HAND LUGGAGE WITH INTERCHANGEABLE DECORATIVE TRIM SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT
An illustrative embodiment of a system for handbags, purses, clutches and other such hand luggage includes a plurality of interchangeable decorative trims that are releasably attachable to a coupling device. One or more coupling devices are attached along the circumference of and adjacent to the upper rim of the hand luggage. The interchangeable decorative trims each include one or more corresponding coupling devices. Each coupling device and corresponding coupling device pair can be, for example, a pair of magnets or a magnet and a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic element. The decorative accessories may be, for example, a ribbon, fringe, a scarf, or other trim having an aesthetic element.
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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/804,740, filed Jun. 14, 2006, and titled PURSE WITH REPLACEABLE FRINGE, which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

The present invention relates to apparel accessories, and particularly, to a system of interchangeable decorative trims for hand luggage such as purses, handbags, and the like.

SUMMARY

The present invention may comprise one or more of the features recited in the attached claims, and/or one or more of the following features and combinations thereof. An illustrative embodiment of a system for handbags, purses, clutches and other such hand luggage includes a plurality of interchangeable decorative trims that are releasably attachable to a coupling device. One or more coupling devices are attached along the circumference of and adjacent to the upper rim of the handbag. The interchangeable decorative trims each include one or more corresponding coupling devices. Each coupling device and corresponding coupling device pair can be, for example, a pair of magnets or a magnet and a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic element. The decorative accessories may be, for example, a ribbon, fringe, a scarf, or other trim having an aesthetic element.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The detailed description particularly refers to the accompanying figures in which:

FIG. 1 shows a first illustrative embodiment of the invention, including hand luggage and a releasably attachable decorative trim, the hand luggage and trim each having corresponding coupling devices;

FIG. 2 shows a second illustrative embodiment of the invention, including hand luggage and a releasably attachable decorative trim, the decorative trim having corresponding fastening devices at opposite ends;

FIGS. 3A and 3B respectively show corresponding cross sections of magnetic coupling devices contained within the decorative trim and the circumference of the hand luggage opening;

FIGS. 4A and 5A respectively show a first and second illustrative decorative trim each having a coupling device;

FIG. 4B shows the hand luggage of the first illustrative embodiment having the first decorative trim of FIG. 4A releasably attached thereto;

FIG. 5B shows the hand luggage of the first illustrative embodiment having the decorative wrap positioned around the circumference of the hand luggage opening handheld in place with the second to decorative trim of FIG. 5A;

FIG. 6 shows a cross-section of the illustrative decorative trim and of FIG. 3A with an alternative magnetic coupling device;

FIGS. 7A and 7B respectively show the first and second illustrative decorative trims of FIGS. 3A and 3B each having alternative coupling devices;

FIG. 8 shows an alternative illustrative embodiment of the hand luggage of FIG. 1 having alternative coupling devices along the circumference of and adjacent the hand luggage opening; and

FIG. 9 shows an illustrative system of interchangeable decorative trims each having a different aesthetic element.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

For the purposes of promoting and understanding the principals of the invention, reference will now be made to one or more illustrative embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same.

The present invention comprises hand luggage 100, for example a purse, handbag, clutch, or the like, to which a decorative trim 101 may be detachably affixed to the upper outer rim 102 defined around the opening 104 to the interior 106 of the hand luggage 100. It is contemplated that the user may maintain a variety of decorative trims 101 of different colors, styles, or other aesthetic attributes, for example, to match the particular clothing worn by the user. Thus, a particular trim may be selected and easily releasably coupled to the upper portion of the hand luggage 100, for example, around the rim 102, so that the overall appearance of the hand luggage 100 and the trim 101 combination matches the attire of the hand luggage user. In general, the hand luggage also includes an exterior surface 108, for example, comprised of fabric, leather, or faux leather/vinyl, and may also include a separate interior liner 106.

In the illustrative embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the decorative trim 101 includes aesthetic elements 110 and forms a loop or band which is sized to be moved downwards (as shown in FIG. 1) into a position adjacent the rim 102, for example, around and outside of the rim 102. Advantageously, the hand luggage 100 includes at least one coupling device 120 positioned along the rim 102 and the decorative trim 101 includes at least one corresponding coupling device 130. The coupling devices 120 and 130 can be magnets or pairs each having a corresponding magnets and in element responsive to and intractable to the magnet, for example a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic element such as metal.

Additionally or alternatively, and as shown in FIG. 1, the outer diameter of the hand luggage 100 in the illustrative embodiment is sized so that it is generally smaller in circumference near the upper edge 112 than it is for at least a portion of its length distal from the upper edge 112. This relative change in circumference further secures the decorative trim 101 by preventing further distal (downward) movement from a particular desired position distal from or immediately adjacent the edge 112.

