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(54) **Seating furniture**

(57) An item of seating furniture provided with a basic element (1) having a substantially horizontally extending seating part (3) and a backrest (5) extending therefrom in height direction, and at least one armrest (19, 21) connectable with one of first and second opposite sides of the basic element (1). In this seating furniture element,

the basic element (1) is provided with a supporting support construction (11, 13) on which the at least one armrest (19, 21) with a recess (33) can be removably slid. A combination of an item of seating furniture with exchangeable armrests (19, 21) and a holder (51) for storing and presenting extra exchangeable armrests (19A-C, 21D-G) is also part of the invention.

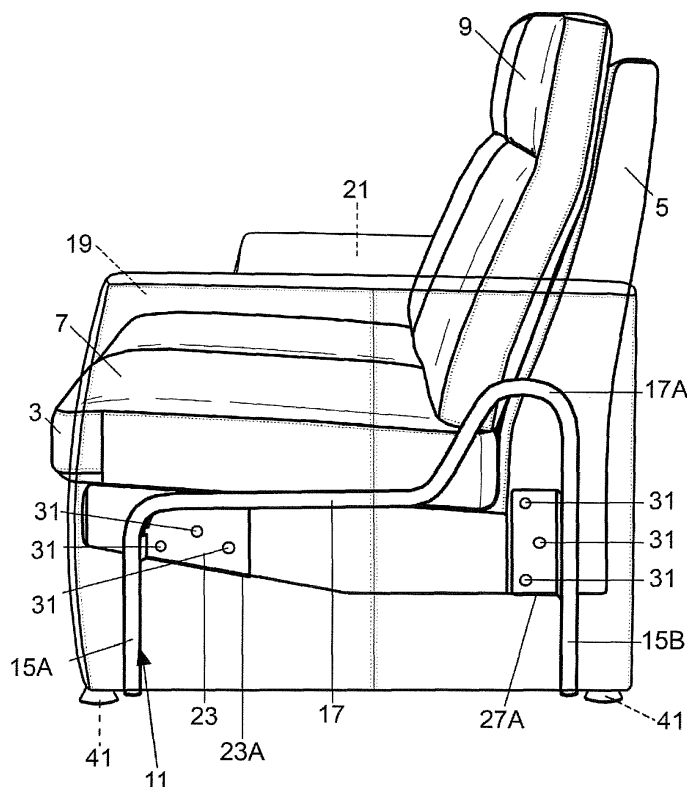


FIG. 6

Description

[0001] The invention relates to seating furniture concepts. More particularly, the invention relates to items of seating furniture that are simple to alter into a different style or appearance by exchanging elements. The emphasis of the invention is in particular on demonstration seating furniture for use in retailer showrooms.

[0002] Heretofore proposals have been made to vary appearance and form of seating furniture items by exchanging or variously combining elements. In a proposal according to the American patent publication US3414912, the end user can choose from a number of styles for an armrest. Due to the dominant decoration chosen, the variation in style is small and the number of loose parts is very large. This system is exclusively intended to enable an alteration to be made by a skilled worker, at the end user's home and at his request. Due to the required skill and the time consuming operations that are needed to carry out such an alteration, this known concept is insufficiently suitable for showroom use. Another proposal according to the American patent publication US5775778 concerns an item of seating furniture for the do-it-yourself market, where loose elements can be combined in different ways to obtain mutually different models. The idea behind this proposal is that the consumer himself assembles a basic model and can adapt this to the current fashion at a later time by additional purchase of accessories or replacement elements. Due to the comparative complexity of the construction and the capriciousness of fashion and public taste, it is no wonder that this modular system also has found little acceptance in the furniture industry. Nor has this previous proposal come into vogue for showroom use.

[0003] The form and style of diverse seating furniture, such as multiple seat couches, corner seats, sofas, lounge chairs, or chairs that are equipped with armrests or elbow-rests, is determined to an important extent by the form of these armrests and elbow-rests. Using this phenomenon, the seating furniture collections of individual suppliers are often composed of combinations of a common seating portion, which is then combined with a variety of armrests, to thereby allow a choice of models to be offered. These furniture items are as a rule not intended for assembly by the end user, or the retailer. On the other hand, the use of a common or uniform seating portion in manufacture does allow a certain degree of standardization and simplification to be achieved. Nonetheless, with this the efforts in stock-keeping, but especially also regarding the necessary display space in furniture showrooms, have remained as large as ever.

[0004] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to eliminate or ameliorate at least one of the disadvantages of the prior art. It is also an object of the present invention to provide alternative solutions that can be implemented in a simpler manner and moreover can be made comparatively inexpensively. Alternatively, it is an object of the invention to provide to the public an at least

useful option. More particularly, it is an object of the invention to provide an item of seating furniture for showroom use with exchangeable armrest elements. Also, it is an object of the invention to provide a combination of such an item of seating furniture and a holder for keeping and displaying a selection of different armrest elements. The seating furniture item that is to be delivered to the end user after a selection has been made can subsequently be manufactured with the selected armrests in one piece, which results in a lower end price for the consumer.

[0005] To this end, the invention provides an item of seating furniture with exchangeable armrests and a combination of an item of seating furniture and a holder for exchangeable armrests, as defined in one or more of the appended claims. All this in accordance with and as described in detail in the description of the drawings hereinbelow, in which:

Fig. 1 shows an item of seating furniture according to the invention without armrests arranged thereon; Fig. 2 shows the seating furniture item from Fig. 1, but now provided with armrests;

Fig. 3 shows an enlarged detail of a support construction for the seating portion of the seating furniture item from Figs. 1 and 2;

Fig. 4 shows an armrest for use in combination with the seating furniture item according to the invention, shown from the inside;

Fig. 5 shows the armrest from Fig. 4 viewed from below;

Fig. 6 shows in a transparent representation how the armrests are mounted over the support construction;

Fig. 7 shows a presentation standard for organized storage and presentation of alternative armrests;

Fig. 8 shows another variant of an armrest for use in combination with the seating furniture item according to the invention, shown from the inside;

Fig. 9 shows a detail of the armrest variant from Fig. 8;

Fig. 10 shows a presentation rack for armrest variants as shown in Fig. 8;

Fig. 11 is a partial view in perspective of a different form of showroom seating furniture item according to the invention, with the basic element not yet provided with an armrest as desired; and

Fig. 12 is a partial view in perspective of the construction variant from

Fig. 11, viewed from the other side and with an armrest partly slid on.

[0006] Fig. 1 shows the seating portion 1 of a two-seat couch according to the invention. The seating portion 1 forms a basic element which is provided with a substantially horizontally extending seating part 3 and a backrest 5 extending therefrom in height direction. The seating part 3 may be provided with one or more seating cushions 7 and the backrest 5 with one or more back cushions 9.

Further, the seating portion 1 is equipped on a first side thereof with a first support construction 11 and on a second side thereof with a second support construction 13. The first and second support constructions 11, 13 are each provided with two respective front and rear legs 15A, 15B by which the seating portion is supported on the floor and further with a bracket part 17, extending in height direction at some distance laterally of the seating part 3 and the backrest 5.

[0007] Fig. 2 shows the two-seater couch from Fig. 1 with first and second armrests 19, 21 arranged over the support construction. For a further discussion of the support construction, reference is made to the detailed representation of the first support construction 11 in Fig. 3. The support construction 11 is provided, at the top of the front leg 15A, with a front mounting plate 23, which together with a front spacer 25 is attached to the upper part of the front leg 15A. Similarly, also the rear leg 15B is provided at its upper part with a rear mounting plate 27, which together with a rear spacer 29 is attached to that rear leg 15B. The rear mounting plate 27 is preferably higher than the first mounting plate 23. As a result, the rear mounting plate 27 extends into the proximity of the backrest 5, which is beneficial to the sturdiness of the entity. Both the front mounting plate 23 and the rear mounting plate 27 are fastened with a suitable number of screws 31 both to the seating part 3 and to the backrest 5. The screws 31 can be wood screws, but can also be screws or bolts that cooperate with press-in and screw-in nuts for wood. The front and rear spacers 25, 29 ensure that the legs 15A, 15B and the bracket part 17 remain at some distance from the sides of the basic seating element formed by the seating portion 3 and the backrest 5. The portion of the support construction 11 that is formed by the front and rear legs 15A, 15B and the bracket part 17 can be obtained in a suitable manner from a commercial length of steel tube material. The mounting plates 23, 27, with their spacers 25, 29, may be formed from sheet steel material and be welded to the tube material. Such a construction, when attached to the seating portion 1, is very stable. It goes without saying that the support constructions 11, 13, when desired, may also be in wood or other suitable material. It is possible, for instance, that the bracket-shaped support constructions are of square metal or rectangular. The metal used can be iron, steel, or aluminum, and the dimension in cross section may be considerably thinner or thicker. Instead of hollow tube, use can also be made of a completely solid plate of multiplex, unlaminated wood, plastic or aluminum. In the just-discussed metal construction, it may be of further advantage when the front and rear mounting plates 23, 27 are further provided with front and rear flanges 23A, 27A extending under the seating part 3. With these, the transverse load on the screws 31 can be appreciably reduced. As the embodiment described shows, the bracket part 17 can be provided in the proximity of the backrest 5 with a raised portion 17A. Clearly it is also possible for the bracket part 17 that extends

between a front leg 15A and a rear leg 15B to be constructed with a constant height. This will become clear from the following discussion of an armrest.

