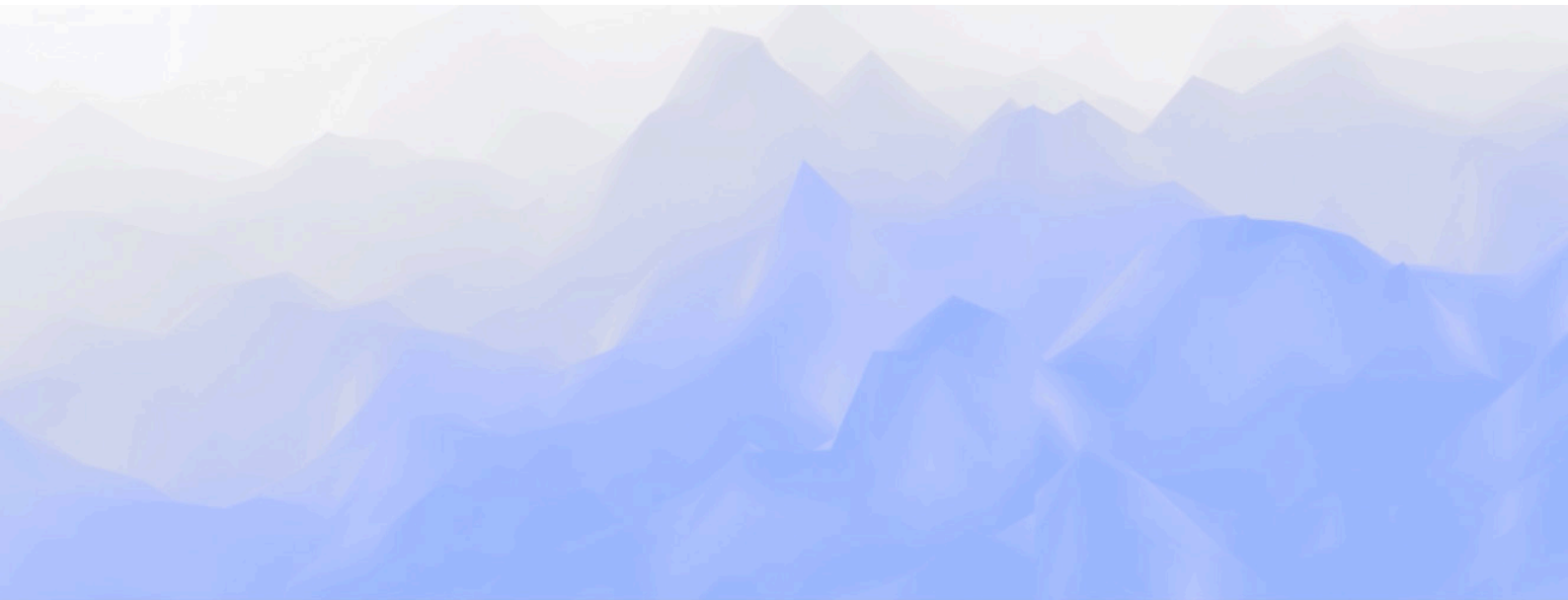


I DO BELIEVE, 2019

real-time video projection, computer, touch designer software

by Giulia Spreafico, in collaboration with Alex Cayuela, Particula Studio, Marco Ginex and Paolo Romano.



1. CONCEPT

I do believe, 2019 is a project that starts from a two-centuries-old image, brings it forward in the present and makes it live again thanks to big data.

FROM THE BEST AUTHORITIES, 2017-ongoing

I do believe, 2019, belongs to a wider project called From The Best Authorities, started in 2017, that tries to explore the mysterious Kong Mountains, existed between 1798 and 1888. They were a huge chain, a parallel line going along the equator, splitting the African continent from Guinea to Niger. What is intriguing about Kong Mountains is that they never existed except in the imaginations of explorers, mapmakers and merchants.

The power of being visual images gives maps a unique role in defining knowledge. Satellites today, just like cartographers in the past, are invested with such an authority that makes every interpretation accepted and validated.

In every work I try to retrace lost routes of explorers who created an authentic myth full of political and economical reasons and implications but also imbued with a strong poetic inspiration: the Kong Mountains were covered with snow, impossible to overcome, hostile, but also magical, blue colored and full of rivers and rapid torrents.

The works in this series explore the words, the visions, the shapes, the coordinates of these lost mountains, trying to find a contemporary link in an attempt to fill a void and to give an answer.

