A soft manipulatable figure toy comprising a flexible cover, or body material, defining an animal form and including a fluent particulate partial filler comprising a non-toxic, edible cereal grain.
TOY ANIMAL FIGURE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The field of art to which the invention pertains comprises figure toys having a particular form, such as of fanciful human or animal form. More particularly, the present invention pertains to figure toys having a body formed of flexible material, especially a fabric cover and including a filler material.

While prior art animal figure toys having edible fillers are known, such toys, for reasons which will become more apparent hereinafter, do not possess the requisite degree of safeness, tactile stimulation, or opportunity for positioning the toy in a variety of animated positions for providing added dimensions for a child playing with the toy.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is directed to providing a safe, versatile, and durable soft figure toy with lifelike characteristics and individuality. Toys constructed in accordance with the invention are characterized as three-dimensional soft toys having a flexible cover, i.e., body forming casing, formed of a textile or non-textile web having a requisite degree of softness, flexibility, etc., to provide an appealing tactile sensation to a child who grasps, holds, and manipulates the toy. In this regard, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, a toy made in accordance with the invention comprises a fanciful whale having a textile covering and provided with a non-toxic particulate cereal grain filler material having an individual particle size and configuration which cooperates and compliments the tactile suitability of the covering. A significant aspect of the invention resides in the volumetric relationship of the interior volume of the figure toy and the generally normally compacted volume of the filler material within the figure toy.

In accordance with the foregoing summary of the invention, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a versatile, safe and durable soft toy including a particulate filler comprising an edible, moisture-resistant, relatively non-disintegrating material.

Another object of the present invention is the provision of a soft toy having an edible, moisture-resistant, relatively non-disintegrating filler material having the uniform physical characteristics to compliment the overall tactile appeal of the cover material and provide an overall density to the toy which renders it suitable for stable placement in a variety of animated positions to provide added dimension for a child user in a play situation.

A further object of the invention is to provide a soft figure form toy wherein the volumetric relationship of a filler material to the volumetric capacity of the form defining cover member is such that sufficient surface to surface contact of the figure toy can be achieved in a great number of positions without adversely affecting the ability of the toy to remain stable in the position preselected by a child user.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a soft figure toy in the form of a fanciful whale, or fish, having a covering of a soft textile fabric and including a partial filling of an edible cereal grain comprising smooth, round, hard, small grains, whereby such grains are capable of compacting so as to minimize interstices between the grains so as to provide a relatively dense filler for the toy.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following more complete description thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a figure toy embodying the present invention and having an exemplary configuration of a fanciful whale;

FIG. 2 is another perspective view of the figure toy of FIG. 1 showing an exemplary configuration of the belly portion of the whale;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged longitudinal vertical cross-sectional view of the figure toy of FIGS. 1 and 2;

FIG. 4 is a bottom plan view of the figure toy of the preceding figures;

FIG. 5 is a plan view of exemplary configurations for the web portions required to form the cover for the exemplary figure toy shown; and

FIG. 6 is a slightly enlarged bottom perspective view of the exemplary figure toy further showing an exemplary animated position of the figure toy.

Turning now to the drawings in greater detail, and FIGS. 1, 2 and 4 in particular, it will be seen that an exemplary three-dimensional soft toy indicated generally at 10 and constructed in accordance with the present invention may comprise a fanciful whale. The whale 10 illustrated is formed of a soft flexible material, such as a textile web for example. In this regard, a corduroy type fabric has been found to be particularly suitable in providing the proper tactile properties. As seen in the aforementioned figures, the exemplary whale 10 form comprises opposed generally identical side pieces 12 and 14, which when joined together generally along their marginal edges, in a manner to be more fully described hereinafter, cooperate to form the side, back and tail portions of the whale 10. The bottom piece or belly portion 16 comprises a generally oval panel, such as of a solid color or print cotton. As seen in FIG. 5, the pieces forming the sides 12 and 14 of the exemplary whale 10 shown may comprise generally identical pieces 18 and the belly portion 16 is substantially as shown in previously described FIG. 4.

