

Statement

As a practitioner in climate justice, our collective exploration on graphic communication's effect on food consumption practices has allowed me to develop a critical understanding of how graphics shape consumption behaviours through the establishment of visual hierarchies.

By utilising scale, colour, layout, material and format, our satirical advertising flyers coupons and labels demonstrate the capacity of graphic communication design to expose, exchange, or even redistribute accountability for climate change within everyday food practices. Engaging directly with UAL's procurement data and Net Zero plan prompted me to interrogate graphics as mechanisms of environmental literacy development among the public. The iterative process of translating scientific data into daily-relevant visual forms also provoked me to reflect on the potential misconceptions that may emerge from our speculations, deepening my awareness of the ethical and social responsibilities inherent in graphic communication design.

In conclusion, our exploration of the extent to which graphics can foster carbon literacy in food purchasing environments has informed me of the implications of graphic communication design in constructing realities, shaping perception and influencing social behavioural responses. Therefore, as a practitioner, I should recognise design as a form of critical practice, and beware of the assumptions, values, and consequences embedded within my design outcomes.

From the Reading List

1. Drucker, J. (2011) Graphesis: Visual knowledge production and representation [online]. Available at: https://peterahall.com/mapping/Drucker_graphesis_2011.pdf (Accessed: 20 February 2026).

Visual forms do not merely represent knowledge; they actively participate in its production (Drucker, 2011). The procedural organisation of visual elements—such as layout, scale, and sequence—shapes how information is prioritised and interpreted. Through structuring visual forms, designers establish relationships between elements, determining what appears significant, relational, or even irrelevant. When translating reality into graphics, the graphics become representational forms that construct the reality rather than neutrally transcribing it. Graphic designer, therefore, becomes active practitioners in the production of meaning, shaping the conditions through which reality is presented and perceived.

In response, our project translates scientific procurement data into the visual language of supermarket advertisements. By restructuring the hierarchy of visibility of food graphics according to their carbon emissions, we shift emphasis in commercial display from the familiar financial value to the often-overlooked environmental impact. Through the strategic use of scale and colour, our graphics draw viewers' attention to the environmental significance of each product, extending their purchasing acts into contributions toward climate change. Drucker's framework enhances our understanding of this process by highlighting how consumer desirability and consumption choices can be shaped through the framing and communication of products in graphic design, reinforcing the view that knowledge is embedded in the graphics we produce.

From the Reading List

2. Chung, W.H.K. (2018) 'On Patterns and Proxies', *e-flux Architecture*. Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/accumulation/212275/on-patterns-and-proxies> (Accessed: 25 February 2026).

On Patterns and Proxies (Chung, 2018) offers a critical lens on the role of representation in translating complicated phenomena into interpretable forms. Its core argument surrounds on how meaning can be distorted, replaced or lost when complicated systems are rendered into simplified visual patterns or proxies. Throughout our project, we transformed carbon emission data into supermarket-facing graphics (e.g. catalogues, flyers, stickers, receipts), which function as proxies for the complex supply chain emissions.

Chung's perspective encourages me to critically reflect on the limitations of data visualisation and the potential pitfalls of simplification, even when such simplification is intended for greater literacy. It pushes me to consider how our chosen formats may inadvertently generate misconceptions by flattening the relationships between food production, individual consumption, and their broader context in global climate change. Our approach of associating the financial cost of food with its environmental cost shift responsibility from retailers, producers, and governmental institutions onto individual consumers, who only represent the final stage of the supply chain. In general, this reference challenges my assumption that data visualisation clarifies information, and prompts reflexivity on how graphic communication design can displace accountability in social and environmental contexts.

Outside the Reading List

1. Doyle, J. (2011) *Mediating Climate Change*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate (published in paperback by Routledge/Taylor & Francis). ISBN

9780754676683. Available at:

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315594583/mediating-climate-change-julie-doyle> (Accessed: 20 February 2026).

