June 2, 1964 H. G. HAAS ETAL 3,135,058

FURNITURE STYLE AND FABRIC SELECTOR

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FIG. 2

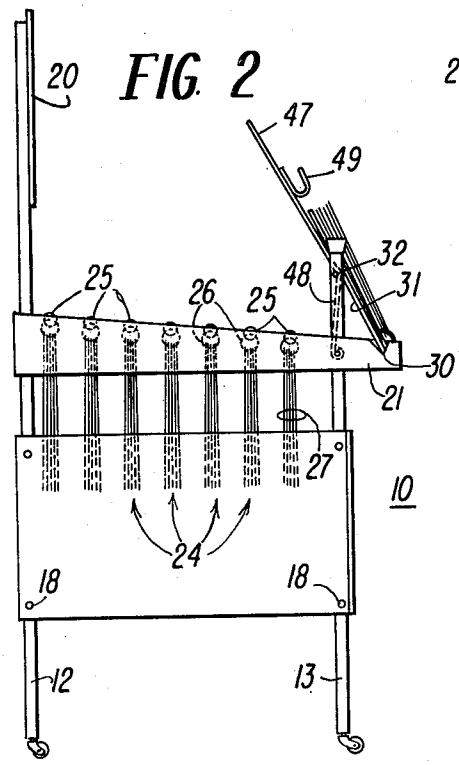
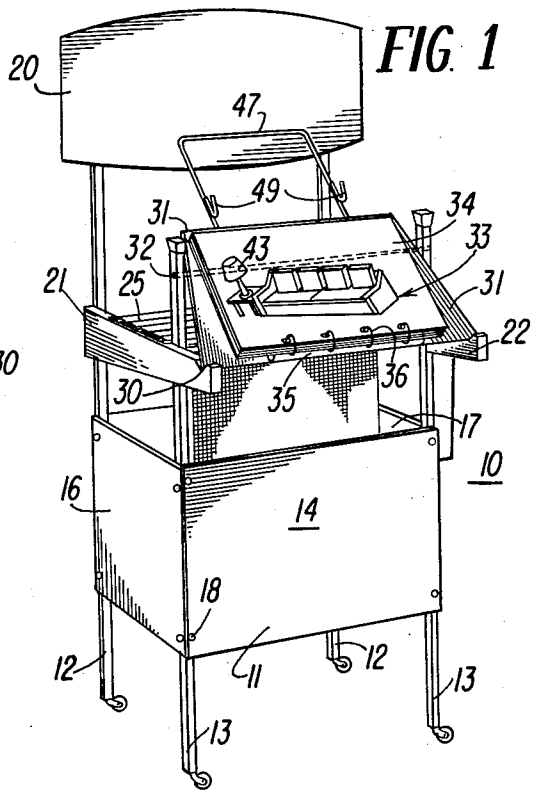


FIG. 1



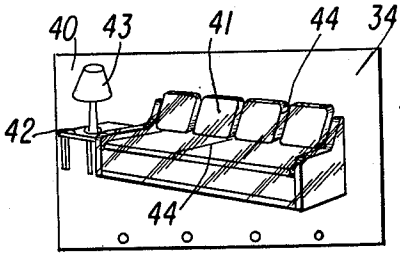


FIG. 7

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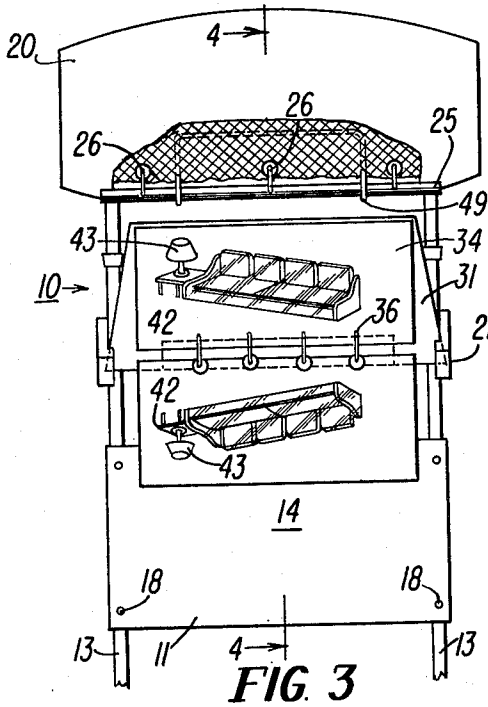


