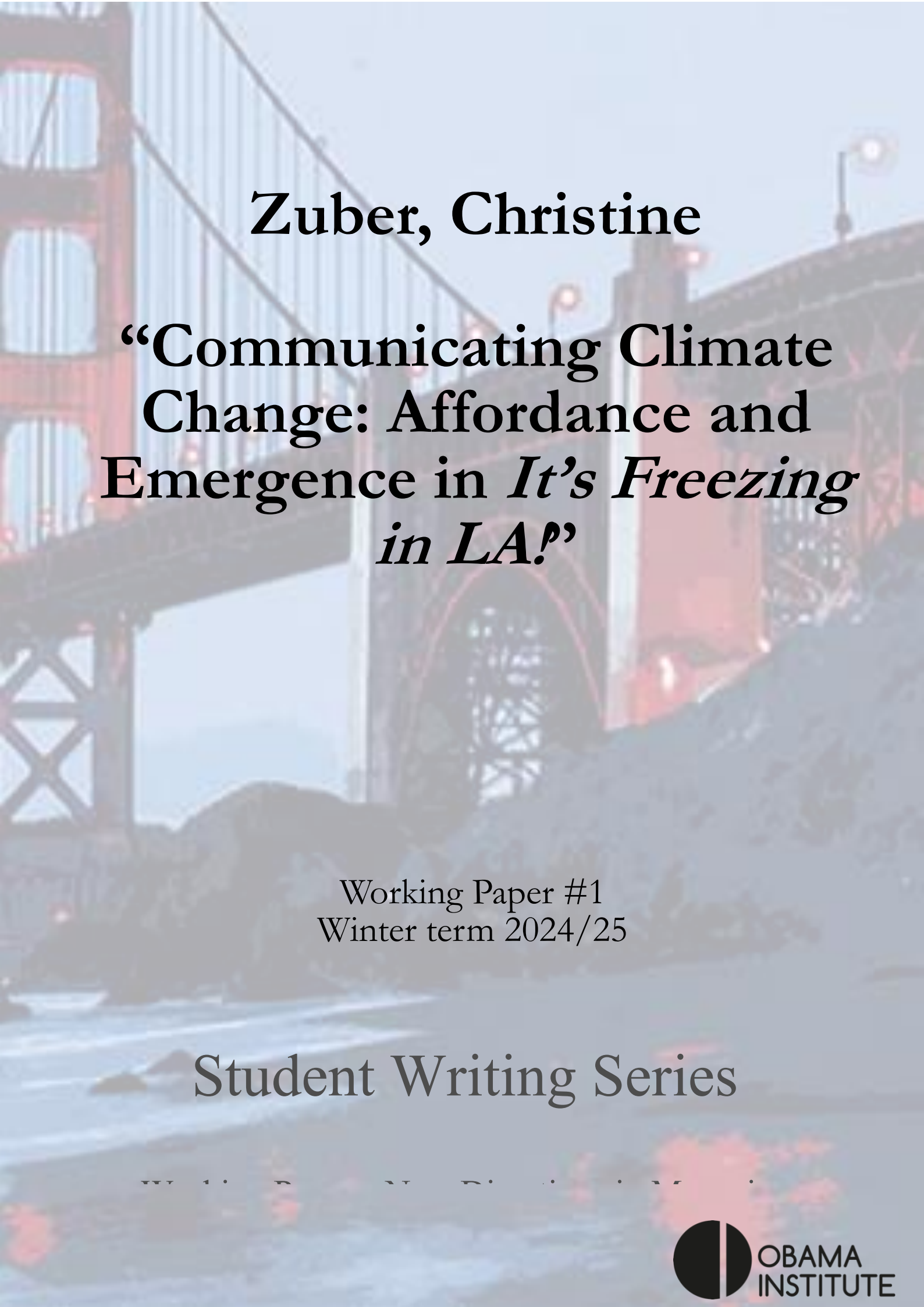




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**“Communicating Climate
Change: Affordance and
Emergence in *It’s Freezing
in LA!*”**

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Introduction

“Ice storm rolls from Texas to Tennessee—I’m in Los Angeles and it’s freezing. Global warming is a total, and very expensive, hoax!”

Donald Trump made this statement on Twitter (now X) on January 29, 2013 (Trump). At the time, he frequently expressed skepticism about climate change, pointing to cold weather events as supposed evidence against global warming. This tweet was in response to a major ice storm affecting parts of the U.S. Trump’s reasoning in 2013 reflects a common misunderstanding between short-term weather conditions and long-term climate trends—a tactic he and other climate denialists have frequently used to dismiss climate science. The irony of Trump’s statement becomes clear when considering the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in California. While he dismissed global warming based on a cold weather event, California now experiences devastating wildfires annually; fires that scientists attribute to rising global temperatures, prolonged droughts, and shifting weather patterns caused by climate change. Yet, climate change skeptics rarely acknowledge this pattern as evidence in the same way they seize upon cold weather to refute global warming. However, even without being a climate change denier, it can be hard to comprehend what climate change entails, how it affects us personally, and what, if anything, can be done about it.

