Feb. 13, 1973 C. A. BROSSARD 3,715,823

DECORATIVE ARTICLE HOLDER

Filed Feb. 26, 1971

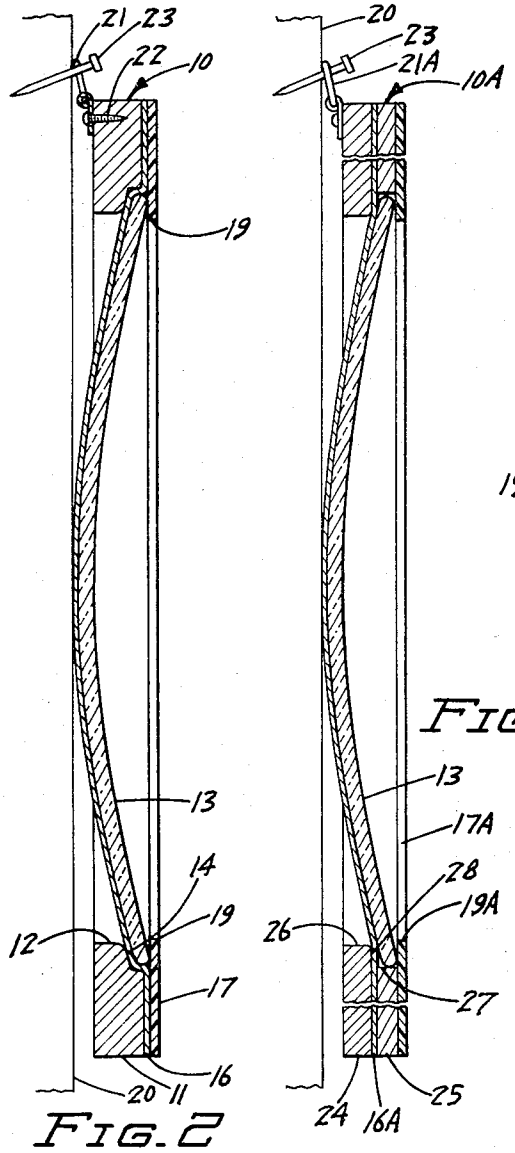


FIG. 2

FIG. 4

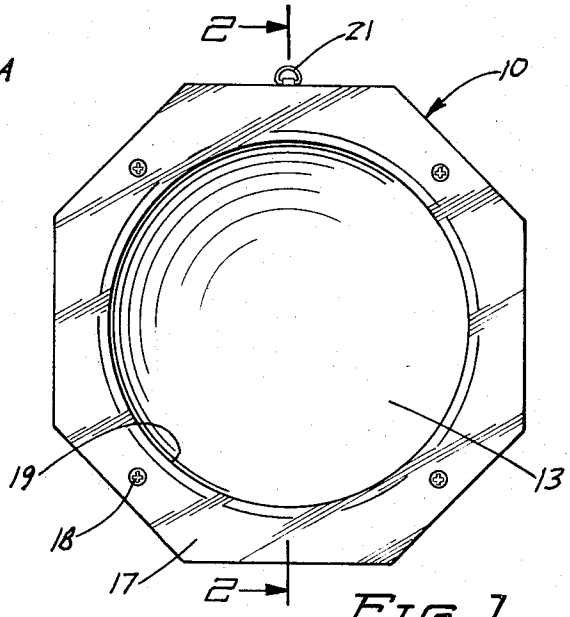


FIG. 1

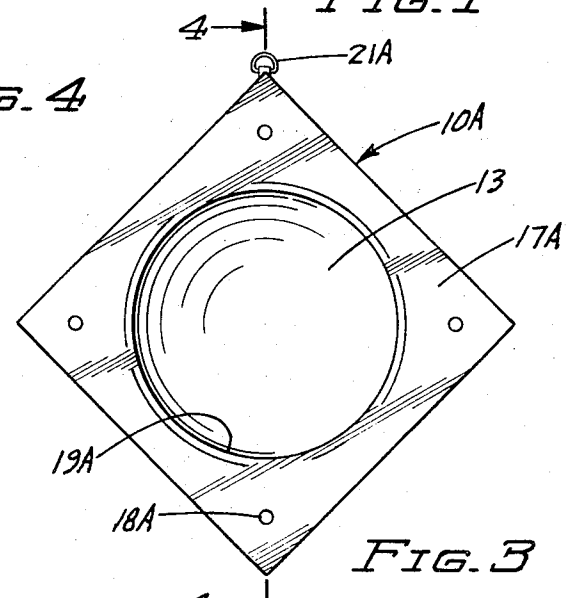


FIG. 3

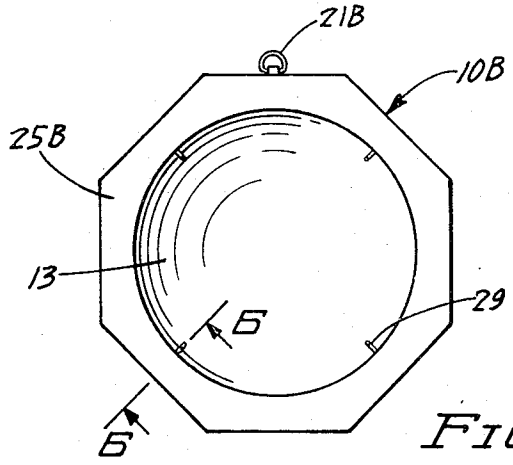


FIG. 5

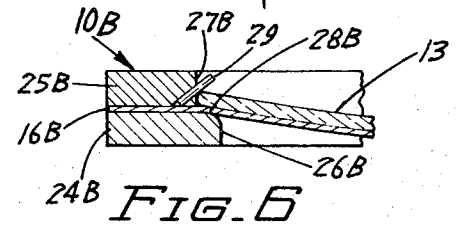


FIG. 6

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United States Patent Office 3,715,823 Patented Feb. 13, 1973

3,715,823

DECORATIVE ARTICLE HOLDER

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Filed Feb. 26, 1971, Ser. No. 119,195
Int. Cl. G09f 1/12
U.S. Cl. 40—152 10 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A holder for mounting and displaying decorative articles such as plates, medallions and the like. The holder includes a base with a recess for receiving the article, cushioning fabric or similar material for resiliently supporting the article and retaining means for holding the article in the recess. The retaining means may preferably be transparent so as not to obscure any of the article. When the article to be mounted is transparent, the cushioning material, being visible through the article, is selected to enhance the appearance of the article.

The invention relates to a decorative article holder for mounting and displaying generally flat three dimensional decorative articles such as souvenir and commemorative plates, antique plates, decorative and ornamental plates, medallions, coins, plaques, and like decorator items. The collection of plates and similar articles has long been a popular hobby. It has long been the practice to produce souvenir plates as mementos of visits to various cities, states, national parks, historic shrines, and the like. Since early in this century, several firms have annually produced commemorative Christmas plates in limited numbers. These are avidly sought by collectors and older plates have greatly appreciated in value. In more recent years, other companies have entered the field and more events are being commemorated by issuance of plates of appropriate pattern and design. While most of these plates are opaque china or earthenware plates, some are transparent crystal or glass plates with designs and patterns printed thereon, or embossed or etched therein.

