NEVER GIVE UP

From Honda's humble beginnings as a manufacturer of gasoline-engine powered bicycles right after WWII, right up to the breath-taking Acura NSX concept just unveiled this week at the Detroit Auto Show, the company is one that represents unrelenting pursuit of excellence in technology and cutting edge design.

Known the world over, Honda has been the largest manufacturer of motorcycles since the 1950's, when Soichiro Honda introduced the "Cub", as well as the world's largest maker of internal combustion engines by volume.

While doing some research for this project, I was intrigued by Soichiro Honda's personal story, and was amazed at his early drive and relentless push. When he designed a piston he hoped to sell to other manufacturers and his initial design was rejected, he worked painstakingly to perfect his design, even going back to school and pawning his wife's jewelry to pay for it. Right after the war, with extreme gasoline shortages, he attached a small engine to his bicycle. This simple and yet innovative idea lead to investment and the beginning of the Honda Motor Company. The rest, as they say, is history.

That drive, innovation and pursuit of excellence is what makes Honda great. Soichiro once said "*Success is ninety-nine percent failure*". His personal story is one that matches perfectly the idea for this spot. He never gave up, and we are all the better because of it.
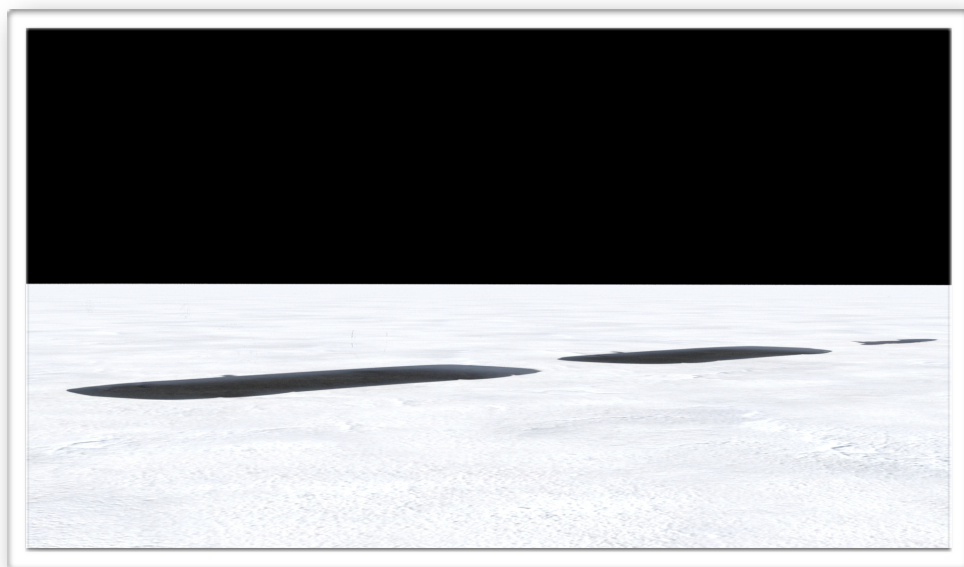
"Dream the impossible"

MOTHERSHIP +

I am an avid enthusiast of automobiles, and when I found out there was even a slim possibility of working on a Honda commercial, I got so excited and I talked to my kids at length about it. In the last few days they keep pointing at Honda cars in the street and ask me if I am indeed working on the spot. I hope to answer in the positive soon!

While I'm as comfortable leading a team of computer artists as I am shooting behind a camera, here's our take on what we feel is the best technique to achieve the concept in the time we have. We at Digital Domain/Mothership have a lot of experience creating full-CGI cars for film and television, and I personally have directed spots that feature fully photo-realistic vehicles. I feel it's the approach that will give us the most flexibility and also be more cost-effective.

Having said that, it's important to understand that I treat CGI the same way I would treat live action. I want the cars and motorcycles to look their best no matter the particulars. So great cinematography and cameras are at all times front and center. For me it's important to create a great piece, not just a "great CGI piece". It should stand on its own as a testament of what's great about Honda as a company, and introduce a new generation of car fans to its history. The fact that we would create it fully in the computer is a sideline.

