

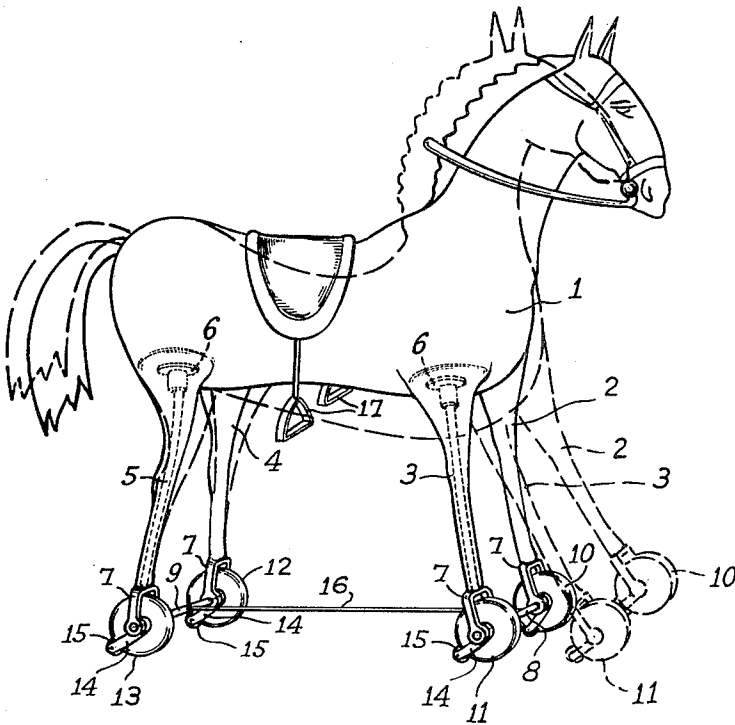
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RIDABLE TOY ANIMAL

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1

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RIDABLE TOY ANIMAL

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1 Claim. (Cl. 280—1.183)

This invention relates to the field of toys and more particularly to toys which conform to the shape of animals or similar objects and which are capable of supporting a child who can, by his own movements, produce a unidirectional motion therein.

Toys in the form of a horse, or other animal, having all four legs articulated with respect to the body and spring-loaded in such a way that vertical movements of the mounted child cause the front legs to alternately move away from and towards the rear legs, are already well-known in the art. Such devices are usually furnished with ratchet wheels which permit the toy to move in only one direction under the effect of the child's movements.

This toy is realistic enough since the child imitates, more or less, the movements of a rider and since the toy horse advances by moving its limbs.

On the other hand no attempt at all is made to achieve realism with regard to the appearance of a real horse since the materials used and the shapes employed (which must necessarily be simple) are far removed from reality, principally for reasons of economy.

Moreover, the various motion-production mechanisms previously conceived are complicated, fragile and expensive, if for no other reason than that the very conception according to which these prior art toys were constructed, made it necessary that such joints, pivots and other organs be used.

The present invention overcomes all of these inconveniences and shortcomings, since it envisions an animal, the appearance and texture of which approximates more closely those of a real animal, and also since it does not require any delicate or complicated mechanism.

To these ends, the object of the present invention is the provision of a toy in the form of an animal, the forward and rear members of which can be spread apart from each other elastically and which rest on wheels which include means for permitting movement in only one direction, characterized in that the body of this animal is constituted by a flexible pneumatic chamber upon which are affixed, preferably in a detachable manner, the rigid limbs of the animal.

According to one particular embodiment of the present invention, the front legs are connected to the rear legs by one or several detachable elastic bands.

According to one feature of the present invention, the unidirectional movement of the wheels is obtained by means of a small wheel which acts as a wedge and which is attached to a stirrup in such a way as to be tangent to its wheel, the stirrup being in turn pivotally mounted on the axle of each wheel in such a way as to straddle its respective wheel, or by means of a metallic tongue affixed to the horse's legs in such a way as to become engaged in the teeth of a ratchet which rotates with its respective wheel axle.

Other features of the present invention will become better understood from the following detailed description taken in connection with the attached drawing which illustrates the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

The figure represents a perspective view of a toy according to the present invention, the dotted lines showing one of its positions when in use, i.e. when subjected to the weight of a rider.

