



US 20090084014A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Sloan et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2009/0084014 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Apr. 2, 2009**

(54) **PERSONALIZED PHOTO COSTUMING TOY**

Publication Classification

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
A47G 1/06 (2006.01)
A47G 35/00 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **40/799**; 40/798; 428/542.2

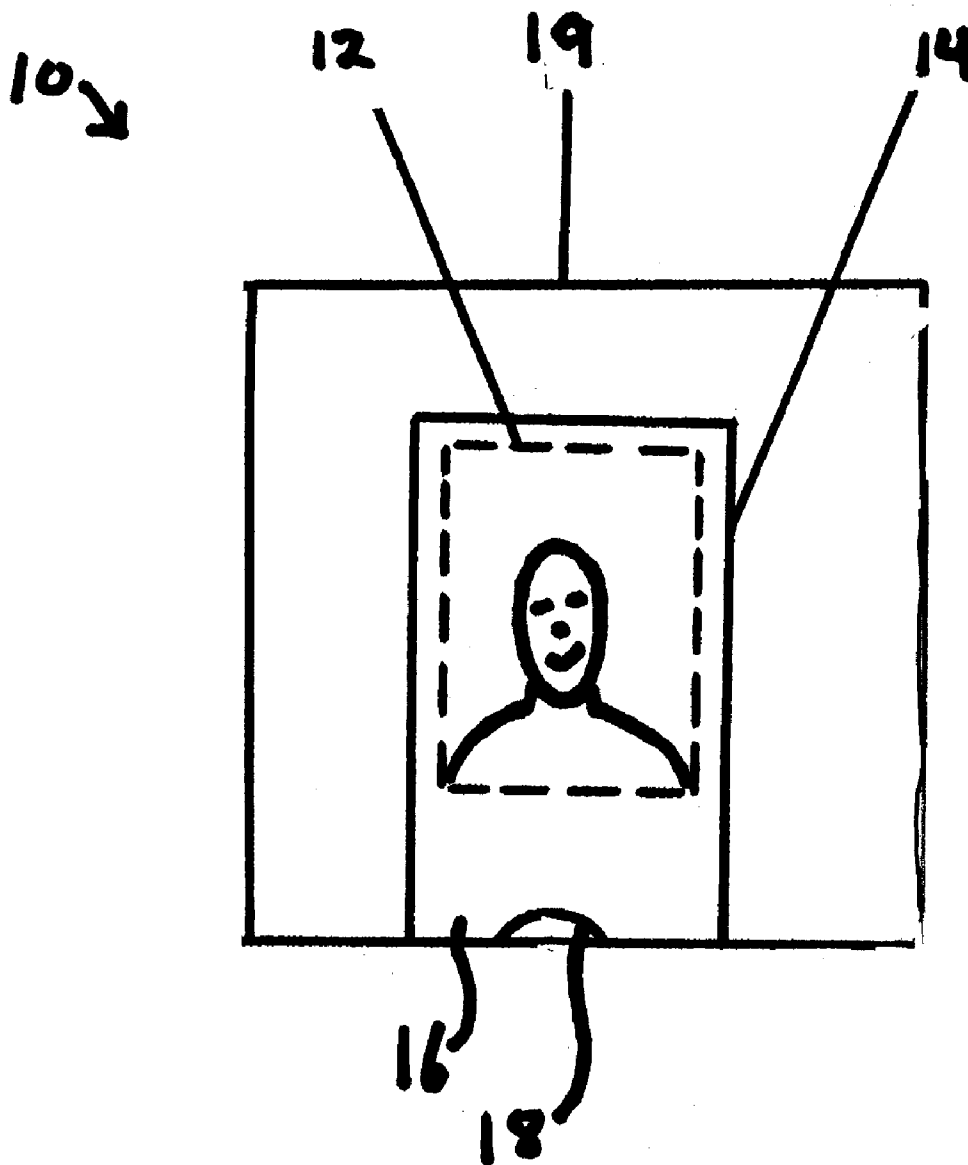
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Provided is an activity toy configured to allow for a primary image, such as a photograph, to be converted into a fun and amusing secondary image in a manner that does not harm the original primary image. The toy may be used by children to decorate photographs with decorative devices, such as markers or stickers, without permanently marking the underlying photograph. Provided systems for use with both traditional and digital images.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/865,345**