This difficulty ties directly into the deficit-diffusion model of science communication, which assumes that people would change their beliefs if they had more knowledge. As Schmid-Petri and Bürger explain, society’s hesitation to accept scientific research and its implications has often been attributed to a general lack of scientific literacy (Hannah Schmid-Petri and Moritz Bürger 106). However, providing information is not enough to generate the awareness and understanding needed to face climate change and comprehend its influence on our lives. Broader social, political, and psychological contexts always inform individual knowledge and actions. Political ideology, economic interests, media representation, and personal experiences shape how individuals interpret and respond to scientific information. The deficit-diffusion model assumes that public skepticism about science is not just due to a deficit of knowledge, and a widespread diffusion of scientific facts can bridge this gap. As Wolf-Andreas Liebert notes in “Communicative Strategies of Popularization of Science,” science communication does not exist in isolation but interacts with popular culture, where “own forms of knowledge are generated, which are partly hybridized with scientific knowledge, partly also in explicit opposition to science with the claim to validity” (400). The spaces where these interactions take place such as film, print, and social media, museums, and participatory formats like citizen science, each have their own dynamics (Feyerabend quoted in Liebert 400). Consequently, climate communication must account for how scientific knowledge is filtered, reinterpreted, or even contested within different cultural and media environments. Therefore, science communication must move beyond the deficit model. Instead of merely presenting facts, effective climate engagement requires dialogue, storytelling, and policy-driven action. Climate change is not just an abstract scientific concept; it is a lived reality that affects communities in different ways. Messaging must resonate with people’s values, emotions, and everyday concerns to encourage real engagement.

The independent magazine *It's Freezing in LA! (IFLA!)* achieves this blend of climate science, cultural commentary, and visual storytelling through its affordances, the ways in which its structure and content enable understanding, engagement, and action. Rather than merely presenting information for passive consumption, *IFLA!* is structured to invite deeper engagement, offering readers opportunities to develop a more nuanced understanding of climate issues. *It's Freezing in LA!* positions itself as a dynamic connection point within the field of climate communication. Rather than acting as a definitive authority, the magazine bridges diverse perspectives on science, politics, literature, and culture while encouraging dialogue and collaboration. By introducing projects, collectives, and authors alongside accessible explanations of theories and phenomena. Therefore, *IFLA!* creates a space that forwards information and builds connections, encouraging readers to engage actively with climate issues. The magazine provides this connection point through a combination of clear orientation around complex topics. Its streamlined layout and unifying themes connect diverse perspectives, guiding readers through the complexity of climate change without overwhelming them. At the same time, the magazine's interdisciplinary approach, especially its inclusion of marginalized voices, leads to emergent understandings of climate change. In other words, by combining multiple perspectives, *IFLA!* allows new meanings and insights to develop beyond what any single article or viewpoint could achieve alone. The independent magazine *It's Freezing in LA!* uses its affordances, structural clarity, and interdisciplinary content to create orientation and connection points that support more profound engagement with climate change, allowing for new emergences in understanding and agency.

Affordance and Emergence

In their article "The Object of Periodical Studies," Frank and Podewski complain that using critical theories of literary analysis for magazines reveals "a blind spot of scholarly attention" because "their analogical or metaphorical use travesties the characteristics and functions of periodicals" (36). They conclude that periodicals should not be studied merely as vessels for literary or philosophical texts nor as contributors to external discourses, "not as the sum of single elements, but as a compact print artifact" (Frank and Podewski 38). In other words, magazines should be analyzed as distinct media forms with their own internal logic rather than being reduced to their components or treated solely as vehicles for external ideas. This perspective emphasizes the need to develop analytical approaches for the unique ways periodicals function, not only as cohesive, dynamic systems, but more precisely as infrastructures that organize, and enable, the circulation of knowledge.

Understanding periodicals in this way requires a shift away from traditional literary approaches and toward a framework that accounts for their formal and functional complexity. Sean Latham builds on this more holistic approach to magazine analysis in "Affordance and Emergence: Magazine as New Media" by proposing that magazines should be understood as systems rather than mere collections of articles. He argues that "we might best understand magazines not as derivatives of the book at all but as a distinctive array of radically new software designs that operate on the hardware of paper and ink" (Latham 2). Compared to books, magazines offer greater affordances, allowing for more flexible and dynamic modes of engagement. Affordance theory refers to the possibilities for action that a given medium or

object provides. In the context of magazines, this means considering their content, structure, layout, materiality, and how they invite or constrain different kinds of engagement. On the other hand, emergence describes how meaning arises unpredictably from the interaction of multiple components rather than being wholly determined by any single element. As Latham states, “It is precisely this considerably expanded affordance that makes the magazine itself a fundamentally new media form” (2). A magazine’s meaning is not simply embedded in its content but emerges through the interaction of its various components such as text, images, layout, and reader engagement. Therefore, recognizing magazines as systems allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how they shape discourse and influence reader engagement. Latham explains that “understanding them as complex systems capable of producing meaning through the unplanned and even unexpected interaction of their components helps us free them from the dominant metaphors of the book” (3). In other words, magazines generate meaning through multiple, non-linear reading paths, making them fundamentally different from books. While Latham uses the term complex systems to describe these additional functions, I propose viewing magazines as infrastructures instead. This term highlights their internal complexity and their function in enabling and organizing the flow of discourse. Magazines like *IFLA!* do not merely provide a narrative like books do, they structure how climate change knowledge, for example, is produced, distributed, and made legible. This double role as both, infrastructure for content and as infrastructure objects within a larger system of production emphasizes their mediating capacities. Therefore, treating *It’s Freezing in LA!* as an infrastructure allows us to move beyond treating it as a mere collection of climate-related articles. Instead, we can analyze how its structure, content, and editorial choices interact to create new ways of engaging with climate science.