FIG. 3

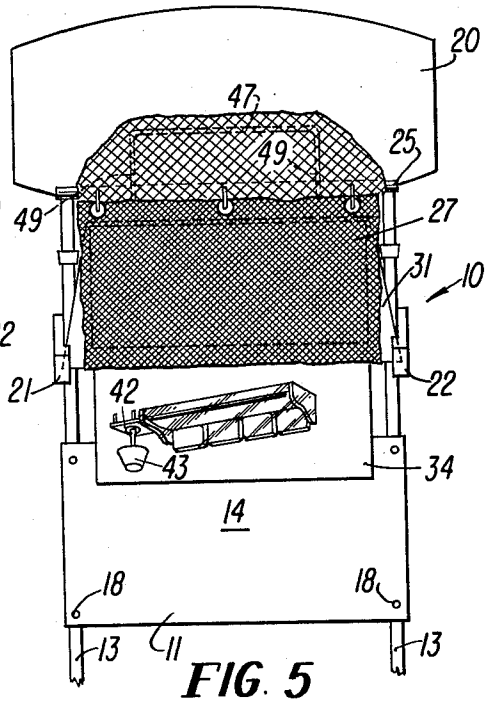


FIG. 5

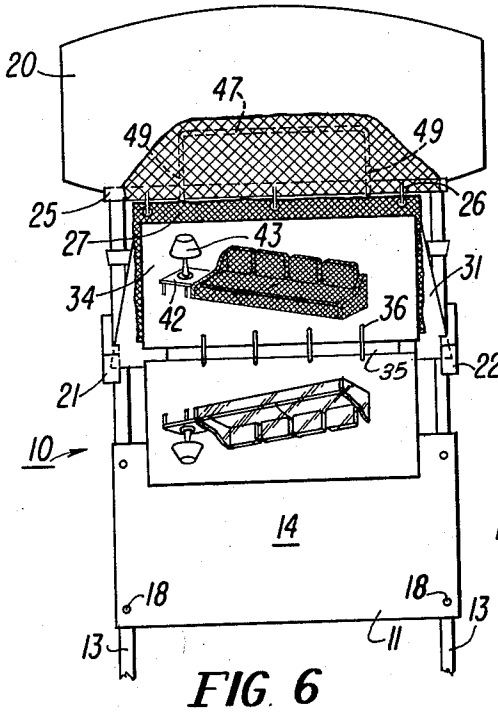


FIG. 6

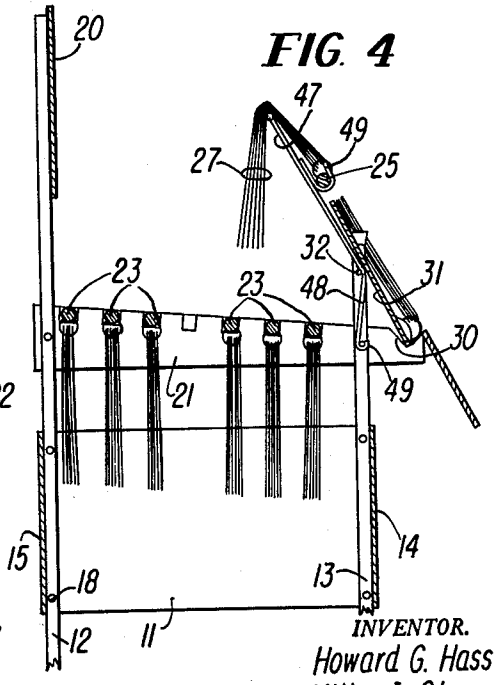


FIG. 4

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FURNITURE STYLE AND FABRIC SELECTOR

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2 Claims. (Cl. 35—53)

This invention relates in general to furniture styles and upholstery. It deals more specifically with a device for facilitating furniture style and fabric selection.