(22) Filed: **Oct. 1, 2007**



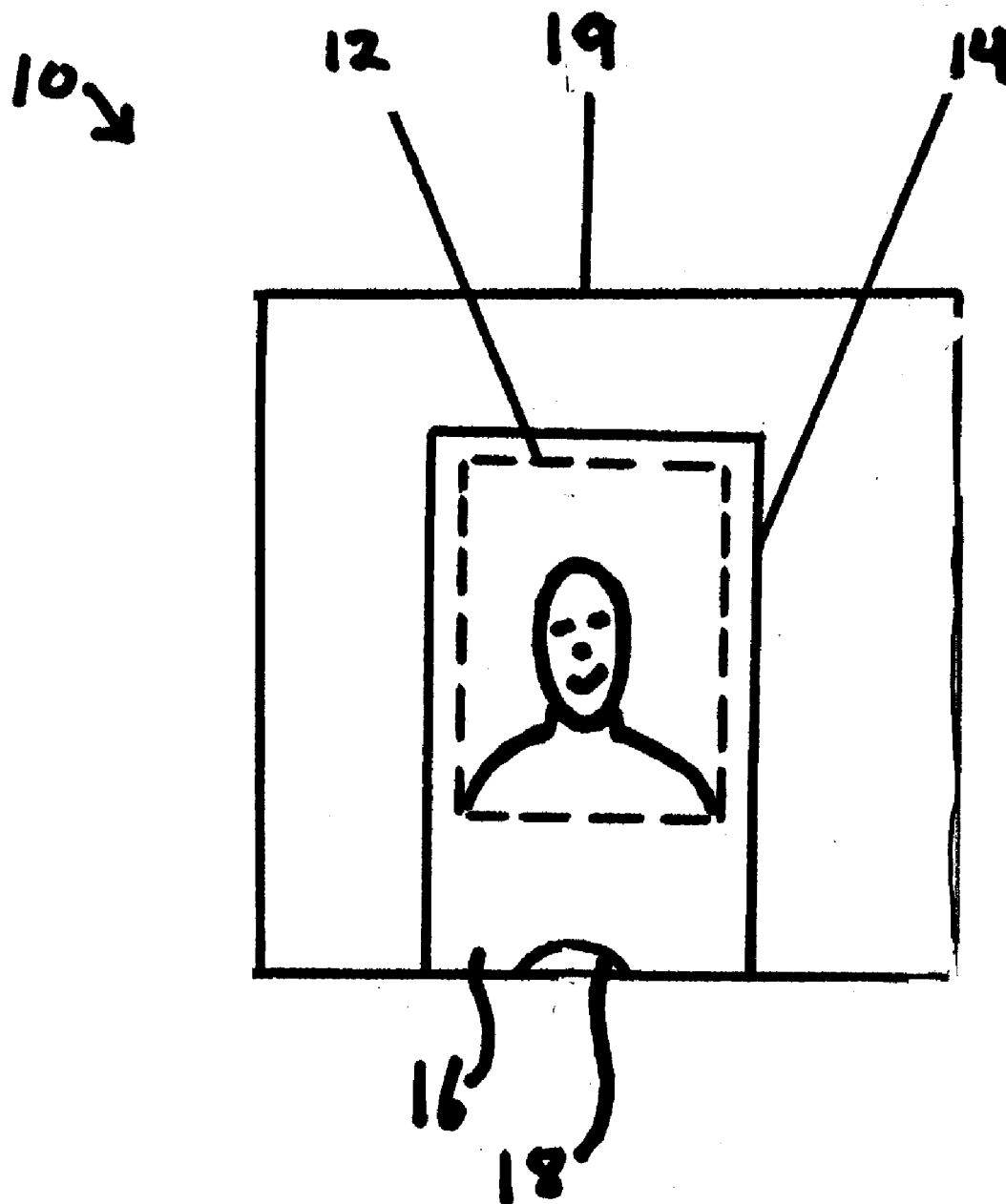


Fig. 1

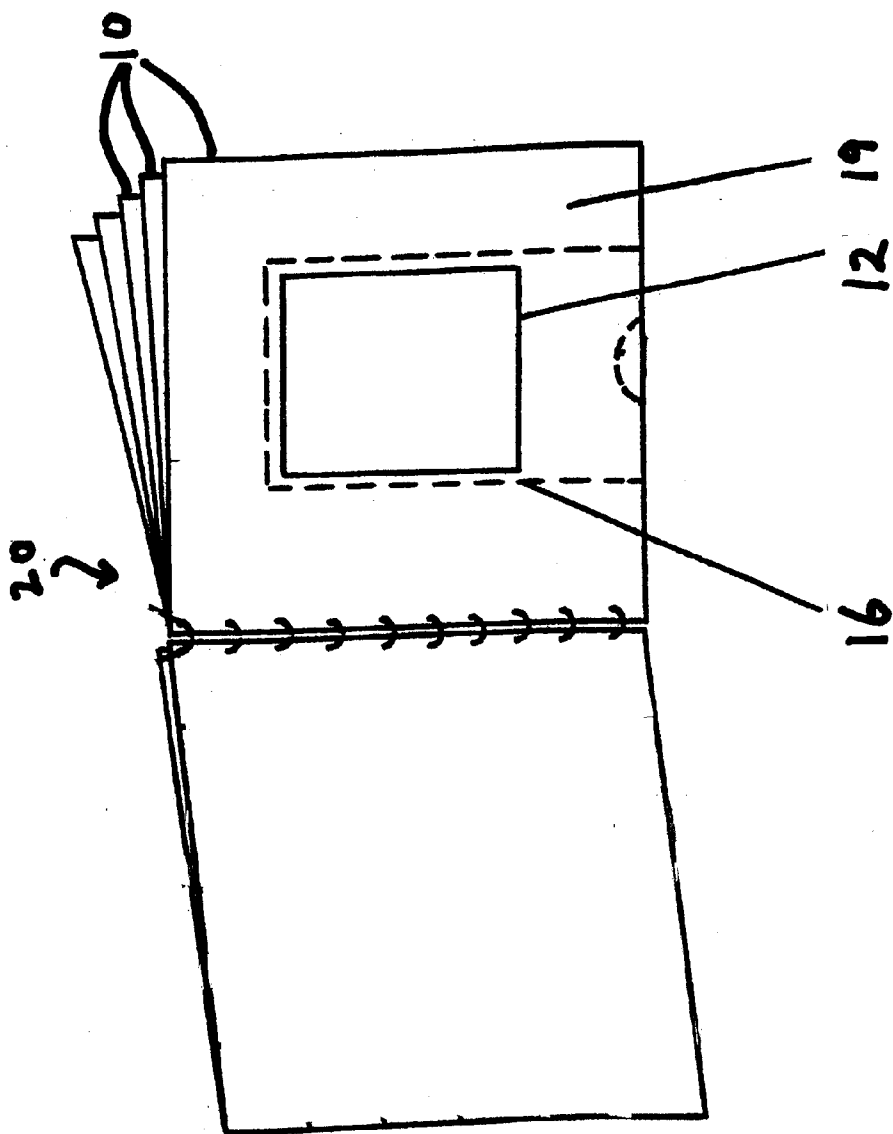


Fig. 2

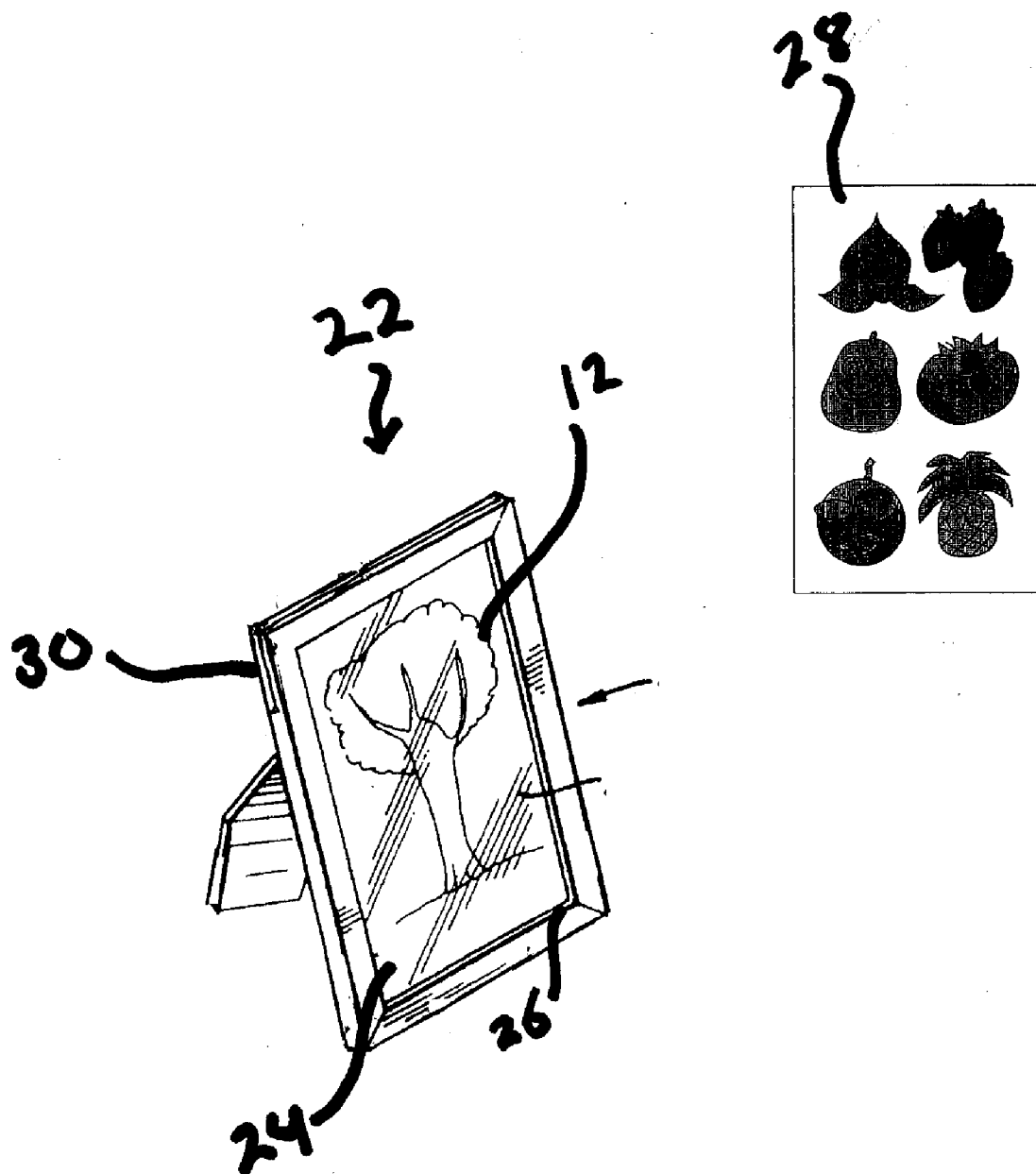


Fig. 3

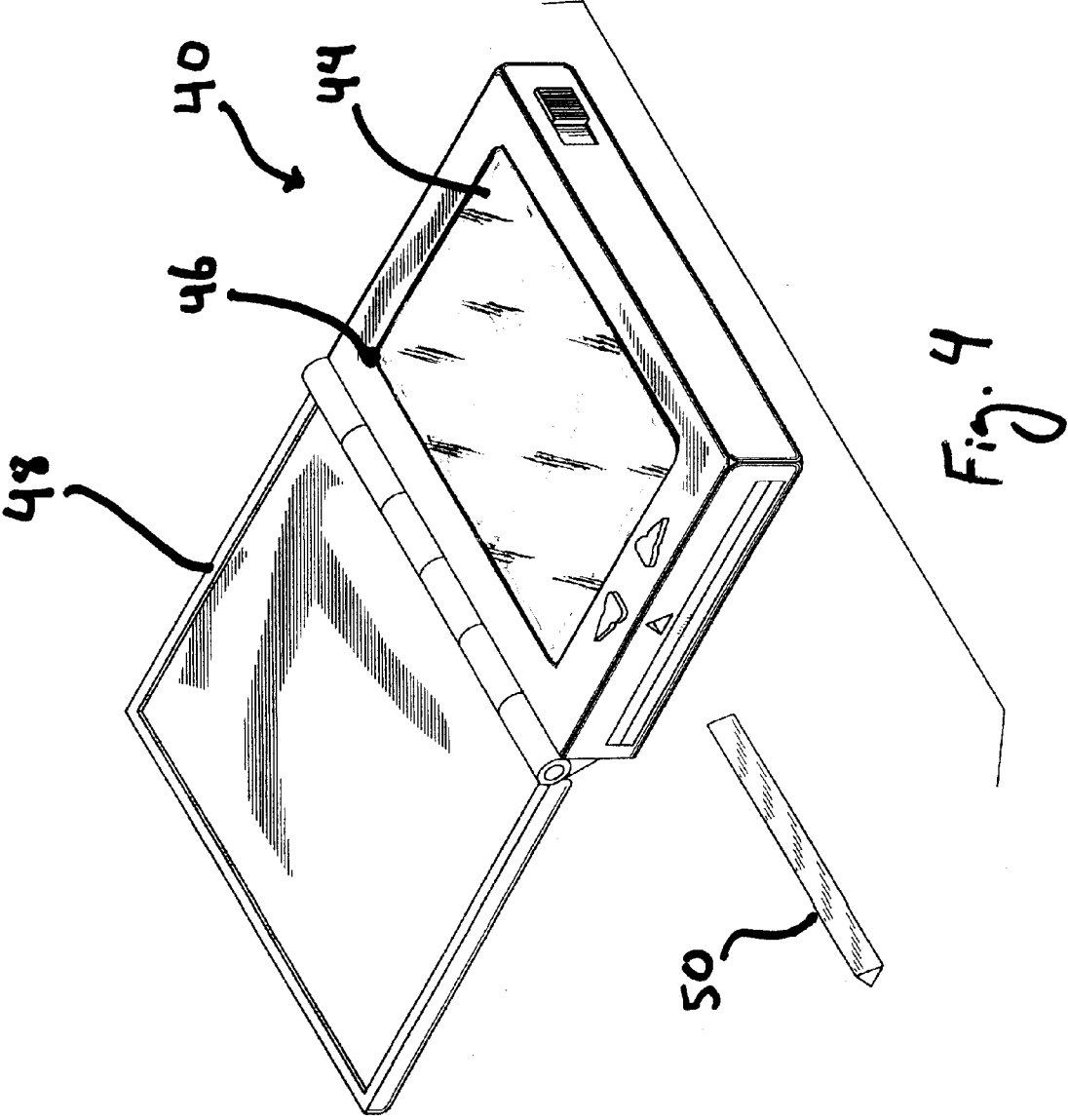


Fig. 4

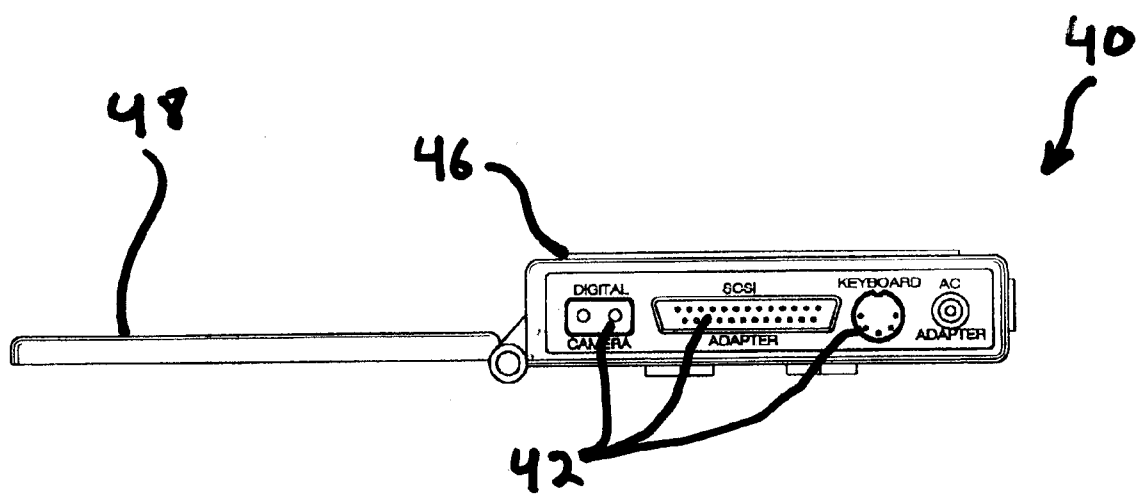


Fig. 5

PERSONALIZED PHOTO COSTUMING TOY

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/827,535, filed Sep. 29, 2006, titled Personalized Photo Costuming Toy, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates in general to a children's activity toy and methods by which individual adherent ornamental objects or descriptive devices can be used to decorate photos of a child and additional people, animals, characters or objects.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Colorforms, die-cut vinyl sheet images and shapes that can be applied to a slick background, have