

Press Release

PR23

5 October 2009

Metallisation Protecting Film Industry Sets

For the first time in its 87 year history, Metallisation equipment has been used to protect film industry sets from damage during filming.

The polystyrene props were first cut to shape and then metal sprayed with zinc and steel to strengthen them and make them less prone to dents during movement around the set. Metallisation customer and founder of The CNC Factory Ltd, Ed Hladio, has been contracted to create columns, walls and a 3D topographical map for a recent film.

Ed says: "When I work with film sets I regularly have to repair and patch up props due to damage caused while they are moved around, or through contact with actors and filming equipment. For many months now I have been experimenting with metal spraying on all sorts of surfaces, including apples and wood. So, when it came to creating the new film sets it made perfect sense to me to metal spray the polystyrene shapes to give them strength and protection."



The 3D map, created for a film, needs to be strong enough to take the weight of the actors who will be walking upon it during filming. This strength and durability is provided by the metal sprayed finish.

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The reason metal spraying works so well for polystyrene is that the molten particles created during the Arcspray process hold only a small amount of heat energy. This heat dissipates very quickly when it comes into contact with the large surface of the polystyrene. During the Arcspray process the raw materials, a pair of metal wires, are melted by an electric arc. The molten material, in this case zinc and steel, is atomised by a cone of compressed air and propelled towards the polystyrene. This spray solidifies when it hits the surface of the work piece to form a dense coating making metal spraying the perfect solution for protecting items made from polystyrene.

One of the alternatives to metal spraying is to fill or coat the surface of the polystyrene shapes with hard setting resins. This process is very messy, takes time to cure and requires additional work in sanding the surface to acquire the appropriate finish. With the tight timescales Ed has to work to, metal spraying provides the most efficient and effective solution.

Ed has previously metal sprayed polystyrene for other film scenes. These include cutting 'books' out of polystyrene for a library scene. The books were then metal sprayed for durability and painted to look like a row of books. He is currently experimenting with different coloured metals and materials to enable him to offer a range of finishes to his clients. He is also looking at post spraying techniques, such as polishing and acid ageing, to expand the range of finishes available and to increase the durability offered by metal spraying polystyrene. Ed has also used the Metallisation Arc140 system to spray metals on to boat moulds and to produce rotational moulds.

Ed continues: "People think of metal spraying as simply an engineering process. But I have shown that it has a much more creative use if you think outside the box. The most exciting thing is that no one expected me to do this. I love being challenged and looking for ways to create film sets and props that are durable but realistic. It's all great fun."



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As well as being used on polystyrene, metal spraying can also be used to spray fibreglass and carbon fibre mouldings for decorative purposes.

Established in the UK in 1922, Metallisation is synonymous with metal spraying to a diverse range of industries around the world. Metal spraying is a technology, which protects and greatly extends the life of a wide variety of structures, equipment and vessels, in the most hostile environments and in situations where protective surface coatings are vital for longevity. For more information please visit www.metallisation.com or call Stuart Milton, Sales and Marketing Manager on 01384 252 464.

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