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(54) Hygienic covering element for backs of armchairs, seats and the like

(57) An hygienic covering element (1) for backs of armchairs, seats and the like is disclosed, comprising at least one covering surface (3) of the backs, which covering surface (3) is adapted to be placed onto the backs in order to provide a clean side to users of the backs, and is adapted to be removed from the backs when it is dirty in order to be cleaned or disposed of; the covering element (1) is further equipped with at least one area (9) in which it is possible to apply, print, glue or in another way attach writings, logos and other publishing or advertising material.

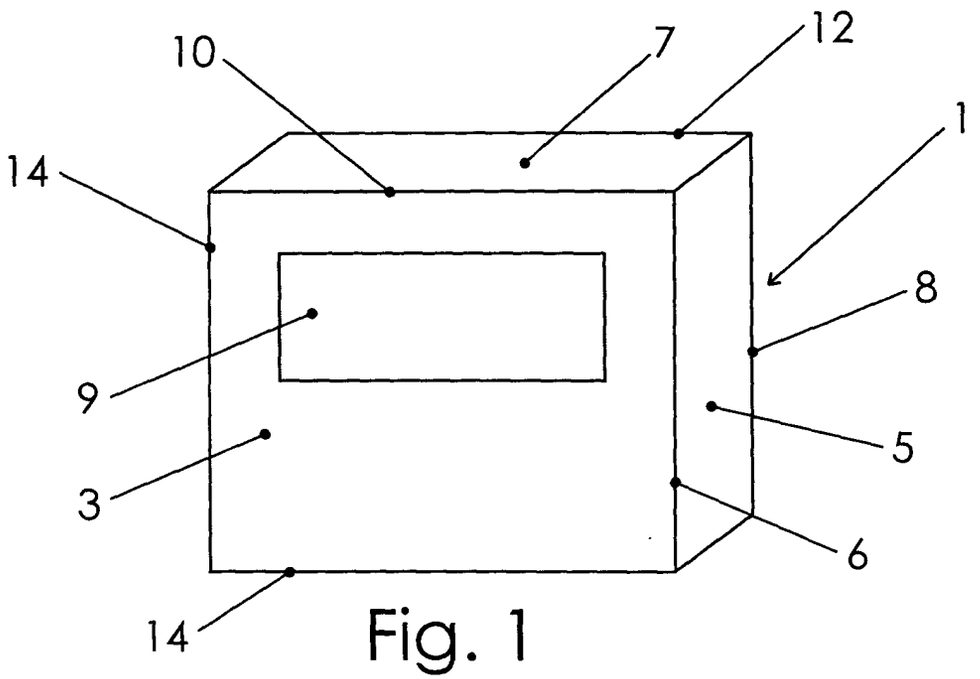

Fig. 1

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Description

[0001] The present invention refers to an hygienic covering element for backs of armchairs, seats and the like.

[0002] Covering elements are known in the art for head-rests of seats of airplanes, tourist buses, trains and the like, that are used to protect from dirt the places in which the travellers' head is placed.

[0003] However, the function of such covering elements is often lost, since they are seldom (if never) replaced, for different reasons, and sometimes also due to the material of which they are composed, that makes them in practice accessories that cannot be separated from head-rests on which they are installed.

[0004] Instead, in public places such as cinemas, theatres or night-clubs, attended by a great number of people of different origin, in which there are a great number of seats, armchairs and the like on which different types of people sit during the day, there are currently no elements that guarantee hygiene and cleaning of such seats and the like as regards new users. Since users rest onto the seat- backs both their back and their head, such seat-backs get quickly dirty and are sporadically and superficially cleaned (sometimes they are never cleaned), since this is a long, difficult and costly operation.

[0005] Among the other things, lacking such type of element that both performs an hygienic function and that provides a free and available surface on the seatback, in the above places, aesthetic or advertising resources, that could derive from the use of hygienic elements of this type, are lacking.

[0006] Object of the present invention is solving the. above prior-art problems by providing an hygienic covering element for backs of armchairs, seats and the like, that guarantees, for its users, an always clean bearing surface (for their back or head), independently from the number of people that use armchairs, seats and the like during the day.

[0007] A further object of the present invention is providing a covering element of the above-mentioned type that is easy to install and remove, that can be quickly cleaned once having removed it and therefore can be possibly re-applied onto the surface to be protected, or easily disposed of in case of a disposable application.

[0008] A further object of the present invention is providing a covering element of the above-mentioned type that can be used also for advertising and publishing purposes, being made of such a material that it allows printing thereon different types of messages. Moreover, the above-mentioned covering member can be manufactured with various types of materials, colours, perfumes and arrangements in order to be adapted to the widest needs.

[0009] The above and other objects and advantages of the invention, as will appear from the following description, are obtained by a covering element as claimed in Claim 1. Preferred embodiments and non-trivial variations of the present invention are claimed in the dependent Claims.

