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54 **Towel or mat.**

57 A towel or mat, such as a bar towel, is made from a stitch bonded non-woven fabric which comprises 50% polyester fibres and 50% viscose fibres. The towel or mat is preferably printed with a pattern or design. The fibres may be further bonded at intervals by particles of synthetic resin which may be incorporated in the printing ink used and/or may be sprayed onto the respective surface of the fabric before printing. The towel or mat is more durable than conventional towels or mats, has good liquid absorbing properties, and is capable of being printed with high definition patterns or designs.

Description

"Towel or mat"

THIS INVENTION relates to towels or mats and it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved towel or mat which is durable, effective and can be effectively printed with a desired pattern or design.

According to one aspect of the invention there is provided a towel or mat comprising a combination of polyester and viscose fibres.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a towel or mat comprising a non-woven, stitch-bonded fabric.

Embodiments of the invention are described below by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawing which is a view, to an enlarged scale, of a fragment of a non-woven stitch bonded fabric from which a towel or mat embodying the invention may be made.

A preferred form of towel embodying the invention comprises a non-woven fabric which comprises a thin mat of fibres, preferably 50% polyester fibres and 50% viscose fibres which are held together by a succession of parallel seams of chain stitching extending across the fabric. Thus, as shown in the drawing, which illustrates a fragment of such a fabric, the polyester and viscose fibres, indicated at 10 and extending substantially horizontally in the drawing are held together by a series of parallel, closely spaced, vertical rows of chain stitching, indicated at 12, in an appropriate thread. Each loop of chain stitching of each seam encompasses a narrow bundle of the fibres 10 of the mat, so that the fibres 10 and seams 12 effectively correspond with the warp and weft of a conventional woven fabric.

In a preferred form, the fibre mat is about 1.5 mm thick, the stitch length is 2 mm and the transverse spacing between the parallel seams of stitching is 3.5 mm, but it will be appreciated that the invention is in no way limited to these dimensions.

The fabric is preferably formed by the method of British Patent No. 1268630 in the name of Cosmopolitan Textile Company Limited, in which process the stitches used for stitch bonding the fibres are locked by interengagement with loops of fibres drawn from the fibre mat being stitch bonded.

The fabric described may be screen printed with any desired pattern or design.

Preferably the fibres of the fabric, at least on the side thereof which is printed or which is to be printed, are bonded together by particles of synthetic resin or the like binder. This enhances the stability of the printed surface in the final product, ensuring that the definition of the printed design remains good and preventing fraying or fluffing of the printed surface, without materially affecting the absorbency of the mat or towel. Such resin or the like binder may be applied in liquid form, in the form of a spray, to the respective surface of the fabric at some stage prior to printing.

Alternatively, or in addition, an appropriate fibre-bonding resin may be incorporated in the printing ink used for printing the fabric can be achieved by

applying the ink to the fabric through the printing screen by spraying and by electrostatic polarisation of the ink being sprayed. The last-noted technique is particularly applicable where the "ink" used is adapted to present a metallic "gold" or "silver" appearance.

It will be appreciated that other processes may be utilised for printing the desired images or patterns on the fabric. For example, printing may be by printing blocks or plates rather than by screen.

The fabric, particularly when resin treated as described, may with advantage be printed with reproduction of photographs or the like, using half-tone screens or screen portions, or using half tone printing plates or blocks. Preferably, when the fabric is to be printed with such photographic reproductions, the necessary half-tone printing screens, plates or blocks are formed from corresponding photographic records produced by the method of British Patent No. 1540122 or British Patent No. 1588131, both in the name of Schaflin Limited. "SCHAFLINE" is a Registered Trade Mark.

Towels made as described are particularly suited to use as bar towels. Bar towels of the prior art have usually been made of terry towelling and because of the nap of the cloth, fine line design or patterning of such towels is impossible. A bar towel manufactured as described above with reference to the drawing has been found to provide an ideal base for printing, for example by a screen printing technique and well defined fine line designs or patterns are obtainable without difficulty using this fabric. A towel embodying the invention, made as described, has been found to last longer, in comparable conditions of use, than a towel of terry towelling and yet has good liquid-absorbing properties as the stitch bonded material readily soaks up liquid. This characteristic, coupled with its capacity for fine line printing design, which makes it ideal as a visual advertising medium, makes such a towel ideally suited as a bar towel.

The fabric used is not prone to unravelling or fraying along cut edges and so does not require to be hemmed along such edges. If desired, however, the edges of a towel thus made may be protected by overlock stitching.

Whilst, as noted above, towels embodying the invention are well suited for use as bar towels, when made in an appropriate size, towels made in the same manner will serve equally well as bathroom towels or beach or mats.

Other items which may be made in the manner described are aprons, bags and wall coverings.

The features disclosed in the foregoing description, in the following claims and/or in the accompanying drawings may, both separately and in any combination thereof, be material for realising the invention in diverse forms thereof.