An object of the invention is to provide a device which greatly simplifies the selection of furniture styles and upholstering fabrics.

Another object is to provide a furniture style and fabric selector which makes it possible to view innumerable combinations of fabrics and furniture styles.

Still another object is to provide a style selector wherein a selected fabric is displayed as it would appear on a selected furniture style.

Yet another object is to provide a furniture style and fabric selector which is simple and inexpensive in construction and operation.

The above and other objects are realized in accordance with the present invention by providing a device which facilitates the superposition of transparent illustrations of a wide range of furniture styles on various fabrics. Briefly, the invention contemplates the use of a set of transparent illustrations of various furniture styles in combination with a series of sets of fabric swatches. A selected set of swatches is arranged in relation to the set of transparencies in such a manner that each of the fabrics in the set can be viewed by a customer, as desired, and as it would appear on a selected piece of furniture.

The invention, both as to its organization and method of operation, taken with further objects and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of the furniture style and fabric selector embodying the invention,

FIGURE 2 is a side elevational view of the furniture style and fabric selector illustrated in FIGURE 1,

FIGURE 3 is a view of a furniture style cell utilized in the device,

FIGURE 4 is a front elevational view of the selector showing a set of fabric swatches and illustrating the first step in displaying them with various furniture styles,

FIGURE 5 is a view similar to FIGURE 4 illustrating the next step in the display process wherein a single fabric swatch is placed in position to underlie a style selector cell,

FIGURE 6 is a view illustrating the next step in the display process wherein the style selector cell is moved upwardly over the single fabric swatch, and

FIGURE 7 is a side elevational view of the device as illustrated in FIGURE 4.

Referring to the drawings, and particularly to FIGURE 1, a furniture style and fabric selector embodying this invention is shown generally at **10**. In essence, the selector illustrated permits sales personnel to quickly and efficiently show customers any furniture style as it would appear upholstered with various fabrics. The selector **10** facilitates alternating a number of fabrics in relation to graphic illustrations of a series of furniture styles to present a large number of composite pictures depicting what each fabric looks like on each and every furniture style in question.

More specifically, the furniture style and fabric selector **10** includes a vertically disposed framework **11** comprising upstanding back stringers **12** and front stringers **13**. Panel **14** connects stringers **13** together across the front of the framework **11** and panel **15** connects stringers **12** together across the back side of the framework **11**. End panels **16** and **17** connect the front pair of stringers **13** to the back pair of stringers **12** to form a box-like framework. Each of the panels **14** through **17** is secured to corresponding stringers **12** and **13** by conventional means, such as screws **18**. The panels **14** through **17** provide display areas for advertising indicia in addition to their natural function as structural members in framework **11**.

As will be readily seen, the back stringers **12** are substantially longer than the front stringers **13** and carry between their upper ends an elongated panel **20**. Panel **20** is connected to the stringers **12** by conventional means which might also be screws. Panel **20** also serves as display area for advertising or informative indicia. Intermedia the upper panel **20** and the lower panels **14** through **17**, a pair of arm members **21** and **22** extend between and connect corresponding pairs of back and front stringers **12** and **13**. Each of the arm members **21** and **22** has a series of transversely extending slots **23** in its upper edge. The slots **23** do not extend entirely through the arm members but rather terminate short of the outer side of each arm member. In effect, the slots **23** are open at the top and at the inner side of each of the arm members **21** and **22** but are closed on the outer side of each member.

Each opposed pair of slots **23** provides a hanger for one of a series of sets **24** of fabric swatches. Each set includes a dowel **25** having a plurality of snap rings **26** (see FIGURES 4 through 6) extending through it in spaced relationship along its length. A number of swatches **27** are carried by each of the dowels **25** on snap rings **26**.

Each of the sets **24** of swatches **27** ordinarily encompasses a different fabric color range. By dividing the color ranges into separate sets **24**, an expeditious selection of the precise range of colors is facilitated. The number of sets **24** utilized in this device is limited only by the space available for mounting them within the framework **11** of the selector along the length of arm members **21** and **22**.

