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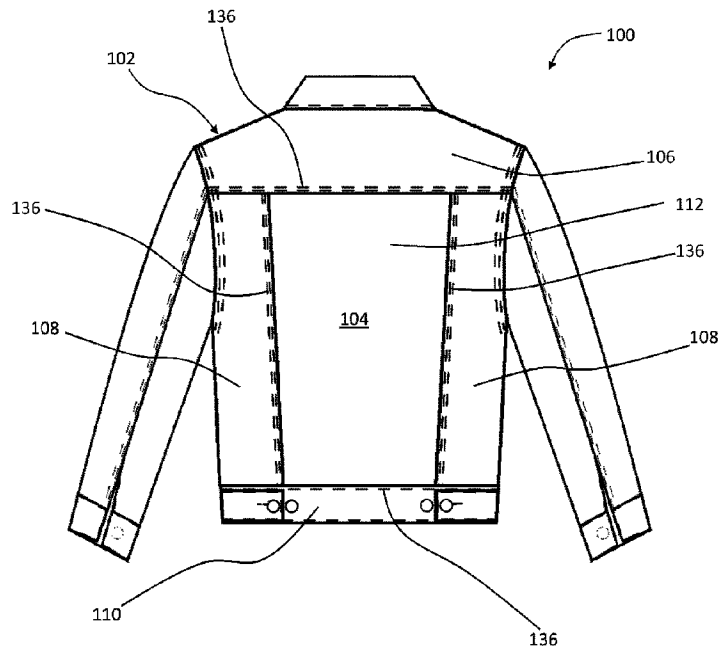
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(54) Title: ARTICLES OF CLOTHING WITH INTERCHANGEABLE PANELS



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

An article of clothing includes a base panel and an outer panel having a window defined therein and joined to the base panel to define a peripheral flap extending about the window. The peripheral flap has an outer flap portion that extends interiorly into the window and an inner flap portion that depends from the outer flap portion and carries parts of first and second attachment mechanisms. The part of the first attachment mechanism is configured for attachment to a corresponding part positioned at a periphery of an interchangeable panel shaped so as to be received into the window when attached to the outer panel. The part of the second attachment mechanism holds the peripheral flap flat against the interchangeable panel through attachment to a corresponding part positioned on a face of the interchangeable panel interiorly of the corresponding part of the first attachment mechanism.



ABSTRACT

An article of clothing includes a base panel and an outer panel having a window defined therein and joined to the base panel to define a peripheral flap extending about the window. The peripheral flap has an outer flap portion that extends interiorly into the window and an inner flap portion that depends from the outer flap portion and carries parts of first and second attachment mechanisms. The part of the first attachment mechanism is configured for attachment to a corresponding part positioned at a periphery of an interchangeable panel shaped so as to be received into the window when attached to the outer panel. The part of the second attachment mechanism holds the peripheral flap flat against the interchangeable panel through attachment to a corresponding part positioned on a face of the interchangeable panel interiorly of the corresponding part of the first attachment mechanism.

ARTICLES OF CLOTHING WITH INTERCHANGEABLE PANELS

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to and/or the benefit of United States Provisional Patent Application No. 63/145,119 filed on February 3, 2021 and United States Provisional Patent Application No. 63/162,708 filed on March 18, 2021, both of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

FIELD

[0002] This document relates to articles of clothing. More specifically, this document relates to garments or articles of clothing provided with mechanisms that allow for interchanging of panels.

BACKGROUND

[0003] US 5,953,757 (Blanks, I) describes an article of a fabric material having an outside surface, an inside surface, and an orifice, and an affixing means on the inside surface bordering the orifice and hidden from view when one views the orifice and the outside surface. Provided in conjunction therewith is an underlying section having an imprint, pocket or pouch on one side thereof, and an affixing means on a border region of said one side, outwards of the imprint, pocket or pouch. The underlying section can be affixed to the affixing means to be visible in the orifice when one views the orifice and the outside surface. The underlying section can further have an imprint, pocket or pouch on a second side thereof, and affixing means also on a border region of this second side, outwards of the imprint, pocket or pouch on the second side. This allows either side of the underlying section to be displayable in the orifice.

[0004] US 2010/0186269 (Suprina) describes how a system optionally attaches non-reversible, interchangeable fabric, leather, vinyl or other natural or synthetic covering material logo (or advertisement, signage, or art) panels to one or more items, such as articles of furniture or personal gear including clothing, sports equipment, and memorabilia frames. The items may include upholstered or non-upholstered sports

stadium chairs or other soft-covered items such as leather jackets or golf bags without detracting from their appearance, even if the panel is removed. The panels can also be applied to vehicle seats, public furniture, office furniture, water coolers, or other domestic furniture. The attachment is inconspicuous and hidden from view. Such a logo panel can also cover an area emblazoned with a permanent different logo. These panels can be embroidered sports memorabilia with spaces for actual team member signatures or performer autographs, or they can be corporate logos or promotional advertising panels.

SUMMARY

[0005] The following summary is intended to introduce the reader to various aspects of the detailed description, but not to define or delimit any invention.

[0006] According to some aspects, an article of clothing includes a base panel, and an outer panel having a window defined therein and joined to the base panel to define a peripheral flap extending at least partly around the window. The peripheral flap carries a part of a first attachment mechanism, and the part of the first attachment mechanism is configured for attachment to a corresponding part positioned at a periphery of a panel that is shaped so as to be received within the window when attached to the outer panel. The peripheral flap carries a part of a second attachment mechanism that holds the peripheral flap flat against the panel through attachment to a corresponding part of the second attachment mechanism positioned on an outer face of the panel interiorly of the corresponding part of the first attachment mechanism.

[0007] According to some aspects, a method of fastening a panel to an article of clothing, where the article of clothing includes an outer panel that defines a window in which the panel can be accommodated, includes: a. using a first attachment mechanism, attaching a periphery of the panel to a peripheral flap of the outer panel; and b. using a second attachment mechanism, attaching the peripheral flap to an outer face of the panel interiorly of the attachment between the periphery of the interchangeable panel and the peripheral flap.

[0008] According to some aspects, a kit includes an article of clothing and at least a first interchangeable panel that detachably fastens to the article of clothing. The article of clothing includes a base panel and an outer panel having a window defined therein and joined to the base panel to define a peripheral flap extending at least partly around the window. The first panel is shaped so as to be received into the window when attached to the outer panel. The peripheral flap carries a part of a first attachment mechanism, and the part of the first attachment mechanism is configured for attachment to a corresponding part positioned at a periphery of the interchangeable panel. The peripheral flap carries a part of a second attachment mechanism that holds the peripheral flap flat against the first interchangeable panel through attachment to a corresponding part of the second attachment mechanism. The corresponding part of the second attachment mechanism is positioned on an outer face of the interchangeable panel interiorly of the corresponding part of the first attachment mechanism.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The drawings included herewith are for illustrating various examples of articles, methods, and apparatuses of the present specification and are not intended to limit the scope of what is described in any way. Throughout the present description reference will be made to the following drawings, in which:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a rear view of an example article of clothing;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a rear cutaway view of the article of clothing shown in FIG. 1, in which an outer panel is cut away to show a base panel;

[0012] FIGS. 3A and 3B are front and rear views of an interchangeable panel that can be releasably attached to the article of clothing shown in FIG. 1;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view showing the interchangeable panel of FIGS. 3A and 3B attached to the article of clothing shown in FIG. 1;

[0014] FIG. 5 is a perspective view showing the interchangeable panel of FIGS. 3A and 3B during attachment to the article of clothing shown in FIG. 1; and

[0015] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of attaching an interchangeable panel to an article of clothing according to the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] Various apparatuses or processes or compositions will be described below to provide an example of an embodiment of the claimed subject matter. No embodiment described below limits any claim and any claim may cover processes or apparatuses or compositions that differ from those described below. The claims are not limited to apparatuses or processes or compositions having all of the features of any one apparatus or process or composition described below or to features common to multiple or all of the apparatuses or processes or compositions described below. It is possible that an apparatus or process or composition described below is not an embodiment of any exclusive right granted by issuance of this patent application. Any subject matter described below and for which an exclusive right is not granted by issuance of this patent application may be the subject matter of another protective instrument, for example, a continuing patent application, and the applicants, inventors or owners do not intend to abandon, disclaim or dedicate to the public any such subject matter by its disclosure in this document.