Turning now to an exemplary method of assembling the whale 10, two side pieces 18 are placed with the normally outwardly disposed surfaces of the sides 12 and 14 in contiguous relation. The side pieces 18 are joined along their marginal edges, such as by sewing, along the top humped portion 19 from the front 21, or mouth of the whale 10, up along the humped back portion past the reduced width body portion 23 and up along the tail to the point indicated at 25. The bottom piece 16 is then joined to the side pieces 12 and 14, as seen best in FIG. 4, by sewing, for example, from the point 26 along the lower arcuate seam line to the point 29. The seam running along the upper arcuate edge portion of the bottom piece 16 starts at the point 26 and is sewn in a continuous line past the point 29 to the point 31 to form the bottom seam of the tail 20. Assembly of the two sides 18 and bottom 16 in the aforesaid manner cooperates to strengthen the intersection of the three body, or casing, forming parts while providing a smooth and continuous transition from the horizontal, i.e., bottom portion 16, to the vertical, i.e., side portions 12 and 14 of the body of the whale 10. It will be understood that at this point in the assembly of the animal form, the body or casing material is inside-out and the marginal edge portions of the generally V-
shaped tail are left open. Before turning the so assembled body portions right side out through the open tail portion, the inside curved seams are clipped to within one-sixteenth inch of stitching to allow maximum flexibility of the completed animal form.

While, as shown in the exemplary whale 10 illustrated, corduroy, with the ribs running generally normal to the top seam, is preferably utilized, the ribs of the corduroy pattern could be generally parallel or diagonal to the top seam. In addition, any suitably soft material could be substituted for the aforesaid cotton textile, such as suede, wool or even an non-woven expanded vinyl, either supported or unsupported. In the case of the latter named body forming materials, it will be appreciated that the several pieces comprising the animal form can be joined by means other than sewing, such as by fusing together. In other words, the marginal edge portions of the body forming member could be adhesively joined.

As previously indicated, a significant aspect of the present invention, as best seen by a comparison of FIGS. 3 and 4, resides in the fact that the interior or casing of the figure toy is partially filled with a non-toxic edible particulate fl exible filler material indicated generally at 30, which in a preferred embodiment comprises polished white millet seed, such as having a diameter in the order of one-sixteenth inch to one-eighth inch. While millet seed is a preferred filler because of its relatively small size and generally spherical configuration permit the seed to "pack" whereby interstices are minimized, thus providing a relatively "dense" filler, other edible fillers can be utilized. In this regard, it will be understood that while the filler material is not of itself of high density, the utilization of a filler material having the aforesaid physical parameters provides an effectively dense filler for figure toys constructed in accordance with the present invention.

In FIG. 5 it will be seen that an exemplary eye may comprise interlocking components 28 and 29 and wherein the shaft of the eye 28 passes through a suitable aperture in the cover material and is locked by the washer 29. Of course, the eye means 27 could comprise an embroidered, etc., eye.

As specifically shown in FIG. 3, the figure toy is only partially filled with the filler material 30 whereby, for example, an interior void, or voids indicated generally at 32 are created. After the preselected partial filler is inserted through the open, i.e., unjoined or unsewn, tail end, the marginal edges 33 and 35 of the tail are joined to seal in the filler material 30. Such joining can be accomplished by sewing, or in another suitable manner as previously described. As seen in FIGS. 1, 2, 3 and 6, the tail portion of the exemplary whale 10 shown is provided with means for stiffening. In this regard, the exemplary means shown comprises the provision of two rows of stitching 37. Of course, the stiffening can be achieved by fuse of the opposed surfaces of the interior, the side pieces 12 and 14 or by the use of adhesive, for example.

As seen in FIG. 6, the significant aspect of preselecting the partial amount of filler permits animated placement of the figure toy by a child user. In the exemplary figure toy 10 illustrated, a child playing with the toy merely need grasp the whale 10 by the tail whereby the filler 30 "packs" into the main body portion and whereupon bending of the tail normal to the body, as in FIG. 6, presents enough surface area, such as indicated generally at 38, to stabilize the figure toy in the exemplary vertical position illustrated. Needless to say, by virtue of the coaction of the type of filler partial filling, and flexible cover forming material, numerous animatable animal forms can be created without departing from the concept of the present invention.

