United States Patent [19]

Sesto

[11] **3,722,122**

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[54] **PICTURE FRAME ASSEMBLY**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **40/152**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **G09f 1/12**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 40/152, 155, 152.1; 287/20.92 D

[56] **References Cited**

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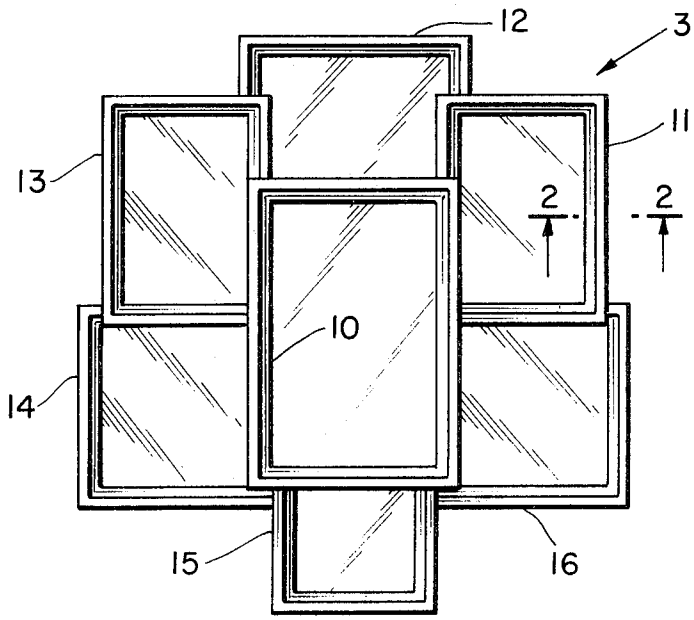
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Primary Examiner—Robert W. Michell
Assistant Examiner—Wenceslao J. Contreras
Attorney—Pastoriza & Kelly

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A picture frame assembly includes a plurality of frames having identical marginal cross-sectional contours for co-operation with clip means for securing the frames in overlapping relationship so that the assembled frames enable the creation of a collage of pictures mountable in the frames for hanging on a wall.

4 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures



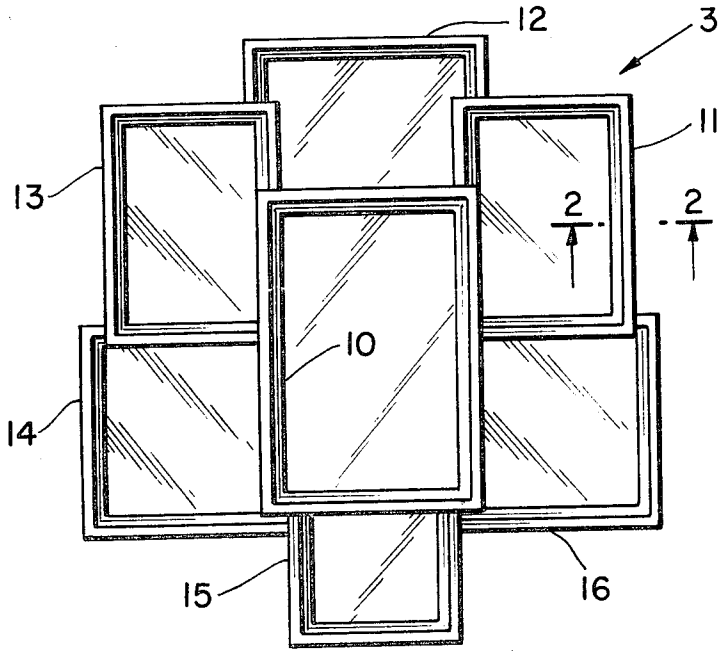


FIG. 1.