[0010] The present invention will be better described by some preferred embodiments thereof, given as a non-limiting example, with reference to the enclosed drawings, in which:

- Figure 1 is a front perspective view of a possible embodiment of the covering element of the present invention;
- Figure 2 is a front view of another possible embodiment of the covering element of the present invention; and
- Figure 3 is a front view of a variation of the covering element of Fig. 2.

[0011] With reference to the Figures, a preferred, but not limiting, embodiment of the covering element of the present invention is shown. Such element will be described herein below as shaped in order to be applied to backs of various types of armchairs and seats, but it is clear that it can find a valid and efficient application in any field in which it is necessary to protect surfaces from contaminating substances.

[0012] According to Figure 2, that shows a first non-limiting example of an embodiment thereof, the covering element 1 of the present invention is adapted to hygienically protect backs (not shown) of armchairs, seats and other similar seating or resting means. The covering element 1 substantially comprises at least one covering surface 3 of the backs, which covering surface 3 is adapted to be placed onto the backs in order to provide a clean side to users of the backs, and is adapted to be removed from the backs when it is dirty in order to be cleaned or disposed of.

[0013] In another non-limiting example of an embodiment shown in Fig. 1, the covering element 1 of the present invention is of a substantially parallelepiped shape, being equipped with at least five covering surfaces (of which only three are shown, 3, 5, 7) of the backs: such covering surfaces 3, 5, 7 are preferably mutually connected through elastic junctions 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, that allow more easily installing the covering element 1 on any type of back.

[0014] In particular, the covering element 1 of this type can be further equipped with elastic means 14 placed around the perimeter of its open part adapted to be placed onto the back: such elastic means 14 allow to more strictly adhere and secure the covering element 1 to the back.

[0015] As an alternative, the covering element 1 can be of a substantially hemispheric shape and be made of an elastic material in order to be able to adapt itself to different types of backs of a rounded shape, by simply placing it above the backs.

[0016] Moreover, the covering element 1 of the present invention, as shown in Fig. 2, can further com-

prises at least one connection element 11 (for example a band of Velcro® or like elements) adapted to cooperate with a corresponding connection element (for example a band of Velcro® or like elements) of the back in order to connect the covering element 1 to the back itself.

[0017] As shown in a variation in Fig. 3, the covering element 1 can be further equipped with a plurality of connection elements 13 adapted to cooperate with corresponding connection elements with which the seat is equipped to connect the covering element 1 to the back itself. In Fig. 3, the connection elements 13 are composed of four snap-clips placed on four corners of the covering element 1 and of the back, but obviously similar arrangements could be provided that perform the same function.

[0018] With a covering element 1 of the above-mentioned type, in addition to its hygienic function, other complementary and side functions are also possible, that make it a more appealing and desired product also in other fields, such as for example the advertising or publishing fields. For such purpose, for example, the covering element 1 can be made of perfumed material, in order to make it more pleasant when it is installed, or in order to advertise a brand of perfume and the like.

[0019] Also for advertising purposes, the covering element 1, given its nature and the material of which it is composed (for example elastic unwoven fabric, elastic paper or another type of soft, light and thin material), can be further equipped with at least one area 9 in which it is possible to apply, print, glue or in other ways attach writings, logos and other publishing or advertising materials.

[0020] Moreover, the covering element 1 can be equipped (on its front, back or sides) with at least one transparent pocket (not shown) in which it is possible to place writings, logos or other publishing or advertising materials, and then remove them when their advertising period is over and they have to be replaced with new ones.

[0021] The above-described covering elements 1 can be installed in various ways, for example through suitable operators that are responsible for their periodical replacement in the various public places in which they are employed, or by giving them to spectators or users together with their purchased entrance ticket, and the like. Similarly, such covering elements 1 can then be removed from the operators that had installed them, in order to be then cleaned, washed and disinfected for a new use, or to be disposed of, burnt or in another way discarded. Or the users themselves could remove the covering elements 1 by depositing them into suitable vessels or by removing them in case the advertising messages contained therein could be interesting for them.

Claims

1. Hygienic covering element (1) for backs of armchairs, seats and the like, **characterised in that** it comprises at least one covering surface (3) of the backs, said covering surface (3) being adapted to be placed onto said backs in order to provide a clean side to users of the backs, and being adapted to be removed from said backs when it is dirty in order to be cleaned or disposed of, said covering element (1) being further equipped with at least one area (9) in which it is possible to apply, print, glue or in another way attach writings, logos and other publishing or advertising material.

2. Covering element (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** it is of a substantially parallelepiped shape, being equipped with at least five covering surfaces (3, 5, 7) of said backs, said covering surfaces (3, 5, 7) being mutually connected through elastic junctions (6, 8, 10, 12, 14).

3. Covering element (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** it is further equipped with elastic means (14) placed around the perimeter of its open part adapted to be placed onto the back, said elastic means (14) allowing to more strictly adhere and secure the covering element (1) to the back.