To analyze *IFLA!* as an infrastructure, I examine two key properties that emerge from the interaction of its components: orientation and content. *IFLA!* affords orientation through its structure, guiding readers through its interdisciplinary material. At the same time, its content, shaped by the interplay of diverse disciplines, presents climate change from multiple perspectives, highlighting its complexity and interconnections in an accessible and engaging way. In addition to analyzing the magazine’s structure and content, I engage in email correspondence with the magazine’s editor, Jackson Howarth, who elaborates on the editorial process. This correspondence provides insights into how the editorial decisions shape the magazine’s orientation and content. Taking editorial intent into account further highlights *IFLA!*’s role as an infrastructure that not only presents climate information but also structures it in a way that promotes deeper engagement. It curates and integrates information from diverse disciplines, thus enhancing its capacity to make complex issues more approachable and engaging for a broad audience. I will argue that this approach allows us to explore more than just what *IFLA!* is, but what it does and how it shapes conversations about climate change and offers new ways of understanding a global crisis. Examining the magazine as a whole is essential because meaning emerges from the interaction of its elements. Considering structure, content, and editorial intent, my analysis reveals how *IFLA!* functions as a science communication medium. Its affordances guide reader engagement, and its meaning emerges through the interaction of its diverse elements, aligning with Latham’s framework of magazines

as dynamic systems. Extending Latham's model by understanding *IFLA!* as an infrastructure emphasizes how the magazine organizes and enables the circulation of climate knowledge.

Orientation and Content

Issues of *It's Freezing in LA!* consistently follow the same structural framework, with only minor adjustments that have evolved over time. The very first element readers encounter when opening an issue, even before the table of contents, is the magazine's mission statement:

Every article in *It's Freezing in LA!* looks at the climate crisis from a different angle. We ask writers, economists, playwrights, scientists, and everybody in between how environmental issues affect their worlds. By breaking the most complex challenge humanity has ever faced into more manageable questions, we tease apart this huge challenge piece by piece. (*IFLA!* 1, 3)

This mission statement immediately establishes the magazine's interdisciplinary and fragmented approach to climate discourse. It sets the tone for what follows: a carefully structured issue that guides readers through diverse perspectives on the climate crisis. After the mission statement, each issue continues with a table of contents and an editor's letter. The editor's letter consistently introduces and reflects on the leading theme of the issue, thus creating an overarching conceptual thread that connects the various contributions. The articles follow a predictable layout: each begins with a title and a summary of the article's theme on the left-hand page, followed by the main body of the article, accompanied by visuals and footnotes on the subsequent pages. This consistent setup creates a rhythm and navigational flow that affords orientation, especially as the topics are often complex and interdisciplinary. Therefore, the magazine's consistent structure provides navigational affordances, making it easier for readers to engage with complex, interdisciplinary content. Significantly, the centerfold of each issue is always dedicated to explaining the visual design and how it connects to the issue's leading theme, thus expanding the magazine's affordances by integrating multiple modes of engagement. For instance, in issue 3, which focuses on protest, the visuals depict "the streets during the 2018 and 2019 children's marches" (*IFLA!*, 30–31, 3). In issue 8, themed around borders, the graphics feature seafloor mapping (*IFLA!*, 8). This integration of content and visual design emphasizes the theme verbally and through imagery, strengthening the coherence of each issue. Toward the end of every issue, a double-page spread of resources for further engagement is featured, sometimes titled "Bookshelf," which offers readers recommendations for deepening their understanding of the topics discussed. The resources are followed by a statement about *IFLA!*'s commitment to sustainability, explaining how the magazine is produced and distributed in an environmentally conscious way and concludes with a list of contributors. Finally, on the back cover, the magazine always reprints the Donald Trump quote that inspired the magazine's name. In the top right-hand corner, a brief explanation of the issue's graphic design is provided, ensuring that visual elements are contextualized and connected to the magazine's broader mission. These recurring elements form a rigid and reliable structure that creates a familiar framework into which new and varied content can be poured with each issue. This structure not only ensures a sense of continuity across issues but also supports the

magazine's ability to address complex topics while providing orientation to readers, which enables an emergent meaning-making process. In what follows, I will examine this structure in more detail, analyzing how these elements contribute to *IFLA!*'s function as a medium of interdisciplinary science communication.

From the outset, each issue of *IFLA!* introduces a central theme or leading idea that threads through the articles and serves as a thematic spine for the issue. Although the individual contributions span a wide range of disciplines and are written by authors with diverse areas of expertise, the leading idea ties them together and provides a coherent frame for the reader. This structure serves as a cognitive affordance, guiding interpretation without rigidly prescribing it. The connection created by the leading idea is made clear from the very beginning through the editor's letter, which introduces and reflects on the issue's theme. Each article is assigned a specific field or topic in the table of contents. For example, in issue 6, which focuses on the theme of Greenwashing, contributions are drawn from disciplines such as ecology, politics, energy, tourism, architecture, education, infrastructure, or technological development, showing the magazine's commitment to exploring the theme from multiple angles (*IFLA!*, 1–2, 6). Editor Jackson Howarth elaborates on how the editorial team assembles such a diverse but thematically coherent set of articles. He explains that while the earliest issues often allowed a theme to emerge organically from the selected pieces, by issue 6, Greenwashing, the team began to choose a theme in advance and commission articles specifically to address that theme. He describes the process as follows:

For issues 2–6, the editorial process involved commissioning a handful of articles, chosen by Martha and myself, and then taking submissions for the rest. These submissions were voted on by our wider editorial team ... Gradually this changed over time. In our 6th issue, we chose a theme before we commissioned, and mentioned it, I think, when we looked for submissions. (Greenwashing). After that, we started commissioning more pieces to fit the theme. (Howarth)

This development toward more deliberate thematic curation shows how *IFLA!* balances diversity of content with editorial coherence, ensuring that each issue maintains a clear conceptual focus while giving space to a range of voices. This evolution reflects how meaning within a periodical is not static but emergent, shaped by editorial decisions and reader interactions over time. As Sabina Fazli argues in “Magazines, Affects, and Atmosphere,” magazines are designed to offer “multiple entry points into the magazine as a whole as well as into individual items, entailing the possibility to skip pieces, pages, or sections” (221). This observation holds true for *IFLA!*: while a leading idea unifies each issue, the division into clearly labeled articles from different fields allows readers to engage selectively, choosing topics that align with their interests while still engaging with the broader theme. For instance, a reader especially interested in economics could focus on the article from that field and see how it contributes to the overarching theme of Greenwashing. Therefore, understanding emerges from both thematic variation and structural continuity.

Beyond thematic unity within individual issues, *IFLA!* also demonstrates structural seriality across issues. Although each issue presents a distinct leading theme, the recurrent

organizational structure, its consistent sections, editorial framing, and categorization of topics, creates a stable reading rhythm. This stability allows readers to navigate individual issues efficiently and track particular fields of interest across multiple issues. For example, a reader drawn to economics in issue 6 will find similarly categorized economic discussions in previous and future issues, even as the overarching themes shift. This aligns with Oliver Scheiding's argument that "periodicals encourage a serial effect that helps readers manage the flow of information available in modern societies. Seriality enables periodicals to assemble, organize, and display knowledge of all sorts on the page" (Scheiding 28). In *IFLA!*, this structural repetition provides orientation for readers both within and across issues, enabling flexible yet coherent encounters with complex topics. Therefore, the magazine functions as a dynamic, evolving medium in which meaning emerges over time, shaped by editorial structure and reader interaction.

The careful editorial and structural organization are further reinforced by *IFLA!*'s visual design, which guides readers through its diverse content. One guiding feature, for example, is the use of small pictographs, which appear both in the table of contents and at the start of each article. These icons indicate which area of expertise the articles belong to and recur in the same position, the upper left-hand corner, of every piece, ensuring readers can quickly orient themselves without flipping back to the table of contents. Moreover, the visual design is closely tied to each issue's theme, coordinated through a consistent color scheme and graphics. The graphics are not merely decorative but are data-driven illustrations that visualize key information connected to the issue's central topic. For instance, issue 3 includes graphics representing the number of young people participating in the 2018 and 2019 children's climate marches. These images are paired with synthesized data from the Climate Action Tracker (CAT), an independent scientific tool for monitoring international climate action. As the magazine explains, the CAT offers "an accurate and consistent comparison" and "an important force for holding governments to their commitments" (*IFLA!*, 30–31, 3). Thus, the visuals emphasize the issue's leading idea, protests, and underline why this information is crucial in the first place. The design creates more than coherence; it affords an understanding of why readers should care. These visual elements provide additional navigational affordance, helping readers intuitively locate and connect different sections. A similarly sophisticated design and content integration is found in issue 8 with the leading theme "Borders." Here, bathymetric maps, which map the ocean floor, illustrate the theme of oceanic knowledge and environmental infrastructure. The magazine explains that understanding the seabed is vital for fields like climate science, ecology, and maritime trade, but also for infrastructure and resource extraction. As *IFLA!* puts it, satellites cannot see through water, so mapping the seabed typically relies on indirect, less accurate methods, while more precise sonar-based mapping remains labor-intensive. The GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project, represented in these graphics, works to combine and share detailed surveys to improve global knowledge. According to the magazine, "The Project's latest map covers 20% of the seabed in detail, and the snapshots shown here connect to each article in this issue" (*IFLA!*, 29–30, 8). Thus, each article's visuals, theme, and content connect into a coherent multimodal narrative. As Howarth explains, these data-driven graphics, featured on the cover, back cover, and throughout the issue, are a collaborative effort between the editorial and design teams, who generate concepts closely aligned with the theme. He

emphasizes that the team is “quite intentional with how [the graphics] fit the theme,” highlighting the magazine’s deliberate multimodal strategy (Howarth). This issue, therefore, exemplifies how *IFLA!* uses its infrastructural design to represent and reflect on external infrastructures, such as those related to ocean mapping. In doing so, the magazine does not merely report scientific knowledge but mediates it through magazinal infrastructures.