In one embodiment, the coupling devices 120 are position between the exterior surface 108 and the interior liner 106. The magnets are positioned so that the same
magnetic polarity (e.g., either north or south) faces the exterior of the hand luggage 100 on both the front and back sides of the hand luggage 100. For coupling devices 120 and/or 130 comprising a magnet, the magnet can, for example, include neodymium (Nd—Fe—B) and have a nickel or other protective coating, or be another relatively thin, but strong magnet. A magnet with a Maximum Energy Product (BH) max of 89 MGOe or MoG0e or more may be suitable for hand luggage 100 and trim 101 of typical size and weight. For a combined magnet and magnetically attractive element applications, a magnet with a sufficient pull force to retain the trim 101 in position is used. The strength of the magnet uses for coupling devices 120 and/or 130 may vary depending on the trim weight, thickness of materials separating the coupling devices 120 and 130, and other related variables.

[0021] Optionally, and as shown in FIG. 1, the opening 104 of the hand luggage may also include a closure 140 to help hold opposite sides of the rim 102 together and hold closed the opening 104 of the hand luggage 100. For example, closure 140 may include a pair of magnets 140 and 144 that use magnetic attraction to draw and hold the opposite sides of the rim 102 together. Optionally, the decorative trim 101 may also include one or more corresponding coupling devices 130 located to magnetically attractably engage with one or both of the magnets 142 and 144.

[0022] Referring now to FIG. 2, a second illustrative embodiment of the invention includes hand luggage 200 and decorative trim 202. In this illustrative example, the member forming decorative trim 202 is in the approximate shape of an elongate strip having opposite ends 214 and 215. Each end 214 and 215 of the trim 202 may optionally and respectively include releasable fastening devices 216 and 217. For example, releasable fastening devices 216 and 217 may be hook and loop, hook and eylet, or other fasteners for releasably positioning the trim 202 around the periphery of the rim 202 as shown in FIG. 2.

[0023] Additionally or alternatively, and similarly to the illustrative embodiment in FIG. 1, the hand luggage 200 includes at least one coupling device 220 positioned along the rim 202 and the decorative trim 201 includes at least one corresponding coupling device 230. The coupling devices 220 and 230 also can be magnets or pairs each having a corresponding magnet and an element responsive to and attractive to the magnet, for example a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic element such as metal. The coupling devices 230 associated with the trim 201 are spaced to align with the corresponding coupling devices 220 that are associated with the hand luggage 200 when the trim 201 is wrapped around the rim 202 of the hand luggage 200.

[0024] FIG. 3A illustrates a cross-sectional view of decorative trim 201 cut through one of the coupling devices 230. Similarly, FIG. 3B illustrates a cross-sectional view of rim 202 cut through one of the corresponding coupling devices 220. One method for manufacturing the decorative trims 201 and the hand luggage 200 is to provide a positioning layer 222 for example, a strip of fabric or plastic strip, onto which coupling devices 220 and 230 can be properly spaced, and if magnets, positioned with the proper orientation of the magnetic field. For example, the magnets are oriented so that coupling devices 220 and 230 provide a magnetic attraction when decorative trim 201 is positioned around rim 202 of the hand luggage 200. To temporarily hold the magnets, for example, the coupling device 220 shown in FIG. 3B, on the positioning layer 222 during manufacturing, an adhesive layer 224 fabric based hockey tape, may be placed over the magnets to secure them to the positioning layer 222. The edges of the adhesive layer 224 may then be sewn to the positioning layer 222 to provide a permanent attachment that securely holds the coupling devices 220 in position. A similar construction can be used to position and secure coupling devices 230 to positioning layers 232.

[0025] Alternatively or additionally, adhesives 234 such as hot glue, GLUE DOTS (trademark of Ellsworth Adhesive Company), or other permanent adhesives can be used to attach the coupling devices 220 and 230 to the positioning layers 222 and 232, as is illustrated in FIG. 6. Alternatively, other materials or suitable attachments and adhesion systems that do not significantly compromise the magnetic qualities of the coupling devices 220 and 230 may be used.

[0026] The combined coupling devices 220 and positioning layer 222 may then be affixed to the hand luggage 200 and combined coupling devices 230 and positioning layer 232 to the decorative trim 201. For example, positioning layer 222 and 232 can be glued or sewn to a portion of material forming the hand luggage 200 and decorative trim 201 respectively. For example, as shown in FIG. 3A, the coupling devices 230 and positioning layer 232 are wrapped within a cover layer 236, for example a fabric or other appropriately aesthetic material, and are glued, sewn, or otherwise attached to a decorative layer 238 to which aesthetic elements 210 are attached or otherwise incorporated. The coupling devices 220 and positioning layer 222 can be similarly wrapped in a cover layer and attached to the rim 202, or, as shown in FIG. 3B, the coupling devices 220 and positioning layer 222 can be positioned, for example by sewing, gluing, or otherwise fixing, between the inner lining 206 and the exterior surface 208 of the hand luggage 200 adjacent edge 212 of rim 202.