[0008] Figs. 4 and 5 show the second armrest 21 from Fig. 2 detached from the basic seating element. The armrest 21 is of an upholstered type and is provided with a recess 33. The recess 33, as shown in Fig. 5, includes a front guiding groove 35 and a rear guiding groove 37. The front and rear guiding grooves 35, 37 are parallel to each other and extend, in use, in vertical direction. The horizontal distance between the front and rear guiding grooves 35, 37 corresponds to the outward horizontal distance that is defined by the front and rear legs 15A, 15B of the, in this case second, support construction 13.

[0009] The recess 33 further has a receding upper edge 39 behind which an upper part 33A of the recess 33 extends. This upper portion 33A is represented in Figs. 4 and 5 with a dotted line. As can be seen, the upper extension 33A of the recess 33 is adapted in shape to the bracket part 17 with which it can cooperate. It is further visible in Figs. 4 and 5 that the armrest may be provided with leg elements 41 such as they are also indicated in Fig. 2. In the variant described of the item of seating furniture according to the invention, these leg elements 41 have only a more or less decorative function. This is because the variant described is actually eminently suitable for use in retailer furniture showrooms. Due to the exchangeable character of the armrests 19, 21, different variants can be shown to the consumer public. When a prospective end user has decided upon a particular armrest model, an item of seating furniture will be manufactured by the manufacturer in accordance with the selected specification and the armrests will be attached to the seating portion in a permanent manner. The support constructions 11, 13 of the showroom model are then eliminated and the leg function is taken care of entirely by the leg elements 41.

[0010] Also with the item of showroom seating furniture described here, it may be useful to have the leg elements 41 rest entirely on the floor to bear the weight of the armrests 19, 21. This creates the possibility of having the upper part 33A of the recess 33 extend with some space above the bracket part 17. It can thus be ensured that the armrest will always be in the correct position with respect to the seating portion.

[0011] For a proper positioning in a front/rear direction of the armrest 21, however, it is desirable that the front and rear grooves 35, 37 enclose the front and rear legs 15A, 15B of the support construction with as little clearance as possible.

[0012] In Fig. 6 it is additionally shown in a side elevation how the armrests 19, 21 have been slid onto the support constructions 11, 13 from above. The armrests 19, 21 are represented in transparent view with dotted contours, so that the support construction 11 remains visible in its entirety with all its associated details. In Fig. 6 the reference numerals from the preceding figures have been adopted and a further description of Fig. 6 thus

seems superfluous.

[0013] Fig. 7 shows a suitable presentation standard 51 for use in combination with the above-described showroom seating furniture item. The presentation standard 51 includes a base 53 which has a circular shape here. It goes without saying that the base 53 can also have other suitable shapes. Supported on the base 53 is a post 55, extending substantially in vertical direction. The post 55, which can have a polygonal or, when desired, also a circular shape, is provided with multiple carrying brackets 57. These carrying brackets 57 can generally be of a more or less butterfly-shaped model that, at any rate at least in part, corresponds to the recess 33 of an armrest. It goes without saying that the brackets onto which the armrests can be slid can be varied in height, width and thickness, depending on the model and product type. As shown in Fig. 7, on a part of the carrying brackets 57 a number of left and right armrests 19A-19C; 21D-21G have been slid in a random order. This setup merely serves for illustration. In showroom practice, there will be a preference for arranging a pair of matching left-hand and right-hand armrests on opposite counterparts of the carrying brackets 57. The armrests present on the presentation standard 51 can be taken off the standard as desired and be exchanged with the armrests 19, 21 of the seating portion 1, also present in the showroom, such as it can be seen in Figs. 2 and 6.

[0014] For advertisement or instruction purposes, the column-shaped presentation standard 51 may further be provided with a panel 59 for text or the like. This panel may be arranged with advantage at the upper end of the post 55. The carrying brackets 57 may be manufactured from the same steel tube material as the first and second support constructions 11, 13, but are preferably of a diameter thinner than the tubes on the couch, so that the armrests can be slid onto or taken off the carrying column somewhat more smoothly. In this way, a reliable, smooth and comfortable cooperation can be achieved with the front and rear grooves 35, 37 of the armrests (see Fig. 5).

[0015] Further, it can be seen that in the example of Fig. 7 the carrying brackets are attached to the post 55 at an angle less than 45°. Depending on the number of armrests to be stored and displayed on the presentation standard 51, the angle of the carrying brackets 57 can be chosen to be smaller. In this connection, constructions are conceivable where the angle that the carrying brackets make with the central column, relative to the horizontal, can be in the range of 0° - 45°. Possibly, an angle up to 60° is also conceivable, but this makes it less easy to slip the armrests on and off. Also, the additional gain in floor space with respect to a maximum angle of 45° is then only very minimal.

[0016] The invention can be applied to seating furniture in the broadest sense of the word, including so-called 1-seaters, 2-seaters, 2.5-seaters, 3-seaters, corner seats, dining chairs, kitchen seats and longseats. By means of a preferably metal side-construction or supporting support construction, in the form of a bracket, thus the pos-

sibility is created of mounting on and demounting from the side bracket a correspondingly adapted type of armrest without this requiring much time, practice, agility, talent, great strength or tools. To that end, the armrest is provided on the inside with a construction cooperating with the bracket, such as the recess with parallel grooves described above.

[0017] The side bracket is preferably formed as a tubular bent metal frame which by its shape ensures that the inside and the outside of the armrests can retain a form they will also have in the product to be delivered to the end user. This also applies to the front and back sides of the armrests. In that way it is possible to vary infinitely, while the construction on the inside of the armrest ensures that the armrest cannot make any sideward movement, and also not any forward or rearward movement. The construction thereby is very stable and enables simple placement and removal of the armrests. The construction arranges for a basic seating furniture model to be supported by a tubular metal frame, by which the seating element is carried and supported. The metal frame also forms the construction for the exchangeable armrest.

[0018] The attachment construction described here possibly lends itself also for an item of seating furniture with a backrest to be rendered exchangeable.

[0019] In addition the invention provides a facility with which five, six, seven or at most eight pairs of left and right armrests (hence twice the number mentioned) can be displayed and stored opposite each other in a manner that the display is both sales-promoting and space-saving, while this manner of storage prevents disorder around the showroom models that are exchangeable.

[0020] The holder for the different armrest models includes, for example, a rectangular, circular, or square base which, depending on the wishes of a specific group of retailers for which it is made, can have a vertical post of metal or wood. This vertical post may be octagonal, circular, rectangular or square in shape and may be equipped with preferably butterfly-shaped brackets forming the holders for a smooth cooperation with the inside of the armrests. As a result, the armrests are well supported, more specifically in such a manner that the underside of the armrest does not get damaged against the post. The angle of the brackets with respect to the post can be varied from substantially horizontal into an angle of 45 degrees maximum, thus allowing modeling play to meet the individual wishes of different customer groups as much as possible.

[0021] In addition, this armrest column is fine-looking, marketing-oriented and, partly as a result of this, sales-promoting. A further contribution to this can be made by optionally providing at the top of this column an advertising panel with an extra designation for the specific customer group for which the type of column is intended. This advertising panel can also be implemented as an electronic flatscreen display, for displaying a demonstration or instruction film.

[0022] The designs shown in Figs. 1-7 utilize armrests 19, 19A-C; 21, 21D-G of a relatively slender model. As clarified in Figs. 8-10, also thicker and heavier armrests may be part of the showroom collection.