MOTHERSHIP + DD

Here's a simple breakdown of passes I used to generate one
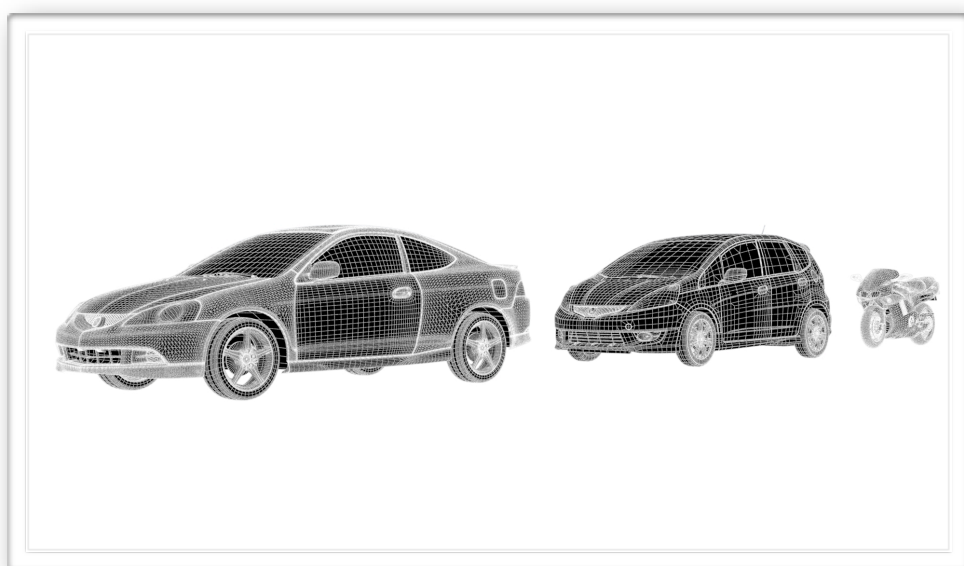of the style frames we are presenting.
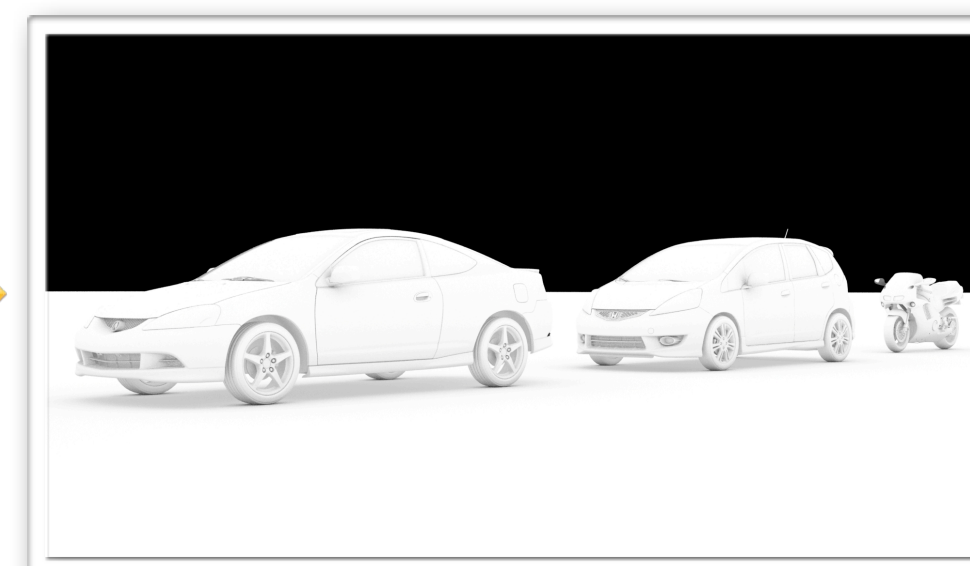

Salt Flats Ground pass

Background pass

Haze pass

Car Wireframe pass

Car Beauty pass

Car Occlusion pass

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Beauty Comp

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I took the liberty of creating a simple motion test that proves our technique in a rather striking way. Page 7 shows a variety of frames from that test, and we are posting a Quicktime as well.

Let me finish by thanking you and your team for the opportunity of participating in this exciting project. We have the know-how, the technology, but most importantly, we have the excitement that this spot needs. Whether we do it all in CGI or shoot live action elements, I feel we can make this a visual tour the force that will continue to amaze drivers and car lovers the world over.

Peace,

Aladino Debert

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