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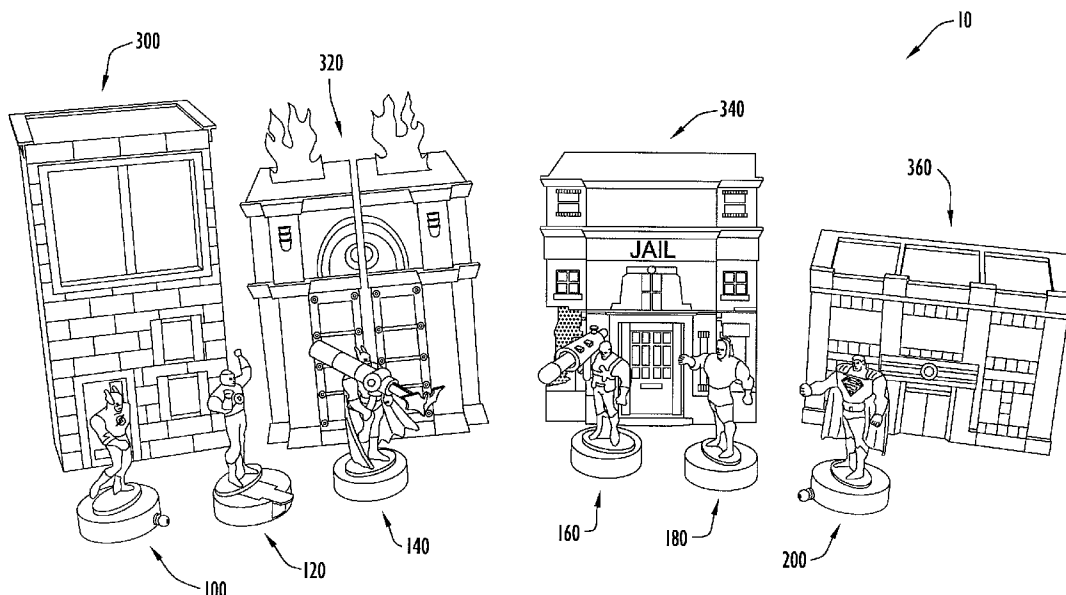
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(54) Title: ACTION FIGURE BATTLE GAME WITH MOVEMENT MECHANISMS



(57) Abstract: Various embodiments of an action figure battle game including figures with movement mechanisms are disclosed.

ACTION FIGURE BATTLE GAME WITH MOVEMENT MECHANISMSCross-Reference to Related Applications

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/780,935, entitled "Action Figure Battle Game with Movement Mechanisms," filed March 8, 2006, Attorney Docket No. MAT 3Z031P, and also claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/848,231, entitled "Action Figure Battle Game with Movement Mechanisms," filed September 29, 2006, Attorney Docket No. MAT 3Z031P1. The disclosures of the above-mentioned provisional patent applications are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

Background of the Invention

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to games and, more particularly, to battle or war games utilizing action figures. Specifically, this disclosure relates to battle or war games utilizing action figures having movement mechanisms.

[0003] Examples of games using movable elements or pieces, such as action figures, having a measuring device are disclosed in U.S. Published Patent Application Nos. 2004/0119234, 2005/0040598, and 2005/0189715, as well as in U.S. Patent Nos. 2,052,035, 3,387,778, 4,005,543, 4,280,300, 4,317,570, and 6,659,463. The disclosures of these and all other publications referenced herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes.

[0004] The game pieces in games using movable elements or pieces, such as action figures, may comprise a game figure character having a base, the character adapted for movement a distance over a surface, and a distance measuring device disposed in the base for contacting the surface when the game figure character is disposed at the surface, the distance measuring device providing

an indication of the distance of movement of the character over the surface. Game play in games using movable elements or pieces, such as action figures, may comprise providing for each player a plurality of game pieces, each game piece having an indicium indicating a point value, a distance indicating device indicating a distance the game piece has moved over the surface, and a weapon for attacking an opponent player's game pieces, selecting for each player a group of the game pieces having point values summing to a predetermined value, and selecting a number of actions each player can take per player's turn, an action comprising either a move, comprising moving a game piece a distance up to the particular game piece's point value, or an attack, comprising actuation of the particular game piece's weapon, wherein the players alternate taking turns, selectively making a move or an attack, until the game is determined to have ended.

[0005] Examples of toys having motion based on a torsional elastic element that is energized by a pull-string are disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 3,583,096 and 6,123,598. The disclosures of these and all other publications referenced herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes.

[0006] Examples of games using game pieces having information, such as scoring indicia, disposed thereon are disclosed in U.S. Published Patent Application Nos. 2004/0051243, 2004/0051244, 2004/0212148, 2005/0017450, 2005/0073098, and 2005/0167919 as well as in U.S. Patent Nos. 6,899,332 and 6,899,333. The disclosures of these and all other publications referenced herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes.

[0007] Examples of toy figures, such as may be used with a game, having moving or separable components are disclosed in U.S. Published Patent Application Nos. 2005/0048866, International Publication No. WO 2005/021115, and in U.S. Patent Nos. 946,778, 3,848,357, 3,845,956, 3,927,883, 3,955,311, 4,031,657, 4,570,938, 4,623,318, 5,087,219, 5,458,523, 5,690,330,

5,727,982, 6,280,286, 6,296,543, 6,343,969, 6,682,392, and 6,860,787. The disclosures of these and all other publications referenced herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes.

[0008] Examples of toy figures configured to perform appropriate motions for use in simulated combat, such as swinging or striking arm motions, are disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 946,778, 3,848,357, 3,845,956, 3,927,883, 3,955,311, 4,031,657, 4,570,938, 4,623,318, 5,087,219, 5,458,523, 5,690,330, 5,727,982, 6,280,286, 6,296,543, 6,682,392, and 6,860,787. The disclosures of these and all other publications referenced herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes.

Summary of the Disclosure

[0009] Embodiments of an action figure battle game including figures with movement mechanisms are provided.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0010] Fig. 1 is a perspective view of various figures and environments, which may be suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0011] Fig. 2 is a detail view of some of the figures and environments for the action figure battle game.

[0012] Fig. 3 is a detail view of some of the figures and environments for the action figure battle game.

[0013] Fig. 4 illustrates a rigid figure, a flying figure, and a shooting figure for the action figure battle game.

[0014] Fig. 5 illustrates multiple embodiments of punching figures and an embodiment of a shooting figure for the action figure battle game.

[0015] Fig. 6 illustrates a jump-through environment and a pass-through environment for the action figure battle game.

[0016] Fig. 7 illustrates exemplary impact-damageable environments for the action figure battle game.

[0017] Figs. 8A-8D illustrate a movement functionality for the action figures of the action figure battle game.

[0018] Figs. 9A-9D illustrate an embodiment of a play method combining an action figure and a pass-through environment.

[0019] Fig. 10 illustrates the components of a flying action figure with the launch lever in a first position.

[0020] Fig. 11 illustrates the components of a flying action figure with the launch lever in a second position.

[0021] Figs. 12A and 12B illustrate the functionality of the flying action figure of Fig. 11.

[0022] Figs. 13A-13D illustrate an embodiment of a play method combining a flying action figure and a jump-through environment.

[0023] Figs. 14A-14C illustrate an embodiment of a play method combining a punching figure and an impact damageable environment having one or more breakaway features.

[0024] Figs. 15A-15C illustrate an embodiment of a play method combining a shooting figure and an impact-damageable environment having one or more shootable windows.

[0025] Fig. 16 illustrates various figures and a mini-comic score sheet for an action figure battle game, including figures with projectile launchers, punching figures, throwing figures and figures with a captive projectile launcher.

[0026] Figs. 17-19 illustrate various sets in which the action figure battle game of Fig. 16 may be packaged and/or sold.

[0027] Fig. 20 illustrates an embodiment of a play mat suitable for use with the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0028] Fig. 21 illustrates another embodiment of a play mat suitable for use with the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0029] Figs. 22-23 illustrate embodiments of Mini-Comics for the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0030] Fig. 24 illustrates exemplary figures for the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0031] Fig. 25 illustrates exemplary types of movement for the figures of the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0032] Fig. 26 illustrates exemplary types of attack actions for the figures of the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0033] Fig. 27 illustrates exemplary types of power chips, which may effect the strategy, for the figures of the action figure battle game of Fig. 16.

[0034] Fig. 28 illustrates exemplary features and components of a figure configured for use with an action figure battle game.

[0035] Figs. 29-37 illustrate exemplary figures configured for use with an action figure battle game.

[0036] Figs. 38A-38C, 39A-39C, 40-47 illustrate features of exemplary motion bases for figures suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0037] Figs. 48-52 illustrate features of exemplary motion bases for figures suitable for use with an action figure battle game, wherein the motion bases include a push-lever energized wind-up motion system.

[0038] Figs. 53-59D illustrate the functionality, structure and components of exemplary punching or striking action figures that have a punch-attack capability and are suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0039] Figs. 60-67 illustrate the functionality, structure and components of exemplary whipping or horizontal-attack action figures that have a whipping or horizontal-attack capability and are suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0040] Figs. 68A-68B, 69-75 illustrate the functionality, structure and components of exemplary limited range or captive projectile action figures that are capable of firing a limited range or captive projectile and are suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0041] Figs. 76-80 illustrate the functionality, structure and components of exemplary projectile firing action figures that are capable of firing a projectile and are suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0042] Figs. 81-83, 84A-84B, 85, 86, 87A-87H illustrate the functionality, structure and components of exemplary flying action figures that have an aerial or flight based movement and/or attack capability and are suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0043] Figs. 88, 89A-89E, 90, 91A-91B, 92-94, 95A-95H illustrate the functionality, structure and components of exemplary throwing action figures that are capable of throwing objects and are suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0044] Fig. 96 illustrates the functionality, structure and components of exemplary vehicles that are suitable for use with an action figure battle game and may be included in one or more of the sets illustrated in Figs. 17-19, such as a deluxe set as depicted in Figs. 19 and 96.

[0045] Figs. 97A, 97B, 98 illustrate exemplary packaging components for the sets of Figs. 17 -19, such as the starter set illustrated in Fig. 17, which may be configured into a game play component suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0046] Figs. 99A-99B illustrate exemplary packaging components for the sets of Figs. 17-19, such as the booster set illustrated in Fig. 18 or the deluxe set illustrated in Fig. 19, which may be configured into a game play component suitable for use with an action figure battle game.

[0047] Figs. 100-111 illustrate various embodiments of action figures according to the invention.

[0048] Fig. 112 illustrates several components of a game system according to the invention.

[0049] Fig. 113 illustrates the components of Fig. 112 disposed in an exemplary arrangement for game play.

[0050] Figs. 114A-114D illustrate an exemplary method of game play using a figure and an environment.

[0051] Fig. 115 illustrates a perspective view of a portion of an embodiment of a base for a figure.

[0052] Figs. 116A illustrates a perspective view of an exemplary secret power chip for use with the base of Fig. 115.

[0053] Fig. 116B illustrates a perspective view of the secret power chip of Fig. 116A inserted into the base.

[0054] Fig. 116C illustrates a bottom perspective view of the base of Fig. 116A with the secret power chip inserted therein.

[0055] Figs. 117A-117B illustrate portions of several embodiments of secret power chips according to the invention.

[0056] Fig. 118 illustrates an assembled perspective view of another embodiment of a base for a figure according to the invention.

[0057] Fig. 119 illustrates an exploded perspective view of the base of Fig. 118.

[0058] Fig. 120 illustrates an alternative embodiment of an energy mechanism that can be used with a base according to the invention.

Detailed Description

[0059] An exemplary embodiment of an action figure battle game is illustrated in Figs. 1-15C.

The action figure battle game 10 may include one or more figures or action figures 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, and 200 and one or more environments or environmental structures 300, 320, 340, and 360, as shown in the exemplary embodiment illustrated in Figs. 1-3.

[0060] The figures 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, and 200 can be associated with a common theme, such as superheroes and villains. The figures 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, and 200 have one or more types of functions as described below. One type of function a figure may have is a certain type of movement. Another type of function a figure may have is a certain type of attack or battle function. The different types of functions are described in greater detail below.

[0061] In this embodiment, the environments or environmental structures 300, 320, 340, and 360 are configured to resemble buildings, each of which has a different functionality. The environments are configured to be interacted with by the figures 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, and 200 during play or during a game. The different embodiments of environments and the interactions between the environments and action figures are described in greater detail below. In other embodiments, the environments or structures can resemble items other than buildings.

[0062] The action figure battle game may also include one or more objective cards, such as ones similar to those shown in Figs. 22-23. The various components of the action figure battle game may be fabricated from any suitable material, such as plastic, wood, metal, and/or an elastomer. The various components of the action figure battle game may be fabricated by any suitable method, such as injection molding, casting, stamping, pressing, and/or sculpting.

[0063] Referring to Figs. 4 and 5, some of the embodiments of the action figures are illustrated. Each of the figures may include a base and a body, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5. The bodies of the figures may be configured to resemble various licensed characters, such as superheroes or villains, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5.

[0064] As illustrated in Fig. 4, figure 100 includes a body 102 and a base 104. The body 102 is fixedly coupled to the base 104 and moves with the base 104. This figure 100 can be referred to as a “rigid figure.” Inside the base is a movement mechanism that imparts motion to the base 104 relative to a surface on which the base 104 is placed. The movement mechanism 106 includes a string pull 106 and a retractable string 108. The movement mechanism 106 is configured to impart substantially linear motion to the base 104. The operation of the movement mechanism 106 is illustrated in and described relative to Figs. 8A-8D and 9A-9D below.

[0065] Figure 120 includes a body 122 and a base 124. The body 122 of figure 120 is removably coupleable to the base 124. This figure 120 can be referred to as a “flying figure” because the body 122 can be launched or projected from the base 124 so that the figure 120 appears to fly through the air. Figure 120 includes a movement mechanism 126 that can be actuated to impart movement to the body 122. In this example, movement mechanism 126 is a launching mechanism with a launch lever 128. The operation of the movement mechanism 126 is illustrated in and described relative to Figs. 10, 11, 12A-12B, and 13A-13D below.

[0066] Figure 140 includes a body 142 and a base 144. The body 142 of figure 140 is fixedly coupled to the base 144. This figure 140 can be referred to as a “shooting figure” because the body 142 includes a projectile launcher 146 that is coupled to the body 142. The projectile launcher 146 is a spring-loaded launcher with a release mechanism that can be used to project or launch a projectile 148. In one embodiment, figure 140 can include a movement mechanism similar to the movement mechanism of figure 100 that imparts substantially linear movement to the base 144 of the figure 140. In another embodiment, figure 140 may not have a movement mechanism and also, may simply have wheels that extend from the lower surface of its base.

[0067] Referring to Fig. 5, Figure 160 includes a body 162 and a base 168. In this embodiment, the body 162 of figure 160 includes a torso 163, a waist portion 164, and a leg portion 165. Coupled to the torso 163 is an arm 166 that extends outwardly from the torso 163. This figure 160 can be referred to as a “punching figure” because the arm 166 is oriented in a punching manner and the torso 163 rotates in a punching manner. The torso 163 can be rotated rearwardly relative to the leg portion 165 against the force of an internal spring, and subsequently released to return to the position shown in Fig. 5.

[0068] Similarly, figure 180 includes a body 182 and a base 188. The body 182 of figure 180 includes a torso 183, a waist portion 184, and a leg portion 185. Coupled to the torso 183 is an arm 186 that extends outwardly from the torso 183. This figure 180 is another embodiment of a “punching figure” and its torso 183 can be rotated against a spring force relative to leg portion 185. Figure 180 includes a movement mechanism 190 that includes a string pull. The movement mechanism 190 includes a retractable string 192 internal to the base 188 which can be actuated to impart movement to the base 188. The punching functionality and operation of figure 180 is illustrated in and described relative to Figs. 14A-14C below.

[0069] Figure 200 includes a body 202 and a base 204. Similar to figure 140 described above, body 202 of figure 200 is fixedly coupled to the base 204. This figure 200 can be referred to as a “shooting figure” because the body 202 includes a projectile launcher 206 that is coupled to the body 202. The projectile launcher 206 is a spring-loaded launcher with a release mechanism that can be used to project or launch a projectile 208. In this embodiment, figure 200 can include a movement mechanism similar to the movement mechanism of figure 100 that imparts substantially linear movement to the base 204 of the figure 200. In other embodiments, figure 200 can include wheels and be moved by a user’s hand. The functionality and operation of figure 200 is illustrated in and described relative to Figs. 15A-15C below.

[0070] The base of the figures may include a generally cylindrical structure, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5. The base may be configured as a right circular cylinder, as shown in the exemplary embodiment presented in Figs. 4 and 5. In some embodiments, the base may be configured into shapes other than a circle, such as a polygon or an ellipse, or any suitable combination thereof. In some embodiments where the base is other than circular in shape, the base may be symmetric about one or more vertical planes. In some embodiments, the base may be asymmetric relative to one or more vertical planes.

[0071] The size of the base may vary from figure to figure. In some embodiments, the bases of selected figures may be relatively larger than the bases of selected other figures. Figures having relatively larger bases may be more difficult to knock over.

[0072] Now some exemplary embodiments of the environments or structures are described. Referring to Figs. 6 and 7, several embodiments of environments are illustrated. Environments 300 and 320 are illustrated in Fig. 6 and environments 340 and 360 are illustrated in Fig. 7.

[0073] Referring to Fig. 6, environment 300 is configured to resemble a building. Environment 300 can be referred to as a “jump-through” environment, which means that an action figure can “jump-through” the building. In this embodiment, environment 300 includes a front wall 302 having a surface 304 defining an opening 306 through the front wall 302. An entry panel 308 is disposed proximate to the opening 306. The entry panel 308 is pivotally mounted so that it can be moved relative to the opening 306. The opening 306 has a sufficient size and configuration so that a figure can pass therethrough.

[0074] As illustrated in Fig. 6, environment 320 is configured to resemble a building. Environment 320 can be referred to as a “pass-through” environment, which means that an action figure can pass through the building. In this embodiment, environment 320 is formed as two portions 322 and 324 that can be placed proximate to each other and form a slit 326 that extends between the portions 322, 324. A movably mounted door 328 is coupled to portion 322 and another movably mounted door 330 is coupled to portion 324. Door 328 is located in an opening 336 formed in portion 322. Similarly, door 330 is located in an opening 338 formed in portion 324. The openings 336 and 338 collectively form an opening 339 in the environment 320. The environment 320 includes simulated fire effects 332 and 334 that extend upwardly through and are movably mounted in openings or slots 333 and 335 in the upper surfaces of portions 322 and 324, respectively.

[0075] As illustrated in Fig. 7, environment 340 is configured to resemble a building. In this embodiment, environment 340 can be referred to as an “impact-damageable” environment because it includes breakaway or removable features. Environment 340 includes two openings 342 and 344 formed in its sides that resemble structural damage. Breakaway features 346 are provided that can

be removably coupled to the environment proximate to the openings 342 and 344. The breakaway feature associated with opening 342 is not illustrated.

[0076] Similarly, environment 360 is configured to resemble a different building with parts that can be used to simulate damage to the environment 360. Environment 360 includes several openings 362, 364, and 366 formed in its front side. Inside the openings are movable panels that function as target portions or shootable windows 368, 370, and 372. The function and operation of the environments 300, 320, 340, and 360 are described in greater detail below.

[0077] Referring back to the action figures, the function and operation of a figure with a string pull movement mechanism are described relative to Figs. 8A-8D and 9A-9D. The base of at least some of the figures may include a retractable string, as shown in the exemplary embodiment presented in Figs. 4-5 and 8-9. The retractable string forms part of a movement mechanism for a particular figure. Any of the various types of figure may include a retractable string. In some embodiments, all of the figures may include the retractable string. The retractable string or movement mechanism may include a string pull, a string, and a recoil mechanism. The various components of the retractable string may be at least partially disposed within the base of a figure.

[0078] The recoil mechanism may include a torsional biasing element that is used with the string and the string pull. The string may extend through an opening, such as a hole or a slot, which may be disposed on the side of the base. The string pull may be sized such that it is larger than the opening so that the string pull remains in a position in which a user may grasp it.

[0079] The length of the string may vary from figure to figure such that the string is longer in some figures than in other figures. The torsional bias of the torsional biasing element may vary from figure to figure such that the torsional bias of the recoil mechanism in some figures is greater than the torsional bias of the recoil mechanism in other figures. The length of the string may be

proportional to the torsional bias in some figures such that the torsional bias in figures having a relatively shorter string may be greater than the torsional bias in figures having a relatively longer string.

[0080] As will be described in more detail below, the string may provide measurement and movement functionality. In particular, the length of the string may define the distance the figure may move, such as the distance the figure may move at one time and/or in one turn. The torsional bias on the string, which may tend to rewind or withdraw the string into the base, may be used to move the figure.

[0081] An exemplary functionality of a figure having a string pull is presented in Figs. 8A-8D. As shown in Fig. 8A, a user may grasp the base 104 of the figure 100 with a first hand 20 and grasp the string pull 106 with a second hand 22. The user may draw the first hand 20 away from the figure 100 such that the string 108 is extended, against the torsional bias, as shown in Figs. 8B and 8C. The user may extend the string 108 partially and/or completely. In some embodiments, the user may use the string 108, such as when fully extended, to determine the scope of permissible movement for the figure 100. More particularly, the length of the string 108, such as when the string 108 is fully extended, may define the extent to which the figure 100 may be moved, such as in one turn.

[0082] In some embodiments, the user may use the torsional bias on the string 108 to at least partially move the figure 100. In particular, as shown in the illustrative embodiment presented in Fig. 8D, subsequent to extension of the string 108, the user may release the base 104 with the first hand 20 while restraining the string pull 106 with the second hand 22 such that the torsional bias may cause the string 108 to retract into the base 104 and pull the base 104 toward the second hand 22.

[0083] The body of one or more of the figures 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, and 200 may be sculpted in any suitable style, such as to resemble one or more of a series of licensed characters, such as those illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5. Some of the figures may be configured to represent adverse characters, such as superheroes and anti-heroes or villains.

[0084] As previously discussed, each of the figures 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, and 200 may be classified as at least one type of figure based on the functionality or functionalities of the particular figure. For example, each figure may be configured to function as one or more of a rigid figure, a flying figure, a shooting figure, and/or a punching figure, or the like. Each figure may include any combination of anyone or more of the various functionalities described herein. Some figures may include some or all of the functionality of a rigid figure, a flying figure, a shooting figure, and/or a punching figure, or the like. Although specific characters are shown as being a rigid figure, a flying figure, a shooting figure, or a punching figure, any character may include anyone or more of the various functionalities of anyone or more of these or similar types of figures. Other types of functionalities of the various figures are described below. The different types of figures are now described in greater detail, including each figure's movement and attack capabilities.

[0085] A rigid figure, such as figure 100, may include a sculpted body 102 and a base 104, such as shown in the embodiment presented in Fig. 4. The body 102 of a rigid figure 100 may be fixedly attached to the base 104 such that the body 102 may not be removed from the base 104 during normal use. In some embodiments, the body of a rigid figure may be permanently attached to the base. In some embodiments, the body of a rigid figure may be removably attached to the base. The body of a rigid figure may be sculpted in any suitable pose, such as one that might be characteristic of the character depicted by the figure. For example, in the embodiment presented in Fig. 4, the rigid figure 100 depicts THE FLASH, a character known for being able to run quickly, and is

sculpted in a running pose, which is representative of the character's attributes. This figure 100 includes a movement mechanism as discussed above that imparts movement to the base 104.

[0086] Another type of figure is the flying figure or launching figure. A flying figure may include a sculpted body and a base, such as shown in the embodiment presented in Figs. 4 and 10-12B.

The body of a flying figure may be sculpted in any suitable pose, such as one that might be characteristic of the character depicted by the figure. For example, in one embodiment, the flying figure 200 resembles the character THE GREEN LANTERN.

[0087] In this embodiment, the body 122 of a flying figure 120 may be separable from the base 124, as shown in Figs. 10-12B, and may include a body 120 and a body base 123. The body base 123 may include one or more attachment points, such as one or more holes 125, as shown in Fig. 10.

[0088] The one or more holes 125 and any corresponding one or more projections on the movement mechanism 126 (as described below) may be mutually configured such that a particular flying figure body 122 may be compatible with one or more flying figure bases 124. For example, some of the flying figure bodies may be interchangeably used with one or more of the flying figure bases. In some embodiments, one or more flying figures may be configured such that the body is compatible only with predetermined bases. For example, a particular body may be associated with or keyed to a particular base or bases. In some embodiments, one or more flying figure bases may be configured such that the base is compatible only with predetermined figures. For example a particular base may be associated with or keyed to a particular body or bodies. Although the illustrative embodiment of the flying figure 120 presented in Fig. 10 has holes 125 disposed on the body base 123 and corresponding projections 132 disposed on the base 124, in some embodiments,

at least some of the projections may be disposed on the body base and at least some of the holes may be disposed on the base.

[0089] The flying figure 120 may include or be used with any suitable mechanism that is configurable to launch the figure body 122. Exemplary mechanisms include those that directly transform a user input into motion, such as a catapult, and those which include an energy storage mechanism, such as a mechanism including a spring or other elastic element.

[0090] In the embodiment presented in Figs. 10-12B, the flying figure base 124 includes a catapult type launching mechanism. The launching mechanism 126 may include a launch lever 128 and a launch platform 130. The launch lever 128 may be disposed within an opening 127 and be configured to pivot relative to the base 124, as shown in Figs. 10-12B. The launch platform 130 may be linked to the launch lever 128, such as where the launch lever 128 and the launch platform 130 are parts of a single component. In some embodiments, the launch lever 128 and the launch platform 130 may be linked through a mechanism configured to provide a mechanical advantage such that a user input is amplified to provide enhanced flight performance.

[0091] An exemplary functionality of a launching figure or flying figure is illustrated in Figs. 12A-12B. A user may attach the body 122 to the base 124 and grasp the base 124 with a first hand 20. The user may then depress, such as rapidly, the launch lever 128 with the second hand 22. Depressing the launch lever 128 may cause the launch platform 130 to rise such that the body 122 is propelled upwardly. In some embodiments, the launch platform 130 may impart a horizontal motion to the body 122, such as shown in the embodiment presented in Fig. 12B. The altitude and distance of flight may be controlled, such as by varying the amount of force input to the launch lever 130.

[0092] An illustrative embodiment of a jump-through environment and another use of a launching figure or flying figure is illustrated in Figs. 13A-13D. In this embodiment, a jump-through environment 300 may include an opening 306 on its front surface and one or more entry panels 308, or the like, proximate to opening 306. Environment 300 may also include one or more exit panels 314, or the like, that are proximate to an opening 312 formed in side 310.

[0093] The entry panel 308 may be movable between a first or closed position 309A, as shown in Fig. 13A, and a second or open position 309B, as shown in Fig. 13C. The entry panel 308 may be biased to the closed position 309A, such as where the entry panel 308 is configured to pivot relative to the environment 300, such as along the top edge of the entry panel 308. As shown in the embodiment presented in Fig. 13C, the entry panel 308, when in the open position 309B, may permit a figure to enter the environment 300.

[0094] The exit panels 314 may be movable between a first or closed position 315A, as shown in Figs. 13A-13C, and a second or open position 315B, as shown in Fig. 13D. In some embodiments, the exit panels 314 may be biased toward the closed position 315A. As shown in the embodiment presented in Fig. 13D, the exit panels 314, when in the open positions 315B, may permit a figure 120 to exit the environment 300.

[0095] In some embodiments, the environment 300 may include an internal mechanism such as a ramp, chute, or the like. The internal mechanism, such as the ramp, chute, or the like, may be configured to transport a figure that as entered the environment 300, such as through the entry panel 308 as shown in Fig. 13C, out of the environment 300, such as through the exit panels 314, as shown in Fig. 13D. During game play, an objective or task for a player may include attempting to launch a figure through environment 300.

[0096] Now the interaction of a shooting figure and an impact-damageable environment will be described. As previously discussed, a shooting figure may include a sculpted body, a base, a projectile launcher, and an associated projectile, such as shown in the embodiments presented in Figs. 4 and 5. The body of a shooting figure may be fixedly attached to the base such that the body may not be removed from the base during normal use. In some embodiments, the body of a shooting figure may be permanently attached to the base. In some embodiments, the body of a shooting figure may be removably attached to the base.

[0097] Referring to Figs. 15A-15C, a shooting figure 200 is illustrated proximate to an impact-damageable environment 360. The shooting figure 200 has a projectile launcher 206 that may be configured to deliver the projectile 208, such as in response to a user input. As shown in the illustrative embodiment presented in Figs. 15A-15C, a user may grasp the shooting figure 200 with a first hand 20, such as by grasping the base 204. The user may cause the projectile launcher 206 to deliver the projectile 208, such as in a user selected direction along a user selected trajectory.

[0098] The projectile launcher 206 may include any suitable mechanism configurable to launch the projectile 208. Exemplary mechanisms include those that directly transform a user input into motion, such as a catapult, and those which include an energy storage mechanism, such as a spring or other elastic element.

[0099] In this embodiment, the impact-damageable environment 360 may include one or more shootable components 368, 370, and 372, such as shootable windows, as shown in Figs. 15A-15C. each of the shootable components 368, 370, and 372 may be configured to move between a first or intact position 373, as shown in Fig. 15A, and a second position 374, such as to simulate a broken or shot-out window 376, as shown in Figs. 15B and 15C. The shootable components 368, 370, and 372 may be configured to move from the first position 373 to the second position 374 when

impacted with a sufficient force, such as when struck by a projectile 208 released by a shooting figure 200, as illustrated in Figs. 15A-15C. The shootable components 368, 370, and 372 may be configured to pop loose or to pivot relative to the environment 360 between the first positions 373 and second positions 374. During game play, an objective or task for a player may include damaging environment 360 using one of the player's figures.

[0100] Now the interaction of a punching figure and an impact-damageable environment will be described. As previously discussed, a punching figure may include a sculpted body and a base, such as shown in the embodiments presented in Fig. 5. The body of a punching figure may be sculpted in any suitable pose, such as one that might be characteristic of the character depicted by the figure. In one embodiment, the punching figure can resemble a character, such as SUPERMAN.

[0101] As previously described relative to Fig. 5, the body of a punching figure, such as punching figure 180, may include an upper region 183, such as a torso or the like, and a lower region 185, such as legs or the like. The torso 183 may be configured to move relative to the legs 185, such as where the torso 183 pivots relative to the legs 185, such as between a first position 194, as shown in Figs. 5, 14A and 14C, and a second or energized position 195, as shown in Fig. 14B. The torso 183 may be biased relative to the legs 185. In some embodiment, the torso 183 may be rotationally biased relative to the legs 185, such as to the first position 194.

[0102] An exemplary functionality of a punching figure is shown in Figs. 14A-14C. A user may grasp the base 188 or legs 185 of the punching figure 180 with a first hand 20, as shown in Fig. 14A. The user may then grasp the torso 183 or arm 186 with a second hand 22 and rotate the torso 183 from the first position 194 toward the second position 195, as shown in Fig. 14B. The user may release the arm 186 or torso 183, such that the bias on the torso 183 may cause the torso 183 to

transition from the second position 195 to the first position 194, such as by rotating relative to the legs 185 and/or the base 188, as shown in Figs. 14B-14C.

[0103] An impact-damageable environment 340 may include one or more breakaway features 346, as shown in the embodiment presented in Figs. 14A-14C. At least one of the breakaway features 346 may be configured to resemble damageable components of the environment 340, such as components that may be damaged by an impact. For example, the breakaway feature 346 may be configured to simulate a portion, such as a corner, of a building that may be knocked loose and/or off when struck, as shown in Figs. 14B-14C. In some embodiments, the breakaway feature 346 may be retained relative to the environment 340, as shown in Figs. 14A-14B, until struck with a predetermined level of force. For example, the breakaway feature 346 may be configured to remain intact when struck relatively weakly. During game play, an objective or task for a player may include damaging environment 340 using one of the player's figures.

[0104] As set forth above, each of the environments may be configured to represent a structure, such as a building, and may be classified as at least one type of environment based on the functionality or functionalities of the particular environment. For example, each environment may be configured as one or more of a jump-through environment, a pass-through environment, and/or an impact-damageable environment, or the like, as shown in Figs. 6 and 7. Each environment may include any combination of anyone or more of the various functionalities described herein. Some environments may include some or all of the functionality of a jump-through environment, a pass-through environment, an impact-damageable environment, and/or a breakaway environment, or the like.

[0105] An example of a pass-through environment is presented in Figs. 9A-9D. A pass-through environment may be configured to permit a figure to move through the environment, such as along

a predefined path. As shown in Figs. 9A-9D, this embodiment of a pass-through environment 320 may include a slit 326 and one or more openings 336 and 338 (as also shown in Fig. 6).

[0106] The pass-through environment 320 may be configured such that a user may pass a string 108 associated with a figure 100 through the slit 326, as shown in Figs. 9B-9C. The figure 100 may be made to move through the environment 320, such as along a path corresponding to the slit 326, as shown in Figs. 9C-9D and discussed above in connection with Figs. 8A-8D.

[0107] The path through the environment 320 may include one or more effects, such as doors 328 and 330, fire effects 332 and 334, or the like. The doors 328 and 330 may be movable between a closed position, as shown in Fig. 9C, and an open position to create an opening 339, as shown in Fig. 9D. The doors 328 and 330 may be disposed across a predetermined path through the environment 320, such that when the figure 100 moves along the predetermined path, the figure 100 may cause the doors 328 and 330 to move from the closed position to the open position, as shown in Figs. 9C-9D.

[0108] The fire effects 332 and 334 may be configured to move between a first position simulating a burning building, as shown in Fig. 9A, and a second position, which may simulate an extinguished fire, as shown in Fig. 9C. The fire effects 332 and 334 extend through openings or slots 333 and 335, respectively, that are formed in the upper surface of the environment 320. The fire effects 332 and 334 may be configured to remain in the first position. The environment 320 may include an activation mechanism, such as a switch, lever, or the like, configured to cause the fire effects 332 and 334 to move to the second position. In some embodiments, the activation mechanism may be configured to cause the fire effects 332 and 334 to move to the second position when the doors 328 and 330 are opened. In some embodiments, the activation mechanism may be configured to cause the fire effects 332 and 334 to move to the second position when a figure 100

has passed at least partially through the environment 320. In such an embodiment, the activation mechanism may include a switch, lever, or the like disposed proximate the side of the environment 320 opposite the intended entry point of the environment 320, such as proximate the side opposite the doors 328 and 330. During game play, an objective or task for a player may include trying to move a figure through the pass-through environment 320.

[0109] The figures and environments described above can be utilized together as part of a system for playing a game, such as an action battle game. As part of a game, players may have to complete tasks or objectives using a figure. For example, a player may need to complete an objective using a figure relative to another person's figure. Alternatively, a player may need to complete an objective using a figure relative to an environment. The completion of an objective or the winning of a battle against another player's figure may result in the award of points in a game. The objectives can be any type of challenge, task, or action that involves one or more action figures. In one embodiment, the objectives can be included on objective cards that form a part of the game.

[0110] In different embodiments, the objective cards may be fabricated from any suitable material such as paper, cardstock (e.g., pressed paper), plastic, or wood. Each of the objective cards may include a first surface and a second surface. At least some of the objective cards may include indicia printed, engraved, and/or embossed on one or more surfaces, such as on the first and/or second surfaces.

[0111] At least some of the objective cards may define an objective for a user, such as a particular task or objective a user must perform. In some embodiments, at least some of the objective cards may define a particular action to be executed by one or more figures such as relative to one or more of the environments. As an illustrative example, an objective card may specify that a figure pass

through an environment, such as to simulate extinguishing the fire simulated by the fire effects. Exemplary objective cards may also specify that a figure jump through an environment and/or damage an environment with an impact, such as punching and/or shooting a projectile at an environment.

[0112] At least some of the objective cards may include at least one indicia that may correspond to a point value, such as a victory point value. The point value may be associated with completion of an objective. In some embodiments, the point value may be associated with completion of at least one objective defined on the objective card.

[0113] An action figure battle game may be configured for suitable number of users and/or players, such as two to four players. The action figure battle game may be configured such that a player may assemble a team and/or set of figures suitable for completing at least one objective, such as an objective specified on at least one objective card and/or to defeat an opposing player. The player may choose figures having appropriate abilities and/or functionalities for completing the objectives and/or defeating an opposing player. In some embodiments, one or more players may use the various components of the games, such as figures and/or environments to recreate stories or scenes, such as those in comic books.

[0114] As described in greater detail below, an embodiment of the action figure battle game may be packaged as a basic or starter set. An illustrative example of a starter set may include one environment, two figures, a booklet, such as a mini-comic, and three objective cards. An action figure battle game may also include additional components, such as may be packaged in a booster or add-on set. A booster set may include three figures and one objective card.

[0115] In some embodiments of the action figure battle game, at least some of the sets may be configured such that, prior to purchase, a purchaser may be unaware of the type and/or

functionality of at least some of the included components. For example, the type or identity of at least one of the included figures, environments and/or objective cards may be concealed prior to purchase. Such an embodiment may encourage a user to purchase additional sets. In some embodiments of the action figure battle game, at least some of the sets may be configured such that, prior to purchase, a purchaser may be aware of the type and/or functionality of at least some of the included components. In such an embodiment, a purchaser may make a purchasing decision at least partially based on the contents of a particular set.

[0116] In some embodiments, an object of the action figure battle game may be to be the first player to reach a certain number of victory points, such as 12 victory points. A player may earn victory points such as by completing different objectives. For example, a player may complete an objective associated with one or more environments and/or figures. In some embodiments, the player may complete an objective associated with the player's environments and/or figures. In some embodiments, the player may complete an objective associated with an opposing player's environments and/or figures.

[0117] An example of an action figure battle game may begin with one or more players choosing the number of environments with which the player will play. In some embodiments, the number of environments used by a given player may be the same as the number of environments used by other players. A first player may set up his or her environments in a play area, such as between the first player and a second player, such as in front of the second player. The second player may then set up his or her environments in the play area, such as in front of the first player. Each of the players may set out at least one objective card, such as face down. Each player may place the objective cards such that the indicia indicating an objective and/or a point value associated with completion of the objective may be concealed, such as from other players.

[0118] A method of play for an illustrative example of an action figure battle game may include a series of turns. On a particular player's turn, such as each player's turn, that player may perform a predefined number of actions, such as three actions. Exemplary actions may include moving a figure, activating the functionality of a figure, and/or switching a figure in play for another figure, such as a figure not currently in play. During a turn, a player may select appropriate actions to maneuver the player's figures and/or to complete an objective, such as one specified on at least one objective card held by the player. When a player completes an objective specified on an objective card, the player may reveal the point value associated with completion of the objective, such as by turning over the objective card. A player may keep track of his or her score, such as by keeping objective cards associated with completed objectives in front of the player. In some embodiments, a player may win a game when that player earns a predetermined number of points, such as twelve points, by completing objectives.

[0119] During a turn, a player may move at least one figure. A player may move a figure using the retractable string on the base of the figure, as described above. The length of the string may be unique to each character. A player may move a particular figure any distance, such as a distance less than or equal to the length of the string associated with that figure. In some embodiments, the figure may move along other than a straight path, such as when the figure moves around the corner of an object.

[0120] During a turn, a player may activate a functionality associated with a particular figure. For example, a figure may be made to jump, punch, and/or shoot a projectile, as described above. A player may use a particular functionality for purposes such as completing an objective and/or attacking another player's figures.

[0121] During a turn, a player may switch a figure in play for another figure, such as a figure not currently in play. For example, a player may choose to substitute a figure having a functionality more appropriate to a particular objective and/or for attacking another figure. In some embodiments, a player may substitute figures the player has acquired such as through the purchase of additional game sets.

[0122] As an illustrative example, a player may switch a flying figure into play when the player desires to launch a figure to complete an objective and/or to attack another player's figures. For example, a player may switch a flying figure into play to knock over obstacles, land on top of an environment, and/or, or attempt an aerial assault on another player's figures.

[0123] As an illustrative example, a player may switch a punching figure into play when the player desires to strike environments and/or other figures. For example, a player may switch a punching figure into play to complete an objective, such as by damaging an environment, and/or attempt to knock over other figures.

[0124] As an illustrative example, a player may switch a shooting figure into play when the player desires to use a projectile to complete an objective and/or attack another figure. For example, a player may switch a shooting figure into play when the player desires to shoot out the windows in an environment having windows that may be damaged.

[0125] As an illustrative example, a player may switch a figure having a longer and/or more powerful retractable string into play. A player may use the movement of such a figure to attack other figures or to move through an environment, as discussed above.

[0126] In some embodiments of an action figure battle game, a player may interfere with other players. For example, a player may use his or her figures to attack an opponent's figures. As an illustrative example, a player may use one or more of the functionalities of his or her figures to

cause at least one of another player's figures to be knocked over. In some embodiments, if a figure is knocked over during play, that figure may be eliminated from play and/or may be required to return to a previous position, such as a starting position. When a figure is eliminated from play, the elimination may be for the remainder of a game or may be for a predetermined number of turns, or the like.

[0127] In some embodiments, some of the figures may have bases configured to make knocking the figure over more difficult. For example, some figures may have a larger base and/or a base having a shape configured to make tipping more difficult in some directions, such as a non-circular or polygonal base.

[0128] Another exemplary embodiment of an action figure battle game is illustrated in Figs. 16-99. As shown in the example presented in Fig. 16, the action figure battle game 400 may generally include a plurality of figures, which may be divided into two or more general classes of figures. As shown in Fig. 16, the figures may be generally grouped as heroes and villains, some of which may be based on licensed characters. Each of the figures may be sculpted or otherwise configured to resemble one of a plurality of characters.

[0129] Referring to Fig. 16, several different figures are illustrated. Figure 410 is a character that has an articulated waist portion that allows an upper portion 412 to move relative to a lower portion 414 of the figure 410. The articulated waist portion facilitates a punching action by the figure 410. Figure 420 includes an extended arm portion 422 that allows the figure to perform a punching action. Figure 430 includes a base 432 that has a window 434 extending into a receptacle formed in the base 432. As illustrated in Fig. 16, a secret power chip or element 436 can be inserted into the receptacle of base 432 and an indicia 438 on the chip 436 visible through the window 434. The secret power chip can be referred to as an enhanced play element as well.

[0130] Figure 440 is a character that includes a weapon 442 with an extendable punch gun portion 444. Figure 450 is a character that includes a projectile launcher 452 that is configured to shoot or propel a projectile 454, which in this example resembles a missile. The figure 450 can include a back pack structure 456 that has additional projectiles 458 disposed therein. Figure 460 is a character that includes a projectile launcher 462 that is configured to shoot or propel a projectile 464, which in this example resembles a grappling hook projectile. Finally, figure 470 is a character that has a throwing action that can be used to throw or launch an object. In one implementation, figure 470 can have spring-loaded arms that can be pulled back and released to throw an object. In another implementation, figure 470 can have an upper portion, such as a torso, that is resilient biased relative to a lower portion. A user can pull back on the upper portion to launch an object. The object can be placed on the pivotally mounted arms, which pivot forwardly as the torso moves forwardly.

[0131] Also illustrated in Fig. 16 is an objective card or score sheet 480 that can be in the form of a miniature or mini-comic. The features of the objective card 480 will be described in detail below. In this embodiment, the objective card 480 includes a story portion or image portion 482 with images relating to the game and/or some of the figures. The objective card 480 also includes a score portion 484 with a series of numbers that can be used to keep score of a game.

[0132] In some embodiments, there may be 5, 10, or even 20 or more different potential characters that the figures may be configured to resemble. As will be discussed more fully below, each of the figures may be configured to move and/or attack in at least one of several different possible ways. For example, as shown in the example presented in Fig. 16, one or more of the figures may be configured to attack via punching or striking, launching projectiles, which mayor may not be captive, throwing objects, or any other suitable method such as flying, charging, or the like.

[0133] The various components of an action figure battle game may be packaged into one or more different types of sets and/or packages. As illustrative examples, some of the components of an action figure battle game may be packaged into a starter set 500, such as is illustrated in Fig. 17, an expansion or booster set 550, such as is illustrated in Fig. 18, and/or a deluxe set 580, such as is illustrated in Fig. 19. The various types of sets and/or packages into which the various components of an action figure battle game may be packaged may be suitably arranged into a planagram for retail sale, such as where the different types of sets and/or packages are of different sizes, appearances, and/or price-points, or the like.

[0134] It should be understood that the following descriptions of sets and/or packages are given by way of example only. Thus, it is within the scope of this disclosure for the various components of an action figure battle game to be packaged in any suitable combination such that anyone of the described sets may include more or less of any given component and/or new and/or different combinations of components may be packaged together.

[0135] An illustrative example of a starter set for an action figure battle game is illustrated in Fig. 17. The starter set may include, at least, a predetermined number of figures such as four or five figures 510, 512, 514, 516, and 518, a plurality of secret power chips 520, such as eight secret power chips, a plurality of hero/villain tokens 524 and 526, such as 12 hero/villain tokens, at least one mini-comic 540, a play mat or play map 530, and written instructions. The secret power chips 520 may include indicia 522 that is indicative of points associated with the particular chip. The objective card or mini-comic 540 includes an image portion 542 and a score or scoring portion 544. The play mat 530 is a color play mat that can be double sided and can include several locations identified thereon that can be used in a game.

[0136] The figures in the starter set may be packaged such that one or more of the figures, such as figures 510, 512, 514, and 516, is visible to a potential purchaser prior to purchase. At least one of the figures, such as figure 518, may be blind-packed such that a purchaser will not know the identity of one or more of the figures prior to purchasing. The blind-packing of figures may prompt additional purchases, such as based on the desire to obtain more of or different blind-packed figures. By way of a non-limiting example, the starter set may include at least one punching figure 510, which may also be capable of throwing objects, and at least one projectile firing figure, such as figure 512 or figure 516, which may or may not fire captive projectiles. The blind-packed figure may be any type of figure.

[0137] An illustrative example of a booster set for an action figure battle game is illustrated in Fig. 18. The booster set 550 may include, at least, a plurality of figures, such as three figures 560, 562, and 564, at least one of which may be blind-packed, a plurality of secret power chips 566, such as four secret power chips, a plurality of hero/villain tokens 568 and 570, such as 2 hero/villain tokens, at least one mini-comic or objective card 572, and written instructions. In some illustrative embodiments, all of the figures in the booster set may be blind packed.

[0138] An illustrative example of a deluxe set for an action figure battle game is illustrated in Figs. 19 and 96. The deluxe set 580 may include, at least, one or more vehicles 582, which may be blind-packed, a plurality of secret power chips 586, such as two or even four or more secret power chips, at least one mini-comic or objective card 584, a play mat or play map 588, and written instructions. In some embodiments, the deluxe set may include a plurality of hero/villain tokens.

[0139] In addition to the starter, booster, and deluxe sets and/or packages, other possible sets and/or packages may be utilized. For example, two figures, such as one good guy or hero and one bad guy or villain, may be packaged together to form a “versus” set or pack. In some embodiments

of the “versus” set or pack one or both of the figures may be blind packed, such as to motivate additional purchases.

[0140] An illustrative example of a play map or play mat, such as one that may be included in the aforementioned starter set or deluxe sets, that is suitable for use with an action figure battle game is illustrated in Fig. 20. The play mat 600 may be double-sided and printed with a suitable number of colors, such as five, using any suitable process. The play mat may be any suitable size, such as a size selected for compatibility with the number and/or motion characteristics of the various figures to be used with the play mat when playing the action figure battle game. For example, a play mat that is 36 inches by 36 inches may be suitable for use with an action figure battle game involving two, three, or even four players. The obverse and reverse sides of the play mat 600 may be the same or they may be different. For example, as shown in Fig. 20, the obverse side of the play mat 600 may provide a complete playing surface, such as for use during a two-player game, with locations marked for players’ start areas 602, 604, 606, and 608, scoring information, city specific locales, mini-comic objectives, or the like. In the illustrative example play mat shown in Fig. 20, the city specific locales include the bat cave, Wayne enterprises, city hall, etc.

[0141] Some of the markings relating to landmarks or landmark locations in the game may include Wayne Enterprises 610 which is landmark location 612, Gotham Jail 614 which is landmark location 616, Arkham Asylum 618 which is landmark location 620, and Axis Chemicals 622 which is landmark location 624. Some exemplary markings relating to hot spot locations include the Bat Cave 630 which is a hot spot location 632, the City Hospital 634 which is a hot spot location 636, the Clocktower 638 which is a hot spot location 640, Gotham Heights 642 which is a hot spot location 644. The play mat 600 includes a location resembling City Hall 650.

[0142] The markings on the play mats for city specific locales may be explicit, such as suggested in Fig. 21 (which roughly corresponds to the play mat shown in Fig. 20). The use of a simplified play mat, such as suggested in Fig. 21 may make the action figure battle game suitable for younger players. The markings on the play mats for city specific locales may be configured to represent and/or resemble real and/or fictional buildings and/or land marks, such as shown in Fig. 20. In some embodiments of a play mat configured as shown in the illustrative example presented in Fig. 20, clearly defined borders between the designated locales may be provided such as to aid players to more readily determine the extent of the designated locales. Such clearly defined borders may permit more ready determination of whether an action figure is positioned on a particular locale.

[0143] As illustrated in Fig. 21, the play mat 660 includes several landmarks 670, 672, 674, and 676. The play mat 660 also includes several hot spot locations 680, 682, 684, and 686. The quantity and arrangement of the landmarks and hot spot locations can vary in different embodiments.

[0144] The reverse side of the play mat may provide a fraction of a complete playing surface for use with a multi-player game, such as when the game is played by four or more players. For example, the reverse side of the play mat may provide one quarter of the playing surface for use with a multi-player game, such as one 90 degree quadrant such that four such play mats can be combined to form a complete playing surface, which may be 72 inches by 72 inches. The reverse sides of the play mats may be the same or the reverse side may vary from play mat to play mat, such as where the reverse side of each play mat includes one of a predetermined number of possible reverse sides such that multiple different playing surfaces may be created by combining different versions of the reverse side of various play mats. The reverse side of the play mat could be one-

quarter of a giant four-player play mat. Each quarter section may fit together with the others, with four sections completing the expanded play mat area for an expanded number of players.

[0145] Some examples of objective cards or mini-comics suitable for use with an action figure battle game are presented in Figs. 22 and 23. Each mini-comic may provide a game scenario, such as in the form of a story and context for a particular game, and a method of scoring a particular game. The mini-comics may be any suitable size, such as approximately 3.75 inches by 11 inches, and they may be sized to fit in a standard clear collectable or trading card sleeve, such as when appropriately folded. The mini-comics may be printed using any suitable method, such as a five-color, glossy process, and may be single or double sided. The mini-comics may be a four-panel comic, as shown in Figs. 22-23.

[0146] There may be multiple different mini-comics produced within the collective game play system for the action figure battle game, such as a total of 15 to 20 different mini-comics. As used herein, the term “collective game play system” may generally refer to the collective combination of all game components that are available to players. For example, the “collective game play system” may refer to the collection of all game components that have been sold to or otherwise distributed to all potential players of the action figure battle game.

[0147] The selection of mini-comics for inclusion in each set may be random, and the mini-comics may be blind packed into the sets to enhance the collectable nature of the mini-comics such as to encourage the purchase of additional sets. Some of the aforementioned sets or packages may include a predefined or selected mini-comic. For example each starter set may include the same mini-comics.

[0148] Referring to Fig. 22, the objective card or mini-comic 700 includes a story portion 702 that includes several panels or images 704, 706, 708, and 710. In this embodiment, images 704, 706,

708, and 710 form part of a story or storyline. Referring to Fig. 23, the mini-comic 720 similarly includes a story portion 722 that includes several panels or images 724, 726, 728, and 730 that form part of a story or storyline. Image 732 sets forth a game play mode or objective to be attempted by one or more players. The objective card can provide a story and context for the game. New objective cards during a game can change game objectives and provide new challenges.

[0149] The mini-comics may be used to track the scoring of a game, including providing a method and/or structure suitable for determining a player who has won a game. For example, as shown in the example presented in Figs. 22 and 23, a mini-comic may include a plurality of spaces along the lower edge to track victory or other points, such as knock-down points as will be discussed more fully below. As illustrated in Fig. 22, the mini-comic 700 includes a scoring portion 712 with several victory / knockdown point tracking spaces 714. Similarly, mini-comic 720 includes a scoring portion 734 with several point tracking spaces 736. A mini-comic may also include spaces 716, such as in the last panel (see image or panel 710 of mini-comic 700), to track landmark points, which may correspond to landmarks held by a player, as shown in Fig. 22. As illustrated in Fig. 23, the mini-comic 720 includes a game objective or method of play 732 in the last panel 730. A more detailed landmark point tracking system, such as suggested by Fig. 21, might also be included on a mini-comic, such as to provide a more involved landmark-based game play.

[0150] In some embodiments, mini-comics may provide additional directions to the players. For example, some mini-comics may instruct a player to move his or her figures in a particular manner and/or to a particular location, such as a particular landmark or to or onto a particular structure or other game play element. An example of such instructions is illustrated in Fig. 23 as image 732 of mini-comic 720.

[0151] The written instructions for the action figure battle game may be in the form of an instruction book. The instruction book may explain the basic game rules and concepts, such as the use of the secret power chips.

[0152] Some additional illustrations of various action figures and sets are illustrated in Figs. 24-26. Referring to Fig. 24, exemplary figures 510, 512, 514, and 516 that can be components of a starter set 500 are illustrated.

[0153] Referring to Fig. 25, two types of figures that are configured to move are illustrated. These figures are similar in movement functionality to some of the figures previously described. Figure 750 is an exemplary running figure that has a body 752 and a base 754 coupled to the body 752. The base 754 includes wheels (not shown) underneath that extend from a lower surface of the base 754. To energize the movement mechanism of figure 750, the figure 750 can be rolled rearwardly along the surface on which it is supported to cause the internal components to ratchet up against a spring. When a user pushes the brake release 756, the movement mechanism of the figure 750 is activated and the base 754 is driven so that it rolls on wheels. Figure 760 is an exemplary flying or launching figure that includes a body 762 and a base 764 coupled to the body 762. In this embodiment, a user can press down a spring loaded button 766 and when the user releases the button 766, the figure 760 is launched into the air. The figure 760 can be return to its standing position after its flight has been completed.

[0154] Referring to Fig. 26, three figures that have attack functionalities are illustrated. These figures are similar in movement functionality to some of the figures previously described. Figure 770 is exemplary of a figure that projects or launches objects. Figure 770 includes a button 772 that is located on backpack 774. The button 772 can be actuated to launch a projectile 776. Figure 780 is exemplary of a throwing figure that has a body 782 with spring loaded arms 784 that are

movable relative to the body 782. A release button 786 can be disposed on the back of the body 782. A user can push the release button 786 to cause the figure 780 to throw the object 788. Figure 790 is exemplary of a punching figure. Figure 790 includes a body 792 and an arm 794 that are driven as previously described. As shown, figure 790 can run into and punch figure 796 to knock it down. Knocking down a figure can give a player points. Figure 796 includes a window 798 through which a secret power chip or element is visible. Some examples of secret power chips or elements are now described.

[0155] Some illustrative examples of secret power chips suitable for use with an action figure battle game are shown in Figs. 16-19, 27, 38, and 48. Referring to Fig. 27, the use of the secret power chips 800 and 802 are described. The secret power chips may represent unusual powers and twists of fate that may appear in a superhero showdown, such as one that is represented by the action figure battle game. The secret power chips factor into the strategy of a game and can be used for “enhanced” powers or results. During game play, secret power chips may be selected from a player’s available pool of secret power chips, and one chip may be inserted into the base of each of the player’s figures at the beginning of a game. As illustrated in Fig. 27, an exemplary base 810 includes a side 812 in which a slot 814 is formed. The slot 814 is configured to receive a secret power chip 200. The base 810 includes a window 816 through which an interior of the base 810 is visible. The base 810 includes a lower surface 818 in which a window 820 is formed. When a chip 800 is inserted into the base 810, the type of chip is visible through the windows 816 and 820. In one embodiment, if the chip is green, it can be inserted face up into the slot 814. The secret power chips may add an element of strategy or guess work to the action figure battle game by allowing a widely varying customization of figures with collectable powers. Once a figure 804 has been defeated, the figures secret power chip may add a new twist to the outcome.

[0156] The secret power chips may be punched out from a card, which may be fabricated from styrene, paper, cardboard or the like, and have indicia printed on both sides. As shown in Figs. 16, 27, 38A-38C, and 48, the secret power chips may be configured to be snapped into a secret power chip slot that is provided in the base of at least one of the figures for the action figure battle game. The collective game play system for the action figure battle game may include multiple different cards, such as 15-20 different cards, which may include varying selections of the different types of secret power chips. Some of the sets and/or packages may uniformly include the same card of secret power chips. For example, the starter sets may always include the same card of secret power chips.

[0157] A rarity value may be assigned to at least some of the secret power chips. The rarity value (e.g., common, uncommon, and rare) may be indicative of the relative frequency with which the particular secret power chip appears in the collective game play system of the action figure battle game. In particular, some of the secret power chips may appear relatively infrequently within the total available supply of secret power chips that are available in various sets and/or packages. The rarity value of a secret power chip may correspond to the power or overall value of the secret power chip. For example, more powerful secret power chips, which may appear relatively infrequently in the collective game play system, may have a higher rarity value. By way of non-limiting illustration, a secret power chip having a rarity value of "common" may occur at a frequency such as 1 in 10, 1 in 5, or even 1 in 3; a secret power chip having a rarity value of "uncommon" may occur at a frequency such as 1 in 10, 1 in 50, or even 1 in 100; while a secret power chip having a rarity value of "rare" may occur at a frequency such as 1 in 100, 1 in 500, even 1 in 1000 or even less frequently.

[0158] The secret power chips may be color coded, such as to define how the secret power chips should be used during game play. For example, some of the secret power chips may be blue and some may be green. The blue secret power chips may be intended to be inserted into the figure base face down (i.e., with text facing the surface of the play mat such that the text is only visible through the window on the lower surface of the figure base when the figure is knocked over). The green secret power chips may be intended to be inserted into the figure base face up (i.e., visible through the window on the upper surface of the figure base).

[0159] The color coding of the secret power chips may provide an indication of how and when the secret power chips are to be effective during game play. For example, the blue secret power chips may become active when the figure carrying the chip is knocked over, in which case the secret power is revealed and then resolved immediately. The green secret power chips may selectively activated during game play, such as by being one of the player's actions taken during a turn, at which time the secret power is used and then taken out of play.

[0160] Some illustrative examples of the powers granted by blue secret power chips, which may only come into effect when a figure is knocked over, may include the following examples.

[0161] Some blue secret power chips may be labeled "Stay in the fight." The "Stay in the fight" blue secret power chips may have a rarity value of uncommon and may be included in the starter set, as illustrated in Fig. 17. The "Stay in the fight" blue secret power chip may permit a figure that was on a predefined objective location when it was knocked over to be set-up in the closest hot spot (see Figs. 20 and 21) instead of in the player's setup area during the player's next turn.

[0162] Some blue secret power chips may be labeled "Sidekick." The "Sidekick" blue secret power chips may have a rarity value of common and may be included in the starter set. The "Sidekick" blue secret power chips may permit a player to move one of his or her other figures,

such as a superhero, that has a higher point value when the figure having the “Sidekick” blue secret power chip is knocked over.

[0163] Some blue secret power chips may be labeled “Inspiration.” The “Inspiration” blue secret power chips may have a rarity value of rare. When a figure having the “Inspiration” blue secret power chip is knocked out, the player associated with that figure may be permitted to move all of the player’s other figures.

[0164] Some blue secret power chips may be labeled “Dodge.” The “Dodge” blue secret power chips may have a rarity value of common and may be included in the starter set. The “Dodge” blue secret power chips may permit the figure having the “Dodge” blue secret power chip to be recovered (i.e., stood up after being knocked down) and the opponent who knocked down the figure having the “Dodge” blue secret power chip gets no knockdown points for knocking down the figure. Subsequent to such usage, the “Dodge” blue secret power chip may be removed from the figure.

[0165] Some illustrative examples of the powers granted by green secret power chips, which may be selectively activated as an action during a player’s turn, may include the following examples.

[0166] Some green secret power chips may be labeled “Speed Boost.” The “Speed Boost” green secret power chips may have a rarity value of common. The “Speed Boost” green secret power chip may permit a figure to be moved twice in one turn, but the two movements may count as two actions during that turn.

[0167] Some green secret power chips may be labeled “Kryptonite Weapon.” The “Kryptonite Weapon” green secret power chips may have a rarity value of rare. The “Kryptonite Weapon” green secret power chip may permit a player who uses a figure carrying the “Kryptonite Weapon” green secret power chip to knock over a specific figure, such as one resembling Superman, to cause

that version of the specific figure (e.g., the punching version of the specific figure) to be removed from the current game such that the particular version of the specific figure cannot be recovered during the current game.

[0168] Some green secret power chips may be labeled “Taunt.” The “Taunt” green secret power chips may have a rarity value of common. To use the “Taunt” green secret power chip, prior to shooting at or otherwise attacking an enemy figure that is on an objective, a player attacking with a figure that is on a hot spot may discard the “Taunt” green secret power chip from that figure and then score two extra Knockdown Points for knocking out the enemy figure or lose one knockdown point for missing the enemy figure.

[0169] Additional types of secret power chips may be included in the action figure battle games. For example, there may be a secret power chip which permits a figure to be moved from the playing surface to an elevated position, such as atop an obstacle, structure or other three-dimensional feature of the game, such as one that the base or other portion of the figure is touching, which may enable the figure to then attack from an elevated position.

[0170] Some illustrative examples of hero/villain tokens suitable for use with an action figure battle game are shown in Figs. 16-18. The hero/villain tokens may be small disks, such as .375 inches in diameter, which may be punched out from a card, which may be fabricated from styrene, paper, cardboard or the like, and have indicia printed on both sides. In some embodiments, the hero/villain tokens may be manufactured or otherwise provided on the same card as the secret power chips. In some embodiments, the hero/villain tokens may be approximately the same size as the secret power chips. For example, the starter set may include one or more cards having both hero/villain tokens and secret power chips. As shown in Figs. 16-18, one side of the of the hero/villain tokens may have a hero symbol, such as an “H” printed thereon, while the other side

may have a villain symbol, such as a "V." During play of the action figure battle game, the hero/villain tokens may be used to track points in or on the mini-comics, such as by placing appropriately oriented hero/villain tokens on the Victory/Knockdown Point tracking spaces on the mini-comic, as shown in Figs. 16 and 22-23, or by placing appropriately oriented hero/villain tokens on the on-map objectives or landmark points shown in Figs. 21 and 22.

