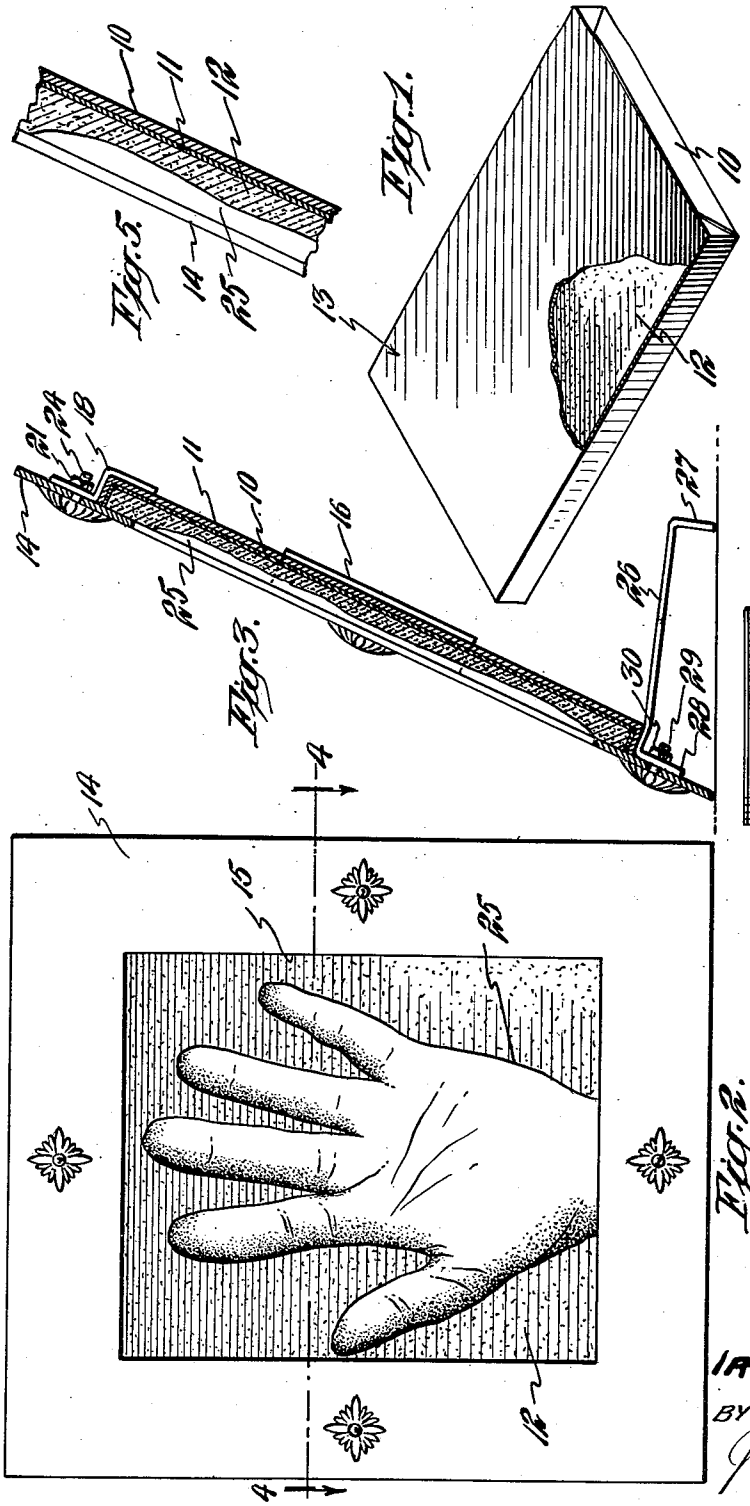
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MANUFACTURE OF NOVEL CLAY ARTICLES

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MANUFACTURE OF NOVEL CLAY ARTICLES

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1 Claim. (Cl. 41—24)

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The present invention relates to a method for the manufacture of novelty articles formed of clay and to the resulting products. More particularly, this invention relates to a method of mounting and preserving clay panels containing patterns or impressions such as a child's handprint.

