

“... brands dominate our lives as workers, citizens & consumers. As workers we are in a ‘branding economy’ in which the strongest brands are the ones generating the worst jobs. It is branding that forces firms to sever their traditional ties to steady job creation, seek out youth culture for more aggressive branding, & use ‘real-live youth’ to pioneer ‘a new kind of disposable workforce’. It is brands, defended by lawyers, which restrict our choice of writing, music, movies & internet content. It is not state regulations, but brands that limit civil liberties & call free speech & democratic society into question...”

JAMES WOUDDHUYSEN BRANDS-DON'T BUY THE HYPE

TITLE



MODULE #2 COLTAN

DESCRIPTION

The world is an ever changing, unconquerable place & yet our consumption of global products leads us to believe that the world & the things we use are everlasting. At the same time the world is becoming smaller & more homogenous at precisely the time that record numbers of people have the ability to travel to far-flung corners of it.

With the same meal in every stomach, the same song on every radio, the same story on every news page, the same coffee in every cup, we are moving towards a monochrome culture, led by multinational business, where every high street has been replaced by global & national chains. With economic systems that favour the large, remote & uniform there's a threat to local economies & communities, diversity & choice. Aligned with this, biologists have suggested we are now living through a global mass extinction with environmental degradation & over-consumption, driving countless plant & animal species to extinction.

D-Fuse have created a multi-screened immersive environment that uses 3D animations of high resolution still photos & simple vector maps of the planet to explore these issues. Offering a reading of this global mono-culture where aesthetic, architectural, agricultural, natural & civic diversity is being lost as the consumer driven culture spreads across the globe.

As a data driven installation **Small Global** consists of individual modules that explore themes of consumption, at present 2 modules exist with more modules in progress and can be presented individually or as a series of modules.

The first module references **McDonalds**, this was chosen for **Small Global** as the most widely acknowledged symbol of the growth of mass global consumption. By graphically mapping the data of the company's growth against the destruction of the rainforests the audience will experience the hidden costs of the great changes in our world.

The second module contrasts the mining & prices of **Coltan** [the metal used in cellular phone chips] in the Congo, against the human death toll & the extermination of the worlds Gorilla population.

These are all facts that wash by us in our daily consumption of convenience & technology.

Small Global can also be presented as a live A/V performance.

Small Global is a touring audio-visual installation.

For further details please contact: **Keri Elmsly**

M+44[0]791-615-0213 T +44[0]20-7253-3662 E keri@dfuse.com

TITLE



MODULE #1 McDONALDS

D-FUSE BIOG

D-Fuse is a group of London based, international artists & designers from varied disciplines, who work across a range of creative media from the **Web, Print, TV, Film, Art & Architecture**, to **Live A/V Performances & Mobile** media.

D-Fuse's visual art has been shown internationally; venues include **Sonar** [Barcelona], The **Rotterdam, Seoul** Film Festivals. Performances & installations have been projected at the Lisbon & Valencia **Bienale, Porto 2001, Back Up** Festival [Weimar], the **Jam** and **Onedotzero** festivals in London & Tokyo.

CREDITS D-FUSE

Video **D-Fuse** [Michael Faulkner + Barney Steel]
Audio **D-Fuse** [Matthias Kispert] with contributions by **Scanner**
Producer **D-Fuse** [Keri Elmsly]

CREDITS EYEBEAM

Artists **Jun Zee Myers, Chihcheng Peng + Eric Socolofsky**
Director of Production **Melanie Crean**
Studio Technical Director **Rob O'Neill**
Coordinating Producer **Margaret Heinlen**

CREDITS OTHER

This installation and it's title has been inspired by **smallGLOBAL**, a network of small creative practices worldwide [info@smallGLOBAL.com]
Rainforest Imagery provided by **The Rainforest Foundation** [www.rainforestfoundationuk.org]
McDonalds Info provided by **McLibel** [www.macspotlight.org]

SPECIAL THANKS TO

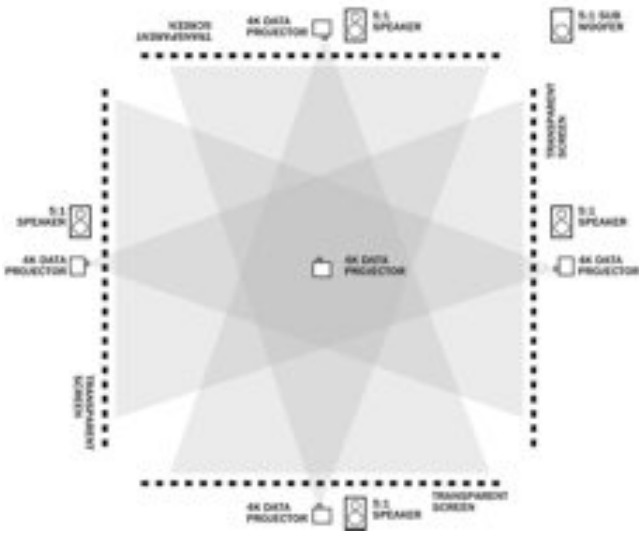
Robin Rimbaud [Scanner] for support with both audio and ideas on the project, **Melanie Crean** [Eyebeam], **Rob O'Neil** [Eyebeam], **Rosemary Brown** from the Rainforest Foundation, **Matthew Cooper** for Research, **Mason Dixon** for help on AE programming, **Joanna Buick** for inspiration, **Stephen Hill**, and **Sarah Wootton Edith Garcia** for their support.

