mother

Didier Damiani

Press release

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With the *Mother* project on show until 5 April at Basta - *Espace d'Art Contemporain* in Lausanne the artist, Paul Kirps, is continuing his investigations into the relationships of man and machine through graphical representations and illustrations of technological aesthetics. This work of art has been created in a pop-art style and is bathed in the nostalgic atmosphere of the 1980s, evoking modern science-fiction cinema.

The mural illustration, *Mother*, made up of a juxtaposition of adhesive vinyl, inspires through its title, a maternal relationship with the viewer. Geometric shapes and surfaces of uniform colour applied sparingly, in poetic tones, take possession of the three dimensions of the exhibition area, like the interface of the central informatics unit positioned on the bridge of a spaceship. *Mother*, a maternal figure in the technological world, makes direct reference to the huge archaic computers of the 1980s with the numerous flashing command buttons (*Albator, Star Trek, Goldorak*) and to artificial intelligence.

This "mural illustration" or "illustrative installation", created by Paul Kirps, suggests man's loss of control over machines and the danger of the all-powerful computer system taking control of the human brain. HAL in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the *Nostromo* in *Alien*, and the strange scientific dysfunctions populating the American SF literature of Asimov, Clarke and Dick, where robots and war vessels break the law, destroy humanity and take control of psychological worlds of post-traumatic fantasy. White dominates in *Mother*, creating an impression of cold sobriety, a feeling of amnesia and loss of consciousness, provoked by the black holes in the galaxy's void and the absence of landmarks, perspectives refracted in space which paradoxically create the disjointed framework of *Mother*.

Born in 1969 in Luxembourg, Paul Kirps is a graphic design graduate from the University of art and design (Ecal) in Lausanne. He has collaborated with the renowned studios, Buro-X and Koeweiden/Postma Design; participated in founding the Qua-Lab-experimental design lab (Barcelona); and was artistic director of the publications centre at Expo.02 in Switzerland in 2000. Paul Kirps has already created a large-scale illustration on the Mudam building *(Camp de Base)* in Luxembourg for the *Graphique Deluxe* exhibition (2005). Later, he took part in the *safe* exhibition at MoMA and the *Eldorado* exhibition at Mudam, and he ventured into the new territory of film by creating *Autoreverse*, a series of audiovisual sequences of decomposing and recomposing fragments of machines produced from recycled electrical household appliances, before founding the *bande à part* collective with Marianne Grisse in 2006.

With *Mother*, Paul Kirps continues his journey which leads him somewhere between graphic aesthetics and art, confirming his mastery of the exploitation of tri-dimensional space by drawing again from his repertory of shapes collected from the worlds of illustration and imaginary technology.