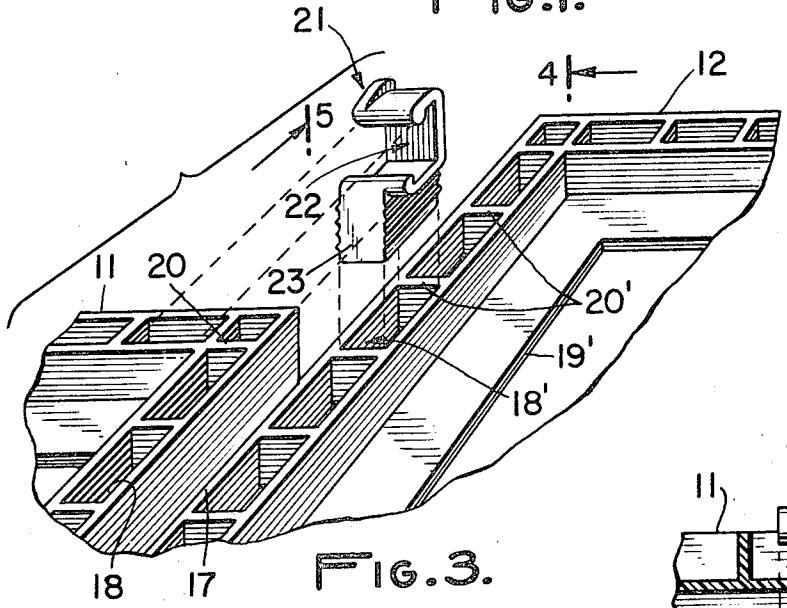


FIG. 3.

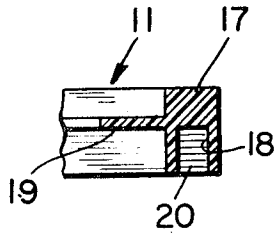


FIG. 2.

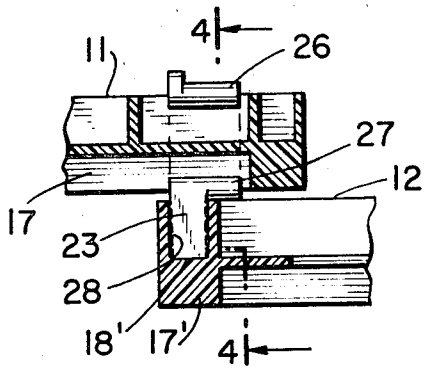


FIG. 5.

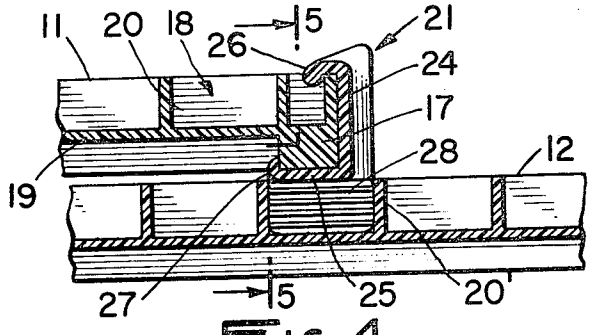


FIG. 4.

PICTURE FRAME ASSEMBLY

This invention relates generally to picture frames and more particularly to means for interconnecting picture frames together in any desired selected relationship to provide an aesthetically appealing collage for pictures mounted in the frames.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is common practice in interior decorating design to mount a collection of pictures in a fairly confined wall area. Generally the pictures are in almost contiguous relationship. Often the actual picture sizes are of different dimensions, some being mounted with their long dimension vertically and some being mounted with their long dimension horizontally depending upon the aspect of the picture.

Grouping of pictures in the above manner enables the creation of an overall outline or contouring which provides a pleasing appearance in any home or office.

Heretofore, such mounting has often been accomplished by simply securing the pictures themselves on an overall large sized board which in turn may be hung from the wall. In other instances, the pictures are mounted in individual frames and each individual frame itself is secured to the wall either in contiguous relationship or separated by very small spaces. In both instances, the assembling of the pictures to define a collage or desired grouping is somewhat tedious and in the event separate frames are utilized in place of a large supporting mounting board, several holes must be made in the wall to mount each individual frame.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention contemplates a novel frame structure having a unique marginal cross-sectional contouring for co-operation with clip means such that at least two and normally a plurality of such frames may be secured together with overlapping margins in a desired relationship.