[0017] Articles of clothing (also referred to herein as 'garments') of many different styles and varieties can be designed with imprints, patches, logos, and other artistic or ornamental design elements that are permanently placed or sewn somewhere on the body of the article or garment. While such design elements may have particular appeal to one wearer or another, one drawback experienced by some users of these items is a lack of flexibility in choice. For example, the range of choices available to the wearer may be completely determined by the clothing manufacturer, whereas the wearer may have their own ideas or preferences for design elements that cannot be realized on account of these designs not being sold. In such case, the wearer may have a choice only of whether to buy or not buy a particular design.

[0018] An additional drawback that some may experience with permanently installed design elements on clothing is that switching of designs may not be practical without the

wearer purchasing an entirely new garment or article. Having the ability to swap fabric panels in and out of an article of clothing may effectively address this additional drawback, but further challenges can still be encountered. For example, the outward appearance of an article of clothing may be negatively impacted by the use of interchangeable panels if doing so would be noticeable to an observer or would create an unnatural appearance in the clothing. Structural stability can also become an issue if the interchangeable panel is not adequately secured within the article of clothing and tends to excessively deform or even detach completely during use. Mismatches in fabric quality can also produce an uneven appearance in the garment.

[0019] Generally disclosed herein are articles of clothing that are configured to receive a panel, preferably a panel that is interchangeable with other like panels. The panel can, for example, bear artistic design elements and other ornamentation (e.g. can bear artistic design elements and can be made from the same material as the remainder of the article, so as to appear as an integral part of the article), or can be unadorned (e.g. can be unadorned and of the same material of the remainder of the article, so as blend in with the remainder of the article). The panel and the article of clothing may be made from a variety of materials, and the panel and the article of clothing may be made from the same or different materials. For example, the panel may be made from a material that supports a specific printing process (e.g. a polyester panel to support sublimation printing, or a cotton panel to support direct to garment printing). For further example, the panel may be made from a material that provides a specific look (e.g. a printed polyester panel to yield the look of a decorative back patch). The panel can alternatively include elements such as a flexible digital screen. The articles of clothing may be provided with an outer panel that defines a window that is sized generally to accommodate the panel, and that includes a peripheral flap that extends around the window (i.e. extends at least partly around the window, and preferably substantially fully around the window). The panel can fit partly tucked under the peripheral flap where a first attachment to the article of clothing can be made by way of, e.g., a clasp locker. A second attachment can additionally be formed with an upper or outward face of the interchangeable panel to hold the peripheral flap flat or generally flat against the upper or outward face of the interchangeable panel thereby

giving the article of clothing a natural appearance in some cases without it being noticeable that the article incorporates one or more panels that are interchangeable.

[0020] Notably, the first and second attachments act synergistically. That is, as will be described below with reference to Figure 5, the first and second attachments provide a “popping” mechanism, by which the first attachment “pops” up to make space for the second attachment. This provides for ease of use, while still providing a desired appearance when the article of clothing is worn.

[0021] The articles of clothing can be beneficial in various scenarios, such as for sports fans who may wish to change panels to support various teams, or in weddings, where a couple may wish to have matching custom garments (e.g. custom matching panels may be used, and then after the wedding, the panels may be framed), or in festivals, or in protests.

[0022] Referring now to the drawings, FIG. 1 shows an article of clothing 100 to which a panel 200 (shown in FIGS. 3A and 3B), e.g. a decorative fabric panel, may be removably attached (e.g. the panel 200 may be interchangeable with other panels). In some cases, article 100 may be a denim or leather jacket; however, article 100 may generally be any article of clothing made of fabric or other natural or synthetic or semi-synthetic materials and which is worn by a person, such as shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, pants, jeans, hats, shorts, and others. In some cases, article 100 may include items or articles other than clothing, e.g. backpacks, book bags, briefcases, carrier bags, purses, pencil cases, and the like.

[0023] In the embodiment shown, article 100 includes an outer panel 102 in which is defined a window 104 situated generally in the middle of outer panel 102 and having a rectangular or quasi-rectangular shape (although other shapes, size, and locations of window 104 may be possible in different embodiments). Outer panel 102 is shown in FIG. 1 for illustrative purposes only as the back outer panel of a denim or leather jacket that can be worn by a person.

[0024] Outer panel 102 may be formed out of two or more individual pieces of fabric that are stitched or otherwise attached together in such fashion as to define window 104, but in some cases may alternatively be formed of a single fabric panel in which window 104 may be cut. In the embodiment shown, outer panel 102 includes a shoulder panel 106, two side panels 108 situated on either lateral side of window 104 under shoulder panel 106, and a waist panel 110 situated generally under window 104 and side panels 108. Although sometimes formed out of multiple individual fabric pieces, shoulder panel 106, side panels 108, and waist panel 110 are collectively referred to herein as an outer panel 102.

[0025] In the embodiment shown, the outer panel includes stitch lines 136 that extend around the window (i.e. extend at least partly around the window, and preferably extend substantially fully around the window). As described in more detail below with reference to FIG. 4, stitch lines 136 can be utilized to both equip outer panel 102 with part of an attachment mechanism for panel 200, while simultaneously also preserving or minimally altering the natural appearance of article 100. As used herein, the term “natural appearance” can be understood to signify the appearance of an article of clothing that is formed only out of permanently attached fabric panels whose removal would effectively result in the destruction of the article.

[0026] FIG. 2 illustrates a cutaway view of article 100, in which outer panel 102 has been cut away to reveal a base panel 112 (also referred to as a ‘liner 112’). Base panel 112 may be a fabric panel of any natural or synthetic or semi-synthetic fibres, and may be positioned underneath outer panel 102 (not visible in FIG. 2) and attached thereto by way of stitching, adhesive or glue, or other attachments. As illustrated, base panel 112 may have the same general shape or perimeter as outer panel 102, except that no window is defined in base panel 112. In some embodiments, base panel 112 may instead be provided by one or more fabric panels of a different configuration that are fastened together.

[0027] In some embodiments, base panel 112 may be provided with stitch lines 126 that extend around the footprint or projection of window 104 in outer panel 102 onto base

panel 112. As described in more detail below with reference to FIG. 4, stitch lines 126 can be utilized to equip base panel 112 with part of another attachment mechanism for a panel 200.

[0028] FIGS. 3A and 3B illustrate an embodiment of panel 200, which may releasably attach to article 100 of FIGS. 1 and 2. Panel 200 may in general be shaped so as to be accommodated within window 104 of outer panel 102, which may in some cases be approximately rectangular or trapezoidal as shown. In some cases, panel 200 may be slightly smaller than window 104 so that panel 200 can be partially tucked under a flap (described below) of outer panel 102, where the flap extends around window 104 and encircles or substantially encircles window 104, as described in more detail below.

[0029] In some embodiments, an outer face 202 of panel 200 may be provided with an artistic or graphical design or other ornamentation that is outwardly discernible to an observer when panel 200 is attached to article 100. An underside 204 of panel 200 may generally be devoid of visual or graphical elements (as these would not be visible when panel 200 is attached to article 100), but in some embodiments such elements may likewise be included also on the underside 204 of panel 200. As mentioned above, panel 200 may alternatively include elements such as a flexible digital screen.