Most plate collectors, being proud of their possessions, wish to display them, often using them as part of the decorative theme or decor in their homes. The available means for mounting plates for wall hanging or the like have been extremely limited. Most consist of spring-loaded hooks which engage the rim of the plate at three or more spaced intervals around its periphery and are provided with hanging means. These offer the disadvantage that the rim may be chipped or scratched at the points of engagement with the hanger, the engaging members are relatively easily disengaged subjecting the plate to possible damage and they are unsuitable for use in connection with transparent plates since they are visible through the plates. In some instances, plates have been mounted, in the nature of pictures, in deep frames and shadow boxes, but these for the most part are custom made and expensive such that only the most valuable pieces can be mounted in this manner.

The present invention is directed toward a relatively simple safe holding means for protectively and attractively mounting souvenir and commemorative plates and the like in a manner to permit their use for display and decoration. The article holders, according to the present invention, are designed to enhance the beauty and decorative qualities of the article mounted therein. They are of simple construction, adapted for quantity production in a wide variety of needed sizes and in designs and

materials to satisfy all tastes. They are especially adapted for the attractive display of transparent plates.

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings in which corresponding parts are identified by the same numerals and in which:

FIG. 1 is a front elevation of one form of article holder;

FIG. 2 is a section, on a somewhat enlarged scale, along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1 and in the direction of the arrows;

FIG. 3 is a front elevation of a modified form of article holder;

FIG. 4 is a section, on a somewhat enlarged scale, along the line 4—4 of FIG. 3 and in the direction of the arrows;

FIG. 5 is a front elevation of a still further form of article holder; and

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary section, on a somewhat enlarged scale, on the line 6—6 of FIG. 5.

