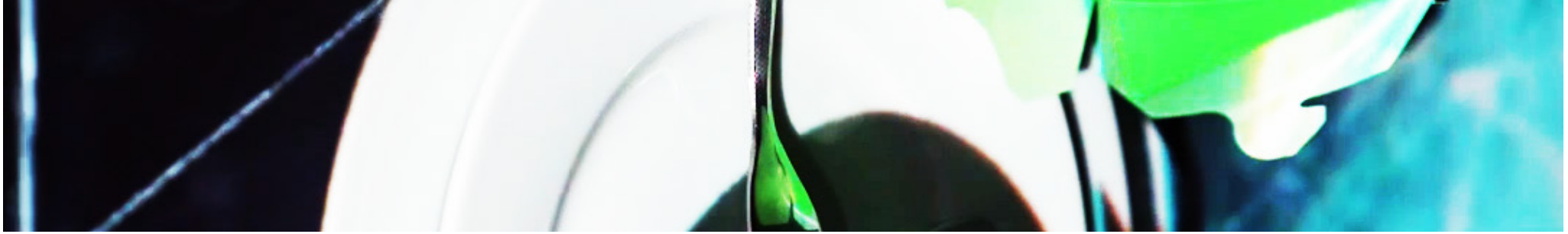
The original setup is without sound. The audio was inserted during the editing process of the final video.