In addition to these graphics, *IFLA!* eschews photography in favor of hand-picked illustrations, which interpret and amplify the written content. Howarth describes how illustrators are often given first drafts of articles so that text and image “tell the same story in two different ways.” More recently, the magazine has experimented with working with a single illustrator for an entire issue, which, according to Howarth, “gives the magazine a more coherent feel.” Thus, the artwork becomes an essential part of the magazine’s narrative architecture, sometimes directly linked to the data and sometimes adding a more atmospheric, interpretative layer. Therefore, integrating illustrations and data-driven graphics creates an interpretative affordance, allowing readers to engage with complex ideas through multimodal storytelling. These visual strategies create what Frank and Podewski describe as “low-threshold contact zones,” where the magazine’s different elements, its texts, graphics, and illustrations, interact mainly on a nonverbal, visual-material level, facilitating knowledge production and distribution (40). Furthermore, each issue’s theme and central visual concept are always explained on the back cover, making this information immediately accessible even to casual or disengaged readers. Since both the front and back covers adopt the same design language, readers encounter visual cues that summarize the issue’s theme before they even open the magazine. This accessibility ensures that, regardless of how deeply a reader engages, they will encounter and understand the theme at some level. Thus, *IFLA!* creates a continuous circle of reminders: no matter where readers start or how they move through the magazine, they are constantly accompanied by the visual design, which carries the leading theme and helps produce meaning. This design reinforces Latham’s idea that magazines are structured to encourage a fluid, nonlinear reading experience where readers engage at different levels. In this way, *IFLA!* exemplifies how multimodality can serve as a crucial access point for comprehension, offering multiple layers of engagement and understanding. Such deliberate use of visual elements speaks to *IFLA!*’s broader editorial care. Interestingly, *IFLA!* also reflects on the tension between design and sustainability. As Howarth notes, “Initially, [the team] was guided by a desire not to ‘waste’ space as a sustainability measure,” but they also realized that negative space can “hold attention effectively and not overwhelm readers” (Howarth). Thus, *IFLA!*’s visual design is not just a matter of style but a carefully calibrated tool that integrates artistic, editorial, and environmental concerns offering multimodal access to comprehension. As Scheiding notes, independent magazines often capture “alternative modes of world-making” through both their thematic focus and multimodal design, allowing for intimate connections between producers and readers (186). *IFLA!* leverages this potential by using its visual design to connect diverse contributions, communicate complex data, and engage readers in a sustained dialogue about the climate crisis.

A key feature that shapes *It’s Freezing in LA!*’s identity is its strong and consistent editorial voice, which runs through every aspect of the magazine’s production. This voice is not confined to the traditional editorial letter, although each issue opens with such a letter that

frames its central themes, but permeates all elements, from the mission statement preceding the table of contents to the short contextual texts introducing each article. Clear explanations in the centerfold accompany visual content, and each issue concludes with reflections on sustainability in both production and distribution. Through this ongoing dialogue with readers, *IFLA!* creates a sense of direct engagement, as if the editors are present throughout to guide, clarify, and respond, never presenting content without situating it within a broader context. By framing each issue with a strong editorial voice and contextualizing contributions, *IFLA!* provides an interpretative affordance, helping readers navigate and make sense of interdisciplinary climate discourse. This approach ensures that readers understand what is presented and why it matters. The repetition and reinforcement of core ideas, much like the careful contextualization of visual material, provide coherence across diverse contributions. For instance, in issue 2, the editors set clear expectations for contributors: “We ask each of our writers and illustrators to expand on one insight or idea. We can’t solve or understand the complexity of the climate situation in a few pages, but we can build a coherent picture piece by piece” (*IFLA!*, 3, 2). Similarly, issue 3 emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary perspectives: “To protect our environment, we must learn from all corners, disciplines and backgrounds. Luckily, from theatre to pollution, and architecture to waste, we’ve found no shortage of vibrant ideas” (*IFLA!* 3, 3). These statements do more than clarify the magazine’s purpose, they align readers’ expectations and create a shared journey through layered topics. In this way, the editorial voice does more than set the tone; it shapes the interdisciplinary methodology that defines the magazine. By combining contributions from various fields and backgrounds, the editors act as what Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink describes as “transcultural mediators.” Lüsebrink emphasizes the importance of such figures in facilitating cultural transfer, arguing that “intercultural or transcultural mediators such as journalists, editors, printers, or translators play a central role in processes of cultural transfer” (Lüsebrink 448). This role is significant in *IFLA!* where addressing climate justice demands bridges between disciplines, cultures, and forms of knowledge.

As the editor of the magazine outlines, this role of editorial mediation is a conscious and carefully developed strategy grounded in clear priorities and principles. A central guiding idea, he explains, is a commitment to diversity both in contributors and topics: “Diversity of writers from different backgrounds has always been and remains important, as has diversity of topics (often from a disciplinary perspective, which you can see borne out in the themes that accompany our articles)” (Howarth). This explicit focus on including a wide range of voices reflects the magazine’s broader goal of fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and ensuring that climate issues are approached through multiple lenses. Moreover, Howarth emphasizes that the editors seek to open new avenues of conversation rather than repeat familiar narratives: “We tried not to let topics overlap and paid special attention to topics we had either not covered before or had not in a while and often focused on publishing things we had not seen written or covered ourselves” (Howarth). This careful curation underscores *IFLA!*’s mission to bring fresh, unexpected connections to light. Over time, as Howarth reflects, the magazine has also become “more consciously a climate justice magazine, telling stories from a justice angle, even if not all of our articles use identifiable ‘lingo.’” This deliberate orientation toward justice broadens *IFLA!*’s interdisciplinary approach, embedding environmental concerns within social and

