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(54) **CHARM JEWELRY ADORNMENT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

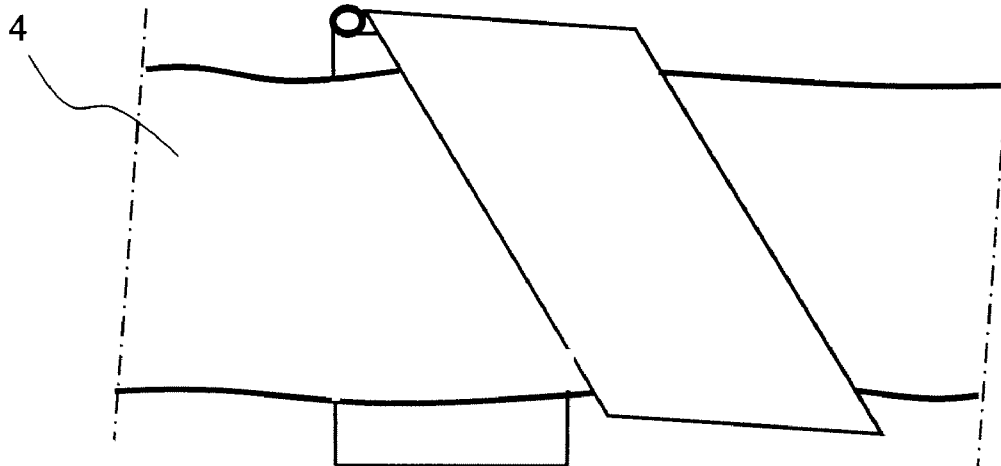
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An adornment attachable to a bracelet, necklace, or anklet, the adornment includes a front element having an inner surface, a rear element having an inner surface opposing the front element inner surface, and at least one hinge configured to hingedly interconnect the front and the rear element. The adornment can include a locking mechanism having a sphere, and a catch piece, wherein the catch piece is configured to capture at least a portion of the sphere to retain the front and rear elements in a closed position.

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

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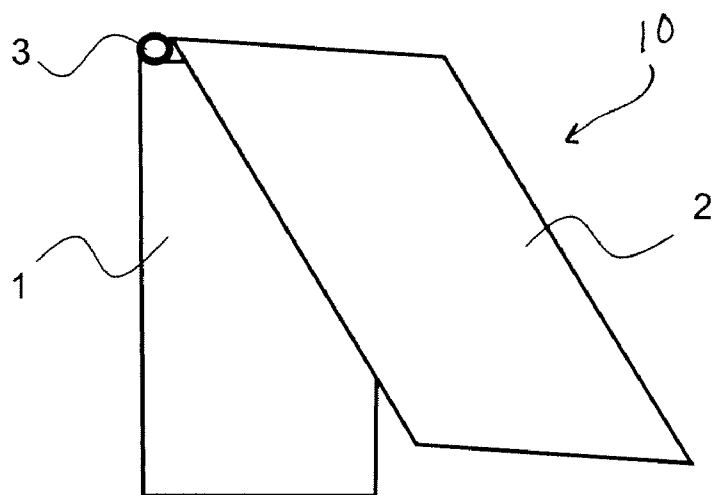