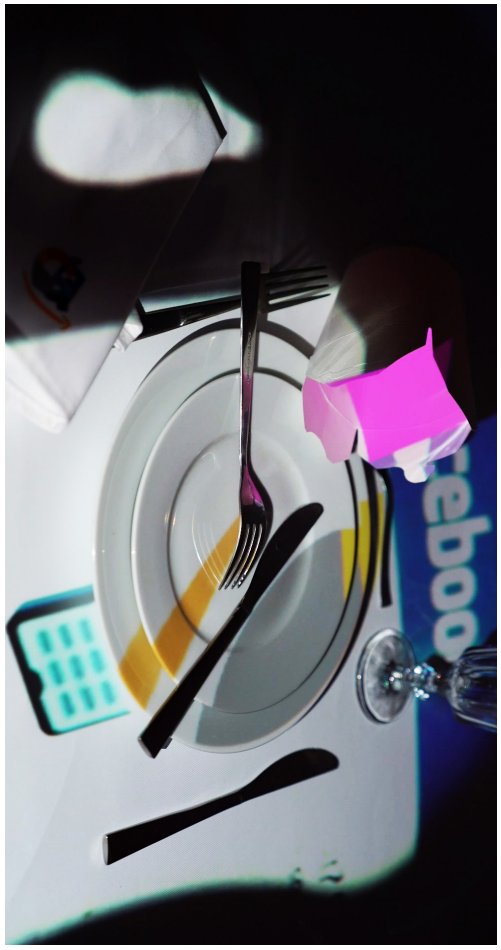
THE FINAL PRODUCT

Scene 1 | The Set Up



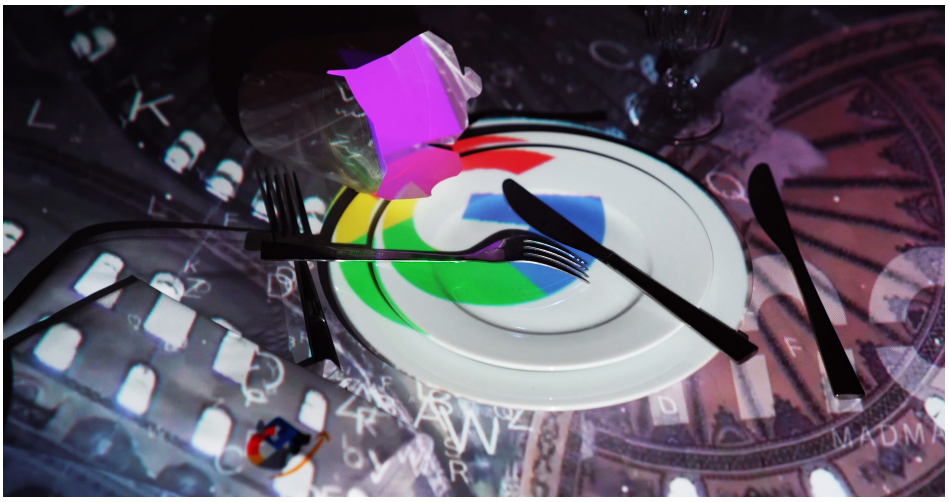






THE FINAL PRODUCT

Scene 2 | Consuming



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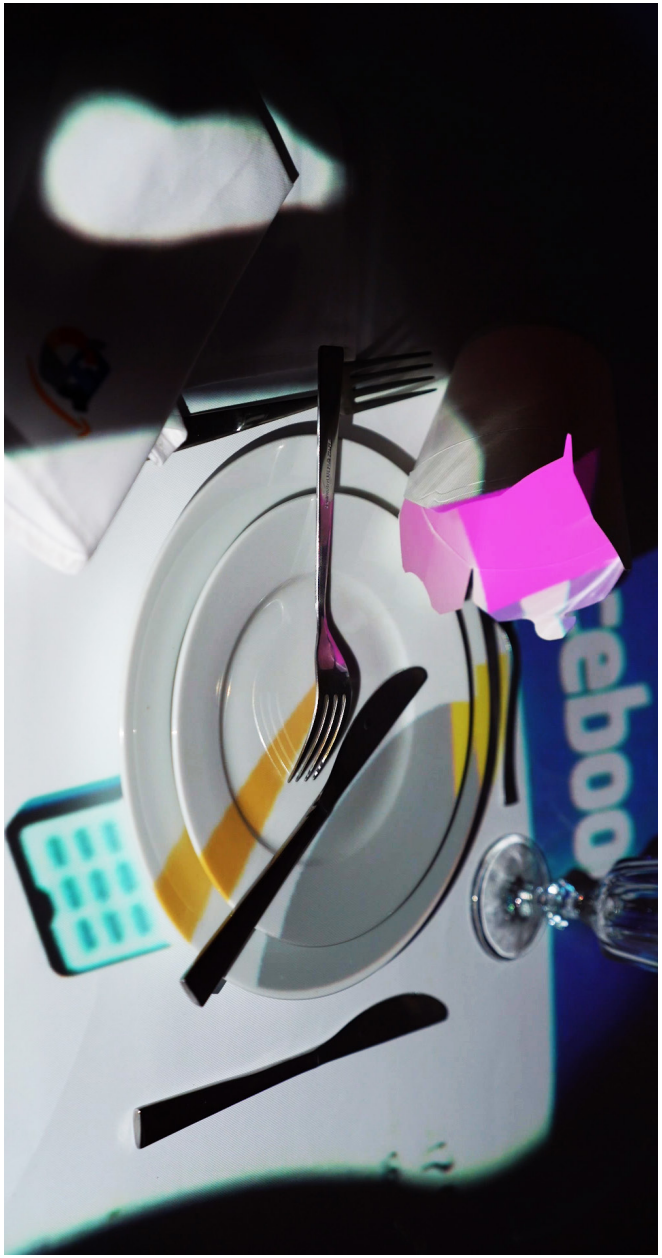


