FURNITURE STYLE AND FABRIC SELECTOR

Howard G. Haas, Glencoe, and Milton L. Sturm, Chicago, Ill., assignors to Sealy, Incorporated, Chicago, Ill., a corporation of Delaware

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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 be best 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 includes bearer 11 carrying 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 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 on 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 26 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 expedient 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 length of the U-shaped rod 47 adjacent the upper edge of rostrum 31. 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 cloth 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 sofa 34 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 be flipped downwardly to depend from the snap rings 36 and lie on top of the cells already flipped downward. 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 overlaying 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 by the fabric 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 need not 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
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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 sus-
pended from a dowel, said dowels normally being sus-
pended 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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