[0171] The collective game play system for the action figure battle game may include multiple different cards, such as 15-20 different cards, which may include varying selections of the different types of secret power chips and hero/villain tokens. Some of the sets and/or packages may uniformly include the same card of secret power chips and hero/villain tokens. For example, the starter sets may always include the same card of secret power chips and hero/villain tokens.

[0172] Some illustrative examples of figures suitable for use with an action figure battle game are shown in Figs. 16-95. Non-limiting examples of figures, as generally classified by their attack functionalities, may include punching or striking action figures, whipping or horizontal-attack action figures, limited range or captive projectile action figures, projectile firing action figures, flying action figures, and throwing action figures. Within the collective game play system for the action figure battle game, there may be figures representing 20 characters, which may include 10 variations.

[0173] Each of the figures may generally include a body and a base to which the body may be removably, semi-permanently, or even permanently mounted. Each of the figures may be articulated at a plurality of points, such as 2, 3, 4, 5 or even 6 or more points. Exemplary points of articulation may include the waist, arms, head/neck, the attachment of the figure to the base, or the like. At least some of the figures may be approximately 6 cm tall, exclusive of the base thickness.

[0174] Some illustrative examples of bases for figures suitable for use with an action figure battle game are shown in Figs. 1-95. The bases may be any suitable shape such as circular, ovoid, polygonal, or the like. For example, the bases may be circular with a suitable diameter such as 4.25 cm or 1.75 inches, or the bases may be octagonal with a major axis or diameter having a length such as 5.25 cm. When the base is other than circular, the figure may be aligned relative to the base geometry, such as aligned toward one of the flat sides of a polygonal base. The bases may be any suitable thickness such as 1 cm or .437 inches. In some embodiments, at least some of the bases may include a labeling or other indicia, which may provide information about the figure such as its identification, its powers and/or limitations, or the like.

[0175] Each base may be configured to receive at least one secret power chip. For example, each base may be provided with one or more slots configured to receive the secret power chip. The slots may be disposed on the side of the base, as generally shown or suggested in Figs. 16, 26-27, 29-36, 38, and 48-49. The slots and the secret power chips may be configured such that the secret power chips slide or snap into the slots.

[0176] Each figure base may be configured to view a secret power chip that has been received in the secret power chip slot. For example, the base may include one or more windows which intersect with the secret power chip slot. As shown in the examples generally depicted in Figs. 48-49, there may be a secret power chip window in the upper and lower surfaces of the base such that the upper and lower surface of the secret power chip may be viewed. The secret power chip windows in the upper and lower surfaces may be aligned, as shown in Figs. 48-49, or they may be unaligned such that the upper and lower windows view different portions of the secret power chips.

[0177] At least some of the figure bases may be configured to provide a motion capability to the action figure such that the figure's motion capability can become an element of play in the action figure battle game. Two exemplary types of motion for which a base may be configured may be "running" and "flying." In some embodiments, a base may be either a running base or a flying base. However, it is within the scope of the present disclosure for a base to at least partially include some of the features of both a running base and a flying base.

[0178] Another embodiment of an action figure according to the invention is illustrated in Fig. 28. In this embodiment, an action figure 850 can be used in a battle game. The concept is to carry through "skill and action" to as much of the game pieces play process as possible. This play is controlled by how a "team of heroes" uses energy. Every game piece is brought into play with a certain amount of energy as indicated on its base. Movement and attach cost energy, and as the battle rages on, pieces will indicated a continual depletion of that energy. Pieces are "sent into battle" by aiming and activating the motion base (wind up motor), letting it charge toward an opponent's piece. This movement may cause one piece to come in contact with another for a close in brawl, get close enough for a better chance at hitting another piece with a projectile or to move an opponents piece away from another one of the player's pieces that it has grappled with. Once a piece is out of energy, it is vulnerable.

[0179] There are several components of action figure or game piece 850. The figure 850 includes a base 852 that can be referred to as an energy base. The base 852 contains a wind up motor feature, with two wheels for piece movement. The base 852 is designed in a way to facilitate piece movement as well as being susceptible to being knocked over if action is taken upon it. The base 852 contains the energy wheel therein. The figure 850 also includes a power wheel 854. The power wheel 854 can be advanced to simulate and store the figure's "maximum" energy. The

power wheel 854 could also be used to “reset at beginning of play” or “power back up during play” the figure’s statistics. The figure 850 also includes an action button 856 that when pressed, causes the figure to go into action.

[0180] The figure 850 includes a weapon button 858 that can be pressed every time the figure 850 uses a ranged or close quarters weapon. This button 858 may also be used when activating a special powers feature. The figure 850 includes an exhaustion meter 860 that has an indicator dial that advances when the action button or weapon button are used. The exhaustion meter 860 displays what the figure 850 has left for battles. The figure 850 includes a “pooped out” flag 862 that protrudes or indicates through a window 861 that the figure 850 is so low in energy that it is to tired to continue playing.

[0181] The action figure 850 is exemplary of a detailed figure with articulation. In different embodiments, the figure may have any variety of “combat” weapons. Such weapons may be ranged projectiles or close in “swing and punch” devices. Toppling or overcoming a figure’s defeat mechanism will at least render it temporarily out of play. The above components of a game piece can be arranged for use in any variety or type of figure, vehicle or environmental component such as a building.

[0182] Referring to Figs. 29-33, several embodiments of action figures according to the invention are illustrated. In particular, the illustrated figures include projectile firing figures 900 and 920, a whipping or horizontal-attack figure 940, a flying figure 960, and a limited range or captive projectile firing figure 980.

[0183] Projectile firing figure 900 includes a body 902 coupled to a base 904. The base 904 includes a window 906 through which a secret power chip that is inserted into the base 904 can be viewed. Figure 900 includes a launcher 908 that is configured to launch a projectile 910. Figure

900 includes a movement mechanism that includes a release mechanism or button 907 that is mounted in an opening 905 formed in the base 904. Similarly, projectile firing figure 920 includes a body 922 coupled to a base 924. The base 924 includes a window 926 through which a secret power chip inserted that is inserted into the base 924 can be viewed. Figure 920 includes a launcher 928 that is configured to launch a projectile 930.

[0184] In this embodiment, whipping or horizontal-attack figure 940 includes a body 942 and a base 944 to which the body 942 is movably coupled. The body 942 includes a weapon extension 943 that extends therefrom. Body 942 is biased relative to the base 944 so that the body 942 can be twisted against the resilient bias and then released to rotate back to its starting position. Figure 940 includes a movement mechanism that includes a release mechanism or button 947 that is mounted in an opening 945 formed in the base 944. In this embodiment, a flying figure 960 is illustrated without its corresponding base, but can be used in a manner similar to the previously described flying or launching figures.

[0185] Referring to Figs. 31-33, an exemplary embodiment of a limited range or captive projectile firing figure is illustrated. This figure 980 includes a projectile 986 that is movable relative to the body 982 of the figure 980, but does not separate therefrom. Figure 980 includes a body 982 and a base 984 and a support 990 coupled to the body 982. The projectile 986 can be moved by a spring loaded launcher mechanism and includes a contact end 988 that can engage another figure.

Opposite the contact end 988 is a limiting mechanism 992 that is configured to limit the travel of the projectile 986 relative to the support 990.

[0186] Some additional embodiments of action figures are illustrated in Figs. 35-37. Figures 1100 and 1102 are exemplary throwing figures. A throwable object 1104 that can be used with throwing figure 1100 is also illustrated. Figure 1110 is an exemplary punching figure. Figures 1120 and

1122 are exemplary projectile firing figures. Figures 1130 and 1132 are exemplary limited range or captive projectile firing figures. Figure 1140 is an exemplary whipping or horizontal-attack figure. Figure 1150 is an exemplary flying figure.

[0187] Some illustrative examples of “running” bases are generally illustrated in Figs. 34, 38A-38C, and 39 -52. Referring to Fig. 34, the lower surfaces of the bases 904, 924, 944, and 966 of figures 900, 920, 940, and 960, respectively, are illustrated. Each of the bases is an example of a running base that includes drive wheels. Some of the bases may also include a guide wheel and one or more touch down or support points. The drive wheels are driven by an internal movement mechanism as described below. The guide wheel and the touch down point function to maintain the balance of the base as it moves by contacting the surface along which the base is moving. For figure 900, base 904 includes spaced apart drive wheels 912, a guide wheel 914 and a touch down point 916. Similarly, base 924 of figure 920 includes drive wheels 932, a guide wheel 934 and a touch down point 936. The base 924 also includes a slot 925 into which a secret power chip can be inserted. Base 944 of figure 940 includes drive wheels 952, a guide wheel 954 and a touch down point 956. Similarly, base 984 of figure 980 includes drive wheels 994, a guide wheel 995, and a touch down point 996. Base 984 includes a window 998 in its lower surface through which a secret power chip can be viewed. The other bases may include a similar window.

[0188] Referring to Figs. 38-52, the operation of running bases will be discussed. The running bases may include a spring-based wind-up mechanism, which may include an internal clutch. The mechanism of the running bases may be configured to randomly vary the distance traveled. For example, the mechanism may be energized by an activation element such as a push lever, such as is shown in Figs. 48-52, that may be pushed a user-selected distance to energize the mechanism (e.g., by winding up a spiral or clockwork-type wind-up spring), and then released, which permits the

base to roll until the stored energy is depleted. During game play, a player may be able to exercise some control over the distance traveled by selectively moving the push lever less than its full stroke, which may only partially wind up a spring. Thus, a skillful player may, with practice and experience, exercise some degree of control over the distance traveled by appropriately moving the push lever less than its full stroke. In some embodiments, the “running” mechanisms may vary from figure to figure, such as where some figures may include a more powerful mechanism or spring. Such figures may travel faster than other figures that have less powerful mechanisms or springs.

[0189] Referring to Figs. 38A-52, exemplary features of embodiments of a base are illustrated. As illustrated in Figs. 38A-38C, the base 1200 has an upper surface 1202 and an opposite lower surface 1204. A side wall 1206 extends around a perimeter of the base 1200 between the upper surface 1202 and the lower surface 1204. A window 1208 is formed in the upper surface 1202. Similarly, a window 1210 is formed in the lower surface 1204. The windows 1208 and 1210 are in communication with an internal receptacle into which a secret power chip 1290 may be inserted. The side wall 1206 includes a slot 1212 formed therein through which a secret power chip 1290 may be inserted.

[0190] The base 1200 includes one or more drive wheels 1242 and 1244 that are driven by a drive mechanism 1240. As the user moves the base 1200 rearwardly along the direction of arrow “A” in Fig. 38A, energy is imparted to the drive mechanism 1240 by moving a rack and gear to compress or load a spring. When the user actuates the drive mechanism 1240, the spring uncompresses and the base 1200 moves in the direction of arrow “B.” The user can actuate the drive mechanism 1240 by pressing on push button 1220. The base 1200 includes projections or feet 1222 and 1224 that

stabilize the base 1200 and provide support when the user pressing downwardly on push button 1220.

[0191] As illustrated in Figs. 39A-39C, the base 1200 includes an upper portion 1226 and a lower portion 1228 that can be coupled together. The drive mechanism 1240 includes a spring 1268 this is compressed to load energy in the drive mechanism 1240. The spring 1268 in its uncompressed state 1269A is illustrated as well as the spring 1268 in its compressed state 1269B. As the base 1200 is moved rearwardly along the direction of arrow "D," the wheel 1244 rotates along the direction of arrow "C" and the spring 1268 is compressed to its compressed state 1269B (see Fig. 39C). To release the drive mechanism 1240, a user can actuate pivoting lever 1272 by pressing downwardly on end 1273. When the drive mechanism 1240 is released, the base and any attachments are propelled forwardly by the force of spring 1268. When the mechanism 1240 is loaded, the wheel 1244 with pinion gear 1245 will float off the rack gear 1247. The released pressure on the push button will randomly re-engage the wheel 1244 with pinion 1245 into the rack 1247. The resulting effect will be a random total distance traveled, depending on the extent to which the spring was compressed.

[0192] In another embodiment, as illustrated in Figs. 40-47, the button can be used to load the spring. Button 1220 is pushed along the direction of arrow "C" to load the spring. The energy is only stored while the button 1220 is held. The button 1220 can be held in any increment until it bottoms out. A feature of the rolling base 1200 is to create short, high torque rolls by driving wheels 1242 and 1244. This abrupt powerful movement may be used to activate a "triggered" action on the rolling or rolled into figure or other accessory. The touch down points or feet 1222 and 1224 oppose force from button 1220 being pressed. The points 1222 and 1224 create stability before the base 1200 begins to move and during movement of the base 1200. The base illustrated

in Fig. 42 uses a free floating brake mechanism 1274 to cause the base 1204 to stop randomly at a maximum distance within a give range. The maximum distance is governed by a combination of how much the push button 1220 is held and the particular gearing in the gear box 1276.

[0193] Referring to Figs. 48-52, an exemplary embodiment of a moving base is illustrated. The base 1200 includes a push lever 1260 that moves along an opening in the upper surface of the base 1200 and has a first, rest position 1261 and a second, loaded position 1263 (shown in dashed lines). A user may move the push lever 1260 from its rest position 1261 along the direction of arrow "L" to its loaded position 1263 and hold the push lever 1260 there. Such movement of the push lever 1260 moves rack 1262 in the same direction so that teeth 1264 engage the teeth of pinion 1266 and rotate pinion 1266 to energize or load up the drive mechanism in the drive spring housing 1270. When the user decides to allow the base 1200 to move, the user releases the push lever 1260 and an internal spring moves the push lever 1260 along the direction of arrow "M" in Fig. 48. At the same time, output shaft 1278 and gear 1279 rotate, thereby causing the axle 1243 and drive wheels 1242 to rotate. As a result, the base 1200 is moved forwardly along the direction of arrow "N" in Fig. 48 and the base 1200 travels in a substantially linear direction. The extent to which a user moves the push lever 1260 from its rest position 1261 toward its loaded position 1263 will determine the amount of travel of the base 1200. In this embodiment, the figure 1280 includes a lower end 1281 that is coupled to the base 1200. As shown in Figs. 48 and 51, the lower end 1281 of the figure 1280 includes a post 1282 that is pivotally mounted to the base 1200. A resilient member, such as a spring, 1284 is used to bias the figure 1280 in a forward pivoting position relative to the base 1200. A player can rotate the figure 1280 rearwardly against the spring 1284 and then release the figure 1280 to cause a punching-like action.

[0194] Some examples of “flying” bases are generally illustrated in Figs. 37 and 81-87. In some embodiments, the “flying” bases may lack the “running” mechanism such that the only motion capability of a figure having a “flying” base is the flying motion. The flying base may generally include a catapult type mechanism where the figure is attached the top of a flight post, which may be energized and then released to catapult the figure into flight. The movement of such a figure may involve the figure flying from the base by using the catapult effect of the flight post to launch the figure across the playing surface, such as over an obstacle. Once the figure lands, the move can be completed by moving the base to the point at which the figure touched down. During game play, a player may be able to exercise some control over the flight distance by selectively deflecting the flight post less than the full amount. Thus, a skillful player may, with practice and experience, exercise some degree of control over the flight distance by appropriately deflecting the flight post less than the full amount.

[0195] Some illustrative examples of the attack functionalities suitable for action figures that are suitable for use with the action figure battle game are generally illustrated in Figs. 53-95. The illustrative examples of the attack functionalities may generally be classified as melee (i.e., close-in, such as punching) attack functionalities or ranged attack functionalities.

[0196] The melee attack functionalities may include the punch-attack, the whipping or horizontal-attack, and the limited range or captive projectile.

[0197] Some illustrative examples of punching or striking figures, which have a punch-attack attack functionality, are shown in Figs. 53-59D. The punch-attack functionalities may be based on spring-biased articulations of the figure and/or the connection of the figure to the base. Some exemplary points of articulation may include the head, waist, shoulders, and the connection between the figure and the base. As is generally illustrated in Figs. 53-59D, to utilize the punch-

attack functionality during play, a player deflects and then releases one or more of the points of articulation, which permits at least a portion of the figure to be snapped back to its original position.

[0198] Referring to Figs. 53-59D, figure 1300 is an exemplary embodiment of a punching figure. Figure 1300 includes a body 1310 that has an upper portion 1312 and a lower portion 1314. The upper portion 1312 includes an arm 1318 that extends outwardly from the body 1310. The upper portion 1312 is movable relative to the lower portion 1314 and is coupled thereto by a biasing member 1316, such as a pivot spring. The pivot spring 1316 forms a waist pivot for the figure 1300 and this can be referred to as a secondary pivot for the figure 1300. As shown in Fig. 57, a post 1319 is disposed on a back surface of the body 1310 and an end 1317 of the pivot spring 1316 can be wrapped around the post 1319. The secondary pivot point 1322 can add to the overall punching force and create an effect of heroic punching action.

[0199] The lower portion 1314 of the body 1310 has a base pivot portion or lower end 1320 that extends into an opening 1334 formed in the upper surface 1332 of the base 1330. A pivot spring 1326 is used with the base pivot 1320 to form a secondary pivot 1324 for the figure 1300. As illustrated in Fig. 54, the figure 1300 can be biased by spring 1326 to move and be biased from a first orientation or position 1340 to a second orientation or position 1342. The pivot spring 1326 provides a primary punching force.

[0200] As set forth above, the figure 1300 includes articulated points to provide a punching action by the figure 1300. The points of articulation on the figure 1300 allow adjustment or aiming of the figure 1300 to the height of where the punching element or arm 1318 is to impact. Some articulation points include the figure's head, shoulders and waist. The goal of using figure 1300, which can be referred to as a vertical punch attach, is to knock over other figures or potentially

activate other secondary accessories, such as to defeat mechanisms on a vehicle such as the batmobile.

[0201] The performance of the figure 1300 can be based on combination of several elements, which are illustrated in Fig. 54. A first element is the strength of the pivot spring (see reference 1350). A second element is how far the punching feature extends from the base diameter when it is activated (see reference 1352). A third element is the size of the punching features striking area (see reference 1354). A fourth element is the height at which the punching features strikes (see reference 1356). The primary pivot point 1322 and the secondary pivot point 1324 provide articulation to the figure 1300 and enhance the punching action.

[0202] Some illustrative examples of whipping or horizontal-attack figures, which have a whipping or horizontal-attack attack functionality, are shown in Figs. 60A-67. The whipping or horizontal-attack figures may include an extra element such as a rotating object, which may itself be articulated relative to the figure to permit control over the range and height of the attack. For example, the rotating object may be adjusted to only strike a nearby opposing figure without contacting a more distant one of the player's own figures.

[0203] Referring to Figs. 60A-67, figure 1400 is an exemplary embodiment of a whipping or horizontal-attack figure. Figure 1400 includes a body 1410 that has an upper portion 1412 and a lower portion 1414. The upper portion 1412 includes an arm 1420 that extends outwardly from the body 1410. The upper portion 1412 is movable relative to the lower portion 1414 and is coupled thereto by a biasing member 1416, such as a pivot spring. The upper portion 1412 and the lower portion 1414 collectively form a pivot spring housing 1418 in which the pivot spring 1416 is disposed. The pivot spring 1416 forms a waist pivot for the figure 1400. The upper portion 1412 can be moved along the direction of arrow "C" from a rest position 1440 (see Fig. 63) to a biased

position 1442 (see Fig. 64) against the biasing force of pivot spring 1416. When the user releases the upper portion 1412, the upper portion 1412 rotates along the direction of arrow "D" from the biased position 1442 to the rest position 1440.

[0204] In this embodiment, the arm 1420 of the figure 1400 has a rotating object 1430 pivotally coupled to the arm 1420 at a rotating object pivot point 1432. The arm 1420 includes an opening 1422 (see Fig. 63) through which a portion of the rotating object 1430 is inserted. The rotating object 1430 can include an end 1434 that has a diameter greater than the opening 1422 in the arm 1420 to prevent separation of the rotating object 1430 from the arm 1420. The rotating object 1430 can be moved from a first position 1436 (see Fig. 65) to a second position 1438 (see Fig. 66).

[0205] Figure 1400 includes articulation points to allow the angle of the rotating object 1430 to be aimed. Some articulation points include the figure's head, shoulders 1446 and waist. The goal of using figure 1400, which can be referred to as a horizontal attack, is to knock over other figures or potentially activate other secondary accessories, such as to defeat mechanisms on a vehicle such as the batmobile. In one embodiment, the figure 1400 can include the ability to adjust the angle of the object that will rotate for the game play.

[0206] The performance of the figure 1400 can be based on combination of several elements, which are referred to in Figs. 60A and 60B. A first element is the strength of the rotation or pivot spring (see reference 1460). A second element is how far the swinging feature extends from the base diameter when it is activated (see reference 1462). A third element how much vertical area the swinging feature moves through (see reference 1464). A fourth element is the degrees of rotation for the swinging feature (see reference 1466). The primary pivot point 1322 and the secondary pivot point 1324 provide articulation to the figure 1300 and enhancing the punching action.

[0207] In this embodiment, the base 1450 includes an upper surface 1452 with an opening or window 1454 through which a secret power chip can be seen. The upper surface 1452 also includes an opening 1456 through which a push lever 1460 of the drive mechanism can extend. The base 1450 also includes a slot 1458 that is configured to receive a secret power chip.

[0208] Some illustrative examples of limited range or captive projectile figures, which are capable of firing a limited range or captive projectile, are shown in Figs. 68A-75. Such figures may also be referred to as long-range punch or short-distance projectile-firing figures. For example, if the limited range or captive projectile is configured to resemble a fist, as shown in Figs. 68A-75, the figure may be referred to as having a “long-range punch.” Figures having a limited range or captive projectile that is configured to resemble a grappling hook or punch gun, such as shown in Figs. 16 and 24, may be referred to as “short-distance projectile-firing figures.” The limited range or captive projectile figures may fire a spring biased projectile which includes a “punching object stop” that limits the travel of the projectile to less than the length of the projectile. The limited range or captive projectile figures may include one or more points of articulation, such as the head, shoulders, and/or waist or the like, which may permit aiming of the limited range or captive projectile.

[0209] The ranged attack functionalities may include the projectile firing, throwing, and flying action figures.

[0210] Referring to Figs. 68A-75, figure 1500 is an exemplary embodiment of a limited range or captive projectile figure. Figure 1500 includes a body 1510 and a base 1550. The body 1510 has an upper portion 1512 and a lower portion 1514. The upper portion 1512 includes a support 1530 that extends outwardly from the body 1510. The upper portion 1512 is movable relative to the lower portion 1514 and is coupled thereto by a biasing member, such as a pivot spring. The pivot

spring forms a waist pivot 1515 for the figure 1500. The upper portion 1512 can be moved from a rest position to a biased position against the biasing force of pivot spring. When the user releases the upper portion 1512, the upper portion 1512 rotates from the biased position to the rest position.

[0211] In this embodiment, the figure 1500 has a support or launcher 1530. A limited range or captive projectile or punching object 1520 is operably engaged with the support 1530. The object 1520 has a shaft 1522 with an engaging or punching end 1524 and an opposite retaining end with a punching object stop 1528. The shaft 1522 is mounted in the opening 1532 in the support 1530 and the object stop 1528 limits the movement of the shaft 1522 and prevents the object 1530 from disengaging from the support 1530.

[0212] The launcher 1530 includes an internal spring biased launching mechanism that has a release trigger 1534. As illustrated in Fig. 75, the shaft 1522 includes a preload retention notch 1526 that can be engaged by a projection of the launching mechanism. The punching object 1520 can be moved from a first, loaded position 1540 (see Fig. 65) to a second, deployed position 1542 (see Fig. 71). In the loaded position 1540, an internal projection is engaged with the notch 1526 to retain the punching object 1520 in that position. The object 1520 stays with the launcher 1530 after triggering. As illustrated in Fig. 72, the punching object stop 1528 limits the travel of the object 1520 by engaging a rear surface of the launcher 1530.

[0213] Figure 1500 includes articulation points to allow the punch or limited range projectile launcher to be aimed. Some articulation points include the figure's head, shoulders and waist. The goal of using figure 1500, which can be referred to as a limited range projectile attack figure, is to knock over other figures or potentially activate other secondary accessories, such as to defeat mechanisms on a vehicle such as the batmobile. In one embodiment, the figure 1500 can include

the ability to adjust the projectile launcher horizontally and vertically for aiming purposes. For example, see arrow E in Fig. 69 for an illustration of the aiming of the launcher.

[0214] The performance of the figure 1500 can be based on combination of several elements, which are referenced in Figs. 68A and 68B. A first element is the strength of the launcher spring (see reference 1560 in Fig. 68A). A second element is the shape of the punching tip (see reference 1562). A third element is the weight of the punching object (see reference 1564). A fourth element is the preload on the launcher spring when it is engaged (see reference 1566). The detail on the punch object ram arm causes the spring in the punch or launch mechanism to have more or less impact force. The variations in length (see 1567A, 1567B, and 1567C) are illustrated in Fig. 68B. A fifth element is the punching objects distance traveled after the mechanism is released (see reference 1568).

[0215] Some illustrative examples of projectile firing figures, which are capable of firing a projectile, are shown in Figs. 76-80. The projectile firing figures may include a spring-powered projectile launcher, as shown or suggested in figs. 76-80. The spring-powered projectile launcher may fire a projectile or missile that has a relatively longer range but a relatively lighter impact. The projectile firing figures may include one or more points of articulation, such as the head, shoulders, and/or waist or the like, which may permit aiming of the projectile.

[0216] Referring to Figs. 76-80, figure 1600 is an exemplary embodiment of a projectile firing figure. Figure 1600 includes a body 1610 and a base 1650. The base 1650 includes a push lever 1652 and a window 1654 which have functions similar to those described above relative to similar structural elements.

[0217] The body 1610 has an upper portion 1612 and a lower portion 1614. The upper portion 1612 includes a projectile launcher 1630. The upper portion 1612 is movable relative to the lower

portion 1614 and is coupled thereto by a biasing member, such as a pivot spring. The pivot spring forms a waist pivot 1615 for the figure 1600. The upper portion 1612 can be moved from a rest position to a biased position against the biasing force of pivot spring. When the user releases the upper portion 1612, the upper portion 1612 rotates from the biased position to the rest position.

[0218] In this embodiment, the figure 1600 has a launcher 1630. The launcher 1630 includes an opening 1632 that is in communication with an internal spring biased launching mechanism. A firing trigger 1634 is operably coupled to the launching mechanism and can be actuated by a user to launch a projectile. Several projectiles 1640, 1642, 1644, 1646, and 1648 can be used with the launcher 1630. As shown in Fig. 76, projectiles 1640, 1642, and 1644 can include notches 1641, 1643, and 1645, respectively, that are engaged by an internal projection of the launching mechanism. The figure 1600 may include a pack 1620 in which projectiles may be stored. The manner in which the additional projectiles are carried by the figure may vary.

[0219] Figure 1600 includes articulation points to allow the projectile launcher to be aimed. Some articulation points include the figure's head, shoulders and waist. The goal of using figure 1600, which can be referred to as a projectile attack figure, is to hit a figure or accessory from a distance. The resulting hitting action could range from knocking down another figure or triggering other objects. In one embodiment, the figure 1600 can include the ability to adjust the projectile launcher horizontally and vertically for aiming purposes. For example, see arrow F in Fig. 77 for exemplary directions of adjustment for aiming of the launcher.

[0220] The performance of the figure 1600 can be based on combination of several elements. A first element is the strength of the launcher spring. A second element is the shape of the projectile tip. A third element is the weight of the projectile. A fourth element is the preload on the launcher spring when it is engaged.

[0221] Some illustrative examples of flying figures, which have an aerial or flight based movement and/or attack capability, are shown in Figs. 81-87. The flying action figures may attack other figures by being launched (i.e., flying) into other figures to knock over the impacted figures. By varying the degree to which the flight post is pulled back, a player may exercise control over the flight range of the flying figure.

[0222] Referring to Figs. 81-87, figure 1700 is an exemplary embodiment of a flying or launching figure. Figure 1700 includes a body 1710 and a base 1740. The base 1740 includes an upper surface 1742 with an opening 1744 formed therein. The body 1710 also has an opening 1712 formed therein.

[0223] The figure 1700 can be coupled to a launching mechanism 1720. In this embodiment, the launching mechanism 1720 includes a post 1722 with an upper end 1724 and a lower end 1726. The post 1722 includes a bent portion 1725 that can be inserted in the opening 1712 of the body 1710 to support the body 1710 on the post 1722. The lower end 1726 can be operatively inserted into the opening 1744 in the base 1740. In one embodiment, the post 1722 can be pivotally mounted to the base 1740 about a pivot point 1729. Such mounting allows the post 1722 to rotate about the pivot point 1729 along the directions of arrows "F" and "G" in Fig. 82A.

[0224] The post 1722 can include a pull back tab 1728 that a user can engage to move the upper end 1724 rearwardly along the direction of arrow "F" in Fig. 82A while the lower end 1726 remains in the same position. This movement increases the spring tension of the post 1722. The post 1722 is made of a flexible, yet resilient material that provides a springing or biased action toward its resting position when the post 1722 is released. When the user releases the post 1722, the upper portion 1724 moves along the direction of arrow "G" from its biased position (see reference 1750 in Fig. 84) to its rest position in which it is substantially perpendicular to the base

1740 (see reference 1752 in Fig. 84). As a result, the body 1710 of figure 1700 disengages from the top of the post 1722 and is launched into the air. Some exemplary steps in the launching process are illustrated in Figs. 87A-87H. As shown, a figure 1700 is disposed on the post 1722 which is pulled back and subsequently released to launch the figure 1700.

[0225] Referring to Fig. 82B, the post 1722 includes a lower portion 1727 that has a shaft 1731 extending beneath it. The shaft 1731 is coupled to the lower portion 1727 and includes an internal channel 1733 through which a rod 1750 can be inserted. The ends of the rod 1750 can be inserted into an opening 1747 that is proximate to opening 1744 into which the lower portion 1727 of the post 1722 can be inserted. A biasing member or spring 1760 is mounted on the shaft 1731. After the post 1722 is moved along the direction of arrow "F1," upon release, the spring 1760 biases the post 1722 along the direction of arrow "G1" as illustrated in Fig. 82B.

[0226] The goal of using figure 1700, which can be referred to as a flight attack figure, is to fly into other figures. This motion can be used to take other figures out of play by knocking them over or hit them to "carry figure out of harms way" secret chip power. Flight activation is caused by holding the base and pulling the post or arm 1722 back via a tab 1728 on the post 1722. In one embodiment, the figure on the flight post, under no tension, should be about 4.75 inches above the ground. In this embodiment, at light pullback tension, the flight of the figure should be about 4 inches. This short range can be accomplished without the figure tumbling. In one embodiment, at maximum tension, the flight of the figure 1700 to the ground may be about 16 inches. The figure 1700 typically does not tumble during the flight. The figure 1700 may slide and/or tumble after it hits the ground. The performance of the figure 1700 can be based on the length of the post 1722 as well as the physical properties of the post 1722.

[0227] Some illustrative examples of throwing figures, which are capable of throwing objects such as parts of the terrain, are shown in Figs. 88-95. The throwing figures may include a spring-powered throwing action, which enables the throwing figure to attack by throwing terrain pieces or other figures. Due to the relatively heavier weight of the terrain pieces (or another figure), the throwing figures have a relatively shorter attacking range but deliver a relatively heavier impact than the projectile firing figures. The throwing action may be spring powered. For example, as shown or suggested in Figs. 88-95, the body of the throwing figure may be pivotally attached to the base with an elastic biasing member and the arms may be freely pivotally attached to the shoulders to permit an overhead type throwing action.

[0228] Referring to Figs. 88-95, figure 1800 is an exemplary embodiment of a throwing figure. Figure 1800 includes a body 1810 and a base 1850. The body 1810 is pivotally mounted to the base 1850 for movement relative thereto. As illustrated in Figs. 89A and 89B, the body 1810 has a rest position 1844 which is typical when there is no object to be thrown. The body 1810 is coupled to the base 1850 via a spring tension pivot point 1862 and can be moved rearwardly along the direction of arrow "I" to its loaded position 1842 (see Figs. 89C and 89D). The more that the figure 1800 is rotated back, the further the launched object 1870 should travel when the body 1810 is released. In one embodiment, there is no catch mechanism for the spring. When the user releases the body 1810, the body 1810 is biased forwardly along the direction of arrow "J" toward its rest position. When the rotation of the body 1810 along that direction is stopped, the pivotally mounted arms of the figure 1800 continue to rotate in that direction. As a result, the body 1810 functions as a catapult or launching mechanism and the object 1870 is launched from the body 1810.

[0229] Referring to Fig. 93, the interior 1852 of the base 1850 is illustrated. An opening 1854 is formed in the base 1850 through which a portion 1811 of the body 1810 is inserted. A biasing mechanism 1840, such as a spring, is provided to impart motion to the body 1810 at desired times.

[0230] The body 1810 includes arms 1812 and 1814 that are pivotally mounted thereon. The arms 1812 and 1814 are coupled together by a central portion 1815 that is rotatably mounted in a shoulder 1818. The rotation of the arms 1812 and 1814 occurs about pivot point 1860 and is limited by a stop 1820. As illustrated in Fig. 89, the arms 1812 and 1814 are movable between a rest or launched position 1824 and a loaded position 1822. The arms 1812 and 1814 are rotated to an over-center point overhead. An object 1870 can be disposed on the arms 1812 and 1814 when the arms 1812 and 1814 are in their loaded position 1822.

[0231] Referring to Fig. 91A, the figure may include posts or pins 1827 and 1829 that extend from the hands of the figure. The posts or pins 1827 and 1829 are used with an object 1870 to be thrown by the figure. The object 1870 may include holes 1871 and 1873 that are configured to receive the posts or pins 1827 and 1829. Depending on the manner in which the object 1870 is placed on the figure, the object will be thrown along different paths and distances. Moreover, the shape and configuration of the object 1870 as well as the balance of the object 1870 on the figure will also affect the distance that the object 1870 travels when it is thrown.

[0232] In one arrangement, the object 1870 can be thrown in more of a straight line. In another arrangement, the object 1870 can be thrown in a lobbing or arcuate manner. By engaging the pins 1827 and 1829 of the figure in the holes 1871 and 1873 of the object 1870, the result of throwing the object 1870 is a more direct line throw. When the object 1870 is placed on the hands of the figure and the pins and holes are not engaged, the result is a lobbing, arcuate throw. The players will achieve different throwing results by playing and adjusting the object on the throwing figure.

[0233] Some exemplary steps in a throwing process are illustrated in Figs. 95A-95H. As shown, an object 1870 is placed on a figure 1800 and the figure 1800 is pulled backward to spring load the figure 1800. When the figure 1800 is released, the body 1810 pivots forwardly and when the movement is abruptly stopped by the base, the arms of the figure continue to rotate back to their rest position and the object is released from the arms and thrown.

[0234] The goal of using figure 1800, which can be referred to as a throwing object figure, is to knock over other figures or potentially activate other secondary accessories. In one embodiment, at maximum tension the general arc of travel for the thrown object may be about 2.75 inches above the ground. In that embodiment, at maximum tension, the thrown object may come into contact with the ground 12 inches after the object has traveled through the air. Thrown objects may be a variety of weights and sized to modify game play. A feature of the mechanism allows the figure to appear naturally posed while it is holding, or has launched, the catapulted projectile.

[0235] An example of a vehicle suitable for use with the action figure battle game is shown in Fig. 96. Such a vehicle 1900 may be included in predetermined types of sets and/or packages of the game components, such as the deluxe set, as illustrated in Figs. 19 and 96. In some embodiments, the vehicles 1900 may be blind packed into the set. In some embodiments, the vehicles may be about 7 inches long and 3.5 inches wide. The vehicle motion may be based on any suitable mechanism, such as one generally similar to the "running" motion bases discussed above with respect to the figures. Some embodiments of the vehicles may be configured to launch projectiles, such as three projectiles 1902, which may be free or captive. The vehicles 1900 may be configured to show damage, such as when the vehicle is struck in predetermined locations. For example, striking the tail fins 1908 of the vehicle 1900 may cause damage effects to appear, which may signify that the vehicle has been knocked out of play. Non-exclusive, illustrative examples of

damage effects may include flame effects 1904, a damaged canopy 1906, such as one that rolls over to replace an undamaged canopy with a damaged canopy, or the like. A figure 1920, hero tokens 1922, power chips 1924, and a mini-comic 1926 can be included with the vehicle 1900 in a set.

[0236] Some illustrative examples of various packages and/or package components that are configured for use during game play, such as to simulate buildings, structures, or other three dimensional objects or obstacles, are shown in Figs. 97A-99. For example, the package for the vehicle illustrated in Fig. 96 may be transformed into the bat cave. In some embodiments, there may be themes that run across multiple packages, such as where the planagram and packaging configurations may enable or suggest to players the creation of particular game environments. For example, although the planagram may include different sized packages that may become different sized structures, there may be a common theme or icon on some packages such that corresponding packages may be used together to build a game environment having a unified theme such as a particular city, a bad-guy industrial complex, or the like.

[0237] An exemplary embodiment of packaging that can be used with any of the action figures, environments or other game components described herein is illustrated in Figs. 97A and 97B. The set of packaging 2000 may be referred to as a starter set and is illustrated in an assembled configuration 2002 (see Fig. 97A) and in an exploded configuration 2004 (see Fig. 97B). The packaging 2000 are designed to contribute to the game play and to the toy. Packaging 2000 will break down into game components and still be re-assembled into a storage container. The different parts of packaging 2000 can be referred to as packaging portions. In one embodiment, all aspects of the toy, including packaging, are configured to support an "Epic Play" theme. Additional "boosters" and "deluxe" packs can be purchased to add to the starter set. Packaging components from various toys can be combined to form buildings or structures of various scales.

[0238] In this embodiment, packaging 2000 includes a top cap 2010. The top cap 2010 can become a start area for one player during game play. The top cap 2010 may also prop up a card and act as a visual effect or a support for visual support. Packaging 2000 includes another top cap 2012 that can become a start area for another player during game play. The top cap 2012 may also prop up a card and act as a visual effect or a visual barrier to “hide an objective” from the other player. Either or both of the top caps 2010 and 2012 are injection molded parts with molded-in game details.

[0239] Packaging 2000 includes an outer sleeve 2014 that can be used as a storage bucket with attached caps 2010 and 2012. Packaging 2000 also includes a figure blister 2016 that is typically a discarded item, but can be used to hold items for display. Packaging 2000 includes printed inserts 2018 and 2020 that function as packaging communication areas and can fold back on themselves. Insert 2018 can be folded back on itself for instructions. Insert 2018 includes a perforated communication flap 2019 that can be torn off and become a collector checklist. Insert 2020 can be folded back on itself to reveal a game play element, such as a building. Packaging 2000 can include an inner sleeve 2022 that is a packaging structure that can hold printed insert sleeve 2020. Inner sleeve 2022 forms a packaging area where a mystery figure or other components can be held. Packaging 2000 can also include a bottom cap 2024 that is an injection molded package bottom structure that can be used as a play surface, such as a top of a building.

[0240] Referring to Fig. 98, an exemplary arrangement of the components of packaging 2000 is illustrated. The components are re-assembled into a game play arrangement with start areas 2030 and 2032. Components 2020, 2022, and 2024 can be assembled to form a building or structure 2040.

[0241] Referring to Fig. 99, an exemplary embodiment of a set of packaging is illustrated. In this embodiment, packaging 2100 can be disposed in an assembled configuration 2102 and in an exploded configuration 2104. The components of packaging 2100 can be used in a manner similar to those described above relative to packaging 2000. Packaging 2100 includes a top cap 2110 that is an injection molded package top structure. Top cap 2110 can be used as a play surface, such as a top of a building. Packaging 2100 includes an inner sleeve 2112 that is a packaging structure that is configured to hold a printed insert sleeve. The inner sleeve 2112 forms packaging communication. Packaging 2100 includes a bottom cap 2114 that is an injection molded package bottom structure that can be used as a play surface, such as an objective area. Packaging 2100 includes an inner sleeve 2116 that is a packaging communication area that can be folded back on itself to reveal a game play element, such as a building.

[0242] Additional embodiments of action figures according to the invention are illustrated in Figs. 100-111. These action figures are similar to those previously described.

[0243] Referring to Figs. 100 and 101, an embodiment of a projecting or shooting figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, figure 2200 includes a body 2210 that is coupled to a base 2220. The base 2220 includes a movement mechanism that drives wheels on the lower side of the base 2220. A push lever 2222 that loads or energizes the movement mechanism is provided. When the push lever 2222 is released, the movement mechanism imparts motion to the base 2220. Coupled to the body 2210 is a projectile launcher 2212 that has a trigger 2214 and an opening 2216 that is configured to receive a projectile. The arms of the figure 2200 are pivotally mounted to the body 2210 so that the launcher 2212 can be disposed in different positions, including the upper position 2230 (see Fig. 100) and the lower position 2232 (see Fig. 101).

[0244] Referring to Figs. 102 and 103, an embodiment of a launching figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, figure 2300 includes a body 2310 and a base 2320. The body 2310 includes a pair of pivotally mounted arms 2312 and 2314 and a leg portion 2316. The leg portion 2316 is pivotally coupled to the base 2320 and is biased forwardly by a spring into the position 2302 illustrated in Fig. 102. The body 2310 can be moved rearwardly to its loaded position 2304 against the spring along the direction of arrow “H” in Fig. 103 by pushing on extension 2318. In this embodiment, extension 2318 is integrally formed with the leg portion 2316. When the player releases the extension 2318, the body 2310 moves along the direction of arrow “I” to its initial position 2302.

[0245] Referring to Figs. 104 and 105, an embodiment of a punching figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, figure 2400 includes a body 2410 that is pivotally coupled to the base 2420. As shown, base 2420 includes a push lever 2422 that can be manipulated to move the base 2420. The body 2410 includes an arm 2412 and a leg portion 2414. The body 2410 is movable between a rest position 2430 and a loaded position 2432. The body 2410 can be moved rearwardly along the direction of arrow “J” against the force of a spring in the base 2420 that biases the body 2410 into position 2430. When the player releases the figure 2410, the spring forces the body 2410 to move forwardly along the direction of arrow “K” to its initial position 2430.

[0246] Referring to Figs. 106 and 107, an embodiment of a horizontal attacking figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, figure 2500 includes a body 2510 that has an upper portion 2511 that can be rotated relative to its leg portion 2516. An arm 2512 with a weapon 2514 extends outwardly from the body 2510. The upper portion 2511 is biased into the position 2532 shown in Fig. 107 by an internal spring. The upper portion 2511 can be rotated to the position 2530 shown in Fig. 108 against the force of the spring. When the upper portion 2511 is released, it returns to its original position 2532.

[0247] Referring to Figs. 108 and 109, an embodiment of a limited range shooting figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, the figure 2600 includes a body 2610 that is coupled to a base 2620. The base 2620 includes a push lever 2622 similar to those previously described. The body 2610 includes an arm 2612 with a launching mechanism 2614 that has a release mechanism 2616. Operatively mounted in the launching mechanism 2614 is a projectile 2618 with a stop or limit 2613 at one end and a weapon or attack portion 2619 at the opposite end. The projectile 2618 includes a notch 2617 that is used to retain the projectile 2618 into its loaded position.

[0248] Referring to Figs. 110 and 111, an embodiment of a flying figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, the flying figure 2700 includes a body 2710 with an opening 2712 formed in one surface. The body 2710 can be used with a base 2720 and a post or support 2724 that is movably mounted on the base 2720. The base 2720 includes an opening 2722 into which the lower end 2726 of the support 2724 is pivotally mounted. A spring is disposed in opening 2722 and is configured to bias the support 2724 into the position illustrated in Fig. 111. A player can place the body 2710 so that a bent tip 2725 of the support 2724 is inserted into the opening 2712 of the body 2710. The player can then move the support 2724 against the bias of the spring along the direction of arrow "L." When the player releases the support 2724, the spring forces the support 2724 along the direction of arrow "M" to its position illustrated in Fig. 111. When movement of the support 2724 stops, the body 2710 of the figure is launched from the tip 2725 of the support 2724.

[0249] An exemplary embodiment of a game system according to the invention is illustrated in Fig. 112. In this embodiment, the game system 2800 includes several action figures 2810, 2812, 2814, and 2816. Figure 2810 is an exemplary flying or launching figure. Figure 2812 is an exemplary punching figure. Figure 2814 is an exemplary shooting figure. Figure 2816 is an

exemplary limited range shooting figure. The function of each of these types of figures has been previously described.

[0250] The game system 2800 includes an environment 2818, which in this example, can be a building, such as a city hall. The system 2800 may include a rectangular, blister shell or sleeve 2819 that provides structure and stability to the sleeve of environment 2818.

[0251] The game system 2800 includes scoring trays 2820 and 2830 that can be used by the players to keep track of points during a game. Scoring tray 2820 includes several slots 2822 that extend along its length. Similarly, scoring tray 2830 includes several slots 2832. In this embodiment, the scoring trays 2820 and 2830 are the same, but in different embodiments, the scoring trays may have different configurations or appearances, such as colors.

[0252] Also included in game system 2800 is a re-useable card 2840. Card 2840 includes several game play pieces that are easily detached from the card 2840 and used in a game. The openings in the card 2840 from which the game play pieces are removed are configured so that the game play pieces may be reinserted.

[0253] In this embodiment, card 2840 includes scoring tokens 2842 and 2844 that can be inserted into any of the slots 2822 and 2832 of the scoring trays 2820 and 2830. Each of the scoring tokens 2842 and 2844 has different indicia thereon. The card 2840 also includes secret power chips 2846, 2848, 2850, and 2852. An exemplary secret power chip is illustrated in Figs. 116A-C.

[0254] Referring to Fig. 113, an exemplary game play arrangement of the components of system 2800 is illustrated. The figures are divided into teams and placed at opposite sides of the game play area. In this arrangement, hero figures 2810 and 2812 are placed on one side with scoring tray 2830 and scoring token 2844 and villain figures 2814 and 2816 are placed on an opposite side with scoring tray 2820 and scoring token 2842. The environment 2818 is assembled and placed in the

middle of the play area as illustrated. Either player can pick one of the teams of figures to play. In one exemplary arrangement, the players can place their figures a certain distance apart with the environment in the middle. For example, the figures can be spaced approximately three feet apart.

[0255] Now, some exemplary game play rules are described. In one game, the first player to score a certain number of points, such as ten, will be the winner of the game. One player goes first and each player moves and attacks with two figures for each turn. A player scores a point if that player knocks down an opponent's figure. That player can update his or her score by moving the scoring token a slot in the scoring tray. The opponent stands that figure back up where the figure fell down. Another way for a player to score a point is for that player to have a figure on top of the environment at the start of a turn. In one game play variation, only one figure can be on top of an environment at a time.

[0256] An exemplary interaction between a figure and an environment is illustrated in Figs. 114A-114D. Referring to Figs. 114A and 114B, if a figure 2814 touches a building or environment 2818 at any time in its move, the figure can be placed on top of the building and end its turn. As illustrated in Fig. 114B, the top of the building 2818 can include two designated areas 2854 and 2856 at which a figure 2814 can be placed. In one exemplary game play, the movement of figure 2814 on top of a building takes the place of an attack move during a player's turn.

[0257] As illustrated in Fig. 114C, a figure 2814 can use its position on top of the building 2818 to have a height advantage over the other figures in the game. Depending on the figure type, players can choose between a flying, throwing, and projecting attack. In this embodiment, figure 2814 is launching a projectile 2815 from its position on the building 2818. If a flying figure is launched from the top of the building 2818, the flying figure will remain where it lands at the start of the

player's next turn. Referring to Fig. 114D, figure 2814 is placed within a certain distance, such as two inches, of the building 2818, at which point the figure 2814 can attack.

[0258] Several exemplary types of movement and attack functionalities for the different action figures have been previously described. Two types of movement functions are ground moves and aerial moves. Ground moves utilize a base with wheels and a drive mechanism that is activated by the user. The location at which the figure stops moving is where the figure starts the next turn. Aerial moves utilize the structure described above for the flying figure. The location at which the figure lands is where the figure starts the next turn. The various types of attack functions include a punching attack, a projectile attack, a limited range attack, a throwing attack, and a swinging attack.

[0259] Referring to Figs. 115 and 116A-116C, an embodiment of a base for a figure is illustrated. In this embodiment, the base 2900 includes an upper surface 2902, a side wall 2906, and a lower surface 2904. The upper surface 2902 has a slot 2908 into which a secret power chip 2920 can be inserted. The side wall 2906 and the lower surface 2904 have openings 2910 and 2911, respectively, through which indicia or information on the secret power chip 2920 can be viewed. The base 2900 also includes a strength or energy value indicia 2912 that is indicative of the remaining strength that the figure has. A player can lose strength or energy when it is attacked or when it performs certain functions. As shown, two buttons or dots 2914 and 2916 are indicative of a certain level of strength. In one embodiment, the strength value indicia 2912 can be manually adjusted by a player depending on game play.

[0260] Referring to Figs. 116A-116C, the interaction between a secret power chip 2920 and a base 2900 is illustrated. Secret power chips give figures special powers during a game. The secret power chips may be from multiple categories, such as offensive chips and defensive chips, and may be used at different times during a game.

[0261] As shown in Fig. 116A, secret power chip 2920 includes figure series indicia 2922 that identifies the series to which the chip belongs, a figure indicator 2924 (such as H for hero or V for villain), a strength value 2926 (such as one or more dots) that can be used by the player to increase the strength or energy level of the figure, and a special action 2928. After the secret power chip 2920 is inserted into slot 2908 of the base 2900, the figure indicator 2924 and strength value 2926 can be viewed through opening 2910 of the side wall 2906. Also, the special action 2911 can be viewed through opening 2911 of the lower surface 2904. The secret power chips come in hero and villain versions and may only be used by the appropriate team.

[0262] Referring to Figs. 117A and 117B, exemplary special actions of various secret power chips are illustrated. In Fig. 117A, the special actions 3000 are offensive powers and in one embodiment, can be used on blue secret power chips. Action 3002 is a “double shot” action that permits a non-aerial attack figure to shoot twice instead of one action for the turn being a move. Action 3004 is a “foot cavalry” action that permits a non-aerial attack figure to move twice instead of one action for the turn being an attack. Action 3006 is a “flank” action that permits a player to move all of the player’s non-aerial attack figures. Action 3008 is a “fast climb” action that permits a player to move a figure directly to an open spot on the roof. Action 3010 is a “back-up” action that permits a player to make an extra attack with a particular figure. Action 3012 is a “run for it” action that permits a player to make an extra move with a figure without an attack. Action 3014 is a “hold the fort” action that gives a player one point if the figure is on a building at the end of the player’s turn. Action 3016 is a “charge” action that permits a player to move all of the player’s non-aerial attack figures. Action 3018 is a “double barrel” action that permits a player to attack again if the first attack is a miss.

[0263] Illustrated in Fig. 117B are special actions 3100 that are defensive powers and in one embodiment, can be used on red secret power chips. Action 3102 is a “stand tall” action that permits a player to stand a figure back up where it fell if it was knocked off a building. Action 3104 is a “close call” action that permits a player to stand a figure back up if it is knocked over by a projectile. If the figure is knocked over again, the opponent only scores one point. Action 3106 is a “recover” action that permits a player to stand a figure back up and the opponent does not score any points. Action 3108 is a “phoenix” action that permits a player to stand a figure back up and attack once. The opponent scores one point. Action 3110 is a “tag team” action that permits a player to replace the figure with an equal or lower strength figure. The opponent does not score a point. Action 3112 is a “quick change” action that permits a player to replace a figure with an equal or lower strength figure of the same character. The opponent does not score a point. Action 3114 is a “body armor” action that permits a player to stand a figure back up if it is knocked down by a projectile. The opponent does not score a point. Action 3116 is a “reload” action that permits a player to put secret power chips into all of the player’s figures that do not have chips. Action 3118 is a “quick feet” action that permits a player to move one of the player’s other figures, but no attack is allowed. Action 3120 is a “berserk” action that permits a player to attack with one of the player’s other figures.

[0264] In various embodiments of the invention, other special actions can be provided on different secret power chips that can be used with various action figures.

[0265] Referring to Figs. 118-119, another embodiment of a base is illustrated. In this embodiment, the base 3200 includes an upper portion 3210 and a lower portion 3220 that can be coupled together. The upper portion 3210 includes two openings 3212 and 3214 in communication with the interior of the base 3200. The base 3200 includes an energy level mechanism that can be

used by a player to keep track of the energy of the figure associated with the base 3200. For example, a figure may begin the game with an energy level of five points. Each time the figure is attacked or knocked down, a point is deducted from its energy level. If the player does not supplement the energy level of the figure during the game, the figure will run out of energy and can no longer participate in the game. Energy level points can be gained through secret power chips or other game play items.

[0266] In this embodiment, the base 3200 includes an energy wheel 3230 that has indicia 3222 thereon that can be used to track the energy level of the figure. Indicia 3222 includes numbers that can be viewed through opening 3212 in the base 3200 as shown in Fig. 118. The wheel 3230 has an engagement portion 3234 around its perimeter that can be engaged by a player to rotate the wheel 3230 so that a different number is viewable in the opening 3212. In this implementation, the energy wheel 3230 is rotatably mounted on a shaft 3222 with a mount 3224 that aligns the wheel 3230 with openings 3212 and 3214.

[0267] Fig. 120 illustrates an alternative embodiment of a energy level mechanism. In this embodiment, a slidably mounted plate 3240 can be disposed proximate to openings in the base 3210 and movable along the directions of the arrows in Fig. 120. Opening 3212 can be replaced with a slightly wider or longer opening as discussed below. The plate 3240 can include indicia 3242, such as dots, that can be viewable through the corresponding opening in the base. For example, if the figure has an energy level of five, then five dots can be viewed through the base opening. If the figure loses energy, the player can move the plate 3240 so that the proper quantity of dots appears in the opening. If a player gains energy points, such as via a secret power chip, then the player can move the wheel 3230 or the plate 3240 to reflect the current energy level of the figure.

[0268] A website related to the game is available for player to access and download mini-comics or objective cards. The mini-comics can be used to change the basic rules of the game and to test the skills of the players in new and challenging ways.

[0269] The action figure battle game may be played by a suitable number of players, such as 2, 3, or even 4 or more. For example, one or two starter sets may be sufficient to enable two players to play the action figure battle game. Inclusion of additional components, such as figures or other elements, from additional sets or packages, such as booster sets, deluxe sets, or even additional starter sets may permit more than two players to play the action figure battle game.

[0270] An illustrative example of set up for a two player game may include placing a play mat in a suitable area, with the front or Gotham side of the mat facing up, picking teams for each player, assigning secret power chips, picking a start area, and setting up figures. A first player, such as the youngest player, may pick a team (e.g., Batman & Robin or The Joker & Harley Quinn). In some embodiments, no more than one version of any character may begin the game on a player's team (e.g., there can only be one Joker of any type (such as punching or limited range or captive projectile) on the villain team when the game begins). Other versions may enter play later such as during a replacement, as will be discussed below. The extra figures may initially be set aside. The players may assign secret power chips, such as by the players taking turns picking secret power chips and snapping them into the base of each of their figures. The extra secret power chips may initially be set aside. The second player, such as the oldest player, may then pick a start area and set up his or her figures. The youngest player may set up his or her figures in the opposite corner.

[0271] An illustrative example of general set up, such as for more than two players and/or when using more sets may include placing the play mat in a suitable area, deciding on a team size, assembling teams, assigning secret power chips, and placing team figures in the player start areas.

[0272] When assembling teams, each player may choose a team of hero or villain figures equal to the point total. Players may use either heroes or villains, but not both. Each figure may have a pre-determined value, which may be indicated by its base shape. In some embodiments, no more than one version of any character may begin the game on a player's team (e.g., there can only be one Joker of any type (such as punching or limited range or captive projectile) on the villain team when the game begins). Other versions may enter play later such as during a replacement, as will be discussed below. The extra figures may initially be set aside.

[0273] When assigning secret power chips, the players may select one secret power chip for each figure in their team and snap it into the figure's base. The extra secret power chips may initially be set aside.

[0274] To commence game play, the players may select a particular mini-comic to guide their game play and/or to provide a scoring system and/or method for the action figure battle game.

[0275] During game play, one player, such as the youngest player, may go first. Subsequently, the players may take alternating turns until one player scores a number of Knockdown Points equal to or greater than the number of figures in each players' force or until one player captures the locations required by the particular mini-comic being used. For example, if each player is using four characters that may be in play together, such as from starter sets, four knockdown points need to be scored. The player's may track the scores on a mini-comic, such as by using the hero/villain tokens.

[0276] During each player's turn, the player may take three actions. The player may take actions using the same character or two or more different characters. Possible actions to be taken may include move, attack, using a secret power, recover, and replace. A player may take any

combination of three actions during a turn, unless otherwise prohibited. In some embodiments, no figure may move or attack twice in the same turn.

[0277] During game play for the action figure battle game, such as when using the figures and motion bases defined above, there may be two methods of movement: running and flying. In some embodiments, each figure may only be able to run or fly, but not both. To move a figure by running, a player may turn the figure to face the desired direction of movement, energize the movement mechanism, and cause the movement to begin, such as by releasing the activation element or brake and letting the figure move. To move a figure by flying a player may turn the figure to face the desired direction of movement, energize the flight mechanism, and release the figure. Once the figure lands, the player may move the base to the point of landing and replace the figure on the base.

[0278] A figure may use its attack to attempt to knock out an opponent's figure during play of the action figure battle game. The methods of attack may include punching or striking, shooting at, throwing, charging, or any other method by which a first player may use one or more of his or her figures to cause at least one of an opposing player's figures to be knocked over.

[0279] Any figure knocked over by an opponent (whether via projectile, punch, throw or charging) may be considered "knocked out" and should be immediately placed on its side in the player's start area. The figure may be considered out of the game unless it is "recovered" in a following turn. Each time the player knocks out an opponent's figure he may gain 1 Knock Down point, which may be marked on the mini-comic track, such as with one of the hero/villain tokens.

[0280] In some embodiments, if a player's figure is standing on a 'hot spot' location (e.g., Batcave, Gotham Heights, The Clocktower, City Hospital) and the figure is used to knock over an

opponent's figure, the player may replace the figure's secret power chip with any available secret power chip.

[0281] A player may use a figure to punch or strike another figure by holding the base of the figure, twisting the figure back, then letting it swing to knock down an opponent's figure or special sections of buildings.

[0282] A player may use a figure to knock down an opponent's figure, or special sections of building, by firing a projectile, which may be captive, at the opponent's figure or the special sections of buildings.

[0283] A player may use a figure to throw an object at an opposing figure by placing an object in or on the figure's arms, pulling the arms back, releasing the arms, and letting the object knock down an opponent's figures or special sections of buildings. Figures may pick up and throw an object, such as terrain or other figures, such as those that are in contact with their base.

[0284] A player may use a figure in a charging attack. For example, characters that run quickly or fly may knock down an opponent's figures during their move. Knocking down a figure during movement (i.e., by charging) may not count as an additional action. Rather, knocking down a figure during movement may merely count as the one action associated with the "move."

[0285] During game play for the action figure battle game, a player may use secret power chips. For example, a player may use a green secret power chip during that player's turn, which counts as one action. As discussed above, blue secret power chips are activated when the figure carrying the chip is knocked over.

[0286] A player may "recover" a figure that was previously knocked out (by being knocked down) and return that figure to play by taking a Recover action. A recovered figure should be placed

upright on its base in the player's start area. In some embodiments, recovering a knocked out character may take two actions.

[0287] A figure may be "replaced" with a different version of the same character. To take a replacement action, a player may declare the replacement and swap out the different figures in place. The replacement may come from the player's collection, as opposed to from the starting pieces. For example, if the player picked punching Batman to start the game, the player may replace it with his Flying Batman or Projectile Batman, which may come from his general collection.

[0288] The starter set mini-comic may provide two ways to win the action figure battle game. First, a player may get one point, such as a knockdown point, each time he knocks down an opponent's figure. The first player to score a predetermined number of points, such as four points, wins the game. Second, a player may also win by controlling a predetermined number of landmarks, such as four landmarks, on the play mat, which may represent Gotham City. If a player ends his turn with a figure in one of the four objective landmarks (e.g., Wayne Enterprises, Arkham Asylum, Axis Chemicals, Gotham Jail), the player should place one of the player's appropriately oriented hero/villain tokens (Hero or Villain) on the matching mini-comic spot. If an opposing token is already on the spot, flip it to the appropriate side. Capturing the predetermined number of landmarks, which may be all four landmarks on the play mat, wins the game.

[0289] If the players possess a sufficient numbers of figures and other components, such as when players have expanded their collections of figures, the players can increase the size of the teams they play with. Players may agree on the size of team to play with. Knockdown points may continue to be scored as normal. The game winner may then be determined based on the first

player to score a particular number of points, such as a number of points equal to the number of figures at start of the game.

[0290] The use of different or additional mini-comics may permit use of the different marked map locations to alter the win conditions or to provide different story experiences and/or challenges. For example, a mini-comic might say having the only figure in City Hall gives the player 2 bonus Knockdown points per turn.

[0291] If sufficient players are available and the players possess a sufficient numbers of figures and other components, the game may be expanded from two to a greater number of players, such as four players. Four player may play on a map that may be formed using the rear or Metropolis sides of four individual maps to form a single large map. All four corners of the large or Metropolis play mat may be used for start areas. The youngest player may take the first turn, with play continuing clockwise around the map.

[0292] It is believed that the disclosure set forth herein encompasses multiple distinct inventions with independent utility. While each of these inventions has been disclosed in its preferred form, the specific embodiments thereof as disclosed and illustrated herein are not to be considered in a limiting sense as numerous variations are possible. The subject matter of the disclosure includes all novel and non-obvious combinations and subcombinations of the various elements, features, functions and/or properties disclosed herein. Similarly, where any claim recites "a" or "a first" element or the equivalent thereof, such claim should be understood to include incorporation of one or more such elements, neither requiring nor excluding two or more such elements.

[0293] Applicant reserves the right to submit claims directed to certain combinations and subcombinations that are directed to one of the disclosed inventions and are believed to be novel and non-obvious. Inventions embodied in other combinations and subcombinations of

features, functions, elements and/or properties may be claimed through amendment of those claims or presentation of new claims in that or a related application. Such amended or new claims, whether they are directed to a different invention or directed to the same invention, whether different, broader, narrower or equal in scope to the original claims, are also regarded as included within the subject matter of the inventions of the present disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for playing an action figure battle game, comprising:
a game board including a plurality of locations;
a first action figure and a second action figures, each action figure including at least one of a movement mechanism and a battle mechanism, each action figure being disposable at any of the plurality of locations; and
an objective card, the objective card identifying an task for a player to attempt with one of the first and second action figures, the task involving one of the locations on the game board.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the first action figure includes a body and a base, the body and the base being fixedly coupled to each other, and the second action figure includes its own body and its own base, the body of the second action figure being removably coupled to the base of the second action figure.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein the first action figure includes a movement mechanism, the second action figure includes its own movement mechanism, the movement mechanism of the first action figure being configured to impart motion to the first action figure in a different manner than the motion imparted to the second action figure by its movement mechanism.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the first action figure movement mechanism imparts substantially linear movement to the first action figure across a surface, and the second action figure movement mechanism imparts an movement to the second action figure through the air.