political contexts. Rather than direct activism, this shift reflects an effort to frame climate discourse through a justice lens, drawing on multiple disciplines to explore ethical, cultural, and systemic dimensions of the crisis. Importantly, it also reflects a commitment to accessibility: “We’re aware that a large portion of our audience either come from the art and design world, drawn by our aesthetic approach, but also largely from ‘green spaces.’ With that in mind, we’ve increasingly realized that a good portion of our role is to continue to engage people who are already roughly pro-‘environment’, or at least curious about green issues, to draw them in further.” This dual focus, reaching new audiences while deepening the engagement of existing ones, demonstrates the editors’ ongoing balancing act between accessibility and critical depth. Taken together, these strategies show how *IFLA!*’s editorial voice functions as a form of transcultural mediation, bridging disciplines, communities, and cultural contexts to advance meaningful engagement with the climate crisis. As Lüsebrink reminds us, “transcultural mediators and cultural transfers represent major factors of cultural change in societies which would have developed differently—namely, substantially slower and with less diversity—without these factors” (Lüsebrink 448). By consciously shaping the magazine as such a mediator, *IFLA!*’s editors contribute to environmental discourse and the broader cultural transformations necessary for addressing climate change. Through its editorial mediation, *IFLA!* creates an engagement affordance, actively involving readers in climate discourse by positioning them as participants rather than passive consumers. Crucially, as Howarth notes, the editorial voice is not an abstract framework imposed on the magazine after the fact. Instead, it emerges from “trying to synthesize a whole conversation around a specific idea.” This conversation is not limited to the articles but extends across the magazine’s multimodal design, from visuals to layout. “We are usually trying to say something quite specific with each issue,” Howarth explains, underscoring that coherence and intentionality are at the heart of *IFLA!*’s editorial project. Ultimately, this makes *IFLA!*’s editorial message so powerful: the magazine does not simply collect voices on climate change, it also curates a dialogue that readers are invited to join in multiple ways across text, visuals, and design. In doing so, *IFLA!* exemplifies how independent magazines can create rich, multidimensional spaces for public discourse.

Having established *IFLA!*’s organizational structure and innovative approach to climate communication, it is essential to examine the magazine’s content to understand how these goals are implemented. The articles and features in *It’s Freezing in LA!* demonstrate a commitment to interdisciplinary work, consistently give space to marginalized voices, and offer readers practical resources and opportunities to take action. The following section will focus on the magazine’s interdisciplinary approach to show how *IFLA!* creates opportunities for engagement and dialogue around climate issues. A closer look at any issue of *It’s Freezing in LA!* reveals a broad variety of articles that approach climate change from diverse perspectives. As discussed above, each issue is guided by a leading theme, such as Greenwashing, Plants, Health, or Borders, that is explored through multiple lenses. These lenses span various fields, from scientific research and technological innovation to politics, activism, education, literature, and the arts. While some themes like ecology or political responses to climate change recur frequently, the magazine maintains an evolving set of disciplinary approaches that reflect the complex nature of the climate crisis. Frank and Podewski argue, “Periodicals promote a distinct mode of compiling, blending, and negotiating knowledge from different places, people, and

sources” (29). *IFLA!* embodies this potential by curating diverse contributions that collectively form a “little archive” of perspectives on each central theme. This interdisciplinary collection allows readers to engage with climate issues from multiple angles, encouraging them to see connections between fields often separated in mainstream or academic discourse. Rather than presenting a singular authoritative narrative, the magazine invites readers into an ongoing conversation. Frank and Podewski emphasize that “Understanding periodicals as ‘little archives,’ then, enables us to historicize Foucault’s abstract concept of the archive and to investigate the tangible phenomena in their specific cultural environment” (41). In this sense, *IFLA!* operates not only as a magazine but also as a curated archive that reflects and shapes contemporary climate conversations. By bringing together articles from activists, scientists, artists, and educators, *IFLA!* documents various climate experiences and responses, offering readers a snapshot of current debates and solutions. Importantly, this interdisciplinarity is not accidental but a deliberate editorial strategy. As Howarth explains:

Our own qualitative analysis, from engaging our audiences suggests that telling stories from multiple different angles, via multiple different mediums is more effective—it gives people more ways to digest and engage—at least to the extent that our audiences are able to reliably report on their own experiences.

Here, Howarth highlights that the diversity of content and form within *IFLA!* is designed to meet readers where they are, offering various entry points for understanding and action. This editorial approach provides a cognitive and participatory affordance, enabling individuals to connect with the material in ways that align with their existing interests and knowledge while encouraging cross-disciplinary exploration. This approach reflects the magazine’s broader goal of providing inclusive and accessible climate communication. Through this commitment to interdisciplinarity, *IFLA!* enables readers to engage with climate change not as a distant or narrowly scientific issue but as a complex, intersectional problem that touches all aspects of life be it social, cultural, technological, or political.