[0027] Another illustrative embodiment of the invention shown in FIGS. 4A and 4B includes a decorative trim 301 having coupling device 330, for example a magnet, and an aesthetic element 310, in this example a material resembling a flower. As shown in FIG. 4B, the decorative trim 301 can be releasably attached to the hand luggage 300, for example, along the rim 302. As with other embodiments, the coupling device 330 is held by engagement with a corresponding coupling device 320 associated with the hand luggage 300. The coupling devices 320 and 330 can include a pair of magnets or a magnet and a material responsive to and attracted to the magnet, for example a material including metal or other element responsive to and attractable to the magnet.

[0028] Referring now to FIGS. 5A and 5B, in another illustrative embodiment, users desiring to utilize a trim 401 or other decoration made from the fabric of their own selection, such as a scarf, can releasably attach the trim 401 to hand luggage 400 using coupling device 430. For example, coupling device 430 may be a neodymium magnet provided with a decorative element 410. For example, the decorative element 410, such as a button, fabric flower, or brooch, can be attached to one said magnet or other coupling device 430 by sewing, gluing, or otherwise permanently adhering the two together. The trim 401, for example a scarf or other piece of fabric, may be easily wrapped around the rim 402 of the hand luggage 400 as shown in FIG. 5B and
adhered to the hand luggage 400 by use of the single coupling device 430 positioned over the trim 401 and a corresponding coupling device 420 associated with the hand luggage 400. It is preferable that for such an arrangement, that the weight of the trim 401 itself does not pull the coupling device 430 holding it to the hand luggage 400 away from the hand luggage 400. The decorated coupling device 430 may also be used alone as a single decoration for the hand luggage 400 that adheres to any one of the coupling device 420 associated with the hand luggage 400 as shown in FIG. 4B.

[0029] In one illustrative embodiment of the invention, a system includes a plurality of decorative trims 501 according to the above disclosure and illustrated in FIG. 9. For example, the decorative trims 501 may include an almost limitless variety of styles, compositions, colors, and other aesthetic aspects. For example, features of decorative trims 501 may include decorative fabric, leathers, fur, or faux fur, fringed fabric, leather or suede, chains, ribbons, and the like.

[0030] Referring to FIG. 7B, in one illustrative embodiment, the coupling devices 220 are magnets and the front and/or the back sides of the hand luggage 201 may also have a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic member 226, such as an iron or steel disc or washer (or other ferrous metal members made of nickel, cobalt, or steel alloys), affixed between the magnet 220 and the interior liner 206. One purpose of the member 226 is to prevent the magnets 220 on the front side of the hand luggage 200 from repelling the magnets 220 on the back side of the hand luggage 200. For example, if all magnets 220 associated with the hand luggage 200 have the north pole facing toward the exterior of the hand luggage 200, the south poles of the magnet will all face the interior of the hand luggage 200. Normally, this would cause the front and the back sides of the hand luggage 200 to be repelled from each other, thereby causing the top rim 202 of the hand luggage 200 to be propelled open. However, by interposing a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic member 226 between at least one of the sets of magnets 220, both magnets 220 on opposing sides of the member 226 are attracted to the member 226, and therefore secure the sides of the hand luggage 200 to each other. Another purpose of the member 226 is to act as a block to the magnetic fields inside the hand luggage 200. This will redirect the magnetic fields in order to protect magnetically sensitive items that are placed in the hand luggage 200, such as credit cards. Another purpose of member 226 is to direct a stronger magnetic field to attract coupling devices 230 and more securely position trim 201.

[0031] One concern is ensuring that the coupling devices 230 associated with the decorative trim 201 line up with the coupling devices 220 associated with the hand luggage 200. A higher confidence of magnetic attraction may be obtained by utilizing coupling devices 220 associated with the hand luggage 200 which have a larger surface area than the coupling devices 230 associated with the trim 201, as illustrated in FIG. 8. In fact, it is possible to utilize larger coupling devices 220 for example, rectangles of about 0.4 x 0.7 inches in size with the hand luggage 200, and circular or other shaped coupling devices 230 of about 0.5 inches in diameter with the decorative trim 200. Alternatively, coupling devices 220 and 230 of the same size and shape may be used in both the hand luggage 200 and the trim 201 to ensure precise placement of trims 201 around the rim 202, if a high enough level of quality control is possible in the manufacturing process for the hand luggage 200 and trims 201.