5. The system of claim 3, further comprising:

a third action figure, the third action figure including its own body removably coupled to its own base, the third action figure body including its own movement mechanism configured to impart motion to the third action figure in a manner that is different from the motion imparted to the first action figure and the motion imparted to the second action figure.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the movement mechanism of the first action figure imparts substantially linear movement to the first action figure body and base, the movement mechanism of the second action figure launches the second action figure body away from the second action figure base, and the movement mechanism of the third action figure rotates a portion of the third action figure body relative to the third action figure base.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

an environmental structure, the environmental structure resembling a building, the environmental structure including an engaging portion with which one of the action figures can interact.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the engaging portion is an opening formed in the environmental structure, the opening being configured to receive one of the first action figure and the second action figure.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the environmental structure has at least two sides and has two openings, each of the openings being formed in a different side of the environmental structure, the openings being in communication with each other so that when one of the action figures enters the environmental structure via one opening the action figure exits the environmental structure via the other opening.
10. The system of claim 1, wherein the objective card includes a narrative relating to the game.
11. The system of claim 10, wherein the objective card includes a scoring portion that is configured to be used by a player to keep track of a score for the game.
12. The system of claim 10, wherein the objective card includes a first portion that is configured to be used to track a first type of points, and a second portion that is configured to be used to track a second type of points, the second type of points being different than the first type of points.
13. The system of claim 10, wherein the objective card includes instructions to move one of the first action figure and the second action figure in a particular manner.
14. The system of claim 1, wherein the objective card includes point value indicia associated with the completion of the action.

15. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

an enhanced play element, the enhanced play element being associated with an action for the first action figure, and the first action figure is configured to receive the enhanced play element.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the first action figure base defines a receptacle and an opening in communication with the receptacle, the receptacle being configured to receive the enhanced play element, the enhanced play element being visible through the opening.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein the enhanced play element is a first enhanced play element, the system further comprising:

a second enhanced play element, the second enhanced play element being associated with a different action for an action figure, the action of the second enhanced play element being different than the first enhanced play element.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the action of the first enhanced play element allows the first action figure to remain in the game in the event that the first action would otherwise be removed from the game.

19. The system of claim 1, wherein each of the game, the game board, the first action figure, the second action figure, the objective card, and the task relate to a common theme for the game.

20. A set of components for playing an action figure battle game, comprising:
- an action figure, the action figure having a battle function;
 - an environmental structure, the environment structure being configured to be engaged by the action figure; and
 - an objective card, the objective card including an objective to be performed using the action figure, the objective involving the environmental structure and the action figure.
21. The set of claim 20, wherein the battle function of the action figure includes a punching action being performed by the action figure.
22. The set of claim 21, wherein the environmental structure resembles a building that includes a breakaway portion removably coupled to the environmental structure, the breakaway portion being configured to be separated from the environmental structure in response to the punching action of the action figure.
23. The set of claim 22, wherein the objective on the objective card includes separating the breakaway portion from the building using the action figure.
24. The set of claim 20, wherein the action figure includes a launching mechanism, battle function of the action figure includes a projecting action, the projecting action involving the launching of a projectile by the action figure.

25. The set of claim 24, wherein the environmental structure resembles a building that includes openings formed therein, the openings being configured to receive the projectile launched by the action figure.

26. The set of claim 25, wherein the objective on the objective card includes projecting the projectile with the action figure through one of the openings of the environmental structure.

27. The set of claim 20, wherein the action figure is a first action figure, and the set further comprises:

a second action figure, the second action figure having its own battle function, the battle function of the second action figure being different than the battle function of the first action figure.

28. The set of claim 27, wherein the objective card is a first objective card, and the set further comprises:

a second objective card, the second objective card including an objective to be performed using the first action figure relative to the second action figure.

29. The set of claim 20, wherein the objective card includes an image portion and a score portion, the score portion being configured to be used by a player to keep track of a score of a game.

30. A system for playing a game, comprising:

a first action figure, the first action figure including a body and a base, the first action figure including a movement mechanism configured to move the base relative to a surface, the first action figure including a battle function;

a second action figure, the second action figure including its own body and its own base, the second action figure including a movement mechanism configured to move at least a portion of the body of the second action figure relative its base, the other portion of the body of the second action figure remaining fixed relative to its base, the second action figure including its own battle function different from the battle function of the first action figure; and

an objective card, the objective card including an image portion and a scoring portion, the objective card identifying an action for a player to attempt with one of the action figures, and completion of the action results in points for the player.

31. A set of components for playing a game involving action figures, comprising:

an action figure, the action figure having a battle function;

an environmental structure, the environment structure being configured to be engaged by the action figure; and

an objective card, the objective card including an objective to be performed using the action figure, the objective involving the environmental structure and the action figure.

32. A method for playing an action figure battle game, the game involving a first action figure and a second action figure, each of the first action figure and the second action figure having its own movement function and its own attack function, the method comprising the steps of:

reviewing a game piece identifying an objective to be performed using one of the first action figure and the second action figure;

performing the action identified on the game piece; and

determining the result of a successful performance of the action identified on the game piece.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the performing the action includes utilizing one of the first action figure and the second action figure to attack an action figure of another player.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein the performing the action includes attempting to position one of the first action figure and the second action figure at a predetermined location on a play mat.

35. The method of claim 32, further comprising:

selectively altering one of the movement function and the attack function of one of the first action figure and the second action figure during game play.

36. The method of claim 32, wherein the performing the action includes performing the action with the first action figure, the attack function of the first action figure being different than the attack function of the second action figure, the method further comprising the steps of:

substituting the second action figure for the first action figure already in play.

37. A method of playing an action figure battle game, the method comprising the steps of:
providing a plurality of action figures having movement and attack functions;
providing a set of rules; and
providing an objective card having a game specific objective and a scoring portion.
38. The method of claim 37, wherein the action figures includes a first action figure and a second action figure, the game specific objective involves using the first action figure to attack the second action figure.
39. The method of claim 38, wherein the objective card is a first objective card, and the game includes at least one environment, the method further comprises the step of:
providing a second objective card, the second objective card having a game specific objective different than the objective on the first objective card, the game specific objective of the second objective card involves using one of the first action figure and the second action figure to interact with at least one environment.
40. The method of claim 39, further comprising:
providing a plurality of enhanced play elements, each enhanced play element being related to changing a function or use of one of the action figures so as to provide a different function or use.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein each of the first action figure and the second action figure includes a base having a receptacle formed therein, the method further comprising:

inserting the enhanced play element into the receptacle in the base of one of the first action figure and the second action figure.

42. A system for use in an action figure battle game, comprising:

a first action figure, the first action figure having a movement function and an attack function;

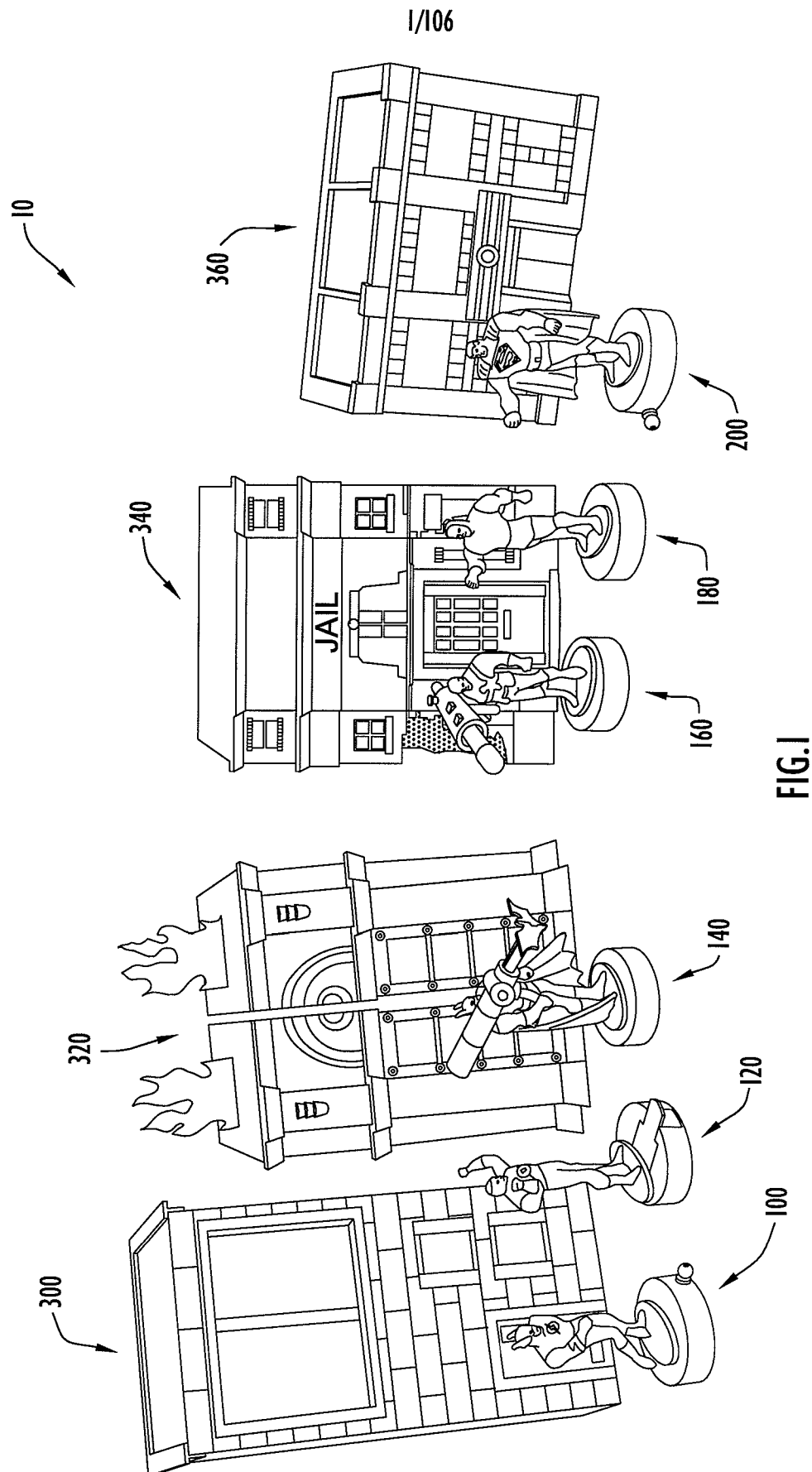
a second action figure, the second action figure having its own movement function and its own attack function;

a plurality of packaging portions, the packaging portions collectively forming an assembled package containing components for the game, the packaging portions configured to include the first action figure and the second action figure therein, the packaging portions being configured to be disassembled and arranged in a configuration for use in the game.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein the plurality of packaging portions are configured to be re-assembled to form a container in which the first action figure and the second action figure can be disposed.

44. The system of claim 42, wherein the packaging portions are used as start areas for different players during the game.

45. The system of claim 42, wherein the packaging portions may be reconfigured to represent structures or obstacles during game play.
46. The system of claim 42, wherein at least one of the packaging portions is injection molded.
47. The system of claim 42, further comprising:
an environment, the environment having a common theme with the packaging portions and the action figures.
48. The system of claim 42, wherein the environment is configured to be engaged by one of the first action figure and the second action figure.



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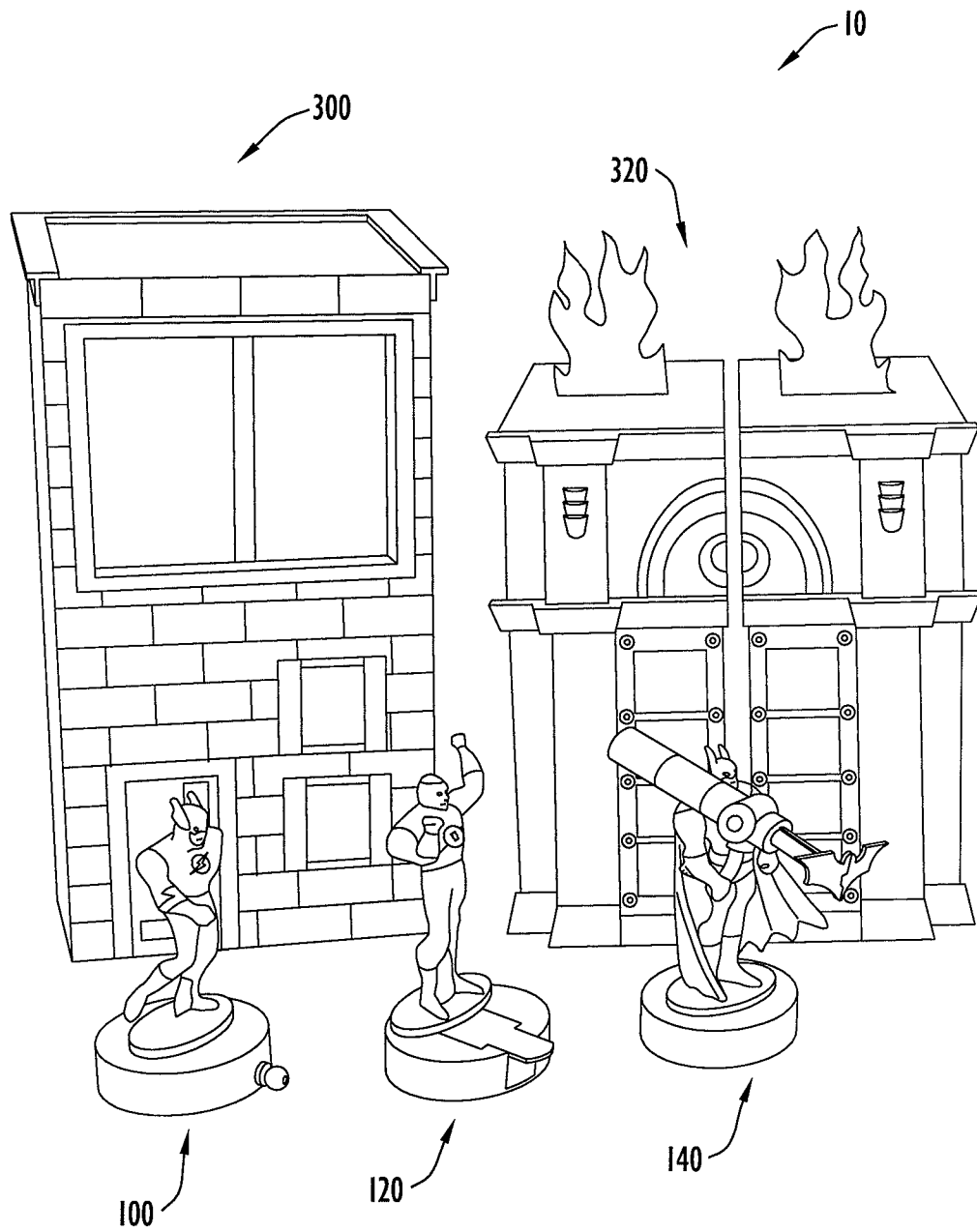
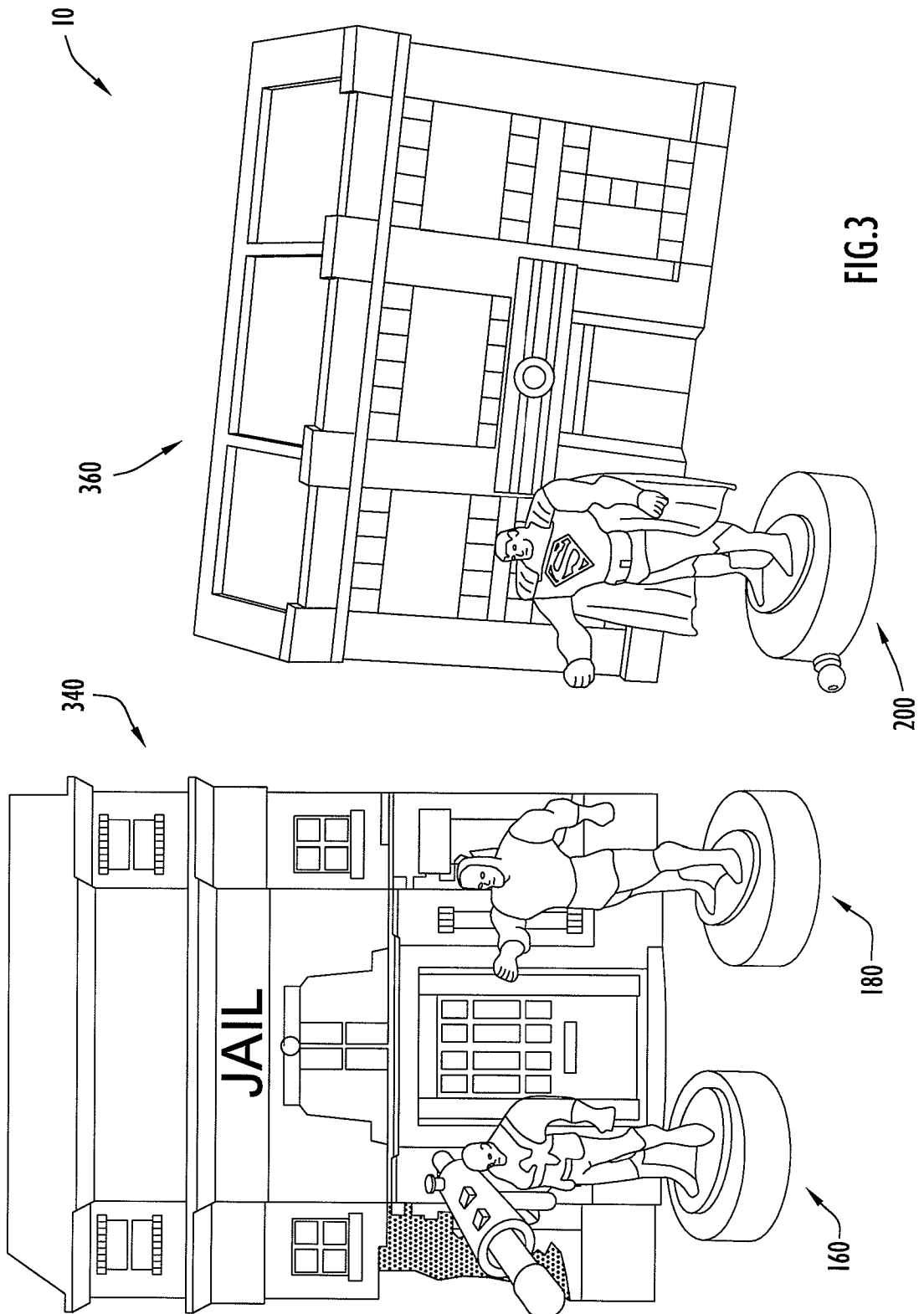


FIG.2

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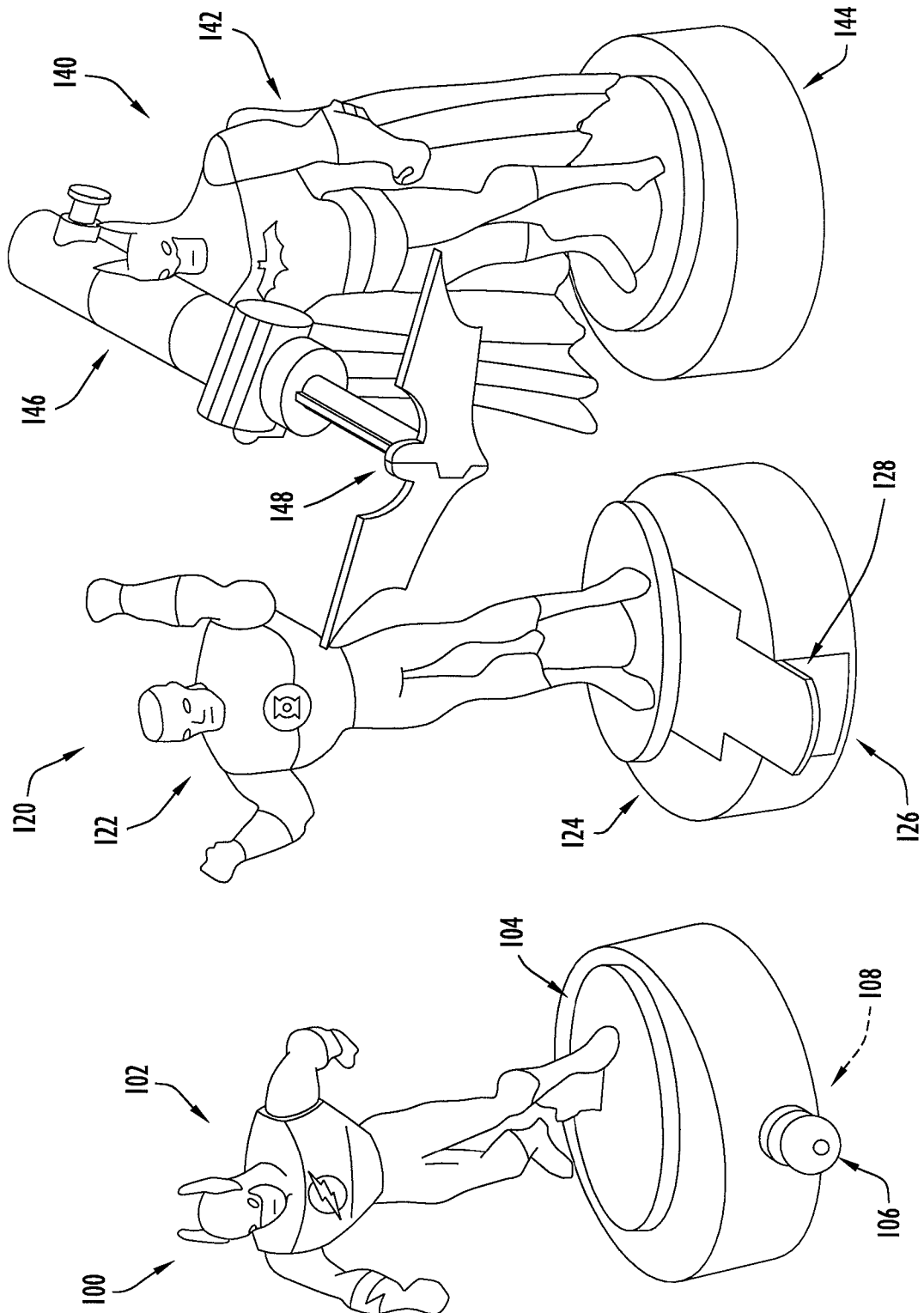


FIG. 4

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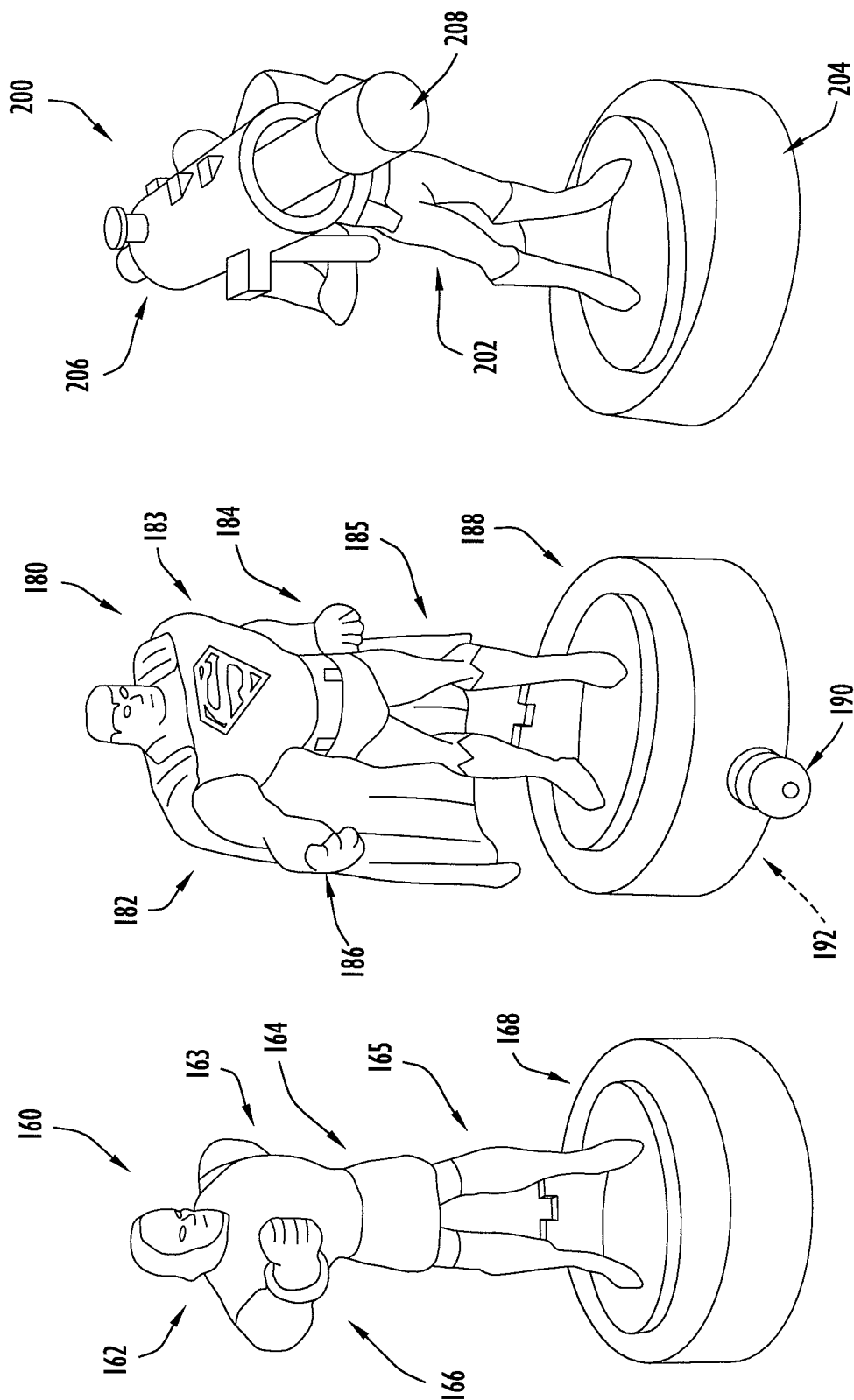


FIG. 5

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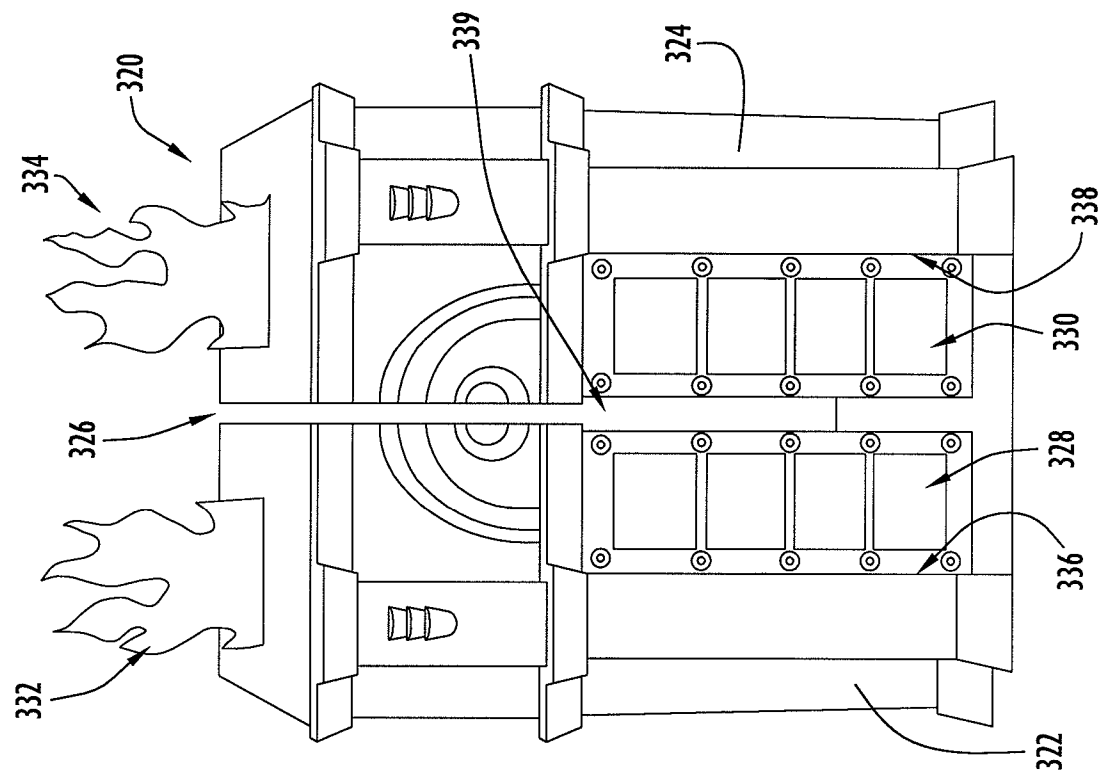
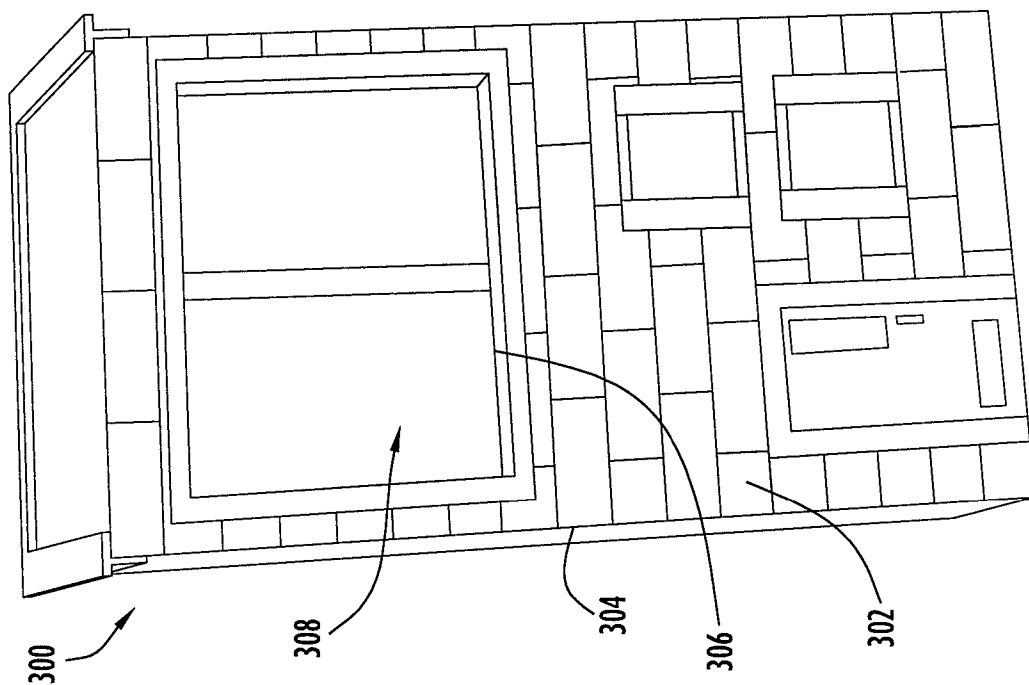
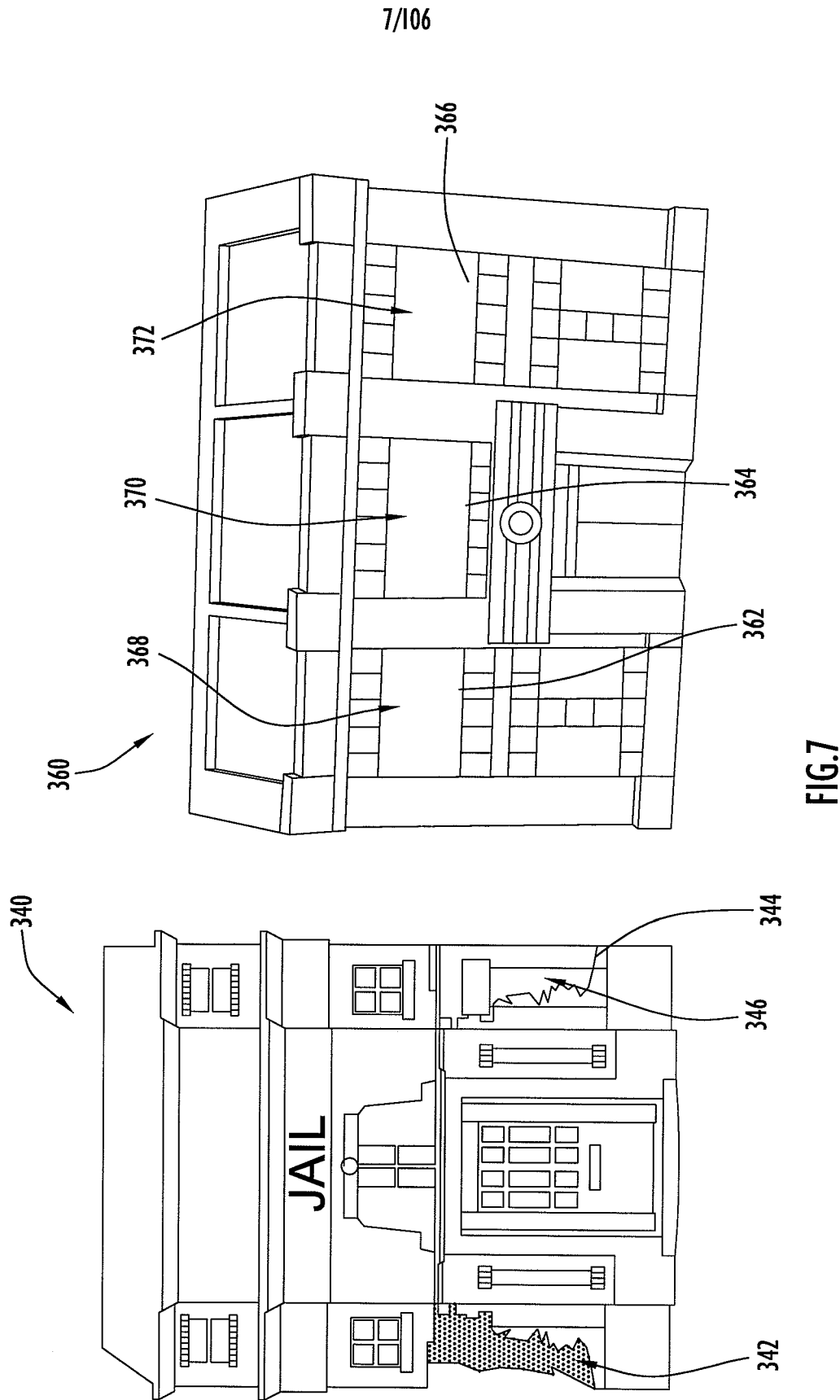


FIG. 6





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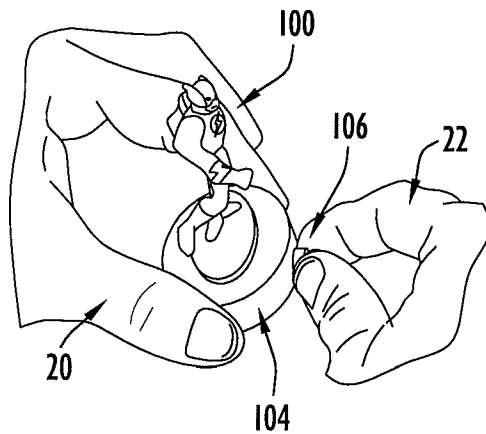


FIG. 8A

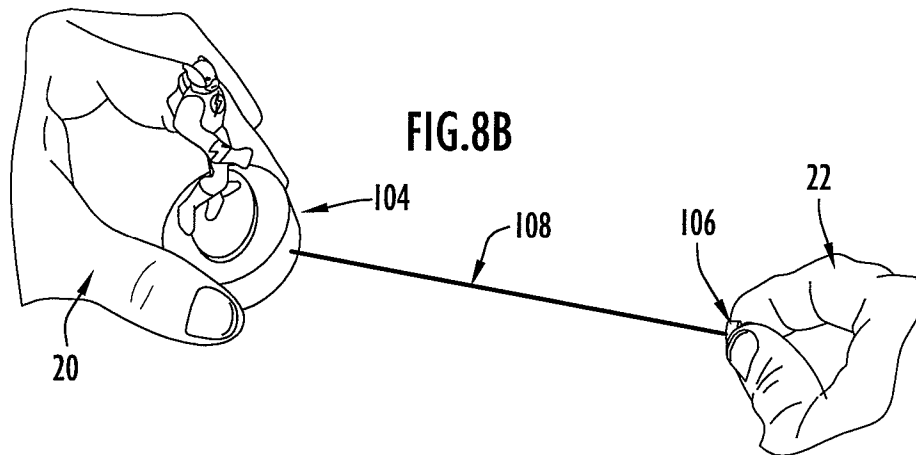


FIG. 8B

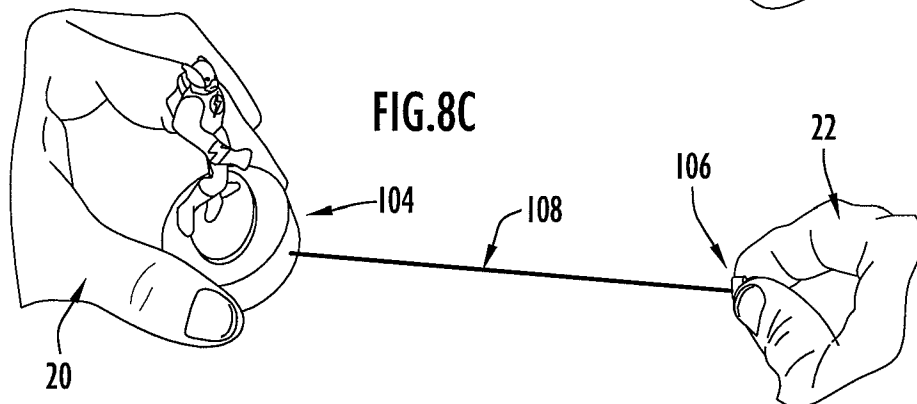


FIG. 8C

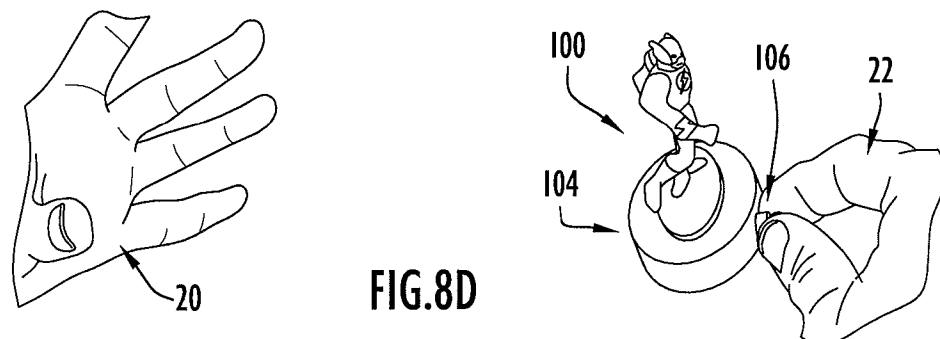


FIG. 8D

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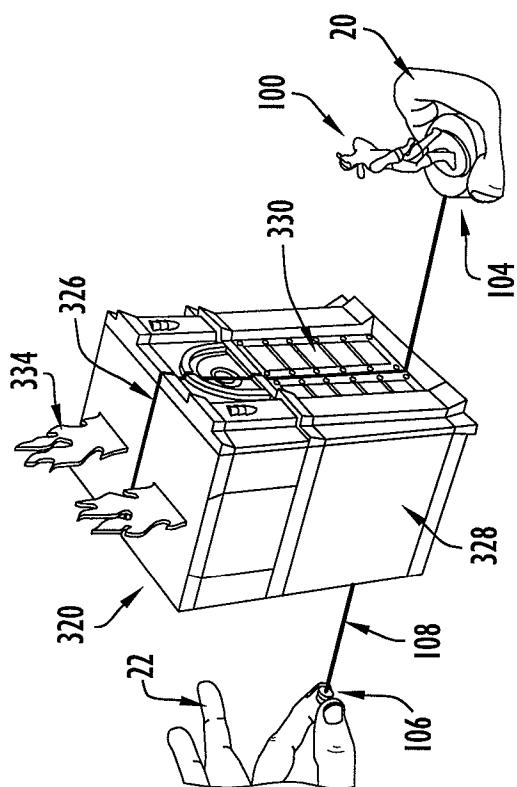


FIG. 9C

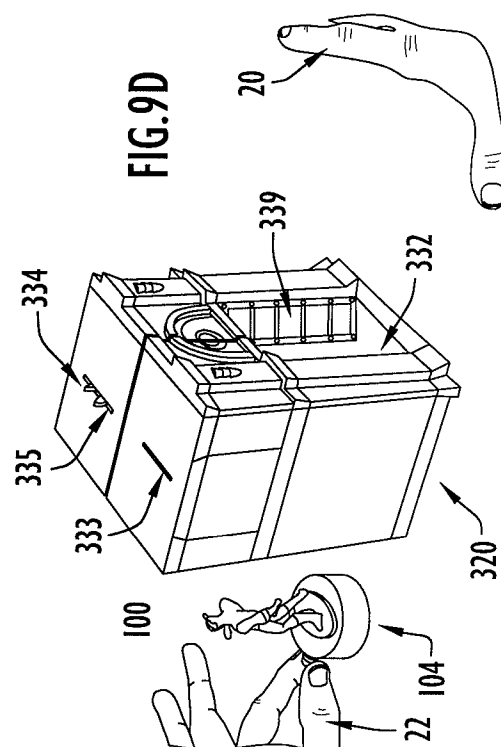


FIG. 9D

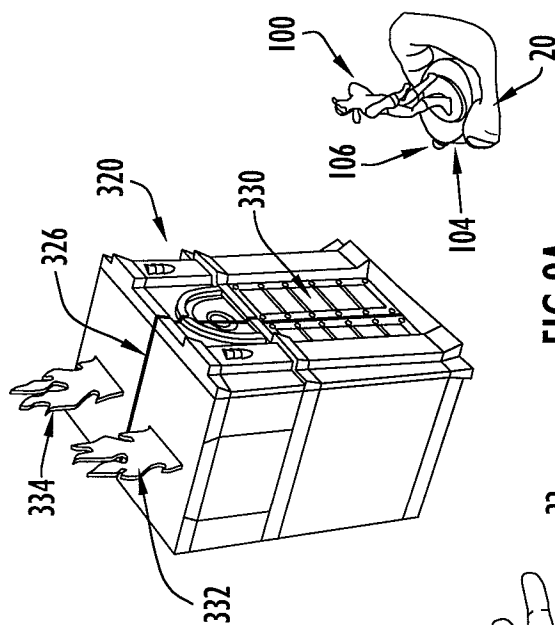


FIG. 9A

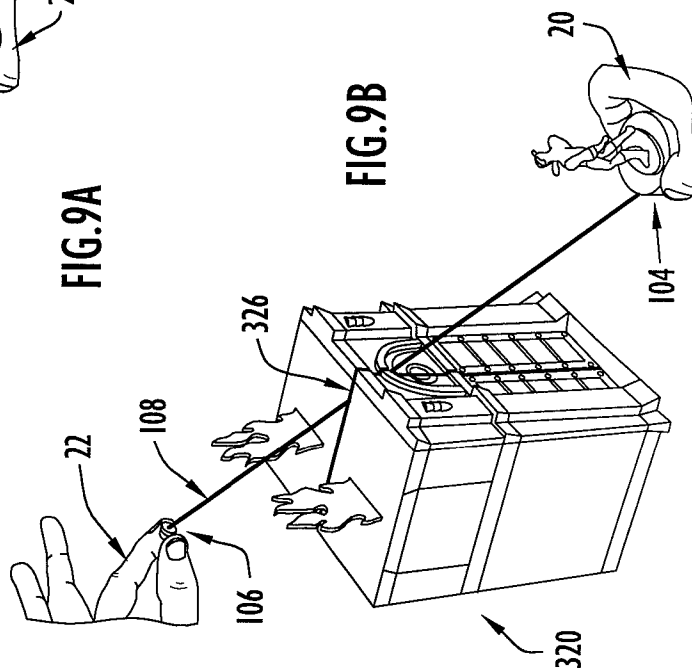
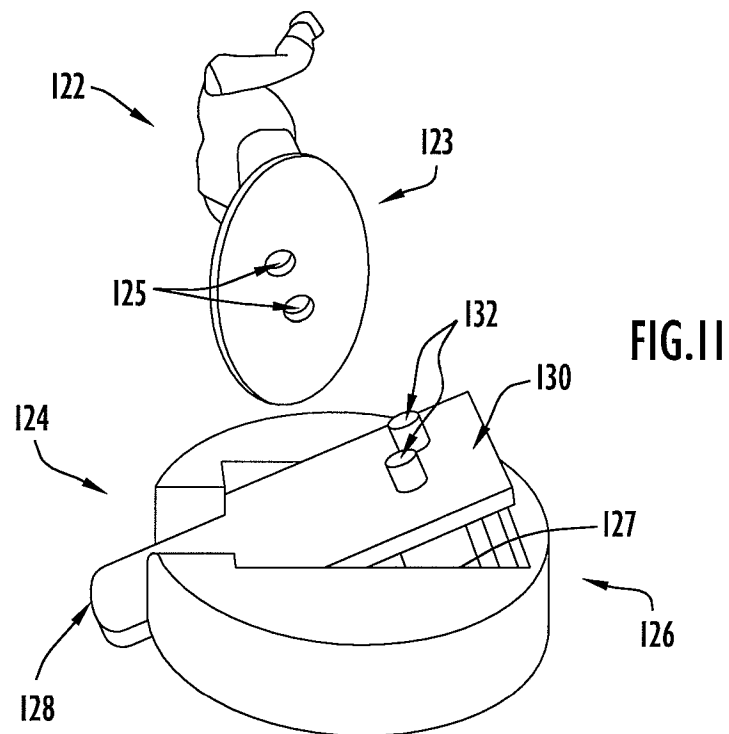
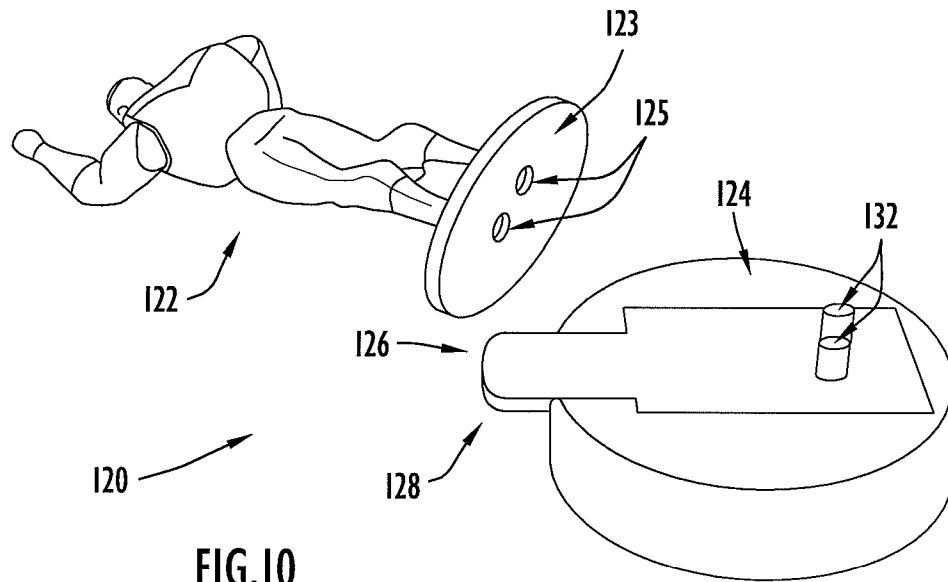
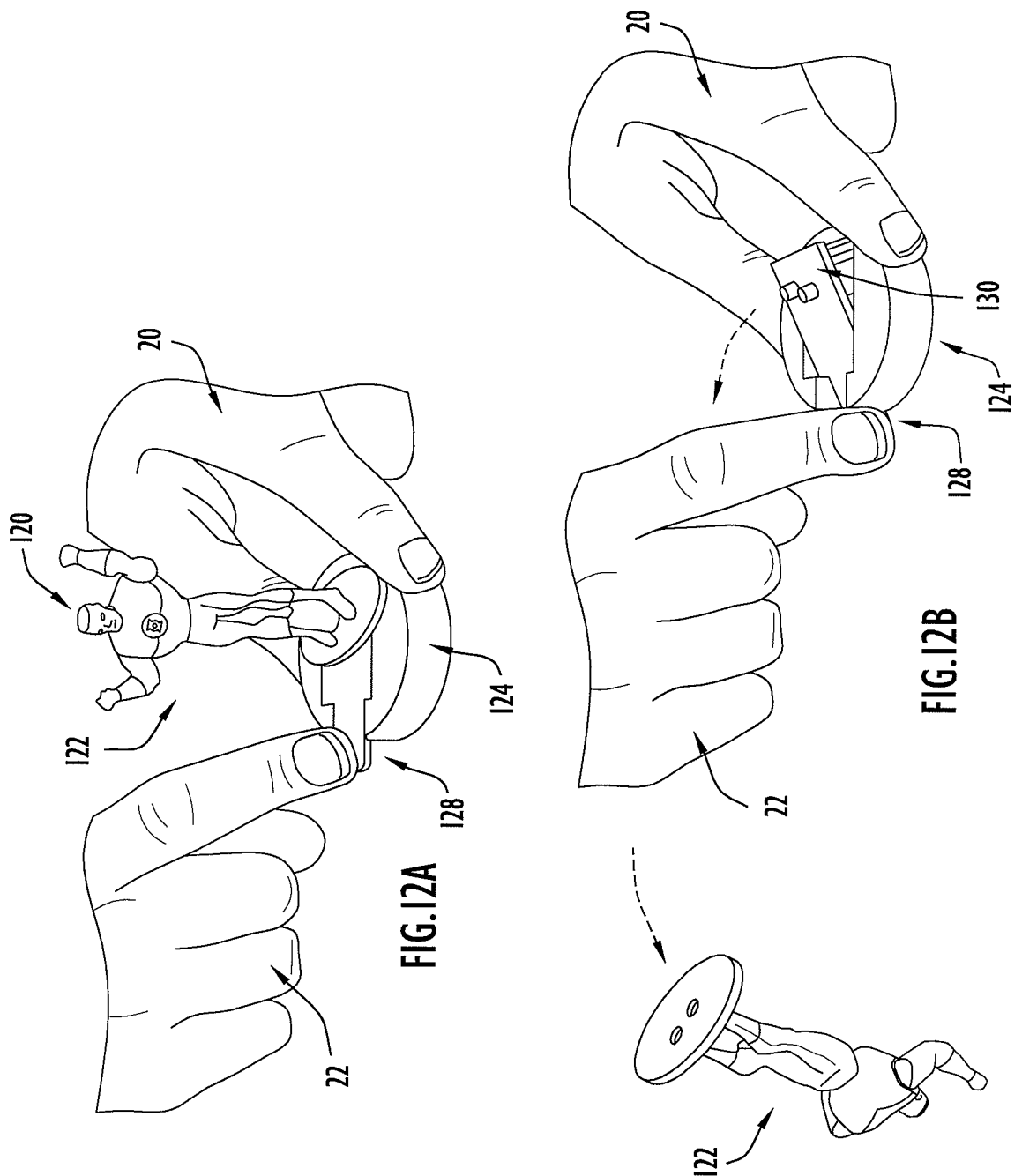


FIG. 9B

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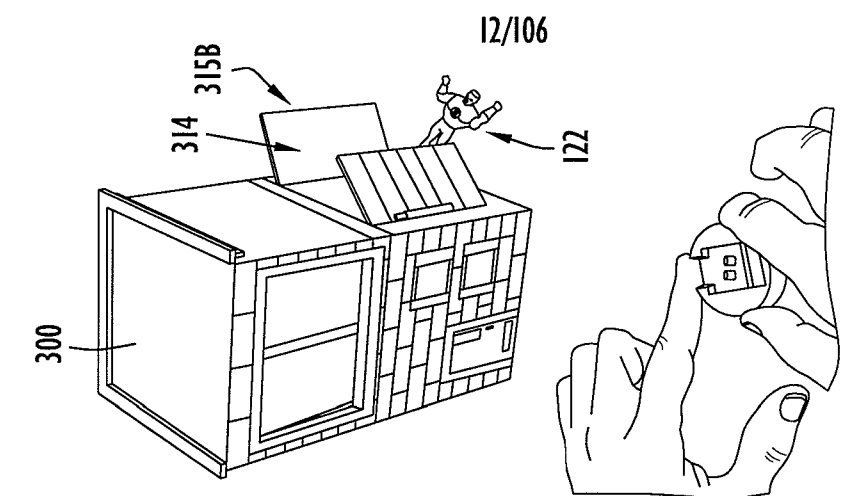


FIG. 13D

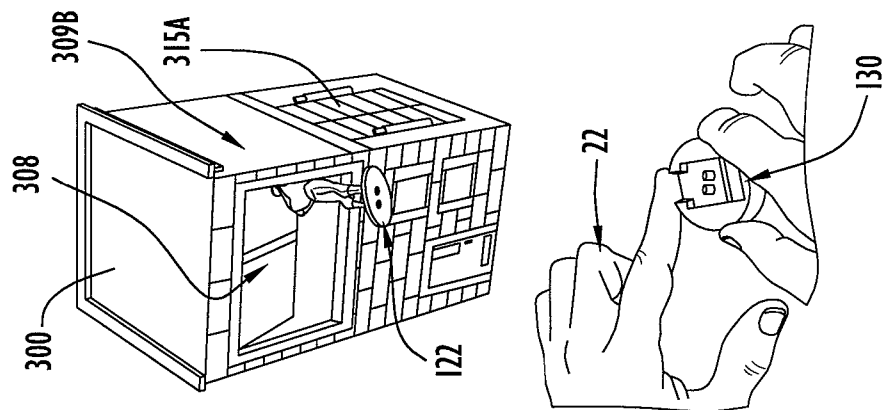


FIG. 13C

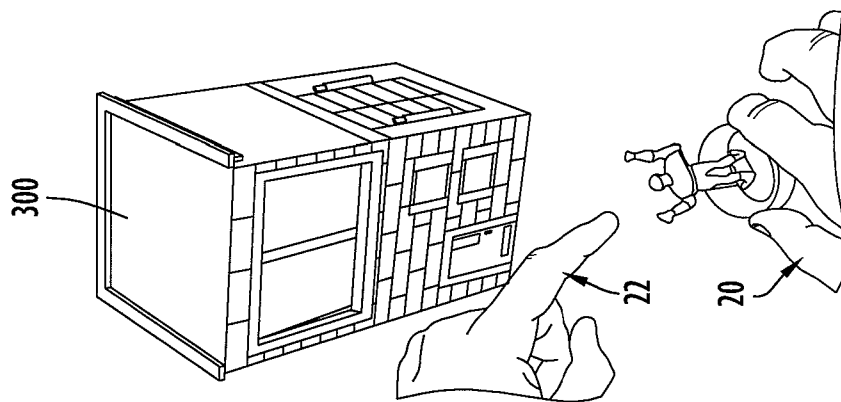


FIG. 13B

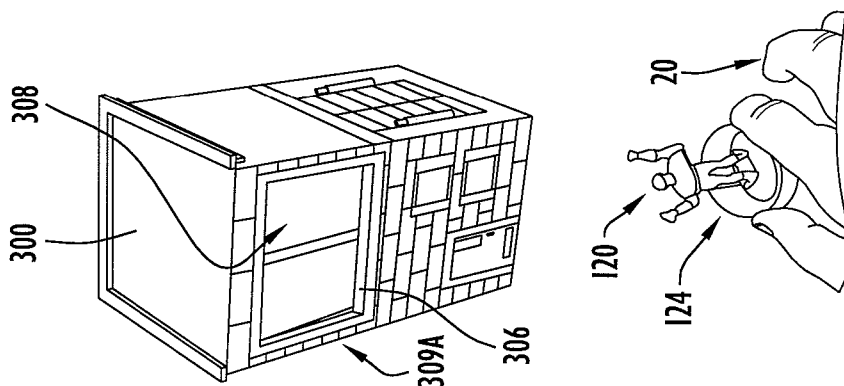
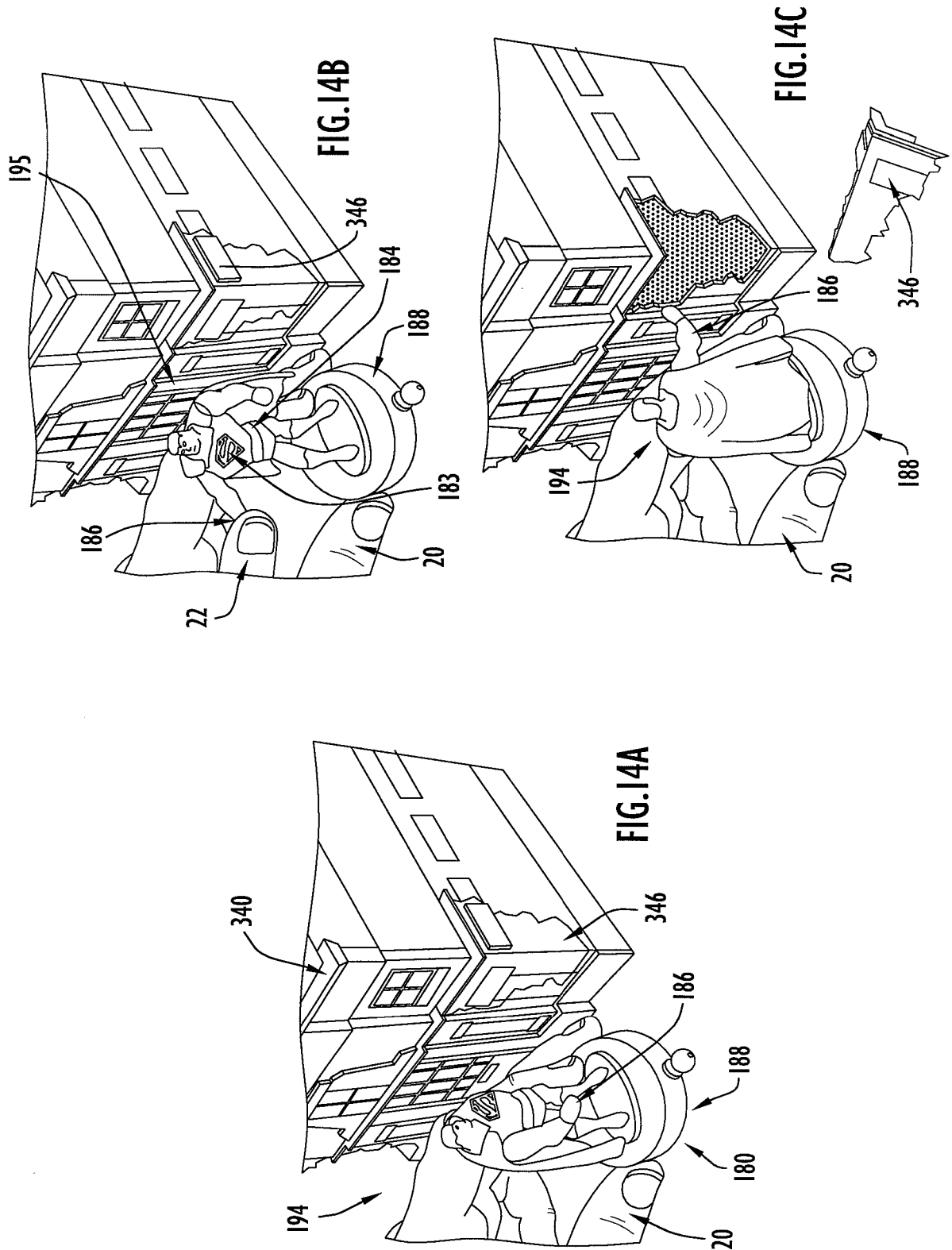


FIG. 13A

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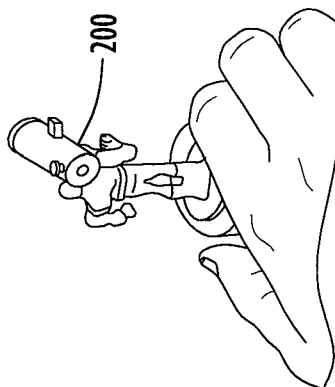
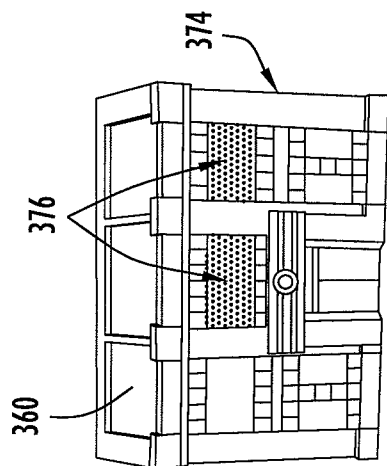


FIG. 15C

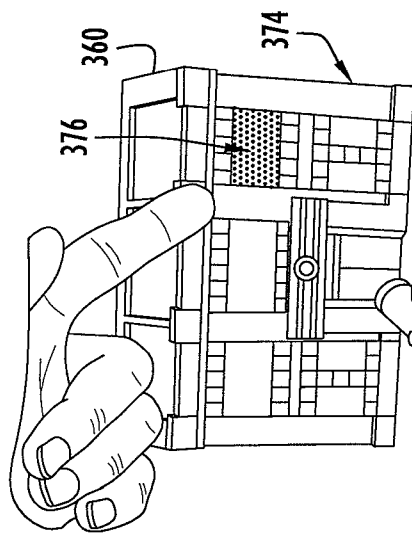


FIG. 15B

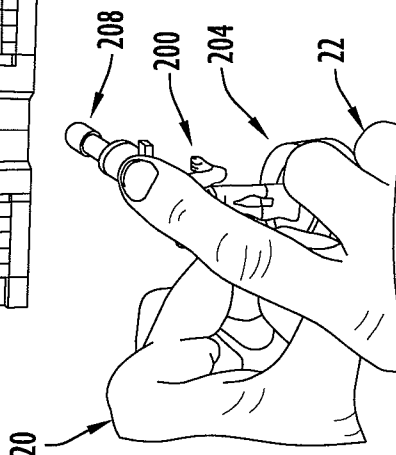
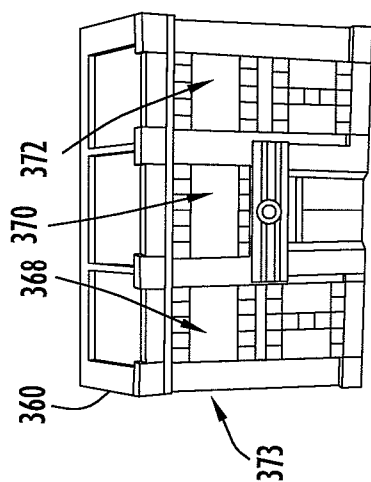