THE FINAL PRODUCT

Scene 2 | Consuming

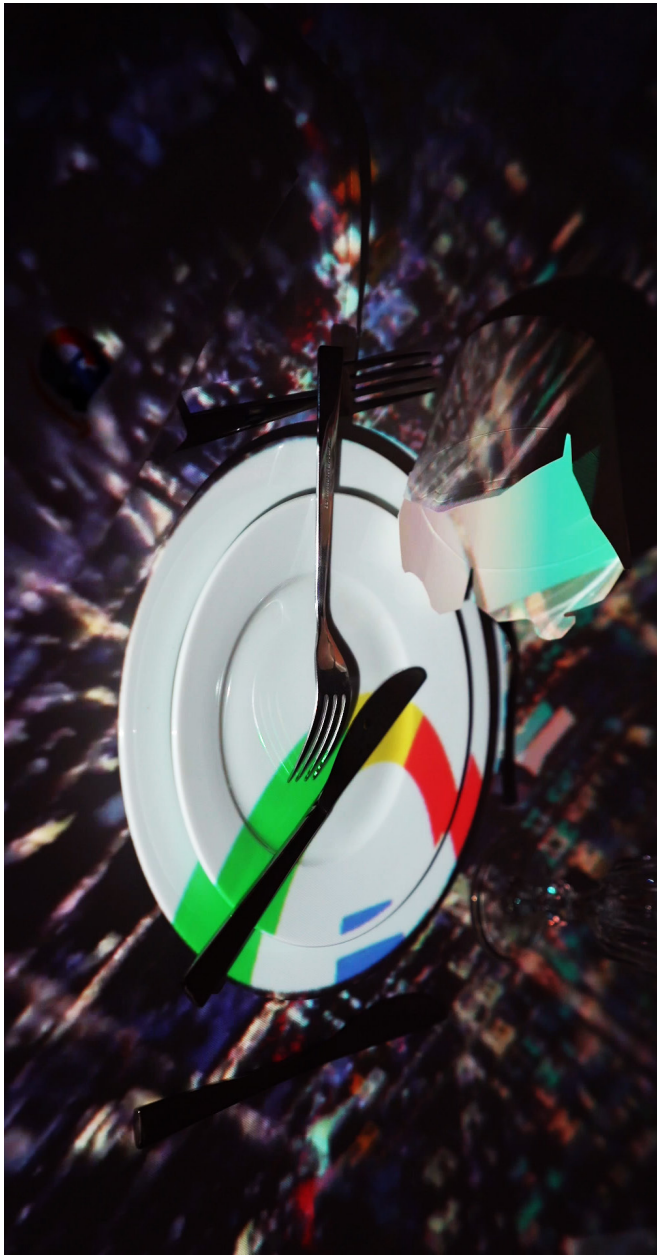
Our video is divided into two scenes: The Set Up and Consuming. The Set Up suggests two things: the GAFA is setting us up and it is the fine dining setup. The cutlery and napkin in this scene are neatly placed. Consuming suggests the process of consumption which is why the cutlery are on the plates and the napkin looks like as if it has been used.
The length of the video is determined by the length of the introductory part of the Round Table discussion video. The audio is from the Round Table discussion video.

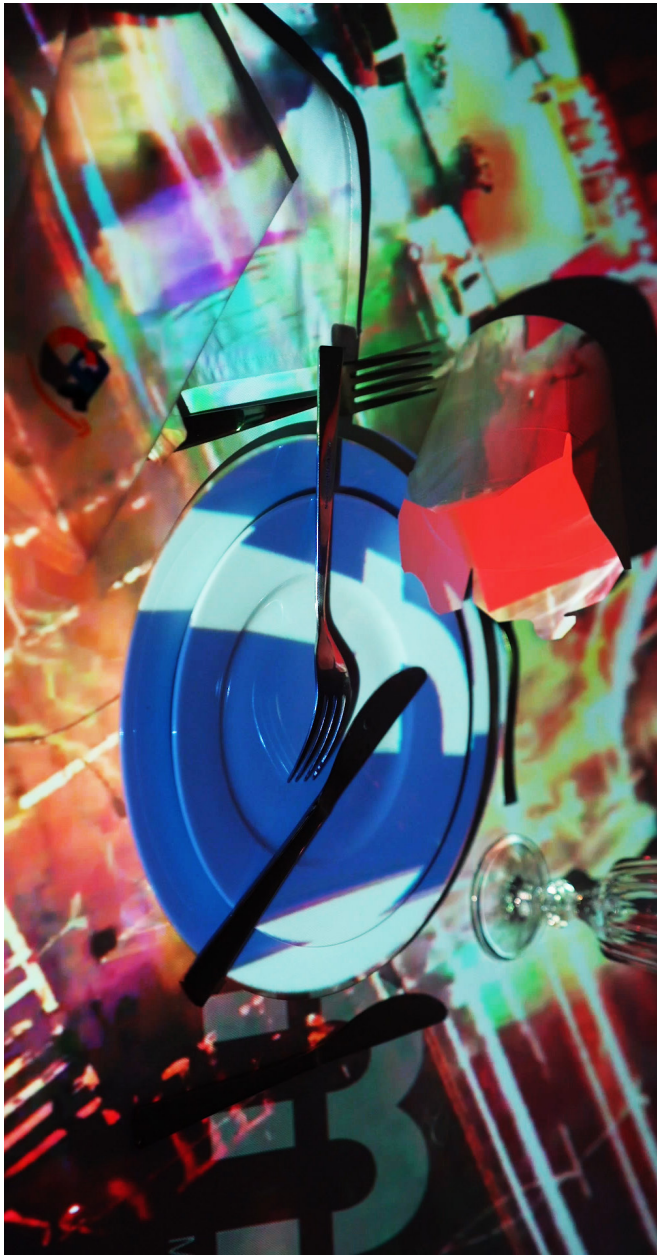
The strobelight video imitates the social media feeds we go through every day. This is what the GAFA has provided us, which is why the strobelight video is projected into the takeaway box, as it is an immersive experience sold to us by the tech giants.

