

the cooling solution

Photography by Gaia Squarci · research by ENERGYA at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Fondazione CMCC · curatorship by Kublaiklan · project coordination by element6.eu · Sep 02/Oct 02, 2024 · Italian Cultural Institute of London, 39 Belgrave Square · Free entry Mon through Fri 09.00am–5.30pm · thecoolingsolution.com



SUMMARY

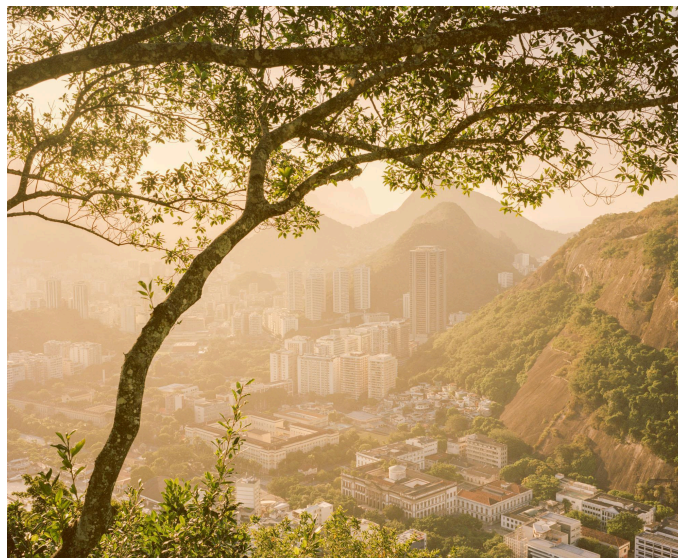
The Cooling Solution

After successful instalments in Venice in 2023 and New York City in 2024, The Cooling Solution lands in London in September 2024 at the Italian Cultural Institute of London.

[*The Cooling Solution*](#) is a scientific project that uses photography to investigate how people of different socioeconomic backgrounds around the world adapt to high temperatures and humidity in the context of climate change. It combines scientific results with personal stories, offering a visual journey through people's lived experiences of ineffective and inefficient cooling, hypercooling, heat dumping, vernacular architecture, and cutting-edge cooling technologies in Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Italy.

Photography by **Gaia Squarci**, research by the ENERGYA team at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, led by prof. **Enrica De Cian**, Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Fondazione CMCC, curatorship by **Kublaiklan**, project coordination by **Elementsix**.

- **Photographic exhibition in London** from September 2 till October 2, 2024. The Italian Cultural Institute of London, 39 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8NX.
- **Vernissage** September 9, 2024 - 5.30PM at The Italian Cultural Institute of London, 39 Belgrave Square, London



ABSTRACT

The Cooling Solution is a scientific project that uses photography to investigate how people of different socioeconomic backgrounds around the world **adapt to high temperatures and humidity in the context of climate change**. Beginning with the title, the term *solution* is meant to call into question this adaptation paradigm. The project examines the **phenomenon of the rising AC demand in its various facets**, addressing its numerous shortcomings and drawbacks, as well as the reasons for its use, which are often related to the necessity of protecting the most fragile members of society from health hazards. According to the report of the International Energy Agency, “The Future of Cooling”, published in 2018, **10 new AC units will be sold every second for the next 30 years**, bringing the number of installed cooling units worldwide to 5.6 billion by 2050.

The project combines scientific research, photography and infographics to investigate people’s experiences as they deal with thermal discomfort in Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Italy. The goal is to use photography’s communicative power to make academic knowledge accessible to the wider public.

As AC becomes cheaper and more efficient, it may end up being used in places where heat stress could instead be adequately tackled by alternative cooling solutions. As a result, **humanity is facing the risk of being trapped in a new, vicious cycle created by consolidated behaviors and urban environments shaped by the ubiquity of AC**. It is now clear that the era of energy-intensive material comfort must come to an end. What is perhaps less clear is that sacrificing this way of living doesn’t mean sacrificing thermal comfort, a concept whose parameters are determined not only by climate, but also by habits, culture, and socio-economic dynamics.

In the frame of a broader scientific research, Brazil, India and Indonesia were chosen to represent populous, tropical countries whose economies are growing, while Italy serves as a western counterpart. While these countries, however different, are following a similar trend driving them towards a homogenized notion of thermal comfort, ***The Cooling Solution* also examines vernacular architecture, alternative cooling methods, innovation, and dedicated research efforts**. We will live on a warmer planet, and AC can and will save lives. However, there is also a great richness in the diversity of cooling methods available that are waiting to be re-discovered, re-visited, and scaled-up.

LOCATIONS

The Cooling Solution has been [hosted at Ca' Foscari University of Venice](#), May-July 2023, and in [New York City at the Photoville Festival](#), 1-16 June 2024.

In the second half of 2024, *The Cooling Solution* will be hosted at **The Italian Cultural Institute in London, from September 2 to October 2, 2024** and at the Radar Festival of Photography in Trani from October 4 to November 30, 2024.



SPONSORS

The project has been supported by the European Research Council (ERC) and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, the Department of Economics at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Fondazione CMCC, and THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for Environmental Humanities.

The London edition of The Cooling Solution is supported by the The Italian Cultural Institute of London, the Department of Economics at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Fondazione CMCC, and THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for Environmental Humanities.

WEBSITE AND CATALOG

The content of the project Cooling Solution is available in an extended version at thecoolingsolution.com, a custom website launched on May 19, 2023.

TEAM

The exhibition and catalog, curated by the collective of curators Kublaiklan, would not have been possible without the economic research led by Enrica De Cian and her ENERGY team, the ethnographic research conducted by Antonella Mazzone, the policy research carried out by Marinella Davide, and the photography by Gaia Squarci, all of which were coordinated by Elementsix.

BIOS

→ **Gaia Squarci** is a photographer and videographer who divides her time between Milan and New York City, where she teaches Digital Storytelling at ICP. Gaia is an IWMF fellow and a National Geographic grantee, as well as a contributor for Prospekt. With a background in art history and photojournalism, she leans towards a personal approach that distances itself from the descriptive narrative tradition in documentary photography and video. Her work focuses on themes linked to the relationship between human beings and the environment, disability, aging, and family relationships.

→ **Kublaiklan** is a curatorial collective that explores widely accessible ways of interacting with photography by designing exhibitions and educational projects for non-profit organizations, institutions, and individuals. At the same time, it investigates contemporary visual culture through research projects aimed at building awareness and promoting a conscious use of photography as a language.

→ **Enrica De Cian** is a professor of environmental economics at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Department of Economics, and a research scientist at the Fondazione Centro Euro-Mediterraneo sui Cambiamenti Climatici and at the European Institute on Economics and the Environment. She is a member of the scientific committee at the New Institute Center for Environmental Humanities, and is the recipient of an ERC Starting Grant for the project ENERGY ("Energy use for Adaptation"), the results of which will be summarized during the exhibition. At Ca' Foscari, she also coordinates the PhD in Science and Management of Climate Change.

→ **Antonella Mazzone** is a research associate at the Centre for the Environment (University of Oxford), fellow at Oxford Martin School, affiliated with THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for Environmental Humanities and Fondazione CMCC. With a background in humanities and social science, her current work focuses on the interplay between gender, cultures, and indigenous knowledge in energy studies.

→ **Elementsix** is an agency specialized in research dissemination and in providing services to academics from diverse fields. Elementsix and Gaia Squarci supervised the curation of the photographic shoots and associated stories, and coordinated, together with Enrica De Cian, the scientific writing for the exhibition and the catalog.