FIG. 15A

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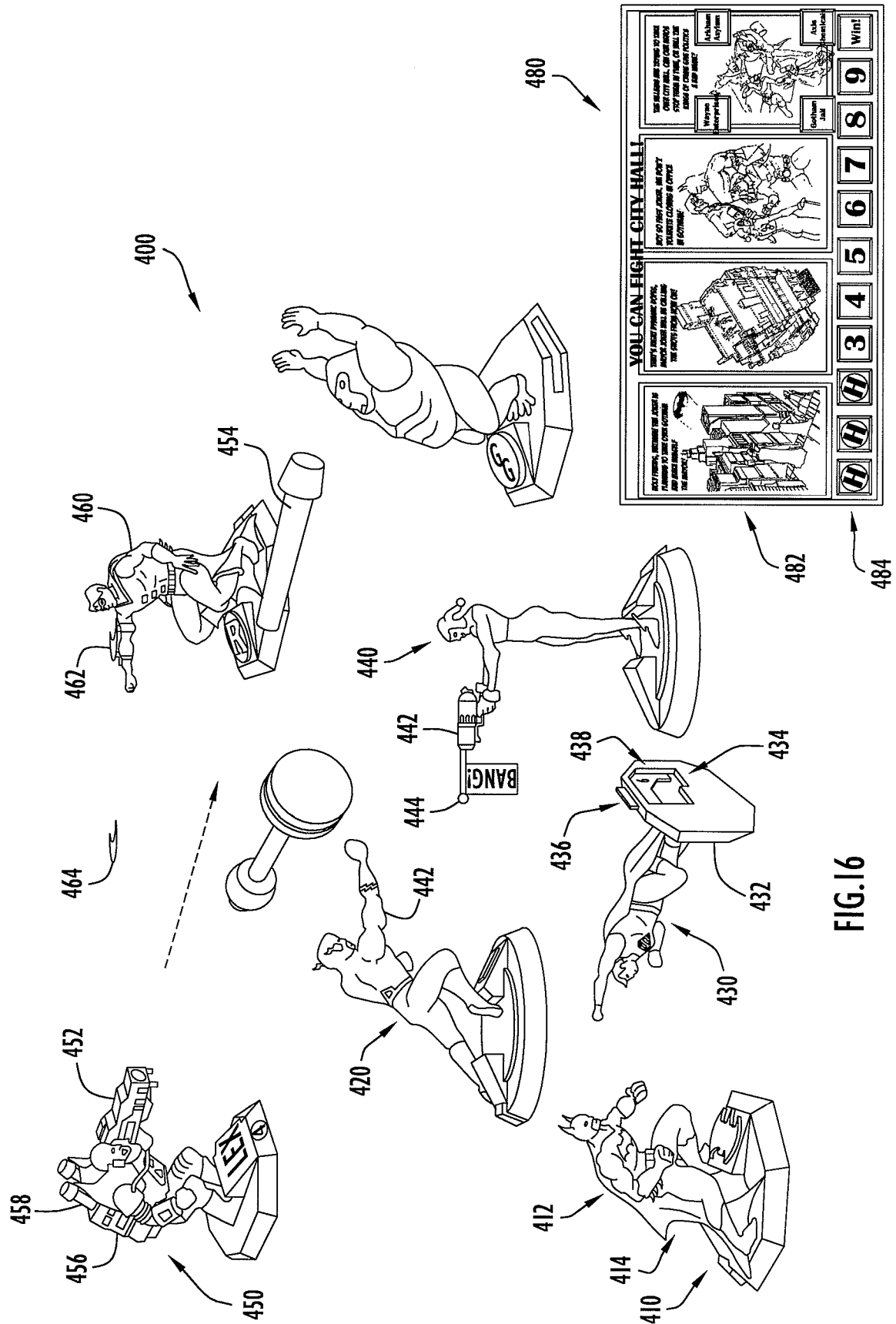
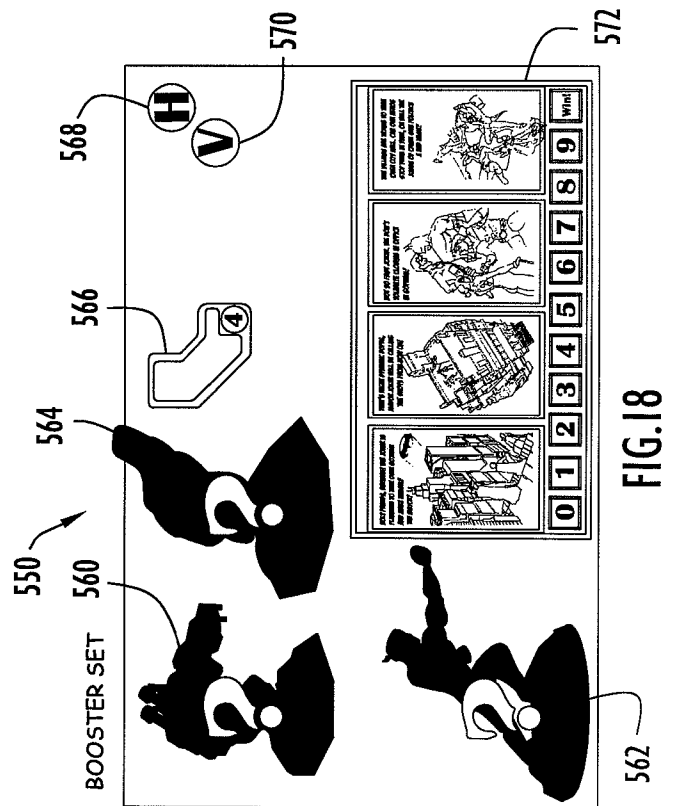
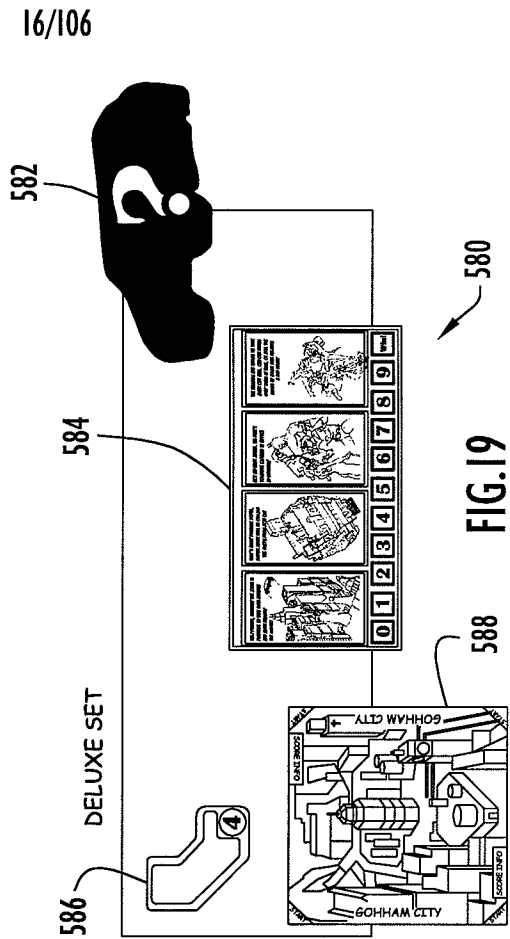
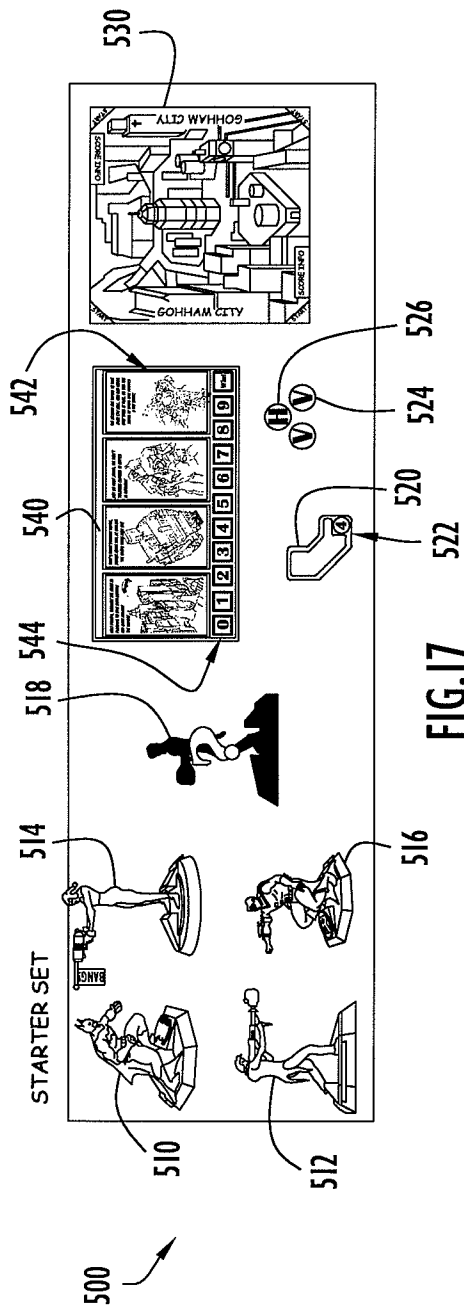


FIG. 16

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)



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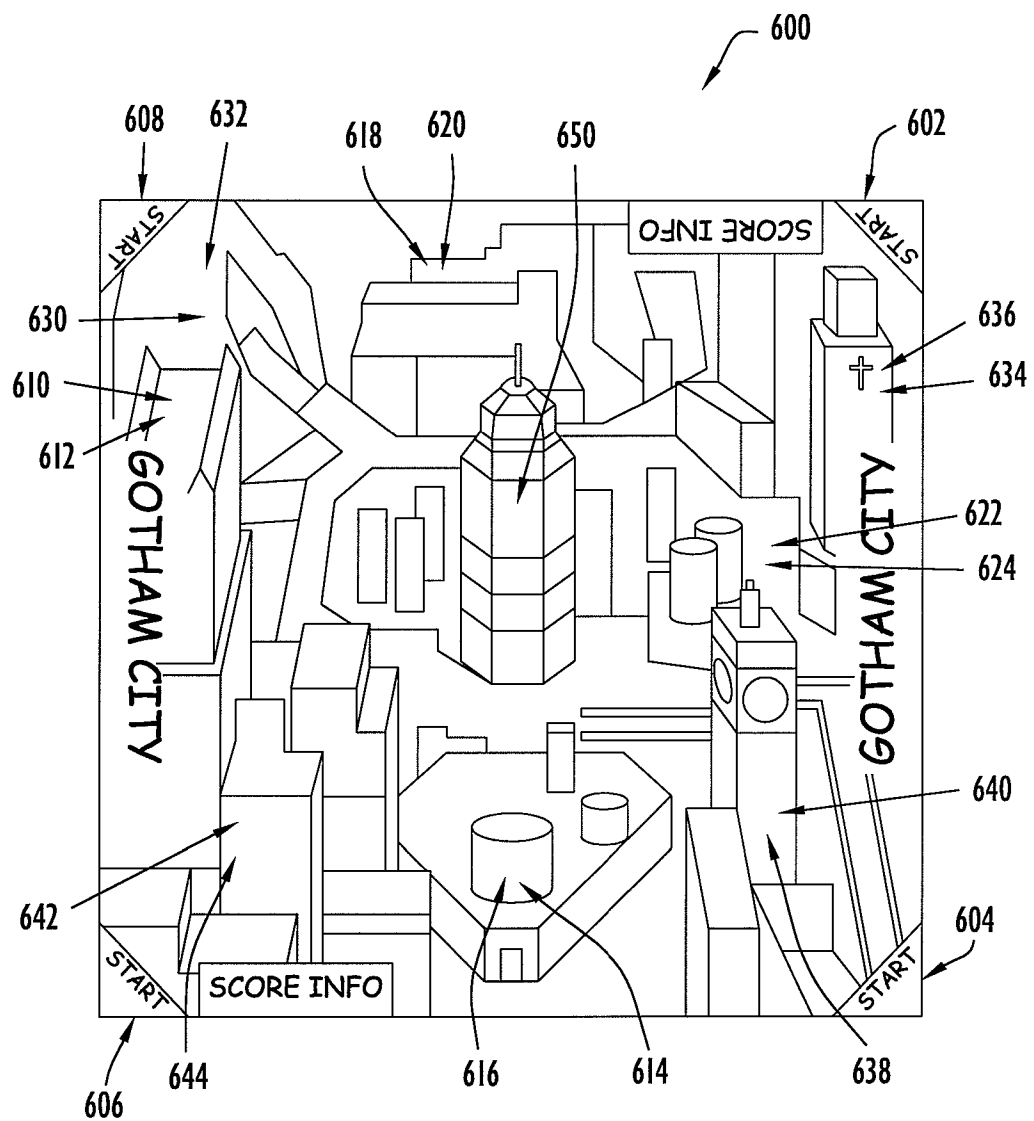


FIG.20

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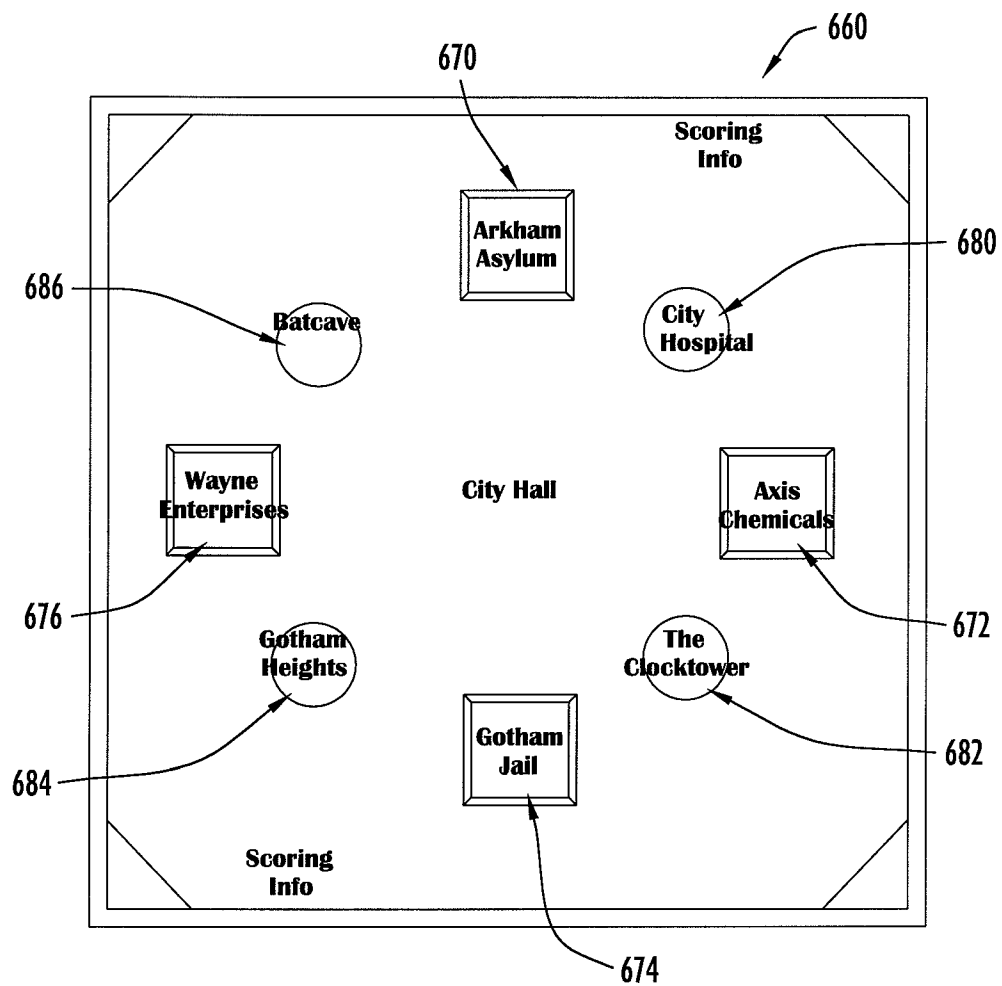


FIG. 21

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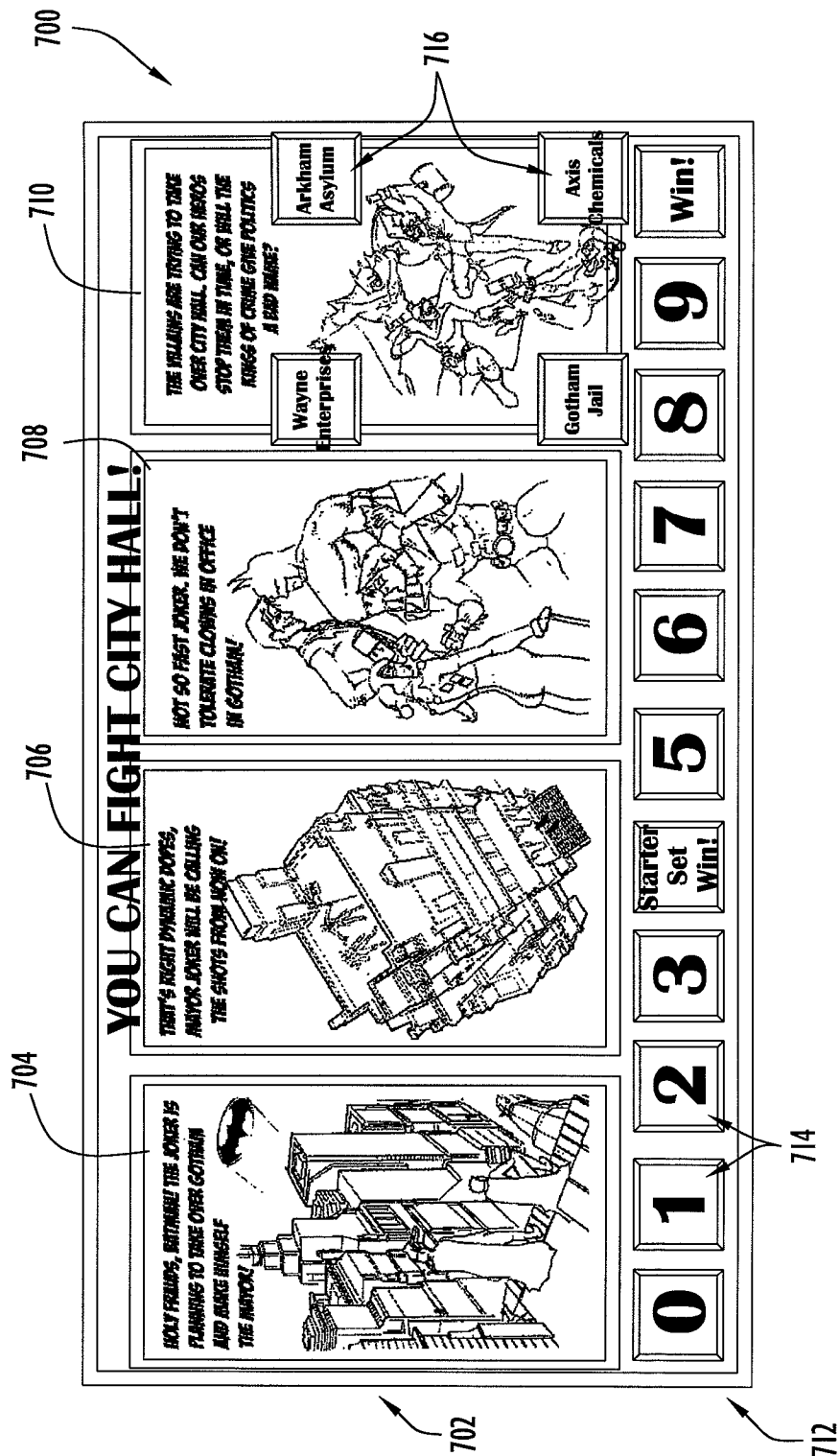


FIG.22

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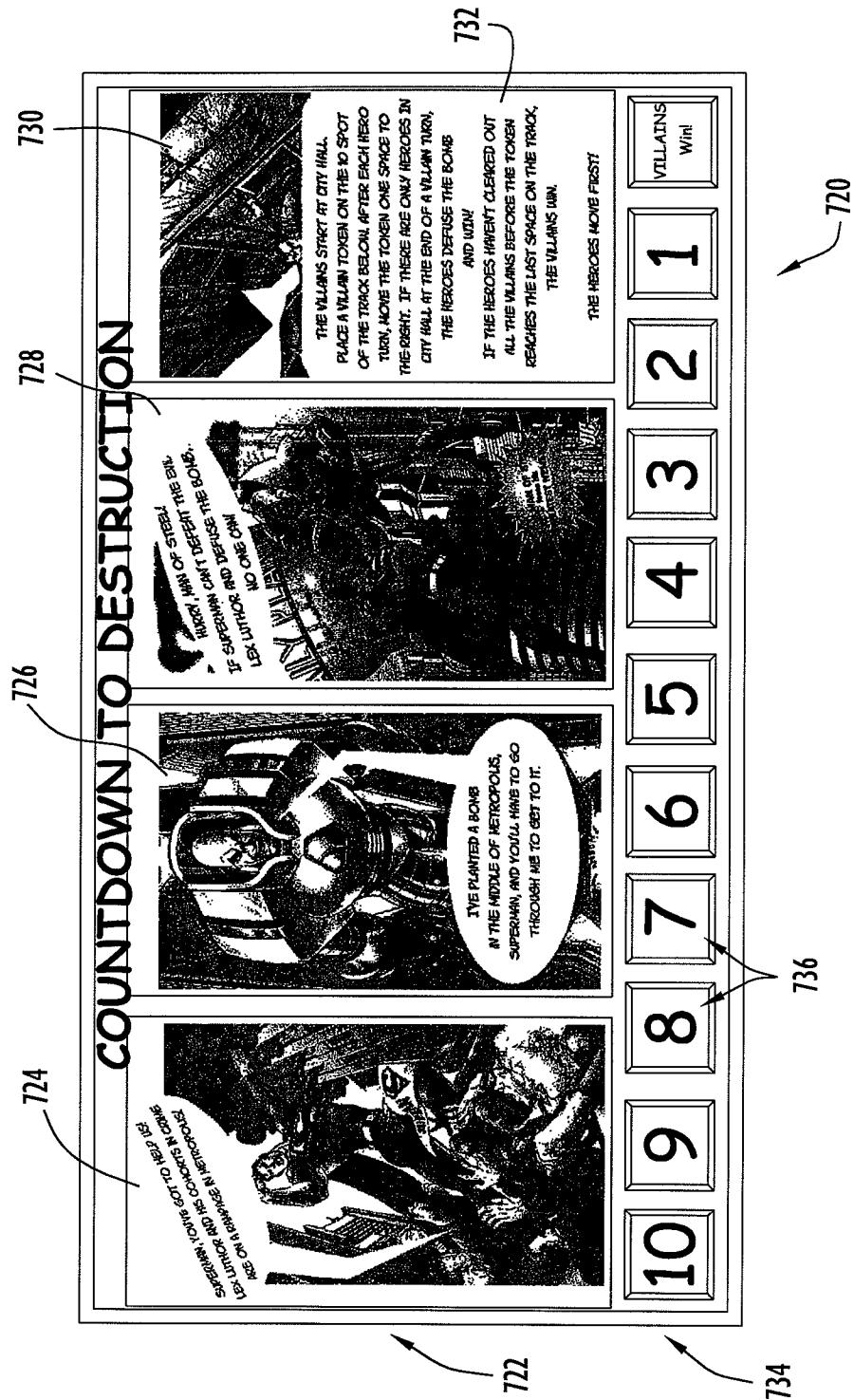


FIG. 23

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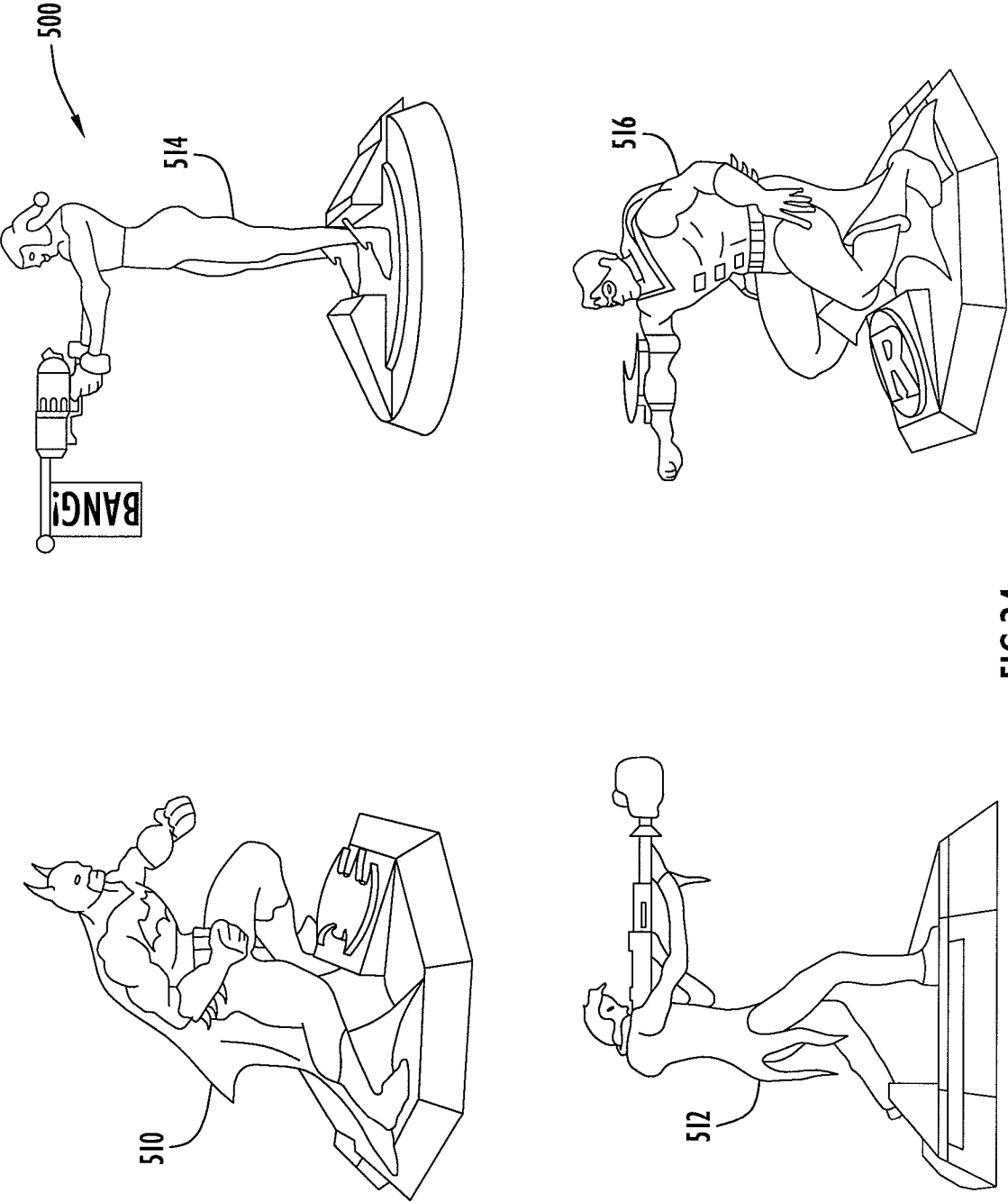
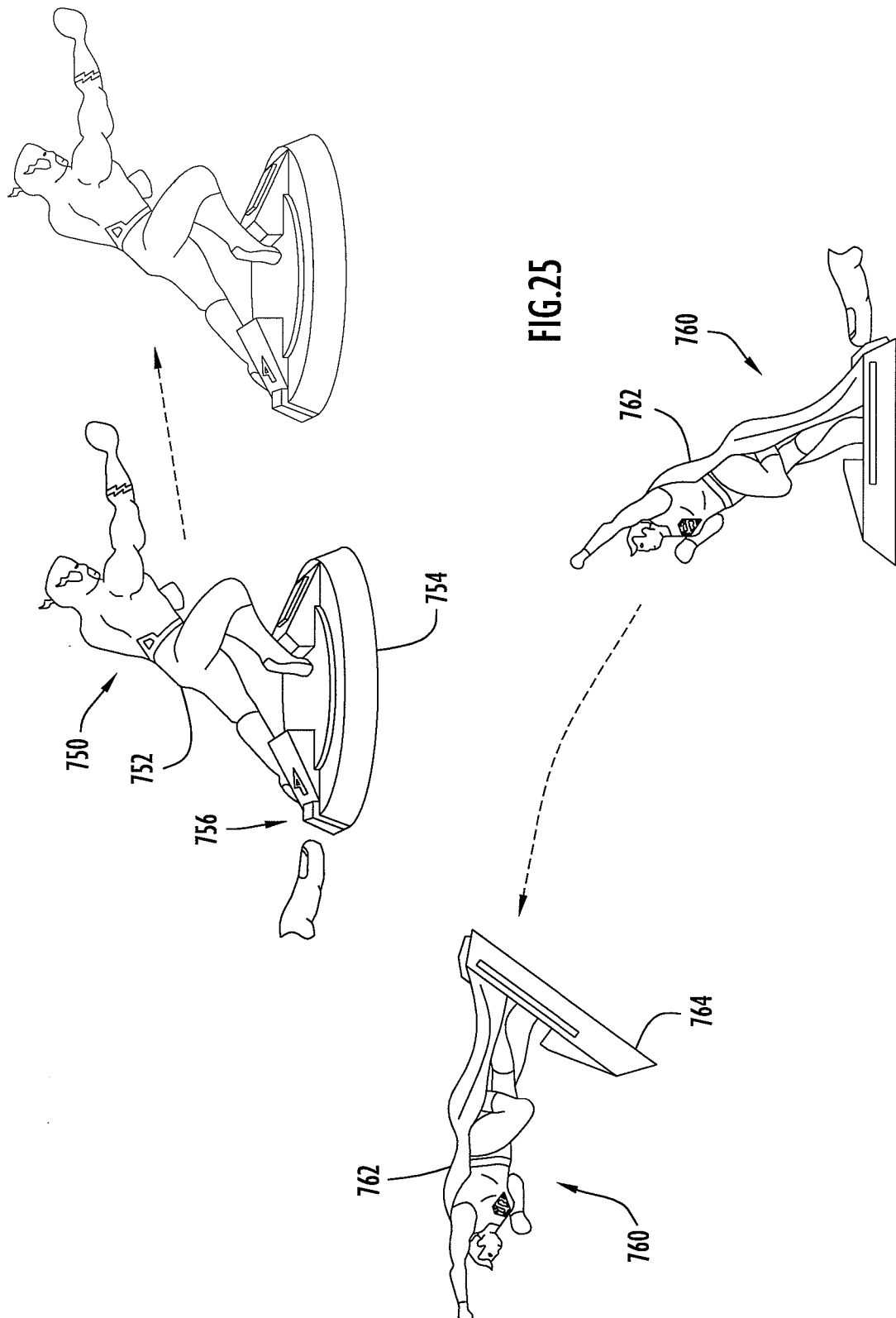


FIG.24

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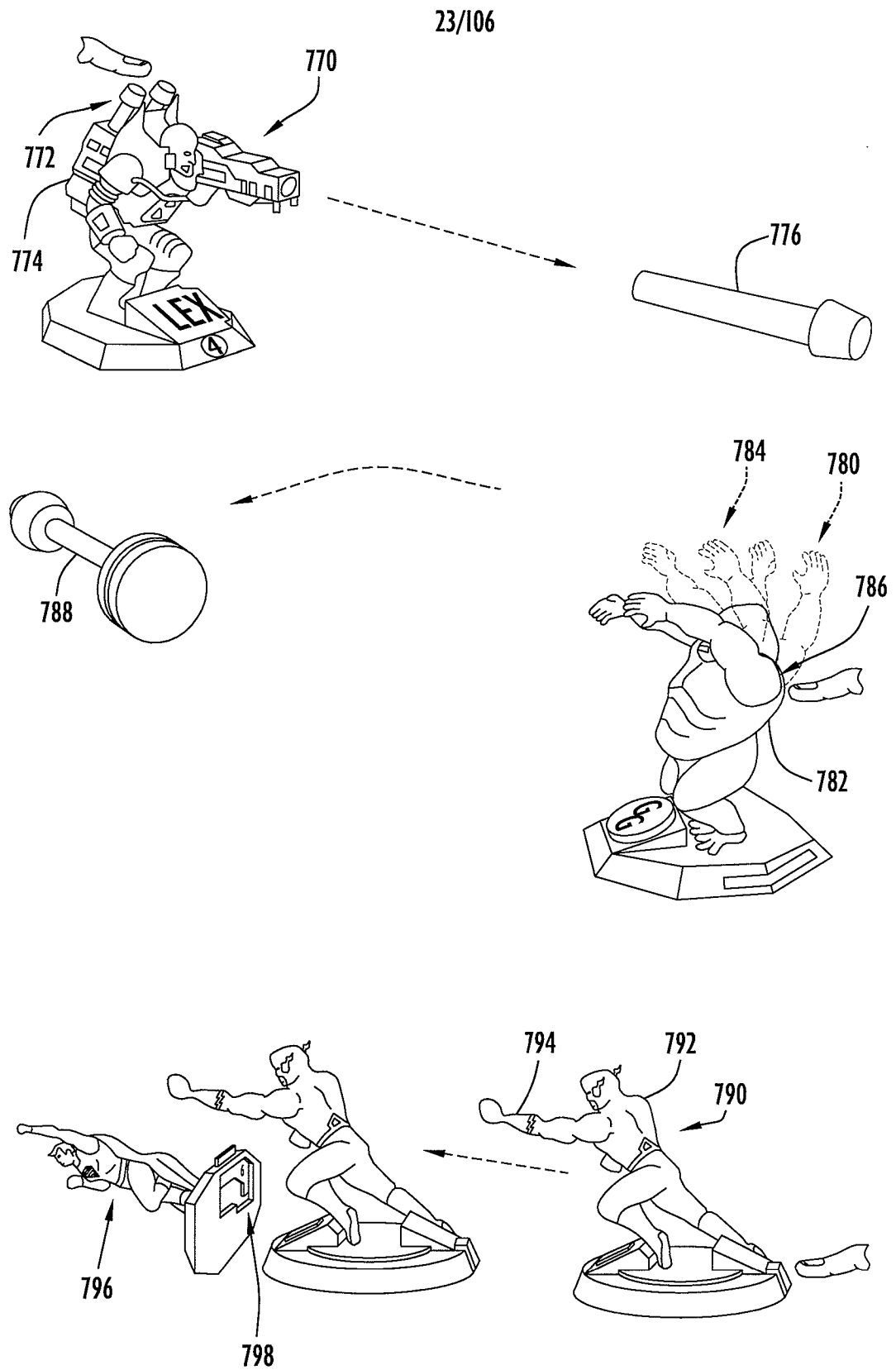


FIG.26

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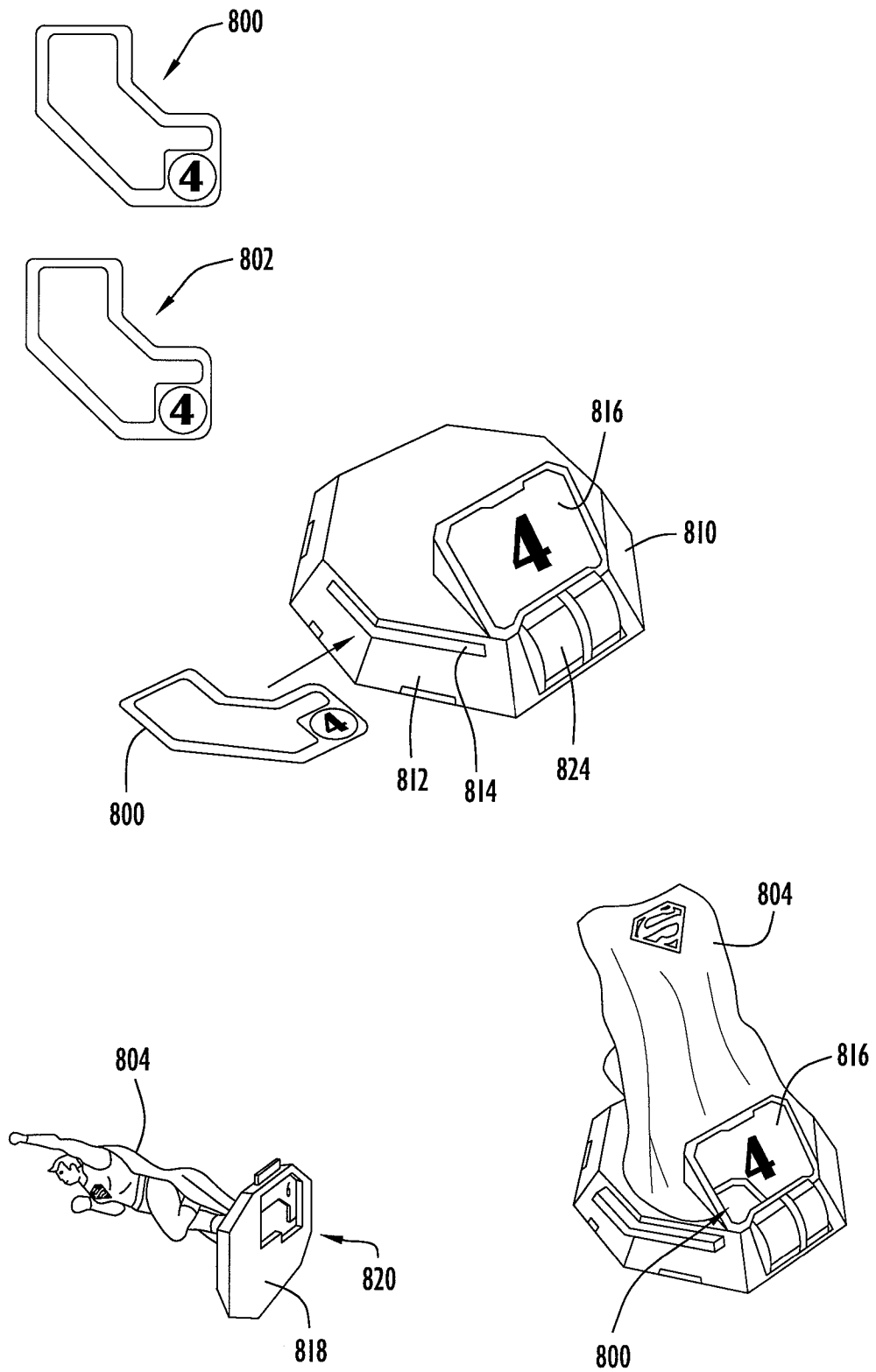


FIG.27

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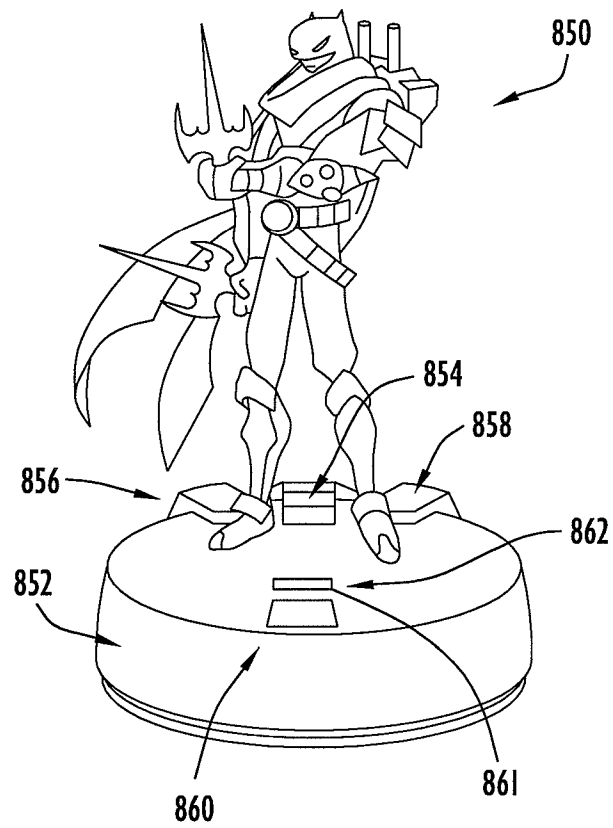


FIG.28

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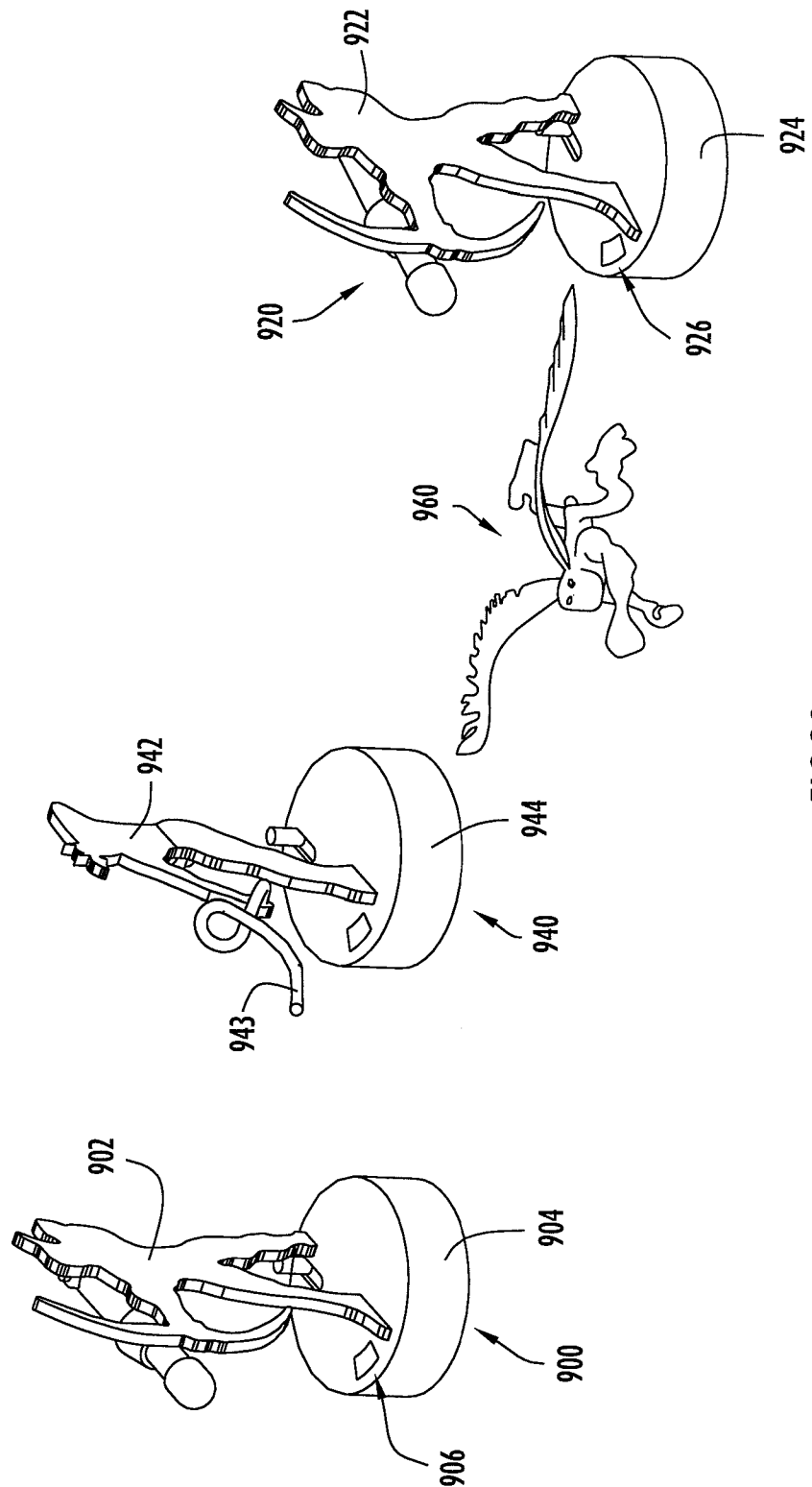


FIG. 29

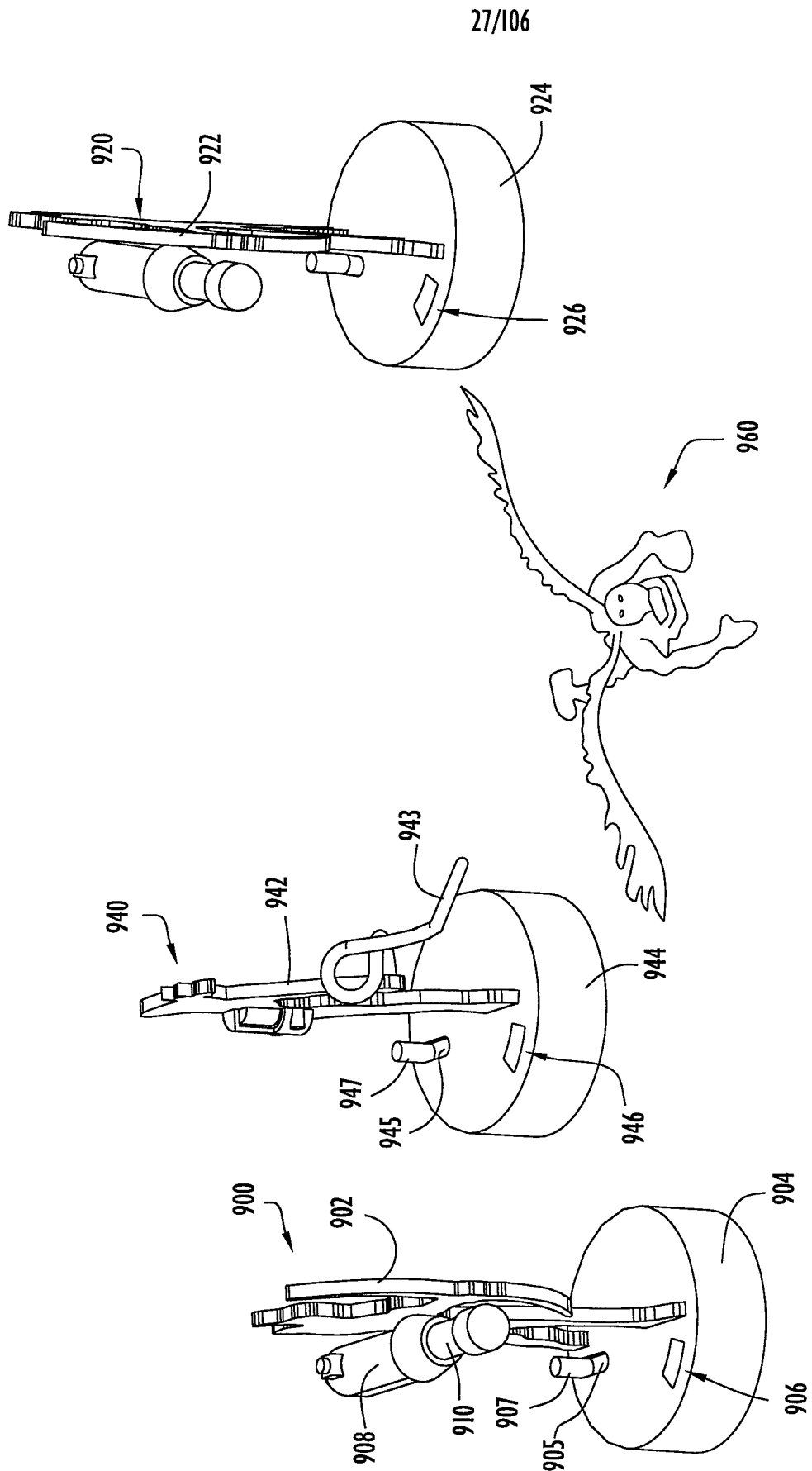
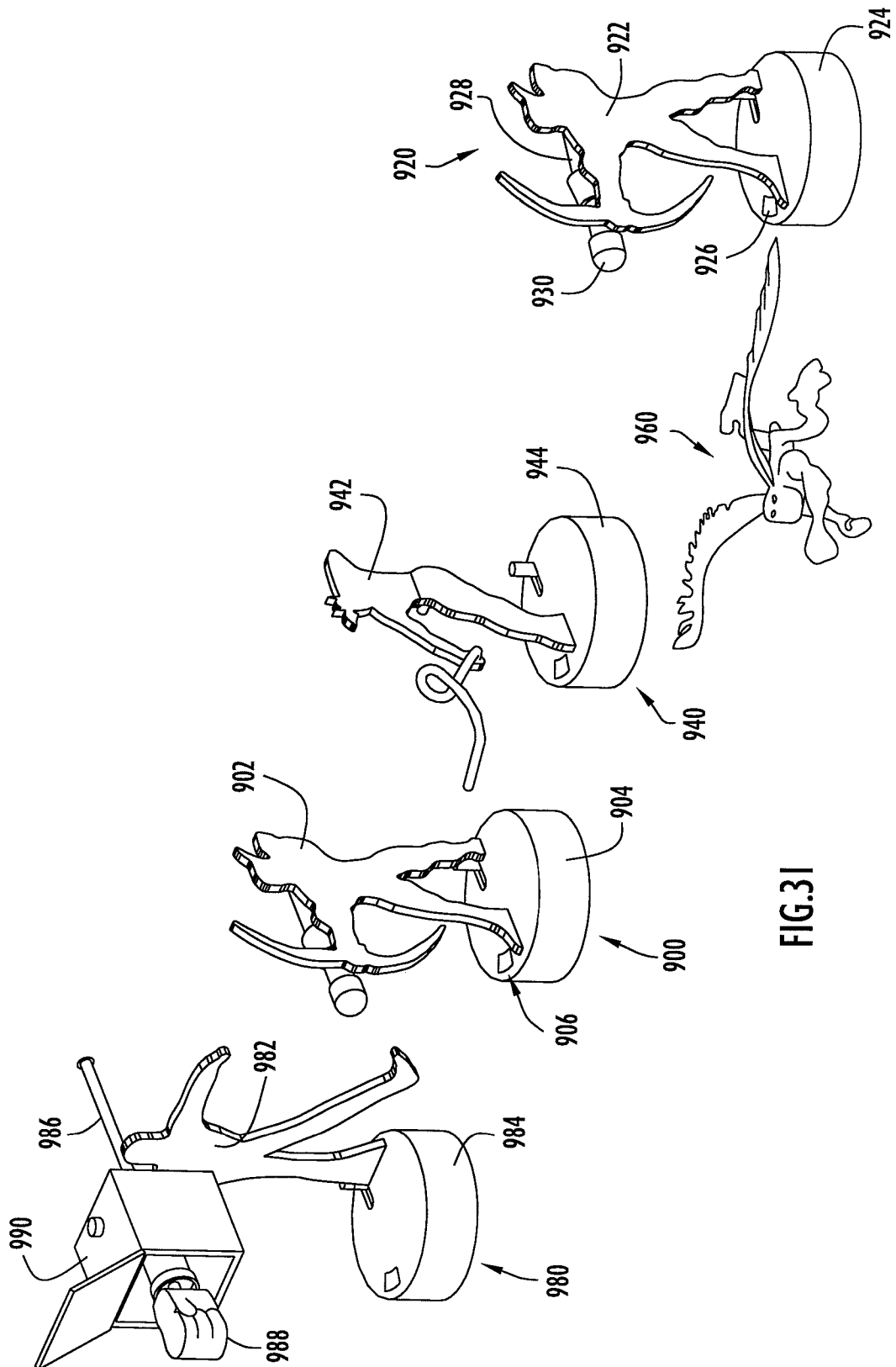


FIG.30

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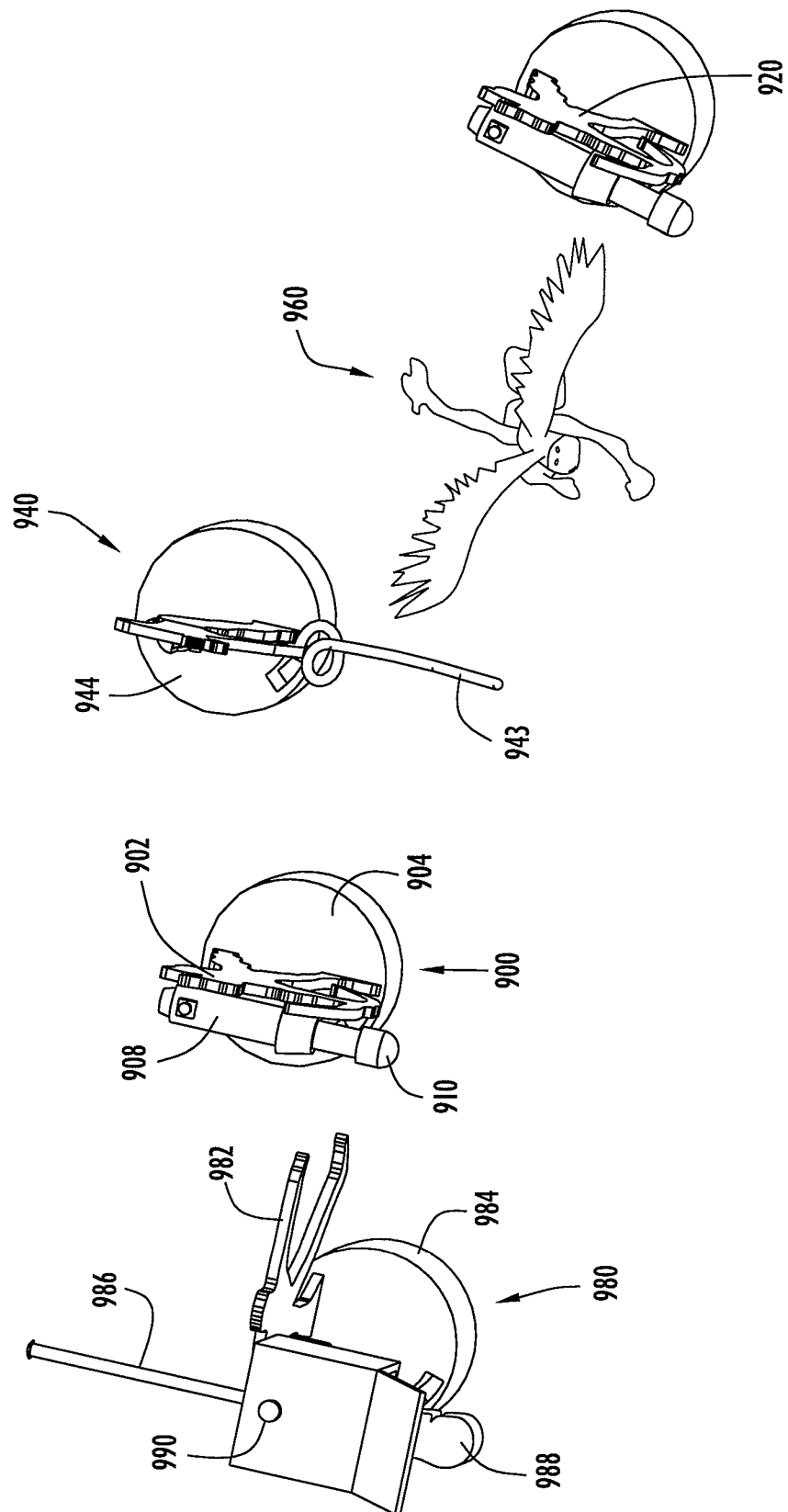
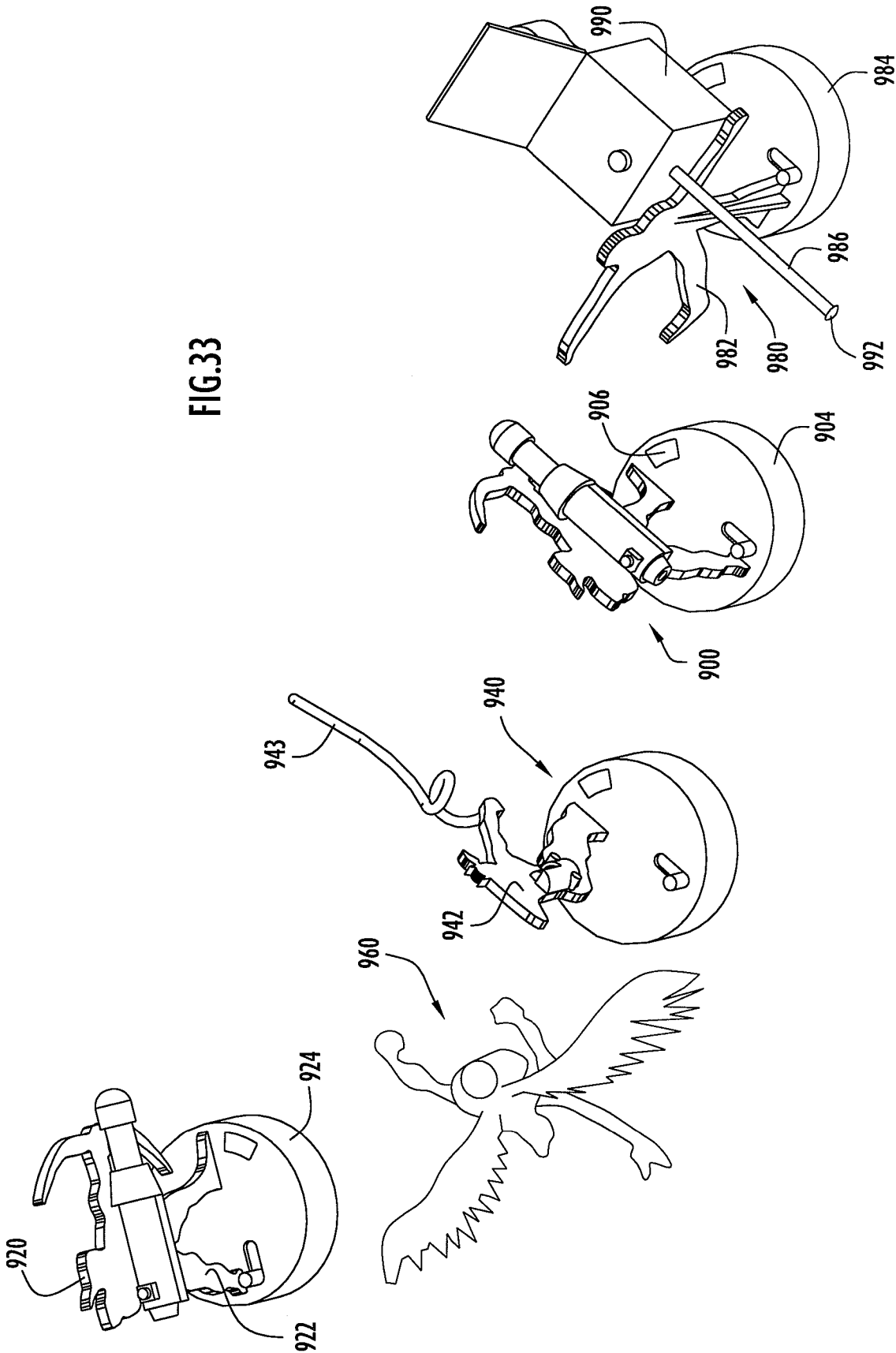


FIG.32

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FIG.33



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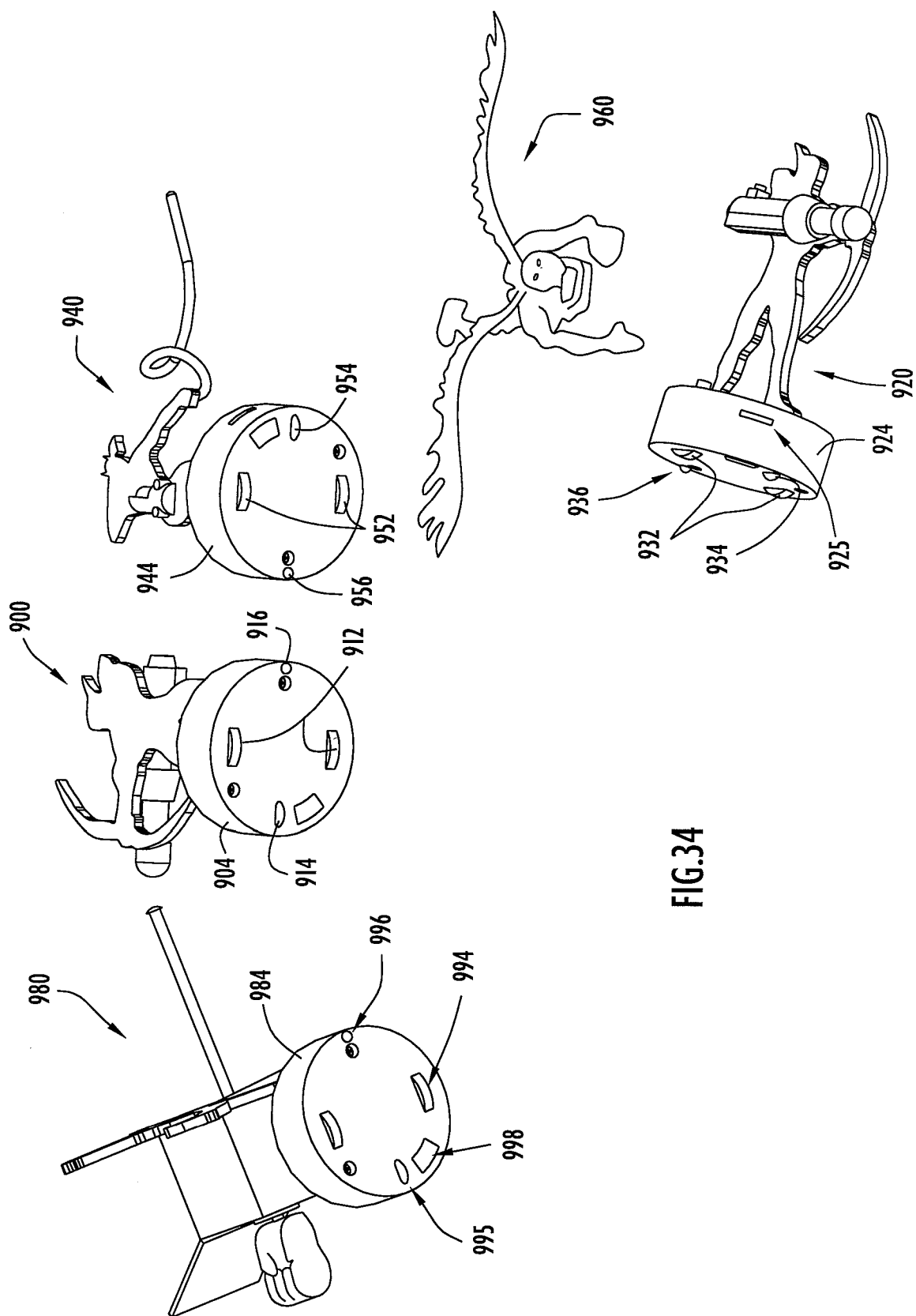