Kong Mountains are an opportunity to investigate the very new authorities, the ones that build and influence our everyday perception of space and reality.

<https://www.giuliaspreafico.com/works/from-the-best-authorities/>

<https://bestauthority.tumblr.com/>



I DO BELIEVE, 2019

I do believe, 2019, is the last chapter of this research. It draws attention to the power of words as something that supports a visual creation and makes it believable and trustworthy. If in the other chapters of my project I analyse and bring to the limit satellite maps and 3D graphic by Google Maps and Google Earth, in I do believe another tool by Google gives life to the work.

“To organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful” (<https://about.google/our-story/>), this is Google mission: to create a box where every single human question could find an answer. Every time we look for our answers in Google, everytime Google gives us a reliable answer, we place part of our trust in that box. Nowadays billions of people look for, find and give answer, giving to Google something that is necessary to keep it powerful and alive: the authority.

In a world like ours in which everybody can say whatever at any moment, the authority principle is

something that people don't confer lightly. Just as cartographers built the image of world, giving it shape and color, so too Google continues the work, with ever more precision, details and informations.

If in 1798 the words of the explorer Mungo Park were convincing enough to become one of the most complete text about Africa of the times, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, what words could be as much powerful? What could be the suitable means to communicate it and keep it in space and time? Who could play the role of James Rennel, well known english cartographer of the Royal Geographical Society, the one who arranged Mungo Park's travel notes and traced the first signs of the mythical Kong Mountains, convincing everybody to do the same in 48 maps for nearly a century.

The answer could be nowhere but in Larry Page and Sergey Brin's box, which during the last few years has been developed with more powerful tools to collect and share informations. We just need to know what and how to look for: keywords "kong" and "mountains" are today the only words that are needed to keep the myth immortal.

I do believe is based on the data taken from the Google browser that concern to the words that compose Kong Mountains. Google Trends is the tool that allows the user to look up what people all around the world ask to Google: through the research of a keyword it is possible to find out how many times it has been looked for, with what frequency and what other words are related to it.

I do believe creates a visual image in real time, which modifies itself over and over again as people look up the Kong Mountains. A software (Touch Designer) processes a data history taken from Google Trends and generates a huge chain of mountains that transform all the time.

It is the incessant research of these words in the browser that guarantees the existence of Kong Mountains, in a self-sustaining process: people choose to believe in their presence once again, ask Google and Google, in turn, subjects the results and the content created by other users.

In I do believe, the elevation, the distance between the peaks and the movement of the mountains from a certain point to another, are decided by the analysis of Google Trends' data: a number which has been given a value into a diagram.

However, once taken the data from this contemporary explorer, the real work of interpretation and definition of knowledge is in the hands of the cartographer, who gives instruction to the software and arbitrarily decides shapes, colours, density, timing range, speed and framing. The image take shape and gives back to the spectator a wide imaginary landscape, soft and ethereal.

Just like the case of Mungo Park and James Rennel, the levels of interpretation rise in tiers: Google analyses the research data of the users, it processes them and creates diagrams, visual models which follow the trend of a word in time; then the software takes this data and gives them another shape, based on the programming and on 3D modelling settings. It is exactly in this hand over

process that the Kong Mountains saw the light for the very first time: to give shape to something you have never seen, to base your work on someone else's words and data, every single decision, every single line on white paper is based on something which is inevitably uncertain.

Kong Mountains do keep existing in I do believe, but not without paradoxes. The association of "kong" and "mountains" doesn't refer always and only to the mythical mountain chain. Sometimes it deals with some mountains near Hong Kong, sometimes with a chain on Kauai island in Hawaii, a peak of which was given Kong Mountain nickname, due to its resemblance to a gorilla's head.

An audio track made with Max/MSP and Ableton Live changes constantly following the movements of the mountains. Through Max/MSP's patches the video of the mountains is processed as MIDI output to control synthetic sounds in Ableton Live. The movements of the peaks, the visual variations in the video control the sound. The sound helps the immersive landscape becoming a place in which spectator can just stay and see Kong Mountains trends moving.