[0023] Fig. 8 shows an armrest 119 which is of a more voluminous model than in the embodiments according to Figs. 1-7. The seating portion for which this type of armrest is used may be identical to the model that is described in Fig. 1. Also, it is possible to proportionally give the bracket part 17 a greater distance from the seating part 3 through altered front and rear spacers 25, 29. It will be clear that also the shape and dimension of the front and rear mounting plates can be altered. It goes without saying that also the seating portion as such can have an altered design. Such variations are part of the invention and do not require further discussion here. What the armrest 119 differs in is the arrangement thereon of two carrying loops 143, 145, by which the armrest 119 can be lifted. Preferably, the carrying loops 143, 145 are on the inner side of the armrest 119 facing the seating portion. This provides the advantage that upon placement of the armrest the carrying loops 143, 145 can be put away between the seating cushions and the back cushions for a better presentation. Further, also the armrest 119 is again provided with a recess 133 with a receding upper edge 139 for cooperation with a bracket part, such as indicated with the reference numeral 17 in Figs. 1, 3 and 6. Also, the armrest 119 may be provided with leg elements 141A, 141B, which, again, are faithful copies of the leg elements with which the eventual product will be delivered to the consumer.

[0024] In Fig. 9 there is shown in more detail how the carrying loop 143 is attached to the armrest 119 with a loop fastening 147. The carrying loops 143, 145 provide an important advantage in handling armrests, such as 119, which are not only bulky, but can also be considerably heavier than the somewhat lighter models according to Figs. 2 and 4-7. As can be seen in Fig. 10, it may also be desirable to store the bulkier and heavier armrest models in an adapted type of presentation rack 151. The presentation rack 151 includes in the embodiment shown a circumferential framework 161, a bottom platform 163 and a level platform 165. Both the bottom platform 163 and the level platform 165 are configured to support a number of armrest variants 119A, 119B, 121C thereon. In the example, a total of twelve armrests can be stored, but according to need the presentation rack 151 can also be configured for more or fewer armrests. The armrests 119A, 119B, 121C placed in the presentation rack 151 are separated from each other by diagonal bars 167 and held upright when the presentation rack 151 is not completely filled. Also having regard to the greater weight of the armrests for which the presentation rack 151 is configured, it may be advantageous to provide the rack with castors 169, allowing it to be displaced more easily. Further, also the presentation rack 151 may again be provided with advertising texts, as indicated with the reference numeral 159.

[0025] In Figs. 11 and 12 a variant of the invention is shown that lends itself in particular for items of seating furniture in which the backrest and the back cushions extend over the armrests. As shown in Figs. 11 and 12, the basic element 201 of this seating furniture item has a seating part 203 and a backrest 205. The seating part 203 is provided with a seating cushion 207 and the backrest 205 is provided with a back cushion 209. The back cushion 209 extends by the full width thereof over the armrest 221 and is provided with a recess 209A at the armrest 221. With seating furniture items of such a model it is less practical and partly even impossible to slide on the armrests from above. To this end, in the variant according to Figs. 11 and 12, a support construction 213 is arranged which enables the armrest 221 to be slid on in horizontal direction. The support construction 213 is formed as a tubular element, of which at least an upper section 213A and a lower section 213B are arranged horizontally and parallel to each other. The lower and upper sections 213A and 213B can be part of a support construction 213 bent in a U-shape or, as shown in Fig. 11, in a closed rectangular shape.

[0026] As in the constructions described above, the support construction 213 is again attached to the seating part 203 and to a side of the backrest 205 by means of a front mounting plate 223 and a rear mounting plate 227. The front mounting plate 223 is connected with the support bracket 213 by means of front spacers 225A, 225B. Similarly, also the rear mounting plate 227 is connected with the support bracket 213 by means of rear spacers 229A, 229B. In the construction shown in Figs. 11 and 12, it has been chosen to keep the lower section 213B of the support bracket 213 clear of the floor. This has been achieved by fastening a separate front leg 215A at the bottom of the front mounting plate 223 and a rear leg 215B under the rear mounting plate 227. The advantage thereby achieved is that also on the lower part of the armrest 221 a guide can be arranged, cooperating with the lower section 213B of the support bracket 213. In any case, when sliding on the armrest 221, it is guided by an upper edge 239 of a recess 233 on the upper section 213A of the support bracket 213. The armrest can also, as shown in Fig. 12, be provided with front and rear leg elements 241A, 241B, which need to be functional only to a limited extent but imitate as closely as possible the model of the couch and armrest combination that is to be represented by the showroom model. Of course, the leg elements 241A, 241B can help carry the weight of the armrest 221. Further, the backrest 205 may be provided with a stop edge 270 against which the rear end of the armrest comes to abut by a recess 271 thereof. As a result, with an armrest 221 fitted, the slide-on construction can be wholly concealed from view. The stop edge 270 can also be used to limit the slide-on depth of the armrest 221. It goes without saying that the slide-on depth, if desired, can also be limited through a suitable tailoring of the support bracket 213 and the recess 233 in the armrest 221. Owing to the armrest 221 being slid

on horizontally in the embodiment according to Figs. 11 and 12, the armrest 221 can extend into the recess 209A of the back cushion 209.

[0027] The system can, as mentioned, be applied to dining chairs, lounge chairs, 2-seaters, 2.5-seaters, 3-seaters, corner seats, kitchen seats and longseats both with right angle and with rounded angle, while the type of seating furniture, whether classic, semiclassic, modern or fluffy, does not play any role. The system could also be used with advantage for making backrests exchangeable.

[0028] It is believed that the construction and the operation of the present invention are readily apparent from the foregoing description. The invention is not limited to any embodiment described herein and, within the ability of those skilled in the art, alterations are possible which are to be understood to be within the scope of the protection. In particular, the invention offers an important saving of space in showrooms and shops of furniture sellers. More particularly, the inventive idea is not limited to showroom furniture or presentation systems therefor. It is entirely conceivable that the concept can also find application in seating furniture items delivered to the end user in this form. This can provide advantages in stocking the armrests on the one hand and the possibly standardized seating portions on the other. Similar considerations also hold for a variant with an exchangeable backrest. Also, it can provide to the end user selection and varying possibilities that the conventional seating furniture items do not offer.

[0029] Further, all kinematic inversions are understood to be within the scope of protection of the present invention. Expressions such as "consisting of", when used in this description or the appended claims, should be construed not as an exhaustive enumeration but rather in an inclusive sense. Expressions such as: "means for ..." should be read as: "component configured for ..." or "member constructed to ..." and should be construed to cover all equivalents of the structures described. The use of expressions such as: "critical", "advantageous", "desired", et cetera, is not intended to limit the invention. Moreover, also features that are not specifically or expressly described or claimed may be included in the construction according to the present invention without departing from the scope of protection.

Claims

1. An item of seating furniture comprising:

a basic element having a substantially horizontally extending seating part and a backrest extending therefrom in height direction; and
at least one armrest connectable with one of first and second opposite sides of the basic element, wherein the basic element is provided with a

supporting support construction onto which the at least one armrest having a recess can be removably slid.

2. An item of seating furniture according to claim 1, wherein the item of seating furniture belongs to a category comprising multiple seat couches, corner seats, sofas, lounge chairs, kitchen couches, longseats and chairs.
3. An item of seating furniture according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the item of seating furniture is exclusively for showroom use.
4. An item of seating furniture according to claim 1, 2, or 3, wherein the supporting support construction is formed by a first support construction on a first side of the basic element and a second support construction on a second side of the basic element.
5. An item of seating furniture according to claim 4, wherein each of the first and second support constructions includes a substantially tubular element, which is bent in a U-shape, such that the legs of the U-shape form downwardly directed front and rear legs and the base of the U-shape forms an upwardly directed bracket part to be received within the recess of the exchangeable armrest, which can be removably slid on from above.
6. An item of seating furniture according to claim 4 or 5, wherein each of the first and second support constructions is provided with a front mounting plate and a rear mounting plate, which are attached to the respective opposite sides of the basic element, and/or wherein the front and rear mounting plates are each connected through a spacer to the support construction of which it forms part and/or wherein at least one of the front and rear mounting plates is provided with a bent-over flange extending under the seating part.
7. An item of seating furniture according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the recess in the at least one armrest includes mutually parallel front and rear grooves, for receiving the support construction therein-between.
8. An item of seating furniture according to claim 4, wherein each of the first and second support constructions is provided with a substantially tubular element, which is bent in a U-shape, such that the legs of the U-shape are directed rearwards, so that the exchangeable armrest can be removably slid on from the front and wherein each of the first and second support constructions is provided with a front mounting plate and a rear mounting plate, attached to the respective opposite sides of the basic element, which front and rear mounting plates are each pro-

vided with a leg attached thereto.