been a popular children's activity toy for many years. They are popular with toddlers and small children because of the interactive creativity used, the physical interest of the material, the variation of the shapes, and the artistic and versatile nature of the pictures and stories that can be created by the child.

[0004] Another favorite activity of children is the study of faces and pictures, particularly their own and people they know or recognize. Toddlers and small children love to look at photos and name the people in the picture. The same activity is relevant when cartoon characters or familiar puppets can be identified and named.

[0005] Children also enjoy coloring and drawing faces and pictures. They often like to draw pictures of themselves and their family. A child would also think that decorating an atypical pattern on a picture is hilarious and fun. For example, drawing a mustache and glasses on a picture of an uncle or sibling would be great fun indeed without the consequential discipline for ruining a photo.

[0006] The combination of these three activities would be an enjoyable, developmentally positive, creative, and unique game with limitless possibilities.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] It is believed the present invention will be better understood from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. The drawings and detailed description that follow are intended to be merely illustrative and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

[0008] FIG. 1 illustrates a front view of one version of a personalized photo costuming sheet.

[0009] FIG. 2 illustrates a perspective view of one version of a plurality of personalized photo costuming sheets arranged into an album.

[0010] FIG. 3 illustrates a perspective view of a frame having a personalized photo costuming sheet inserted therein shown with associated descriptive devices in the form of stickers.

[0011] FIG. 4 illustrates perspective view of a digital photo display device shown with an associated descriptive device.

[0012] FIG. 5 illustrates a right side view of the digital photo display device of FIG. 4 shown with an input for receiving digital storage medium.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] Referring to FIG. 1, in one version, the personalized photo costuming sheet 10 comprises a photo or primary image 12 of an individual covered in a laminate or protective covering 14. In one embodiment, the photo 12 is placed into a laminate sleeve 16 via an aperture 18, surrounded by a border 19, in the sheet 10, where the protective covering 14 is a clear transparent pane in the front of the sheet 10. Referring to FIG. 2, a plurality of sheets 10 may be combined into an album 20 for use. The sheet 10 may be rigid or flexible, transparent or partially transparent, embossed with images, and include any suitable shape, including polygonal or round. In versions of the sheet 10 having a border 19, the border 19 may be any suitable size or configuration where, for example, the border may be used to write descriptive messages, to draw, or to provide a larger surface area than a small picture may provide to prevent accidental damage due to markers, or the like. All or a portion of the sheet, including the protective covering and the border 19, may be erasable or permanent. For example, the border 19 may be marked indelibly, whereas the protective covering 14 may be erasable.

