

The data set chosen by our group was UAL's procurement data, specifically the numbers centred around food and the carbon emissions of different items. Through our research, however, we found that the data relied on a cost-based system and did not specify emissions of individual items. This gap formed the foundation of our work, highlighting the distance between institutional carbon reporting and everyday decisions.

In response, we mimicked and exaggerated the visual language of supermarkets and associated promotional material in order to translate carbon data into a familiar system. By doing so, we could interrogate graphic design's complicity in consumer culture, constructing value and obscuring environmental cost. Through this process, I could directly examine and confront the role of graphic design in shaping purchasing behaviour. Thus, I began to reconsider my position as a design practitioner within the context of climate justice.

Throughout our work, a question that remained central to our enquiry was the role of graphic communication design in fostering climate literacy - if climate justice requires accessible information, then how can design mediate the ways in which data is framed, understood and potentially acted upon? While I believe this is an ongoing enquiry that requires further thought and development, this project deepened my awareness of design as a means of influencing systems of consumption and responsibility.

**From the Reading List**

1. Drucker, J. (2014). Graphesis: Visual Knowledge Production and Representation. [online] Harvard University Press, pp.8-9. Available at: [https://peterahall.com/mapping/Drucker\\_graphesis\\_2011.pdf](https://peterahall.com/mapping/Drucker_graphesis_2011.pdf) [Accessed Feb. 2026].
2. Kyong Chun, W.H. (2017). Accumulation - Wendy Hui Kyong Chun - on Patterns and Proxies. [online] E-flux.com. Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/accumulation/212275/on-patterns-and-proxies>.

**Outside the Reading List**

1. Doyle, J. (2016). Mediating Climate Change. Routledge, [online] pp.14-20. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315594583>.
2. Marshall, G. (2015). Don't Even Think About It: Why our Brains are Wired to Ignore Climate Change. [online] New York: Bloomsbury, pp.231-238. Available at: <https://ncse.ngo/files/pub/evolution/excerpt--think.pdf>

**Project References**

1. Matilda, A. (2019). Portfolio. [online] Portfolio. Available at: <https://adamatilda.com/carbon-footprint> [Accessed Feb. 2026]
2. Rambaud-Measson, C. (2022). Carbon FoodPrint. [online] Cannelle Rambaud-Measson Portfolio. Available at: <https://canlportfolio.com/portfolio/carbon-foodprint> [Accessed Feb. 2026].

**FROM THE READING LIST**

Drucker, J. (2014). *Graphesis: Visual Knowledge Production and Representation*. [online] Harvard University Press, Available at: [https://peterahall.com/mapping/Drucker\\_graphesis\\_2011.pdf](https://peterahall.com/mapping/Drucker_graphesis_2011.pdf) [Accessed Feb. 2026].

In *Graphesis*, Drucker establishes, in great detail, our relationship to information through graphical forms. Her concept of “graphesis” establishes the means by which visual forms not only present but also produce knowledge - in doing so, these productions are rarely neutral and rather, produce particular understandings and responsibilities. Thus, graphic design becomes a tool through which meaning can be manipulated and produced. This reading specifically helped us to reframe our understanding of supermarket- or consumer-targeted information: i.e., the supermarket as a site of information in itself, one that is not neutral but rather a powerful, constructed interface mediating the perception of environmental knowledge.

While carbon data is rarely provided within retail environments or graphics, our work specifically highlights carbon emissions and satirises commercial spaces such as the supermarket. Through our work, we could examine how aesthetic decisions such as scale, colour, and typography influence consumer behaviour while also interacting with larger systems of promotional hierarchies and pricing structures.

Kyong Chun, W.H. (2017). *Accumulation - Wendy Hui Kyong Chun - on Patterns and Proxies*. [online] E-flux.com. Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/accumulation/212275/on-patterns-and-proxies>.

In her writing, Chun examines the role of images in combating climate change - interrogating the “ambivalence” and yet importance of proxies in representing environmental information or imagery; in doing so, she questions to what extent proxies can stand in for complex realities. This reading influences, strengthens and potentially complicates aspects of our project. Carbon data, within our project and in the context of supermarkets, is itself a proxy - a single number representative of vast supply chains, labour conditions and ecological processes. While it appears to be a simple and precise figure, it simplifies and potentially minimises structural or institutional flaws within food supply and distribution systems.