9. An item of seating furniture according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the at least one armrest is provided with a carrying loop. 5
10. A combination of an item of seating furniture with exchangeable armrests and a holder for storing and presenting extra exchangeable armrests. 10
11. A combination according to claim 10, wherein the item of seating furniture is an item of seating furniture according to any one of claims 1-11.
12. A combination according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the holder is provided with a post, supported by a base, the post having laterally projecting carrying brackets attached thereto for cooperation with a recess in each of the exchangeable armrests and/or wherein the carrying brackets are formed from tube material. 15 20
13. A combination according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the holder is supported by castors. 25
14. A combination according to claim 10, 11, or 13, wherein the holder is provided with a framework and a supporting platform defining a space for placing the exchangeable armrests next to each other. 30
15. An armrest for use in an item of seating furniture according to any one of claims 1-9, or for use in a combination according to any one of claims 10-14.
16. A holder for use in a combination according to any one of claims 10-14. 35

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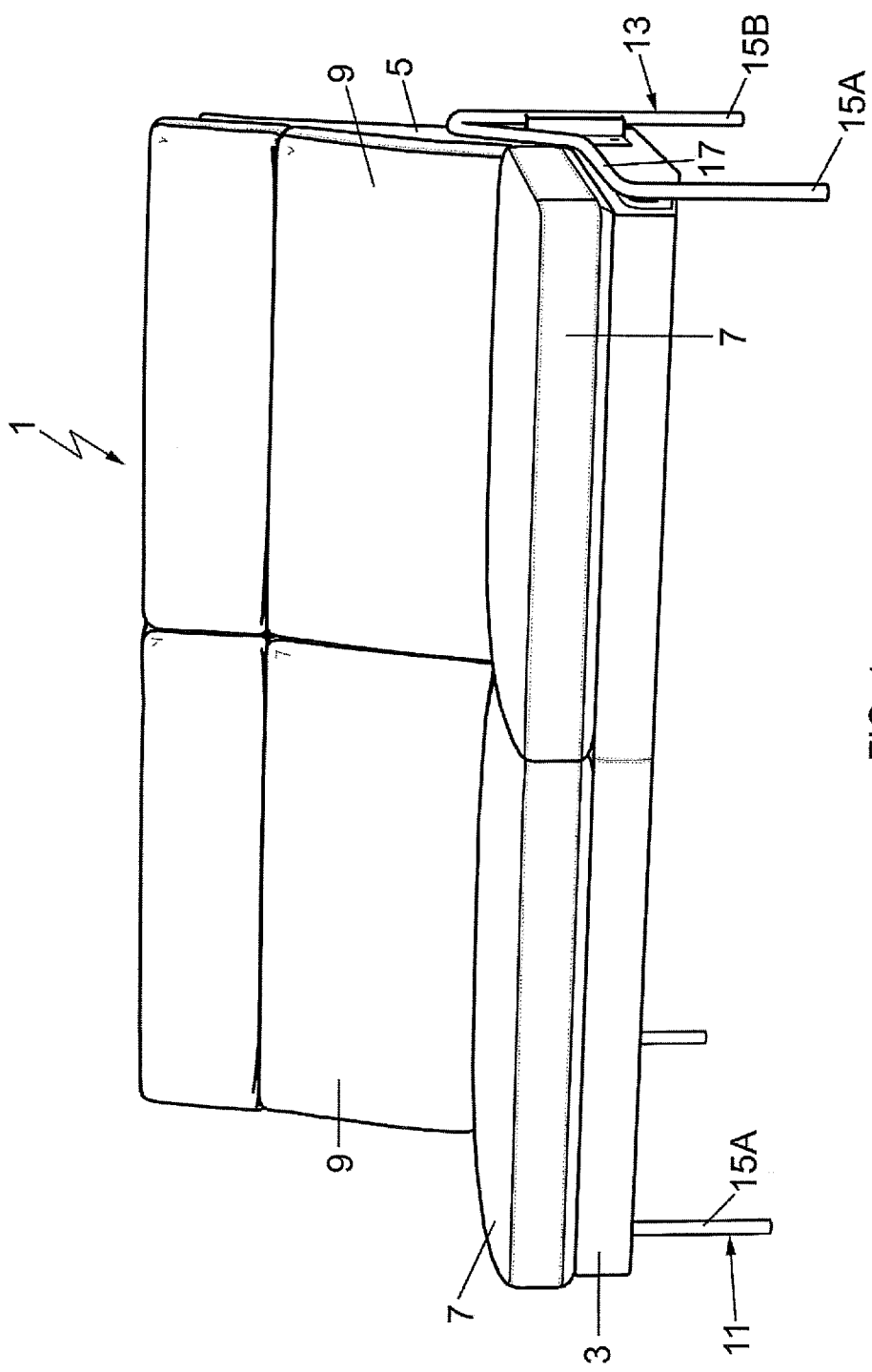