Referring now to the drawings, and particularly to FIGS. 1 and 2, there is shown a first form of plate or similar article holding device, indicated generally at **10**. The exterior configuration, while shown as octagonal, may be any geometrical or free form shape, or the like, as desired and as appropriate to the plate or other article being mounted therein. The holder comprises a generally flat rigid base member **11** having a central opening **12** of a shape, generally circular, corresponding to the shape of the plate **13** or other article to be mounted. The opening **12** is slightly smaller than the size of the plate **13** and is surrounded by a recessed ledge or shoulder **14**, the outer dimensions of which just slightly exceed the dimensions of plate **13** so as to receive the plate therein. Shoulder **14** is desirably about ¼ to ½ inch wide so as to provide good all around support for the plate **13** resting thereon and the shoulder is recessed by a distance corresponding generally to the thickness of the rim of the plate to be mounted therein.

Although, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the thickness of base member **11** is about the same as or slightly less than the overall height of plate **13** and central opening **12** extends all of the way therethrough, in some instances it may be desirable that base **11** be somewhat thicker than the overall height of the plate and that central opening **12** extend to a depth as great as or greater than the overall height of the plate **13** but not completely through the base. Base **11** is desirably formed from wood or it may be molded in quantity from synthetic resinous plastic material of requisite strength and rigidity.

A cushioning sheet **16** which extends across the full face of base **11**, spanning central opening **12**, is sandwiched between the rim of plate **13** and recessed shoulder **14**. A covering member **17** whose outer perimeter substantially coincides with that of base **11** is secured thereto over cushioning fabric **16** by suitable fastening means, such as screws **18** or the equivalent. As shown, covering member **17** has a central opening **19** whose diameter is slightly less than the diameter of plate **13** such that it forms an overhanging lip about ⅛ to ⅜ inch wide around the rim of plate **13** to hold the same firmly within base **11** resiliently cushioned by fabric sheet **16**. Covering member **17** is desirably transparent so as not to obscure any of plate **13**. It is preferably a transparent rigid synthetic resinous material, such as polymethylmethacrylate sold as Lucite or Plexiglas, or the like.

When the cover member **17** is transparent, then the cushioning sheet **16**, visible through the cover member, is selected as a material of color, texture and design contributing to the overall decorative effect of the article holder

and plate held by it. If the plate is a china plate, then only the border area is visible and this may be coordinated with the plate itself or with the surroundings in which the plate is to be displayed. If the plate **13** is transparent, then the entire expanse of the cushioning sheet **16** is visible and is selected to best show off the beauty of the transparent plate. For example, in the case of a crystal plate on which the design is imprinted in silver, a cushioning sheet **16** of pale blue velvet provides contrast with the silver design and attractively enhances the overall beauty of the plate. Instead of having central opening **19**, the covering member **17**, if transparent, may span the entire opening, not only permitting viewing of the plate but protecting its entire surface.

Covering member **17** may be formed of a translucent or opaque material of any appropriate color or pattern, such as solid color, wood grain, simulated stone, or the like, complementary to the pattern of the plate held within. If the covering member **17** is opaque and plate **13** is transparent, the same consideration must be given in the selection of the cushioning sheet **16** as when the covering member is transparent. However, if both the covering member **17** and plate **13** are opaque, then cushioning sheet **16** may be selected for strictly utilitarian properties and may be felt, thin plastic foam, or the like.

Preferably the cushioning sheet **16** extends over the entire back of the plate **13**, even when the plate itself is opaque, to provide a protective cover over the back of the plate and to protect the surface of the wall **20** against which the plate may be hung. An ornamental hanger **21** is desirably provided secured to the back top surface of base **11** as by nails or screws **22** for suspension from some hanging member **23** in the wall. Alternatively, or in addition to hanger **21**, an easel base may be attached for the purpose of displaying a plate on a shelf or in a cabinet.

Referring now to FIGS. 3 and 4, there is shown a somewhat modified form of article holder, indicated generally at **10A**. Holder **10A** is illustrative of another geometrical shape which the holder may take. It differs from that already described in that the base member is comprised of two parts **24** and **25**. Base portion **24** has a central opening **26** somewhat smaller than the size of plate **13** and base member **25** has a central opening **27** just slightly larger than plate **13** so as to permit the plate to fit within opening **27**. A narrow ledge or shoulder **28** is thus formed on the base portion **24** within the limits of central opening **27** when the base members are assembled. The total thickness of the base members **24** and **25** is shown as slightly less than the overall height of plate **13**. However, if desired, the base member **24** may be somewhat thicker in which the central opening **26** is a dished recess or depression instead of extending all of the way through the base member.