FIG.34

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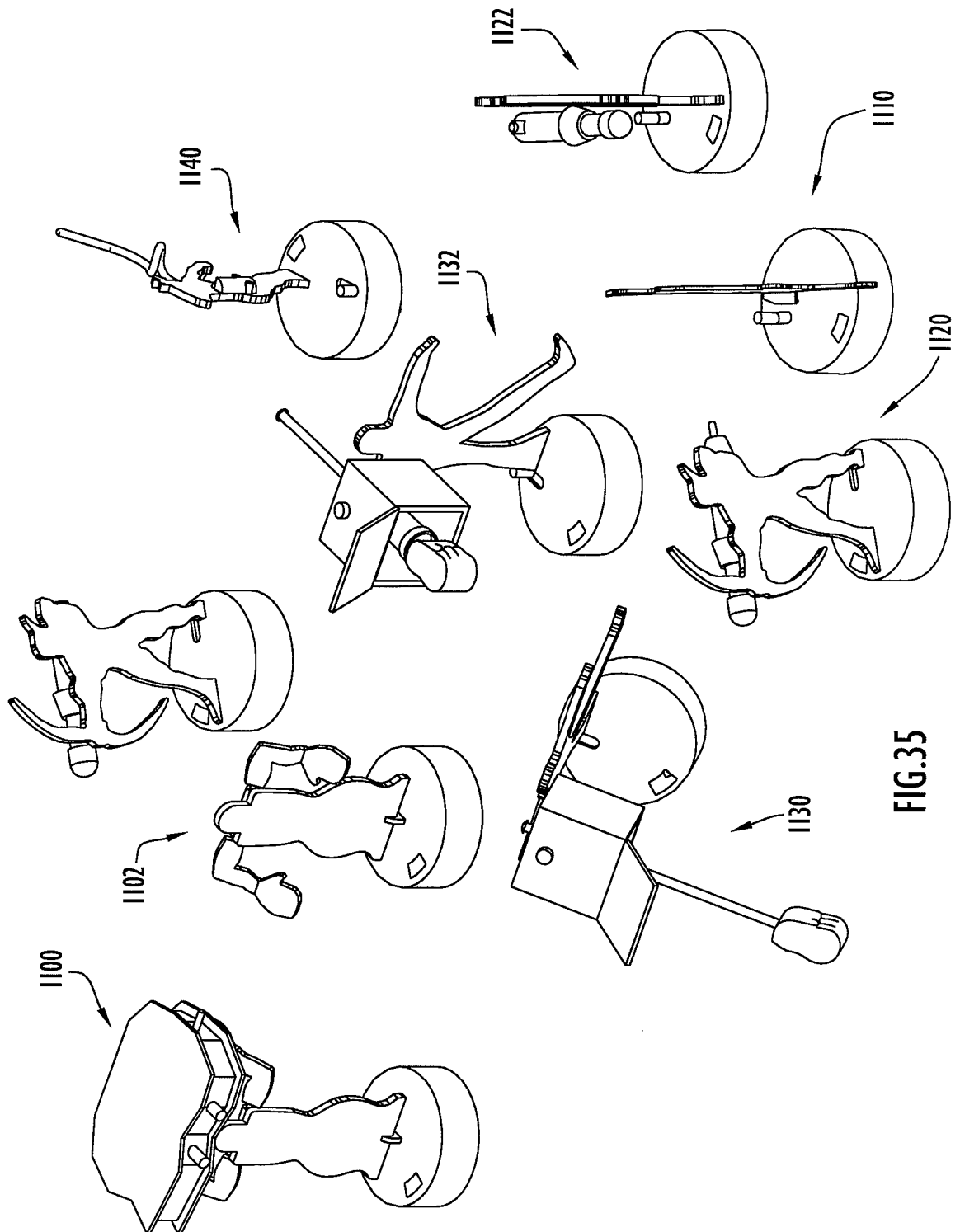


FIG.35

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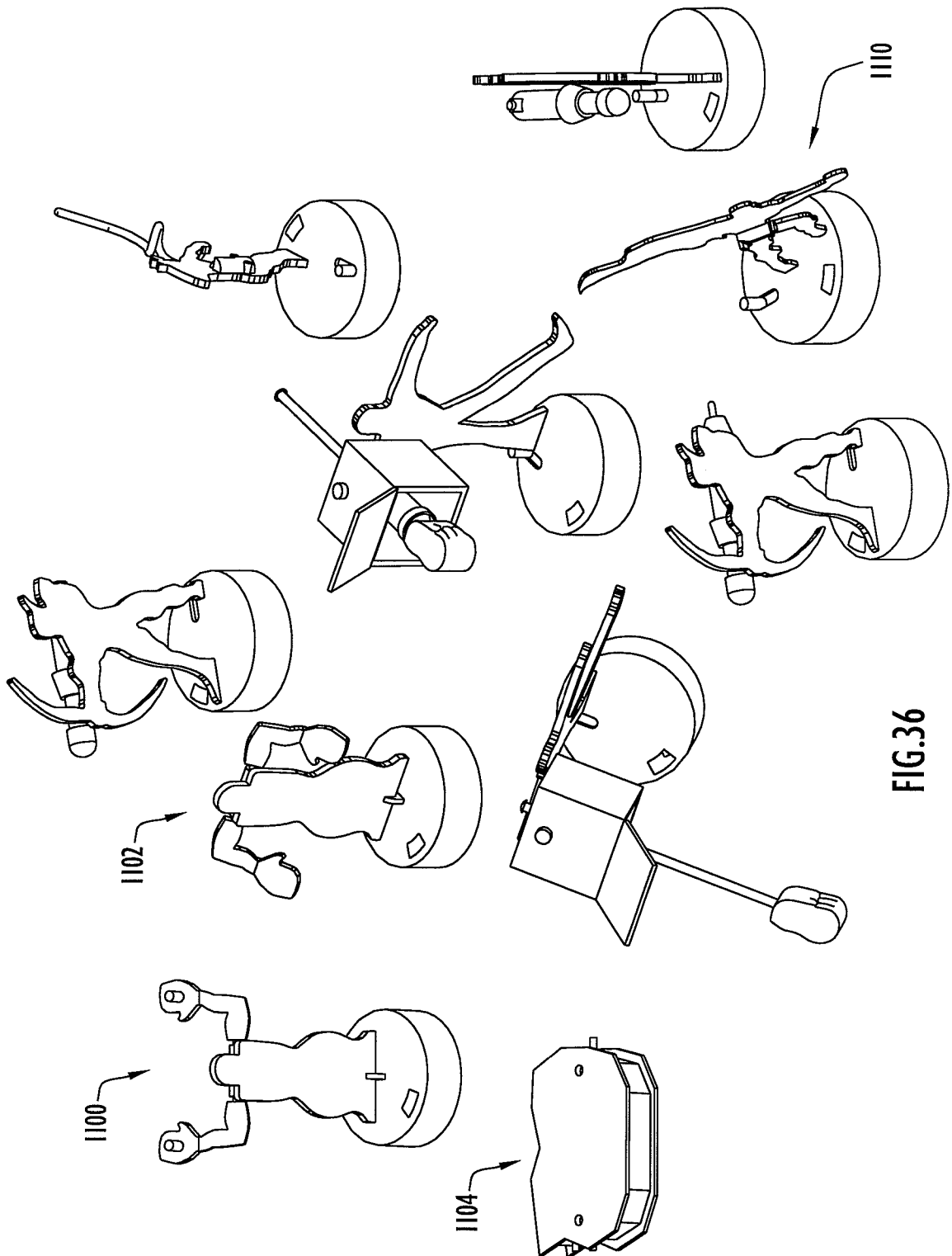


FIG.36

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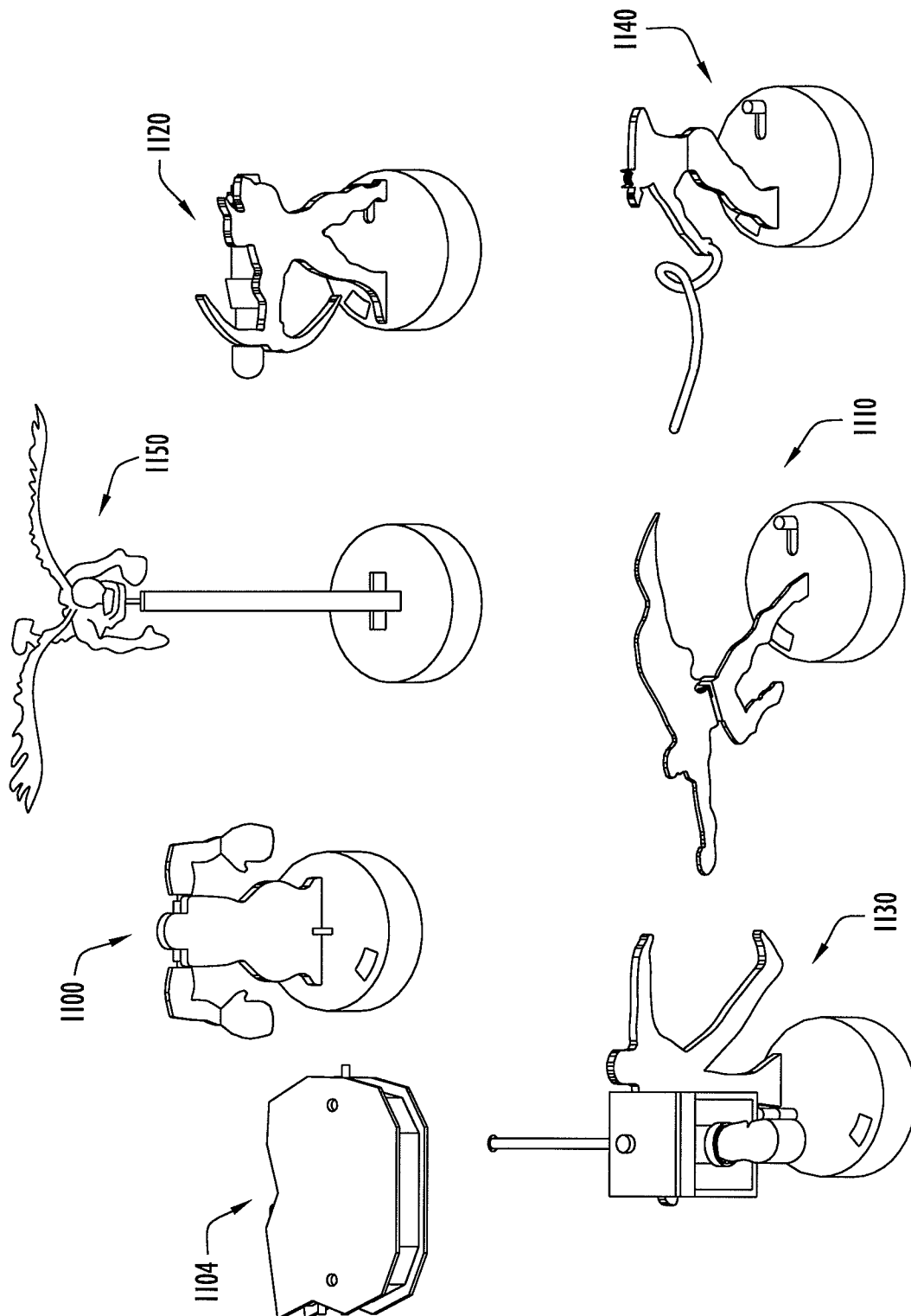


FIG.37

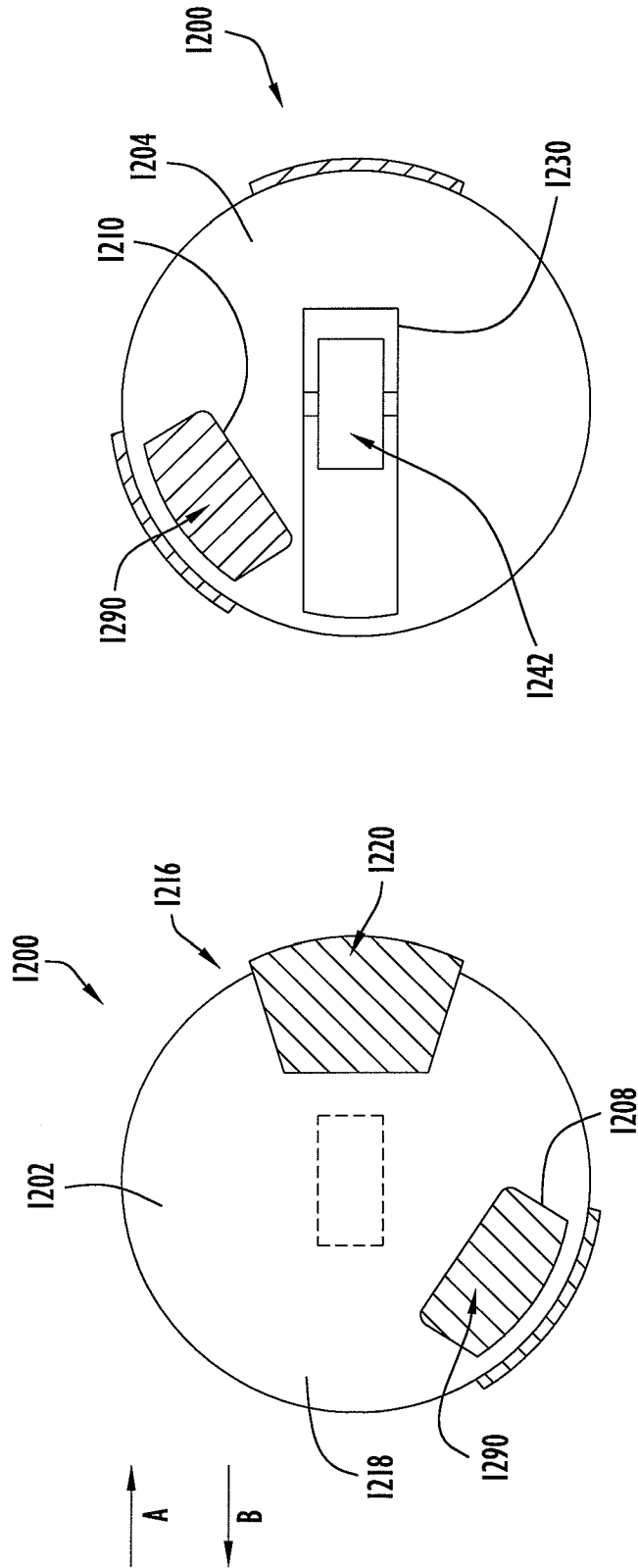


FIG. 38B

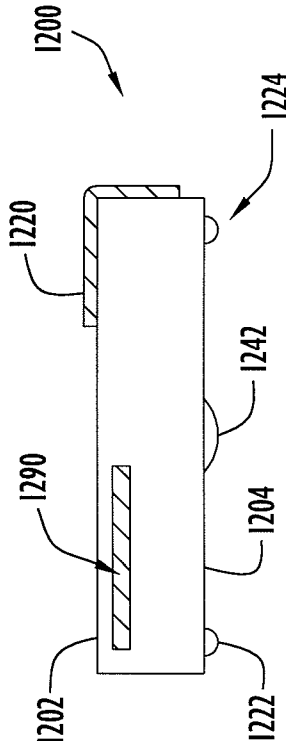
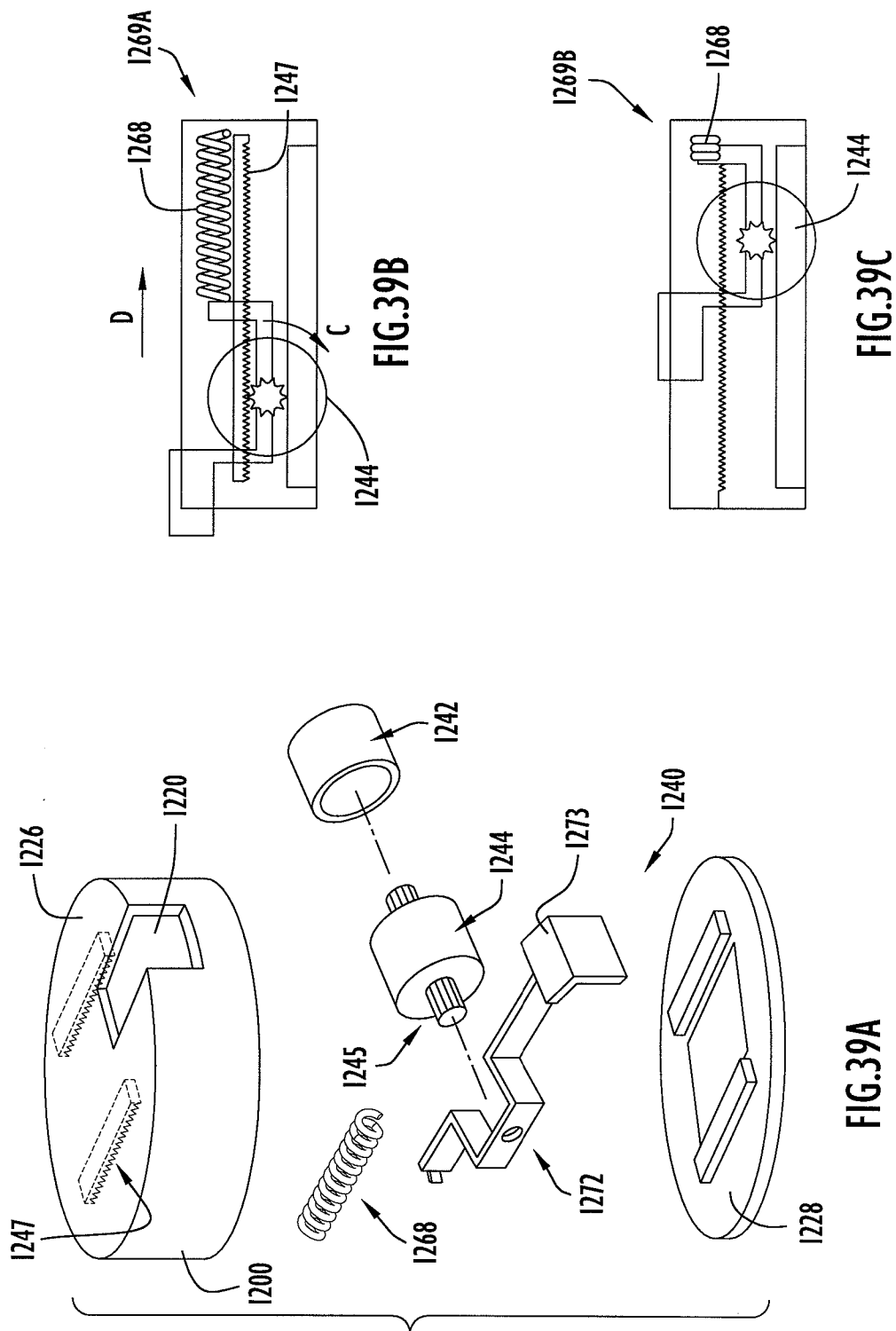


FIG. 38C

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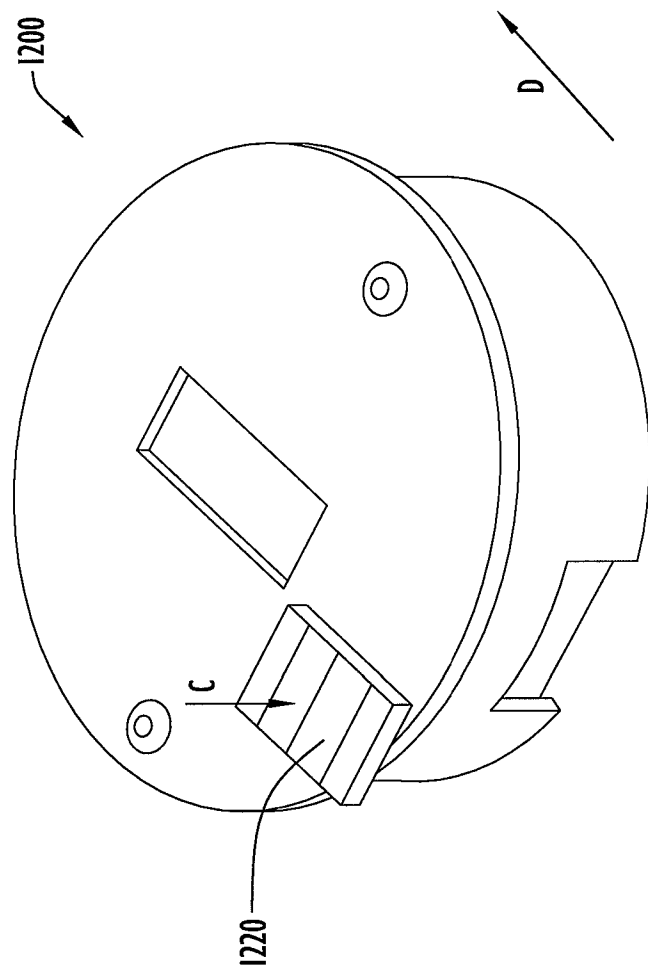


FIG. 40

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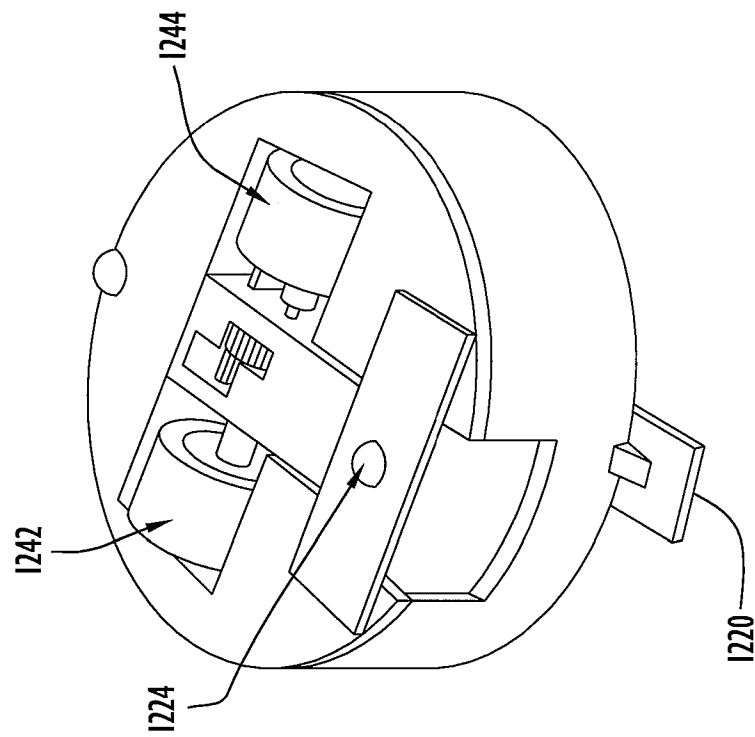


FIG. 4I

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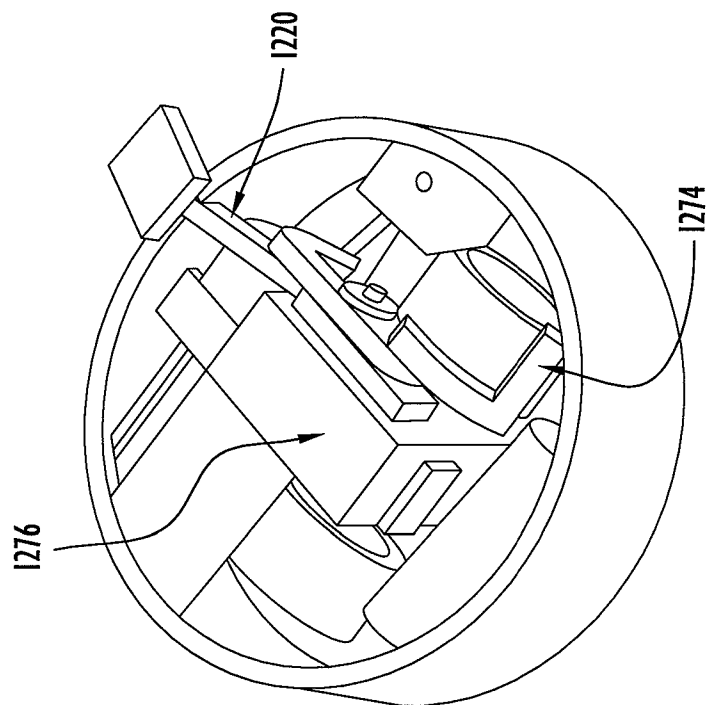


FIG. 42

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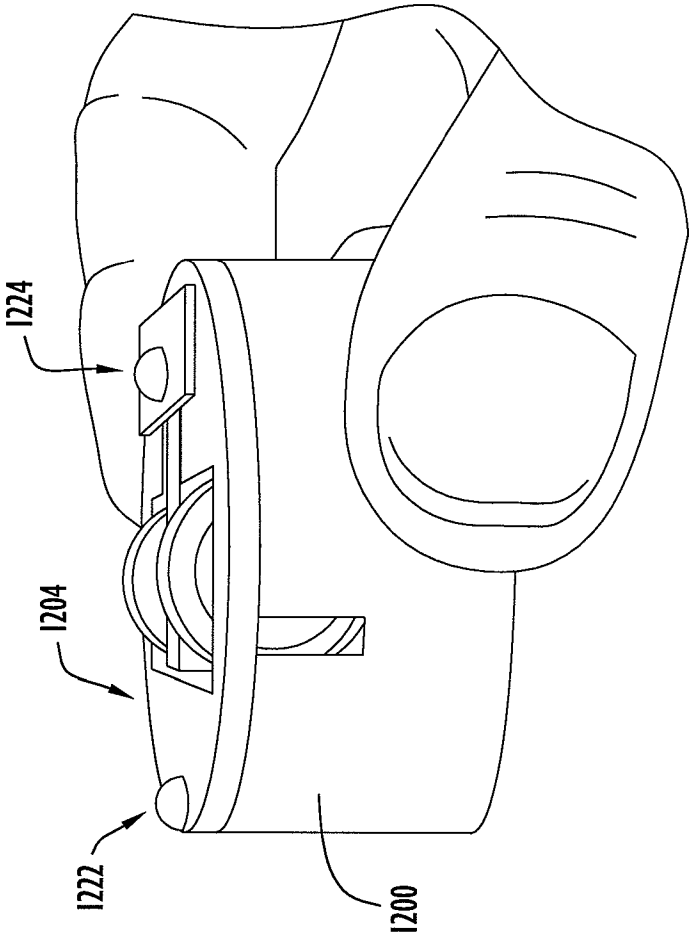


FIG. 43

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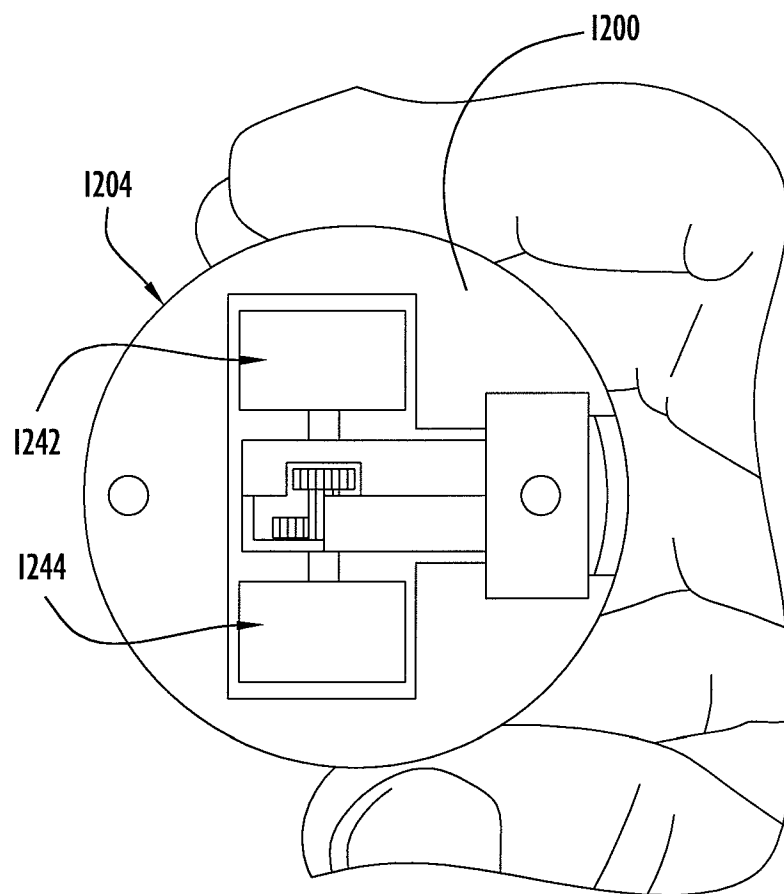


FIG.44

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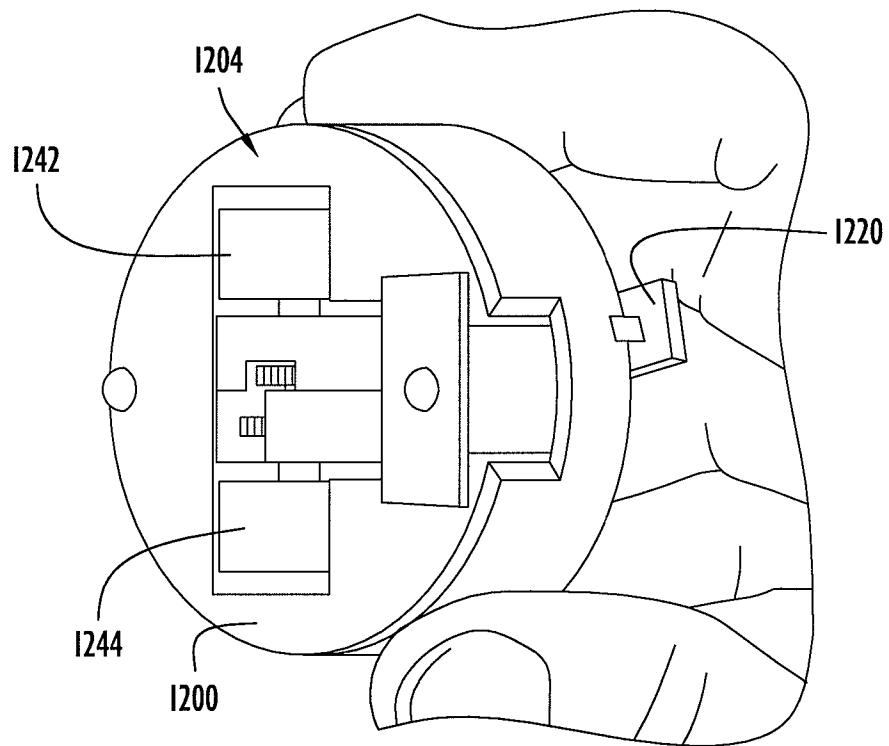
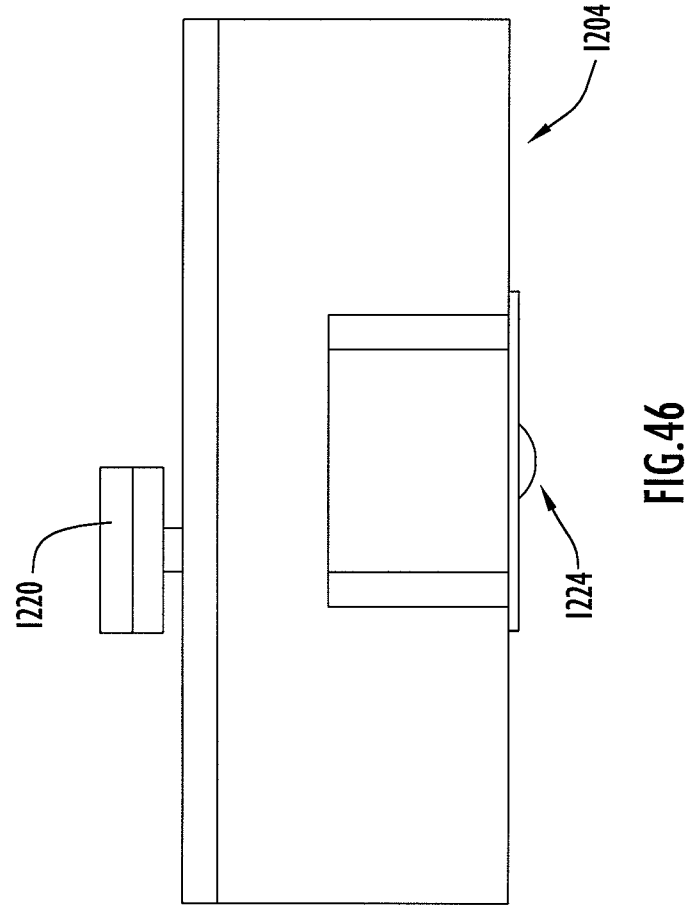
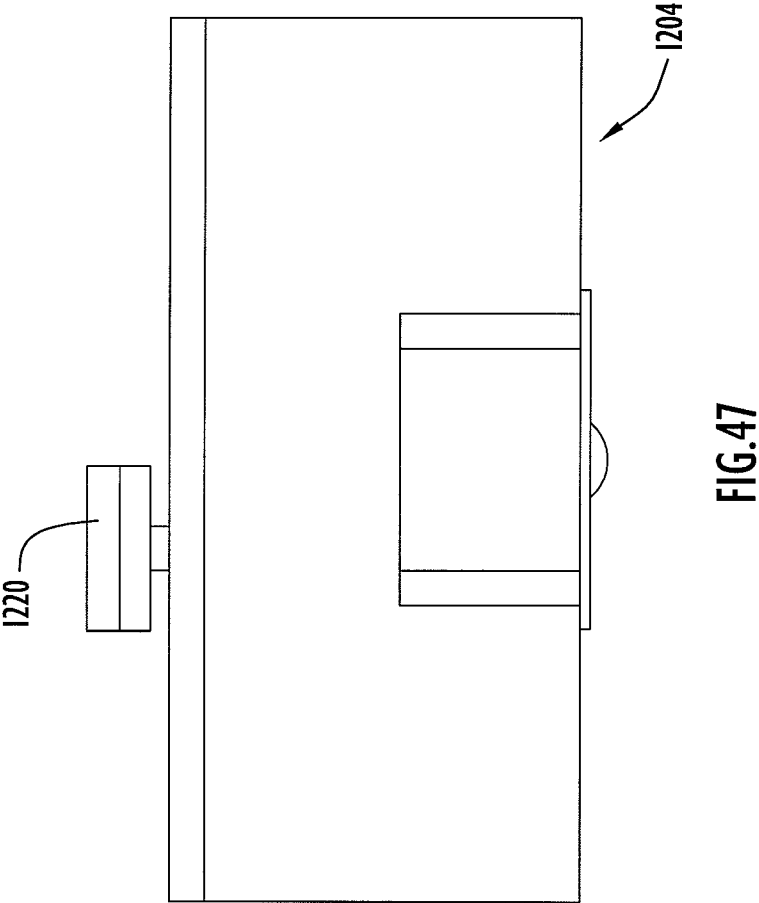


FIG.45



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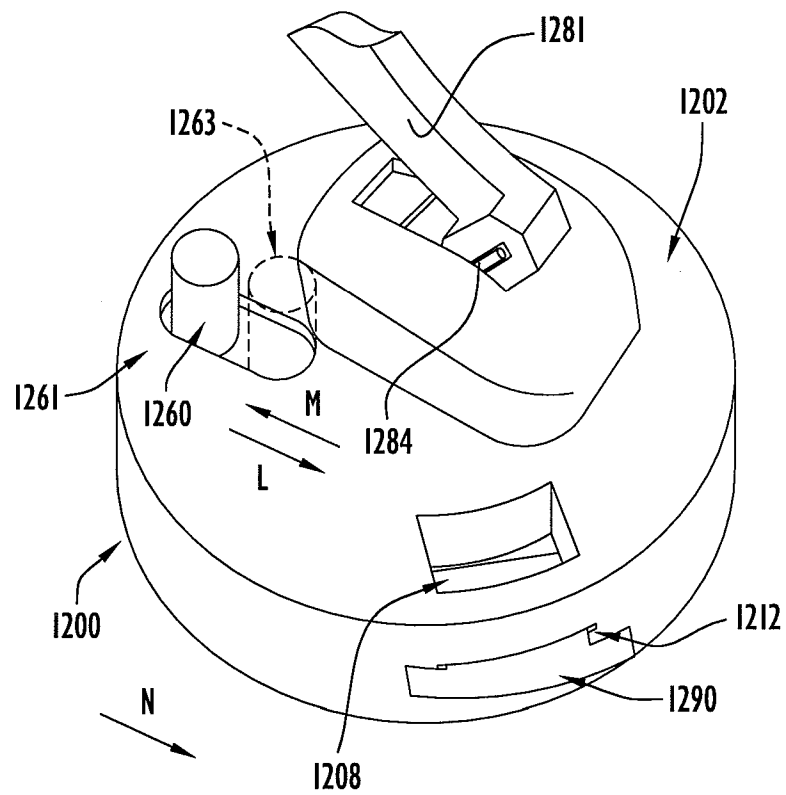


FIG.48

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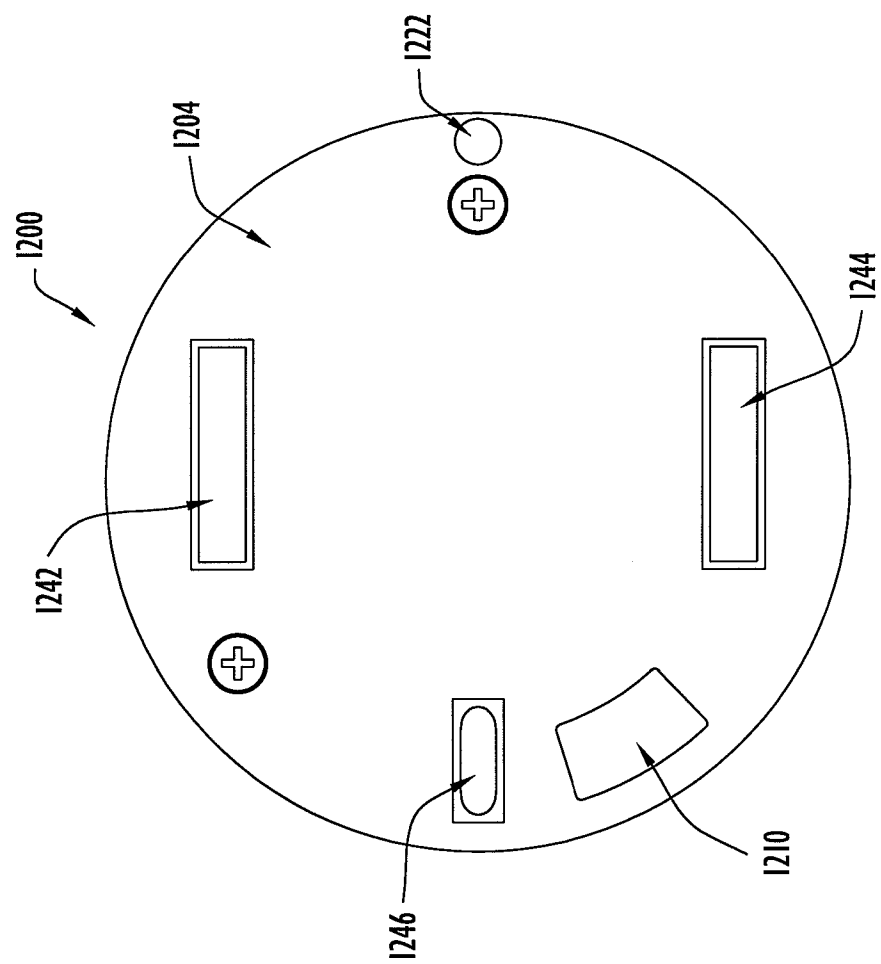


FIG. 49

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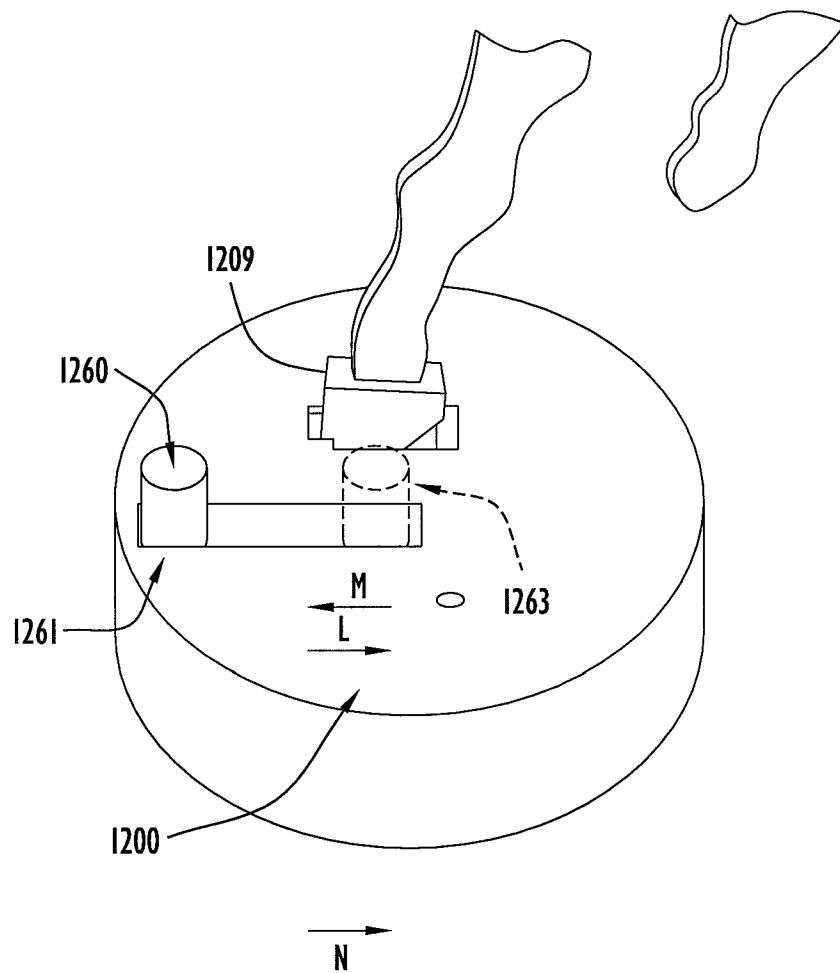


FIG. 50

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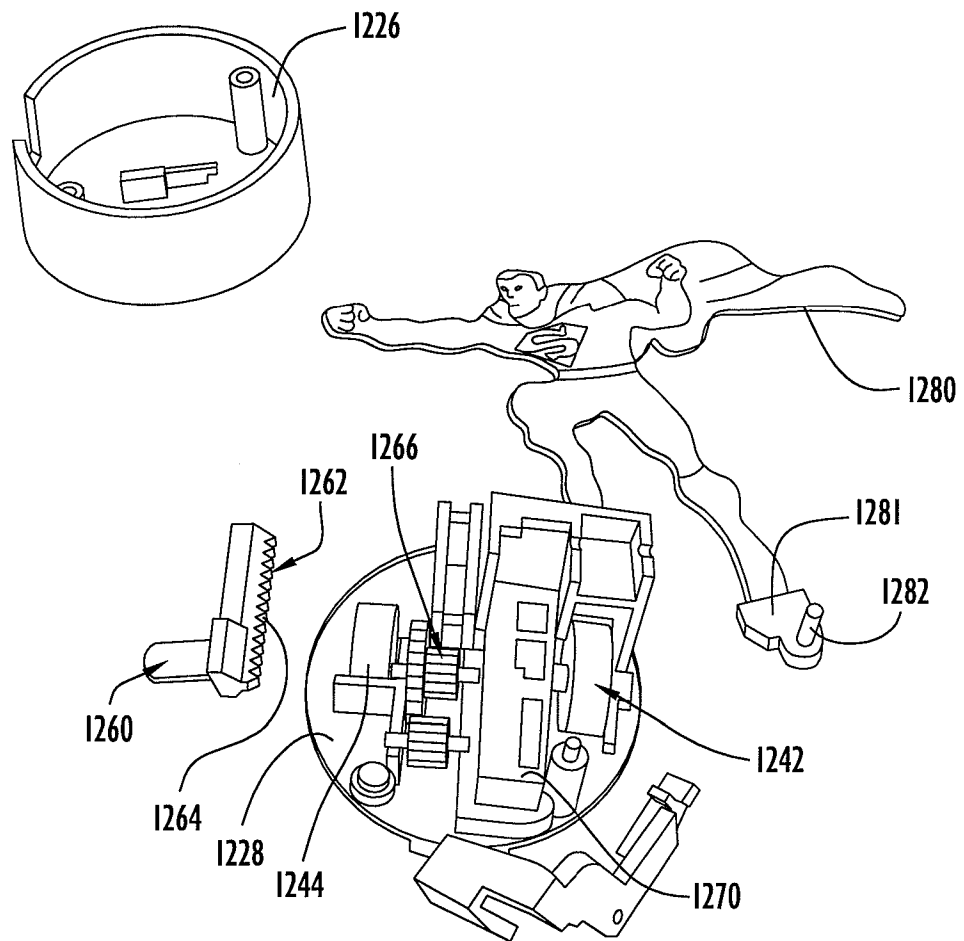
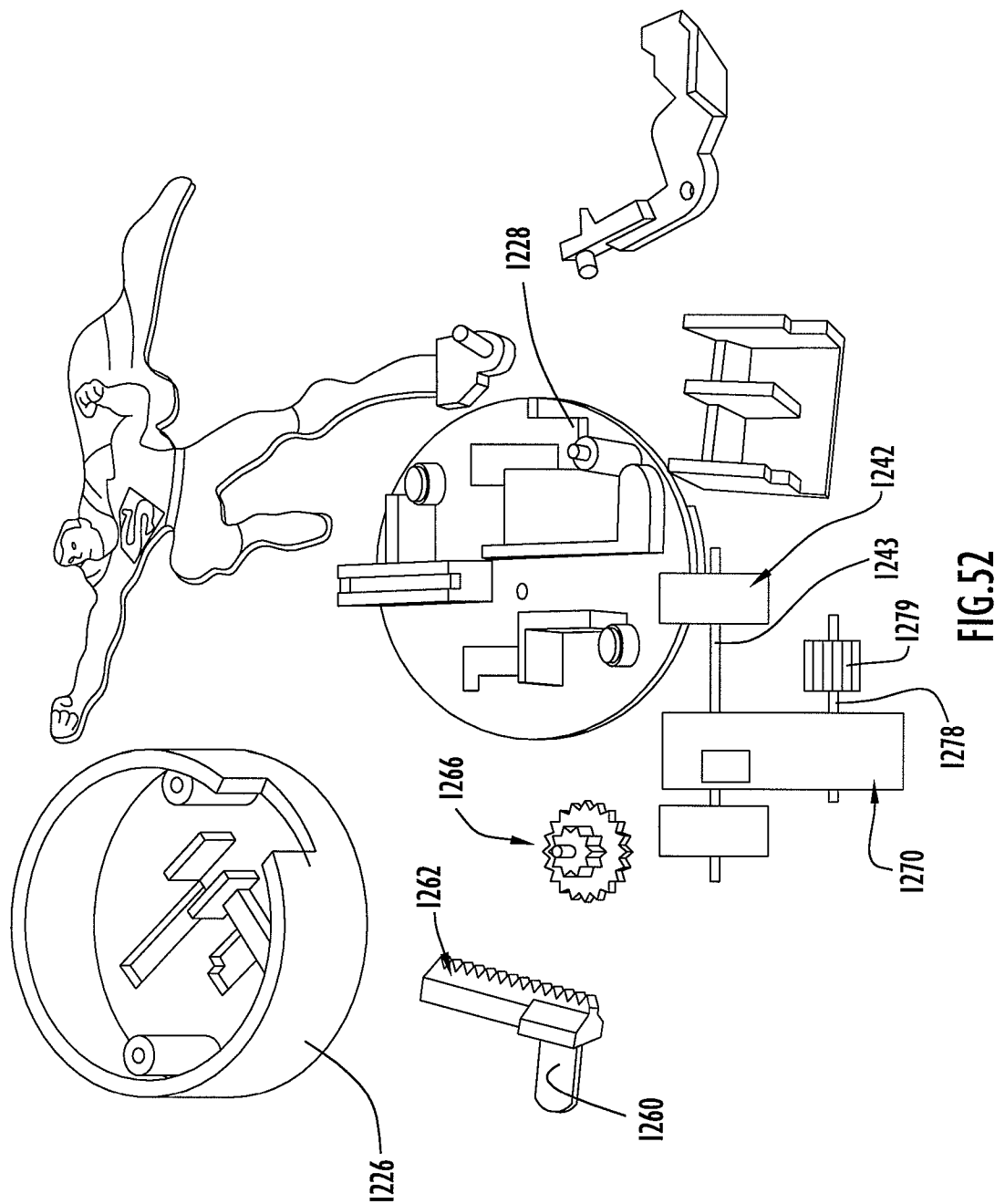
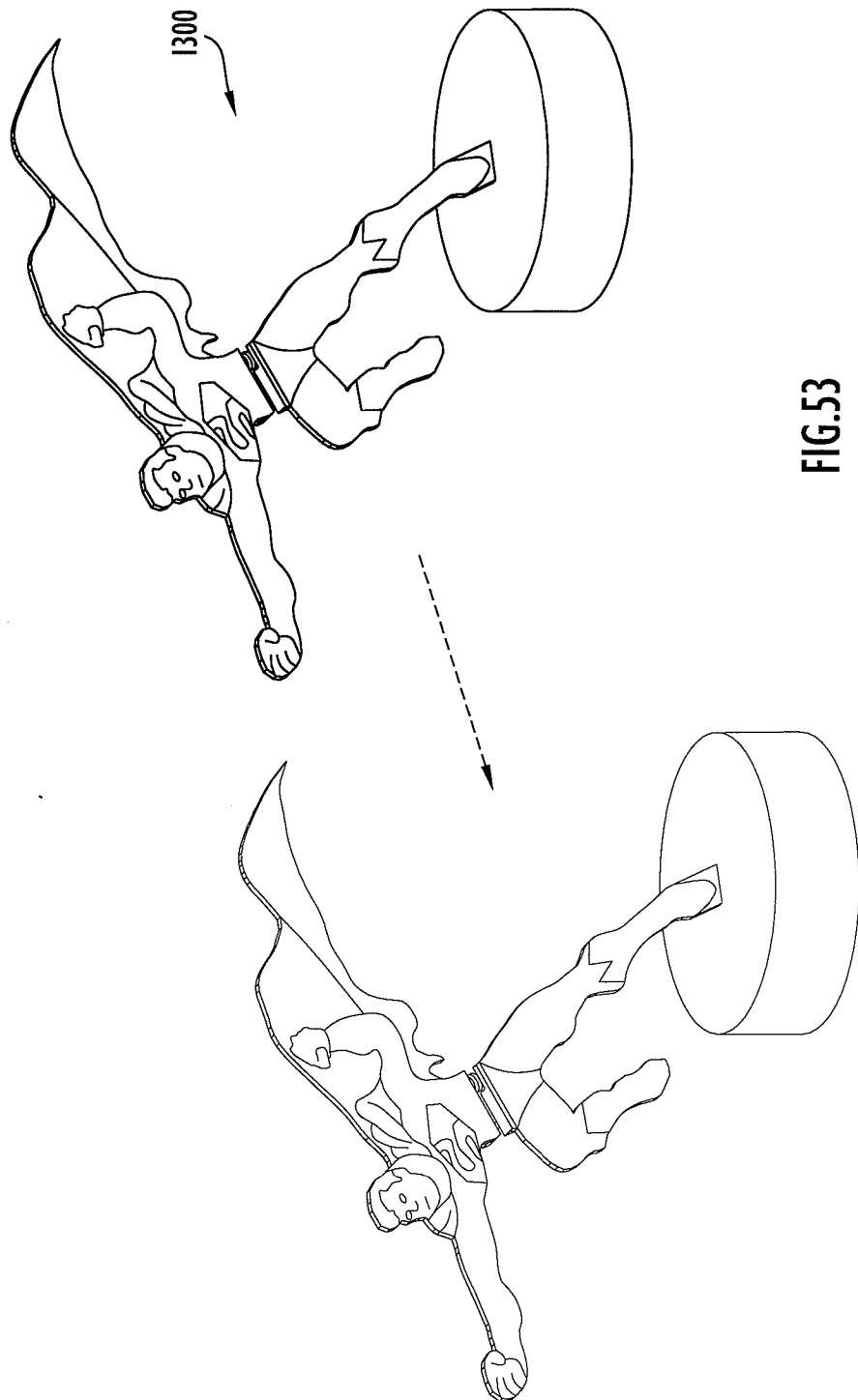


FIG. 51

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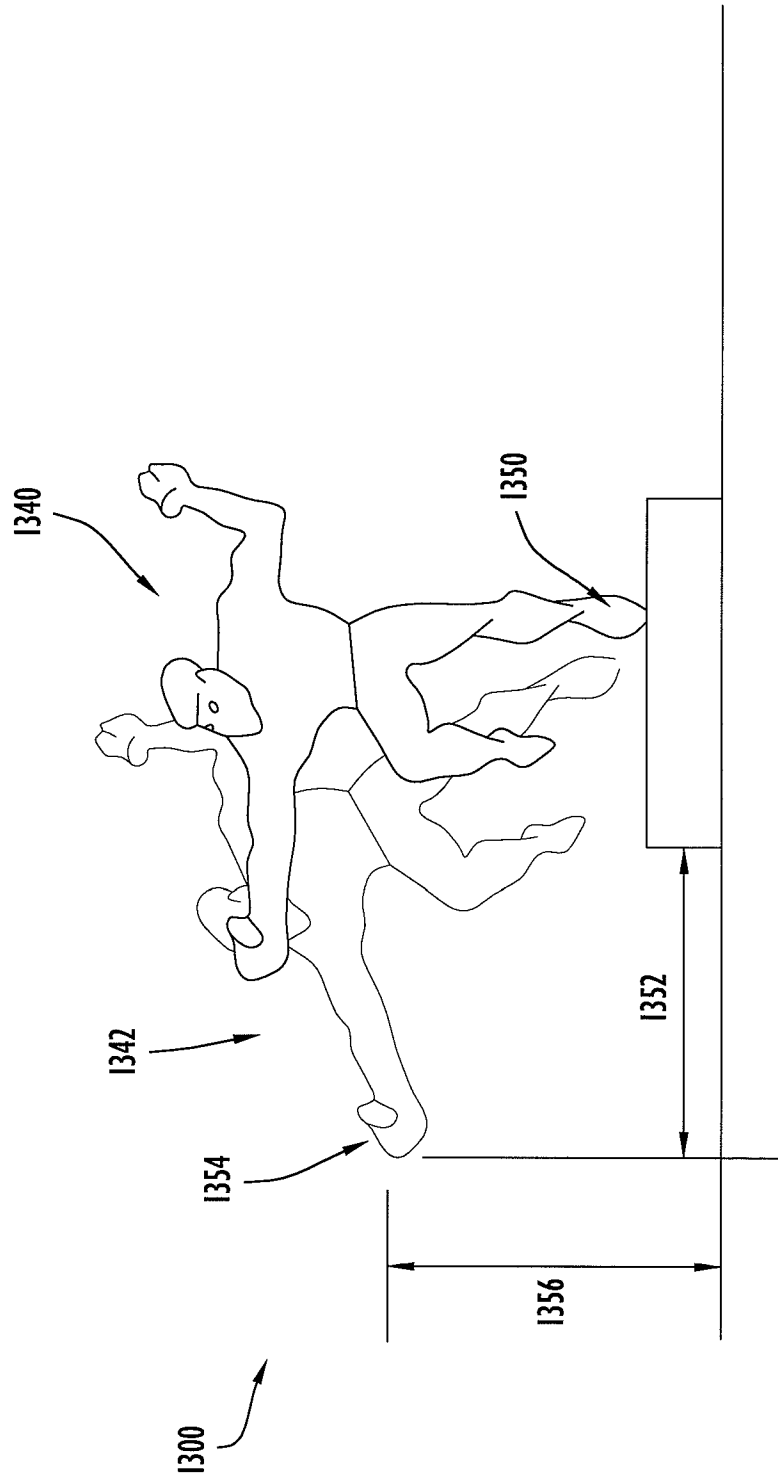
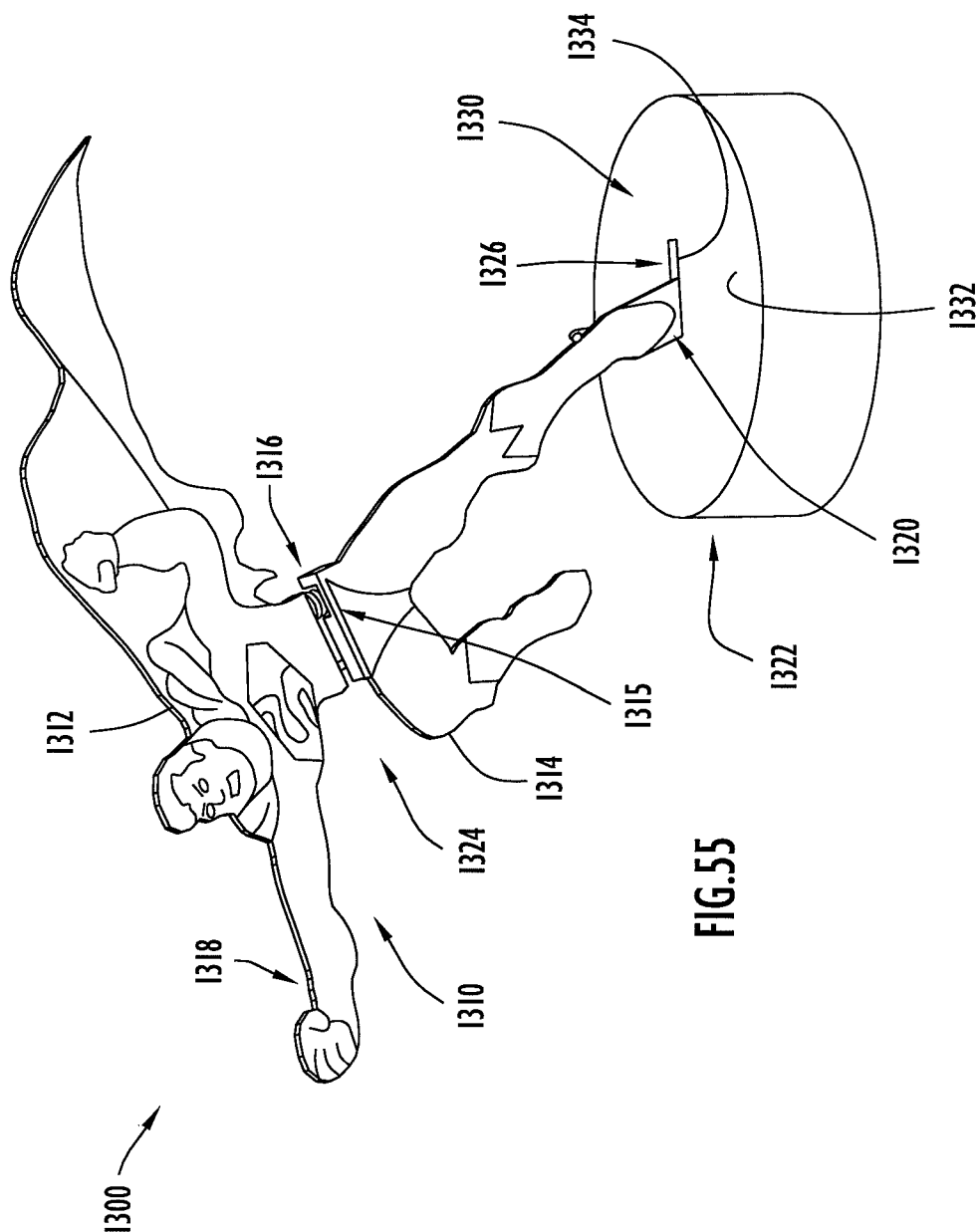
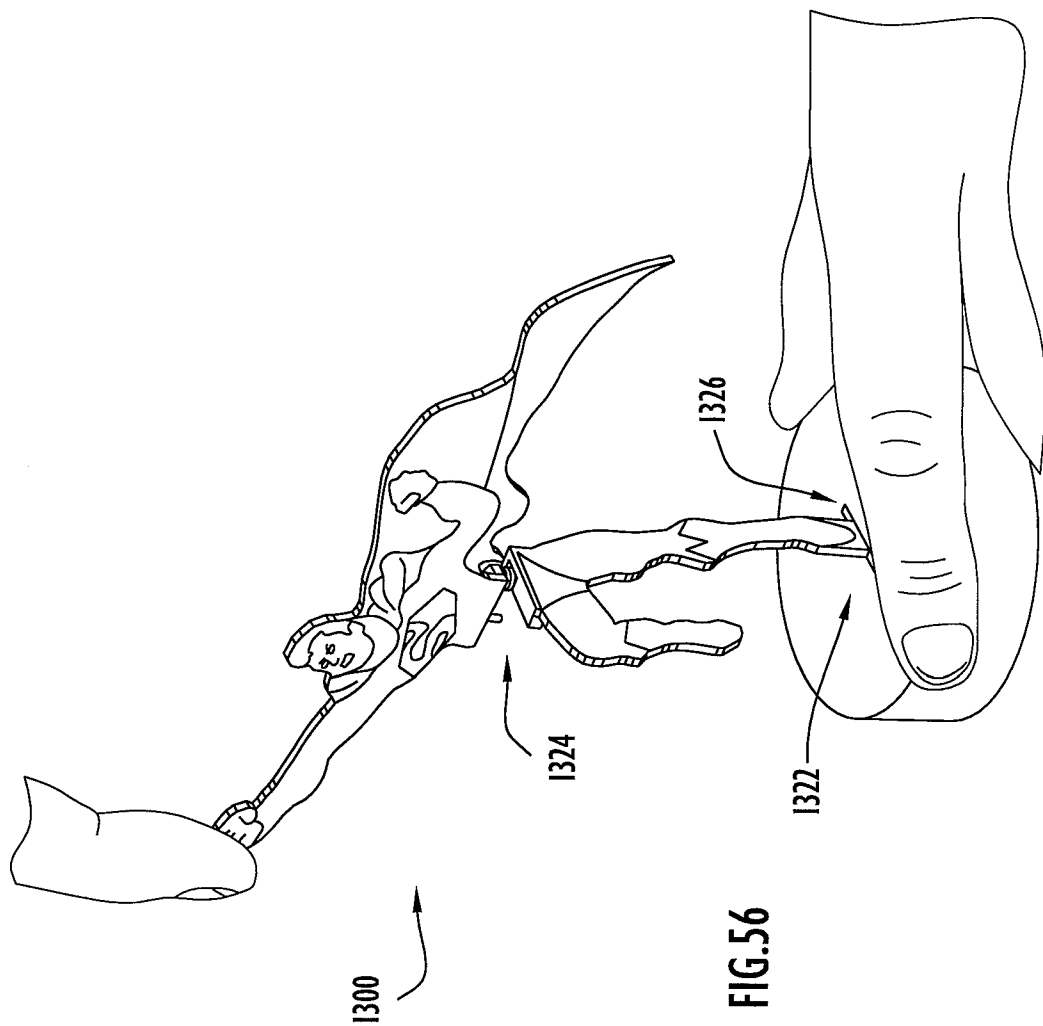