The GAFA logo video on the plates represents the things we consume which are branded by either one of the GAFA logos. The transition from the strobelight video to the logo video demonstrates the tactic the GAFA uses to attract attention onto itself. However, once the food from the takeaway box is poured out onto the plates, the reality kicks in: it is food by the GAFA.

The Round Table video that is video mapped onto the table asks the question of whether the tech giants have grown too powerful. It summarises people's thoughts on the GAFA and features a discussion round (which is not included in our video). The discussions made at the Round Table should be reflected on the individual's table where he or she is fine dining.

We chose to merge the different logos of the big tech companies into one. This suggests that the idea of the tech giants is a concept that is being addressed. We are not really targeting the businesses themselves. The reason why we chose not to include Microsoft is mainly because it is not under the umbrella of the Big Four Tech companies. In addition, an economic argument could be that Microsoft, even though also a gigantic and growing company, is more stagnant than its other comrades, offering products such as the Excel, PowerPoint, Word and so on. A semantic argument is that most journalists and communicators refer to the GAFA as these big US corporations that interfere with our habits and have negative background histories such as underpaid taxes, harsh working conditions, undermination of the use of robotics and etc. Microsoft, on the other hand, has never been in the same scenario.

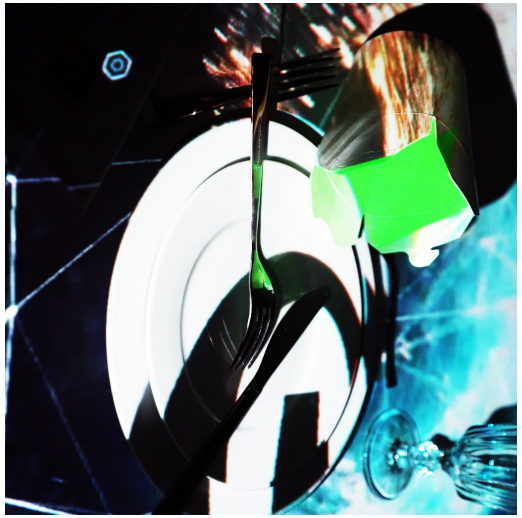
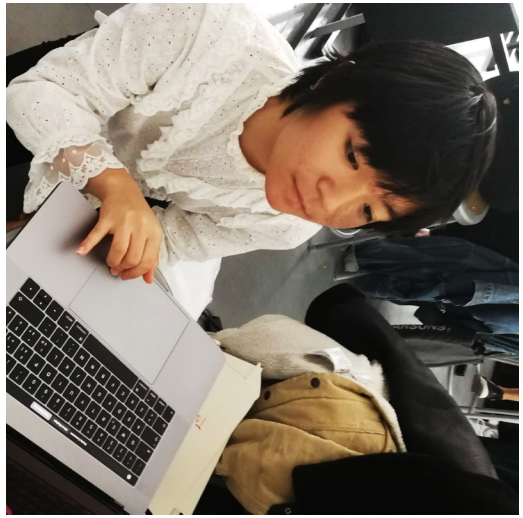




FINAL THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

The experience of video mapping and going to the TechShop to sublimate ourselves was definitely very fun and useful. Difficulties, as mentioned earlier, include not being able to sublimate on the things we wanted. The reason for this is because we did not fully understand the sublimation process which prescribes the object we want to print on to be flat. Otherwise the only other issue we had was finding the best lighting or darkness for filming our documentation video. We wanted the video mapping to be clear and visible but at the same time, we wanted people to see the cutlery and etc.

If we were to develop this project, we would want to try transforming the installation into a bigger scale. Either we create a whole restaurant, like at the Japanese pavillon at the Milano Expo 2015, or we can scale up the objects (plates etc.) in order for people to actually feel like that they are the food.

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