The forward end of each of the arm members **21** and **22** is provided with a notch **30** which removably supports a rostrum **31** along the lower edge of the rostrum. A pin **32** extends between the upper ends of the front stringers **13** of framework **11** and supports the rostrum **31** adjacent its upper edge. A set **33** of style selector cells **34** is mounted on the rostrum. Each set includes a snap ring base **35** carrying a set of snap rings **36** generally regularly spaced in its upper surface. Base **35** is ordinarily secured to the rostrum by screws, but it might be secured by any well known means. The snap rings **36** releasably hold a series of furniture style display cells **34**.

A single display cell **34** is illustrated in FIGURE 7. The cell shown is illustrative of display cells utilized in this device and includes a generally opaque or translucent background **40** with a transparent portion **41** outlining the particular style of furniture. In the case of the illustration of FIGURE 7, a sofa is shown. The background **40** might have an end table **42** and table lamp **43** depicted on its surface to illustrate the proper surrounding decor for such a sofa. However, they are shown here only as an example, their use being merely a matter of choice. Style lines **44** are drawn into the transparent outline **41** of the sofa to complete the fabricless, colorless sofa, on its style selector cell, in the appropriate background.

A somewhat U-shaped fabric support rod **47** extends upwardly from in back of the rostrum **31**. As seen in FIGURE 2, the downwardly extending legs **48** of the U-shaped rod **47** bend over the pin **32** extending between

the upper ends of stringer **13** and are secured to the stringers **13** by screws **49** or other conventional means adjacent the juncture of stringers **13** and arms **21** and **22**. The upwardly extending base of the U-shaped rod **47** is generally in the same plane as the rostrum **31**, as will also be seen in FIGURE 2. Hooks **49** curve upwardly from the legs of the U-shaped rod **47** adjacent the upper edge of rostrum **31**. The hooks **49** are secured to rod **47** by conventional means which might be welding. The hooks **49** provide a seat for the dowels **25** of each set **24** of cloth swatches **27**. The support rod **47** provides backing and support for the clot swatches in a set **24** when it is in operative position on the selector, as seen in FIGURES 3 through 6.

When the furniture style and fabric selector **10** is not in use, the various sets **24** of fabric swatches **27** are stored in appropriate hanger slots **23**, as best illustrated in FIGURES 1 and 2. Seven different sets **24** are shown, but as has been previously explained, the number which might be used is limited only by the space available along the length of the arm members **21** and **22**. The fabrics **27** hang downwardly into the enclosure formed by the panels **14** through **17** and are out of the way of sales personnel and customers, yet immediately available when they are wanted.

A rostrum **31** carrying a set **33** of style selector cells **34** is shown in seated slots **30** on arm members **21** and **22**. FIGURES 1 and 2 show a set **33** of cells as it would normally appear when the selector **10** is not in use. In this case, a set of cells illustrating sofas is utilized. In the alternative, style selector cells depicting easy chairs or studio couches, for example, might also be used. Normally a rostrum **31** carrying a set **33** of cells **34** remains seated on arm members **21** and **22** at all times. However, other sets **33** illustrating various furniture styles might be kept handy.

If, for the sake of illustration, a customer is interested in purchasing a sofa, the salesman would place a rostrum **31** carrying a set **33** of style selector cells **34** in the position illustrated in FIGURES 1 and 2; unless of course this particular set was already in position. In either case, the cells would then be flipped over and downwardly until a particular style of sofa, or one of a number of styles appealing to the customer appeared on the style selector cell. This particular cell, which might be the cell illustrated in FIGURE 7, would then also be flipped downwardly to depend from the snap rings **36** and lie on top of the cells already flipped down. This relationship is illustrated in FIGURES 3 and 4.