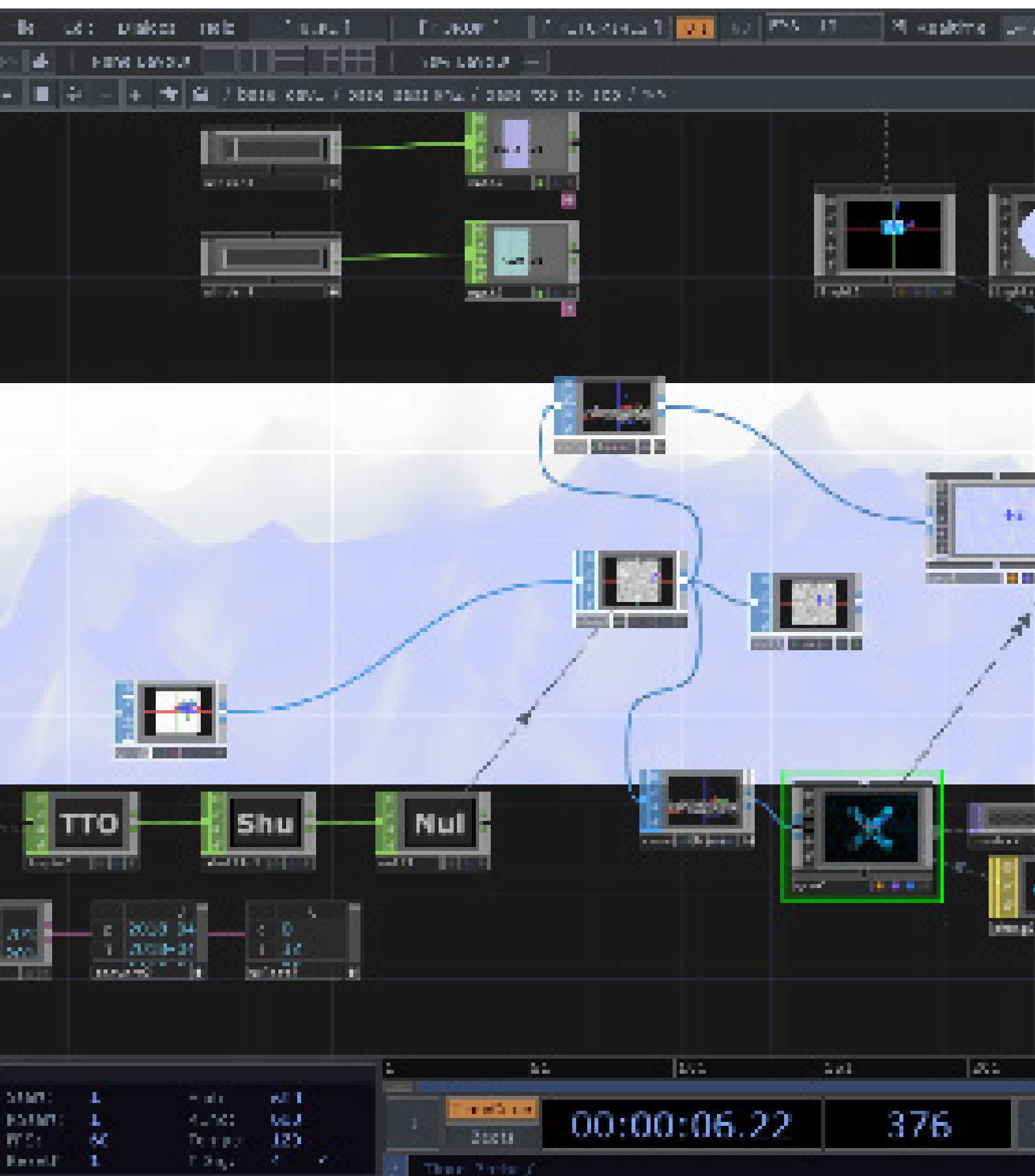
2. PREREQUISITES AND TECHNICAL NEEDS

The display of I do believe requires a computer with TouchDesigner, Max/MSP and Ableton live installed on it. WiFi connection or LAN. A video projector or 3 tv screens. One audio output, 1 stereo channel (R+L) and 2 speakers.

