



MALAYSIA CYBERJAYA

Since its inauguration in 1999, Cyberjaya, which rests in the heart of Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor, has billed itself as the first fully networked "intelligent garden city". But in reality it's more like a fantastical mammoth idea that just can't seem to get on its feet. Imagine Silicon Valley's low-slung office parks perched atop rolling landscaped terraces and winding paths flanked by gazebos and man-made fountains and you have some idea of the horticultural wonderland prom-

ised by Cyberjaya's website, aptly named, The Nucleus. While similarly utopian planned communities like Celebration and Brasilia embrace a gentle nostalgia for Rockwellian innocence or retro-Modern rationality, Cyberjaya is aggressively middle-future, with an excessive number of blinking kiosks and universal "smart" credit cards.

The city hopes to collapse communication breakdowns by connecting each of its citizens from their homes, laptops, and via those "smart" credit

cards. In other words, it would like to make total transparency its hallmark. Basically, Cyberjaya is a giant pan-optical commons where email suggestions to the website's "Command Center" are encouraged as much as spending one's "virtual redemption points" at the many bricks-and-mortar boutiques. Never before has a resort mindset — kayaking, fishing, rollerblading, and midnight strolls — been packaged in such technocratic rhetoric. But a nascent city needs more than clever marketing.

Although the name "Jaya", in Malay, means "success", the photographer Miranda Lichtenstein, who's twice photographed the \$5.3 billion site, is more skeptical. *What she encountered there was "the shell of a future city: the concrete base for the bullet train to Kuala*

Lumpur, an over designed garden at the foot of an incomplete bridge, a well-lit but empty apartment complex." There has recently been some forward movement; a single mini-mall with a few restaurants, she reports, "and DHL and Shell have arrived in the form of modular glass buildings with deserted parking lots." Still, the utopian dream that is Cyberjaya remains a futuristic work in progress.

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