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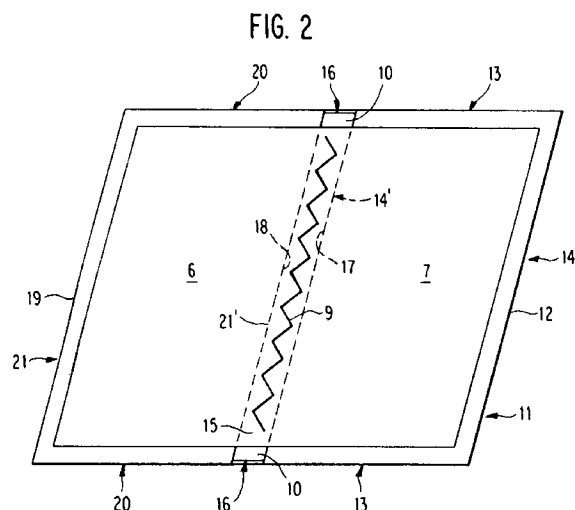
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(54) **Album and method for preparing the same.**

(57) The present invention is directed to an album which comprises a series of plastic pockets (1) which are attached by stitching (9), without glue or thermal fusion, to a binding (10) which in turn is attached to a cover (11) with three sections. The present invention is also directed to a method for making such an album. This method for making an album is more efficient and in some embodiments more decorative than those methods previously known to the art.



The present invention relates to an album, particularly a photograph album, and to a method for manufacturing such an album.

Albums, especially those used to display photographs, are typically prepared by individually attaching by a series of leaves to a binder by a means such as glue or thermal fusion. For instance U.S. Letters Patent No. 4,844,508 to Choi et al. describes a photograph album which contains a plurality of plastic leaves which are thermally fused together to form a hinge which in turn is fused to a binder.

Such binders are often uneconomical to manufacture and result in an album in which the leaves are typically difficult to turn. Moreover, this method of attaching the leaves to the binder does not, by itself, lend any decoration to the album.

The present invention is directed to an album which comprises a series of plastic pockets which are attached by stitching, without glue or thermal fusion, to a binding which in turn is attached to a cover with three sections. The present invention is also directed to a method for making such an album.

The invention will be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a pocket before it is stitched to a binding.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of an opened photograph album according to the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a cross sectional view of the base of an album according to the present invention.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the sheet of paper which is inserted into the rectangularly shaped transparent pockets.

Fig. 5 is a plan view of an embodiment of the present invention in which each section of a pocket is divided into five subsections.

The first element of the present invention is a plurality of rectangularly shaped transparent pockets specially suited for displaying slides, business cards, and most particularly photographs. The pockets may be of any shape depending upon the intended use of the album. Preferably, the pockets have a rectangular shape.

The size of the pockets is not particularly limited and depends upon the purpose for which the album is to be used. For instance, if the album is to be used to display photographs, the pockets could have a vertical dimension of five to six inches and a horizontal dimension of eight to nine inches.

The number of pockets is not particularly limited either. Five to twenty pockets are preferred, and ten to fifteen pockets are more preferred.

To function properly, the pockets must be transparent and should therefore be made of a rigid, transparent plastic or other non-opaque material. Appropriate plastics include polyethylene and polypolyene.

Each pocket has two vertical edges which are

closed and two horizontal edges, one of which is closed and one of which is open. Other arrangements are also possible, provided that three of the four edges are closed and that one of the four edges is open. For instance, the two horizontal edges and the inner vertical edge may be closed and the outer vertical edge may be closed.

Closure of the edges is effected by any of various means, such as by fusion of the material or by stitching. The decorative appeal of the pockets may be enhanced by stitching the pockets on three edges. Alternatively, the pockets may be integrally formed so that there is no need for a separate step to close the edges.

Fig. 1 shows a pocket 1 having a left vertical edge 2, a right vertical edge 3, a top horizontal edge 4, and a bottom horizontal edge 5. The pocket is closed on the vertical edges 2,3, and on the bottom horizontal edge 5, and open on the top horizontal edge 4. The pocket is divided into two sections 6,7, by a notional line 8. The notional line does not actually appear on the pocket in practice, but indicates the position along which the stitching 9 penetrates the pocket to attach it to the binding 10, as shown in Fig. 2. In use, each section 6 and 7 of pocket 1 holds a photograph or other item for display.

The pockets may be mechanically compressed by techniques known to those skilled in the art along the notional line 8. Such a compression is helpful during manufacture of the album by serving as a guide for the location of the stitching.