This brings the customer to a selection of upholstering fabrics for the sofa he has chosen. As has already been pointed out, each set **24** of fabric swatches **27** might encompass a specific color range or fabric type. At a glance then, a particular range of fabrics is quickly selected by the customer and the set **27** hung in position over U-shaped support rod **47** with dowel **25** seated in upwardly curved hooks **49** on the rod. FIGURES 3 and 4 illustrate a set **24** of swatches **27** supported on the U-shaped support rod **47**.

To display the preselected style of sofa as it would appear upholstered with each of the fabrics in the selected range, the first or top swatch **27** in the set **24** resting on U-shaped support rod **47** would be brought down into the position shown in FIGURE 5. It will be recalled, of course, that the style of sofa the customer has selected in this case is depicted on the top style selector cell of the depending cells illustrated in FIGURES 3 and 4. This cell is then folded upwardly on the snap rings **36** into the position shown in FIGURE 6 overlying the first fabric swatch. Looking then at the rostrum, the preselected style of sofa will appear as it would upholstered with the fabric in question. Since the opaque or translucent background **40** of the cell **34** normally has various accoutrements such as end tables and table lamps on its face, the newly upholstered sofa appears as it would in a living room setting, for example.

After viewing this particular combination of sofa style and fabric, the cell might be flipped downwardly again and the next fabric in the swatch or any fabric in the swatch, for that matter, brought into the position shown in FIGURE 5. The style selector cell **34** would then be replaced in the position illustrated in FIGURE 6 and the preselected furniture style would appear as it would if upholstered with the new fabric. This operation, as will be readily understood, can be repeated with as many swatches as there are in a set and as many sets as are available. At the same time, different styles of sofas illustrated on various style selector cells **34** can be viewed as they would appear with each of these swatches.

It will be readily apparent that innumerable combinations of furniture style and fabric color and type can be illustrated by the furniture style and fabric selector **10** embodying this invention. Not only are the combinations virtually limitless, but each is readily available at the salesman's fingertips for almost instant illustration. The customer is able to pick out the furniture style he desires upholstered in the type and color of fabric most attractive on it in a minimum of time and with little effort.

The furniture style and fabric selector **10** is simple in construction and inexpensive to assemble. It provides display surfaces for various advertising and information indicia in the form of panels **14** through **17** and **20**. The furniture dealer actually provides himself with a warehouse full of furniture for viewing by the customer in the form of a relatively small piece of equipment. In essence, then, his inventory needn't be as extensive and overhead is substantially reduced.

It will be further understood, of course, that the mode or steps described above in the display of various furniture styles and fabrics might be varied without departing from the theme of the invention. For example, it is not important whether a particular set of style selector cells is chosen and placed in position before a set of fabric swatches **27** is selected. Also, any order of superimposing preselected style selector cells and fabric swatches might be followed in properly utilizing the invention. In addition, while the embodiment described herein is at present considered to be preferred, it is understood that various modifications and improvements may be made therein, and it is intended to cover in the appended claims all such modifications and improvements as fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

What is desired to be claimed and secured by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A furniture style and fabric selector including a framework, said framework having a pair of forwardly extending arm members, a rostrum carried between the forward ends of said arm members, a set of furniture style selector cells loosely connected by a base member, said base member being mounted on said rostrum, each of said cells comprising an opaque background and a transparency defining a piece of furniture, a generally U-shaped support member extending upwardly from said framework adjacent said rostrum, said support member lying in substantially the same plane as said rostrum, seat means carried by said support member above said rostrum, a plurality of sets of fabric swatches supported in stored relationship within said framework, said sets of swatches being suspended between said arm members, one of said sets of swatches at a time adapted to be carried in said seat means in predetermined relationship to said rostrum, said relationship facilitating the superposition of each of said cells on each of said swatches in said last mentioned set of swatches so as to afford a view of any one of said last mentioned set of swatches through any of said transparencies, each view giving the

effect of a piece of furniture upholstered with the fabric of a swatch.

2. The furniture style and fabric selector of claim 1 further characterized in that each of said sets of fabric swatches includes a plurality of swatches loosely suspended from a dowel, said dowels normally being suspended between slots formed in said arm members, each dowel being retained by said seat means when its set of swatches is carried by said support member.

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