Fig. 1

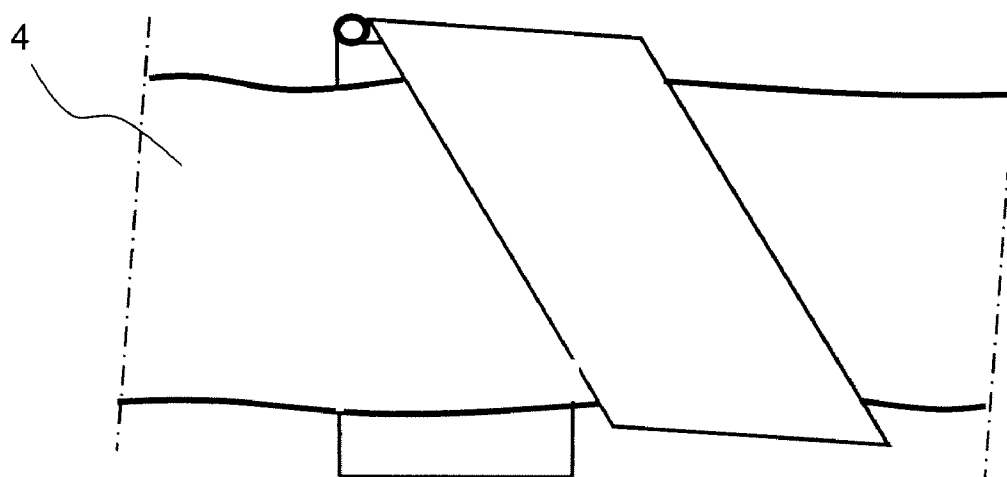


Fig. 2

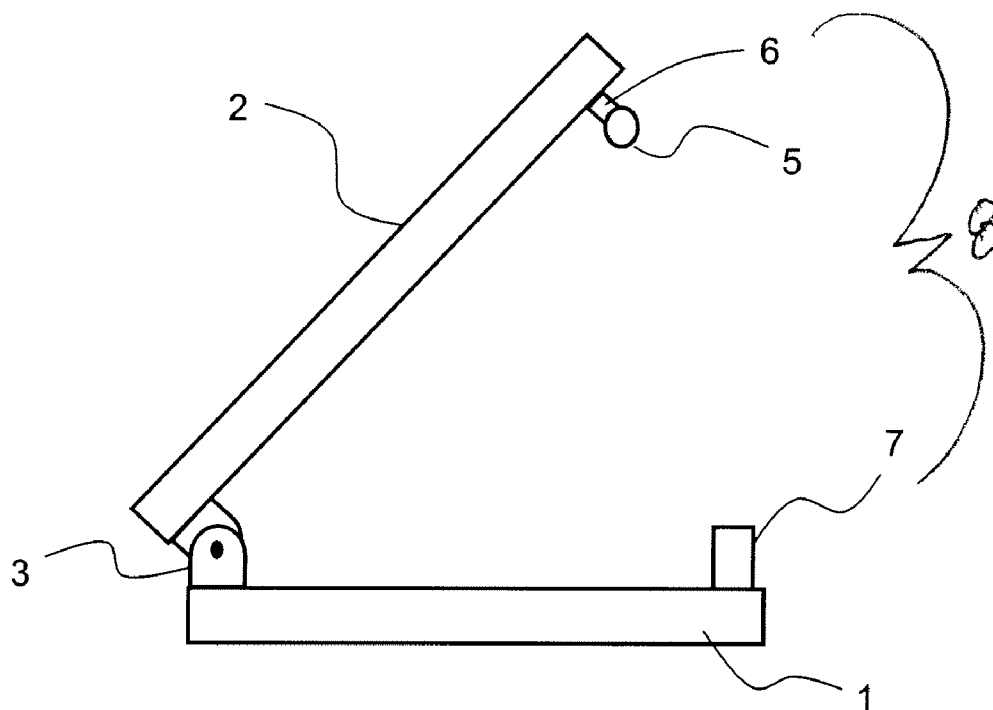


Fig. 3

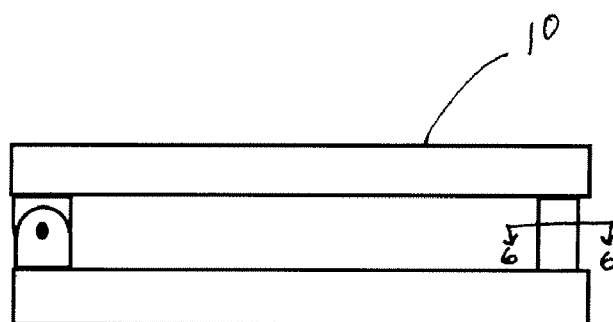


Fig. 4

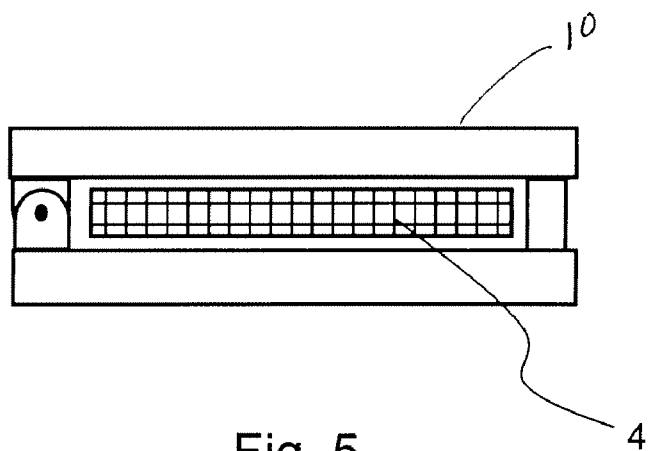


Fig. 5

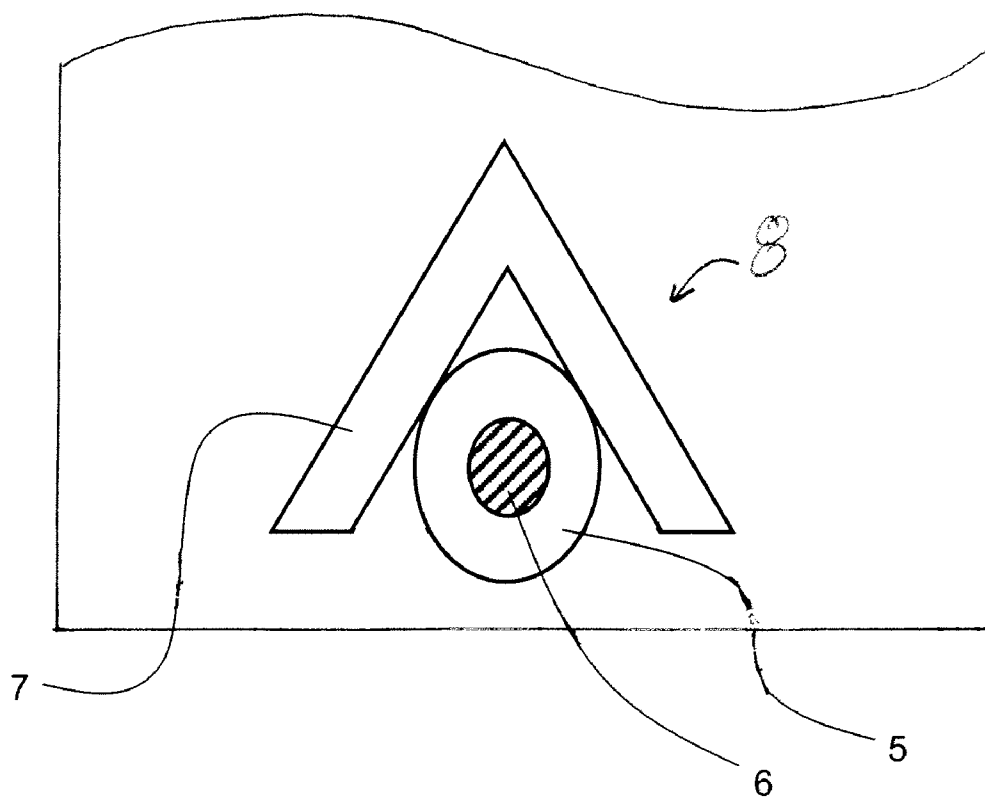


Fig. 6

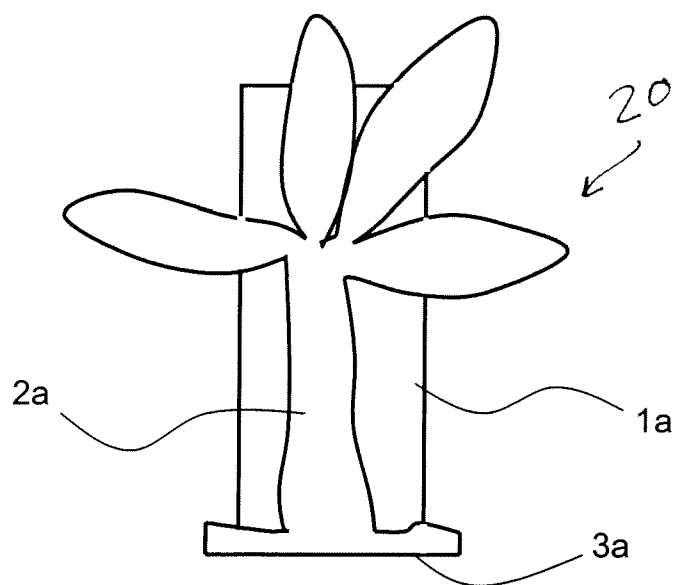


Fig. 7

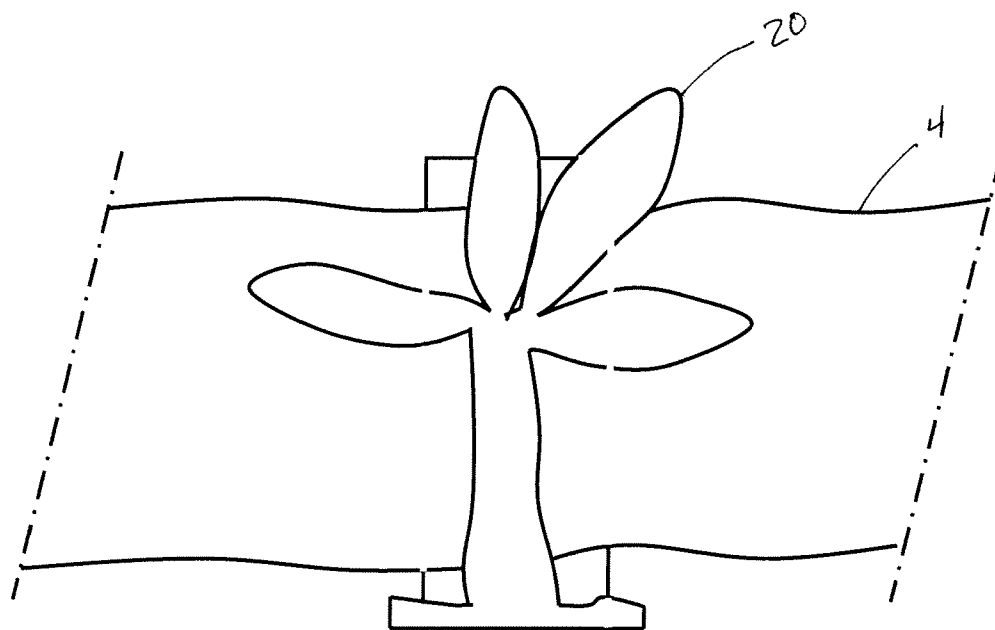


Fig. 8

## CHARM JEWELRY ADORNMENT

### CLAIM OF PRIORITY

[0001] This application is a U.S. national application and claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 to Netherlands Patent Application No. 1038604, filed Feb. 23, 2011, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. Netherlands Application No. 103 8604 was filed in the Dutch language.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The amulets which were produced and used by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans long before the start of our era may be regarded as the forerunners of current charms. A charm bracelet is still a popular jewelry item, particularly among girls and young women.

[0003] A charm bracelet is a bracelet on which small articles, the charms, can be hung. A person wishing to see what was hanging from the bracelet was required first to pay for a new charm to hang from the bracelet. If the prospective viewer did not already have a new charm to hang on the bracelet, then the viewer was required to promise to buy a new charm for the wearer of the bracelet. Making payment in order to obtain a look is called "charming." The individual charms served as a reminder to the wearer of the people who gave them the charms.