In some embodiments of the present invention, a sheet of paper 22, shown in Fig. 4, is inserted into each of the rectangularly shaped transparent plastic pockets before the pockets are stitched to the binding 10. The sheet of paper 22 has substantially the same horizontal and vertical dimensions as the pockets and covers substantially all of the display area of the pockets 1. The sheet may be paper or a plastic material, such as polyvinyl chloride. Further, the sheet may be flat or it may be textured, as by embossing. Finally, although it is preferred that the sheet be white, it may also be black or any other color.

A plurality of pockets 1 is attached in a batch to the binding 10 by stitching 9 without the use of glue or fusion of the pockets 1 to the binding. The stitching 9 may run in a column along the vertical dimension of the pockets 1 and the binding 10. The stitching 9 may be in any suitable pattern, for instance in a criss-cross pattern as shown in Fig. 2 or in a straight line as shown in Fig. 4 or in a shoelace pattern. Additionally, there may be a plurality of such stitching columns, particularly where the album is quite large so that additional stitching is required. In a further alternative, the stitching is in a series of horizontal rows which run down the vertical dimension of the pockets 1 and the binding 10.

The pockets 1 are machine-stitched to binding 10. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art,

the stitching creates separate sections, each of which has a display area.

The stitching material itself may be any suitable thread-like material, which may, for instance, be silk, plastic or fabric. The stitching 9 should be secured to the binding 10, for instance mechanically by tying.

In some embodiments of the present invention, two or more separate batches of pockets 1 are attached to the binding 10.

The binding 10 to which the pockets 1 are attached may be any suitable material, such as cardboard. The binding 10 must be sufficiently long in its vertical dimension so that one may securely stitch the pockets 1 to it. Preferably, the binding 10 is slightly longer in its vertical dimension than are the pockets 1 in their vertical dimension.

The rectangularly shaped binding 10 is attached on the side opposite to the pockets 1 to a cover 11 comprising a rectangularly shaped right section 12 having two horizontal edges 13 and two vertical edges 14, 14' a rectangularly shaped central section 15 having two horizontal edges 16, a first vertical edge 17 and a second vertical edge 18, and a rectangularly shaped left section 19 having two horizontal edges 20 and two vertical edges 21, 21'. The cover 11 is substantially as long as, and preferably longer, in its vertical dimension than the rectangularly shaped binding 10 in its vertical dimension. The attachment of the binding 10 to the cover 11 may be by glue or other means.

The vertical edge 14' of the rectangularly shaped right section 12 and the first vertical edge 17 of the rectangularly shaped central section 15 appear in Fig. 2 as the same dashed line since those two edges 14' and 17 are either joined together or are integral. Similarly, vertical edge 21' of the rectangularly shaped left section 19 and the first vertical edge 21' of the rectangularly shaped central section 15 appear in Fig. 2 as the same dashed line since those two edges 21' and 18 are either joined together or are integral.

The rectangularly shaped right section 12 of the cover 11 is attached along its vertical edge 14' to the first vertical edge 17 of the rectangularly shaped central section 15 of the cover 11, and the rectangularly shaped left section 19 of the cover 11 is attached along vertical edge 21' to the second vertical edge 18 of the central section 15 of the cover 11.

The cover 11 may be made of any suitable material known to the art. The dimensions of the cover 11 are not particularly limited, but should in most cases be somewhat larger in the plan area of its rectangularly shaped central section 15 than is the binding 10 and somewhat larger in the plan area of its rectangularly shaped right and left sections 12, 19 than are the pockets 1.

Fig. 3 shows a cross sectional view of the base of an album according to the present invention. Pockets 1 are attached by stitching (not shown) to binding

10 which in turn is attached to the rectangularly shaped central section 15 of cover 11. Attached to the rectangularly shaped central section 15 are a rectangularly shaped right section 12 and a rectangularly shaped left section 19.

In Fig. 5, section 6 of the pocket 1 (shown in Fig. 1) is divided into subsections 23, 24, 25 by bars 29, 30. Similarly, section 7 of pocket 1 (shown in Fig. 1) is divided into subsections 23', 24', 25' by bars 31, 32. The bars may be created by thermal fusion, stitching or other appropriate methods known to the art. In the embodiment shown in Fig. 5, the subsections 6, 7 are open at the vertical edges 2, 3 and closed on the other four edges.