[0030] In some embodiments, panel 200 is provided with parts of at least two attachment mechanisms that cooperate with corresponding parts on article 100 in order to securely and releasably attach panel 200 to article 100. As will be described in greater detail below, the attachment mechanisms act synergistically to give the article of clothing and panel a desired appearance, to provide for ease of use, and to provide a secure attachment of the article of clothing and the panel. In the example shown, a part 206 of a first attachment mechanism is positioned at the periphery 208 of panel 200. The part 206 of the first attachment mechanism may, for example, include part of a clasp locker, such as a row of teeth forming part of a zipper or similar structure, which extends around the periphery 208 of panel 200 between a start tooth 210 and an end stop 212.

[0031] Panel 200 may further be provided with a part 214 of a second attachment mechanism affixed to outer face 202 of panel 200. The part 214 of the second attachment

mechanism may, for example, include one half of a hook-and-loop fastener or similar structure, the other half of which may be carried in a corresponding location on article 100. As shown in FIG. 3A, the part 214 of the second attachment mechanism may generally be carried on the upper face 202 of panel 200 interiorly (i.e. radially inwardly) of the first part 206 (and also therefore radially inwardly of the periphery 208). As with part 206, part 214 extends around panel 200 (i.e. fully or substantially fully around panel 200), but offset by a distance from the periphery 208.

[0032] FIG. 4 shows a cross-sectional view of panel 200 attached to article of clothing 100. As shown, panel 200 is sized to be accommodated generally within window 104 of article 100, tucked at least partially under the peripheral flap 114, which substantially extends around window 104, and is releasably attached to article 100 by means of two separate attachment mechanisms. The cross-sectional view shown in FIG. 4 is taken laterally between side panels 108 of outer panel 102, but also could illustrate a cross-sectional view between shoulder and waist panels 106, 110.

[0033] As noted, in the embodiment shown, each side panel 108 provides part of peripheral flap 114, and this part extends inwardly into window 104 from a seam 116 that affixes each side panel 108 to base layer 112. Likewise, part of peripheral flap 114 is provided by the shoulder and waist panels 106, 110, and this part extends inwardly into window 104. Each seam 116 can be provided by threaded stitching, glue or adhesive, or other suitable means of durably affixing fabric panels together.

[0034] In the embodiment shown, peripheral flap 114 has a double layer structure formed out of an outer flap portion 118 that extends between seam 116 and a foldback region 120 from which an inner flap portion 122 depends and is projected downwardly under the outer flap portion 118 in a direction generally back toward seam 116. A terminal end 124 of inner flap portion 122 is affixed to base panel 112 at or by a corresponding seam 126, which may be provided, for example, by threaded stitching, glue or adhesive, or the like. In the embodiment shown, the spatial extent of window 104 is defined by the positioning of seam 126. In other embodiments, the spatial extent of window 104 may be defined by another element (e.g. foldback region 120).

[0035] With peripheral flap 114 being made of a flexible material, such as natural or synthetic or semi-synthetic fibres, outer and inner flap portions 118, 122 as well as foldback region 120 are generally free to move and be manipulated by external forces, such as the application of force by hand.

[0036] The inner flap portion 122 carries one part of the first attachment mechanism at or near to the terminal end 124, the corresponding part of which – i.e. part 206 – is carried at periphery 208 of panel 200 as described above with reference to FIGS. 3A and 3B. As shown, the part of such first attachment mechanism is affixed to terminal end 124 also by seam 126 that anchors terminal end 124 of inner flap portion 122 to base layer 112. Thus, a single seam 126 is made through the terminal end 124, first attachment mechanism, and base panel 112.

[0037] In some embodiments, as mentioned above, the first attachment mechanism is provided by a clasp locker structure, such as a zipper or equivalent, the corresponding parts of which are interlocking rows of teeth. In the embodiment shown, the terminal end 124 of inner flap portion 122 carries a row of teeth 128 positioned to interlock with the corresponding row of teeth 206 carried on the interchangeable panel 200, in order to provide a stable and durable attachment of interchangeable panel 200 to article 100. FIG. 4 shows the rows of teeth 128, 206 in an interlocked state.

[0038] In the embodiment shown, the peripheral flap 114 carries one part of the second attachment mechanism on or near to an underside of the foldback section 120, the corresponding part of which - i.e. part 214 - is carried on upper face 202 of panel 200 interiorly of periphery 208 as described above with reference to FIGS. 3A and 3B. In the embodiment shown, the second attachment mechanism includes a hook-and-loop fastener. For example, the underside of the foldback section 120 of peripheral flap 114 may carry a lineal fabric strip 132 of hooks (or alternatively loops) positioned to mesh with a corresponding lineal fabric strip 214 of loops (or alternatively hooks) on the upper face 202 of interchangeable panel 200. In such a location, lineal fabric strips 132, 214 when meshed together may hold the peripheral flap 114 flat against the upper face 202 interchangeable panel 200.

[0039] In some embodiments, a single seam 136 on peripheral flap 114 may be used to both create the foldback section 120 between the outer and inner flap portions 118, 122 and simultaneously affix lineal fabric strip 132 to the underside of the foldback section 120. Thus, the article of clothing 100, when the interchangeable panel 200 is attached, may have a natural outward appearance that is not substantially altered by the inclusion on the article 100 of either the first attachment mechanism (which is concealed under and within peripheral flap 114) or the second attachment mechanism (which is piggybacked onto existing as opposed to additional stitching). In other words, the article of clothing 100 may, despite panel 200 being removable and interchangeable with other fabric panels, have an outward appearance to observers that is substantially indiscernible from that of a garment formed with only permanent fabric panels.

[0040] In some embodiments, peripheral flap 114 may be formed with only an outer flap portion 118 and no inner flap portion 112. In such cases, lineal fabric strip 132 may be affixed to the underside of outer flap portion 118 at a terminal end thereof by seam 136 or, alternatively, to the underside of foldback region 120 if formed in peripheral flap 114, e.g., for aesthetic purposes and/or to provide backing for seam 136. Additionally, with no inner flap portion 118 included in peripheral flap 114, teeth 128 forming part of the first attachment mechanism may instead be affixed directly to base panel 112 by way of seam 126.

[0041] FIG. 5 shows the interchangeable panel 200 in the process of being attached to an article of clothing 100. As shown, interchangeable panel 200 has already been positioned in or over top of the window 104 defined in outer panel 102 of article 100. A zipper slider 140, which is carried on teeth 128, has also been manually exposed, e.g., by hand, from within the space or pocket defined under peripheral flap 114. In general, any portion of teeth 128 and/or inner flap portion 122 may also be exposed from under peripheral flap 114 in order to retrieve zipper slider 140.

[0042] To form the first attachment between interchangeable panel 200 and article 100, the zipper slider 140 may be fitted around start tooth 210 of teeth 206 and then drawn along the rows of teeth 128, 206 which are interlocked in the process. In FIG. 5, the zipper

slider 140 has already been drawn along the entire length of teeth 128, 206 around the periphery of panel 200, in a counter-clockwise direction, to rest ultimately on the end stop 212 (not visible in FIG. 5). Alternatively, in some configurations, zipper slider 140 may be drawn in a clockwise direction around panel 200 or carried instead on interchangeable panel 200 (with suitable modification of teeth 128, 206).

[0043] Advantageously, because the rows of teeth 128, 206 extend substantially fully around panel 200, it may generally be possible to draw zipper slider 140 between start tooth 210 and end stop 212 in one smooth continuous motion. Rounded corners formed in teeth 128, 206 may also facilitate or assist in the movement of zipper slider 140 around the periphery of panel 200 during the interlocking process.