[0014] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, in use, the sheet 10 allows for a child to insert, for example, a photo of a relative into the sleeve 16 such that the photo is protected by the sleeve. After insertion, the child may use any suitable decorating device, including a magnet, a marker, a writing instrument, a sticker, paint, a suction cup, make-up, hair, glitter, glue, beads, dry-erase markers, vinyl objects configured to releasably adhere to a surface, objects comprising adherent backing, or the like, to manipulate the protective coating 14 over the photo to create a secondary image from the photo or primary image 12. For example, a picture of a child's grandfather may be made to look like a doctor when the child draws, or otherwise uses a descriptive device, on the protective covering 14 to add a stethoscope and scrubs. In this manner, a child may enjoy using treasured family members, or other familiar images, as the basis for creative and imaginative play. The protection of the sleeve may allow children to express themselves without damaging treasured family photos.

[0015] Referring to FIG. 3, a frame 22 may be provided into which a sheet 24 containing a primary image or photo 12 is inserted for general viewing. By using such a frame 22, a child may display a secondary image, such as a parent drawn up as a pirate, in a traditional viewing manner. The child may remove the sheet 24 and alter the photograph without, at any time, damaging the primary image of the photograph. The frame 22 may also include a protective pane 26. When used with a sheet 24 having a secondary image, the protective pane may also be used as a surface for creating an even more complex image. For example, referring to FIG. 3, a photo of the tree in the backyard in winter may be used as the primary image. When inserted into a sheet 24, the child may color fill in the foliage of the tree with a decorative device, such as a crayon, to create a vibrant secondary image. Once this image is inserted into the frame 22, a second decorative device, such as stickers 28 shaped as fruit, may be added to the protective pane 26 of the frame 22 to create an even more vibrant image. In an alternate embodiment, the frame 22 does not have a protective plastic pane 26 and is used to display only a sheet 24. In one version, the frame 22 includes a storage compartment 30, which may be a hinged compartment at the back of the frame, to house multiple primary images including photos of a child, family members, pets, or favorite characters. The primary image 12 can be substituted by any of the photos in the storage compartment 30 and placed under the protective

covering. It will be appreciated that the frame 22 may be a box frame without a stand and may have any suitable compartment for storing descriptive devices and/or primary images such as photos.

[0016] Referring to FIG. 4, in one version a digital frame 40 that may be associated with digital primary images, such as photos from a digital camera, is provided such that a person could plug in their digital card, or other electronic medium (not shown), into an input 42 (Shown in FIG. 5) in the frame 40 and, for example, load a photo directly into the frame 40. In this manner, in one version, the frame 40 would display the digital photo in a display 44 having a protective covering or pane 46 over the display 44 such that the primary image, or digital photo, could be modified into a secondary image with a decorative device 50, such as a crayon, as described herein. The frame 40 may include a cover 48 which may be used to protect the display 44 and/or may be used as a compartment to store decorative devices, or the like. In a further embodiment, the frame itself could include and act as a digital camera. In this case, a person may use the frame as a camera, taking the photo, editing the photo, and then displaying the photo to decorate with various decorative devices.

[0017] The entire invention, including descriptive devices such as vinyl stick-on objects, dry erase-type markers, and photo album or frame could be packaged in a carrying case (not shown). The case would be easy to carry and would help the owner to keep everything together in one place while using the toy in various locations.

[0018] In one version, the activity toy is used in an interactive process, where personal photos are taken at a staffed location, such as at a photographer's studio, and are digitally stored or printed. The staffed location then presents these photos, or any other suitable primary image, to the customer with a number of associated decorative devices. For example, if a parent takes their child to get photographed as a clown, the child could be provided with their own picture and an apparatus as described herein containing decorative elements related to the circus, such as lions, tigers, and bears. Photographs may be taken with the express intent of later modifying them with a specific set of related decorative devices. Such an interactive process may be particularly applicable to theme parks and other vacation areas where additional decorative devices provided with photographs may be used as advertising.