In some embodiments of the present invention, as for instance that shown in Fig. 5, the sheet 22 extends substantially beyond the two sections 6, 7. In Fig. 5, the sheet extends beyond the outer vertical edges 2, 3 by approximately 50% of the horizontal dimension of the respective subsections. Both sides of this extension of the sheet 22 are substantially covered by lateral pockets 35, 35'.

The lateral pockets 35 and 35' may be made of the same material and in the same manner as pocket 1. Lateral pocket 35 is divided into subsections 26 and 27 by bar 33; subsections 26 and 27 are open on vertical edge 2' and closed on the other three edges. Similarly, lateral pocket 35' is divided into subsections 26' and 27' by bar 34; subsections 26' and 27' are open on vertical edge 3' and closed on the other three edges. Photographs or other items for display may be inserted into the subsections through the open edges.

In Fig. 5, the sheet 22 is covered except for bends 28, 28'. These bends allow one to fold the lateral pockets 35 and 35' back over subsections 23, 24, 25 and 23', 24', 25', respectively.

Of course, the pocket 1 in Fig. 5 has the same subsection and opening structure on the opposite side, that is, on the side not shown. The sheet 22 which is interleaved between the pocket 1 and the lateral pockets 35 and 35' has the effect of dividing them in two. Thus, on the side shown of the embodiment of Fig. 5, there are ten subsections in which a photograph may be housed, and on the opposite side, that is the side not shown, there are also ten subsections in which a photograph may be housed.

Fig. 5 illustrates just one example of the possible patterns into which the sections 6, 7 of pocket 1 may be divided into subsections.

The present inventive album and the method for making it will now be described by reference to the preferred embodiment of that invention. This description, however, should not be taken as limiting the scope of the invention in any respect.

Fifteen rectangularly shaped transparent plastic pockets 1, slightly longer than five inches and slightly wider than eight inches, are aligned in a stack and attached by stitching 9 to a binding 10. In this prefer-

red embodiment, the stitching is not in a zig-zag pattern, but runs in a substantially straight line from approximately the top of the transparent plastic pockets 1 to approximately the bottom of the pockets along notional line 8. The dimensions described above will accommodate standard sized photographs.

Prior to stitching, vertical edges 2,3 and horizontal edge 5 of the pockets 1 are closed. The stitching 9 has the effect of closing the pockets 1 along the notional line 8 to create separate sections 6,7. Photographs or other items for display may then be inserted into sections 6,7 of pockets 1 through the open area of the top horizontal edge 4.

In this preferred embodiment of this invention, a white sheet of paper 22 is inserted into each of the rectangularly shaped transparent plastic pockets before the pockets are stitched to the binding 10. The white sheet of paper 22 has substantially the same horizontal and vertical dimensions as the pockets and covers substantially all of the display area of the pockets 1.

When the pockets are sewn to the binding, the white sheets of paper 22 are also sewn to the binding 10 and constitute a background for photographs which may later be inserted into separate sections 6,7. The white sheet of paper also has the effect separating two photographs which may be inserted into each separate section 6 or 7.

A white sheet of paper 22 is shown in Fig. 4. The stitching 9 which attaches the white sheet of paper to the binding 10 is also shown, but neither the pocket 1 nor the binding 10 is shown. In this preferred embodiment, the white sheet of paper 22 includes three elongated holes 23,23',23'', which assist one to stitch the white sheet of paper 22 and the pockets 1 to the binding 10.

Alternatively, the stitching step is performed first and then rectangularly shaped sheets of white paper are inserted into the separate sections 6,7 of the stitched pockets. These sheets of paper have substantially the same dimensions as the separate sections 6 or 7 and serve the same function as the sheets of white paper 22 described at greater length above.

Although it is preferred that the color of the paper 22 be white, other colors may be used according to the intended purpose of the album.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the pockets are made of transparent plastic and are integrally closed along the outer vertical edges 2,3 and along the lower horizontal edge 5.