[0044] In some embodiments, teeth 128, 206 may not extend around the entirety of window 104 and interchangeable panel 200. For example, teeth 128, 206 may extend around only half or three-quarters of the window 104 and, in some cases, may be provided in multiple discrete sections. For example, in some cases, panel 200 may have a separate row of teeth 206 on any one or more of its four peripheral edges 208, in which case a corresponding row of teeth 128 on peripheral flap 114 would carry its own zipper slider 140.

[0045] In some embodiments, lineal strips 132, 214 may likewise not extend around the entirety of window 104 and interchangeable panel 200 and may be provided in one or more discrete sections along, but offset interiorly from, the peripheral edges 208 of the interchangeable panel 200. In some embodiments, lineal strips 132, 214 may be provided in multiple discrete sections either simultaneously with or separately from teeth 128, 206 also being provided in multiple discrete sections.

[0046] As noted above, the attachment mechanisms act synergistically to provide for ease of use. That is, as zipper slider 140 is drawn, the counterpart rows of teeth 128, 206 may tend to be pulled up and out of the space under peripheral flap 114 to momentarily rest in the elevated plane above outer panel 102 (as depicted in FIG. 5) spaced apart from outer panel 102 and from base panel 112 (not visible in FIG. 5). In other words, because the rows of teeth 128, 206 extend substantially fully around the window 104,

they are provided with some structural stiffness that causes the rows of teeth 128, 206 to “pop” out from beneath the peripheral flap as zipper slider 140 is drawn. Conveniently, this action may simultaneously tend to keep the lineal strips 132, 214 of the second attachment mechanism separate and apart from one another, which can tend to prevent lineal strips 132, 214 from interfering with each other and/or inadvertently connecting or sticking together while the first attachment mechanism is being fastened. That is, due to the “popping” mechanism, by which the teeth 128, 206 “pop” out from beneath the peripheral flap as zipper slider 140 is drawn, space is made for the user to access both attachment mechanisms as desired, while still allowing for the attachment mechanisms to lay flat when the article of clothing 100 is worn. Furthermore, the “popping” mechanism allows for one continuous attachment mechanism around the periphery 208 of the panel 200. Furthermore, the “popping” mechanism allows the zipper to be concealed relatively deeply in the article of clothing 100. Finally, the “popping” mechanism prevents the lineal strips 132, 214 from inadvertently sticking together while the first attachment mechanism is being fastened.

[0047] Following interlocking of teeth 128, 206 to one another, interchangeable panel 200 may then be pushed downwardly toward base panel 112 and the periphery 208 of panel 200 tucked at least partially under peripheral flap 114 of article 100. Simultaneously therewith, or subsequently thereto, lineal strip 132 carried on the peripheral flap 114 may be pressed down onto the corresponding lineal strip 214 around the window 104. Because the interchangeable panel 200 is already aligned within window 104 and secured in place by interlocked teeth 128, 206, lineal strips 132, 214 can be meshed together either piecemeal or in one smooth continuous clockwise or counter-clockwise movement without limitation.

[0048] After lineal strips 132, 214 have been meshed together, interchangeable panel 200 will be resting as shown in FIG. 4 with both counterpart teeth 128, 206 interlocked and tucked under inner flap portion 112 of peripheral flap 114 and, additionally, with lineal strips 132, 214 holding the foldback section 120 of peripheral flap 114 flat or generally flat with upper face 202 of the panel 200 to thereby produce a natural appearance of article 100, i.e., as though interchangeable panel 200 were permanently installed on article 100.

[0049] Advantageously, prior securement of interchangeable panel 200 to article 100 by interlocking of teeth 128, 206, i.e., through the first attachment mechanism, can assist with positioning of the lineal strip 132 in relation to the corresponding lineal strip 214 due to interchangeable panel 200 already being generally aligned with and within window 104. Alignment of the lineal strips 132, 214 may be more difficult and generally less precise without first having formed an interlocking connection between teeth 128, 206. This could be due to any of misalignment of strips 132, 214, the occurrence of premature or inadvertent connections in different areas along the strips 132, 214 which then have to be severed and re-formed, or for any other reason. As mentioned previously, extrication of teeth 128, 206 and/or inner flap portion 122 from the pocket formed under peripheral flap 114 also tends to keep the lineal strips 132, 214 from interfering with one another during interlocking of teeth 128, 206.

[0050] The combination of attachment mechanisms also effectively suppresses some of the forces and tension in the garment or article of clothing 100 that tend to arise through everyday use. For example, while it is being worn by its user, garment or article of clothing 100 may tend to experience tension on its upper and base panels 102, 112 in the general vicinity of window 104. The interlocking of teeth 128, 206, however, can generally lessen the forces to which lineal strips 132, 214 may be subjected during use, which may in turn lessen the frequency in which lineal strips 132, 214 may inadvertently separate, whereas such occurrence may be more common and/or pronounced if interchangeable panel 200 is attached to article 100 only through lineal strips 132, 214 as a sole attachment mechanism. Thus, for example, use of only a hook-and-loop fastener to secure an interchangeable panel to an article of clothing may not provide adequate structural stability for the panel, which may tend not to stand up to forces naturally experienced during everyday use of the article.

[0051] Additionally, attachment of interchangeable panel 200 only through interlocking of teeth 128, 206 as a sole attachment mechanism may tend to lessen or diminish the natural appearance of article 100 due to, e.g., the visible appearance of a clasp locker or the presence of unsecured flaps or protrusions that disrupt the flat or planar appearance of the outer fabric panels that make up the article 100. While a clasp fastener may, when

serving as a sole attachment mechanism, provide adequate structural stability, on its own such a fastener may tend to diminish or produce a diminished aesthetic quality to an article of clothing formed with interchangeable panels. On the other hand, the combination of attachment mechanisms as described herein effectively avoids or at least lessens the impact of these and other potential drawbacks of interchangeable fabric panels in articles of clothing.

[0052] In order to remove interchangeable panel 200 from article 100, e.g., for the purpose of swapping in a different panel 200 having different ornamentation, the reverse sequence of actions can be taken. For example, the second attachment between article 100 and interchangeable panel 200 may first be severed by pulling lineal strip 214 away from lineal strip 132 in order to entirely un-mesh the pair. Simultaneously therewith, or subsequently thereto, interchangeable panel 200 may be pulled up away from base panel 112 (to rest again as shown in FIG. 5, in the “popped” out position) and then zipper slider 140 may be drawn in a reverse direction around the entirety of panel 200 to unlock teeth 128, 206 until coming to rest at the start tooth 210. In some cases, interchangeable panel 200 may also be pulled upwardly by the act of drawing zipper slider 140 along teeth 128, 206. Once completely detached from article 100, interchangeable panel 200 may be withdrawn and removed. This sequence is exemplary only and other sequences of actions may be possible as well in different embodiments of interchangeable panel 200 and article 100.

[0053] FIG. 6 illustrates a method 600 of attaching a removable or interchangeable panel to a garment or article of clothing in accordance with the disclosure. Method 600 may be performed, for example, on different embodiments of interchangeable panel 200 and article of clothing 100 as described herein. For brevity and convenience, description of method 600 may therefore be abbreviated. Additionally, unless the contrary is expressly stated or implied by context, parts and sequences of method 600 as described may be altered, varied, performed in a different order, or omitted altogether in different embodiments.

[0054] Accordingly, in some embodiments of method 600, at step 605, an interchangeable panel may be positioned generally within or over top of a window defined in an outer panel of an article of clothing. In general, the interchangeable panel may have a shape that corresponds approximately with the window, e.g., the interchangeable panel may be the same size as or slightly smaller than the window so as to be accommodated therewithin and outwardly discernible or visible to observers.