4. Covering element (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** it is of a substantially hemispheric shape and it is made of an elastic material in order to be able to adapt itself to different types of backs.

5. Covering element (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** it further comprises at least one connection element (11) adapted to cooperate with a corresponding connection element of the back in order to connect the covering element (1) to the back itself.

6. Covering element (1) according to claim 5, **characterised in that** said connection element (11) is composed of a band of Velcro®.

7. Covering element (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** it is further equipped with a plurality of connection elements (13) adapted to cooperate with corresponding connection elements with which said seat is equipped to connect the covering element (1) to the back itself.

8. Covering element (1) according to claim 7, **characterised in that** said connection elements (13) are composed of four snap-clips placed on four corners of the covering element (1) and of the back.

9. Covering element (1) according to any one of the

previous claims, **characterised in that** it is made of perfumed material.

10. Covering element (1) according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** it is equipped with at least one transparent pocket in which it is possible to place and remove writings, logos or other publishing or advertising materials.

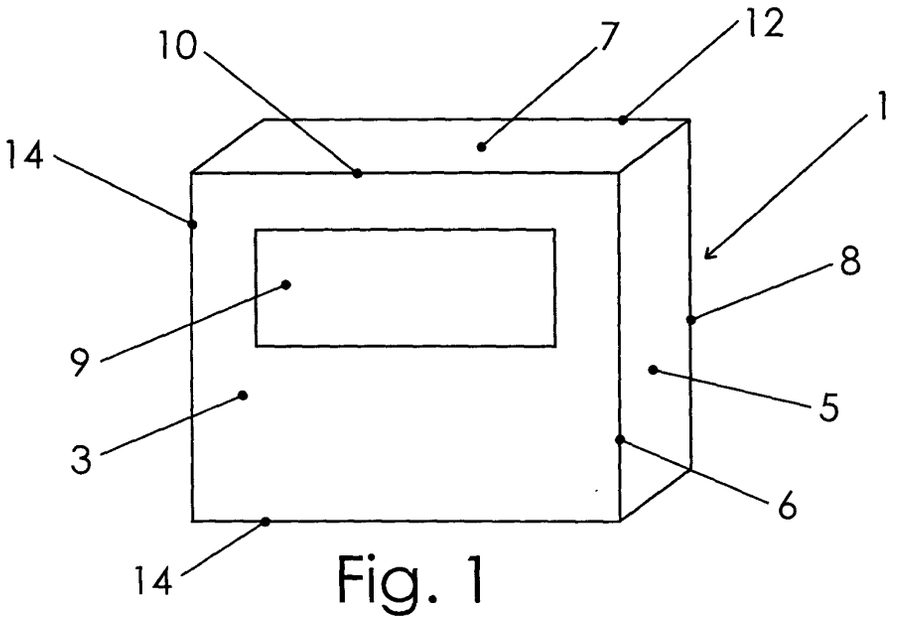

Fig. 1

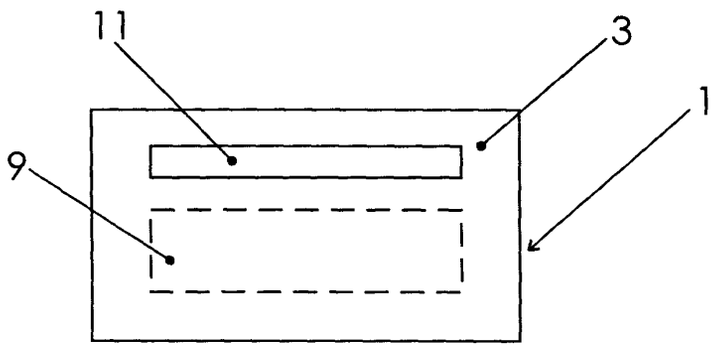

Fig. 2

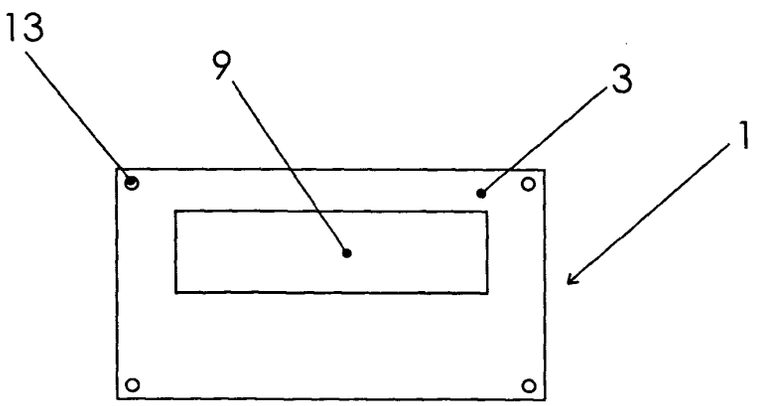

Fig. 3

European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 03 42 5797

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A	* paragraphs [0033],[0034] * ---	2-4	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE	18 May 2004	Kus, S

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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