Claims

1. An album comprising,
 - a plurality of rectangularly shaped transparent pockets each having two vertical edges, an upper horizontal edge, and a lower horizontal edge,

a rectangularly shaped binding having two horizontal edges and two vertical edges,

a cover comprising (1) a rectangularly shaped right section having two horizontal edges and two vertical edges, (2) a rectangularly shaped central section having two horizontal edges, a first vertical section and a second vertical section, and (3) a rectangularly shaped left section having two horizontal edges and two vertical edges,

said rectangularly shaped binding being substantially as long in its vertical dimension as said cover is in its vertical dimension,

wherein the rectangularly shaped right section of the cover is attached along one of its vertical edges to the first vertical edge of the rectangularly shaped central section of the cover, and the rectangularly shaped left section of the cover is attached along one of its vertical edges to the second vertical edge of the central section,

and wherein the plurality of rectangularly shaped transparent pockets are attached along their vertical dimension to the rectangularly shaped binding along its vertical dimension by stitching without glue or thermal fusion of said pockets, thereby dividing each pocket into separate sections each having four edges,

and wherein said separate sections are closed on three of their edges, and open on one of their edges,

and wherein the rectangularly shaped binding is bound along its vertical dimension to the rectangularly shaped central portion of the cover along the vertical dimension of said central portion.

2. The album of claim 1, wherein the plurality of rectangularly shaped transparent pockets are made of polyethylene.
3. The album of claim 1, wherein the plurality of rectangularly shaped pockets are made of polypropylene.
4. The album of any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the stitching comprises a thread which is glued to the side of the binding opposite to the rectangularly shaped transparent pockets.
5. The album of any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the pockets each house a sheet which has substantially the same dimensions as the pocket, is stitched to the binding, and fills substantially all of the display area of the pocket.
6. A method for making an album comprising the steps of,
 - stacking a plurality of rectangularly shaped

transparent pockets each having two vertical edges and two horizontal edges,

bringing a rectangularly shaped binding having two horizontal edges and two vertical edges, into proximate contact with the stacked pockets, 5

stitching the stacked pockets and the rectangularly shaped binding together without the use of glue or thermal fusion of said pockets, thereby dividing the pockets into separate sections, 10

adhering the rectangularly shaped binding on the side opposite to the pockets to a cover comprising a rectangularly shaped right section having two horizontal edges and two vertical edges, a rectangularly shaped central section having two horizontal edges, a first vertical edge and a second vertical edge, and a rectangularly shaped left section having two horizontal edges and two vertical edges, which is substantially as long in its vertical dimension as the rectangularly shaped binding in its vertical dimension, 15 20

wherein the rectangularly shaped right section of the cover is attached along one of its vertical edges to the first vertical edge of the rectangularly shaped central section of the cover, and the rectangularly shaped left section of the cover is attached along one of its vertical edges to the second vertical edge of the central section, 25

and wherein said separate sections are closed on three of their edges, and open on one of their edges. 30

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of rectangularly shaped transparent pockets are made of polyethylene. 35

8. A method according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of rectangularly shaped pockets are made of polypropylene. 40

9. A method according to any of claims 6 to 8, wherein the stitching comprises a thread which is glued to the side of the binding opposite to the rectangularly shaped transparent pockets. 45

10. A method according to any of claims 6 to 9, wherein the pockets each house a sheet of paper which has substantially the same dimensions as the pocket and fills substantially all of the display area of the pocket. 50