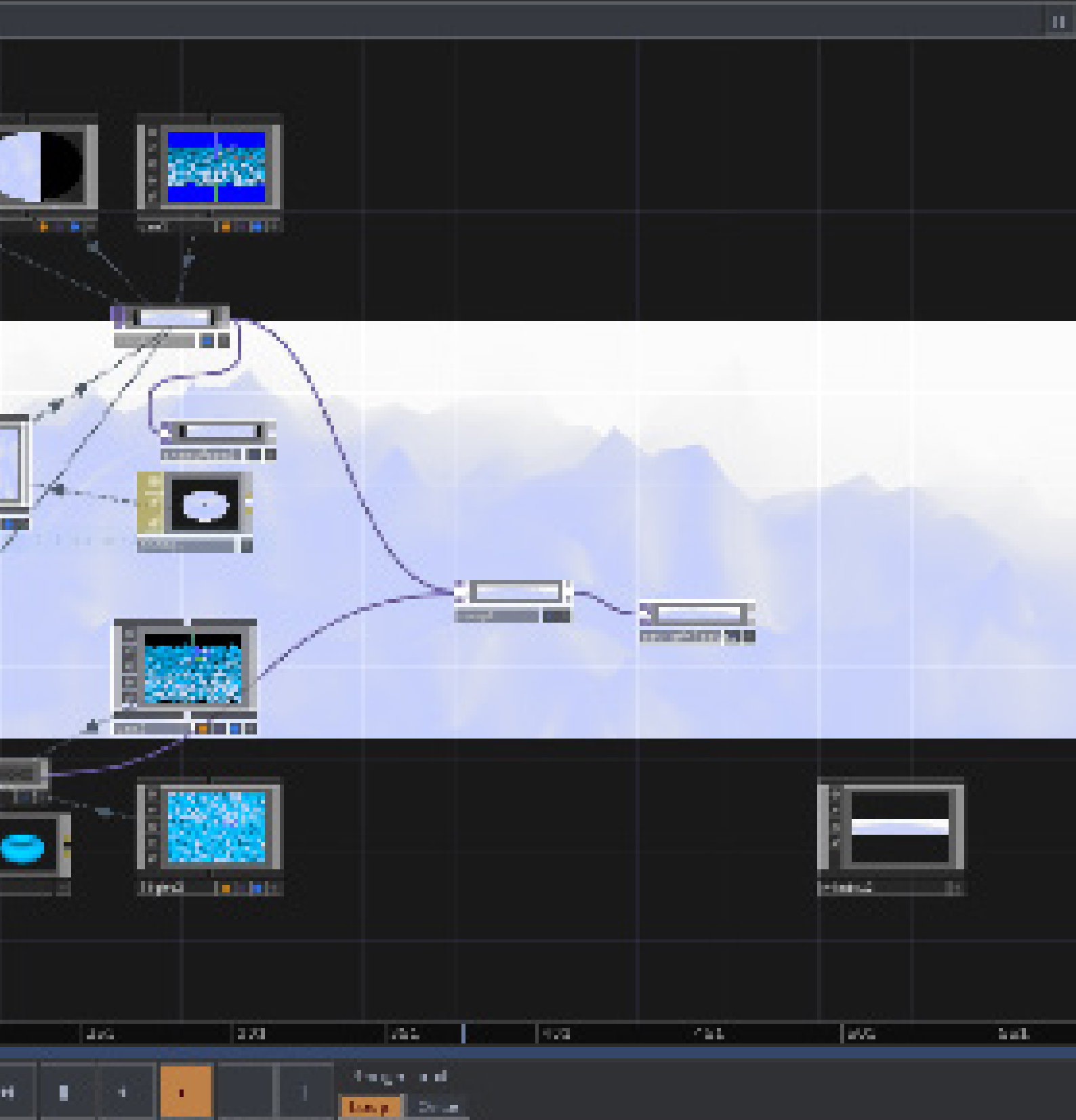
The computer should be turned on for the entire duration of the exhibition. TouchDesigner is a software that provides tools for the realization of real time projects. Here are system requirements for installing TouchDesigner https://docs.derivative.ca/index.php?title=System_Requirements

The video is programmed to take data from Google Trends. The flux of data is taken from the last 3 months since the moment of power on of the software and the software keeps taking data in real time.

The video should be projected or displayed in three HD monitors / TV 43" at least (1920x1080 px each) since the video ratio is 1920x360 px. In the second case we need a computer with 3 video output.



Sei un'azienda che opera nel settore della...