FIG.54

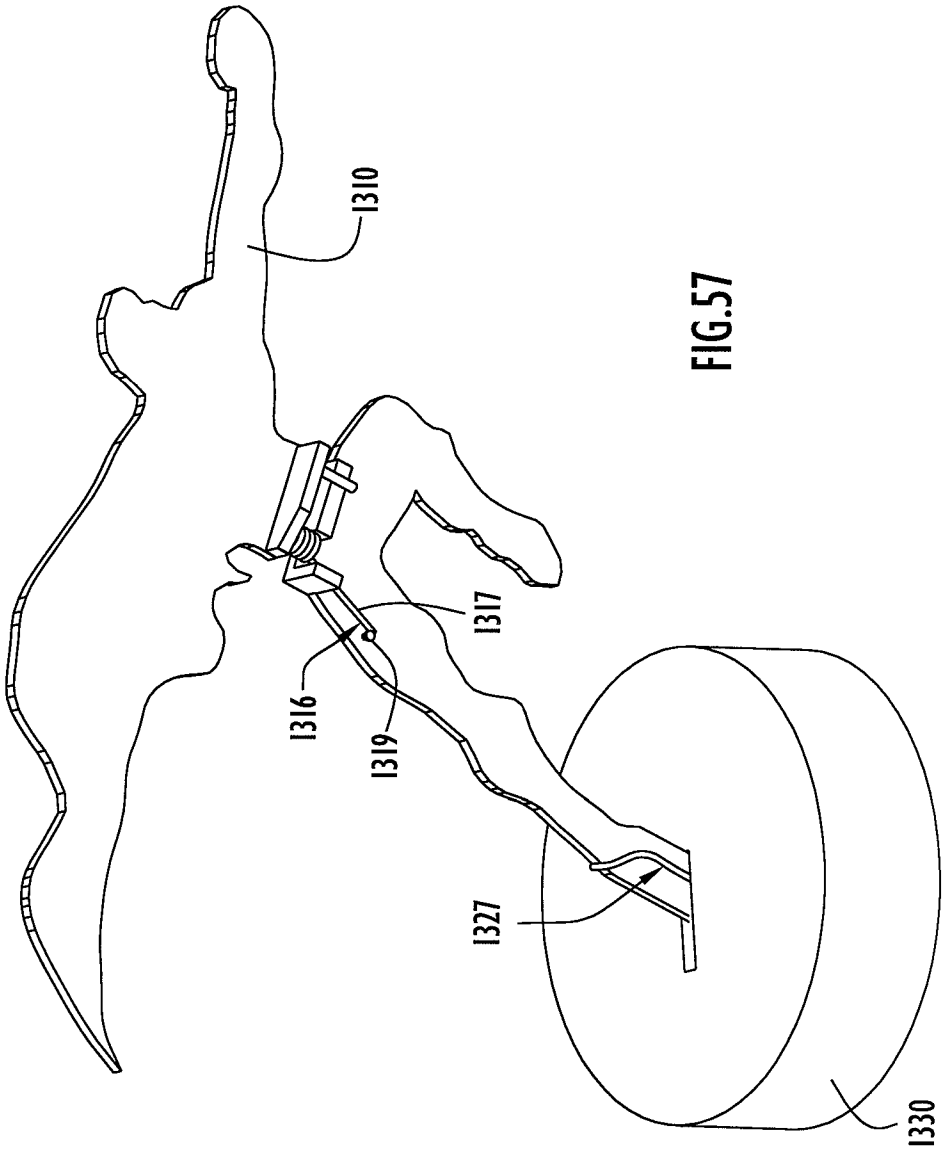
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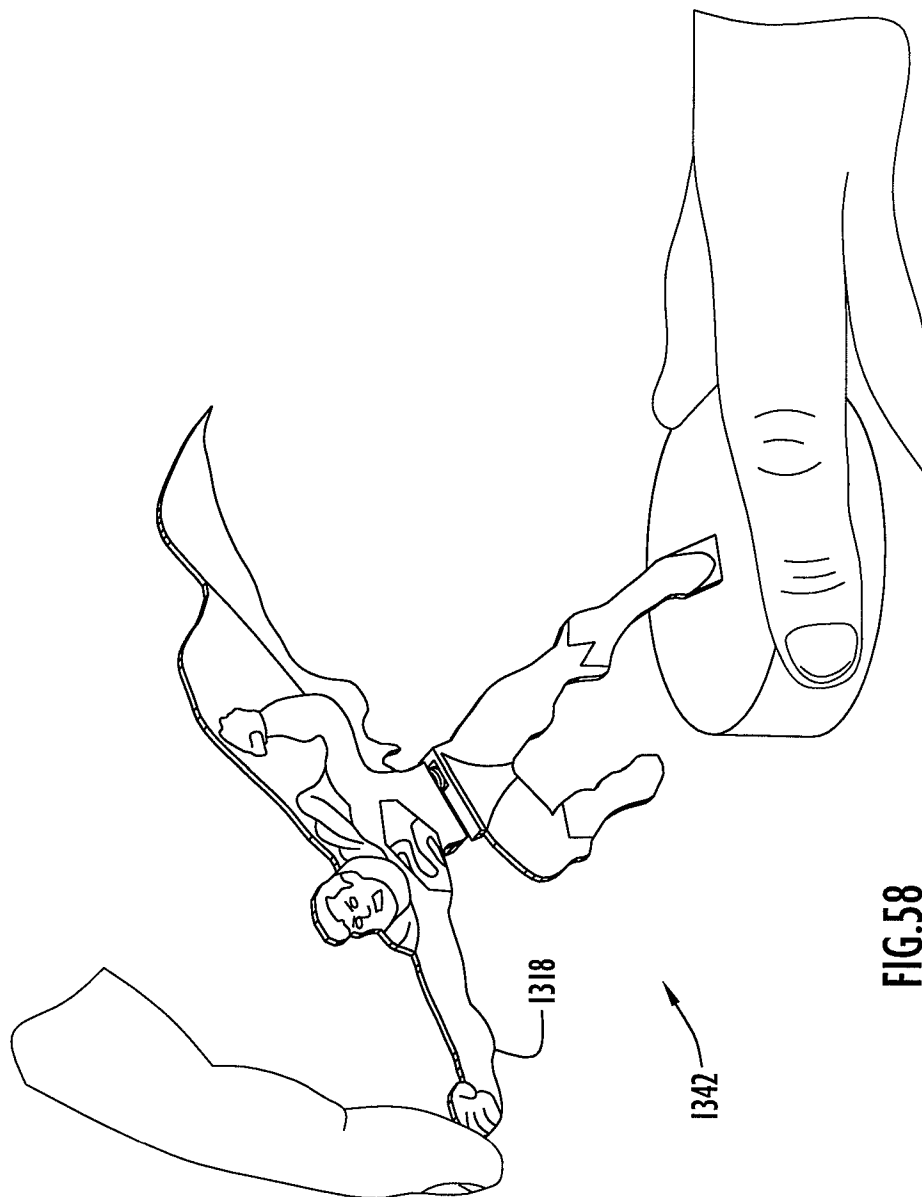
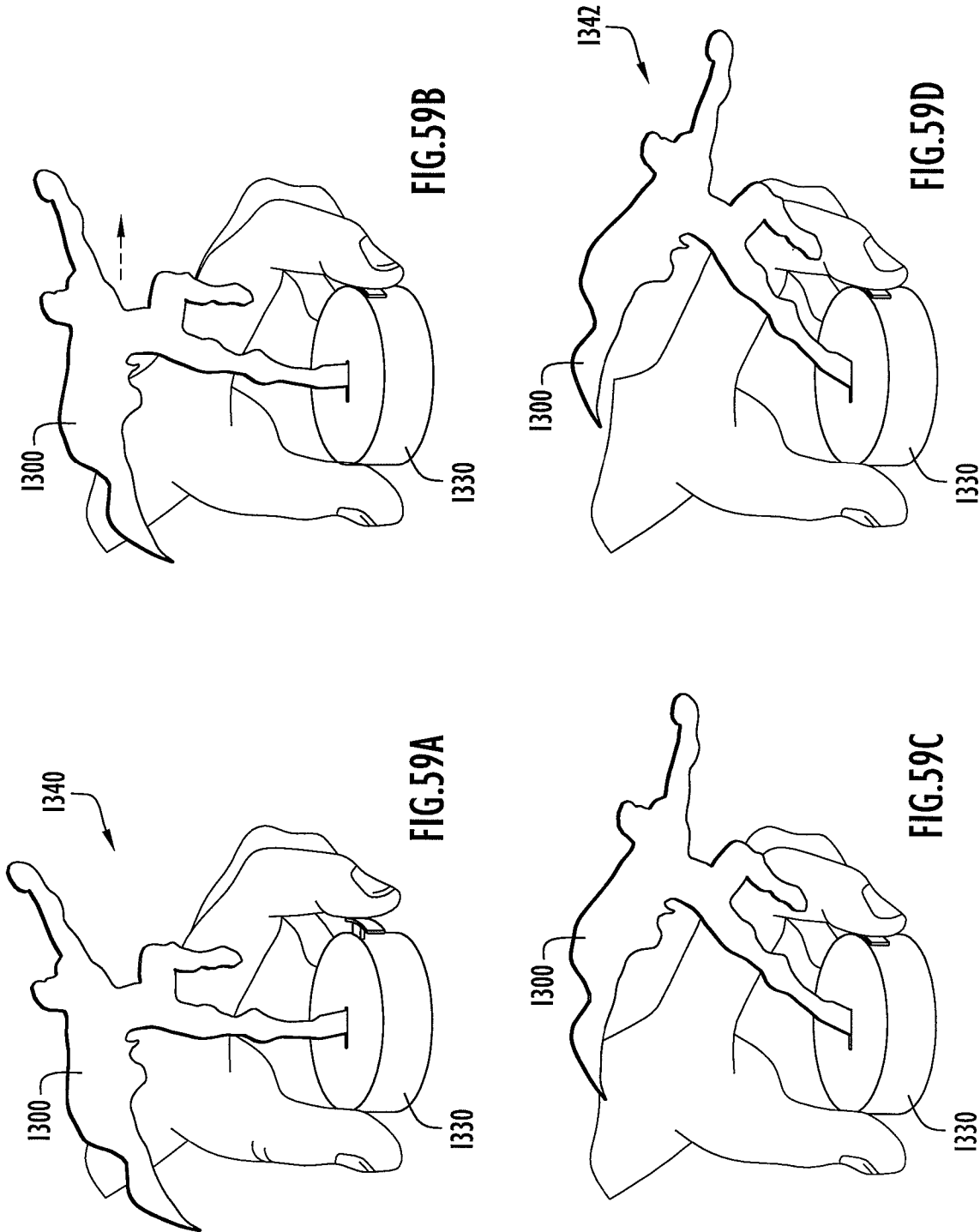
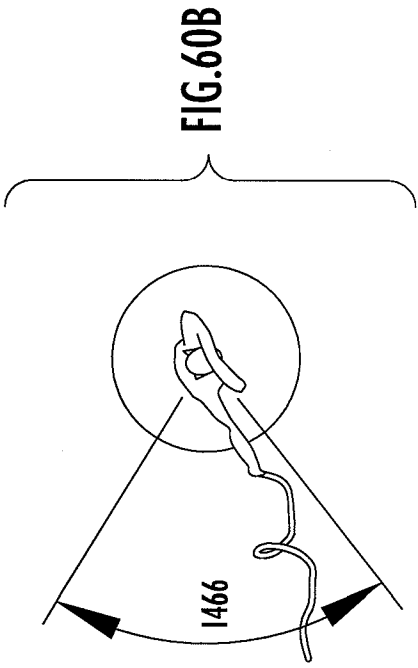
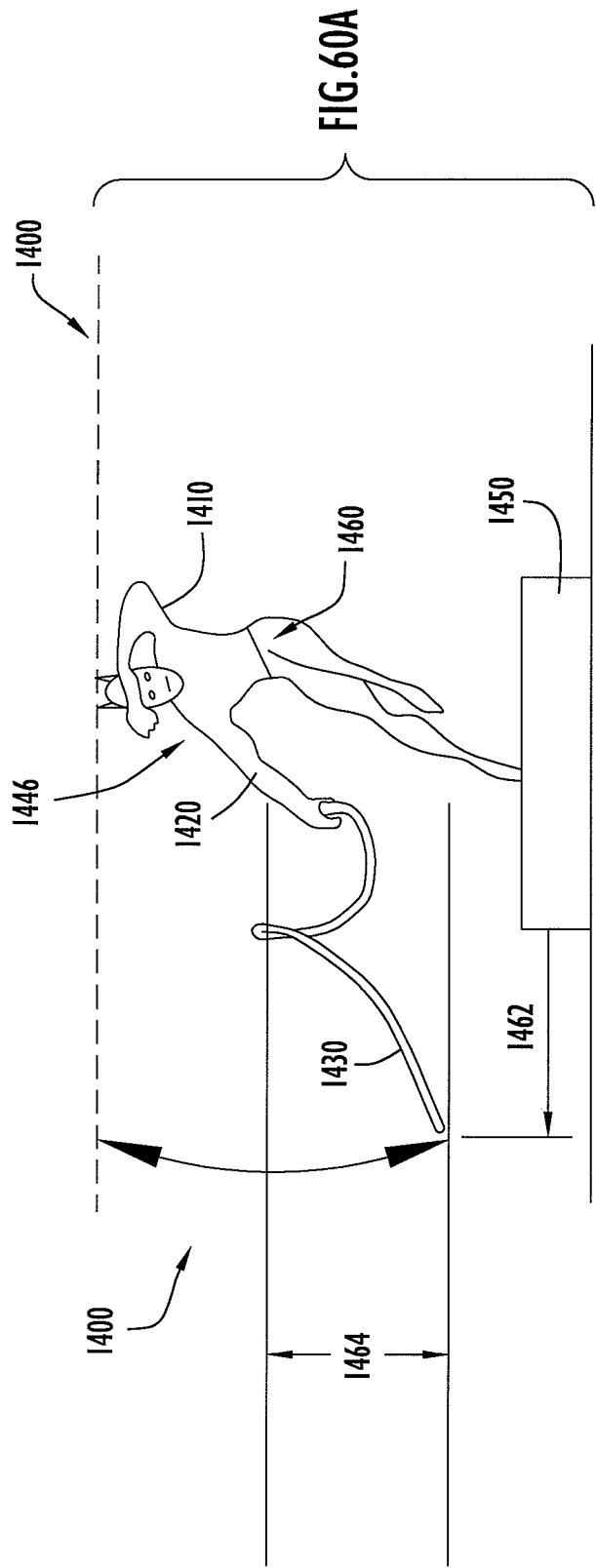
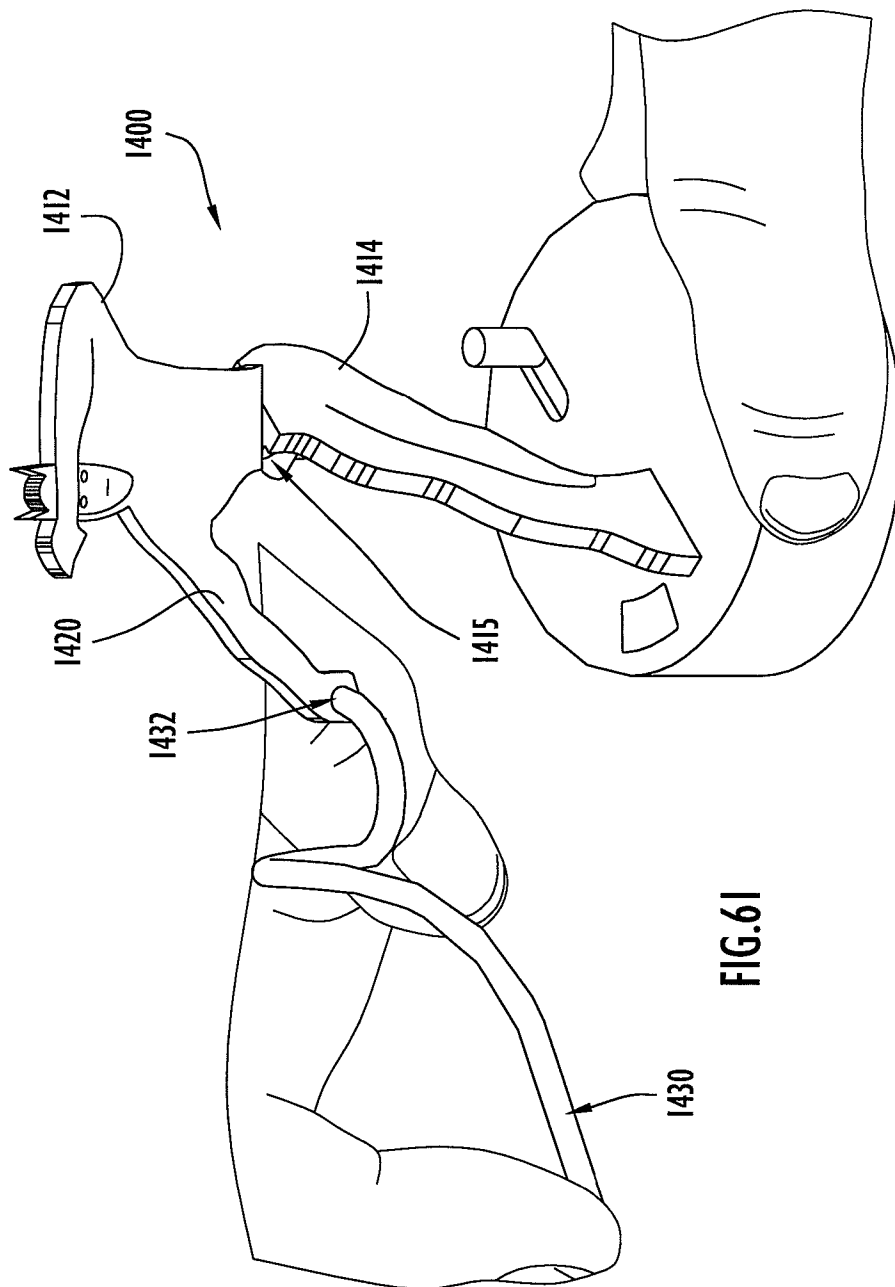


FIG. 58





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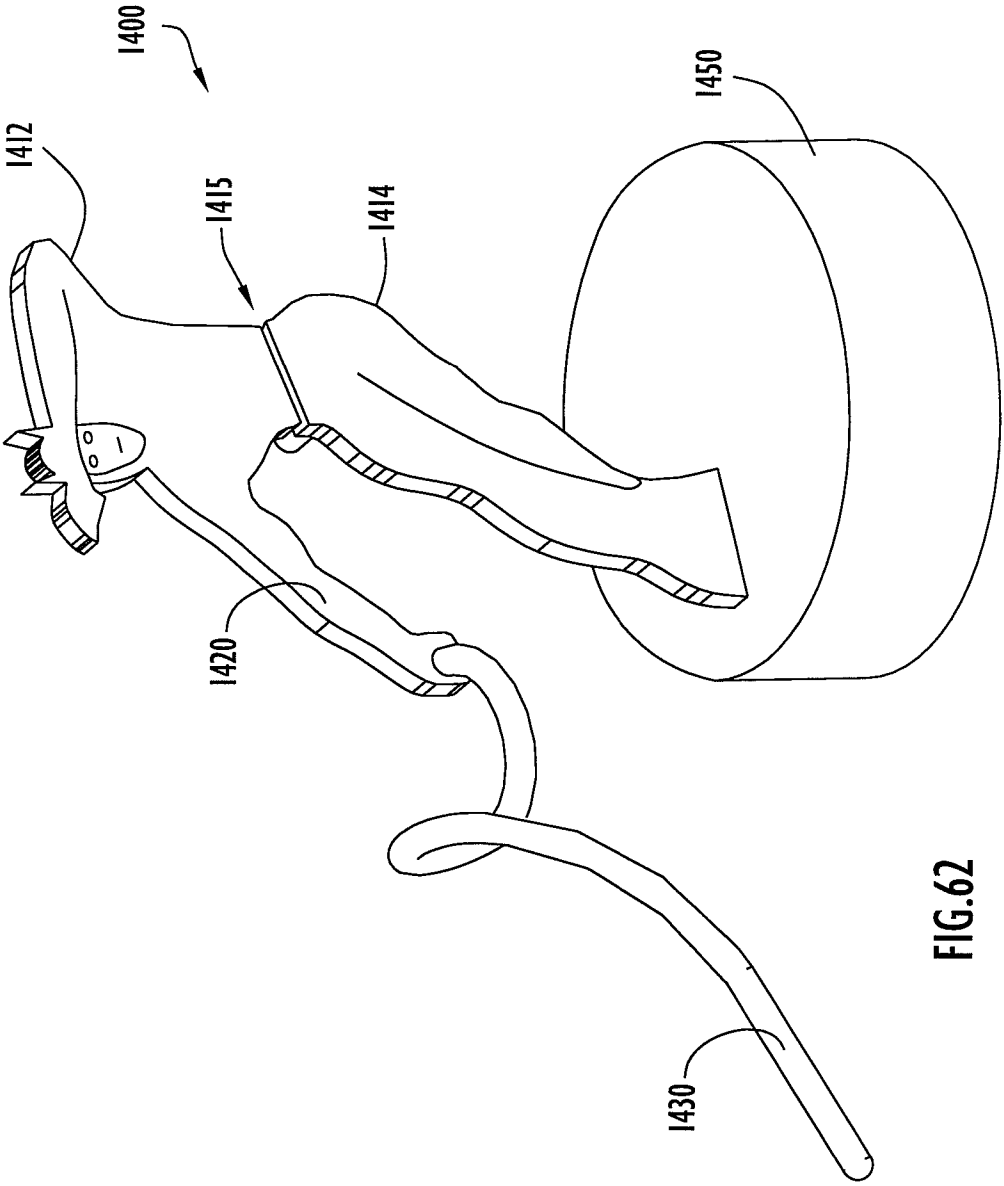


FIG. 62

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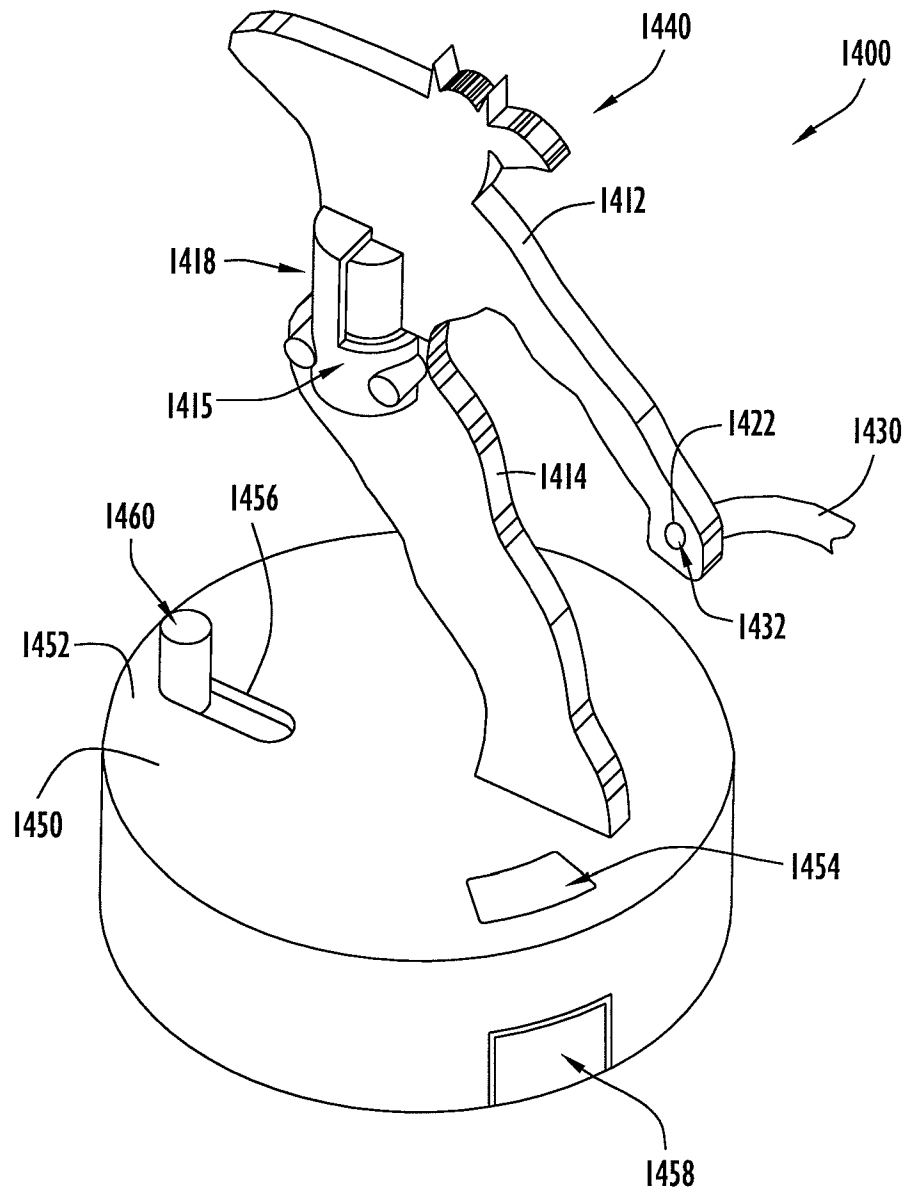


FIG. 63

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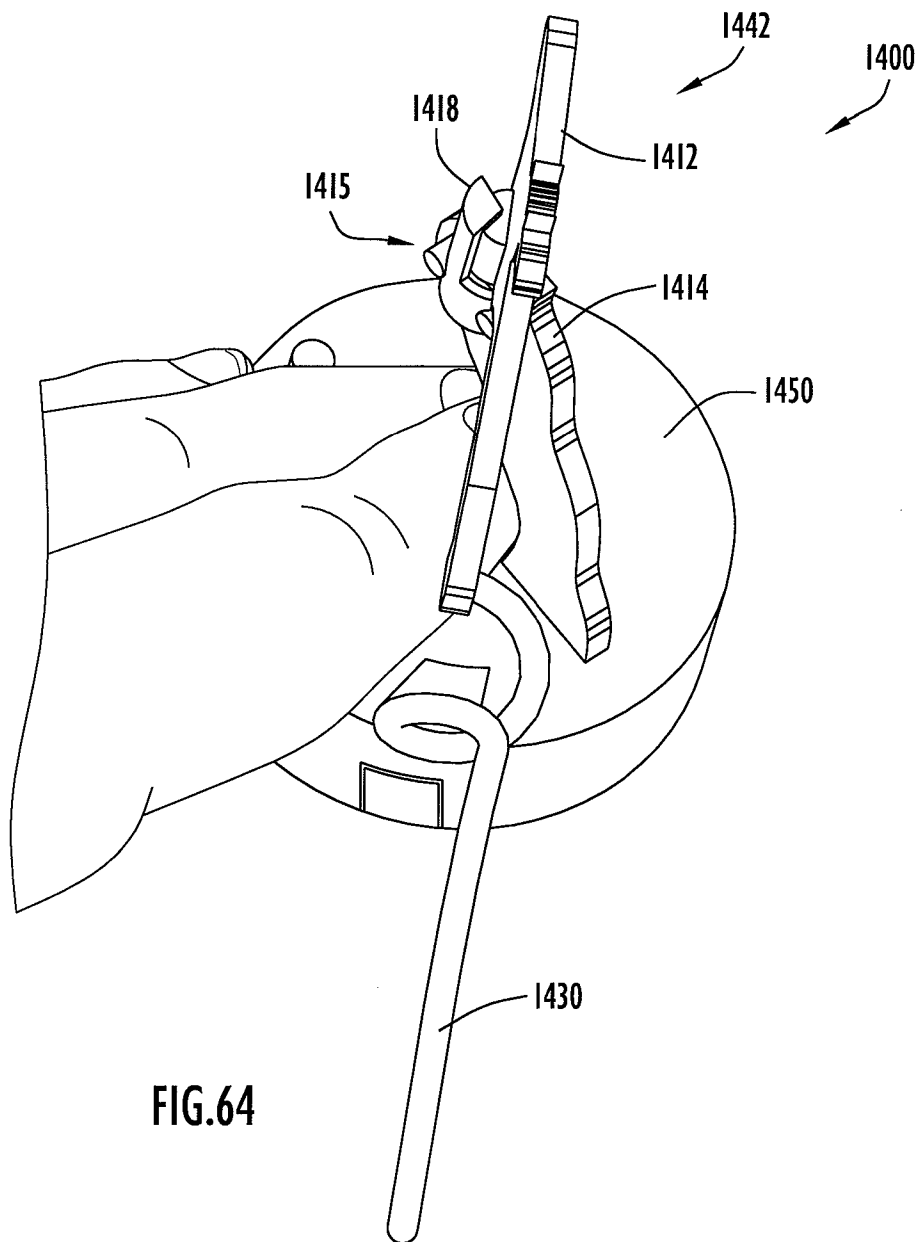


FIG. 64

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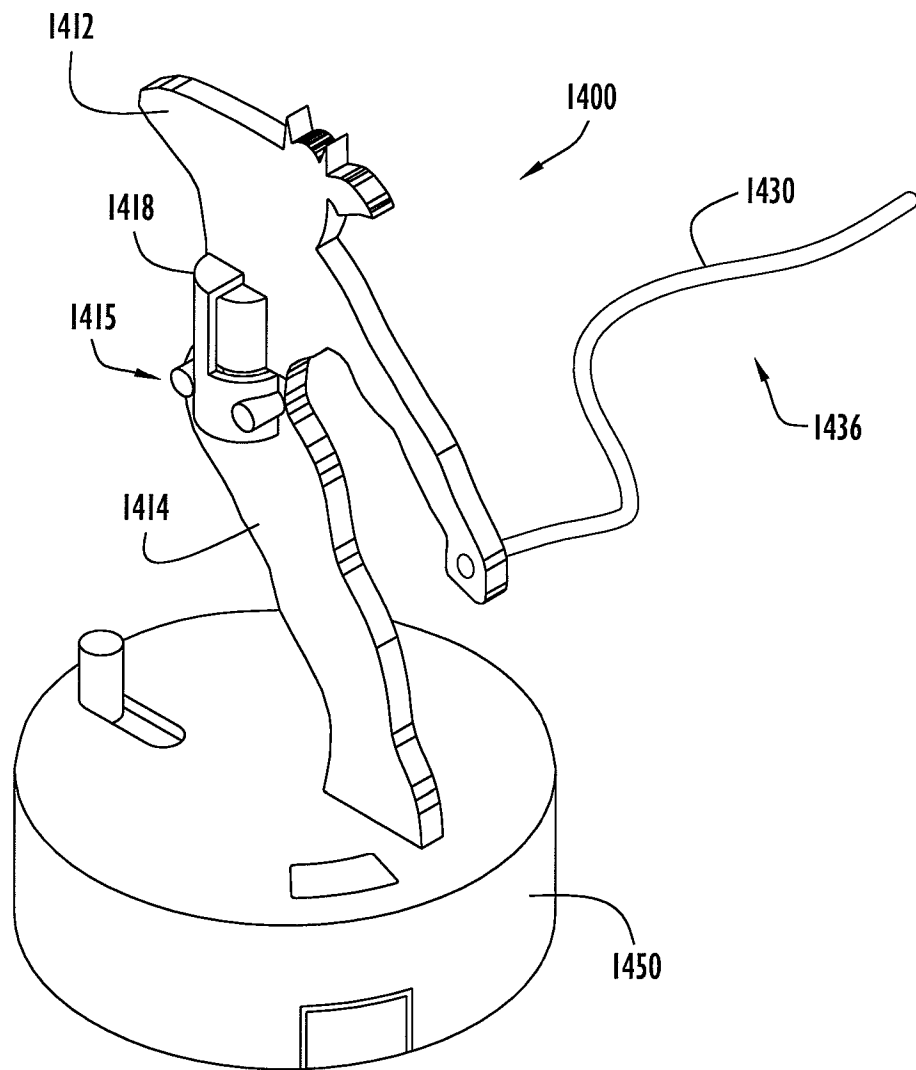


FIG. 65

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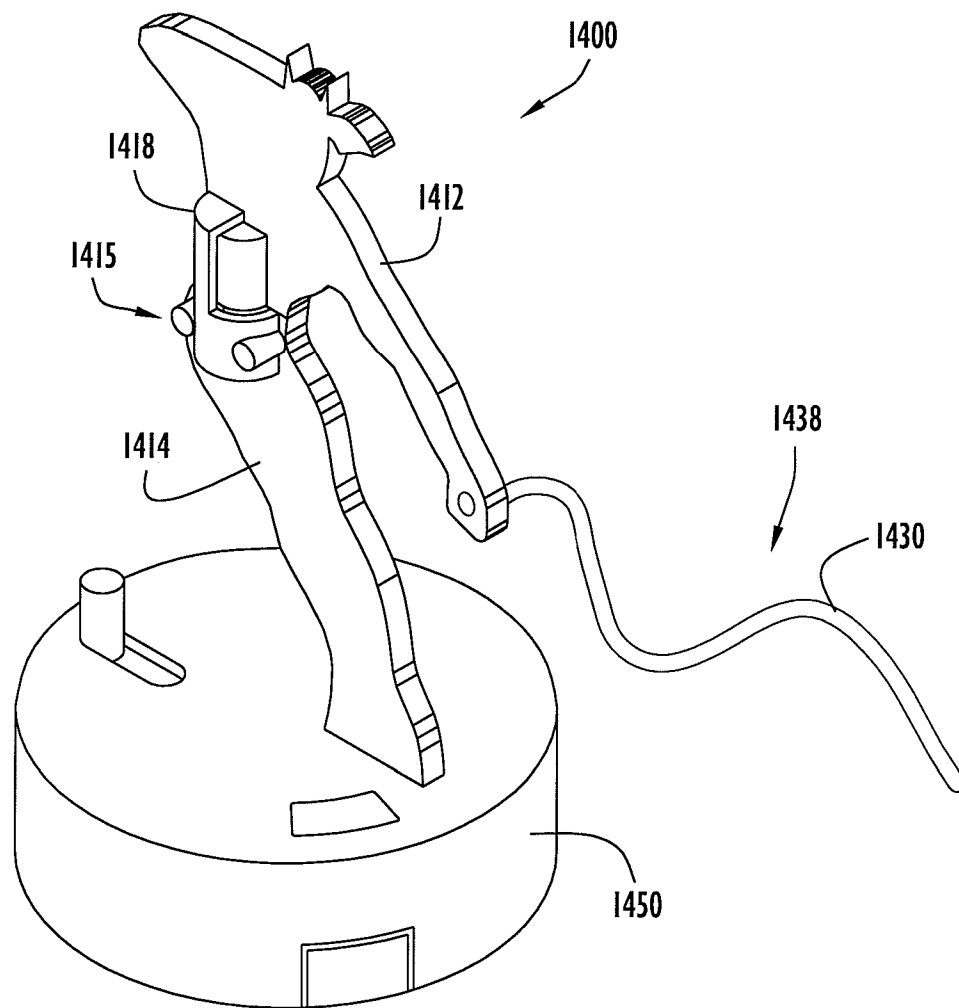


FIG. 66

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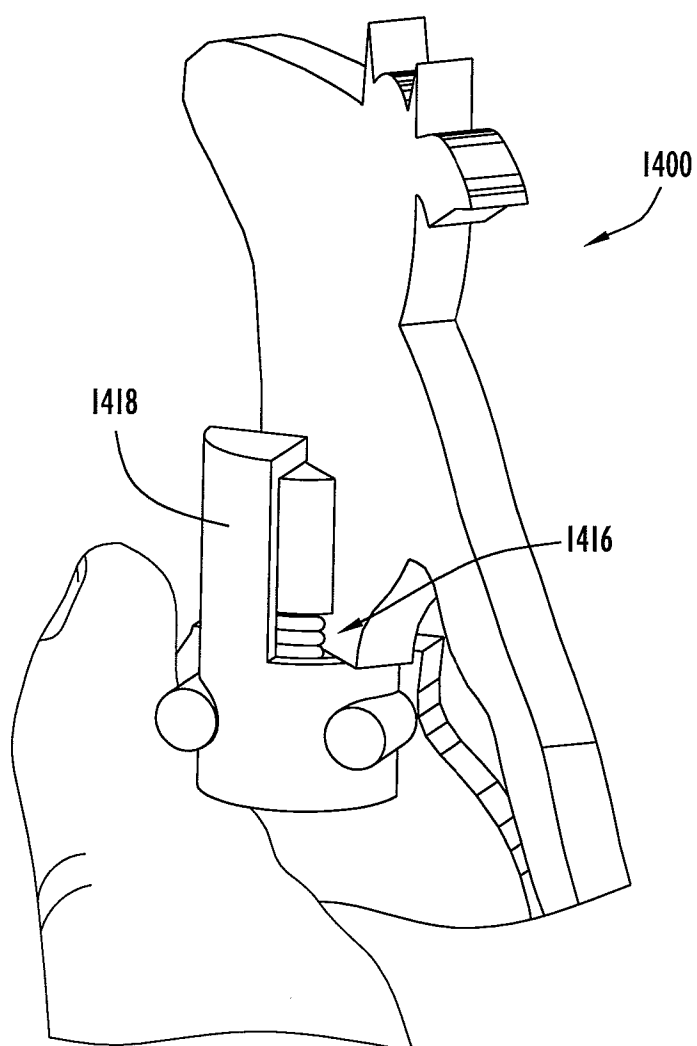
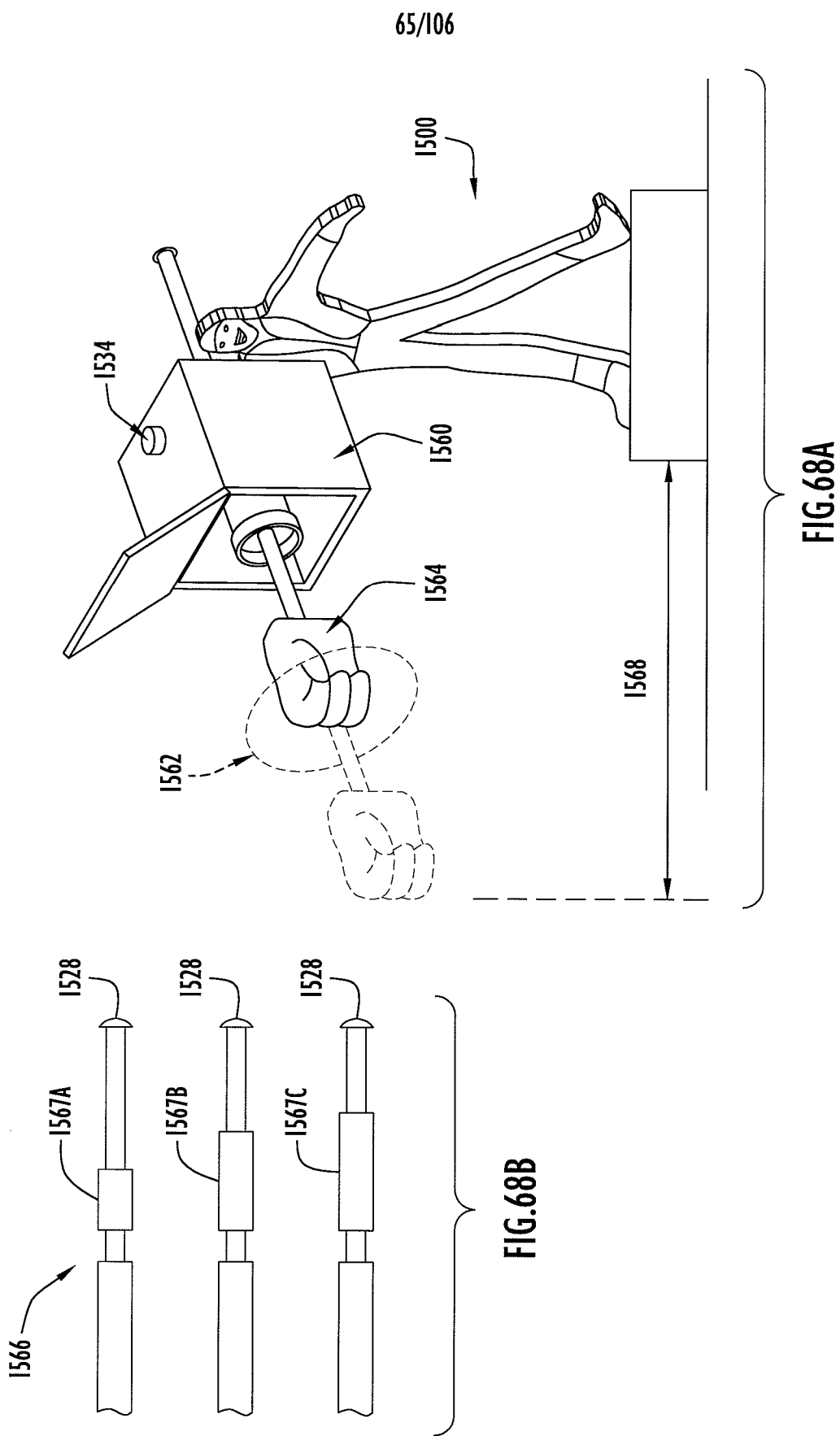


FIG.67



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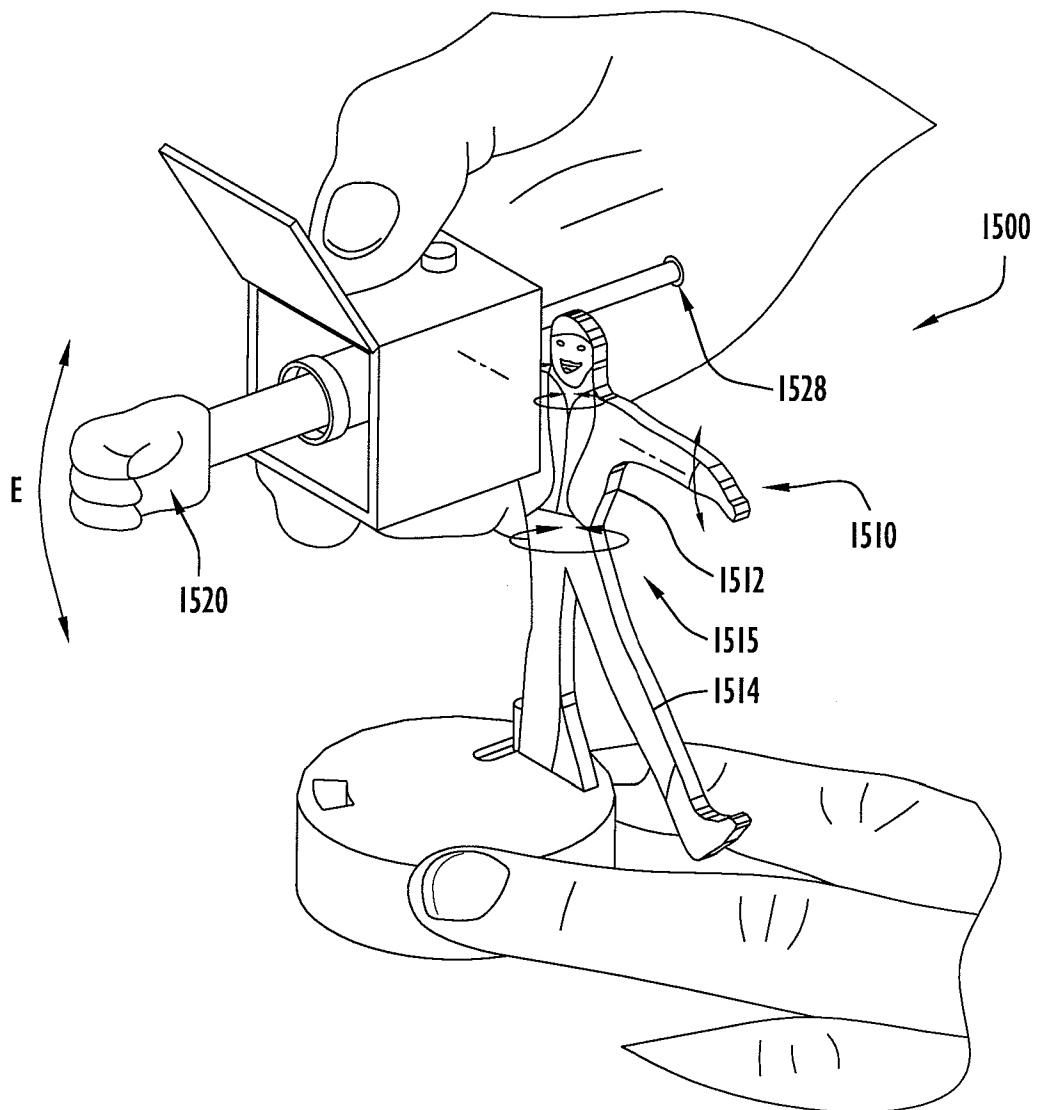


FIG.69

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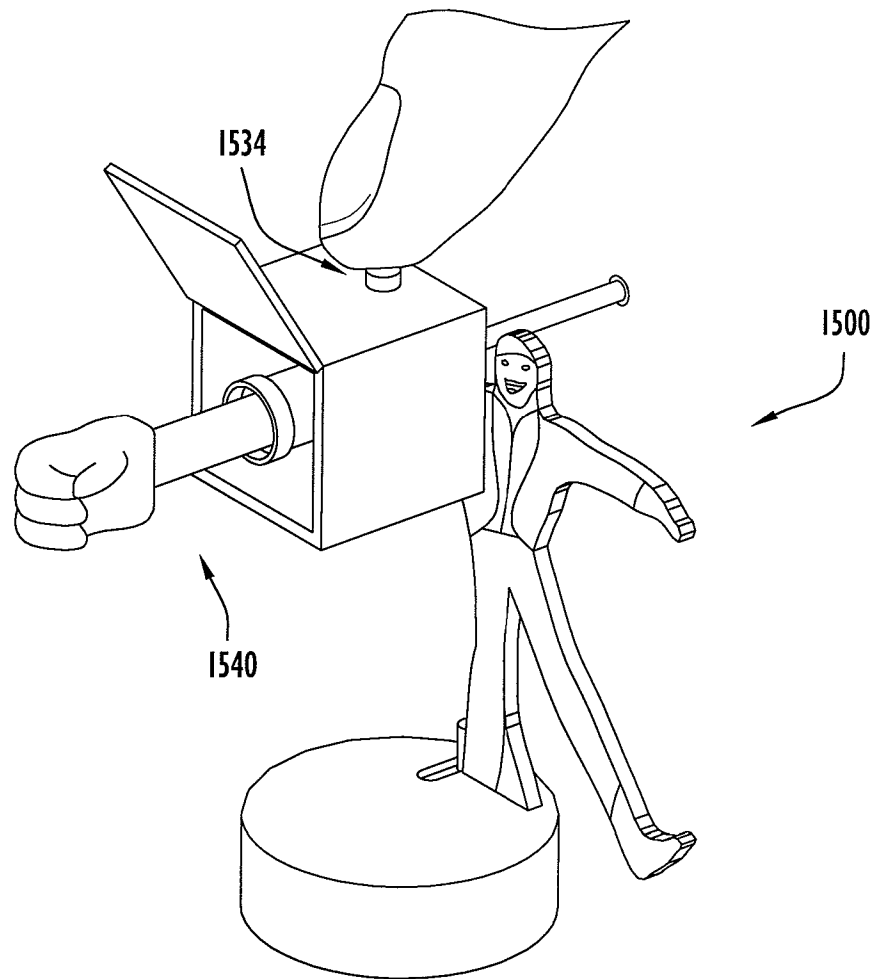


FIG.70

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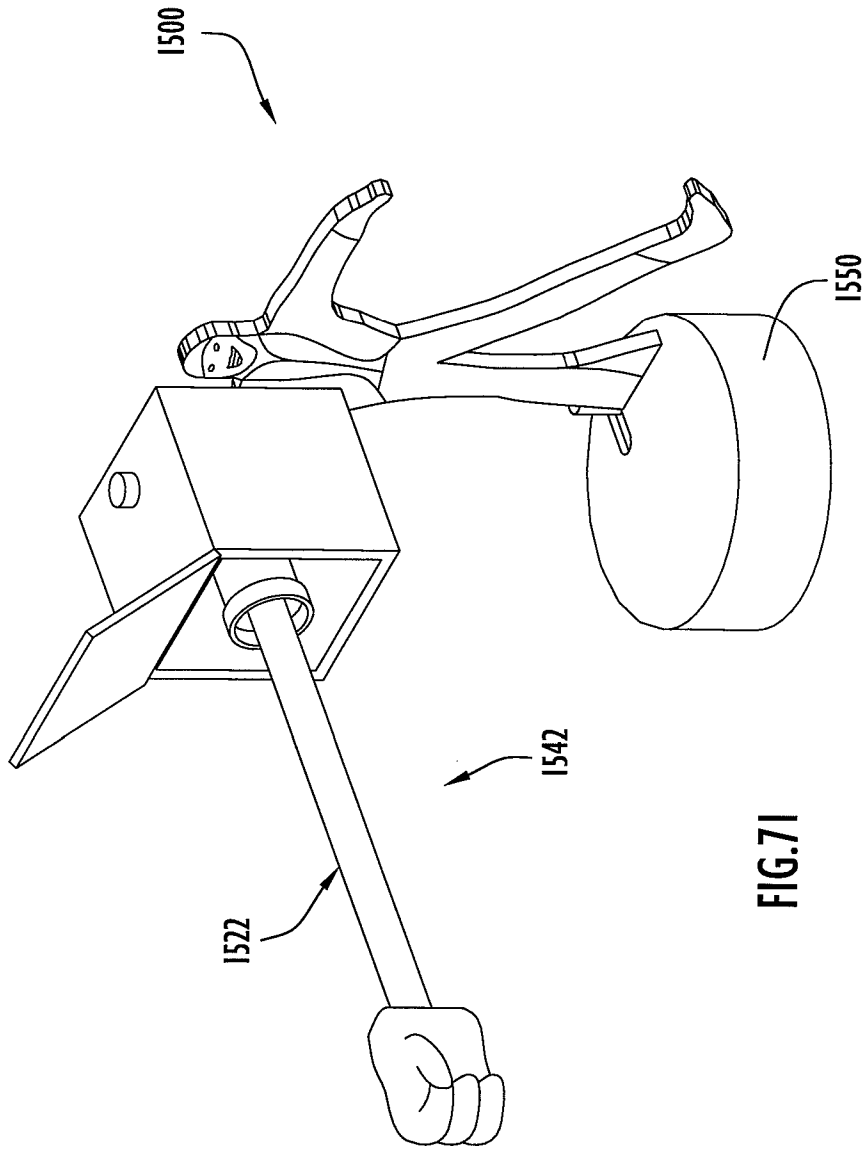


FIG. 71

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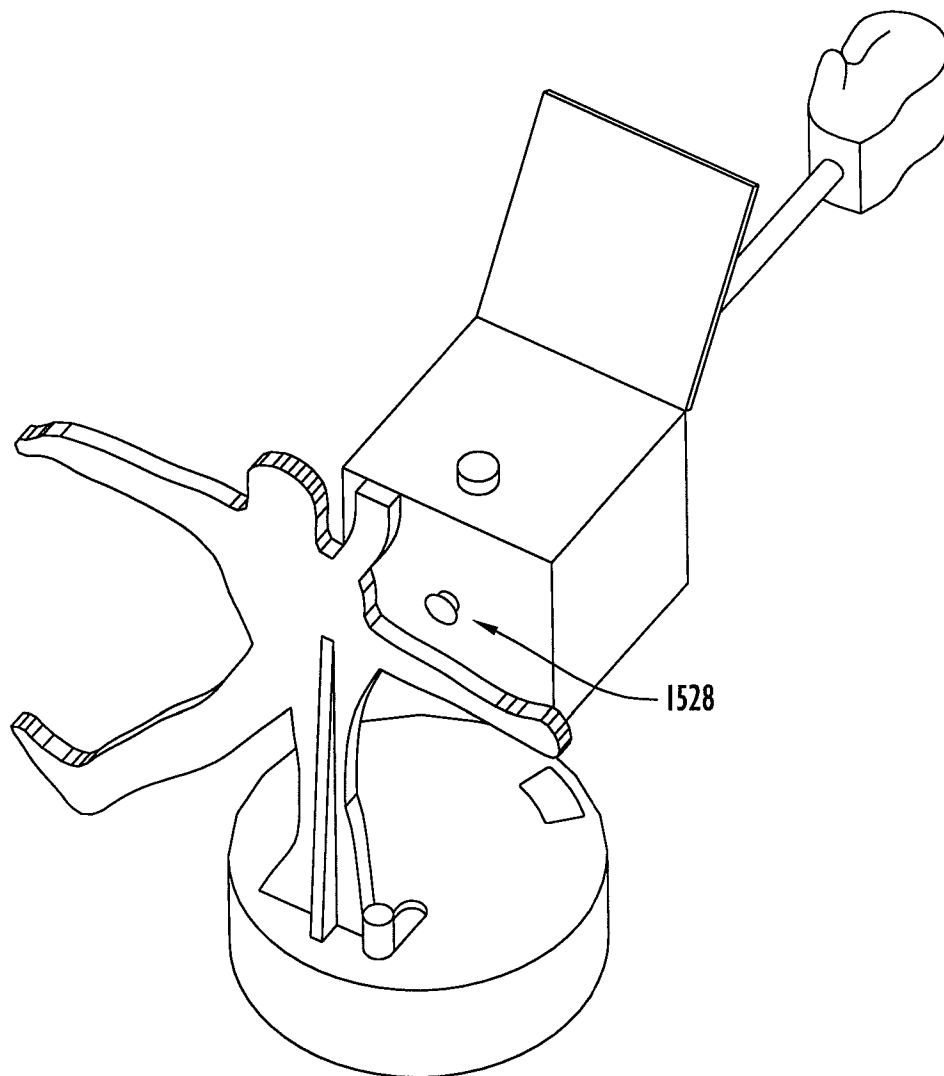
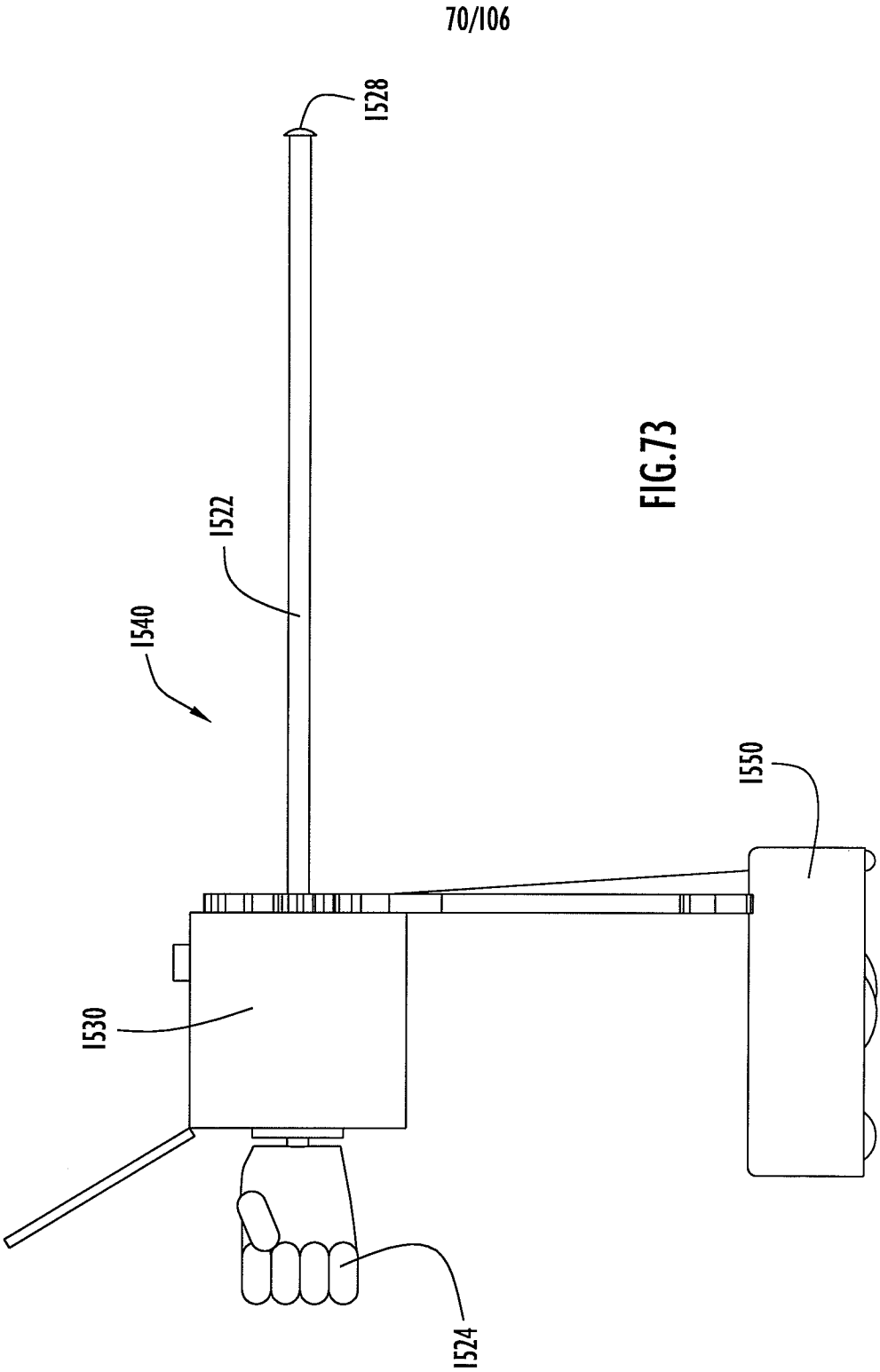
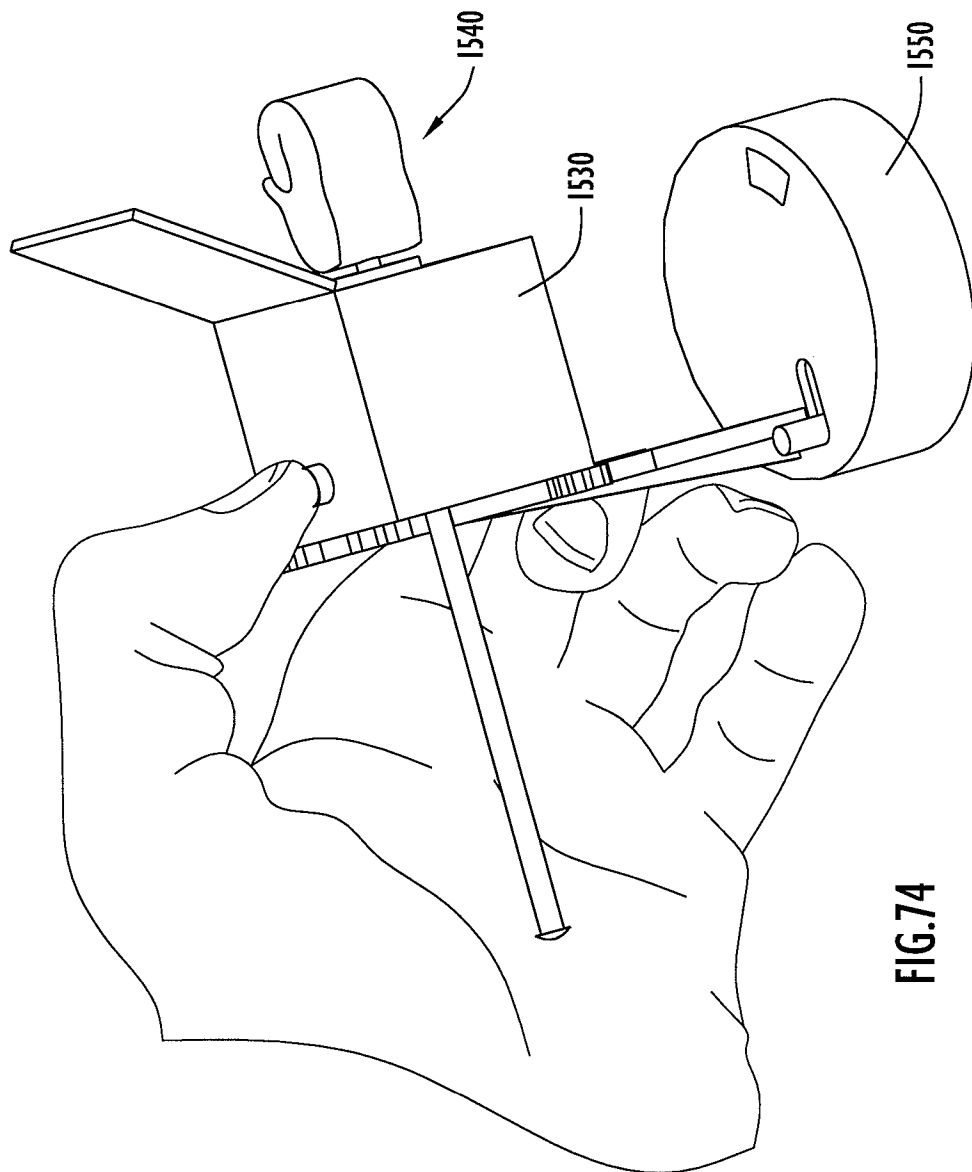