Doyle argues that although political and public acknowledgement of climate change has increased, this recognition has not translated into effective action. She identifies this persistent gap as a consequence of the historical framing of climate change as an environmental issue, mediated largely through numerical systems and scientific representations. While these modes of communication were intended to provide validation and transparency, their statistical nature has rendered climate change as a distant phenomenon rather than a social condition relevant to individuals on a personal level, disabling the public to take urgent collective response.

Doyle's perspective deepens my understanding of our advertising flyers and promotional stickers as outcomes that reject this normative environmental framing. By situating food-related carbon emissions within the familiar visual and spatial context of supermarkets, the project recontextualises UAL's procurement dataset within everyday consumer experience and reframes climate change as a tangible social reality. It reexamines climate change as a shared responsibility, perpetuated through individual daily consumption patterns, ultimately challenging the ambiguity that characterises dominant climate communication.

Outside the Reading List

2. Marshall, G. (2015) *Don't Even Think about It : Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change*, Bloomsbury Publishing USA, New York. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. (Accessed: 26 February 2026).

Marshall (2015) argues that climate change communication often defaults to enemy narratives because they are psychologically manageable and politically non-confrontational. The search for enemies in the climate battle distracts the public's attention from more productive approaches focused on building consensus and collective. Instead, it provides justification for activists to frame climate change as the consequence of individual behaviour rather than systemic failure.

This perspective challenges my understanding of our flyers by exposing how our visuals imply climate change as results primarily derived from individual consumer choices, positioning customers as the antagonists in the global environmental crisis. In doing so, it deliberately obscures the structural role of policymakers and upstream actors within the supply chain, who often claim moral authority but frequently prioritise profit over meaningful systemic change, despite having the capacity to cooperate and implement mass actions to address the climate emergency.

Project References

1. Canlportfolio.com (2019) Carbon FoodPrint. Available at: <https://canlportfolio.com/portfolio/carbon-foodprint> (Accessed: 24 February 2026).

Carbon FoodPrint (2019) is an interactive installation that recontextualises the environmental impact of food consumption into the familiar metric of car-driven miles. The revisualisation of numerical emissions into relatable experiences enhances legibility of carbon data among the public, enabling viewers to develop carbon literacy and critically reflect on their own consumption habits. Like our project, *Carbon FoodPrint* seeks to prompt immediate behavioural awareness and encourage more sustainable decision-making in food practices.

The project reinforces our interest in re-situating environmental data within everyday experiences; however, it also challenges our reliance on numerical representation as the primary mode of literacy development. By substituting quantitative units for another socially recognisable metric, *Carbon FoodPrint* raises critical questions about what constitutes “understanding”. Is carbon literacy restricted to scientific measurements, or can it emerge from relational comparisons? This reference challenges me to reconsider graphics as functional units for data representation, where scientific precision and contextual familiarity coexist to produce meanings and foster literacy.

Project References

2. Adamatilda.com (2022) Carbon Footprint. Available at: <https://adamatilda.com/carbon-footprint> (Accessed: 24 February 2026).

Carbon Footprint (2022) is a campaign that explores the visual communication of carbon emissions in grocery shopping to promote sustainable consumer behaviour. The project identified that a great majority of the public are aware of environmental consequences of their consumption choices yet lacks accessible methods to translate this awareness into concrete action. As solutions, the team developed a series of posters and signages organising products according to their carbon emission levels, alongside a calculator that allows customers to evaluate and track the carbon footprint of each product throughout their shopping experience.

This project is highly relevant to our approach of addressing carbon emissions in supermarket contexts and reframing customers as active participants in climate change. It reinforces my understanding of climate change as a shared social responsibility, in which all individuals contribute through everyday performances. It also enhances my understanding of our group work by demonstrating the capacity of visual communication to carry intentional design strategies that guide audiences toward specific perceptions and responses, reemphasising how graphics communicate meanings that could influence social behaviours.