[0004] Charms originally were comprised of inexpensive materials, such as glass. Over time, it became more customary to use other materials for charms. Charm bracelets can be comprised of links, where the charms can be attached to a link of the bracelet. With smooth bracelets of a ribbon-like strip shape, the charms can be strung on or over the strip. With such charm bracelets, if one desires to change the order of the charms strung on the bracelet it is often necessary to remove a large quantity of the charms from the bracelet and then re-string the bracelet in the new order.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

[0005] FIG. 1 illustrates a charm jewelry adornment in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

[0006] FIG. 2 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 1 placed around a strip;

[0007] FIG. 3 illustrates a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 in an open position;

[0008] FIG. 4 illustrates a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 in a closed position;

[0009] FIG. 5 illustrates a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 in a closed position around a strip;

[0010] FIG. 6 illustrates a cross sectional view taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 4; and

[0011] FIG. 7 illustrates a charm jewelry adornment in accordance with an embodiment of the invention; and

[0012] FIG. 8 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 7 placed around a strip.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] An aspect of the present invention can be an adornment which by its external features may be used as a charm. The adornment (e.g., the charm) does not have to be strung on a strip. The use of the adornment is not limited to bracelets but is practicable also for necklaces and anklets. Accordingly, an aspect of the present invention relates to an adornment, par-

ticularly in the form of a charm that can be attached to a bracelet, a necklace, and/or an ankle bracelet. The adornment can be formed from silver, gold, platinum, or a combination.

[0014] Embodiments in accordance with the present invention provide an adornment which does not need to be strung on the bracelet or necklace, but which can be readily clamped to a strip, making it easy to arrange, or rearrange, the order of the charms.

[0015] FIG. 1 illustrates charm jewelry adornment 10 in accordance with an aspect of the invention. Adornment 10 includes rear element 1 and front element 2 which are hingedly coupled at one side of their respective perimeters (e.g., a proximate portion), via one or more hinges 3. Additionally, elements 1, 2 need not be the same shape, or size. FIG. 1 depicts the adornment in a partially open hinged state. In this state, adornment 10 can be placed around band-shaped strip 4 of a bracelet, necklace, or anklet, as illustrated schematically in FIG. 2. Adornment 10 is not so limited to just being placed around a band-shaped strip. Adornment 10 can be placed around a strip of any cross section profile, which fits between elements 1, 2 when in a closed position. Adornment 10 can be closed by swinging together the front and rear elements. Strip 4 is then encompassed by the closed adornment 10 between the front and rear elements.

[0016] Even if the front and rear elements are pressed together with the aid of a spring construction to form a kind of clip, this might not provide sufficient assurance that the adornment will not fall off of the bracelet. In accordance with an aspect of the invention, mechanisms are provided to ensure a secure mounting of the adornment on the bracelet.

[0017] FIG. 3 illustrates a side view of adornment 10 in accordance with an aspect of the invention. Rear element 1 and front element 2 are provided with respective catch pieces disposed distal to hinge 3. In this aspect, rear element 1 can have, on a perimeter (e.g., the proximate portion) similar hinge pivots. The hinge pivots can captivate a hinge pin. Front element 2 can also include two hinge pivots spaced apart at a width that is almost equal to the distance between the two hinge pivots on the rear element. The two catch pieces of the rear element are also provided with a hole for accommodating a hinge pin. With the hinge pin inserted through corresponding holes on each of the four hinge pivots (two on front element 2 and two on rear element 1), the front and rear elements are connected together. Hinge 3 formed by the hinge pin and hinge pivots can be spring loaded by bending the hinge pin at each of its ends to be at an angle to its main portion and disposed between the front and rear elements. The spring loaded hinge can apply pressure on the front and rear elements to assist in keeping front element 2 and rear element 1 in a closed position.

[0018] In accordance with an aspect of the invention, the adornment includes locking mechanism 8. On an inner surface of front element 2, which opposes an inner surface of rear element 1, is located sphere 5. Sphere 5 is connected to shaft 6 which in turn is connected to the inner surface of front element 2, at a portion distal from the proximate portion where hinge 3 is located. Sphere 5 and shaft 6 assist in securing adornment 10 after the adornment is applied to surround strip 4.