FIG. 72



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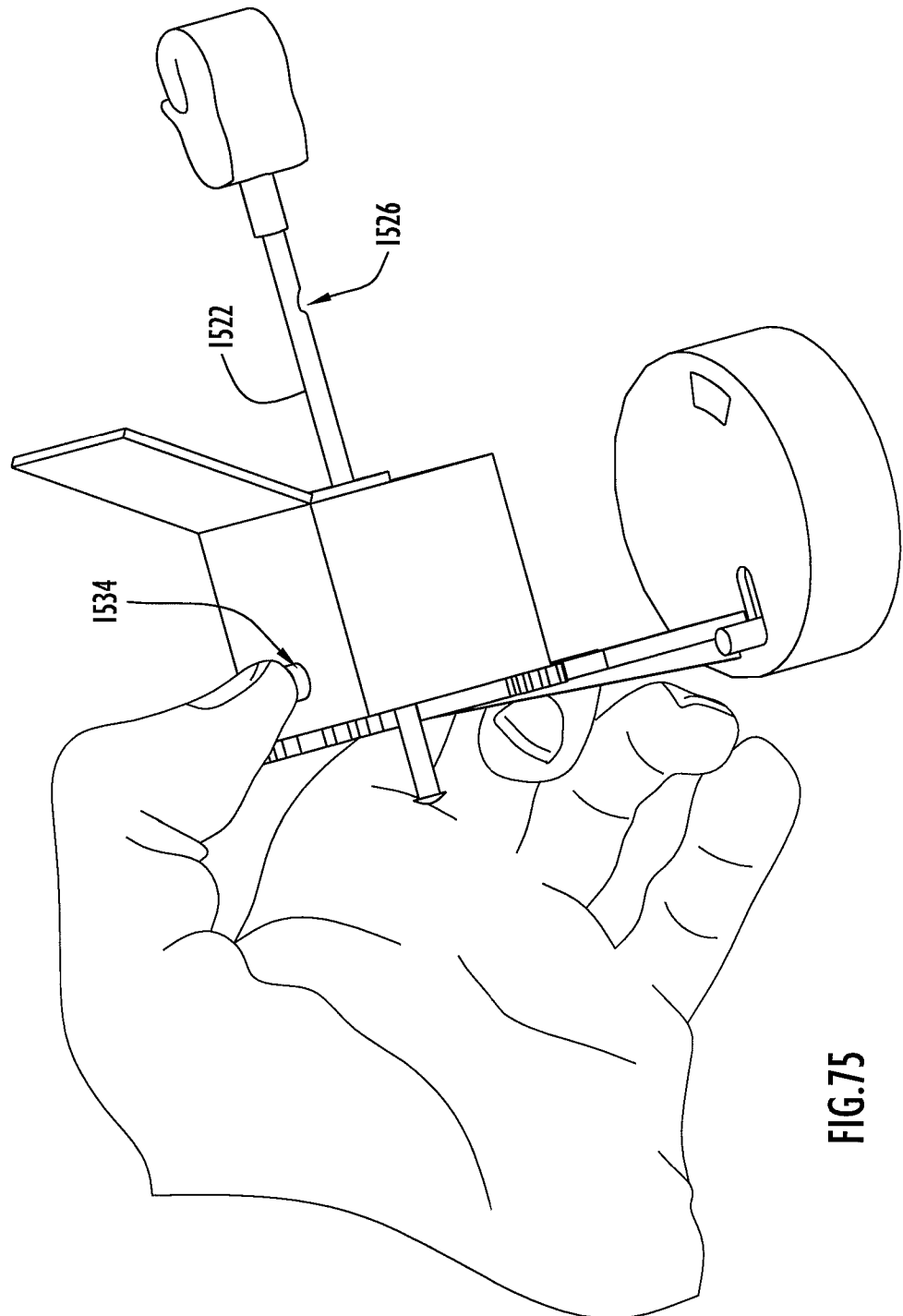


FIG. 75

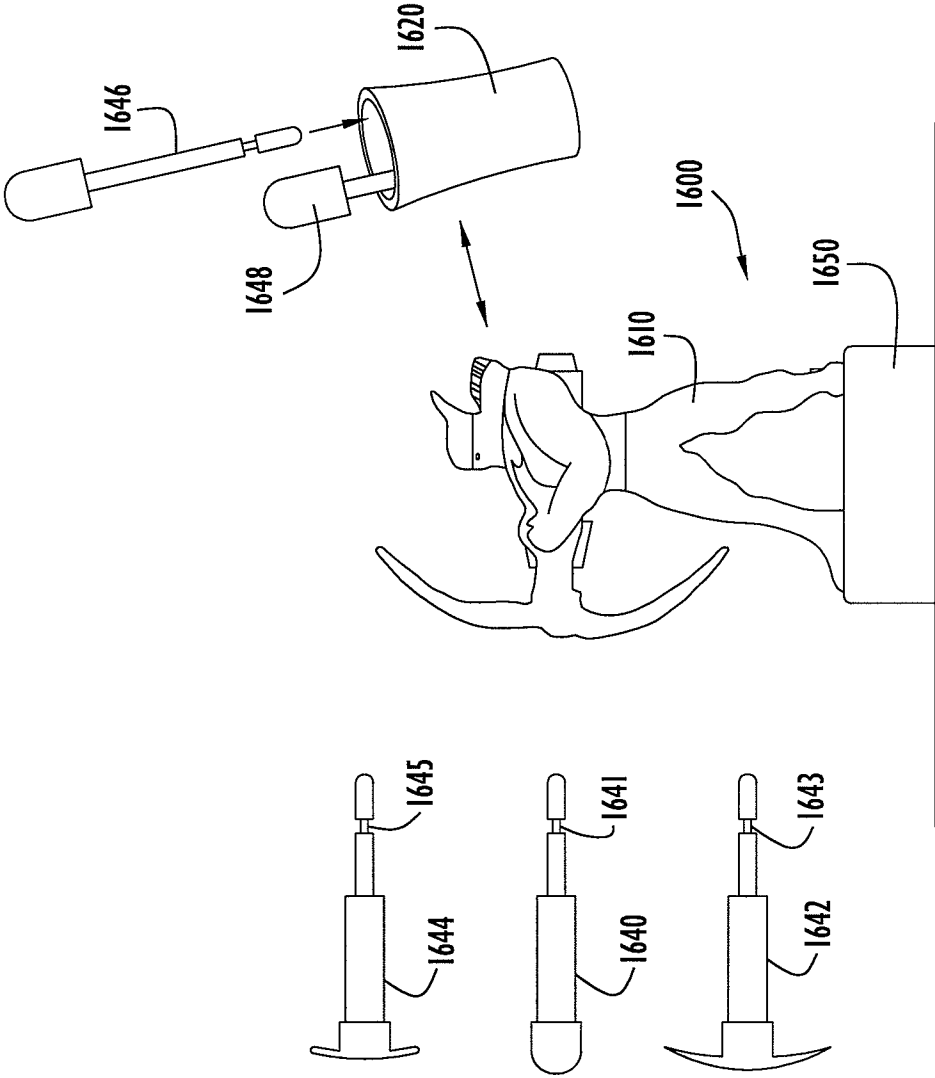


FIG. 76

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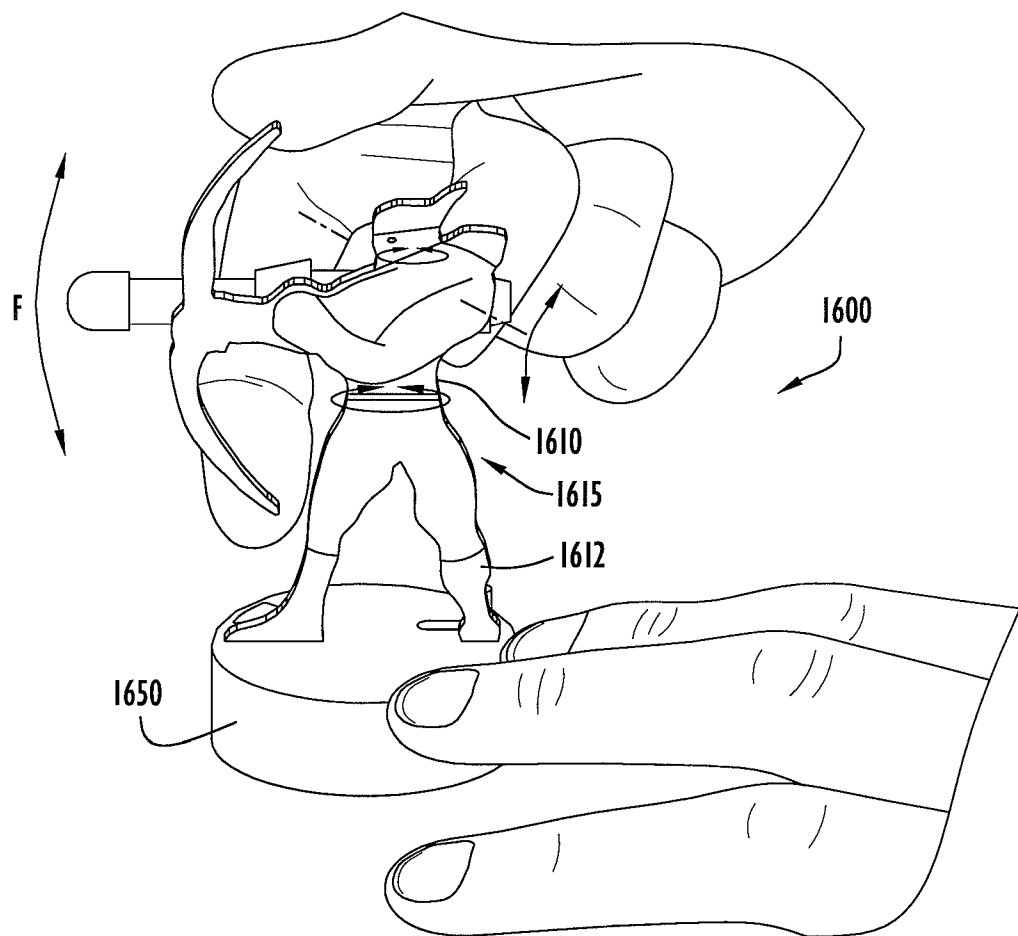


FIG.77

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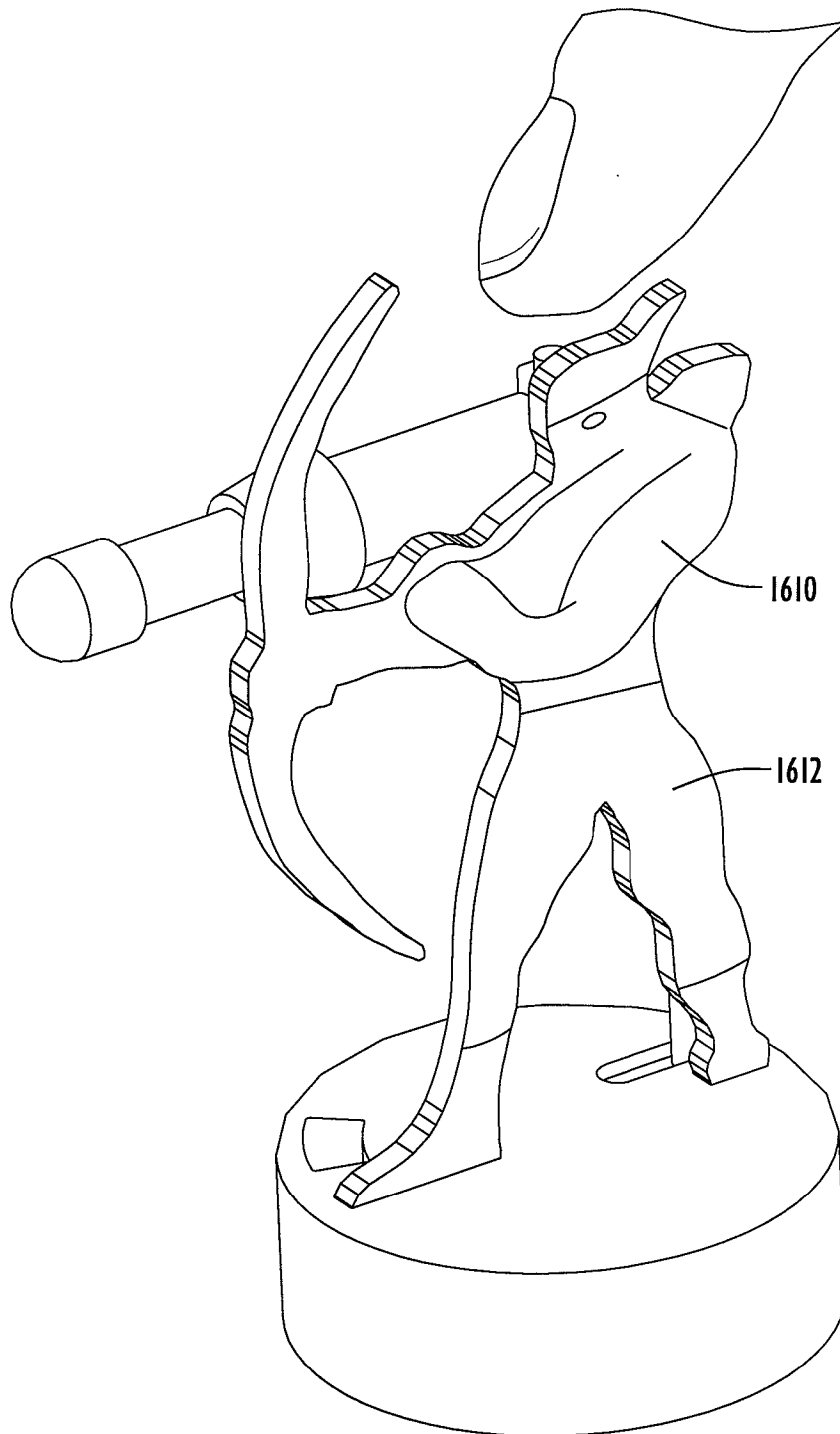


FIG.78

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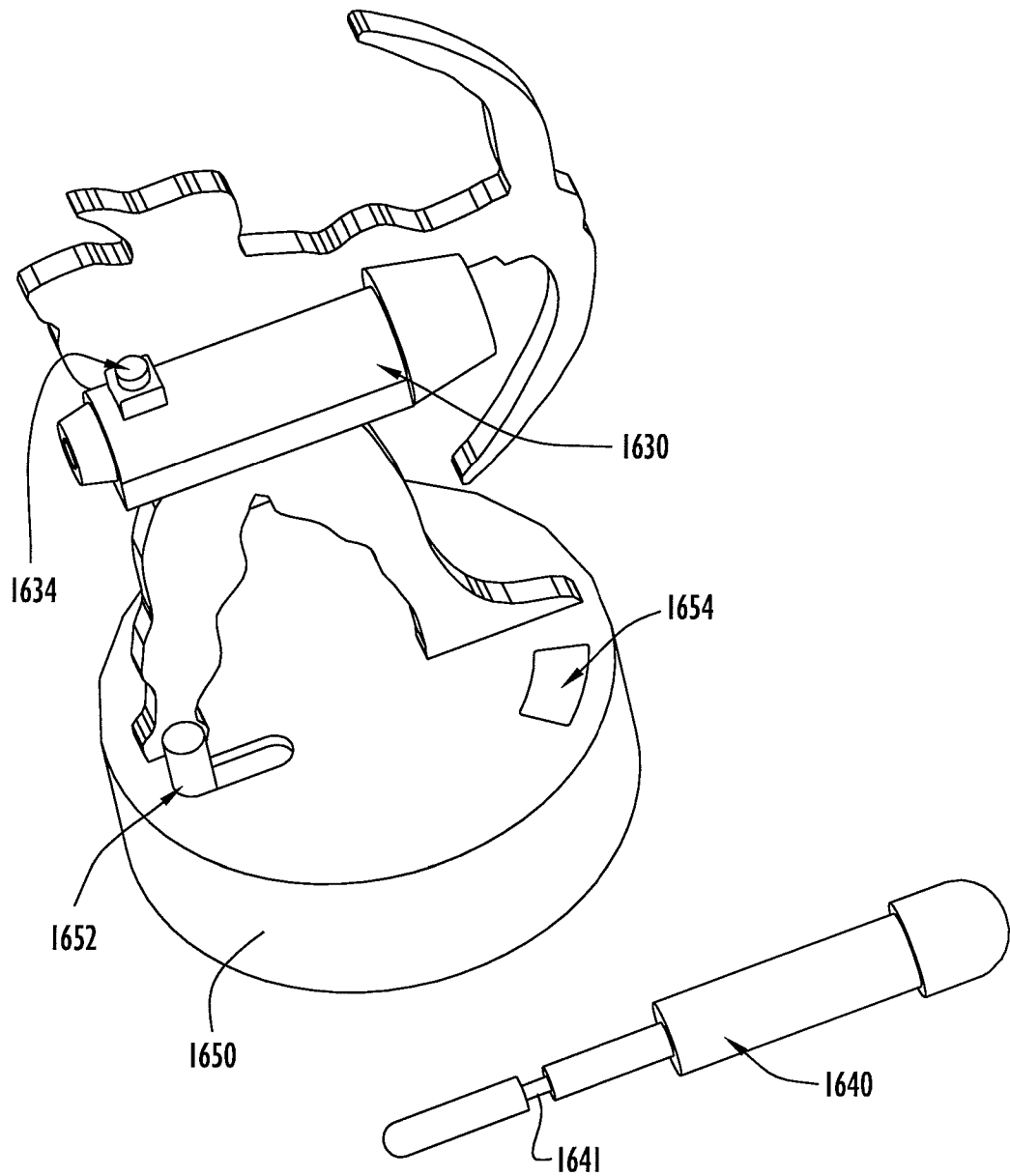


FIG.79

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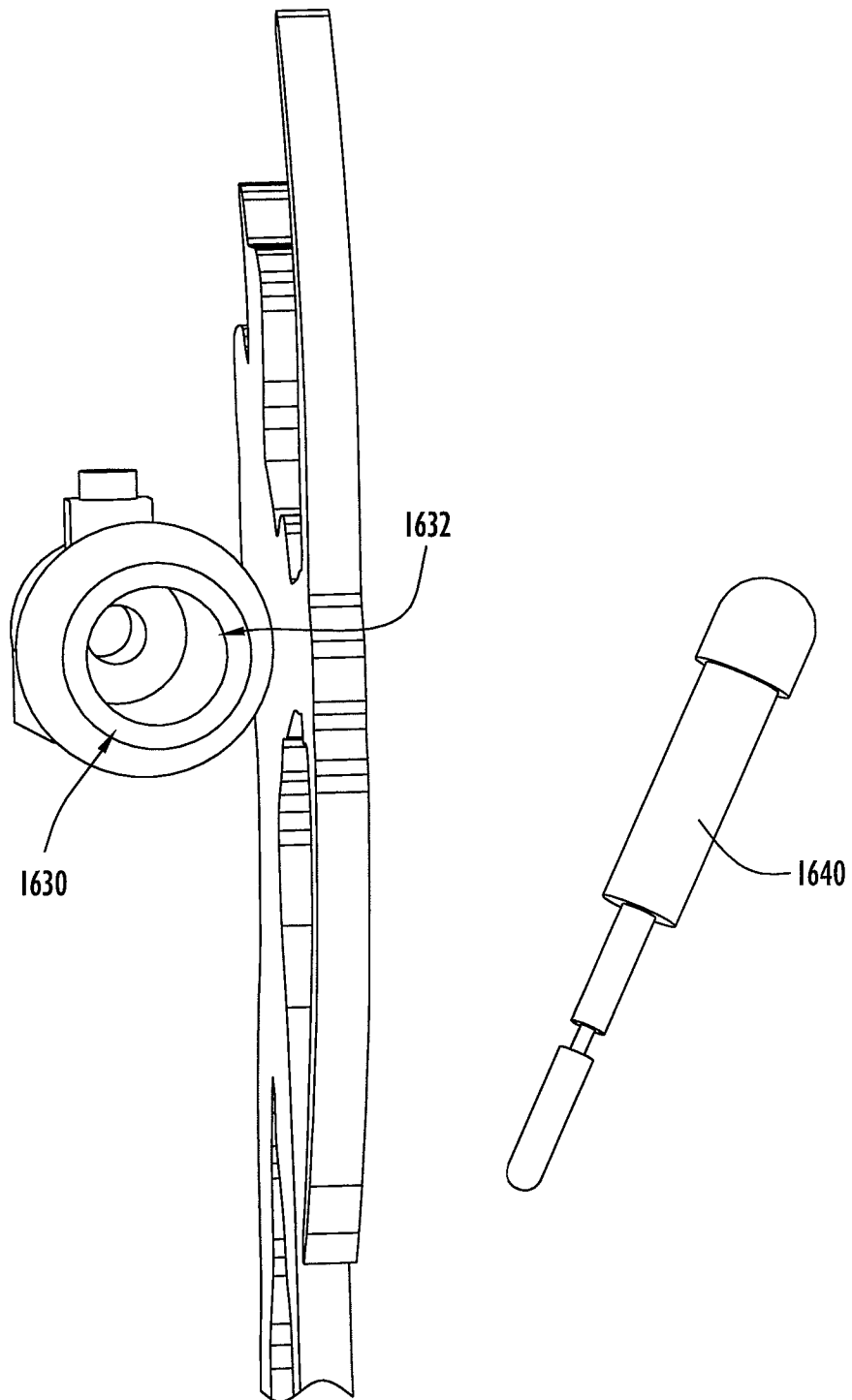


FIG.80

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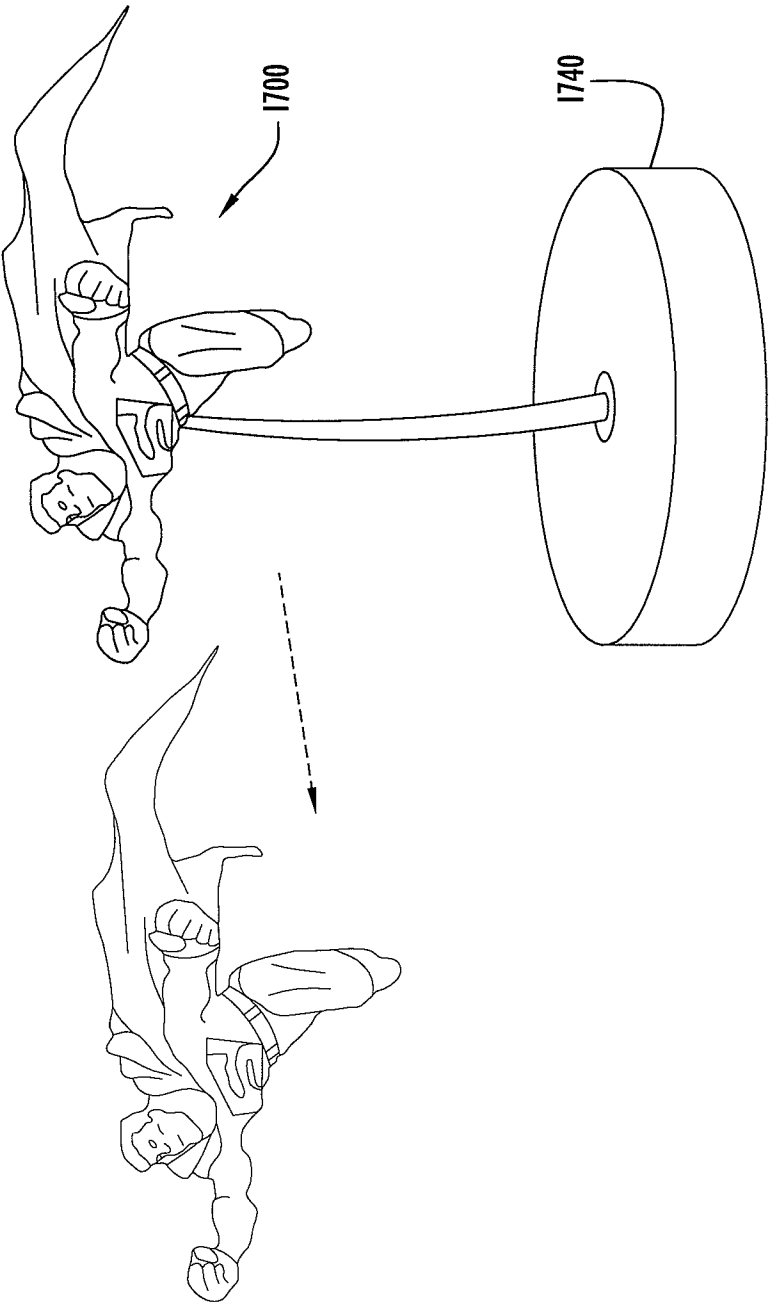


FIG. 8I

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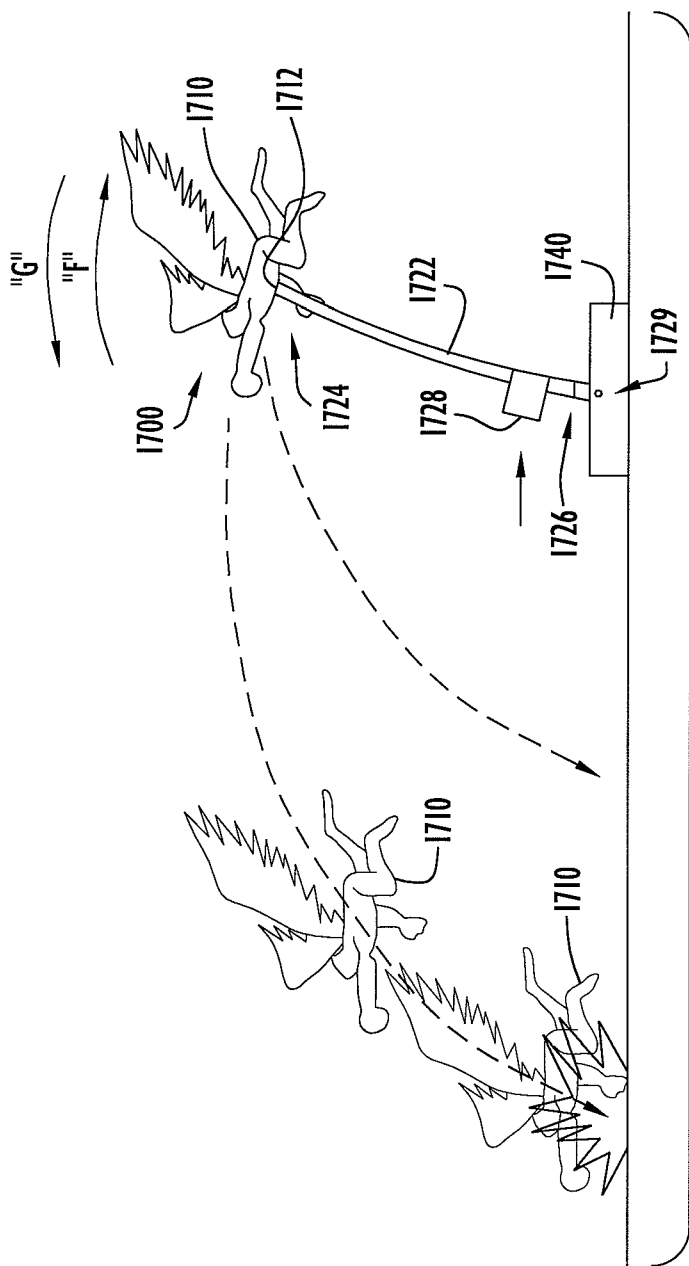


FIG. 82A

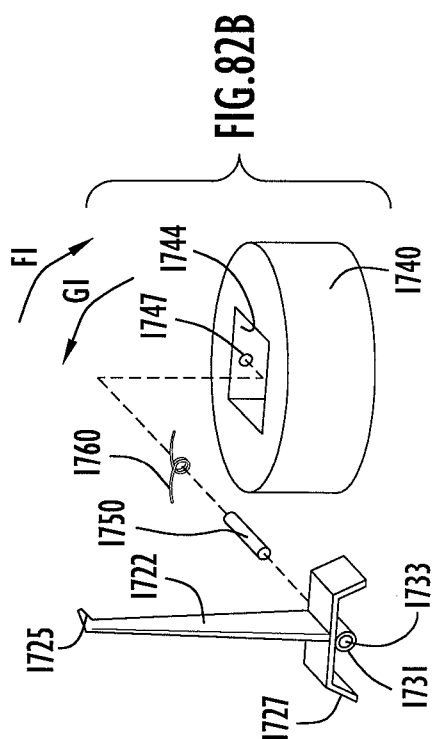
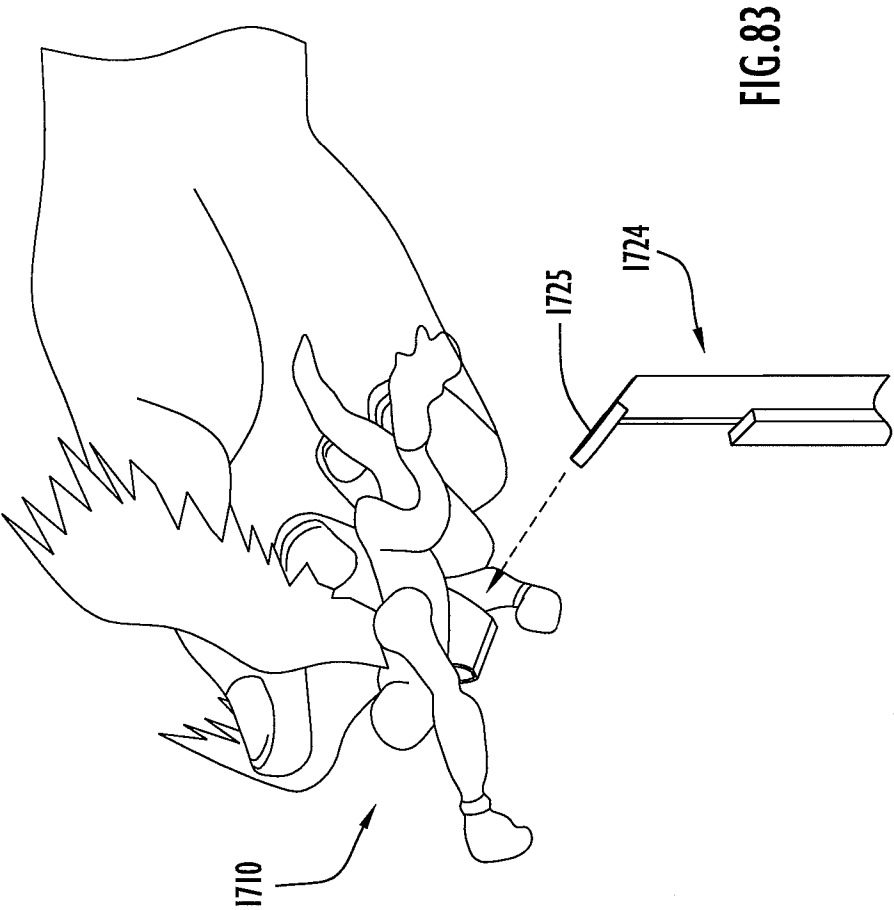


FIG. 82B

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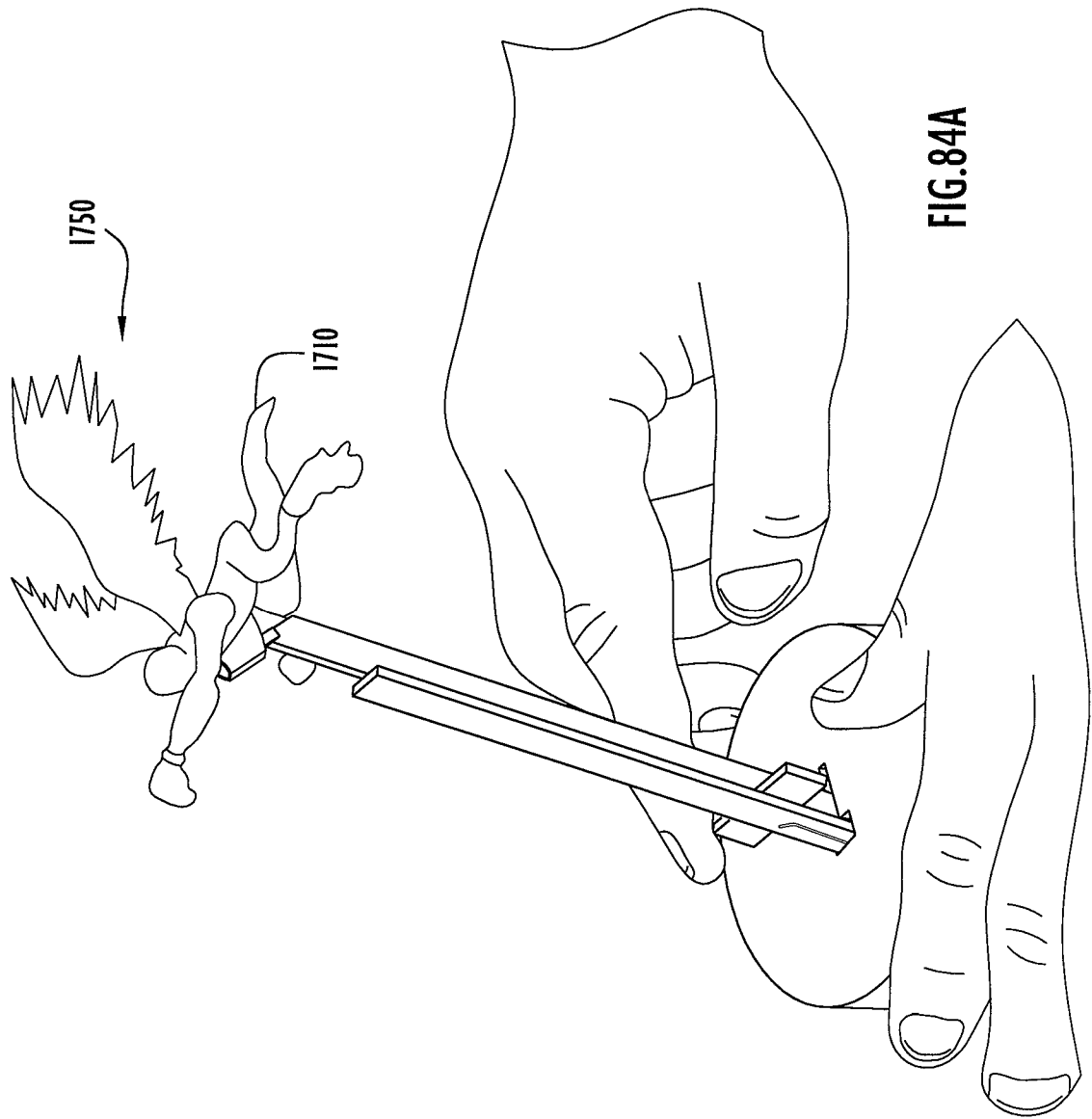


FIG. 84A

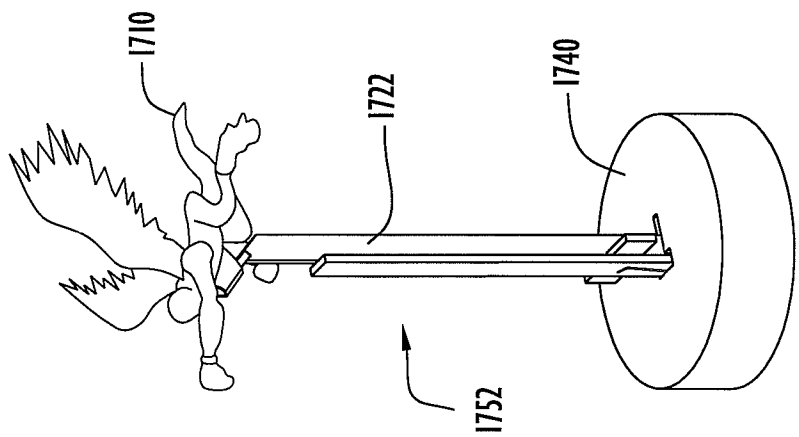


FIG. 84B

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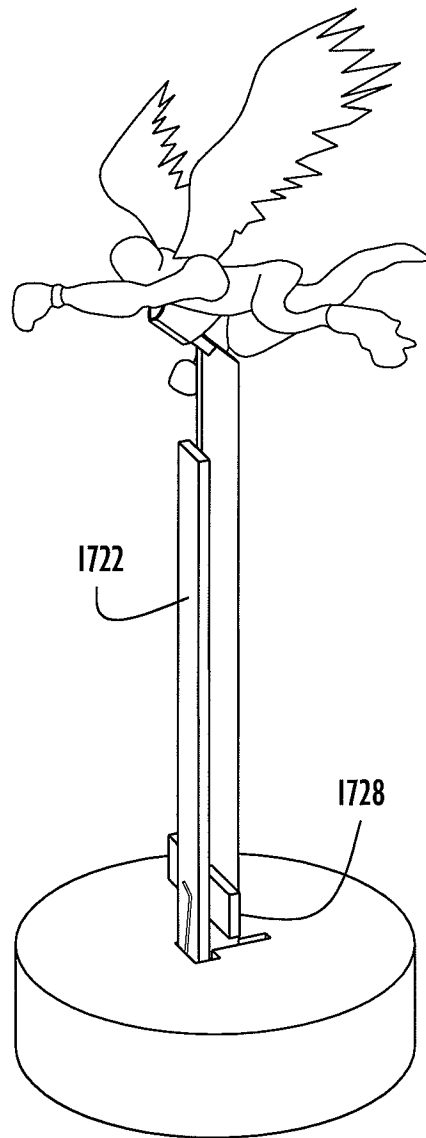


FIG.85

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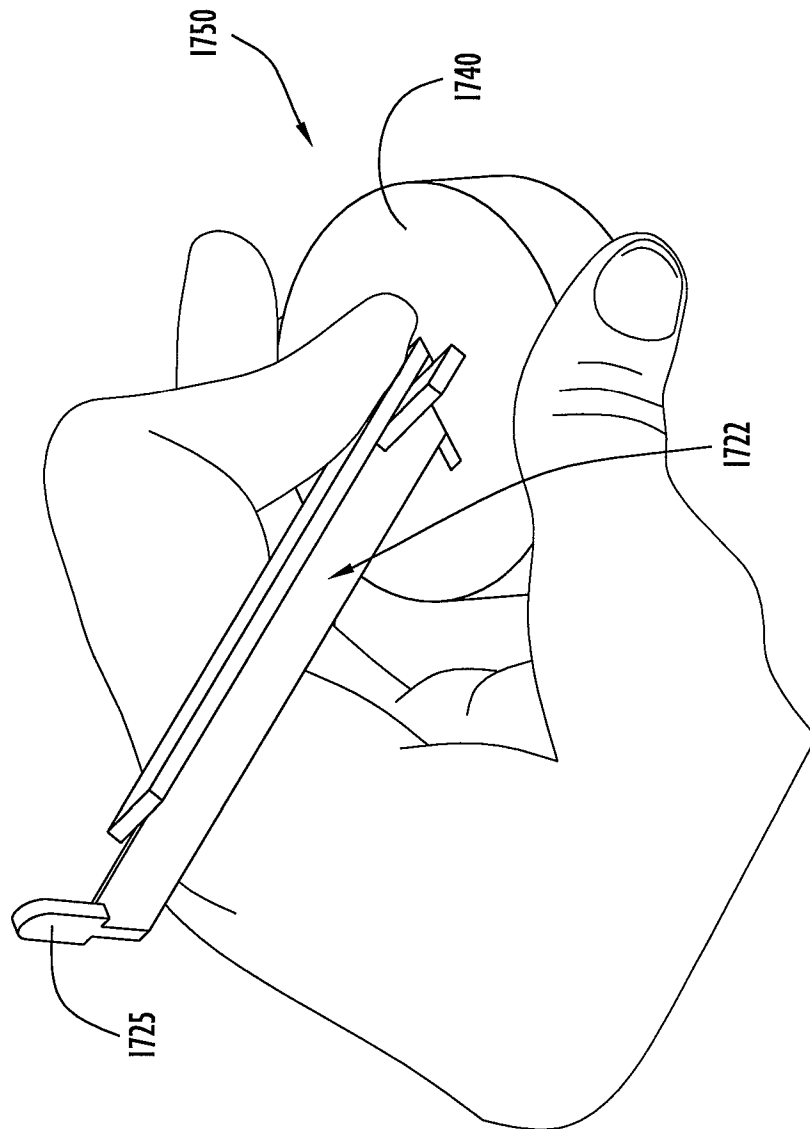
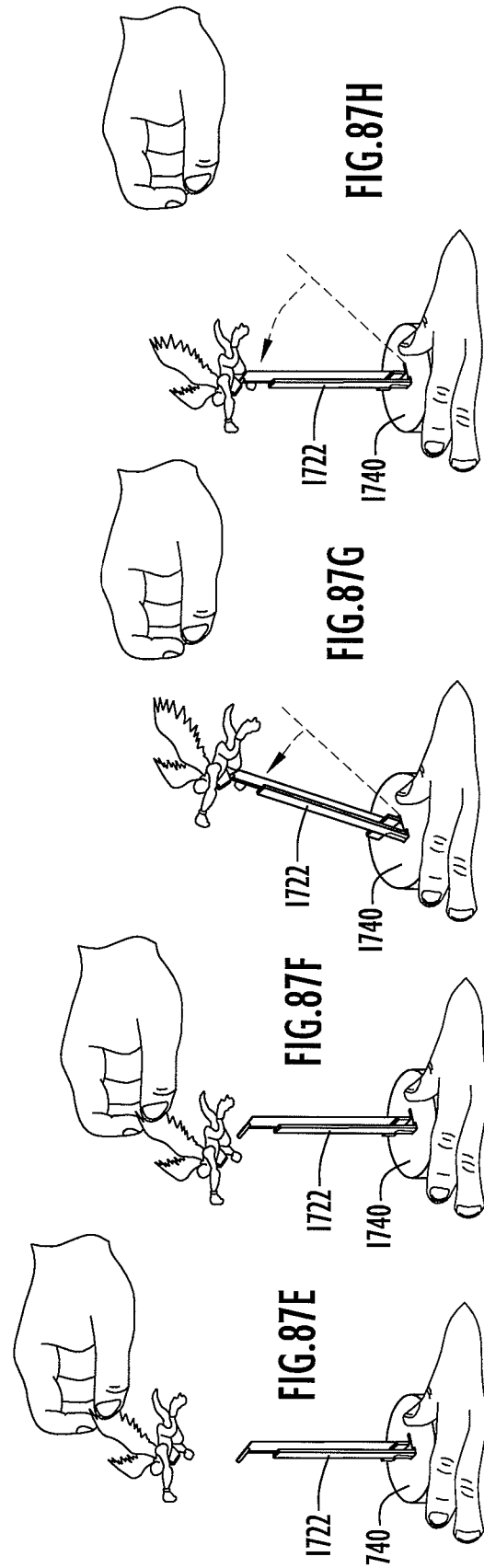
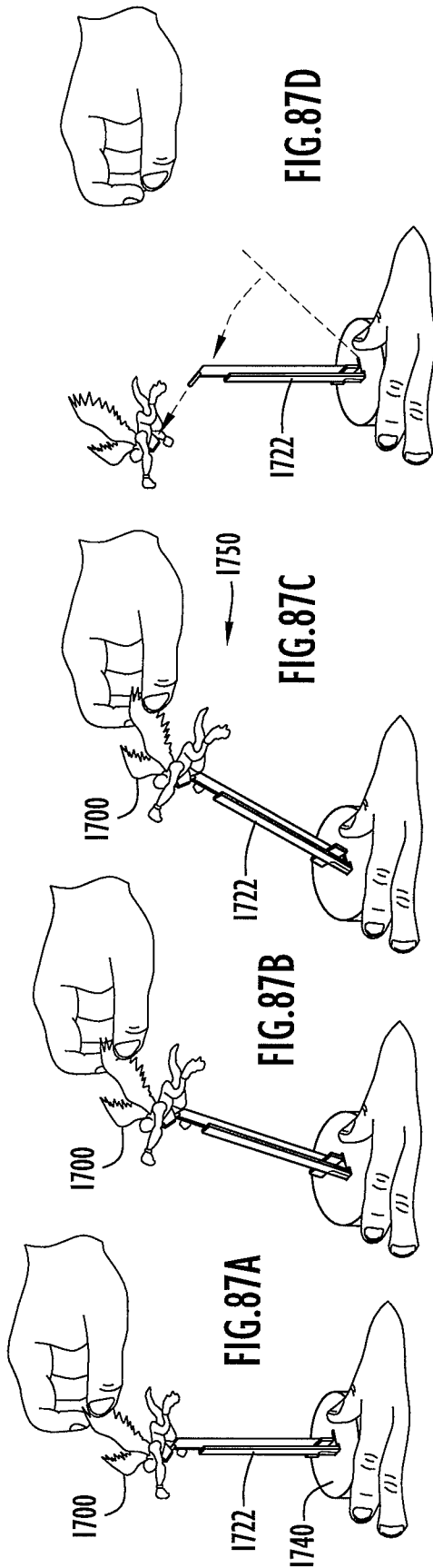
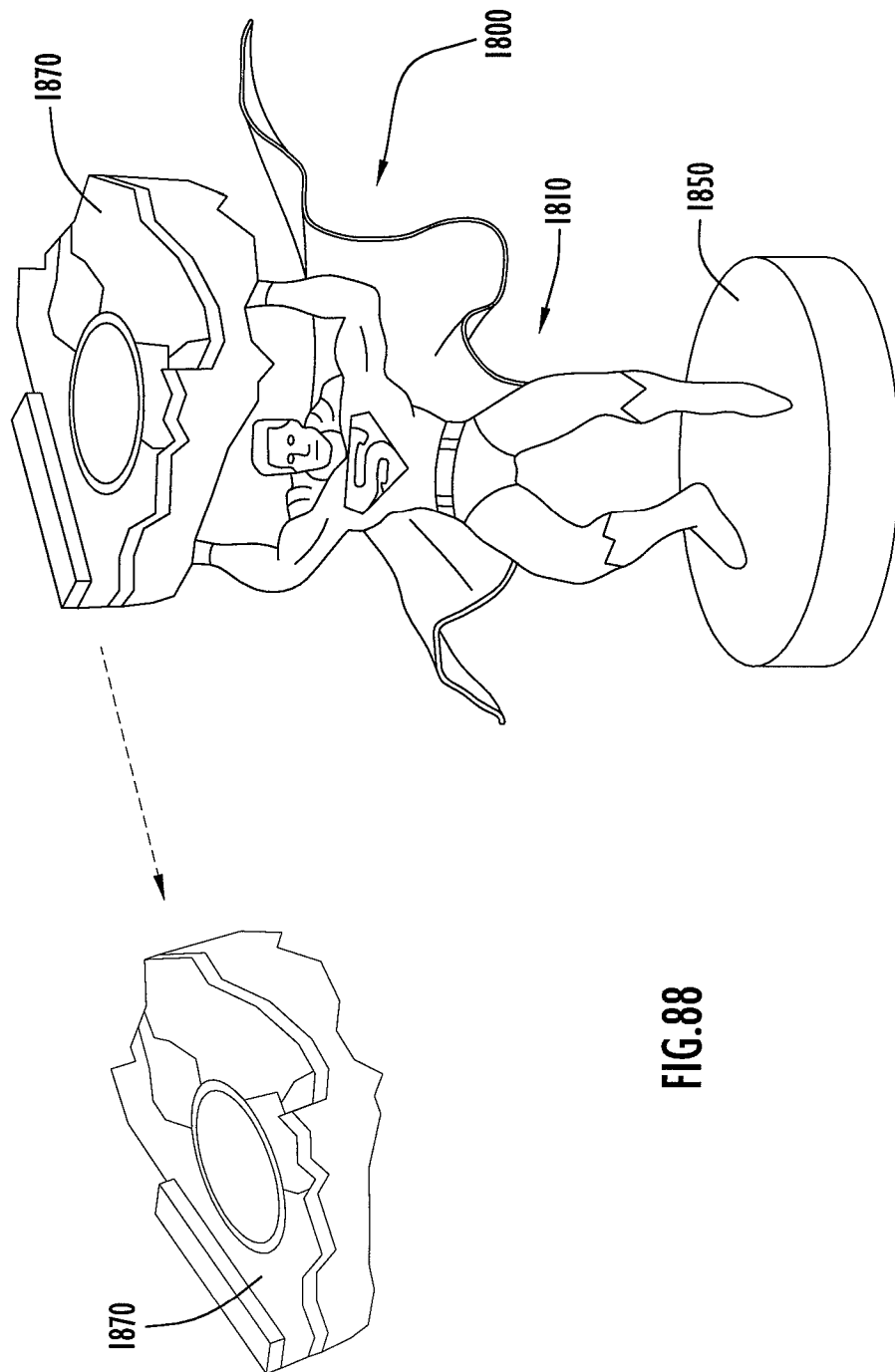


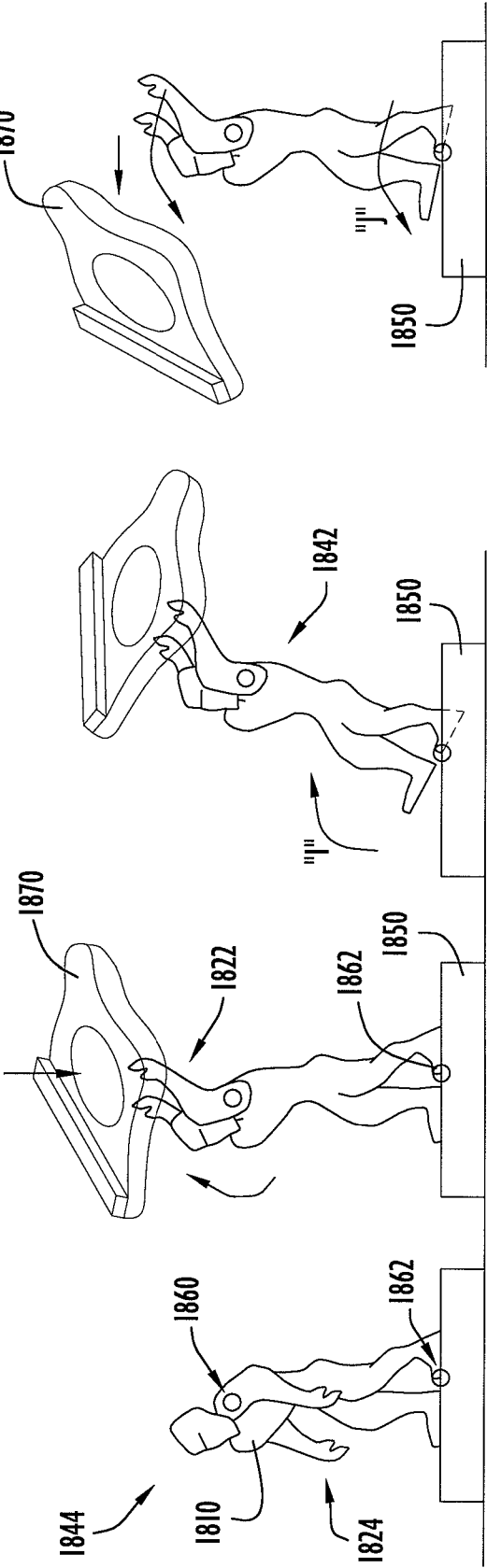
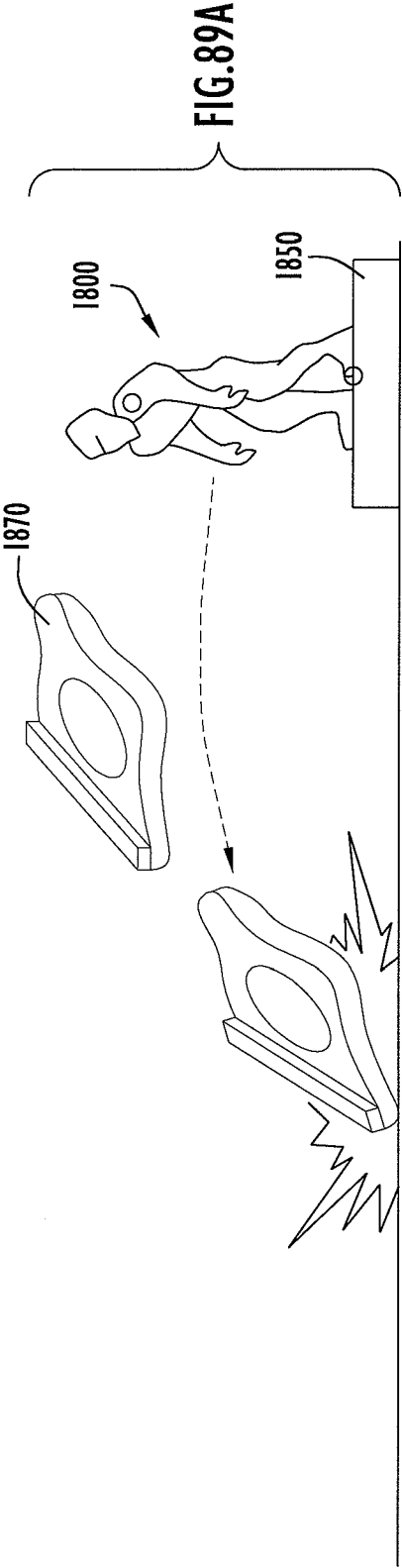
FIG. 86

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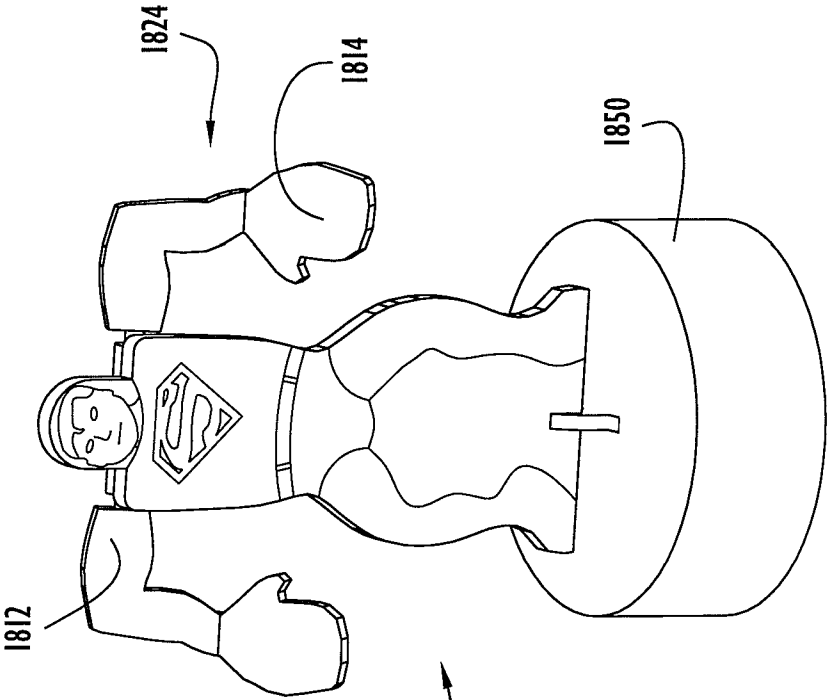
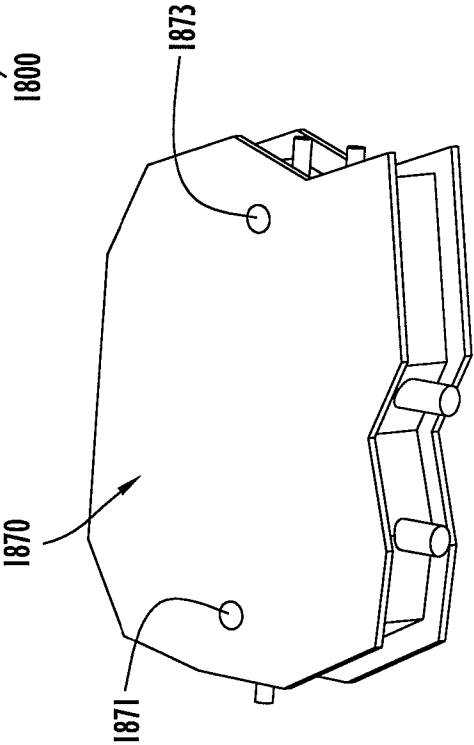


FIG.90



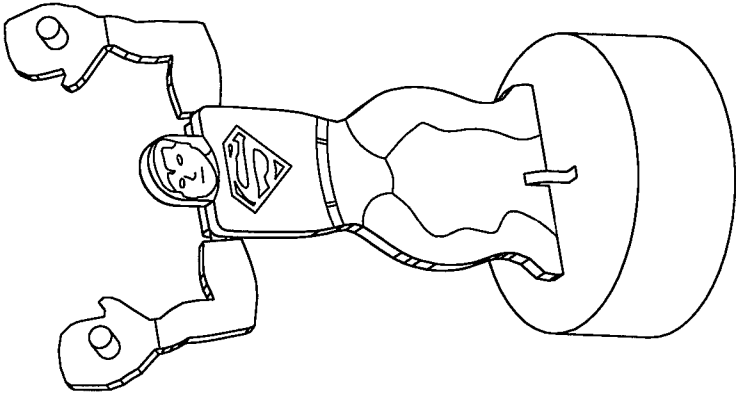


FIG. 9IA

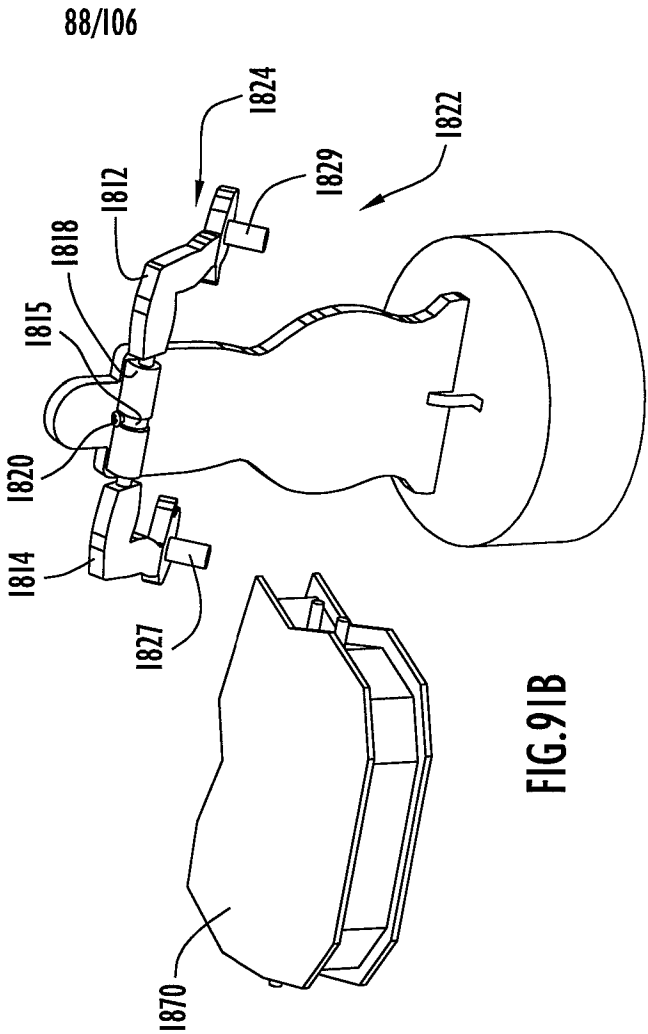


FIG. 9IB

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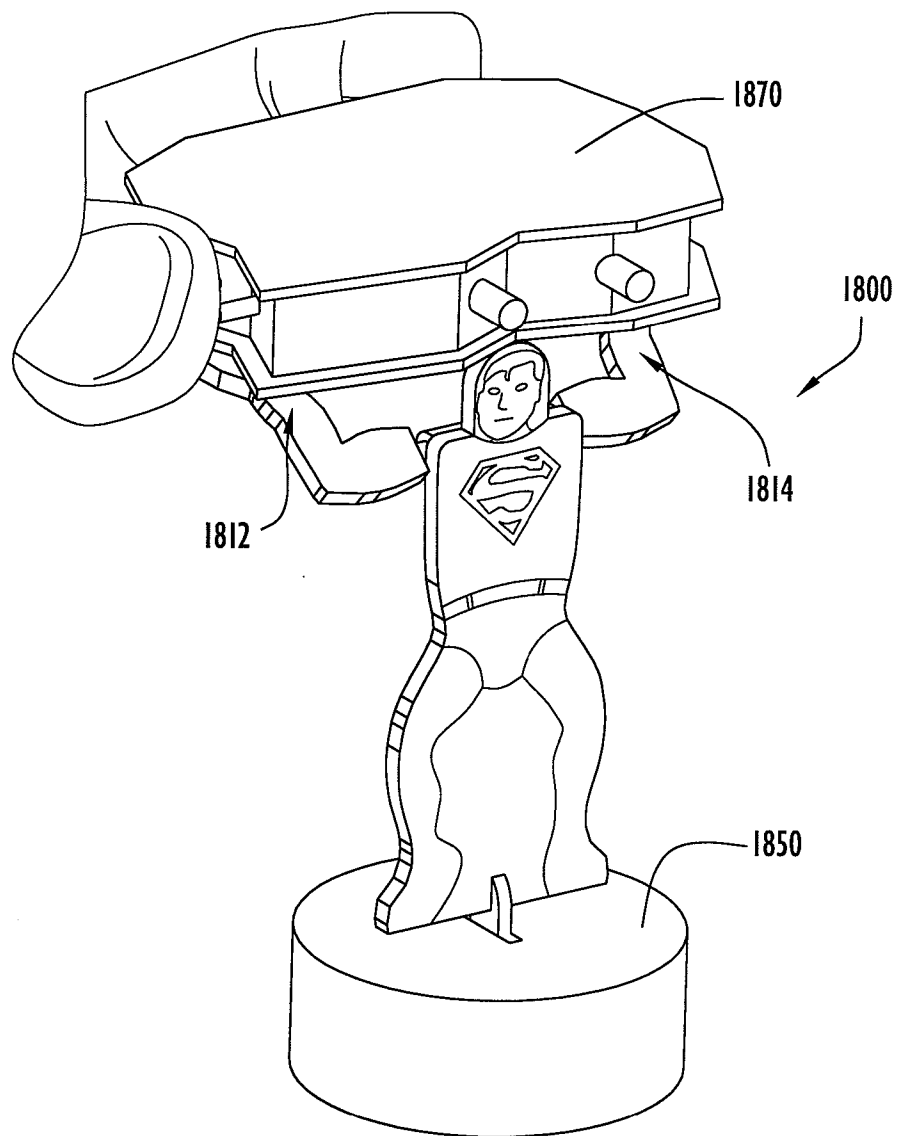