Since the frames are all interconnected physically to each other, only a single wall hanging element is necessary to suspend the resulting assembly. Further, a great latitude is available in the manner in which the frames are assembled to each other, the marginal cross-sectional contouring and the clip means being so designed that shifting of relative positions is easily carried out, additional frames may be added to the assembly with great ease, and complete disassembly is possible all without in any manner requiring removal of pictures from the frames.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A better understanding of the invention will be had by referring to the accompanying drawing in which:

FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of an assembly of frames secured together in accord with the present invention for hanging on a wall whereby a collage of pictures mounted in the frames results;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary cross-section of the margin of one of the frames taken in the direction of the arrows 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary exploded perspective view illustrating the clip means for securing two of the frames together;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary cross-section of the overlapping assembled frames and clip means of FIG. 3 looking generally in the direction of the arrow 4 of FIG. 3; and

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary cross-section of the assembled frames and clip means of FIG. 3 looking generally in the direction of the arrow 5 of FIG. 3.

FIG. 4 also represents a cross-section taken in the direction of the arrows 4—4 of FIG. 5 and FIG. 5 represents a cross-section taken in the direction of the arrows 5—5 of FIG. 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring first to FIG. 1 there is shown a center frame **10** surrounded by a plurality of frames **11**, **12**, **13**, **14**, **15**, and **16** with marginal portions overlapping in a desired relationship. While the overall size of the frames themselves may vary, the cross-sectional contouring of the margins of each of the frames is identical. Typically, the frame **10** might be 5 inches by 7 inches in size and the surrounding frames 3½ inches square or 3½ by 5 inches. Marginal portions of the various frames overlap as shown, the frames **11** and **13** being mounted to the center frame **10**, and the frame **15** being mounted to frames **14** and **16**. The frame **12** in turn may be secured to the frames **11** and **13** at the overlapping marginal portions and the frames **14** and **16** secured to the frames **13** and **11** respectively at their overlapping marginal portions.

FIG. **2** illustrates the contouring of the marginal cross-sections of a portion of the margin of the frame **11**. This cross-sectional contouring is identical for all of the frames and thus a detailed description of one will suffice for all.

In FIG. **2**, the margin of the frame **11** includes a body member **17**, the top surface of which defines the front of the frame and the bottom surface of which defines the rear of the frame and includes a channel **18**. The body also includes a lateral flange **19** between the top and bottom surfaces extending inwardly of the frame for mounting of a picture within the frame. Transverse partitions such as **20** may be provided in the channel **18** as will become clearer as the description proceeds.

The entire frame itself may constitute plastic material which has a given resiliency and may be integrally molded.

Referring now to FIG. **3**, the views show in exploded perspective relationship portions of the frames **11** and **12** of FIG. **1** looking at the rear in the direction of the arrow **3**. Securing of the marginal portions of the frame **11** and **12** together is accomplished by a clip means **21**. This clip means may also comprise an integrally molded plastic member of a desired configuration enabling easy securement of the margins of the frames in overlapping relationship.

Thus, the clip means **21** includes a body engaging cavity **22** for receiving the body member **17** defining the margin of one frame such as the frame **11** and a channel receiving projection **23** projecting below the cavity for insertion in the channel in the body member defining the margin of the frame overlapped by the one frame such as the frame **12**. In FIG. **3**, the counterparts to the marginal structure of the frame **11** in the form of the channel **18**, flange **19** and partitions **20** are designated by the corresponding numerals followed by a prime. Thus it will be evident that the projecting por-

tion 23 of the clip means may be readily received in the channel 18' of the margin of the frame 12 and the body 17 of the frame 11 receivable in the body receiving cavity 22 of the clip means.

The foregoing assembled relationship looking generally in the direction of the arrow 4 of FIG. 3 is illustrated in FIG. 4 in cross-section. As shown, the body portion 17 of the margin of the frame 11 is received within the body receiving cavity of the clip 21. This cavity portion is generally L-shaped being defined by vertical and horizontal legs 24 and 25 terminating respectively in inwardly turned lips 26 and 27. Because of the integral nature of the plastic structure, the body of the frame may be "snapped" into craddling position within the L-shaped structure, the legs spreading slightly to accommodate insertion of the margin body.

