Prototyping firm helps Honda with its push towards driverless technology

A prototyping company from Letchworth has been helping car manufacturing giant Honda with its push towards driverless technology.

Hertfordshire firm Ogle's cutting-edge technology was used to create concept models for Honda as part of the Japanese multinational's bid to develop autonomous driving technology.

The seven models were used for the 'Honda. Great Journey.' advertising campaign illustrating what self-driving cars could eventually look like. The car firm plans to put driverless vehicles on the roads by 2020.

Each of the 1:24 scaled models, the size commonly used for toy cars, required precise production to accurately reflect the high quality of Honda's vehicles.

Ogle's stereolithography (SLA) machines – a form of 3D printing – were used to create the tiny component parts for the models and the firm's team of model-makers painstaking put the pieces together.

Dave Bennion the Marketing and Sales Director for Ogle, said: "The accuracy demanded of our people and machines was significant. To achieve the required paint finishes and component parts for the models, there was no room for error. Each finish had to be executed to perfection, resulting in a seamless look when being filmed.

“We are extremely proud to have been selected toproduce such intricate and unique models for such a household brand and were delighted to receive such positive feedback.

“Innovative solutions were sought throughout. For example, to create a hammock effect, a net finish was achieved by sourcing multiple net fabrics and lacquering the component parts, so that they were clear, before applying paint over the pattern of the fabric.

“A considerable amount of time was spent both in design and on the bench to create clearances for paint so that everything would fit and work after the parts had been painted.”

Some of the fine decorative touches were shaped by hand using stainless steel and copper wire to create a robust and realistic effect.

Ogle’s paint department were tasked with delivering finishes that had never been created before. The meticulous process included applying a guide coat of paint to each of the models to ensure all items were rubbed down correctly before being sandblasted to even all the surfaces and soften any remaining layers.

In the final assembly, all the parts were thoroughly tested to allow for the required movement within each model. Two of the seven models, The Mountain Climber and Jungle Jumper, went through even further inspection because many elements were functional and needed to move, so the overall balance and strength of the model had to be tested and maintained.

For more information about Ogle, visit www.oglemodels.com.