FIG.92

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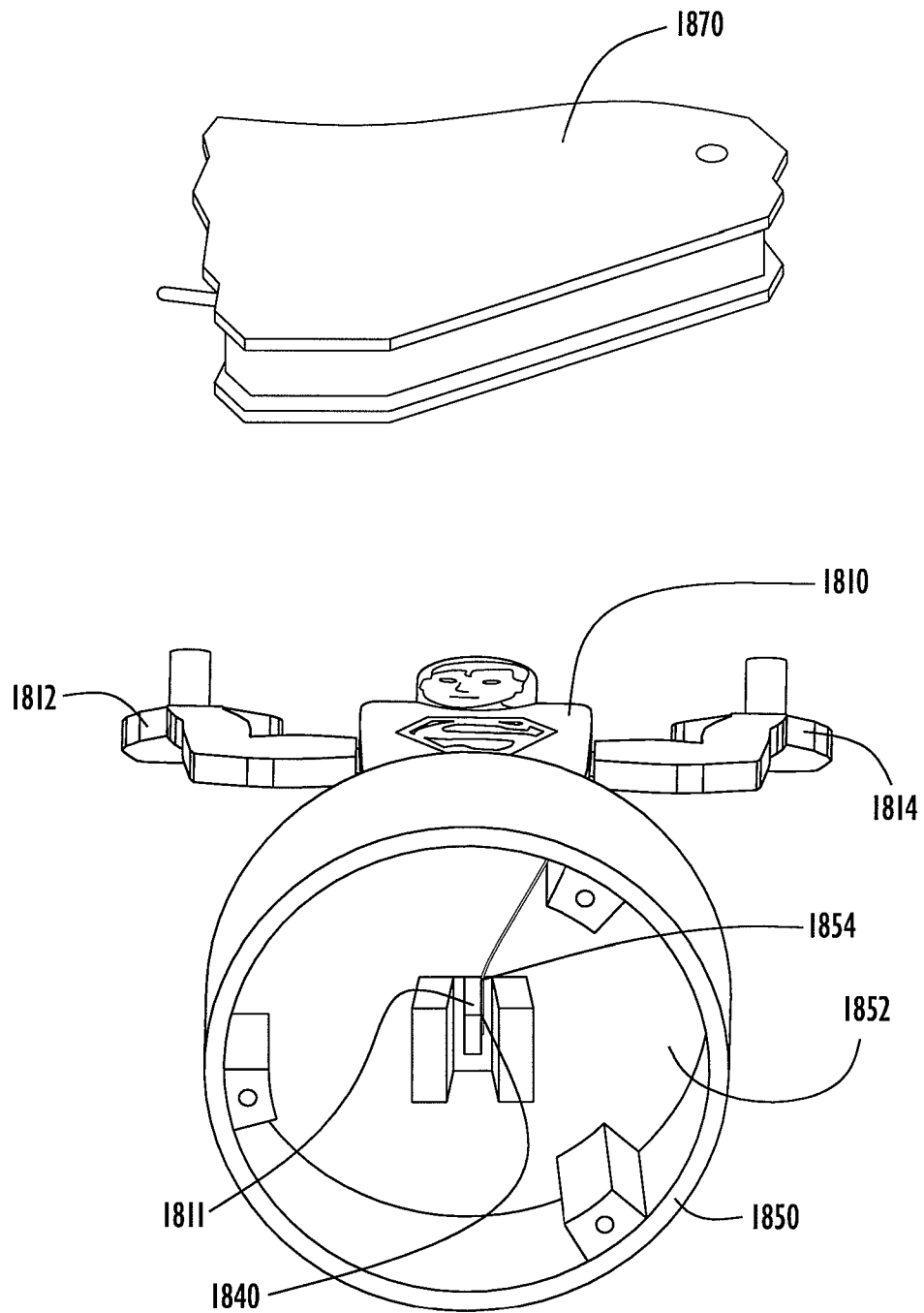


FIG. 93

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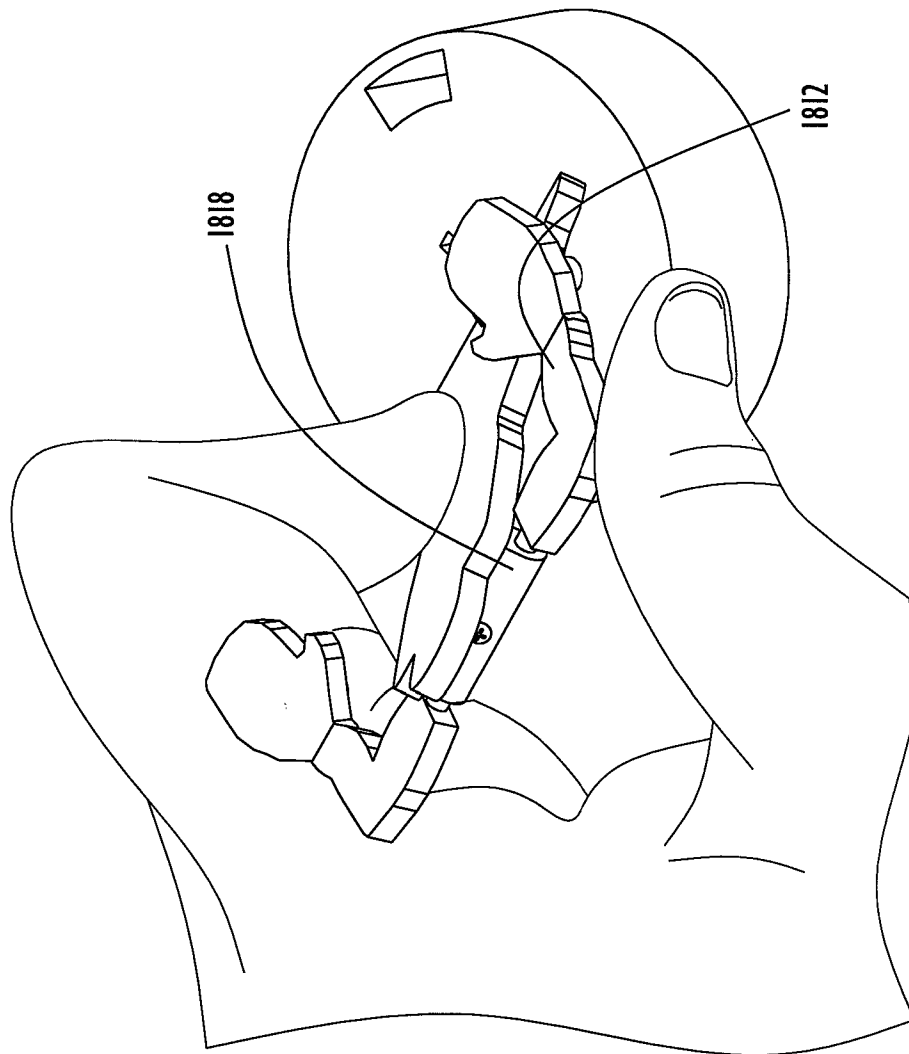
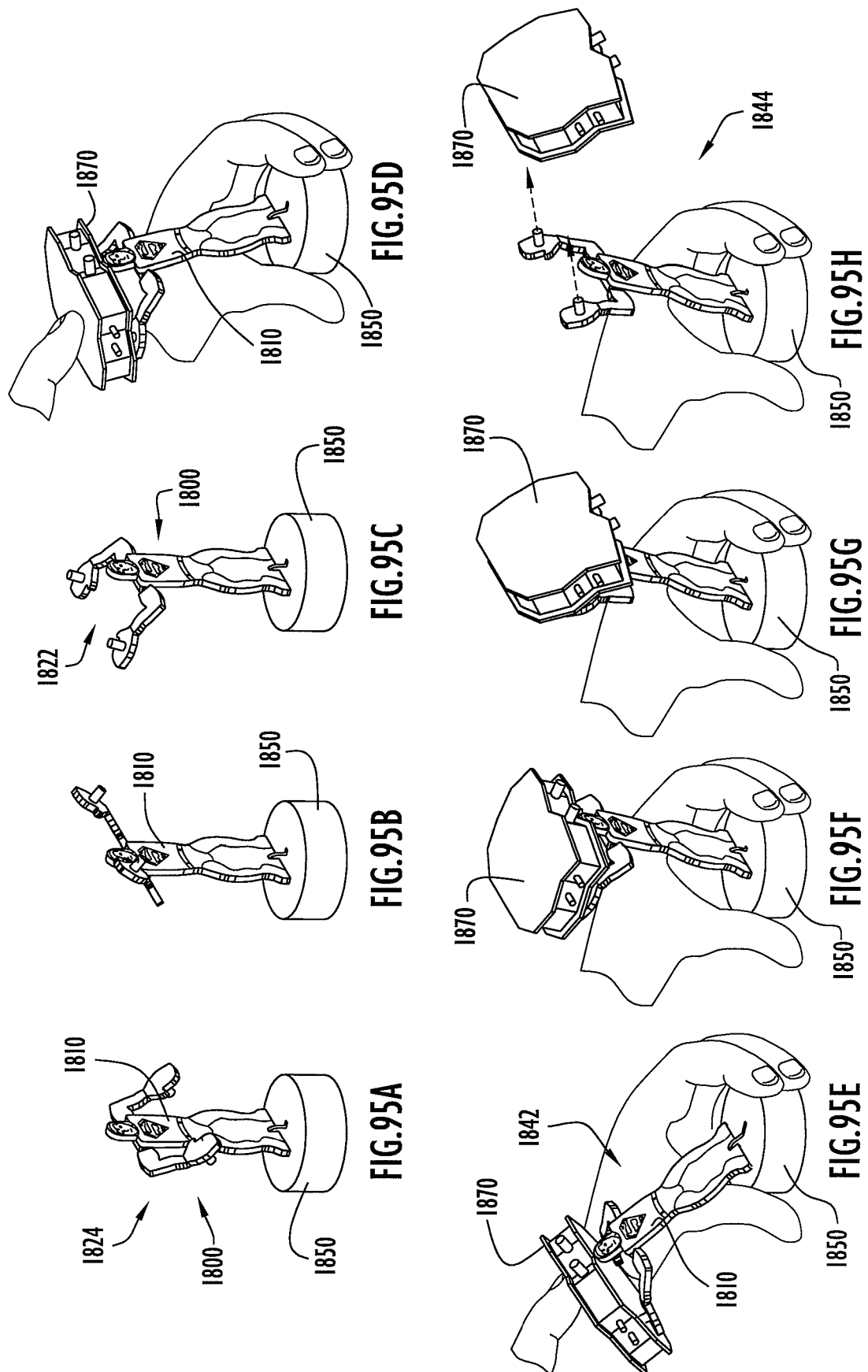


FIG. 94

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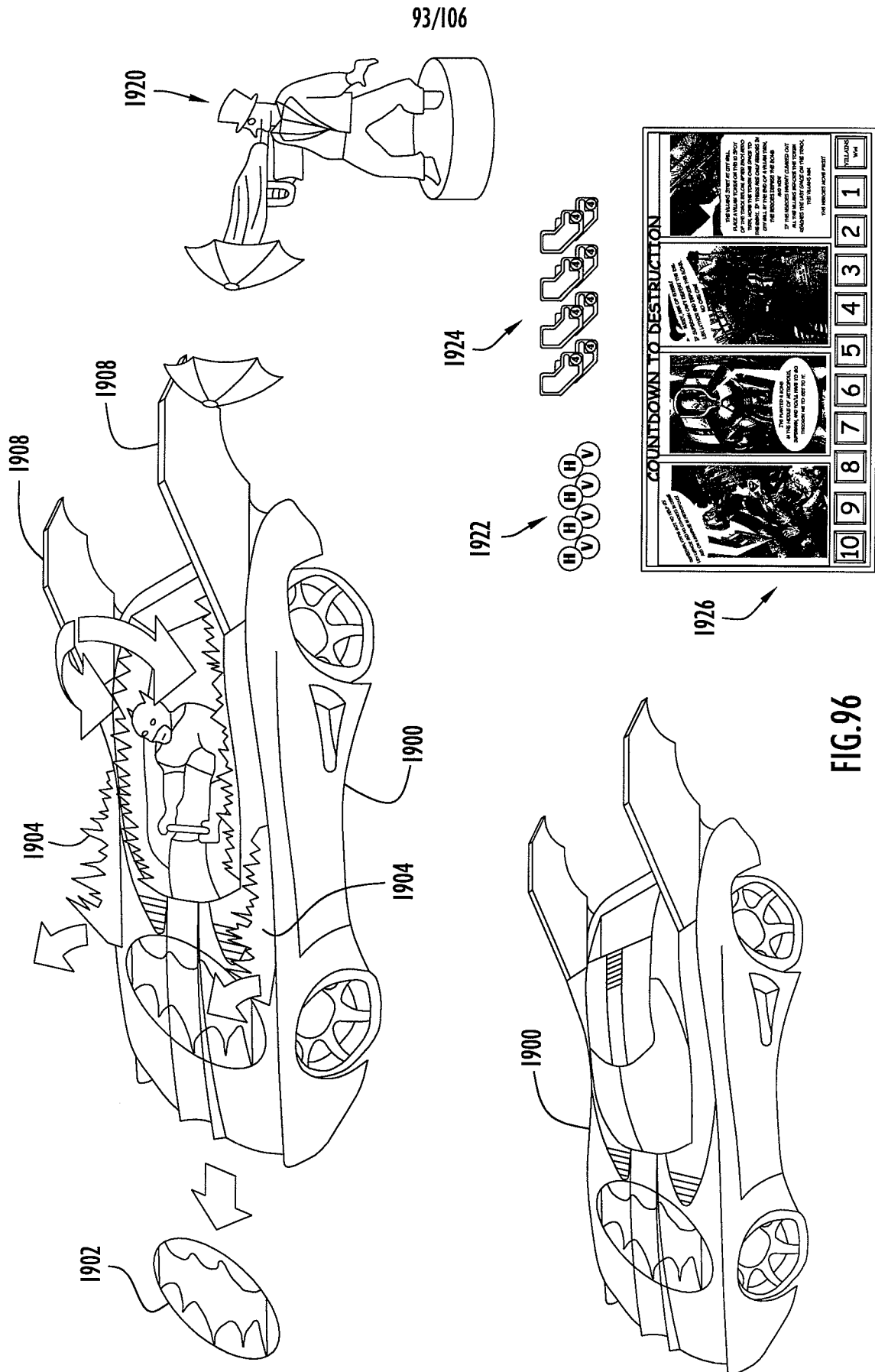
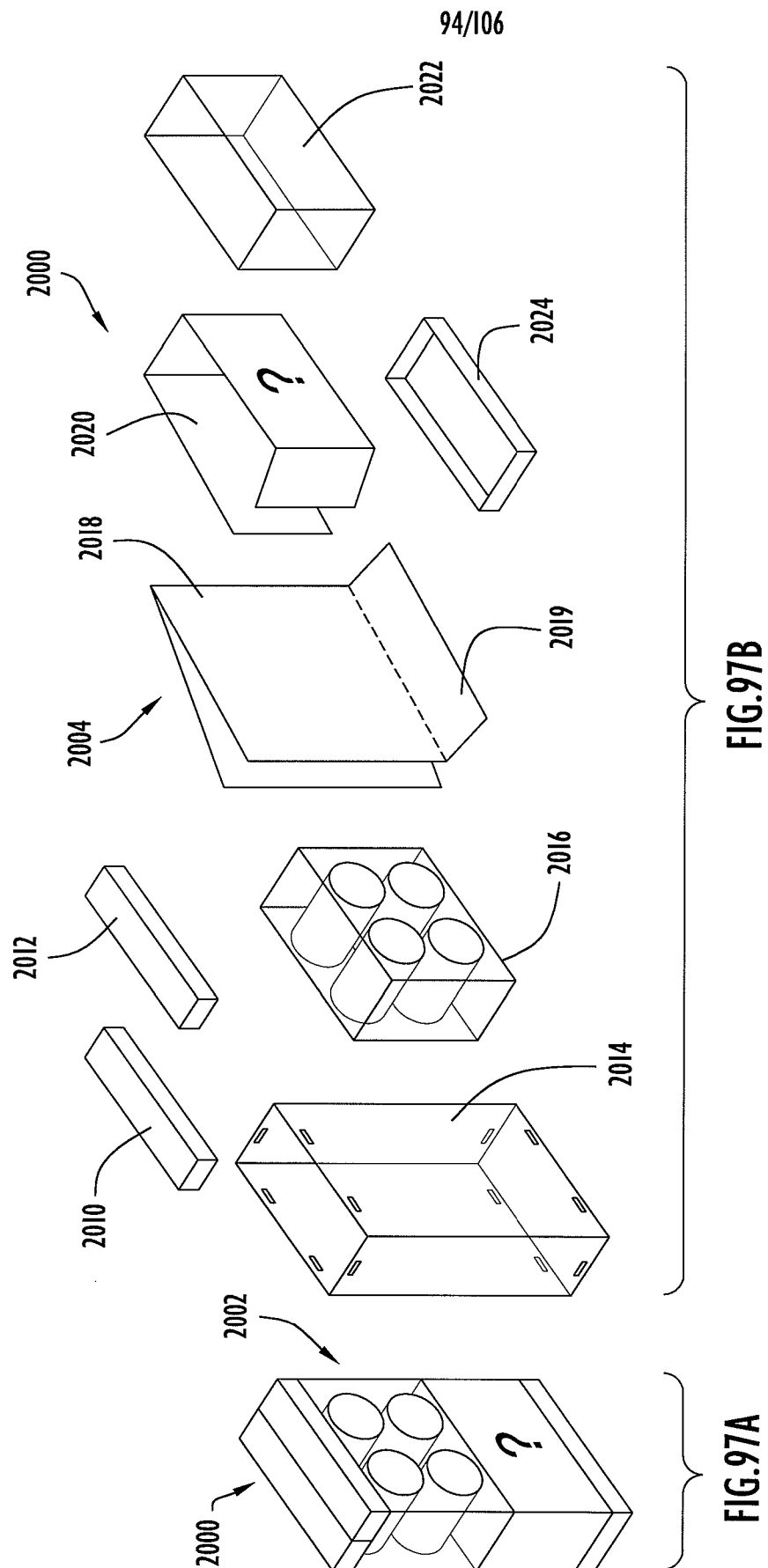


FIG. 96



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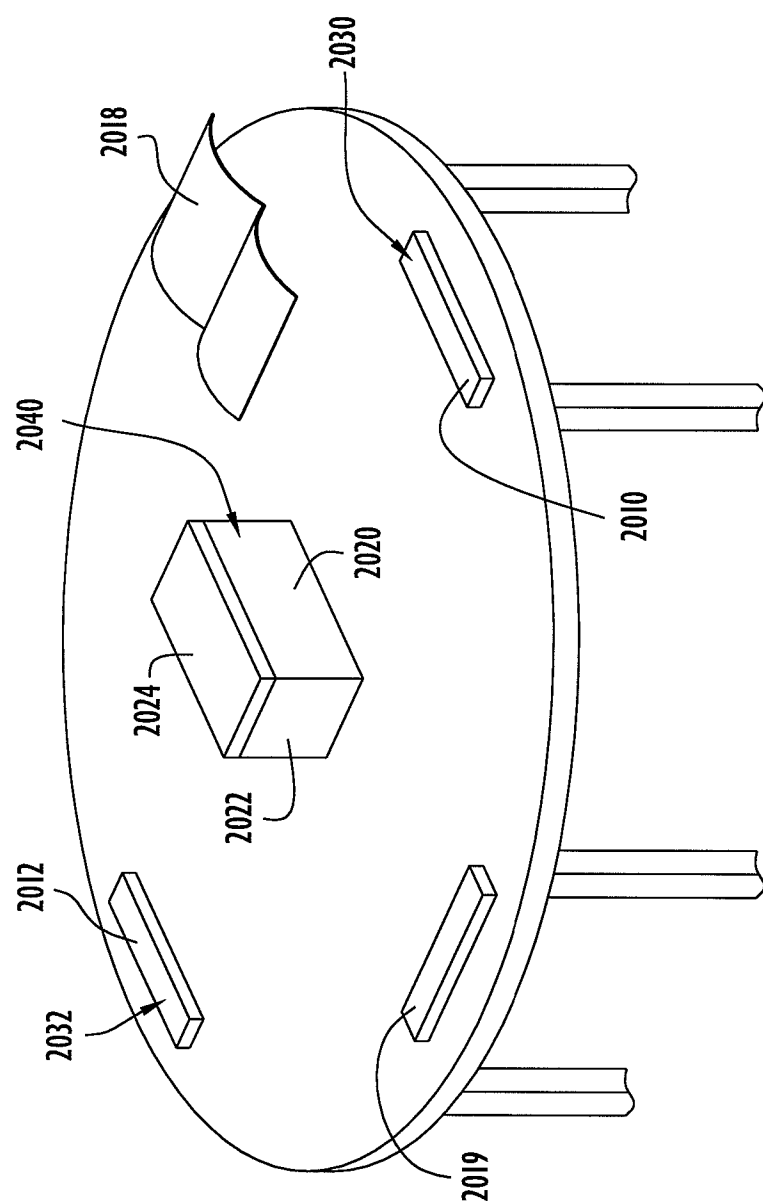


FIG. 98

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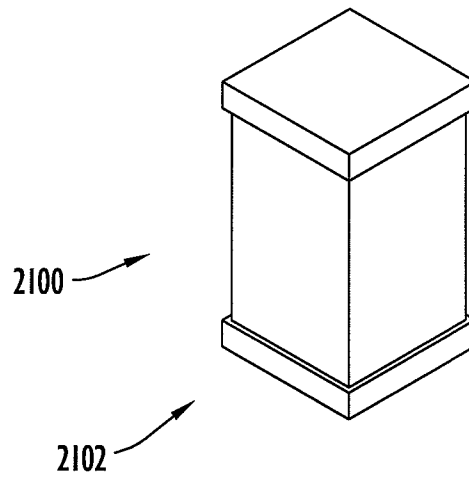


FIG. 99A

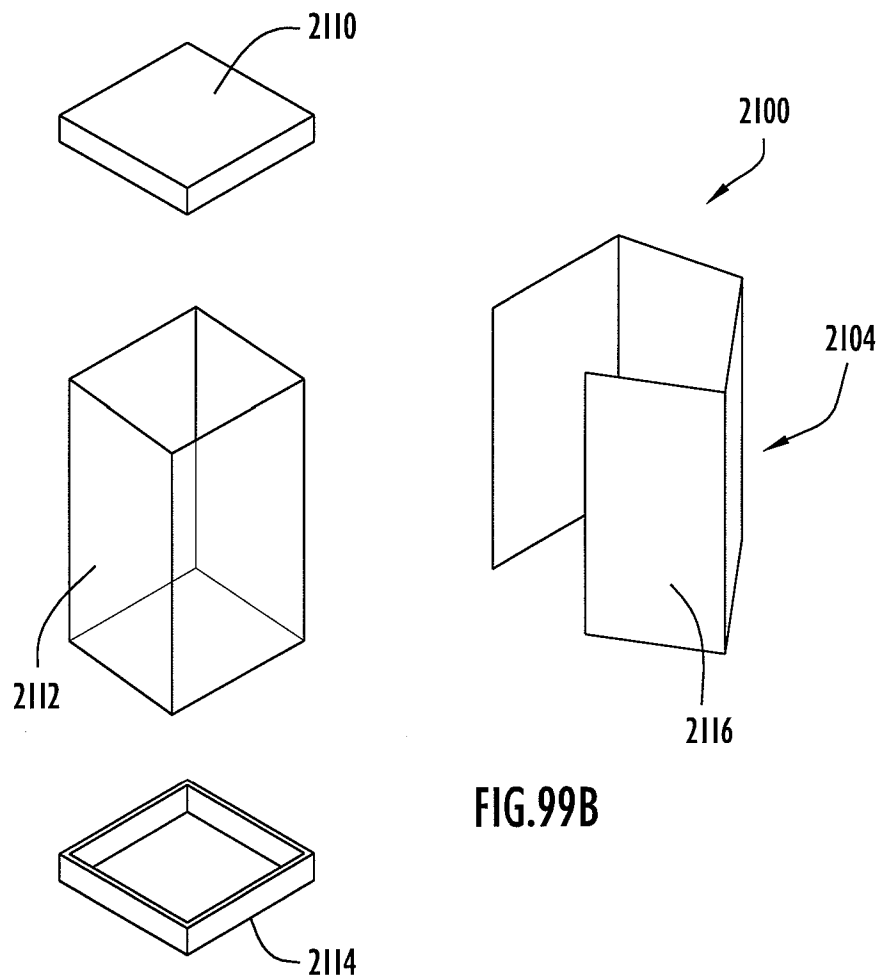
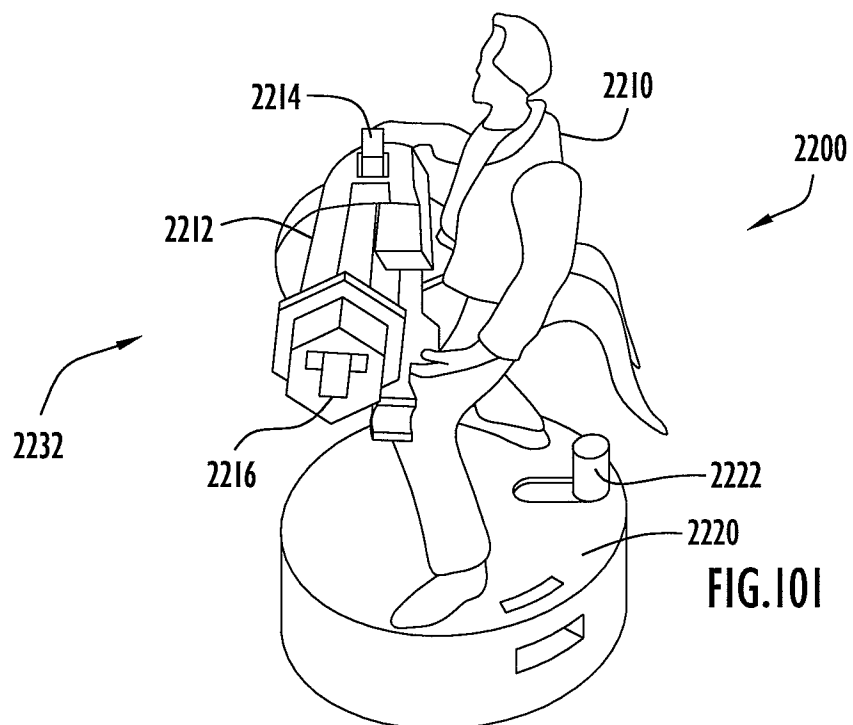
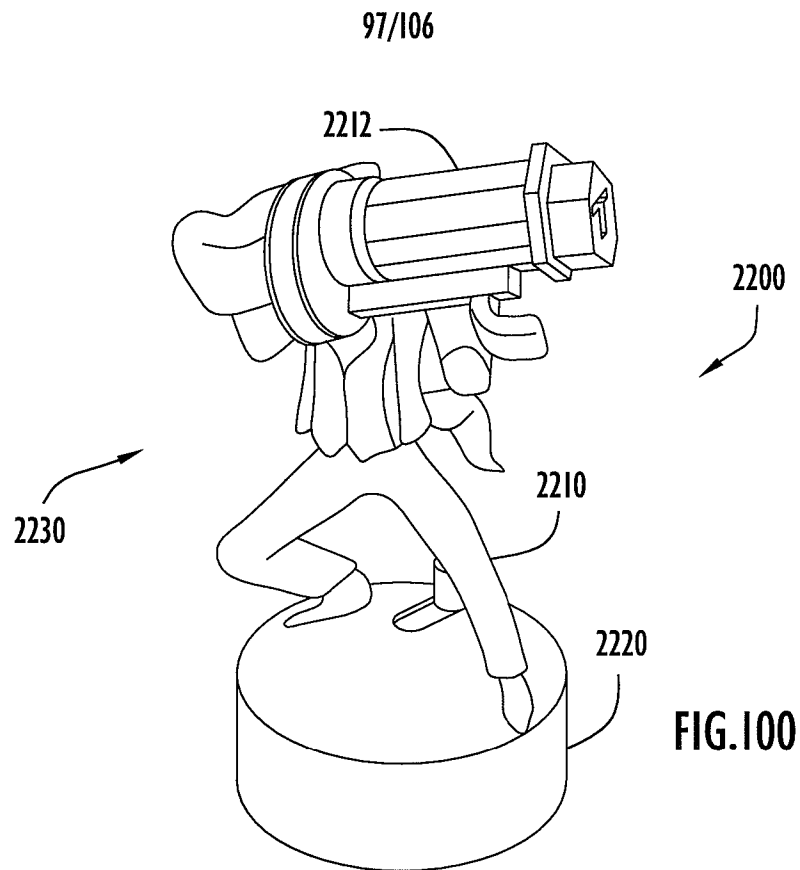
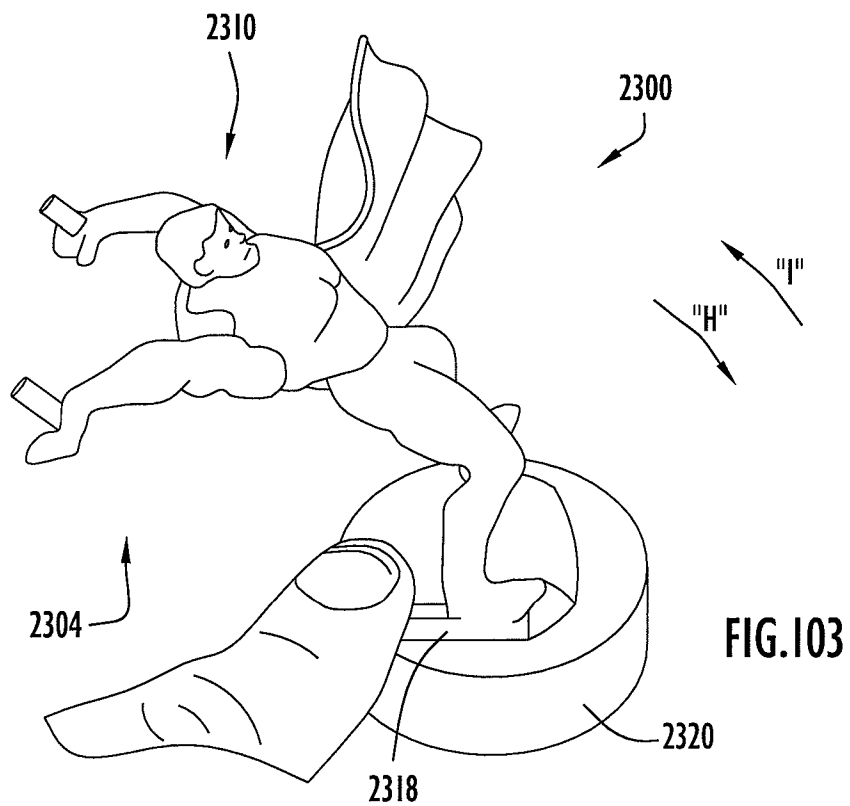
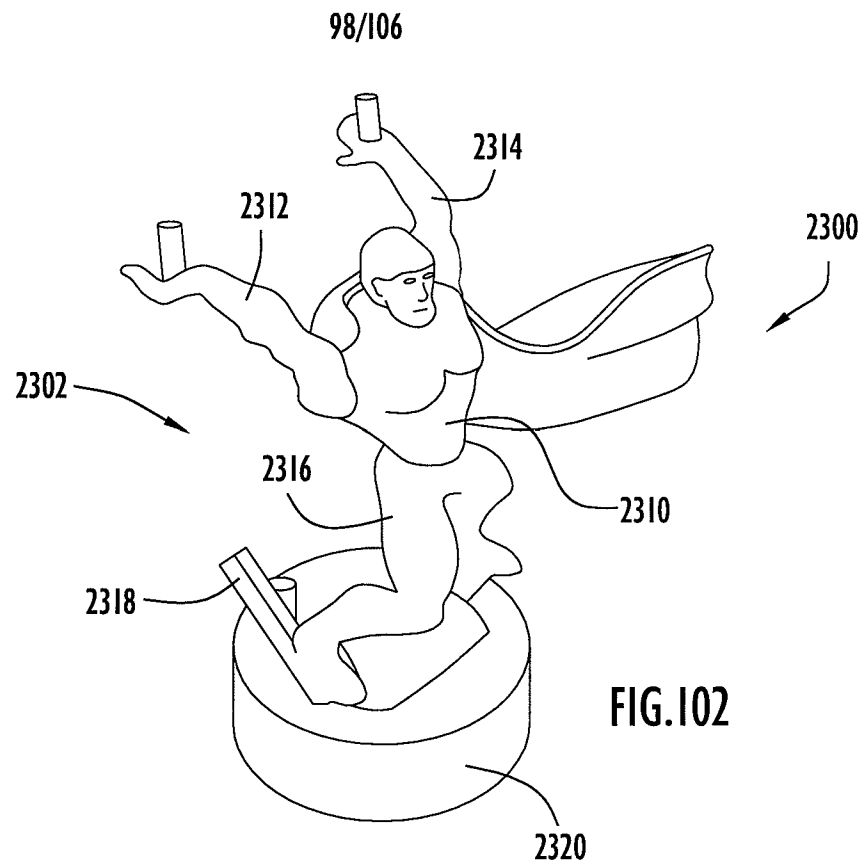
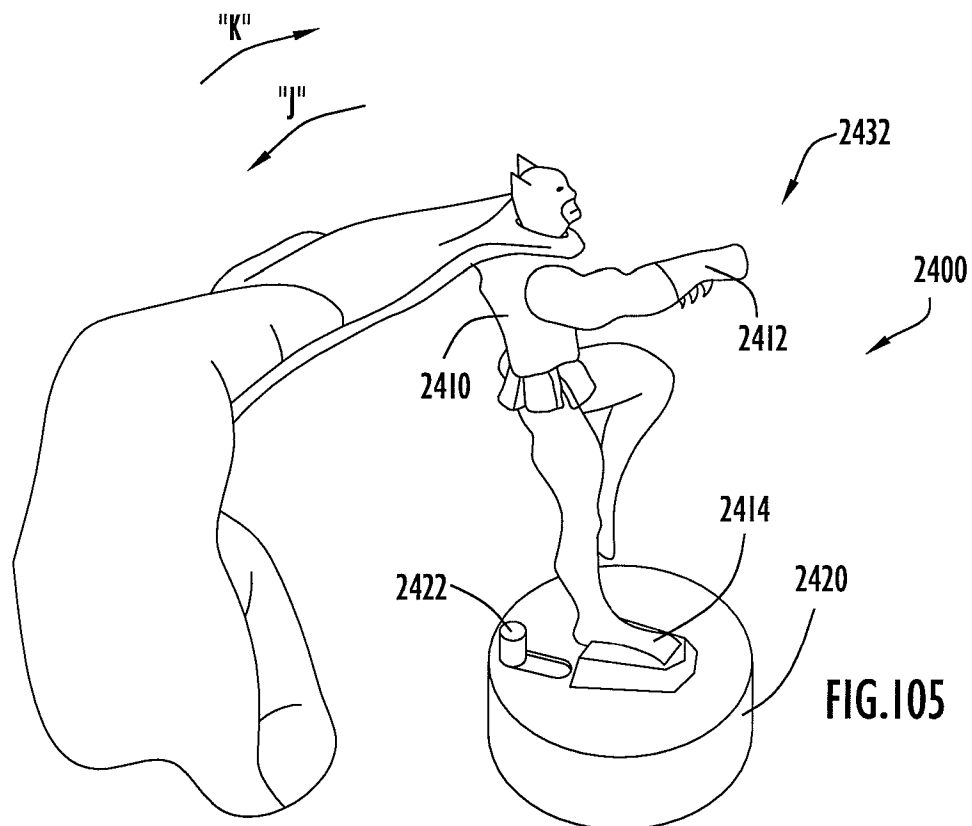
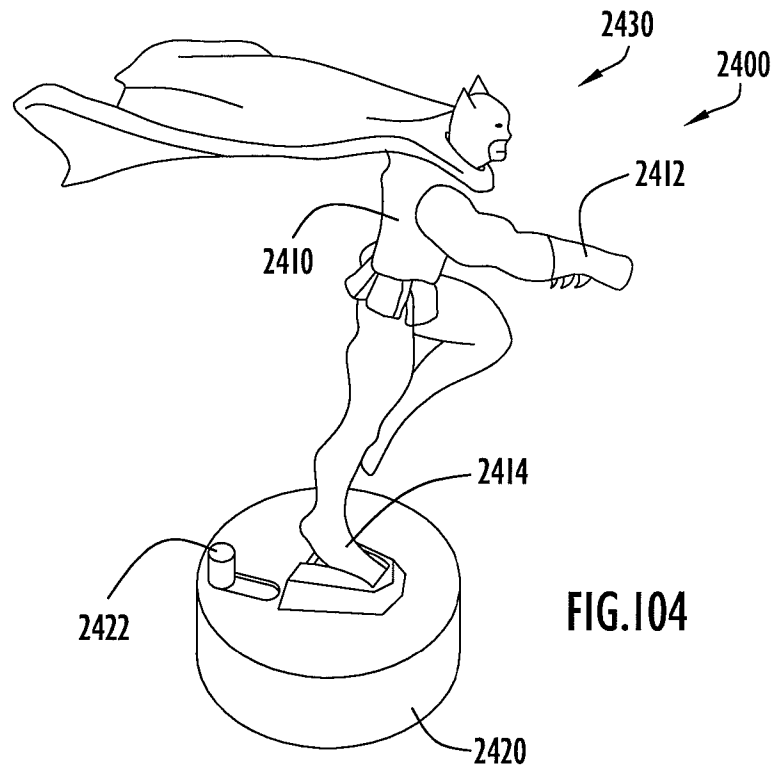


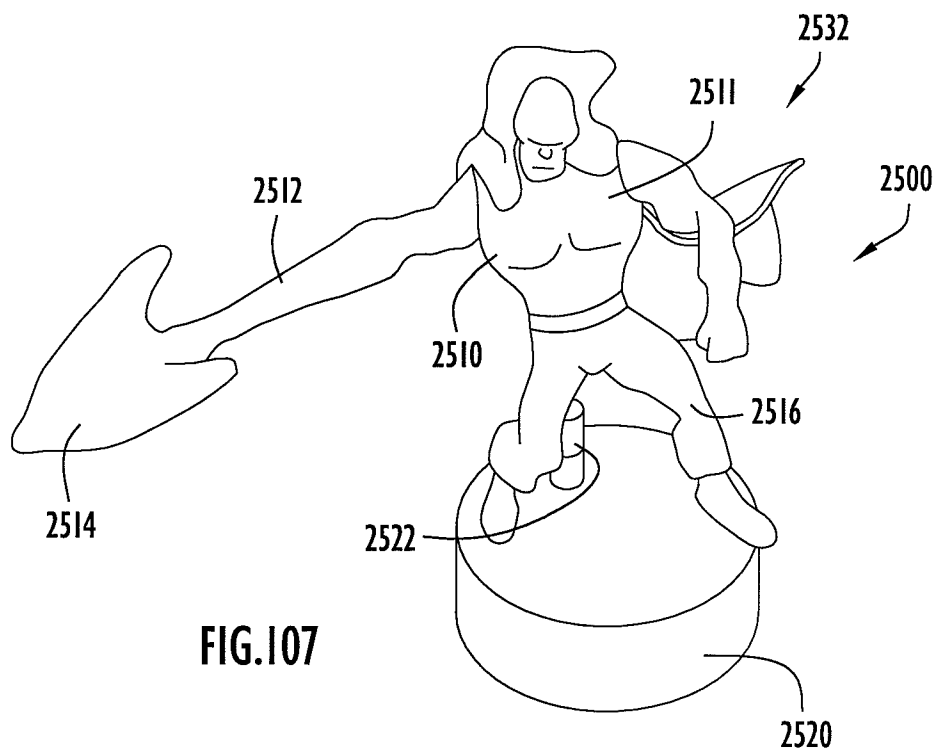
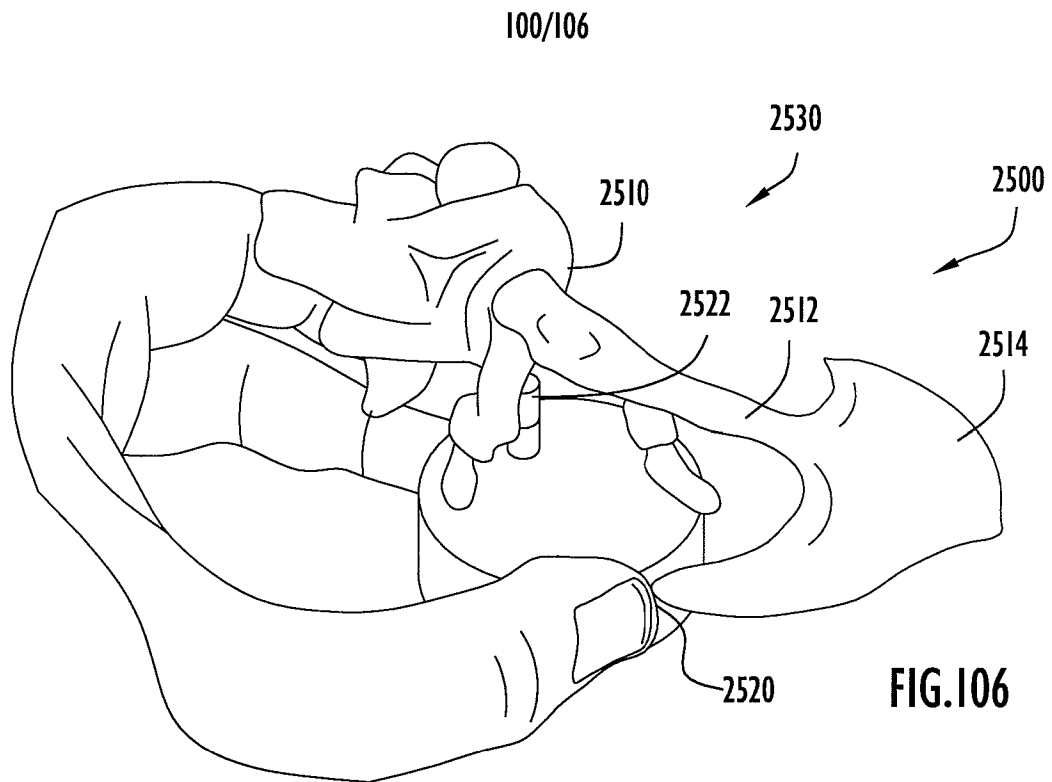
FIG. 99B





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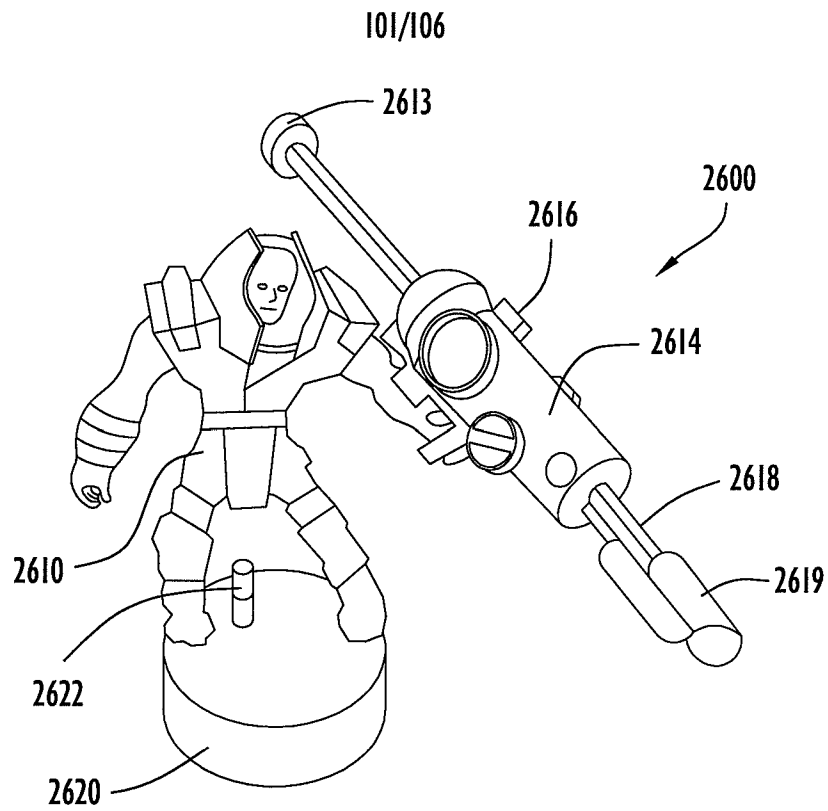


FIG. 108

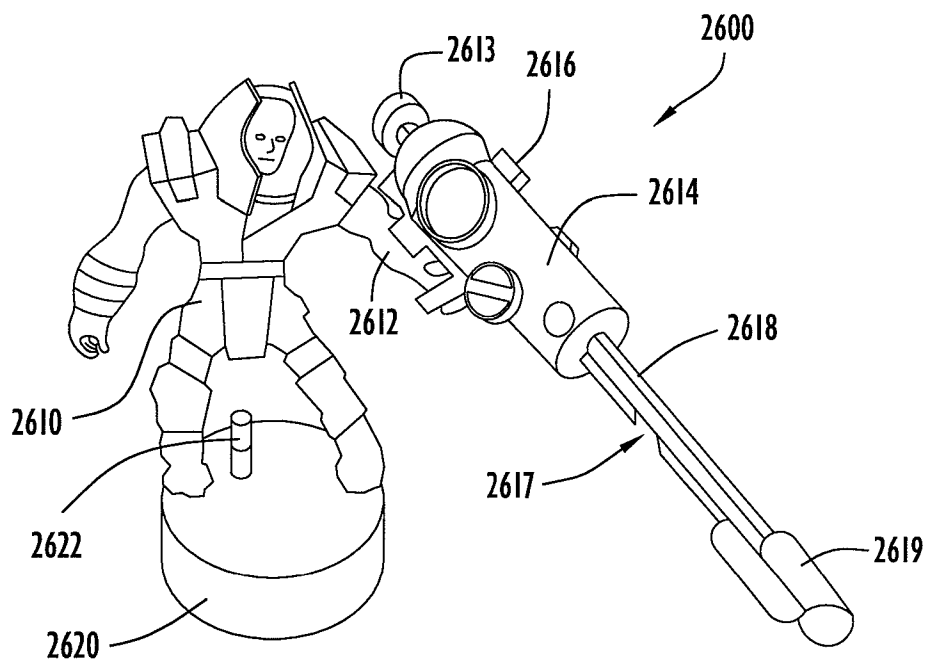


FIG. 109

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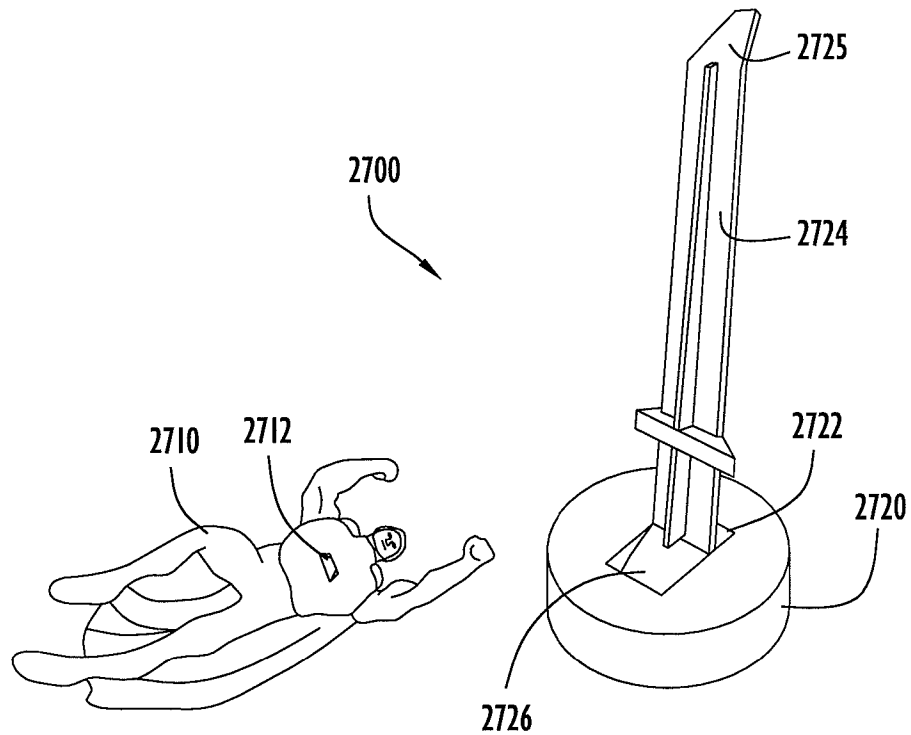


FIG. IIO

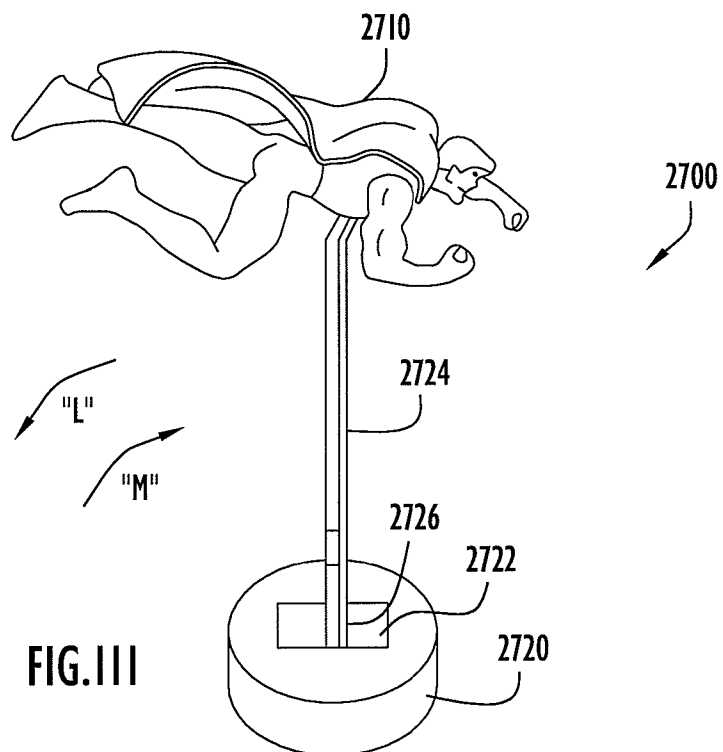


FIG. III

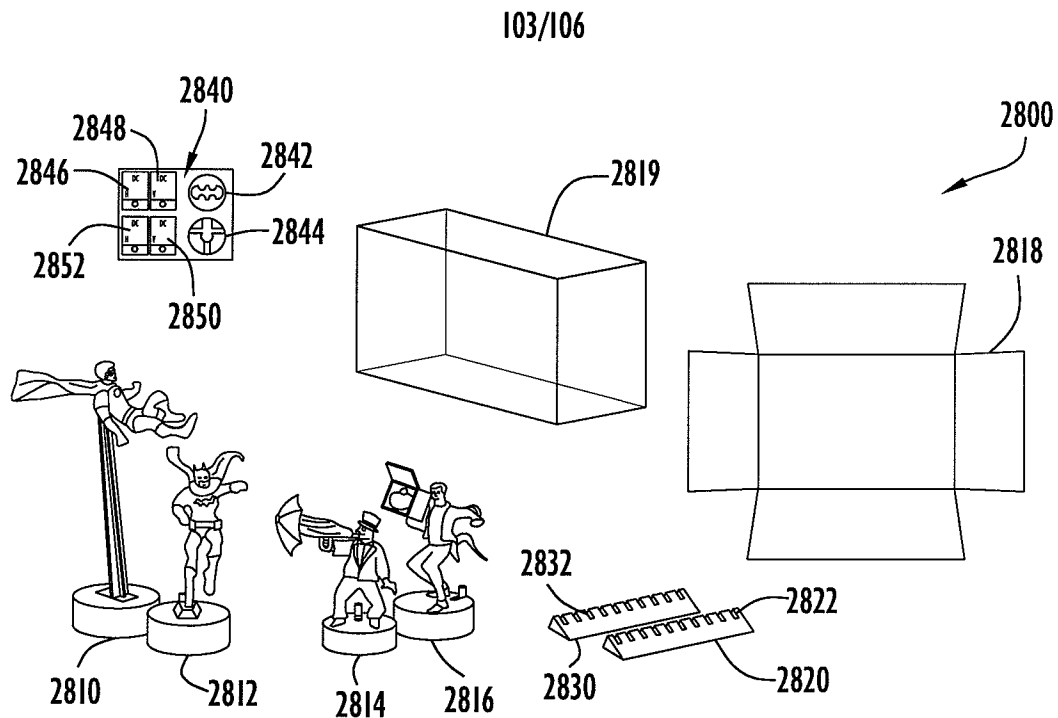


FIG. 112

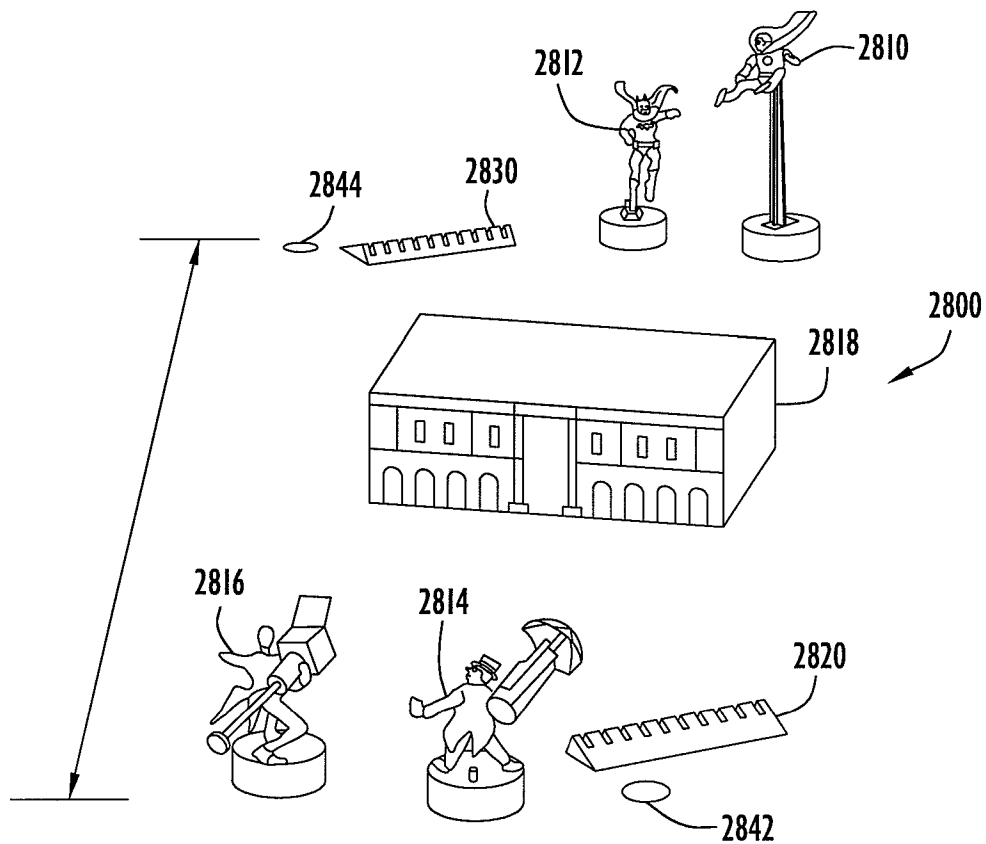
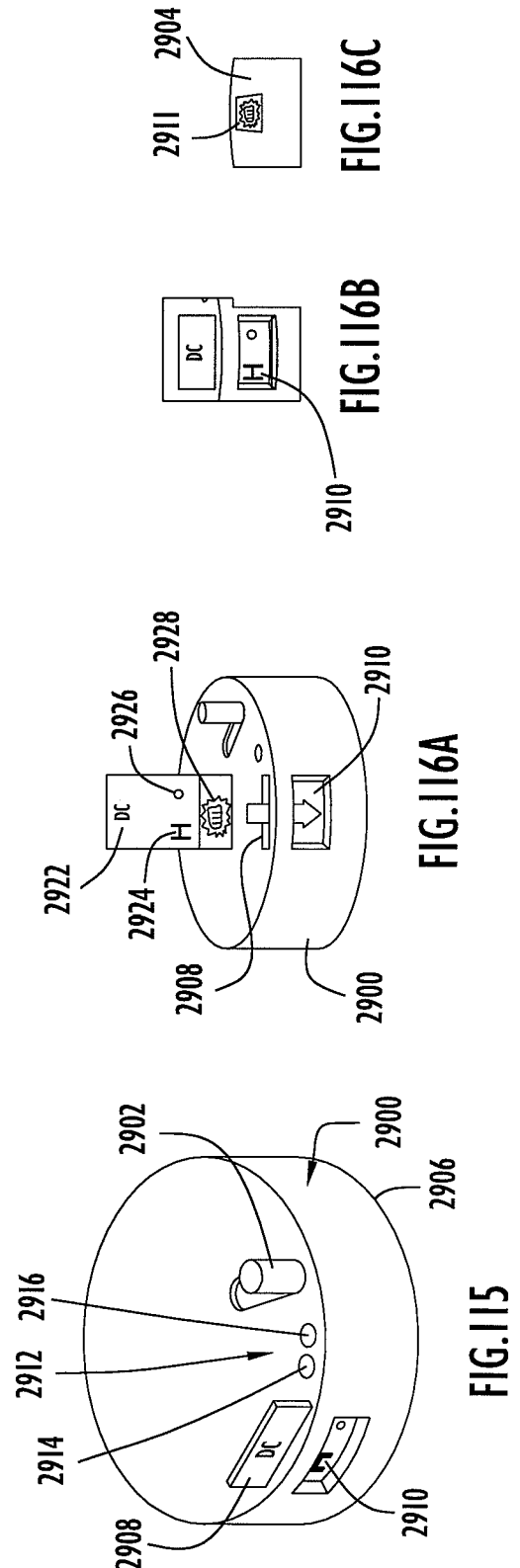
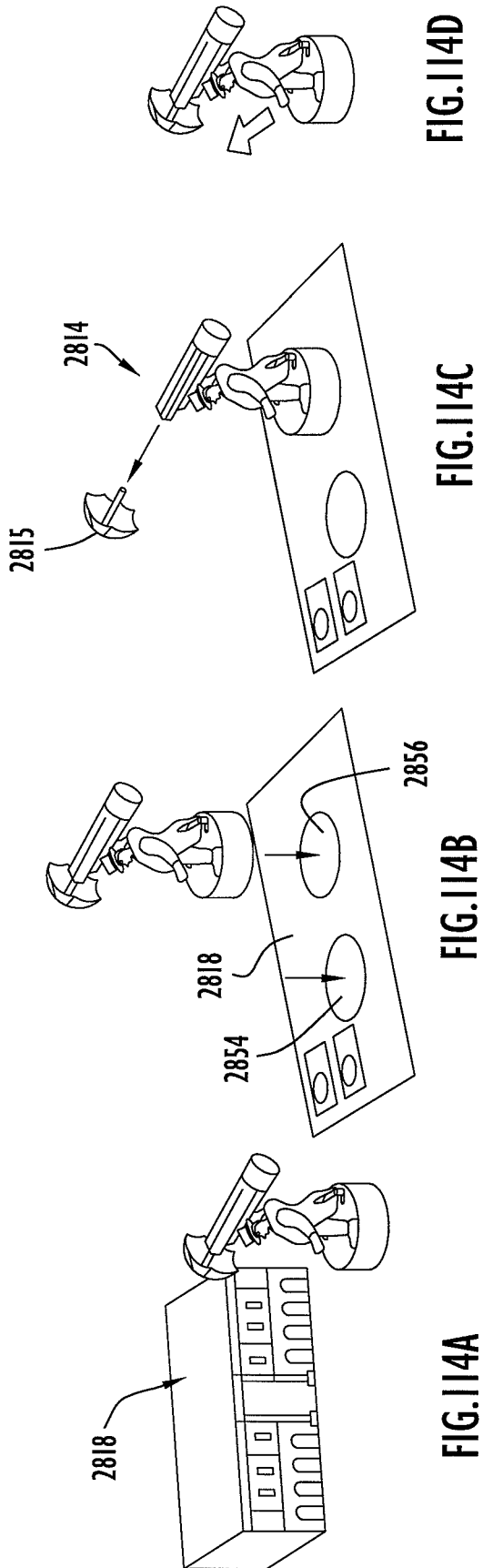


FIG. 113

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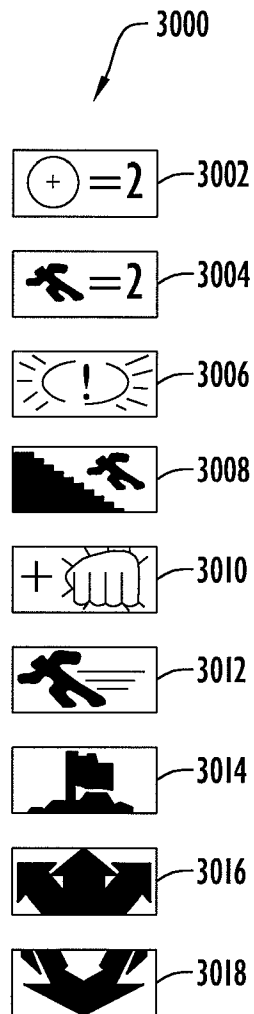


FIG. 117A

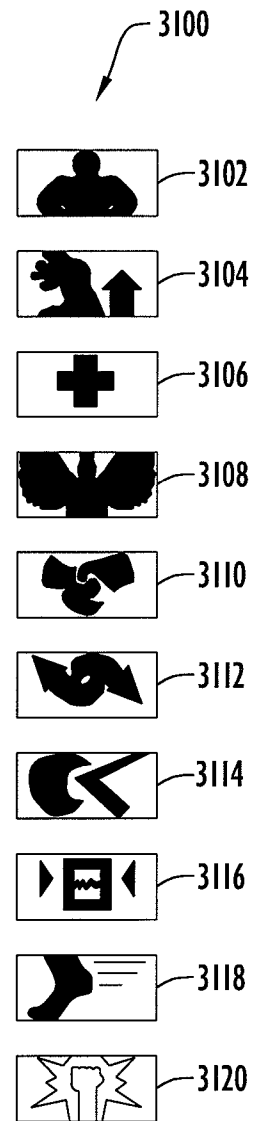


FIG. 117B