[0055] At step 610, a first attachment may be formed between the interchangeable panel and the article of clothing using, for example, a clasp locker such as a zipper. To form such first attachment, a zipper slider carried on a first row of teeth on the article of clothing may be fitted around a start tooth on a second row of teeth on the interchangeable panel which teeth are then interlocked as the zipper slider is drawn along the two rows from start to finish. The first row of teeth may in some cases be carried on an inner flap portion of a peripheral flap formed in the outer panel of the article of clothing and in other cases may be affixed directly to a base panel of the article of clothing that underlies the outer panel. The second row of teeth may be carried on or near a peripheral edge of the interchangeable panel in which position the two corresponding rows may be aligned with one another to form an attachment therebetween.

[0056] In some cases, at step 610, the zipper slider and any portion of the first row of teeth or inner flap portion may be manually retrieved or accessed, e.g., by hand, from within a pocket or other space defined under the peripheral flap in order to provide or facilitate access to the zipper slider. Drawing the zipper slider along the two rows of interlocking teeth may also in some cases tend to pull the interchangeable panel either partially or in its entirety away from the base panel of the article of clothing so as to rest momentarily in an elevated plane (as seen in FIG. 5) above the base panel.

[0057] Accordingly, at step 615, the interchangeable panel may from such an elevated position be pushed downwardly back toward the base panel and the peripheral edges of the interchangeable panel, at this point attached to the article of clothing by way of the first attachment, may be wholly or partially tucked into the space or pocket defined under the peripheral flaps which extend around the window.

[0058] At step 620, either simultaneously with or subsequently to step 615, a second attachment may be formed between the interchangeable panel and the article of clothing using, for example, a hook-and-loop fastener. To form such second attachment, a lineal strip of, e.g., hook elements that is carried on the peripheral flap of the article of clothing may be pressed down onto a corresponding lineal strip of, e.g., loop elements affixed to an outer face of the interchangeable panel. Once the entirety of the second attachment has been formed, the interchangeable panel may be resting flush or generally flush with the base panel of the article of clothing, tucked partially under the peripheral flap of the outer panel, and with the peripheral flap held flush or substantially flush to the outer face of the interchangeable panel to thereby produce the natural appearance of an article of clothing formed entirely out of permanently installed fabric panels.

[0059] In order to detach the interchangeable panel from the article of clothing, the steps of method 600 may be performed either wholly or partly in reverse order and, for brevity and convenience, will not be explicitly described here.

[0060] In accordance with the disclosure, an article of clothing may also be combined with one or more interchangeable panels into a kit or combination product. The article of clothing and each one or more interchangeable panels may contain any or all of the features as described herein in relation to article of clothing 100 (FIGS. 1 and 2) and interchangeable panel (FIGS. 3A and 3B), respectively. In such instance, each panel included in the kit may be interchangeable with one another in the article of clothing, which thereby may take on different ornamental or aesthetic appearance depending on which interchangeable panel has been attached to the garment at a given time.

[0061] While the above embodiments have been described in the context of an article of clothing having the form factor of a denim or jean jacket, with suitable modification, the interchangeable panels may be configured for attachment to a wide variety of different garments or types of clothing or handheld or personal items, without limitation.

[0062] To the extent any amendments, characterizations, or other assertions previously made (in this or in any related patent applications or patents, including any parent, sibling, or child) with respect to any art, prior or otherwise, could be construed as

a disclaimer of any subject matter supported by the present disclosure of this application, Applicant hereby rescinds and retracts such disclaimer. Applicant also respectfully submits that any prior art previously considered in any related patent applications or patents, including any parent, sibling, or child, may need to be re-visited.

WE CLAIM:

1. An article of clothing comprising:
 - a base panel;
 - an outer panel having a window defined therein and joined to the base panel to define a peripheral flap extending at least partly around the window;
 - wherein the peripheral flap carries a part of a first attachment mechanism, the part of the first attachment mechanism configured for attachment to a corresponding part positioned at a periphery of a panel that is shaped so as to be received within the window when attached to the outer panel; and
 - wherein the peripheral flap carries a part of a second attachment mechanism that holds the peripheral flap flat against the panel through attachment to a corresponding part of the second attachment mechanism positioned on an outer face of the panel interiorly of the corresponding part of the first attachment mechanism.
2. The article of claim 1, wherein the first attachment mechanism comprises a clasp locker, and the second attachment mechanism comprises a hook-and-loop fastener.
3. The article of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein at least the first attachment mechanism extends substantially fully around the window.
4. The article of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the peripheral flap has an outer flap portion that extends inwardly into the window and an inner flap portion that depends from the outer flap portion, wherein the first attachment mechanism is carried on the inner flap portion.
5. The article of claim 4, wherein the outer and inner flap portions of the peripheral flap are formed of a continuous panel.
6. The article of claim 4 or claim 5, wherein the part of the first attachment mechanism is positioned at a terminal end of the inner flap portion.

7. The article of claim 6, wherein the terminal end of the inner flap portion is joined to the base panel.
8. The article of any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the part of the second attachment mechanism is positioned at a foldback section of the peripheral flap.
9. A method of fastening a panel to an article of clothing comprising an outer panel that defines a window in which the panel can be accommodated, the method comprising:
 - a. using a first attachment mechanism, attaching a periphery of the panel to a peripheral flap of the outer panel;
 - b. using a second attachment mechanism, attaching the peripheral flap to an outer face of the panel interiorly of the attachment between the periphery of the panel and the peripheral flap.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the first attachment mechanism comprises a clasp locker and the second attachment mechanism comprises a hook-and-loop fastener.
11. The method of claim 9 or claim 10, wherein step a. comprises attaching the periphery of the panel to an inner flap portion of the peripheral flap, wherein the inner flap portion depends from an outer flap portion of the peripheral flap.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein using the first attachment mechanism comprises at least partially extracting the inner flap portion of the peripheral flap from within a pocket defined by the peripheral flap.
13. The method of any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein using the second attachment mechanism comprises pressing the peripheral flap against the panel.
14. The method of any one of claims 9 to 13, further comprising using the first attachment mechanism prior to using the second attachment mechanism.

15. A kit comprising:
- an article of clothing; and
 - at least a first panel that detachably fastens to the article of clothing; and
 - wherein the article of clothing comprises:
 - a base panel; and
 - an outer panel having a window defined therein and joined to the base panel to define a peripheral flap extending at least partly around the window.
 - wherein the first panel is shaped so as to be received into the window when attached to the outer panel;
 - wherein the peripheral flap carries a part of a first attachment mechanism, the part of the first attachment mechanism configured for attachment to a corresponding part positioned at a periphery of the first panel; and
 - wherein the peripheral flap carries a part of a second attachment mechanism that holds the peripheral flap flat against the first panel through attachment to a corresponding part of the second attachment mechanism, wherein the corresponding part of the second attachment mechanism is positioned on an outer face of the first panel interiorly of the corresponding part of the first attachment mechanism.
16. The kit of claim 15, wherein the first attachment mechanism comprises a clasp locker, and the second attachment mechanism comprises a hook-and-loop fastener.
17. The kit of claim 15 or 16, wherein at least the first attachment mechanism extends substantially fully around the window.
18. The kit of any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein the peripheral flap has an outer flap portion that extends interiorly into the window and an inner flap portion that depends from

the outer flap portion, wherein the peripheral flap carries the part of a first attachment mechanism on the inner flap portion.

19. The kit of claim 18, wherein the outer and inner flap portions of the peripheral flap are formed of a continuous panel.

20. The kit of claim 18 or claim 19, wherein the part of the first attachment mechanism is positioned at a terminal end of the inner flap portion.