FIG. 1

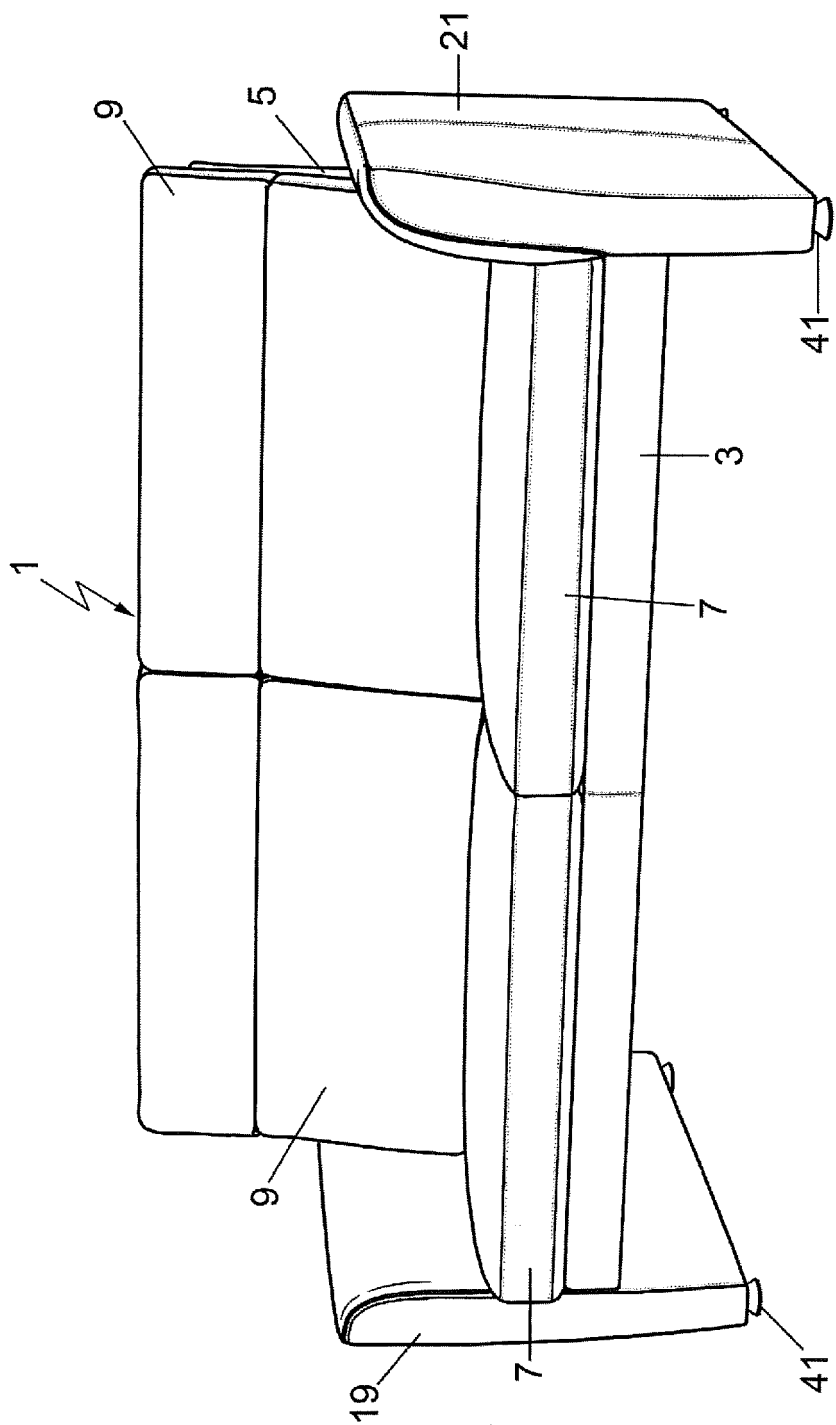


FIG.2

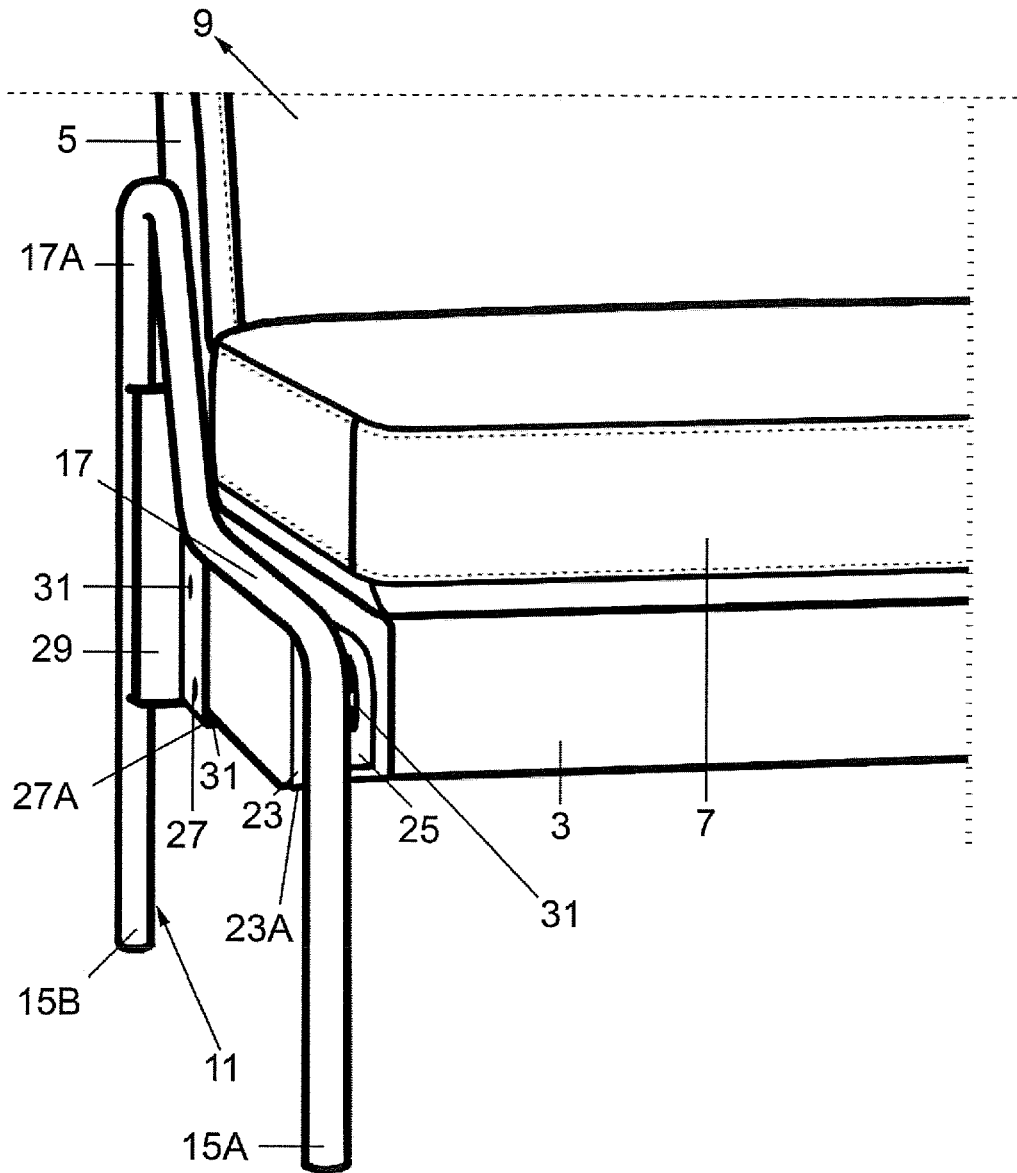


FIG. 3

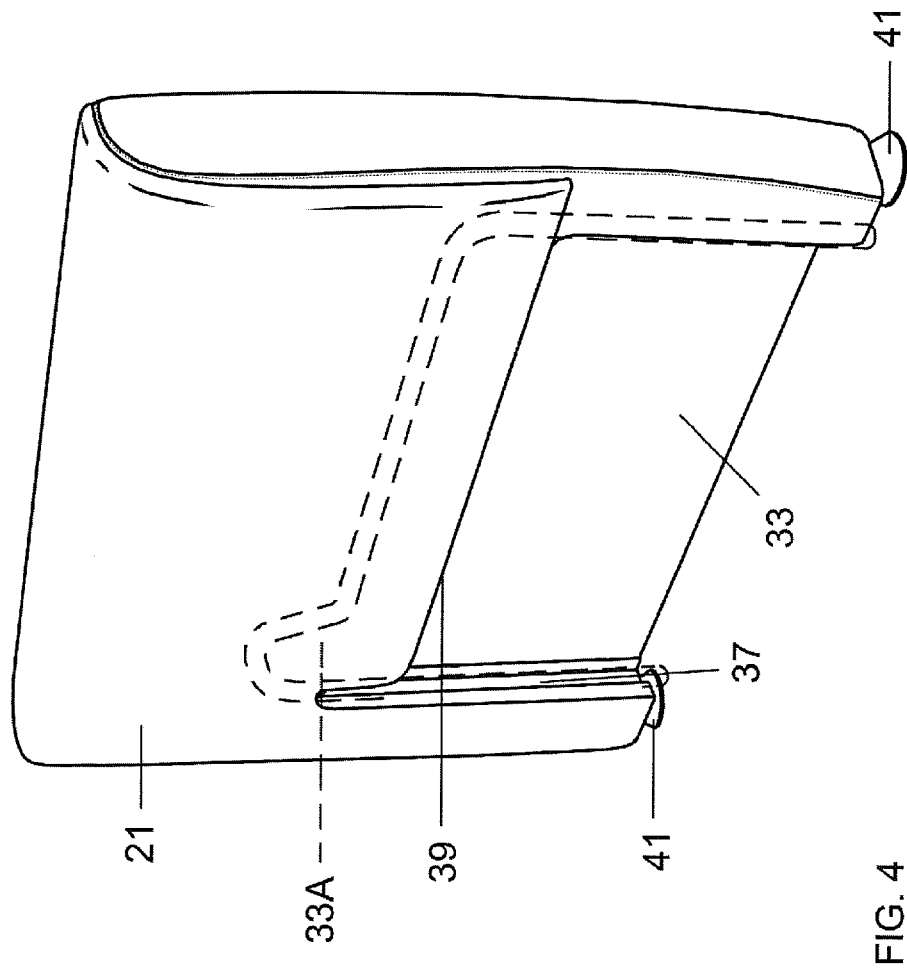
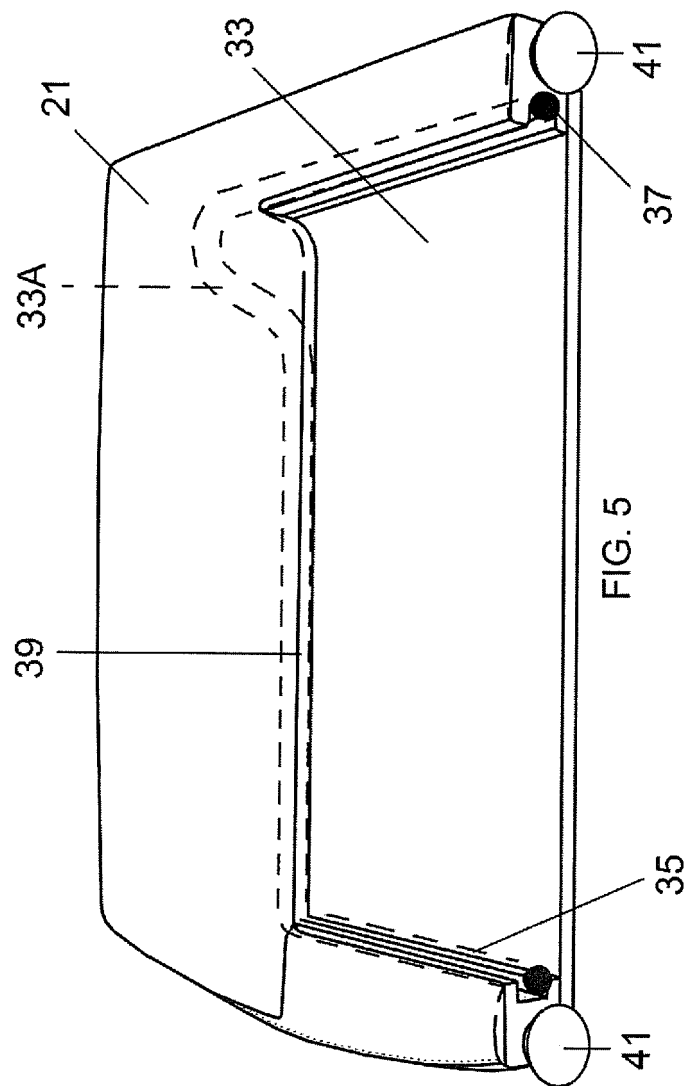