[0019] In accordance with an aspect of the invention, opposite sphere 5 and shaft 6 on an inner surface of rear element 1 is locking catch piece 7, at a portion distal from the proximate portion where hinge 3 is located. Catch piece 7 engages at least sphere 5 to secure the adornment. Catch piece 7 is

configured so as to clampingly accommodate sphere 5, such that the adornment is then securely closed (as illustrated schematically in FIG. 4), and cannot be reopened unintentionally. The interaction of sphere 5, shaft 6, and catch piece 7 substantially prevents accidental opening of the adornment. Adornment 10 can be opened by intentionally separating catch piece 7 from the combination of sphere 5 and shaft 6.

[0020] FIG. 5 illustrates a side view of adornment 10 in a closed position around a strip 4 (e.g., a bracelet) in accordance with an aspect of the invention. Strip 4 is shown in cross section. FIG. 5 illustrates space between the strip and the adornment's front and rear elements (FIG. 3, items 2, 1) such that adornment 10 can be readily moved along the strip 4. It might not be always desirable for this to occur. At least some of the wearers of, for example, a charm bracelet or necklace, may choose to avoid unintentional mobility of the attached charm. In accordance with an aspect of the invention, a plug, or the like, comprised of deformable elastic material—e.g., rubber, can be positioned between one or more inner surfaces of adornment 10 and strip 4, where the thickness of the plug is such that, when the adornment is applied to the strip and closed, the plug is sufficiently deformed to function as a “brake” that prevents movement of the adornment along the strip. The plug can be applied to the adornment by means of, e.g., an adhesive.

[0021] According to another aspect of the invention, another mechanism to prevent unintended movement, along the strip, of an adornment can include the provision of projections on the surface of the rear and/or the front element of the adornment. These projections can be an integral part of the adornment. When the adornment is closed over a strip, such a projection presses locally against the strip, thereby preventing movement of the adornment. Because this solution can result in damage to the bracelet itself, it is not an advisable solution for expensive bracelets which are intended to have a long service life.

[0022] FIG. 6 illustrates a cross sectional view taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 4. With the adornment in the closed state, catch piece 7 is intersected by shaft 6 bearing sphere 5. FIG. 6 depicts that the sphere 5 is clampingly accommodated in the catch piece 7. In accordance with an aspect of the invention, catch piece 7 has a v-shaped cross section. When the adornment is clampingly held closed, the sphere is compressively disposed in the v-shaped space between the inner walls of the two upright sides of catch piece 7. Depending on the fit, an elastic deformation of one or more of the parts consisting of shaft 6, sphere 5, and catch piece 7 can occur. The elastic deformation serves to provide a good clamping force. Locking mechanism 8 need not be based on a continuous force, involving elastic stresses exerted by catch piece 7 on sphere 5. The closure mechanism can be comprised of, for example, a catch piece where sphere 5 must be pressed over a barrier ridge, or opposing ridges, located on catch piece 7 by a momentary elastic deformation of at least one of catch piece 7, shaft 6, and/or sphere 5 so as to capture the sphere. In another aspect, catch piece 7 can include a recess in one or more walls that capture at least a portion of sphere 5. These recesses can be located below the ridge(s), if present, to create an even more secure closure. To open adornment 10, the sphere is moved back over the barrier ridge, and/or out of the recess. Numerous other aspects of closures are possible within the scope of the invention.

[0023] FIG. 7 illustrates charm jewelry adornment 20 in accordance with an aspect of the invention of the present

disclosure. The front and rear elements of the adornment do not both consist of a rectangular element. Instead, adornment 20 is comprised of a rectangular rear element 1a and a front element 2a configured as a stylized tree which is planar or substantially planar, provided that front element 2a extends to reach corresponding latch portion of rear element 1a. Rear element 1a and front element 2a are hinged together by a hinge 3a. In this aspect, the locking mechanism (described above) is disposed behind the trunk of the stylized tree, in the region of the bottom of the trunk, distal from hinge 3a. Embodiments of the invention are not so limited to be just rectangular or stylized trees in shape. For example, both the front and rear elements can be the same, or different, stylized shape.

[0024] FIG. 8 illustrates adornment 20, wherein the adornment is placed around a strip. Adornment 20 can be placed around strip 4 by opening hinge 3a and with adornment 20 in the opened state, sliding adornment 20 over strip 4, where-with rear element 1a is disposed behind the rear side of strip 4 and front element 2a is disposed in front of a front side of strip 4. Then locking mechanism 8 is pressed shut, after which adornment 20 is now fixed to the strip. Unintended mobility of adornment 20 may be prevented by placement of a plug (described above) positioned between the adornment and the strip, or by projections on the adornment which press against the strip, as described above.