In FIG. 4, it will be noted that the downward projection 23 of the clip means includes serrations along its sides as indicated at 28. These serrations provide a friction grip for the walls of the channel defined in the rear of the marginal body for the frame 12. Thus the width dimension of the projection 23 is made substantially the same as the width of the channel 18' as illustrated in FIG. 3 so that such a friction gripping is assured.

The transverse partitions 20' in the channel 18' are spaced apart by a distance at least equal to the length of the projection 23 so that the projection can readily be accommodated between partitions. The projection of the clip may accordingly be positioned at various locations along any one of the margins so that the relative positions of the frames may be adjusted. The transverse partitions 20' lend structural strength to the side walls defining the channels in the frames to assure that spreading of the side walls upon insertion of the clip is opposed to provide the desired frictional engagement of the projection. While these partitions 20' are shown as being spaced at slightly greater than the length of the projection 23, the spacing therebetween could be greater and fewer partitions employed.

The foregoing assembly will be even better understood by reference now to FIG. 5 wherein the frictional engagement of the serrations 28 with the side walls of the channel 18' is illustrated. Further, the slight overlapping of the lips 26 and 27 about the one wall of the channel for the frame 11 and the main body portion 17 of the frame 11 is clear.

OPERATION

In assembling the various frames, there will normally be provided several clip means corresponding to the clip means 21. If it is desired to build up the configuration illustrated in FIG. 1, a minimum of seven clip means would be employed corresponding to the number of frames involved. For greater rigidity of the overall assembly, further clip means could be utilized suitably spaced adjacent the ends of the overlapping portions of the various frames.

Thus, a person will simply insert the clip means at various desired locations in the marginal channel on the rear of the center or main frame. The surrounding frames may then be clipped into the body receiving cavity portions of the various clip means to provide the assemblage illustrated.

Manufacture of the foregoing frame assembly is relatively economical inasmuch as the cross-sectional contouring of the margins of the various frames notwithstanding they may be of different overall dimensions to accommodate different picture sizes are identical. Further, the several clip means employed are all identical and there are no further components such as screws, nuts, spring clips and the like necessary. It will also be clear that no special tools are required to build up a desired assembly.

A particular collage of pictures can thus be provided, such a collage possibly comprising family photographs or the like. The entire assembly may be then suspended from a wall by a single wall fastener or, if desired for stability, two wall fasteners adjacent the corners of the uppermost surrounding frames.

While the invention has been described with respect to frames for mounting pictures, it will be evident to those skilled in the art that the frame structures may be utilized to mount any type of documents to be displayed. The invention, accordingly, is not to be thought of as limited to the specific embodiment or arrangement set forth merely for illustrative purposes.

What is claimed is:

1. A picture frame assembly comprising, in combination:
   a. at least two picture frames, the cross-sectional contour of the margins of said frames being identical, each margin in cross-section comprising a body member, the top surface of which defines the front of the frame and the bottom surface of which defines the rear of the frame and includes a channel, the body also including a lateral flange between the top and bottom surfaces extending inwardly of the frame for the mounting of a picture within the frame,
   b. at least one clip means for securing together overlapping margins of said frames in a desired relationship, said clip means defining a body engaging cavity for receiving the body member defining the margin of one frame, and a channel receiving projection below the cavity for insertion in the channel in the body member defining the margin of the frame overlapped by said one frame, whereby the assembled frames enable the creation of a collage of pictures mountable in the frames for hanging on a wall.

2. An assembly according to claim 1, including transverse partitions in the channel in each frame margin body member, the channel receiving portion of the clip means being received between selected partitions along the channel so that the relative positions of the frames may be adjusted, the sides of the projection engaging the walls of the channel having serrations to provide a friction gripping of the projection by the walls of the channel.

3. An assembly according to claim 2, in which said cavity of said clip means is L-shaped and is defined by vertical and horizontal legs terminating in inwardly turned lips for engaging about one wall of a channel and the top surface of the body portion, respectively, defining the margin of said one frame.

4. An assembly according to claim 1, in which said cavity of said clip means is L-shaped and is defined by vertical and horizontal legs terminating in inwardly turned lips for engaging about one wall of a channel and the top surface of the body portion, respectively, defining the margin of said one frame.

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