

i will pay to make it bigger



All sensations are thus, as such, given only *a posteriori* ... we can cognize *a priori* nothing more than their intensive quantity, namely that they have a degree, and everything else is left to experience.

– Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*

I will pay to make it bigger

– A\$AP Rocky, 'Fuckin' Problems'



[ONE]

you are standing at a kiosk on Chatzichristou. the woman behind the plexiglas hands you a shiny, shrink-wrapped box.

the box is marked THE FUTURE in a blocky font; the woman has turned her attention elsewhere.

she is fiddling with a coiled wire. she is plugging the end of the wire into the top of a small, white, contactless payment device.

the sunlight is unbothered by the kiosk canopy, or by the obstacle course of small, plastic toys hanging above the woman's head.

the sun ricochets off the cheap, white plastic of the woman's card machine.

the device is glinting and glitzing and burning white like the bones of a small child moments after the explosion of a neutron bomb in an old b-movie that you can only half recall.

it is possible that you have never seen the movie in question, or that you have only ever seen the trailer. it is possible you were told about it as a teenager and – at the time – it seemed ironic and cool.

the woman is fiddling with the contactless bomb.

she is prodding the power cable into it, she is wiggling the cable and unplugging and plugging it back into the machine.

the woman behind the kiosk has nails painted a perfect tangerine.

across the street from the kiosk, a waitress is delivering a plate of curried snails to a small man with short, peach hair and an anodyne checked shirt.

the waitress is joined by another who is carrying a small side-plate of wilted greens and a large skillet laden with a hunk of indeterminate meat, flaking off a charred bone.

there is an ochre sauce on the meat, wet and glimmering in the light.

there are big sunlit leaves, jittering in the wind.

you turn away from the kiosk and cross the road, dodging between yellow taxis congregating from three directions in a mess at the south-west corner of the intersection.

the drivers are cheerfully engaged in banter through open car windows, in Greek, which is a language that you do not understand.

you are standing under the awning of a restaurant. a waiter is serving dolmades, tzatziki and courgette balls as you tear at the plastic wrap of the product you have taken from the kiosk.

you dink and dent the outer box as you pull out a sliding cardboard tray, inset with a vacuum-formed, faux-flocked plastic insert.

the plastic insert has been formed with the words THE FUTURE as a relief set squarely below the product itself.

the product stares up at you, snug and helpless in the fit of its faux-flocked plastic tray. it looks poorly made, and suspiciously like the HERE AND NOW.

*

somewhere, in Chengdu, China, or Quang Chau, Vietnam, someone has received a .DXF file via encrypted FTP transfer for the latest design of the plastic insert packaging for the newest model of the HERE AND NOW.

they are relaying the .DXF file to the Formech HD Series 2 technician.

the technician will produce a prototype of what – one day soon – will be launched, distributed and stocked as the most up-to-date model of the HERE AND NOW.

somewhere in Athens, Georgia, there is a high degree of confidence.

amongst the design-team and the market strategists, there is a firm belief that their newest iteration of the HERE AND NOW will be well received.

there is talk of achieving near-total market share.

in Georgia HQ, the vibes are good.



[TWO]

you are somewhere in a south-eastern suburb of Bangkok.

you left Athens, Greece, on a low-cost Singaporean airline almost two days ago.

the airline food was surprisingly restorative.

you are idling in traffic on what your iPhone X will later tell you is the Bang Na Expressway.

it is early morning and you have just woken up in the footwell of a well-maintained, pleasantly-scented Toyota Corolla.

outside, the sun has risen and, beyond the gleam and grit of the highway fencing, a neat little grove of skyscrapers dazzles amongst a smattering of industrial machinery and a large expanse of phthalogreen wetland.

it is entirely unclear as to why you are here, lying on your side, full-foetal in the footwell of a mid-sized hatchback.

it is possible that your drinking has gotten out of hand.

i think my drinking might have gotten out of hand, you say to yourself.

the driver turns away from the road to glance at you heaving yourself onto the backseat of his well-maintained hatchback.

the upholstery is a pleasing weave of turquoise and tangerine; the plastic moulding of the cupholder between the two front seats is dimpled.

if I was a cat, I'd rub my face against the dimpled plastic, you say to yourself.

the driver is saying something in Thai, you are scrabbling for your phone.

you are trying to find the location of the Bangkok branch of the 'best party hostel chain in Thailand'. you are slapping and swiping at the Maps app of your smeared and sticky iPhone.

you are pushing your phone towards the driver and pointing to the location of the Bangkok branch of the best party hostel chain in Thailand.

the driver is saying something in Thai. he is looking at you with what feels like almost unbearable pity.