FIG. 4



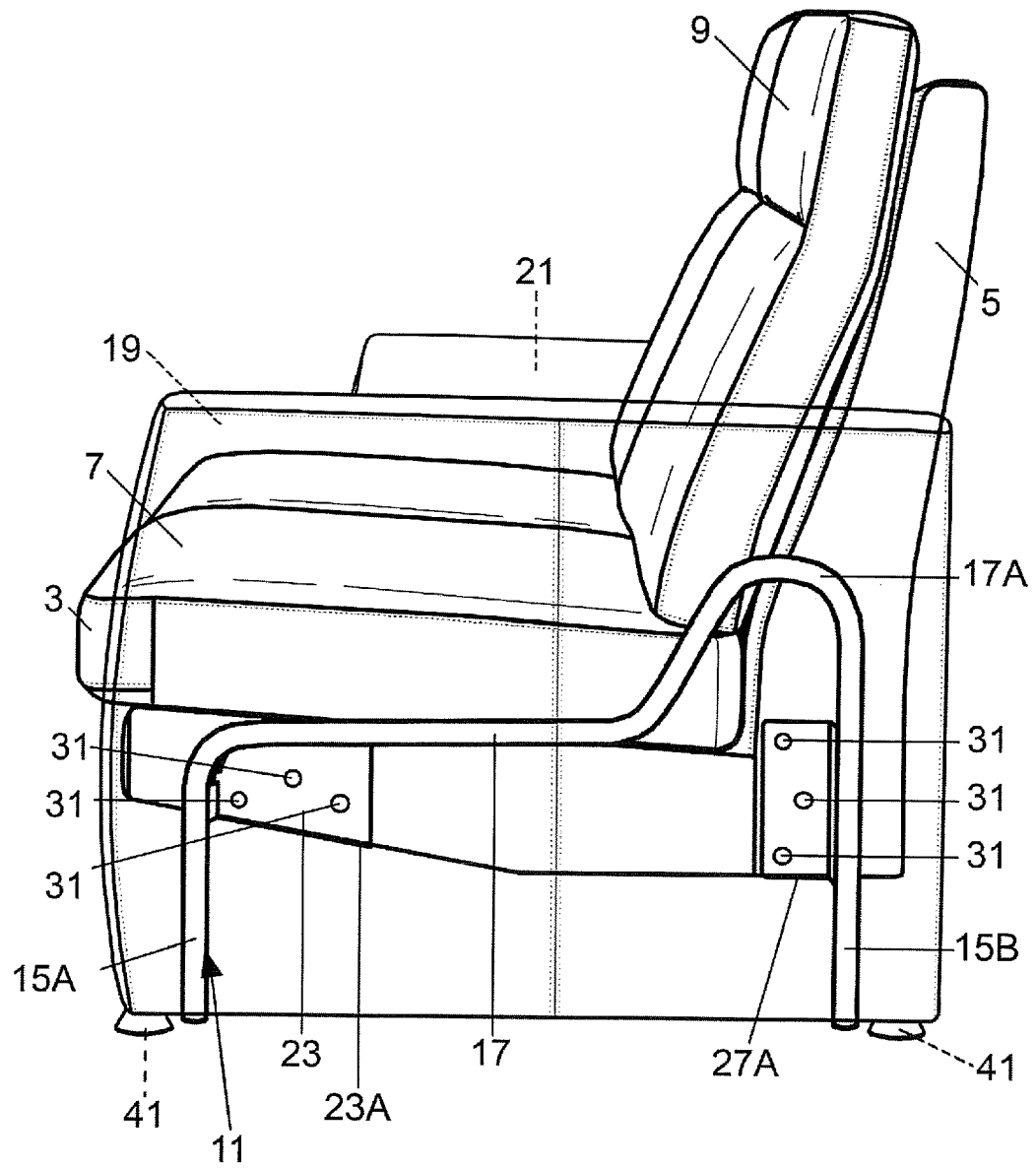
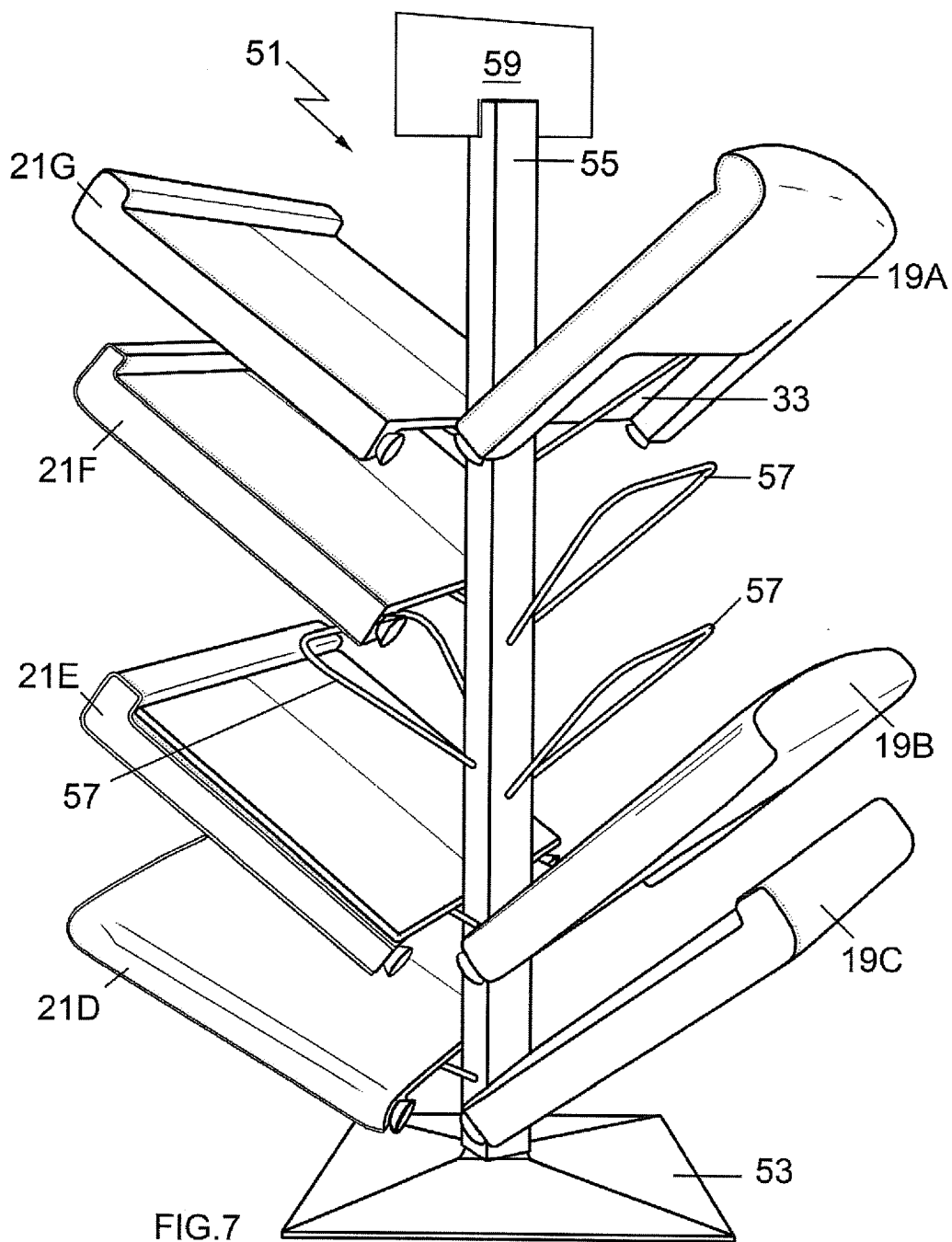