Cushioning sheet **16A** is sandwiched between base members **24** and **25**. If plate **13** is transparent or if base member **25** is transparent, then cushioning sheet **16A** is selected of a material, color and pattern to enhance the beauty of the plate. On the other hand, if both the plate and base member **25** are opaque, then cushioning sheet **16A** may be selected for its utilitarian properties rather than its appearance. Covering member **17A** may be transparent or opaque as already described and if transparent, may have a central opening **19A** or not, as desired. The covering member **17A**, base members **24** and **25** and cushioning sheet **16A** are secured together, as by screws **18A** or other fastening means. A suitable hanger **21A** is also preferably provided.

Referring now to FIGS. 5 and 6, there is shown a further modified form of article holder, indicated generally at **10B**. This holder has a two part base formed of members **24B** and **25B** similar to that already described in connection with FIGS. 3 and 4. However, base member **25B** is somewhat thicker relative to the thickness of the rim of plate **13**. No cover member is utilized to retain plate **13** within the holder but a plurality of spaced apart projections such as transparent pins **29** or tabs extend into the inside edge of base member **25B** so as to engage and overhang the rim of plate **13** to retain the plate therein. Preferably base member **25A** is pre-drilled to receive pins **29** without injury to the plate. Cushioning sheet **16B** is selected to be decorative and/or utilitarian depending upon whether base member **25B** and plate **13**, or either of them, are transparent.

It is apparent that many modifications and variations of this invention as hereinbefore set forth may be made without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. The specific embodiments described are given by way of example only and the invention is limited only by the terms of the appended claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A holder for displaying generally flat three-dimensional decorative or ornamental articles for viewing, said holder comprising:

(A) a generally flat base of dimensions larger than the article to be held,

(B) a central opening in said base, said opening being of the same planar configuration as said article but smaller than said article, and having a depth corresponding generally to the height of the article,

(C) a narrow recessed shoulder surrounding said central opening on the viewing side of the base,

(D) the outer perimeter of said shoulder conforming generally to the configuration of said article whereby the rim of the article may seat on said shoulder,

(E) said shoulder being recessed by a distance at least equal to the thickness of the rim of said article,

(F) a cushioning sheet covering the surface of said shoulder engageable by said article,

(G) rigid means for retaining said article in engagement with said cushioning sheet and shoulder, and

(H) means for supporting said holder for display.

2. A holder according to claim **1** further characterized in that:

(A) said base is of no greater thickness than the height of said article to be held,

(B) said central opening extends through said base, and

(C) said cushioning sheet extends across said opening.

3. A holder according to claim **1** further characterized in that:

(A) said base is comprised of first and second members,

(B) the portion of said central opening in said first member is smaller than said article,

(C) the portion of said central opening in said second member defines the outer perimeter of said shoulder, and

(D) said cushioning sheet is sandwiched between said first and second base members.

4. A holder according to claim **1** further characterized in that:

(A) said shoulder is recessed by a distance approximating the thickness of the rim of the article to be held, and

(B) said means for retaining said article in engagement with said cushioning sheet and shoulder is a generally flat cover member conforming in configuration to said base and secured thereto.

5. A holder according to claim **4** further characterized in that said cover member is transparent.

6. A holder according to claim **5** further characterized in that said cushioning sheet is a decorative fabric having a configuration corresponding to the outer perimeter of said base and sandwiched between said transparent member and said base.

7. A holder according to claim **4** further characterized in that said cover member has a central opening therein conforming in shape to the configuration of said article and smaller than said article, whereby the inner edge of said cover member comprises an overhanging lip engageable with the rim of said article.

8. A holder according to claim 7 further characterized in that said cover member is transparent.

9. A holder according to claim 1 further characterized in that:

(A) said shoulder is recessed by a distance greater than the thickness of the article to be held, and

(B) said means for retaining said article in engagement with the cushioning sheet and shoulder comprises a plurality of spaced apart removable projections extending outwardly from the inner perimeter of the recess.

10. A holder according to claim 9 further characterized in that said projections are transparent pins.

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