This interdisciplinary content offers diverse perspectives and incorporates marginalized voices, which is a focus of *It’s Freezing in LA!*’s editorial strategy. Through this focus, *IFLA!* highlights how climate change is not merely an environmental or scientific issue but connected to questions of social justice, colonialism, and representation. Including marginalized voices affords an epistemic expansion of climate discourse, allowing *IFLA!* to challenge dominant knowledge systems and integrate alternative perspectives. The magazine foregrounds how climate issues intersect with lived experiences across different communities by featuring perspectives often excluded from mainstream climate discourse. For instance, in issue 3, Lola Young, Baroness of Hornsey, explores the role of storytelling in addressing overlapping social and environmental crises, explicitly advocating for “innovative solutions from marginalized voices.” (Young, *IFLA!*, 10, 3). Through this contribution, *IFLA!* emphasizes how cultural narratives can be tools for reimagining more inclusive and just responses to climate change. Similarly, issue 4, focusing on Humans and Ecology, opens with a piece that exemplifies *IFLA!*’s commitment to highlighting underrepresented perspectives. The introductory text to James Morrison’s article on wind turbines and the Wayuu people makes clear that “the building

of wind turbines in La Guajira, Colombia, threatens the culture and practices of the local Wayuu People” (*IFLA!* 5, 4). Morrison argues that “we must not replicate colonial, extractive mindsets with green technology” and instead “calls for green infrastructure that engages with local people and communities” (Morrison, *IFLA!* 5, 4). Here, environmental solutions are interrogated through a critical lens that considers indigenous rights, historical exploitation, and ongoing colonial dynamics, demonstrating *IFLA!*’s attention to the socio-political dimensions of climate action. This focus is continued in issue 6, themed Greenwashing, which contains an article on “Colonialism and Greenwash in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” pointing to how environmental narratives can obscure or even perpetuate injustice (Mahmood, *IFLA!* 19–24, 6). A few pages later, an article on Michaela Coel’s *I May Destroy You* examines how Black experiences of trauma intersect with climate activism, using Coel’s novel to reflect on broader experiences of Black communities in the UK (Ochefu, *IFLA!* 31–38, 6). Through these pieces, *IFLA!* links global struggles against environmental harm to broader racial and postcolonial justice movements. Therefore, *IFLA!* broadens access to knowledge by incorporating diverse voices, including grassroots movements, scientists, and cultural thinkers. These examples illustrate that *IFLA!*’s inclusion of marginalized voices is not incidental but central to its editorial mission. As Howarth explains, “We are always trying to bring a broad range of people into climate issues with our interdisciplinary approach: trying to hit people where their interests are, showing how climate runs through art, theatre, music, architecture and so on... and then bringing them in more broadly.” This mission reflects a fundamental understanding that climate issues intersect with everyday life, culture, and creative expression, not just scientific research or policymaking. By embedding climate discourse within these varied frameworks, *IFLA!* creates entry points that resonate with diverse readers, inviting them into a broader conversation on climate justice.

The magazine’s attention to marginalized voices also reflects what Frank and Podewski describe as the unique epistemic function of periodicals: “Periodicals are not driven by progress towards a certain telos, per se, but are always agents involved in knowledge negotiations and claims of validity. The advancement of knowledge, which is not necessarily equivalent to progress, rests on the medium-specific processing and reprocessing of knowledge” (Frank and Podewski 31). By regularly featuring perspectives that challenge dominant narratives and by bringing together diverse forms of knowledge, from Indigenous rights to Black activism to postcolonial critiques, *IFLA!* becomes an active site for the reprocessing of knowledge. It does not offer a single, unified narrative about climate change. Instead, it presents a collection of perspectives that continually revise and expand what counts as valid knowledge in the climate discourse. Therefore, *IFLA!* creates a combination of interdisciplinary perspectives and marginalized voices, assembling a “little archive” (Frank and Podewski 41) of climate knowledge constantly in dialogue with itself. By assembling a dynamic archive of perspectives, *IFLA!* fosters an emergent form of climate knowledge. This egalitarian ethos aligns with the magazine’s goal of empowering readers to engage with climate action on multiple levels. This strategy positions *IFLA!* as an essential platform for expanding climate discourse beyond dominant, often Western-centric, narratives and toward more inclusive, intersectional understandings of climate justice.

Throughout *IFLA!*, calls to action appear in many forms, creating a dynamic and participatory relationship between the magazine and its readers. While this paper focuses primarily on print issues, it is worth noting that *IFLA!*'s open invitation for contributions on its website reflects a core ethos of accessibility and inclusivity. Prospective contributors are encouraged to submit anything from fully developed pieces to just a few paragraphs outlining an idea. The editors emphasize that "writers from any country or background are welcome" and explicitly state that fluency or prior journalistic experience is not required, offering to work in translation or support writers for whom English is a second language. This attitude demonstrates how *IFLA!* lowers the participation threshold, creating an epistemic affordance that democratizes knowledge production. The magazine encourages dialogue and collaboration rather than functioning as a top-down publication. Within the issues themselves, *IFLA!* extends this participatory model through explicit invitations to political and personal engagement. In Issue 2, for instance, a footnote beneath an article about Caroline Lucas, the Green Party's first ever MP, reads, "*IFLA!* invites all political parties to share their strategy for a climate friendly future with our readers" (*IFLA!* 10, 2). This request encourages direct political engagement and models an expectation of transparency and responsibility from political actors. By printing such calls, *IFLA!* signals to its readers what they can, and should, demand from those in power. Those direct invitations to political and personal engagement create a political affordance that encourages agency. Similarly, in the centerfold of Issue 3, which focuses on climate marches, I mentioned *IFLA!* included "some suggested courses of action for the 10 youth strike areas with the highest global greenhouse gas emissions" (*IFLA!* 30, 3). Here, the magazine points to systemic responsibilities and individual possibilities for action, linking readers to global movements and offering concrete steps for engagement. Even though it is unlikely that governments will directly respond to magazine suggestions, by clearly articulating these demands, *IFLA!* empowers its readers to recognize what is at stake and where pressure can be applied. In doing so, the magazine informs and supports political agency, opening avenues for thinking and acting politically. This vision of empowering readers is echoed by Howarth, who describes the magazine's role as helping readers understand "where issues are, who is most affected and who is most responsible—where and how to apply pressure, and who is already doing so effectively." Howarth highlights the guiding role of the editorial voice and its care for the reader: the aim is to engage people without overwhelming them, cultivating a space where complex topics can be confronted. *IFLA!* aims to create a space that "holds their gaze, that is beautiful and interesting, and that doesn't create as much fatigue" (Howarth). This balance between urgency and care reflects an understanding of the challenges of engaging audiences on overwhelming issues like climate change. Importantly, this dialogical engagement extends beyond the magazines' pages. As Howarth shares, the editorial team actively listens to and learns from their audience:

More broadly, we try to understand our readers' values and speak to them. We do our best to listen to our audiences (which is tricky in the magazine world), at magazine fairs we ask a lot of questions as people rifle through the mags and watch how they do so, I do the same when I meet readers out in the world, we engage with our readers on social

media and ask them what they're interested in, and what works for them, what they enjoy, for example.

Thus, *IFLA!* affords a circular relationship between publication and readership, making clear that dialogue is at the heart of effective climate communication.

This ongoing exchange is further deepened by the magazine's regular inclusion of resources and recommendations, which serve as gateways to continued learning and action. Each issue contains a double page titled "Resources" or "Bookshelf" near the end. Additionally, articles often reference external sources, extending the conversation beyond *IFLA!*'s pages. For instance, issue 3 features an excerpt with a link to the full piece online (*IFLA!* 13, 3) and references to prior issues, such as "See 'Being the Engineers Needed in the 21st Century' by Kelsey Reichenbach in *IFLA!* Issue 2." (*IFLA!* 27, 3). References to organizations and projects like Growing Underground further connect readers to real-world initiatives, demonstrating how the magazine acts as both a node and a bridge in broader networks of climate action (*IFLA!* 38, 4). Ultimately, the calls to action and linked resources throughout *IFLA!* emphasize the magazine's role as an active participant in climate communication, not merely informing but inviting, guiding, and caring for its readers as co-creators in envisioning and building a climate-just future. Drawing on Sean Latham's concept of emergence, which emphasizes how meaning arises unpredictably from the interplay of a magazine's diverse elements, *IFLA!* brings together contributions from various disciplines and perspectives, creating connections. The interdisciplinary nature of the magazine not only reflects the complexity of the climate crisis but also invites readers to make connections between climate science, activism, politics, and culture. In this way, *IFLA!* functions as both a networking archive and an archive of networks, documenting climate discourse and creating connections between ideas, movements, and individuals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *It's Freezing in LA!* distinguishes itself as a climate magazine through its structure, strong editorial voice, interdisciplinary approach, and commitment to amplifying marginalized voices. Rather than simply presenting information, *IFLA!* leverages its affordances: structural clarity, multimodal storytelling, and editorial voice, to create an environment where readers can navigate, connect with, and act on climate issues. These affordances constitute a media-specific infrastructure that fosters deeper engagement and allows for emergent understandings of climate discourse, reinforcing the idea that how knowledge is framed and shared shapes its transformative potential.

One of *IFLA!*'s key affordances is its navigational affordance, which emerges through its consistent structure and connected visual elements. The magazine's rhythm and flow help readers orient themselves, while illustrations and data-driven graphics serve as interpretative affordances, lowering the threshold for engagement by making complex ideas more accessible. Each issue's leading idea functions as a cognitive affordance, guiding interpretation without rigidly prescribing meaning. The magazine also allows for multiple entry points, ensuring that readers can engage with content according to their interests and prior knowledge, which is essential given the overwhelming nature of climate information.

By framing each issue with a strong editorial voice contextualizing contributions, *IFLA!* provides a further interpretative affordance, helping readers navigate interdisciplinary climate discourse. This editorial strategy positions the magazine as a transcultural mediator, curating diverse perspectives and supporting engagement to ensure that climate discourse remains accessible, nuanced, and justice-oriented. *IFLA!* also creates a participatory affordance by actively involving readers in climate discourse, positioning them not as passive consumers but as participants in an ongoing conversation. The magazine operates as a publication and curated archive, shaping contemporary climate conversations while allowing an emergent form of climate knowledge.

In addition, *IFLA!*'s inclusion of marginalized voices provides an epistemic affordance, expanding the framework through which environmental issues are understood. By challenging dominant knowledge systems and integrating alternative perspectives, the magazine lowers the threshold for participation, effectively democratizing climate discourse. This democratization of knowledge creates a political affordance that encourages agency, clarifying that dialogue and action are at the heart of effective climate communication. Furthermore, *IFLA!*'s interdisciplinary approach mirrors the complexity of the climate crisis, providing networking affordances by creating connections between climate science, activism, politics, and culture. In doing so, it functions both as an archive of networks and a network of archives.

Ultimately, *It's Freezing in LA!* exemplifies how independent magazines can act as agents of cultural and intellectual change. Through its structural clarity, multimodal storytelling, and editorial mediation, *IFLA!* transforms climate discourse from a static presentation of facts into an active, participatory dialogue. By providing a space where readers are encouraged to engage, question, and contribute, the magazine informs and empowers its audience, demonstrating the potential of independent media to shape meaningful and transformative conversations around the climate crisis.

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