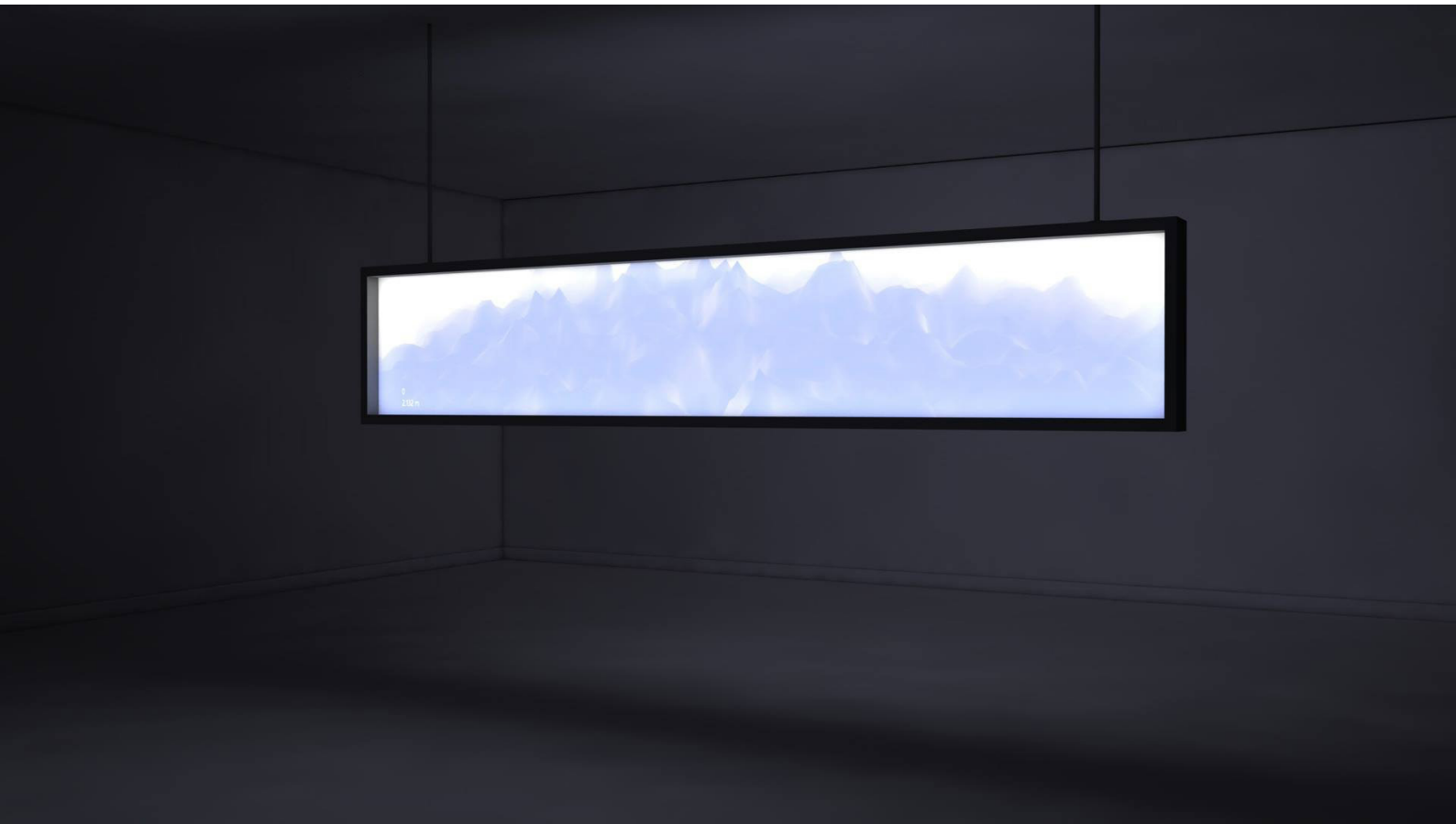












The project is about how the new authority makes us believe or not believe something. Our approach to reality is radically changed using tools like Google Maps. Talking about Kong Mountains and creating an immersive and contemplative landscape is a pretext to talk about how authority changes our perception and therefore our knowledge about reality.

The power of being visual images gives maps a unique role in defining knowledge. Satellites today, just like cartographers in the past, are invested with such an authority that makes every interpretation accepted and validated. If a huge chain like Kong Mountains, splitting the African continent from Guinea to Niger, could have existed for nearly a century during the 19th century, what could exist today, just because we are told it does?

The fact that these imaginary and epic mountains could live again, as long as people type their name on Google, is something that makes me think about what we perceive as reality. It tries to link a poetic research to a tool (Google Trends) usually used for a commercial aim.

<https://www.giuliaspreafico.com/works/from-the-best-authorities/>

instagram: [@gilli_spreafico](https://www.instagram.com/gilli_spreafico)

tumblr: <https://bestauthority.tumblr.com/>

I do believe, 2019
a work by Giulia Spreafico

graphic design and programming by Alex Cayuela and Marco
Ginex

sound by Paolo Romano

