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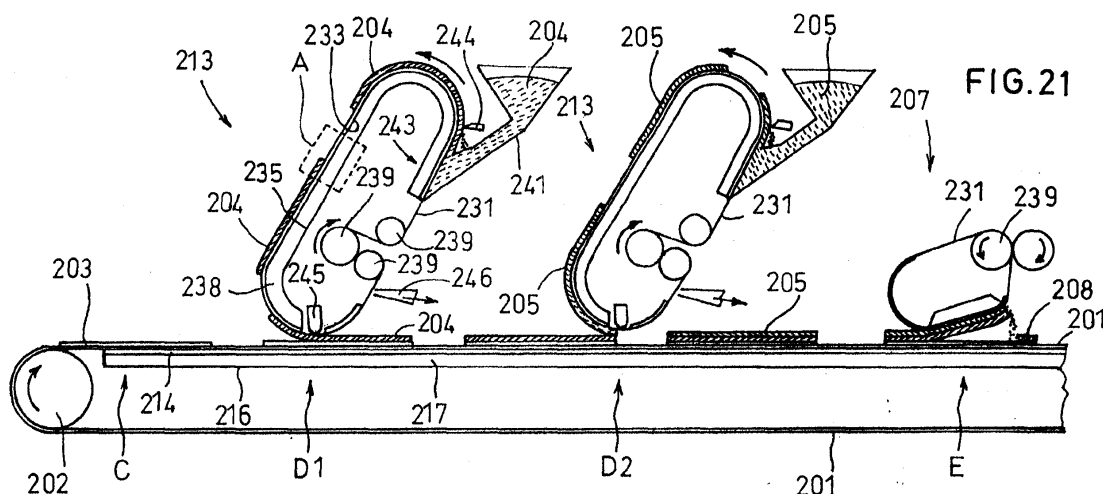
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(54) **Method and means for transfer of granular materials**

(57) Transfer means of granular material (15) includes a permeable baffle (33) through which a fluid acts on said granular material; it further comprises a thin belt (31) on which the said granular material lies, said thin belt being unwound from a coil (39) arranged upstream the pressing station and being rewound in coil (39)

downstream the said pressing station; a method to prepare a layer of powders designed to be pressed in form of ceramic tile comprises the following steps: arranging on a support surface superimposed layers (310,312) of different powders; acting with a fluid on said superimposed layers of different powders to mix them with each other along a vertical direction.





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 98 12 4583

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.6)
X	GB 2 001 872 A (PEREZ CANALES C; FERNANDEZ FRANCO R) 14 February 1979 * page 1, line 90 - page 2, line 3; figures 1,2 *	1,20	B65G15/58
X	US 4 863 645 A (HARBOLT BRUCE A ET AL) 5 September 1989 * page 7, line 63 - page 8, line 23; figure 1 *	1,20	
X	US 4 296 051 A (SHIMAMURA TADAO ET AL) 20 October 1981 * column 2, line 62 - column 3, line 19; figure 1 *	1,20	
----- The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) B65G
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
MUNICH		24 March 1999	Sundqvist, S
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			

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European Patent
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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B

Application Number

EP 98 12 4583

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1, 20, 2

Method and device for transfer of granular material, acting thereupon with a fluid passing through permeable regions of screen means. Said screen means according to claim 2 including regions non-permeable to the fluid.

2. Claims: 3, 21

Device as in claim 1 or method as in claim 20. Said screen means further being surrounded by frame means peripherally containing the granular material.

3. Claim : 4

Device as in claim 1. Said screen means further being arranged in the form of an endless belt.

4. Claim : 5 to 9

Device as in claim 1. Said screen means further communicating with chamber means containing the fluid.

5. Claim : 10 to 14

Device as in claim 1. Additionally a support belt for supporting the granular material.

6. Claim : 15

Device as in claim 1. Said screen means further being movable in order to be introduced in a mould suitable for forming ceramic tiles.

7. Claims: 22, 24, 25

Method as in claim 20. The acting further comprising blowing the operating fluid through the screen means.

8. Claims: 23, 24, 25

Method as in claim 20. The acting further comprising sucking the operating fluid through the screen means.



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Application Number
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The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

9. Claim : 26

Method as in claim 20. The acting further taking place while the screen means supports the granular material.

10. Claim : 27

Method as in claim 20. The acting further taking place while the screen means lies above the granular material.

11. Claims: 28, 29

Method as in claim 20. The granular material further being distributed in at least two layers.

12. Claim : 30

Method as in claim 20. The acting further comprising transferring the granular material into a mould for forming ceramic tiles.

13. Claim : 31

Method as in claim 20. The granular material further being provided with a substantially non-permeable layer.

14. Claims: 32, 35

Method for transferring granular material to a pressing station for ceramic tiles with the features according to claim 32 and, optionally, claim 35.

15. Claims: 33, 35

Method to prepare a layer of powders with features according to claims 33 and, optionally, claim 35.

16. Claims: 34, 35

Method to prepare powders with features according to claims 34 and, optionally, claim 35.

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 98 12 4583

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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24-03-1999

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