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FIG. 1

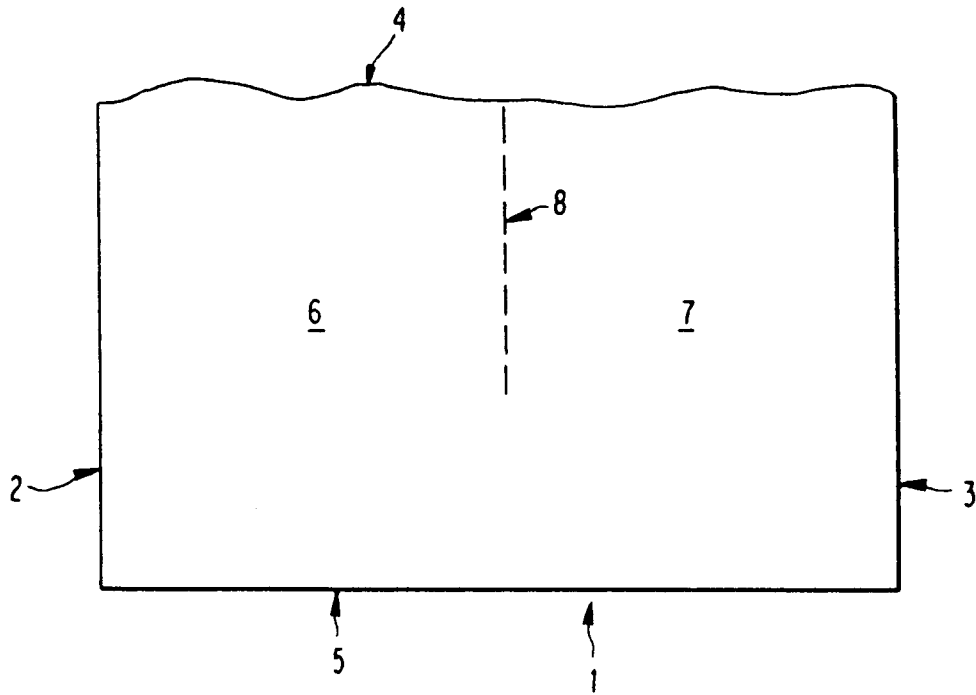
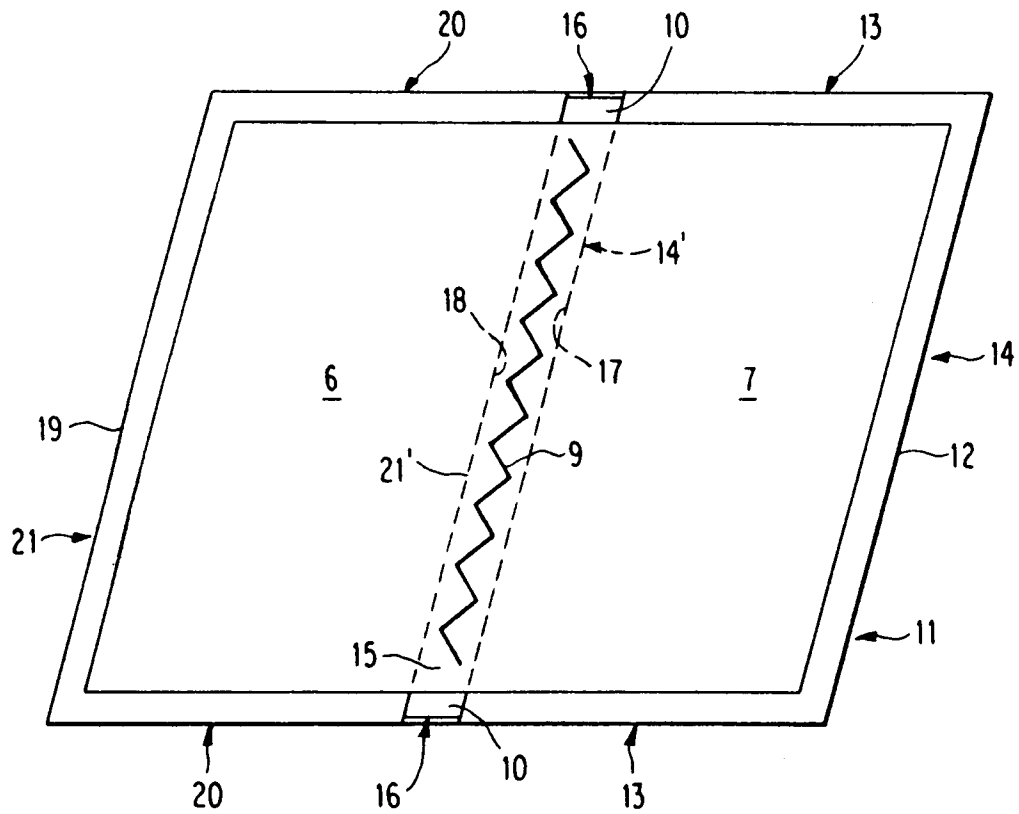
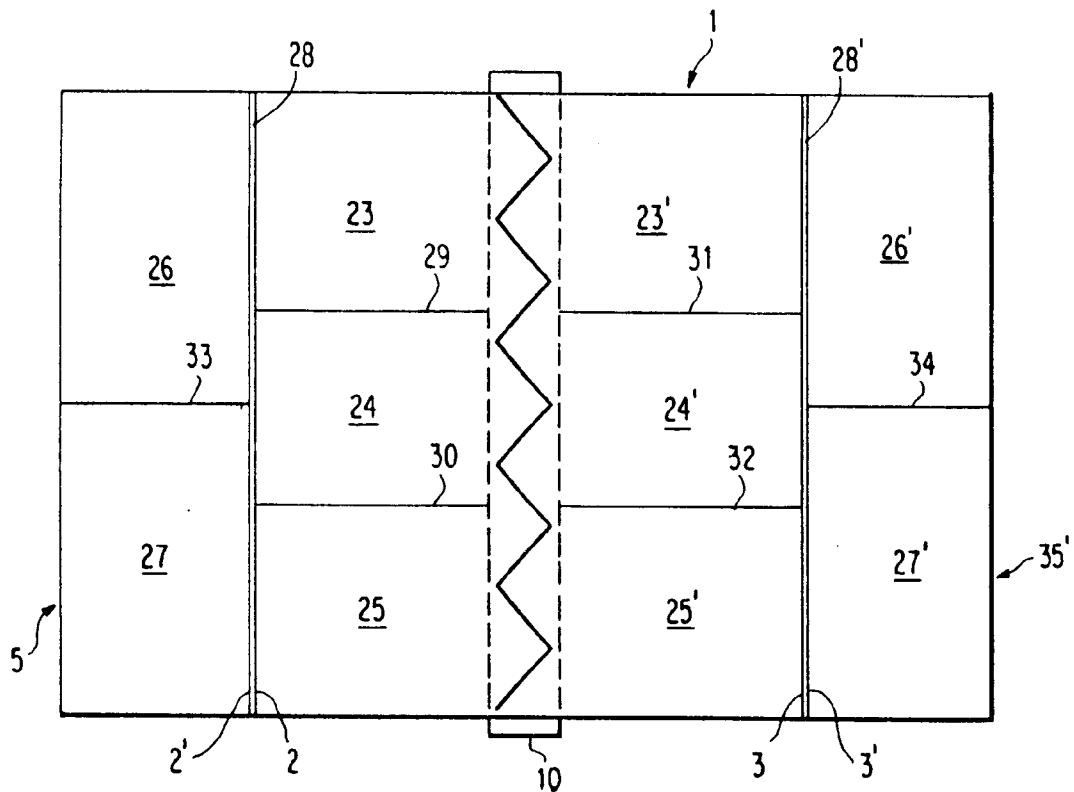
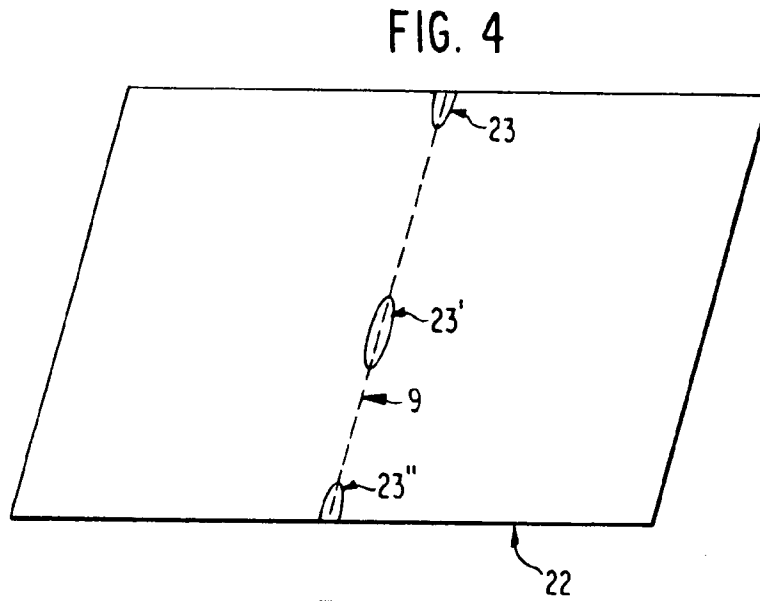
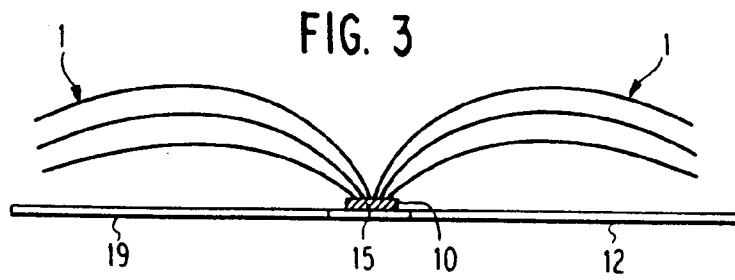


FIG. 2







European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 91 31 0946

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.5)
D, Y	US-A-4 844 508 (CHOI) * column 2, line 38 - column 4, line 26; figures *	1-10	B42D1/06
Y	US-A-1 377 120 (EXLINE) * the whole document *	1-10	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			B42D B42F B42C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 24 MARCH 1992	Examiner HAGBERG A, M, E.
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 I : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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