Plastic clay masses in the form of panels or blocks are customarily used for educational purposes by children in molding, matrixing and for various creative purposes in schools and other institutions. The plastic clay, when in a soft condition, is pliable and easily forms into attractive shapes and masses, but in the case of panels on hardening tends to crack and also has a tendency to warp and curl up around the edges. It is primarily an object of the invention to provide a novel method for the manufacture of novel articles containing clay impressions whereby the impression or pattern formed in the clay is attractively displayed and at the same time preserved against deterioration for an indefinite period of time. A further object of the invention is to overcome the tendency of relatively thin plastic clay panels to warp and crack on drying. Another object of the invention is to provide a novel combination of parts for mounting clay panels which may be easily manipulated and assembled in the home for the preservation of a child's handprint, foot impression or the like. In accordance with the present invention, a soft or plastic clay panel is provided in a shallow pan covered with a sheet of moisture resistant paper or other material to preserve the clay in a plastic condition. The metal pan is preferably lined with a sheet of waxed paper or other material to prevent the clay from adhering to the metal surfaces. When an impression or pattern is to be formed in the clay panel the cover sheet is removed and the impression made in the exposed surface of the clay. The metal pan including the clay panel and lining material are then firmly clamped to the rear of a frame having an opening of rectangular or other formation so that the edges of the panel contiguous to the edges of the pan are firmly clamped to the edge of the frame surrounding the matrix which is exposed to view from the opposite side of the frame.

The above arrangement has been found to durably preserve the hardened clay panel against cracking, warping and chipping for indefinite periods of time. The arrangement of firmly clamping the panel to the rear of the frame is found to effectively prevent the panel from warping and allow the clay to harden uniformly around the edges of the mass. The method of assembling

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the clay panel with a sheet of bedding material on the bottom of the metal pan serves to effectively prevent any tendency of the panel to crack or be distorted during the drying process so that the completed article containing the clay panel provides an attractive display for the impression while effectively preserving the panel in its original position, shape and form over long periods of time.

With reference to the drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspetctive view of an element of the article partly in section to show the plastic panel;

Figure 2 is a front elevation of a complete article formed in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 3 is a vertical section of the frame depicted in Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a horizontal section taken on the line 4—4 of Figure 2.

Figure 5 is a partial section of Figure 3.

Referring to the drawings wherein a preferred embodiment of the invention is shown for purposes of illustration, a rectangular pan 10 is shown as being provided with a lining 11 of waxed paper and contains a panel 12 of soft, moist clay or other glutinous or plastic material. The clay panel 12 may or may not extend slightly above the edges of the metal pan 10 and is provided with a moisture proof cover 13 which may also consist of waxed paper.

After the moisture proof cover 13 is removed or stripped off from the face of the clay panel 12 and a desired impression is made in the surface of the panel, the pan 10 is adapted to be mounted and clamped to the rear of a frame 14 of metal or other material having a rectangular opening 15. The pressure of the hand print or other impression made in the clay panel as well as the normal drying action of the clay tends to cause the clay to rise slightly above the edges of the pan. The frame 14 is provided with a plurality of angular clamping elements 16, 17 and 18 adapted to engage and firmly hold the metal pan 10 containing the plastic panel 12 against the rear of the frame 14. The pressure of these clamping elements on the pan 10 is adjusted by tightening nuts 19, 20 and 21 on the bolts 22, 23 and 24, the heads of which may be formed into studs or gems visible on the front of the article for ornamental purposes.

As shown particularly in Figures 3 and 4 after the pan 10 and panel 12 are pressed against the rear of frame 14 by the clamping elements 16, 17 and 18 the edges of the panel surrounding the

impression 25 firmly engage the contiguous edge of the rectangular opening 15 in the frame 14, while the clay dries. It has been found that when the panel dries in this position, the usual tendency of the panel to become cracked or distorted is eliminated and the impression is attractively and permanently displayed from the front of the frame.

The lower portion of the frame 14 is provided with a metal support 26 having a downwardly turned portion 27 at one end and bent into an angular section 28 at the other end at which point it is secured to the frame 14 by a bolt 29 and nut 30. In addition to providing a support for the entire frame or article, the metal element 26 also forms a lower base or clamping element for the pan 10 containing the panel 12 as shown in Figure 3. When the panel is hung on a wall or similar surface, the support 26 is removed and replaced by an element similar to elements 16, 17 and 18 and the article supported by merely passing a wire beneath the clamping element 18.

It is understood that by the foregoing arrangement, I provide an article which will attractively display and protect a pattern or impression formed in plastic material and at the same time mounts said material in such a fashion as to preclude deterioration and disfigurement of the article as the plastic hardens and thereafter. It is obvious that by these means I provide an article which has both novelty and utility and which may be sold as a set and assembled by the layman in a convenient and amusing manner.

I claim:

A method of mounting and preserving ornamental clay patterns comprising the steps of disposing a pliable clay panel in a shallow receptacle, making an impression in the panel and clamping the receptacle and panel to the rear of a frame while the clay is still soft so that the impression is visible from the front and the edges of the panel engage the surrounding contiguous edges of the frame so that the clay hardens around the edges.

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