21. The kit of claim 20, wherein the terminal end of the inner flap portion is joined to the base panel.

22. The kit of any one of claims 15 to 21, wherein the second attachment mechanism is positioned at a foldback section of the peripheral flap.

23. The kit of any one of claims 15 to 22, wherein when the peripheral flap is held flat against the first panel by the second attachment mechanism, the first attachment mechanism is concealed.

24. The kit of any one of claims 15 to 23, wherein during attachment of the first panel to the article of clothing, the first panel rests in the elevated plane above the outer panel and spaced apart from the outer panel and from the base panel.

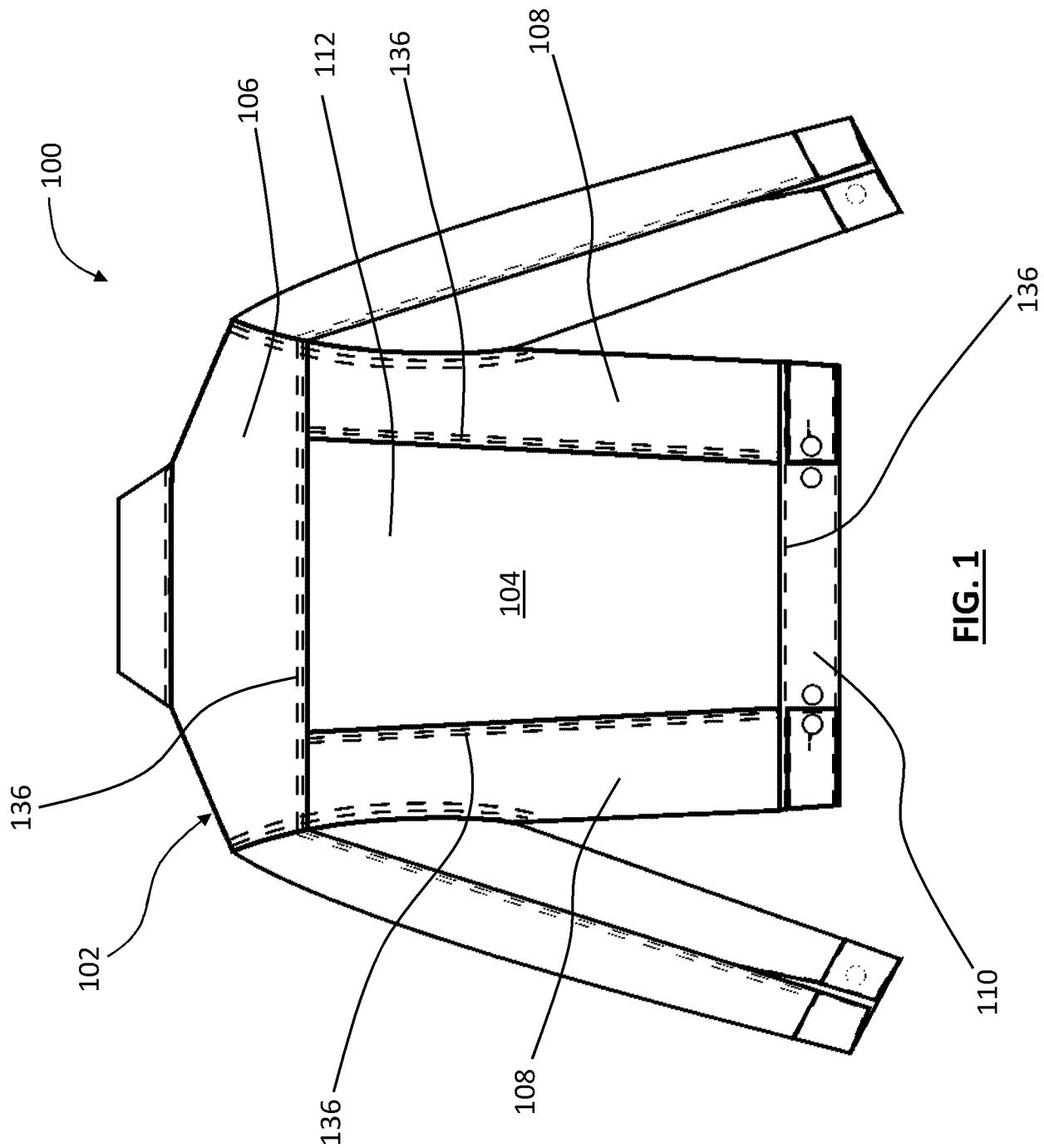


FIG. 1

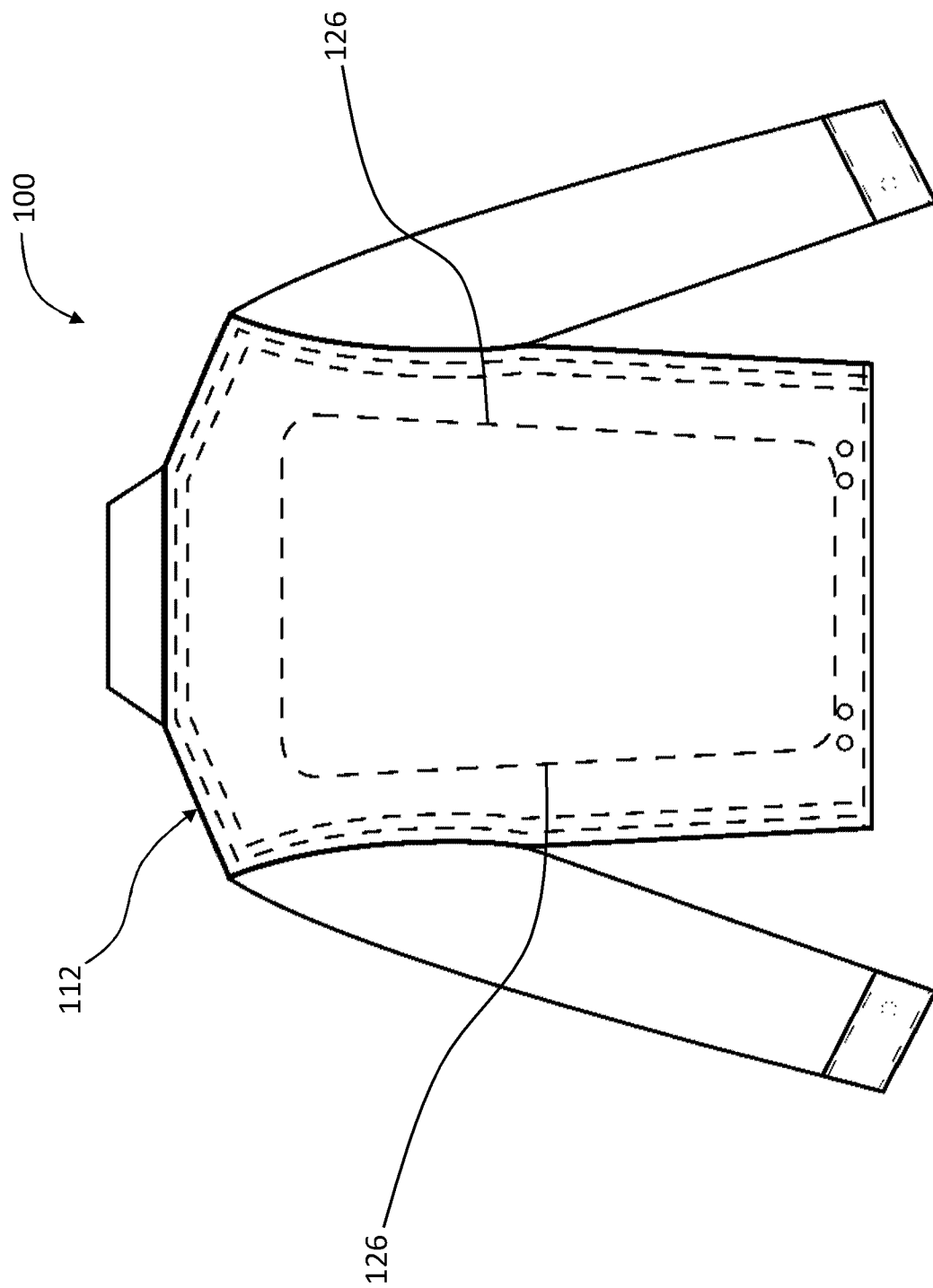


FIG. 2

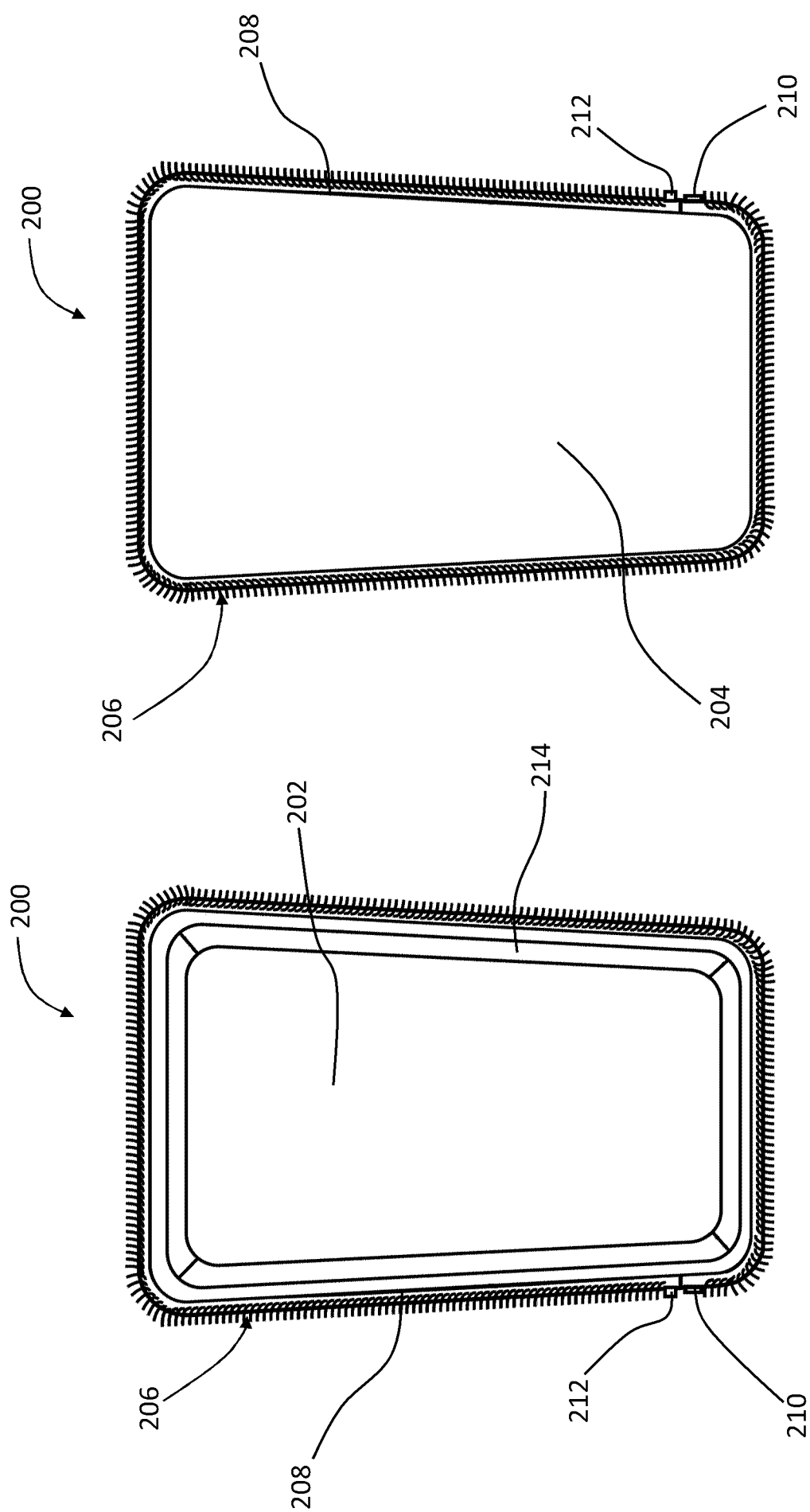
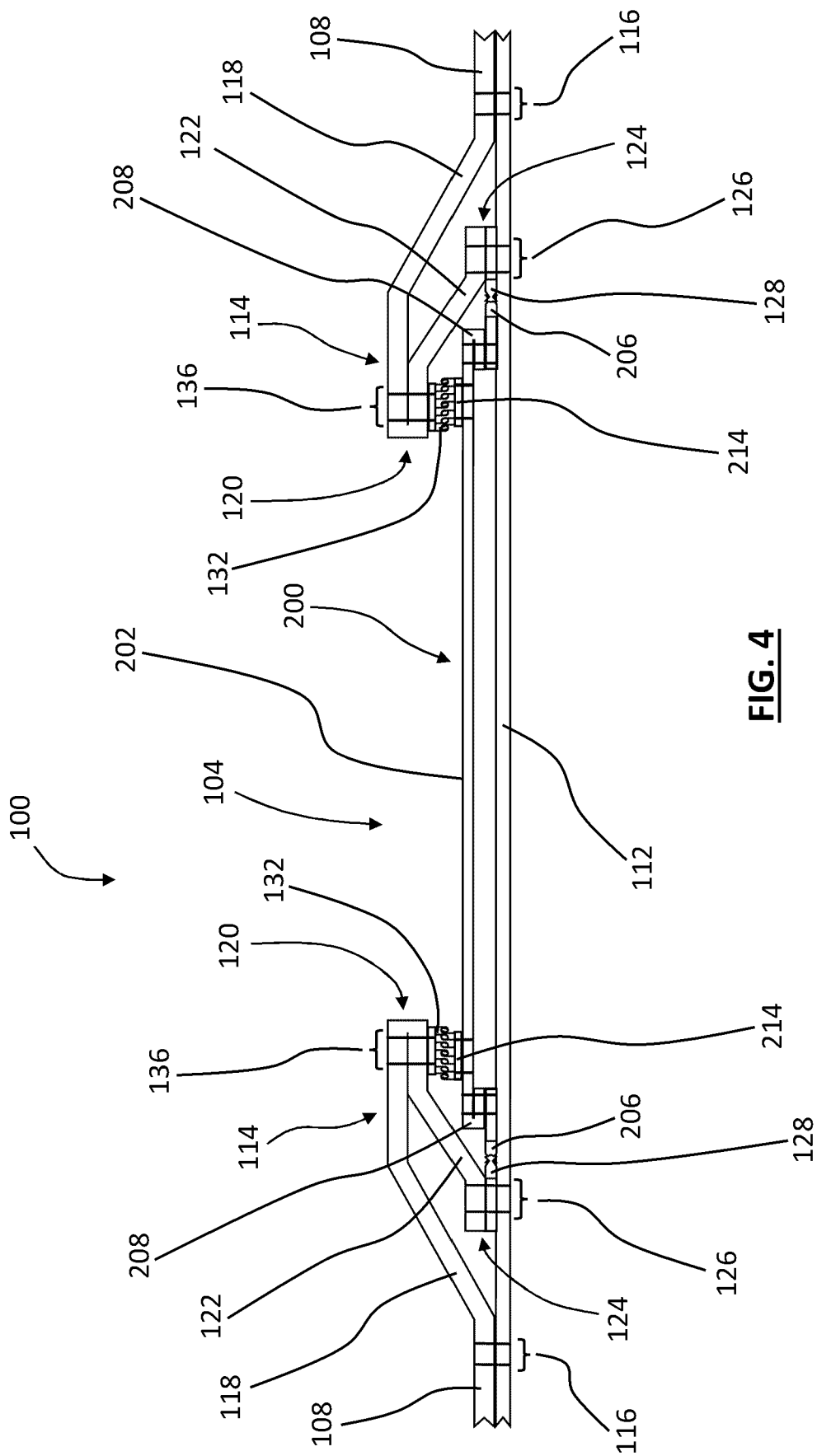


