

## A/C KL blues.

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Born out of nothing to become a metropolis in little more than a century, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is a leading competitor for the title of Air Conditioning's World Capital. The mixture between tropical climate and ferocious development has been submerging the city under an infinite blanket of condensers, ever-rotating propellers, fan coils, heat pumps and cooling towers.

With the delicacy of a bulldozer AC adds a layer of mechanics to everything. It wildly escapes attempts to hide it, but it is hardly if ever used for the sake of its own inherent visual quality, Piano Rogers-style. Even when you don't see AC you hear it. Like an imprisoned beast it is wailing from back alleys, from suspended ceilings and from distant roofs. Its never ending roar is the soundtrack of the city. AC's olfactory signature is everywhere. Through thousands of leaks greasy Freon is melting into the air of the city; it mixes with oriental food and exhaust to give KL its strong characteristic scent.

Even when put in contact with an imaginative population, AC is never tamed in the picturesque way Pakistanis tame their trucks. It has a humanised, colourful presence mostly at small scale. Clusters of condensers are staring at you with their blind, rotating eyes. They pop-up on the buildings in curious bunches like some strange jungle social animal.

AC is a symbol of comfort and well-being; its benefits are obvious for every sensible person who has ever lived a hot, wet summer – and what about a never-ending such

summer. But AC is blind to the humans it cools down. The huge organism of KL-wide AC seems to have its own life, independent from the people it serves almost by accident. The perpetual choir of thousands of condensers and cooling towers has the melancholy of a long-lost geologic era. Artificial AC is a force of nature. Don't mess with it.

Stefan Davidovici.

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