While it could be argued that clearer carbon information could lead to more sustainable consumer decisions: would that be sufficient to drive any kind of radical change? Do proxies such as carbon footprints of food items ultimately individualise responsibility while protecting institutional and infrastructural systems? There does not seem to be an easy answer. By satirising supermarket systems, we do not hope to resolve the environmental crisis; however, we do hope to further accountability and challenge consumer behaviour - perhaps that is a start.

## OUTSIDE THE READING LIST

Doyle, J. (2016). *Mediating Climate Change*. Routledge, [online] pp.14–20.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315594583>.

In her book, Doyle writes: “How climate change is perceived – individually and collectively – depends upon how it is made socially and culturally meaningful to particular audiences.” In a manner similar to Drucker (Drucker, 2014), Doyle establishes the ways in which climate imagery can produce distance, detachment or fatigue. This reference thus especially helped us to frame the tone of our project – pushing us to consider more deeply the ways in which climate data is communicated. Carbon emissions, when represented through conventional data sheets (such as the one provided to us), can often feel overwhelming, confusing or disjointed from everyday life. Hence, through our project, we wanted to depict the data in a way that was humorous, familiar and less intimidating – as done through the hyper-commercial space of the supermarket.

Doyle’s writing helped us to resist a visual language conventional to the climate crisis. We instead adopted aesthetics and a promotional language that could intentionally create discomfort (i.e. by representing environmental data within bright, celebratory retail graphics). Our project hence also highlighted the tension between environmental knowledge and consumer culture.

Marshall, G. (2015). *Don’t Even Think About It: Why our Brains are Wired to Ignore Climate Change*. [online] New York: Bloomsbury, pp.231–238. Available at: <https://ncse.ngo/files/pub/evolution/excerpt--think.pdf> [Accessed Feb. 2026]

“More than any other issue it exposes the deepest workings of our minds...” Marshall writes, “...and shows our extraordinary and innate talent for seeing only what we want to see and disregarding what we would prefer not to know.”

Through his book, Marshall examines the barriers that prevent meaningful engagement with the climate crisis. Marshall’s assertion that the human mind is “poorly equipped” to respond to slow-moving threats, prompted us to question the way in which we could make carbon data representation more impactful.

Our project, thus, attempted to respond to this by being as loud and provocative in our communication as possible. By using exaggerated promotions, vivid colours and satirical slogans, we wanted to highlight the tension between environmental harm and consumerism. However, while we highlight carbon figures, we are also aware that this does not necessarily translate into action. Thus, in context of this reading – our project remained a provocation, instead of a behavioural solution.

## PROJECT REFERENCES

Matilda, A. (2019). Portfolio. [online] Portfolio.

Available at: <https://adamatilda.com/carbon-footprint> [Accessed Feb. 2026]

The context explored by our group was very similar to that done in Carbon Foodprint by Ada Matilda. As an expansive campaign, the team visualized and communicated the carbon footprint & sustainability impact of items in grocery stores - specifically with the help of visualisations. Through both primary and secondary research, the group came to a conclusion similar to our own - carbon data is not accessible and there exists a lack of literacy, even within individuals who want to be conscious of their consumption.

This project helped us to see the different ways in which carbon footprints and sustainability messaging can be communicated. While our project took a much more satirical, vibrant approach - we could see a strong, contrasting approach in this project. Interestingly, the tone and aesthetics adopted within this project would likely result in more accountability and action through it's use of friendly, accessible and non-confrontational language.

Rambaud-Measson, C. (2022). Carbon FoodPrint. [online] Cannelle Rambaud-Measson Portfolio.

Available at: <https://canlportfolio.com/portfolio/carbon-foodprint> [Accessed Feb. 2026].

Carbon FoodPrint, similar to our project, visualized the carbon footprint of food items - specifically sandwiches. As an interactive exhibition, the project translated food emissions into relatable visual comparisons, such as driving miles. By converting the data into familiar metrics, the project used a proxy to demonstrate environmental information. This approach was similar to ours in that the data was situated in a familiar and recognizable context. Both projects acknowledge and represent carbon data in a manner that is meaningful and understandable, specifically through familiar cultural formats.

This project helped us situate our work within the broad spectrum of climate-based communication design, while also prompting us to consider the varied ways in which clarity and critique of carbon data can be communicated. For example, while our project still relied on numerical representation (i.e., CO<sub>2e</sub> per kg), this project translated the same data into more relatable everyday terms. Especially considering our own difficulty in understanding the numerical data sets, it becomes clear how important it is to develop ways of communicating carbon information in a more accessible manner.