FIG. 3A

FIG. 3B



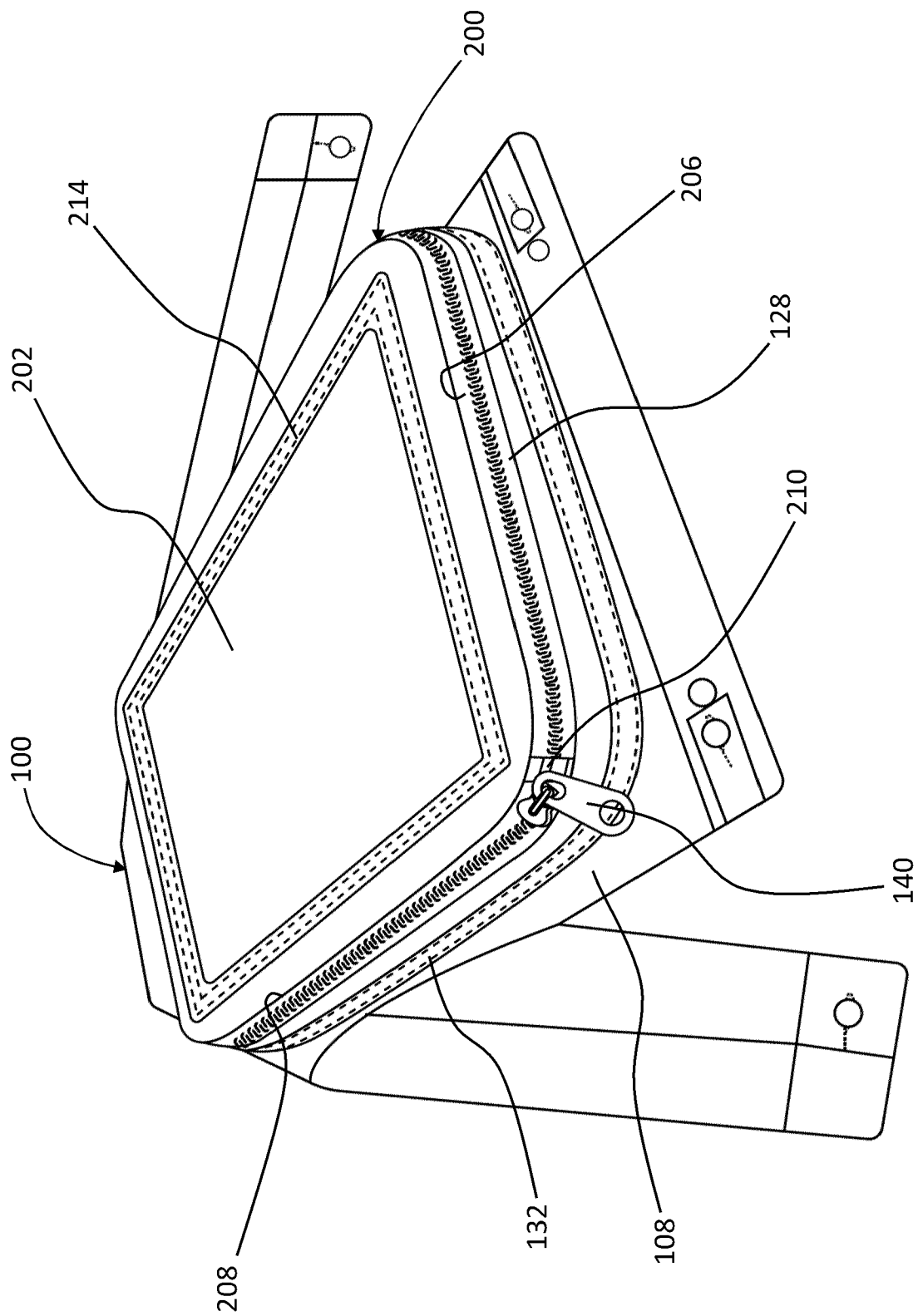


FIG. 5

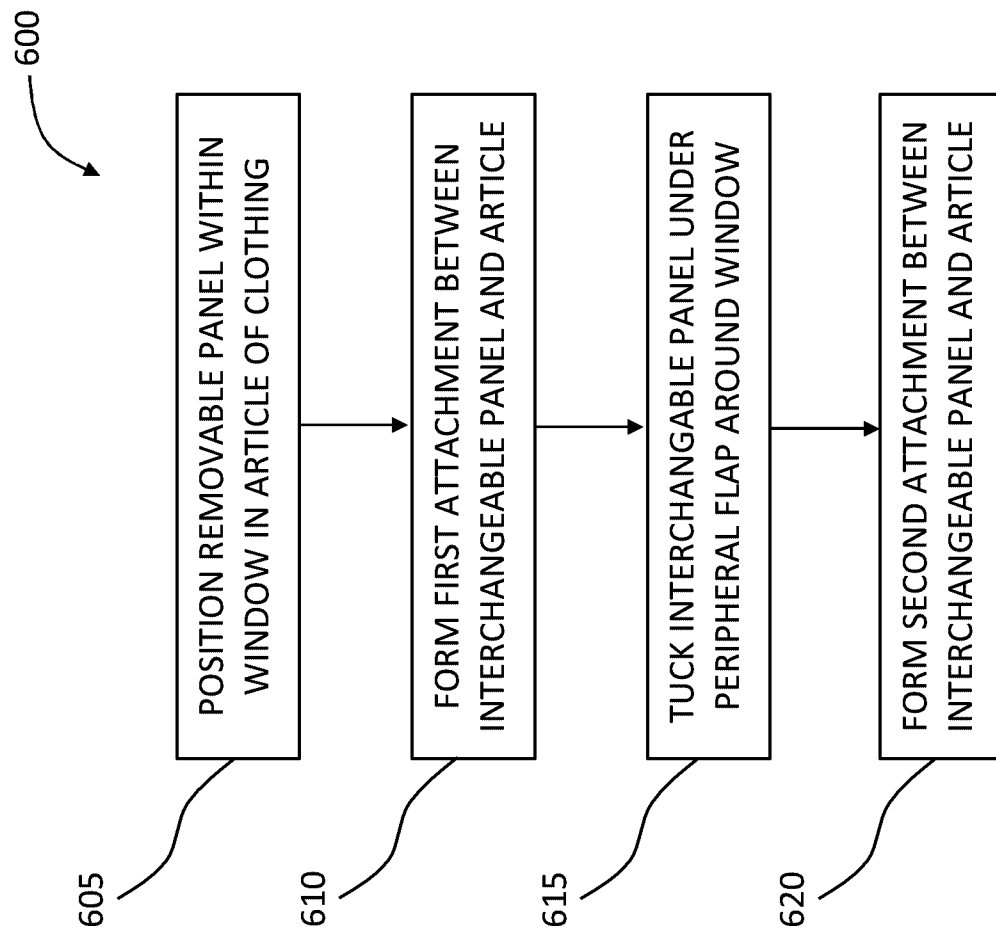


FIG. 6