[0019] Staffed locations could be at home shows, mall kiosks, photography studios, theme parks, resorts, or other locations. The service and product could also be provided via the internet from a interactive website. The customer could e-mail or download digital pictures, or other suitable primary images, according to posted guidelines.

What is claimed is:

- 1. A photograph costuming system comprising:
 - a. a photograph, the photograph comprising:
 - i. a primary image, and
 - ii. a protective covering, wherein the protective covering is:
 - 1. substantially transparent, and
 - 2. configured to encapsulate the photograph;
 - b. a frame, the frame being configured to:
 - i. releasably receive the photograph, and
 - ii. display the photograph to a user; and
 - c. at least one decorating device, the at least one decorating device being operably configured for association with

the protective covering to alter the appearance of the photograph to form a secondary image.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the protective covering comprises plastic laminate material.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one decorating device is detachably coupled to the protective covering to form the secondary image.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the frame further comprises a protective pane, wherein the protective pane is substantially transparent and configured to provide a receiving surface for the at least one decorating device.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the decorating device is selected from the group consisting of a magnet, a marker, a writing instrument, a sticker, paint, felt, a suction cup, make-up, hair, glitter, glue, beads, dry-erase markers, vinyl objects configured to releasably adhere to a surface, objects comprising adherent backing, and combinations thereof.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one decorating device is configured to be utilized by a user to temporarily alter the appearance of the photograph.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the primary image is the outline of a face and the at least one decorative device comprises detachable facial features.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the frame further comprises a storage compartment configured to store the photograph and the at least one decorating device.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the photograph comprises an image selected from the group consisting of an image of the user, an image of the user's mother, an image of the user's father, an image of the user's sibling, an image of the user's relative, and combinations thereof.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the photograph comprises an image selected from the group consisting of an image of a cartoon character, an image of a professional athlete, an image of an actor, an image of an actress, and combinations thereof.

11. The system of claim 1, further comprising a container, the container being configured to house the photograph, the frame, and the at least one decorating device.

- 12. A photograph costuming system comprising:
 - a. a plurality of photographs, each of the plurality of photographs comprising:
 - i. a primary image, and
 - ii. a protective covering, wherein the protective covering is:
 - 1. substantially transparent, and
 - 2. configured to encapsulate the photograph;
 - b. an album, the album comprising a plurality of pages, wherein each of the plurality of pages comprises a pocket, the pocket being configured to releasably receive one of the plurality of photographs; and
 - c. at least one decorating device, the at least one decorating device being operably configured for association with the protective covering to alter the appearance of the photograph to form a secondary image.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the at least one decorating device is configured to be applied directly to the protective covering.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein the pocket further comprises a protective pane, the protective pane being

- a. substantially transparent; and
- b. configured to substantially cover the photograph.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one decorating device is configured to be applied directly to the protective pane.

16. The system of claim 12, further comprising a container, the container being configured to house the photograph, the album and the at least one decorating device.

17. A photograph costuming system comprising:

a. a storage device;

b. at least one digital image, the digital image:

- i. comprising a primary image, and
- ii. being initially stored on the storage device;

c. a digital display device, the digital display device comprising:

i. a screen, the screen being operably configured to display the at least one digital image,

ii. a protective pane, the protective pane being:

1. substantially transparent, and
2. configured to substantially cover the screen, and

iii. a port, the port being configured to allow communication between the storage device and the digital display device to facilitate transfer of the digital image from the storage device to the digital display device; and

and

d. at least one decorating device, the at least one decorating device being operably configured for association with the digital display device to alter the appearance of the photograph to form a secondary image.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the storage device is selected from the group consisting of a digital camera, a memory card, a memory stick, and combinations thereof.

19. The system of claim 17, further comprising a container, the container being configured to house the storage device, the digital display device, and the at least one decorating device.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein the digital display device further comprises a digital camera, wherein the digital camera is integral with the digital display device.

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