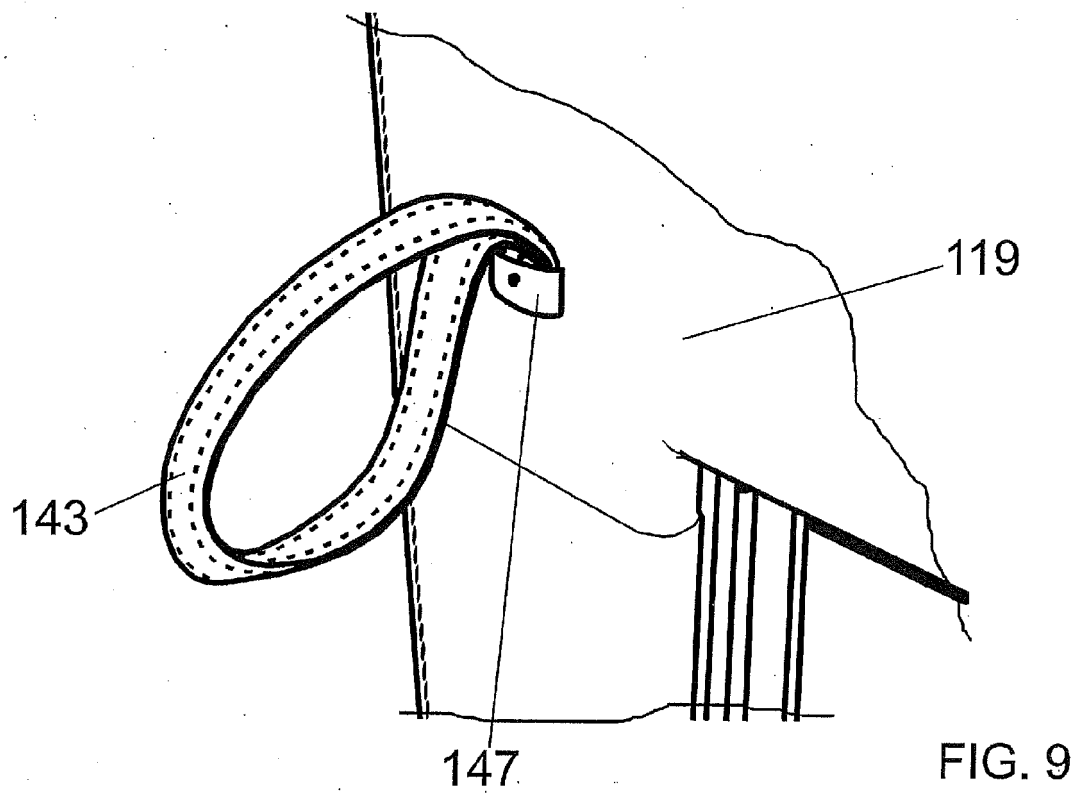
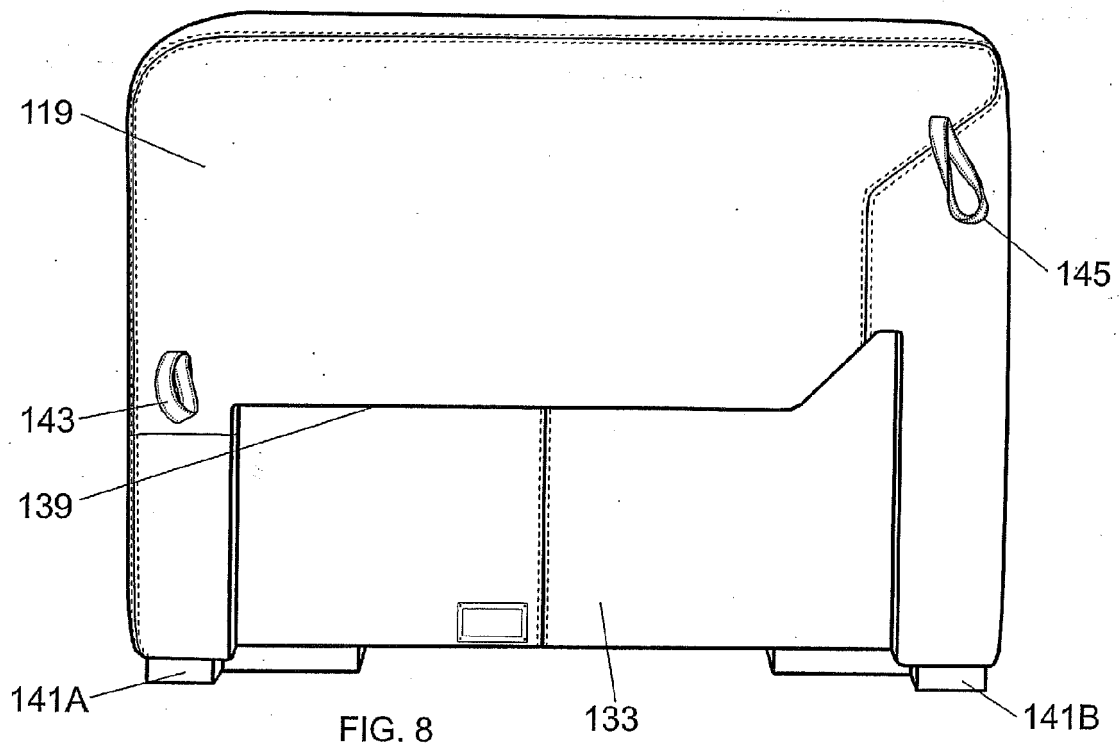