[0025] In accordance with an aspect of the invention, elements 1, 2 need not be generally flat, but can be convex, concave and any other configuration.

[0026] While there have been shown and described fundamental novel features of the invention as applied to one or more aspects, it will be understood that various omissions, substitutions, and changes in the form, detail, and operation of these aspects may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Substitutions of elements from one aspect to another are also fully intended and contemplated. The invention is defined solely with regard to the claims appended hereto, and equivalents of the recitations therein.

1. An adornment attachable to a bracelet, necklace, or anklet, the adornment comprising:

- a front element having an inner surface;
  - a rear element having an inner surface opposing the inner surface of the front element; and
  - at least one hinge configured to hingedly interconnect the front and the rear element;
- wherein when in a closed position the front element and the rear element form an aperture that accommodates a strip, wherein the strip is at least one of a bracelet, anklet, and necklace.

2. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the hinge is mounted on the respective inner surfaces of the front and the rear elements.

3. The adornment of claim 1, wherein at least one of the respective inner surfaces is substantially flat.

4. The adornment of claim 1, further including:

- a distal portion of the front element and a distal portion of the rear element include mating portions of a locking mechanism configured to resist unintended opening of the adornment.

5. The adornment of claim 4, wherein the locking mechanism includes:

a sphere; and

a catch piece, wherein the catch piece includes at least one of a ridge and a recess configured to capture at least a portion of the sphere.

6. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the hinge includes a spring that exerts a force on the front element and the rear element, whereby the adornment can be applied to a ribbon-shaped strip in a self-clamping manner.

7. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the adornment is comprised of at least one of silver, gold, and platinum.

8. The adornment of claim 1, further including a plug of deformable elastic material located between the respective inner surfaces of the front element and the rear elements.

9. The adornment of claim 8, wherein when the adornment is in a closed position the plug is compressible between at least one of the respective inner surfaces and the strip so that the adornment resists movement along the strip.

10. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the adornment is mechanically coupled to the strip without mechanically decoupling other adornments previously mechanically coupled to the strip.

11. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the respective inner surfaces of the front and the rear elements comprise projections, whereby each projection presses against the strip when the adornment is in a closed position to reduce movement of the adornment along the strip.

12. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the rear element is rectangular and the front element is substantially planar, whereby a locking mechanism is located behind the front element and distal from the hinge.

13. The adornment of claim 5, wherein when the catch piece contains both the ridge and the recess, and the recess is located below the ridge.

14. The adornment of claim 1, wherein the strip is a charm bracelet.

15. An adornment attachable to a bracelet, necklace, or anklet, the adornment comprising:

a front element having an inner surface;

a rear element having an inner surface opposing the inner surface of the front element; and

at least one hinge coupled to a proximate portion of the front element and to a proximate portion of the rear element, the at least one hinge configured to hingedly interconnect the front and the rear element;

wherein when in a closed position the front element and the rear element form an aperture that accommodates a strip, wherein the strip is at least one of a bracelet, anklet, and necklace.

16. The adornment of claim 10, further including:

a distal portion of the front element and a distal portion of the rear element include mating portions of a locking mechanism configured to resist unintended opening of the adornment.

17. The adornment of claim 11, wherein the locking mechanism includes:

a sphere; and

a catch piece, wherein the catch piece includes at least one of a ridge and a recess configured to capture at least a portion of the sphere.

18. The adornment of claim 10, wherein the hinge includes a spring which exerts a force on the front element and the rear element, whereby the adornment can be applied to a ribbon-shaped strip in a self-clamping manner.

19. The adornment of claim 10, further including a plug of deformable elastic material located between the respective inner surfaces of the front element and the rear elements.

20. The adornment of claim 14, wherein when the adornment is in a closed position the plug is compressible between at least one of the respective inner surfaces and the strip so that the adornment resists movement along the strip.

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