D-Fuse

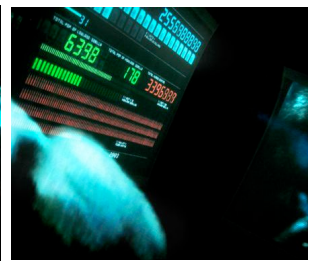
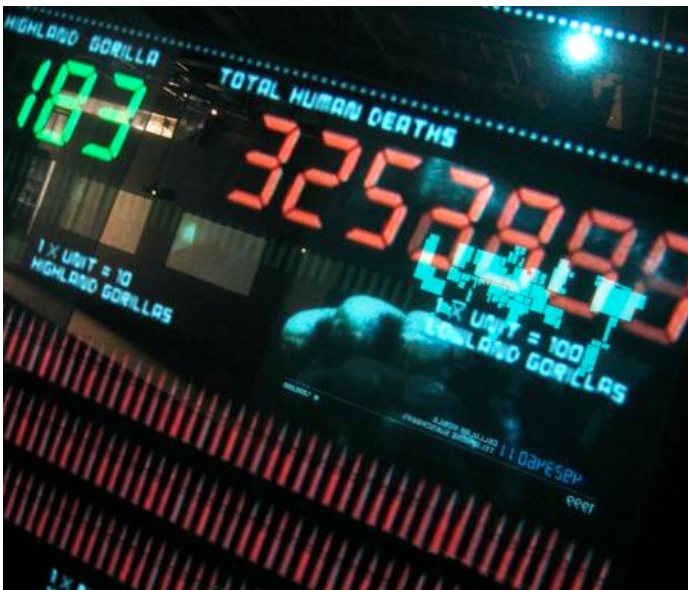
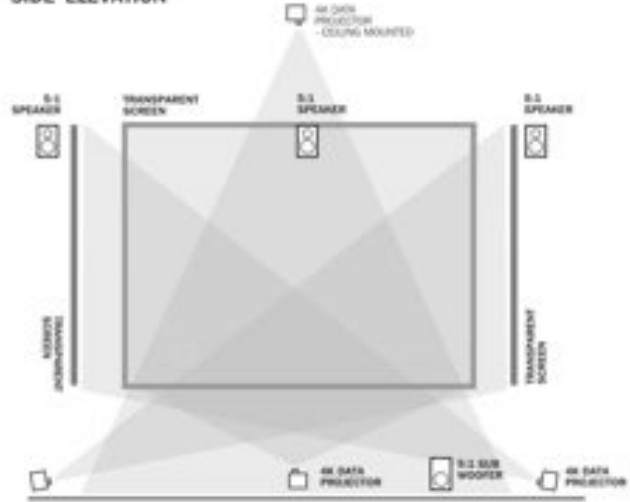
[T] +44 [0]20 7253 3462 13-14 GREAT SUTTON ST. LONDON. EC1V 0BX. UK.
[W] WWW.DFUSE.COM [E] INFO@DFUSE.COM



TOP ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



INSTALLATION

Small Global is a 4 x transparent Screen immersive environment that requires a dark room [dark floors + walls], with a minimum of 4m space around the installation for the public to view the screens from outside and also have the option to walk inside the installation. The screens are set in a cube with 1 metre of space between them to allow for the public to view from either inside or outside of the cube and the fifth projector is mounted above to enable the floor projection.

EQUIPMENT

- 5 X **DATA PROJECTORS** - MIN. 5K ANSI LUMENS
[note specific lenses required]
- 5 X **SUITABLE CRADLES + MOUNTING POSITIONS**
- 5 X **DVD PLAYERS** - NTSC, MULTI-REGION
- 1 X **5:1 SOUND SYSTEM** - INCL. AMPLIFIER, SPEAKERS + CABLING
- 4 X **TRANSPARENT SCREENS** - 4M x 3M
- 1 X **SYNC BOX** - TO SYNC DVD PLAYERS

“Did you know that every time you change your mobile phone for the latest model you are helping to fuel war in Congo?”