FIG. 6





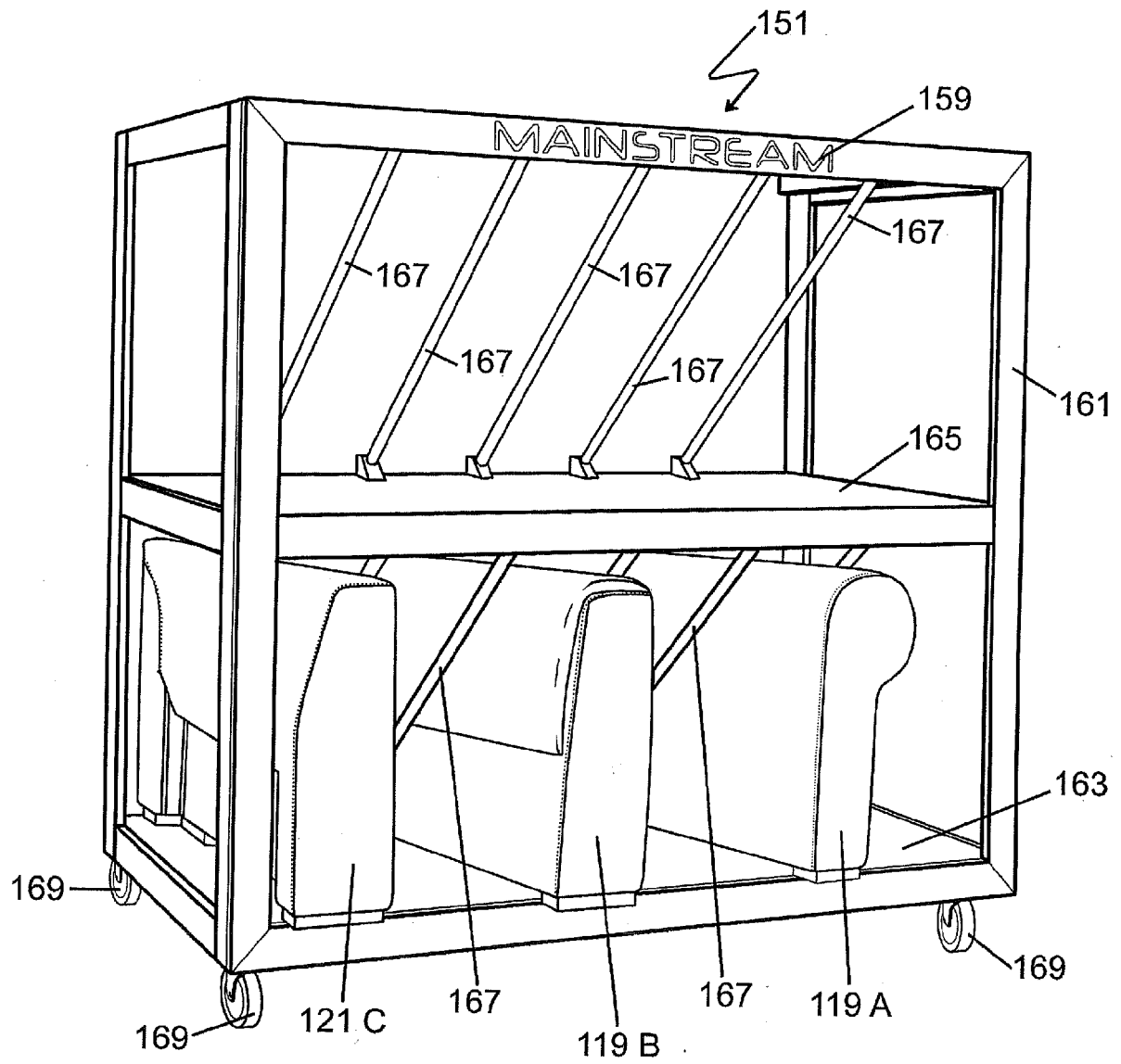


FIG. 10

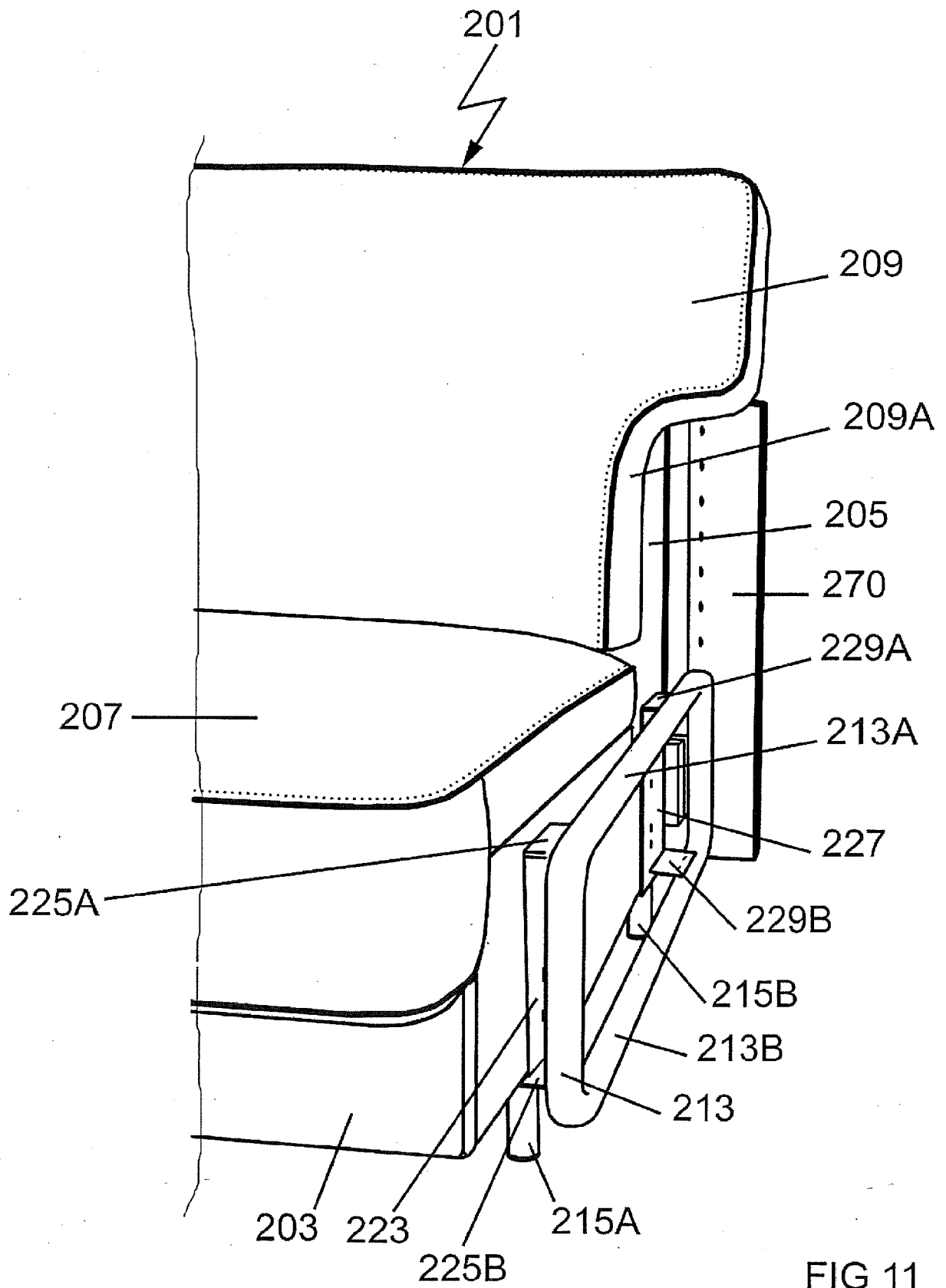


FIG 11

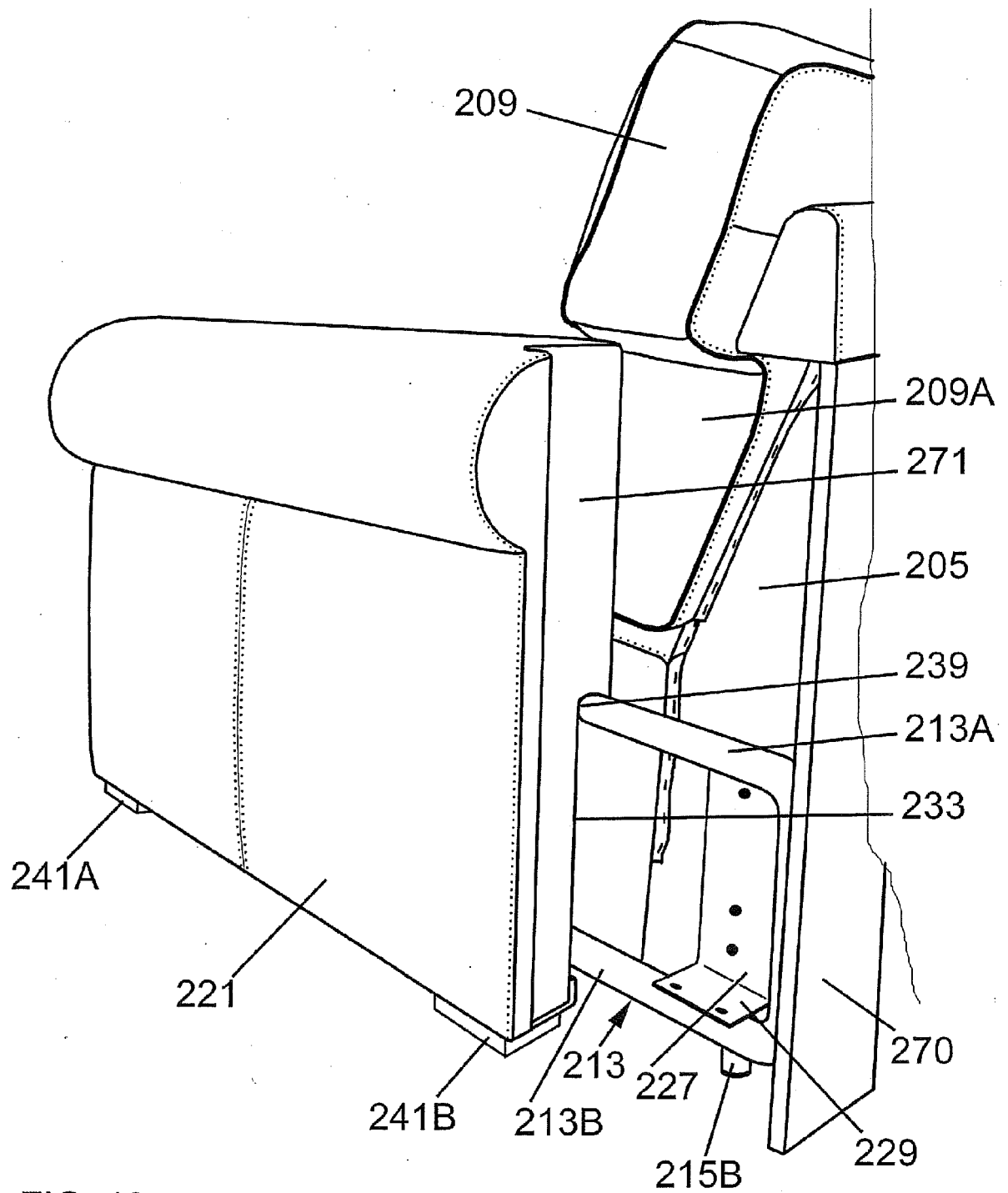


FIG. 12

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

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