[0032] As illustrated in FIG. 7A, it is also possible to use as a base strip 230 for the decorative trim 201 a material comprised of a ferric metal, such as a steel chain, discs, plates or other ferric metal members. If the coupling devices 220 associated with the hand luggage 200 are magnets of sufficient magnetic strength, such a decorative trim 201 including or substantially comprising metal or another ferromagnetic or paramagnetic material would not require magnets, but would be held in place solely by the magnetic attraction between the magnets 220 associated with the hand luggage 200 and the metallic elements 230 of the decorative trim 201.

[0033] In an alternate embodiment, the coupling devices 220 associated with the hand luggage 200 may include a ferromagnetic or paramagnetic material, such as a metallic element or ferric surface or ferric strip. In such an embodiment, the coupling devices 230 associated with the decorative trim 201 include magnets of suitable strength to adhere the trim 201 to the hand luggage 200.

[0034] While the invention has been illustrated and described in detail in the foregoing drawings and description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only illustrative embodiments thereof have been shown and described and that all changes and modifications that come within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims are desired to be protected. For example, aspects of one illustrative embodiment may also be incorporated with any of the other illustrative embodiments disclosed herein. For example, some or all of the features shown in and described for FIGS. 2-9 may also be incorporated into or substituted for features of the illustrative embodiment shown and described for FIG. 1.

1. An apparel accessory system, comprising:
   - hand luggage having a rim, the circumference of which
     forms an opening to an interior of the hang luggage;
   - a first coupling device positioned adjacent the rim;
   - a plurality of interchangeable decorative trims;
   - a second coupling device associated with each of the plurality of interchangeable decorative trims, the second coupling devices adapted to releasably engage the first coupling device.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second coupling devices includes a magnet.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein at least one of the first and second coupling devices includes a magnet and the other of the first and second coupling devices includes an element responsive to and attachable to the magnet.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein:
   - the first coupling device includes a magnet and a member having an element responsive to and attachable to the magnet;
   - the member being approximately aligned with and positioned on top of the magnet;
   - the member is located toward the interior of the hand luggage and the magnet toward an exterior of the hand luggage; and
   - the member is at least sized to be overlying approximately a substantial portion of the magnet.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein:
the hand luggage rim includes an interior layer and an exterior layer; and
the first coupling device is located between the interior layer and the exterior layer.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein:
each of the plurality of interchangeable decorative trims includes an outer layer having an aesthetic element and an inner layer; and
the second coupling device is located between the outer layer and at least a portion of the inner layer.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second coupling devices is fastened to a flexible substrate extending along at least a length of at least one of the rim and the decorative trim.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprises a magnetic closure for the opening.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the exterior diameter of the hand luggage increases distal the rim.

10. An apparel accessory system, comprising:
hand luggage having a rim, the circumference of which forms an opening to an interior of the hand luggage;
a plurality of elongate interchangeable decorative trims, each having first and second ends and adapted to wrap around the hand luggage rim; and
first and second fastening devices, the first and second fastening devices releasably engageable and respectively associated with the first and second ends of the plurality of interchangeable decorative trims.

11. The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a first coupling device positioned adjacent the rim; and
a second coupling device associated with each of the plurality of interchangeable decorative trims, the second coupling devices adapted to releasably engage the first coupling device; and
wherein at least one of the first and second coupling devices includes a magnet and the other of the first and second coupling devices includes an element responsive to and attractable to the magnet.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein:
the first coupling device includes a magnet and a member having an element responsive to and attractable to the magnet;
the member being approximately aligned with and positioned on top of the magnet;
the member is located toward the interior of the hand luggage and the magnet toward an exterior of the hand luggage; and
the member is at least sized to be overlying approximately a substantial portion of the magnet.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein:
the hand luggage rim includes an interior layer and an exterior layer; and
the first coupling device is located between the interior layer and the exterior layer.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein:
each of the plurality of interchangeable decorative trims includes an outer layer having an aesthetic element and an inner layer; and
the second coupling device is located between the outer layer and at least a portion of the inner layer.

15. The system of claim 11, further comprises a magnetic closure for the opening and wherein the first coupling devices is associated with the magnet closure.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein the exterior diameter of the hand luggage increases distal the rim.

17. Hand luggage, comprising:
a rim, the circumference of which forms an opening in the hand luggage; and
a decorative trim adapted to be releasably attachable to the rim.

18. The hand luggage of claim 17, further comprising:
a first coupling device associated with the rim;
a second coupling device associated with the decorative trim; and
the first and second coupling devices releasably engageable.

19. The hand luggage of claim 18, wherein at least one of the first and second coupling devices includes magnetic properties and the first and second coupling devices are adapted to be engageable with a magnet force.

20. The hand luggage of claim 18, further comprising a decorative wrap located along at least a portion of the outer circumference of the rim and between the first coupling device and the second coupling device.

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