SAY MICHAEL BOND AND COLETTE BRAECKMAN

The guns have fallen silent in the two-year civil war. A ceasefire is in place, and troops are pulling back 15 kilometres from the front line. The fighting has killed 250,000 people, and a million people have been displaced in East Congo. What has all this got to do with our mobile phones? Quite a lot, as it happens. The numbers of dead and wounded might have been fewer had it not been for our insatiable appetite for instant communication.

For the past two years, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, several opposition rebel groups and at least six other African states have been involved in a fight for control of the country. Almost every expert we've spoken to agrees that this war is not mainly about border security, as is sometimes claimed. It's really about who gets to own Congo's vast reserves of tantalum, a rare, valuable metal used, among other things, to make capacitors for mobile telephones.

Tantalum is an extremely hard, dense element that is highly resistant to corrosion. It has a high melting point and is a good conductor of heat and electricity. It is used in capacitors for mobile phones, pagers and computers, in aircraft turbines, surgical equipment and in chemical processing plants. Most of the world's declared supply of tantalum is mined as tantalite ore, and comes from Australia. There are also significant reserves in Brazil, Canada and Nigeria. But unofficially, 80 per cent of the world's tantalum reserves are believed to be in Africa, and 80 per cent of those in Congo.

The country's reserves of tantalite are almost entirely in the east, in a place called Kivu. The area is controlled not by the government but by a rebel group called the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), backed by Rwanda, which with Uganda invaded Congo four years ago. The rebels, together with the Rwandan army, control the mining of tantalite, and the proceeds help fund their war effort. The export of tantalum is in the hands of one company, SOMIGL, which operates with the blessing of the rebels to whom it contributes part of its profits. In fact, the RCD is SOMIGL's principal shareholder. Analysts claim that the rebels—the Rwandan army in particular—are prolonging their occupation in order to maintain control of the mines.

It's hardly surprising then that most companies who buy Congolese tantalum for the electronics industry work through intermediaries and say they are blind to how and from whom it is obtained. Even the US Geological Survey barely mentions Congo as a source for the metal in its latest Mineral Commodity Summaries.

Tantalum importers have their suspicions of course, but they're saying little beyond that. “A large part of [the process] could be illegal, and this is the part that makes us very nervous,” says a representative of the US-based AVX Corporation, which manufactures capacitors and other electronics components.

The two biggest processors of tantalite are Cabot Performance Materials of Boyertown, Pennsylvania, and H. C. Starck of Goslar, Germany, part of the Bayer Group. Cabot processes up to 40 per cent of the world's tantalum and the company acknowledges that it takes ore from the Congo. But it admits it doesn't “know enough about the politics of what's going on in the Congo to know if we're doing something that's really wrong”. Starck, meanwhile, refuses to reveal where it gets its ore, maintaining that such information is “confidential for commercial reasons”. But a company insider told us it was “almost inconceivable” that the company did not get some of its ore from Congo.

But why Congo? If there's tantalum to be found in Brazil and Australia, why are companies flocking to Africa. The answer is that they need as much as they can get their hands on. Demand for tantalum has boomed over the past year, thanks to rocketing markets in mobile phones and aerospace products. It is far outstripping supply. Prices rose from around \$65 per kilogram in January 2000 to more than \$550 in December, and currently stand at around \$375. Australia has plenty of tantalum, as have other declared sources. But it can take up to 10 years to open a new mine and two years to expand existing ones. For producers of tantalum products keen to exploit the current demand, this is just too long.

“It is well established that there are many sources [of tantalum] in Africa. Up to now they have been unviable, but with demand exploding they are becoming potentially attractive,” says the AVX representative. “All of us in the industry are almost being forced into this type of business. We would not normally get involved in the mining side, but since existing established channels are full we are looking for new sources.”

The Tantalum-Niobium International Study Center, the industry's trade association based in Brussels, says it would be too difficult to “untangle” the trade routes from Africa. Asked whether the association had considered adopting an ethical trading policy of some kind, a spokeswoman suggested that by the time such a policy was adopted “the [media] fuss would all be over”. She said it should come down to the moral judgement of those buying the ore.

It may even come down to the moral-or commercial-judgement of mobile telephone manufacturers. Their customers may not like the idea that every time they upgrade their phone they are helping to fuel a war. As plenty of companies in other fields have found, when it comes to ethics, customer choice can be a powerful thing.

MICHAEL BOND IS A JOURNALIST BASED IN LONDON.
COLETTE BRAECKMAN IS AFRICA EDITOR OF LE SOIR IN BRUSSELS.
NEW SCIENTIST 07 APRIL 2001.

D-Fuse

[T] +44 [0]20 7253 3462 13-14 GREAT SUTTON ST. LONDON. EC1V 0BX. UK.
[W] WWW.DFUSE.COM [E] INFO@DFUSE.COM