Claims

1. A towel or mat comprising a combination of polyester and viscose fibres. 5
2. A towel or mat comprising a non-woven, stitch-bonded fabric.
3. A towel or mat comprising a non-woven fabric consisting of substantially equal amounts of polyester and viscose fibres stitch-bonded by a succession of parallel seams of stitching extending across the fabric. 10
4. A towel or mat according to claim 2 or claim 3 which is printed with a pattern or design on at least one side thereof. 15
5. A towel or mat according to claim 3 or claim 4 wherein, at least in the region of the printed surface, the fibres of the fabric are bonded together at intervals by particles of synthetic resin or the like binder. 20
6. A towel or mat according to claim 4 or claim 5 which is screen printed.
7. A towel or mat substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawing. 25
8. An item made of or including a fabric which is a non-woven, stitch-bonded fabric comprising a combination of polyester and viscose fibres. 30

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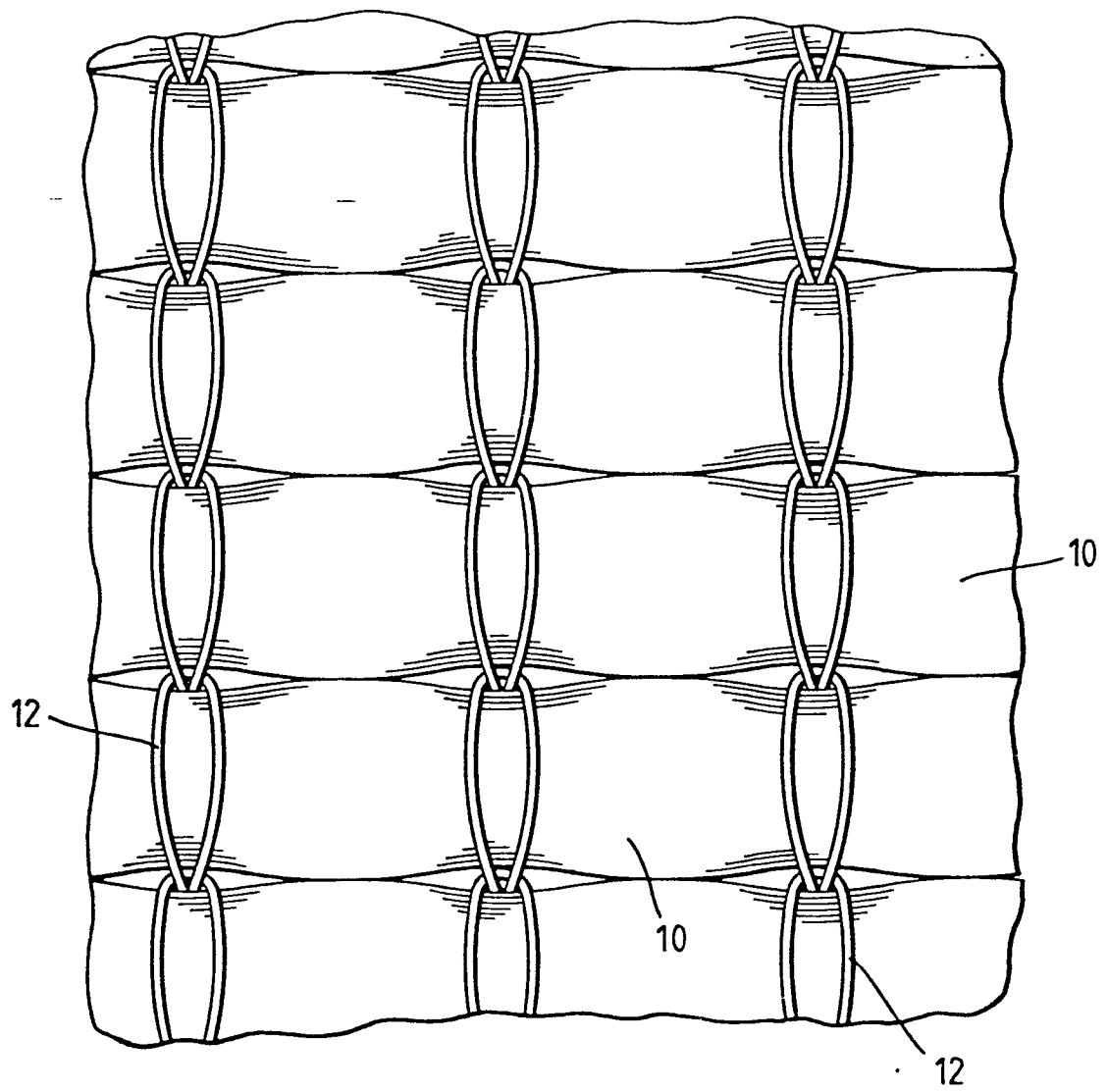
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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.4)
A	LU-A- 80 467 (SANTENS) * Claims 1,3,4,5 *	1,4	A 47 K 10/02 D 04 H 1/52
A	DD-A- 8 194 (MAUERSBERGER) * Claim 1; page 1, lines 22-30; page 2, lines 1-2 *	2	
A	CHEMIEFASERN TEXTILINDUSTRIE, vol. 35, no. 5, May 1985, pages 315-316, Frankfurt, DE; * Pages 315-316 "Haushalttextilien" *	2	
A	GB-A-1 421 747 (WILDEMAN) * Claim 1; example II; page 4, lines 90-95 *	1-4	
A	BE-A- 516 385 (PHILIPS-GLAZER) * Claims 1-8 *	4	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4) A 47 K A 47 L D 04 H D 04 B D 03 D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 05-08-1987	Examiner CATTOIRE V.A.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			