



BP "Robot"

It's a hard brief. "We want something that looks like a robot, but doesn't look anything like a robot." That was the challenge put to Bob Hinks of model-makers Asylum for BP's robot campaign.

We were asked to design and build a robot woman that comes to life but not like anything that had gone before. The idea was that oil would flow through the robot, bringing it back to life."

The trick was to make sure that the famous scene from Fritz Lang's Metropolis, or any other sci-fi robot, never occurred to anyone.

Director Paul Street started looking through photo galleries in LA for inspiration. He'd just received the script and thought there were huge opportunities for creativity. "I didn't want to do Metropolis or C3PO," says Street. "I wanted to concentrate on the core story and narrative – the emotional context of the spot." Rather than Lang's or Lucas's robots, the work of photographer Thierry Mugler became one of the big influences on the design of the BP robot. After a month of 'to-ing and fro-ing' Asylum had a look that everyone was agreed upon and just five weeks to make the robot and shoot the advert.

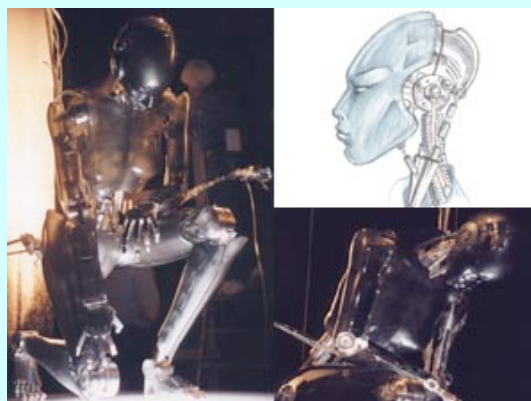
Street quickly cast the model that would be both the main character and the robot. Asylum had photographs of her taken, as well as plenty of measurements, so they could create their own robot based on her shape and Street's and the creatives' ideas.

"We met Rushes to consult with them about how it would be animated," says Hinks. "We had mouldings made right from the start which were sent to them. Initially, they thought they would be doing the whole head as cgi but eventually they animated just its eyes and mouth. But they had a tremendous amount of rod-removal and cleaning of reflections to do."

There was even more cgi to do when the original Perspex sets "just didn't work", according to Street. But instead of having to re-shoot with a new, hastily constructed set, Street was able to provide Rushes with high-quality graphics from the agency which they used to create the abstract background for the entire shoot, which never even existed.

"I always thought the job would be live-action integrated with live-action," says Street. "But we ended up with a great proportion of effects. If I had had more time now, in retrospect I would have given Rushes a bit more work, and pushed them about 20% more."

"Give Life Robot" for BP Lubricants Europe
Agency Doner Cardwell Hawkins
Producer David Shute
Creatives Lee Ford, Damian Simor
Production Buster Evans @ Streetlight
Director Paul Street
Film Editor Christophe Williams
Inferno/Flame Crawford Reilly, Omar Akkari, Claire Pollock
CGI Dave Child, Angela Noble
Facility Producer: Sonia Ralton
Production stills & drawings courtesy of Asylum.





Paul Street



Bob Hinks



Angela Noble



Omar Akkari

[Previous Page](#) | [Winter 2000 Index](#) | [Next Page](#)