We claim:

1. A soft manipulatable article for use as a toy of the like comprising a flexible cover defining an animal form, and a fluent partial filling within said cover, said filling being of a particulate nature, and said cover being composed of three marginally joined pieces of material, said pieces comprising a pair of opposed side pieces joined about a major portion of the peripheries thereof, and a bottom piece joined to and extending between the portions of the peripheries not directly joined to each other to provide a body portion said portions of the peripheries of said side pieces joined together providing an extremity of the body portion, and means for stiffening said extremity comprising joining juxtaposed surface portions of said opposed side pieces at a point in the extremity spaced inwardly from the periphery thereof.

2. The article of claim 1 wherein said filling comprises a foodstuff.

3. The article of claim 1 wherein said filling partially fills said cover and is manually shiftable therein to form the flexible cover to any of a plurality of stable animated positions.

4. The article of claim 2 wherein said filling partially fills said cover and is manually shiftable therein to form the flexible cover to any of a plurality of stable animated positions.

5. The article of claim 1 wherein the animal form defined is a fanciful whale incorporating, in one position, a relatively flat bottom, a high humped forwardly located body section, a rearwardly located vertically oriented tail section, and a relatively narrow transition section between the body and tail sections, said head section tapering smoothly into said transition section.

6. The article of claim 5 wherein the volumetric capacity of the head section is sufficient to accommodate substantially all of the filling.

7. A soft manipulatable article for use as a toy, or the like, comprising a flexible cover defining an animal form, said cover being composed of three marginally joined pieces of material, said pieces comprising a pair of opposed side pieces joined together about a major portion of the peripheries thereof, and a bottom piece joined to and extending between the portions of the peripheries not directly joined to each other, said animal form defined being a fanciful whale incorporating, in one position, a relatively flat bottom, a high humped forwardly located body section, a rearwardly located vertically oriented tail section, and a relatively narrow transition section between the body and tail sections, said head section tapering smoothly into said transition section, and a fluent partial filling within said cover, said filling being a foodstuff, said filling being manually shiftable therein to form the flexible cover to any of a plurality of stable animated positions, said tail section being provided with stiffening means for rendering said tail generally self-sustaining when void of filling, said stiffening means comprising joining juxtaposed side pieces by a plurality of closely adjacent lines.
of stitching vertically along said tail at a point in the tail spaced inwardly from the periphery thereof.

8. The article of claim 7 wherein said tail and transition section are laterally deformable, when substantially void of filling, whereby a vertical standing of the article on that portion of the head section immediately adjacent the transition section can be effected, said filling defining a base within the head section sufficient to maintain the head section upright.

9. The article of claim 8 wherein a relatively dense filling is provided by the utilization of a filler material which packs leaving a minimum of interstices.

10. The article of claim 9 wherein the filler is millet seed.

11. The article of claim 1 wherein a relatively dense filling is provided by the utilization of a filler material which packs leaving a minimum of interstices.

12. The article of claim 11 wherein the filler is millet seed.

13. A soft manipulatable article for use as a toy, or the like, comprising a flexible cover defining an animal form, said cover being composed of three marginally joined pieces of material, said pieces comprising a pair of opposed side pieces joined together about a major portion of the peripheries thereof, and a bottom piece joined to and extending between the portions of the peripheries not directly joined to each other, said animal form defined being a fanciful whale incorporating, in one position, a relatively flat bottom, a high humped forwardly located body section, a rearwardly located vertically orientated tail section, and a relatively narrow transition section between the body and tail sections, said head section tapering smoothly into said transition section, and a fluent partial filling within said cover, said filling being a foodstuff, said filling being manually shiftable therein to form the flexible cover to any of a plurality of stable animated positions, said tail section being provided with stiffening means for rendering said tail generally self-sustaining when void of filling, said stiffening means comprising joining juxtaposed side pieces at a point in the tail spaced inwardly from the periphery thereof.

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