2

As it is shown in the figure, the toy according to the present invention is in the form of a horse and is constituted by an inflatable envelope made from a suitable synthetic material.

The envelope comprises a body portion 1 (including the head and the neck) carrying four rigid bases or sockets 6 which are cemented or otherwise securely joined to body portion 1. The four legs 2, 3, 4 and 5 are rigid in nature and have their upper ends screwed into or otherwise suitably secured in the sockets 6 for connection by the latter to body portion 1. The other or lower ends of the legs 2-5 are rigidly connected to respective yokes 7, and the latter rotatably support the axles 8 and 9 on which rolling wheels 10, 11, 12 and 13 are mounted.

Stirrups 14 extend from the axles 8 and 9 and carry small solid wheels or castors 15 which are mounted for free rotation.

Finally, an elastic cord 16 is connected between the two axles 8 and 9.

When the child is mounted in the saddle, he alternately raises himself up in the stirrups 17 and allows himself to fall back into the saddle. In allowing himself to fall back, he deforms the pneumatic envelope 1 so that it conforms to the outline shown in broken lines, and thereby tends to cause the front legs 2 and 3 to move away from the rear legs 4 and 5. The small wheels 15, which are tangent to their respective large wheels and which are mounted to the rear of the respective axles 8 and 9, become wedged between the rear wheels 12 and 13 and the ground, thus preventing these wheels from moving rearwardly. However, these small wheels do not prevent forward movement of their respective legs, so that the wheels 10 and 11 are permitted to move forward and the resulting forward movement of legs 2 and 3 relative to legs 4 and 5 creates tension in the elastic cord 16.

When the child raises himself up, the envelope 1 regains its original shape (solid lines) because the elastic cord 16 pulls the axles 8 and 9 back towards their original separation. At this time, the small wheels act as wedges to prevent the backward movement of wheels 10 and 11 and permit the wheels 12 and 13 to move forward. The child's vertical movements have thus been translated into a forward movement of the horse.

One important advantage of the toy which has just been described resides in the fact that it can be stored in a very small space when it is deflated.

In order to prevent the envelope from experiencing an excessive amount of wear due to flexure at the points where the legs are joined thereto, the legs can be connected in two pairs transversally across the body 1 so as to prevent any excessive stretching.

According to the weight of the child, extra elastic cords 16 can be added since they are easily removable from the axles 8 and 9, being simply hooked thereon.

In order to assure a better braking of the wheels, the small casters can be given an irregular shape. The manner in which the stirrups 14 are mounted also easily permits them to be easily rotated around axles 8 and 9 so that the castors 15 rest in front of their respective wheels and thus force the horse to move backward. By placing only the casters associated with wheels 10 and 11 towards the front, one suppresses all movement of the toy, while the placing of all of the casters in such a way that they rest on the upper parts of the wheels causes the legs to move forward and back but prevents the animal from travelling in any direction.

In a second embodiment of the present invention, the wheels 10-13 could each be provided with a metallic tongue which is fastened to a respective leg and which engages a ratchet wheel which is integrally connected for rotation with its respective wheel.

3

The inflatable envelope gives the impression of a true horse for more than do those constructed from wood or other hard material. In order to increase the simulation, the envelope could be given a coating of artificial hair or fur by gluing, or by other suitable means.

While there have herein been described several preferred forms which this invention may take, it should be understood that many modifications are possible without departing from the spirit thereof and that the scope of the present invention is intended to be limited only by the breadth of the appended claim.

What I claim is:

A toy conforming to the shape of an animal for permitting a child to simulate riding of said animal, comprising: a pneumatic envelope constituting a body portion in the shape of the torso, head and neck of said animal, a plurality of rigid base members equal in number to the number of limbs possessed by said animal and mounted on said envelope at locations corresponding to the junctions of the limbs of said animal with its torso, a

4

plurality of rigid limbs equal in number to said base members, each of said limbs being detachably secured at its upper end to a respective one of said base members, a plurality of main wheels each of which is mounted in a freely rotatable manner on the lower extremity of a respective one of said limbs, a pair of axles, one of said axles joining the axes of said wheels mounted on the front limbs of said animal and the other of said axles joining the axes of said wheels mounted on the rear limbs of said animal, and at least one extensible elastic band detachably connected between said pair of axles.

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