



US 20050199253A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Fiore et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0199253 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 15, 2005**

(54) **NAIL VENEER APPLIQUE**

Publication Classification

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(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **A45D 29/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **132/73**

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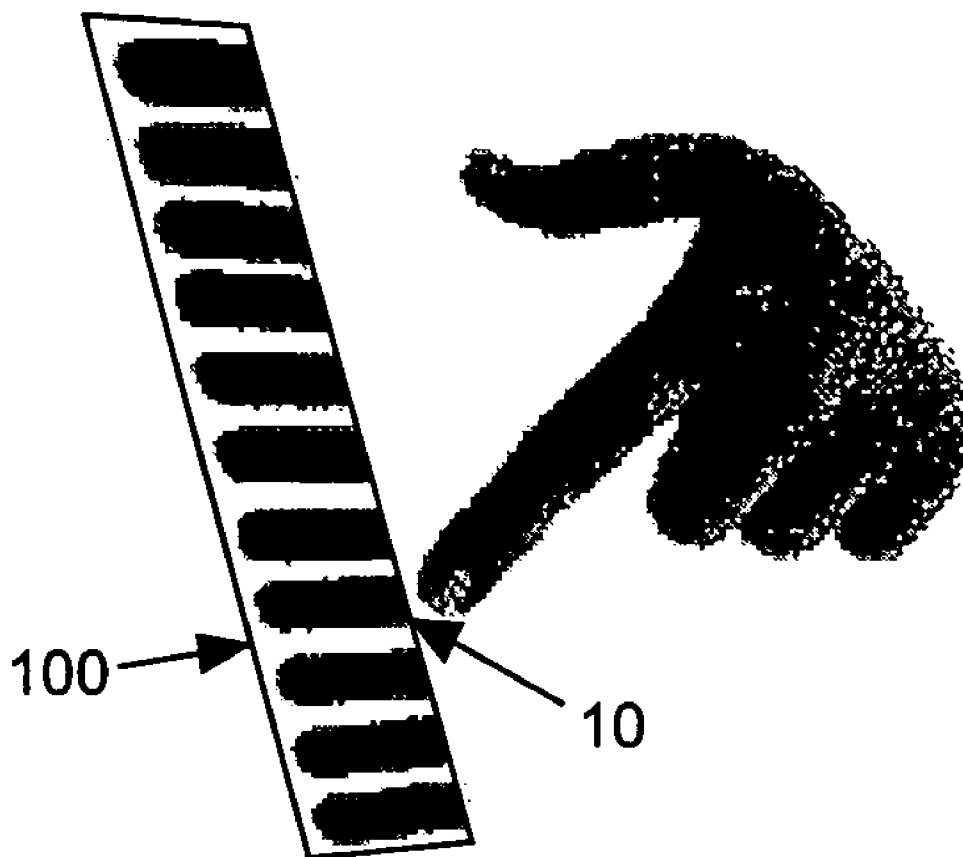
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A nail veneer appliqué formable to the surface shape of a human nail includes a pliable soft vinyl film and an adhesive coating the bottom surface of the film for releasably adhering the film to a fingernail or toenail surface. A solvent based vinyl ink layer is applied to the top surface of the film and an ultraviolet cured ink layer is applied to the solvent based ink layer as a topcoat.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/796,709**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 9, 2004**



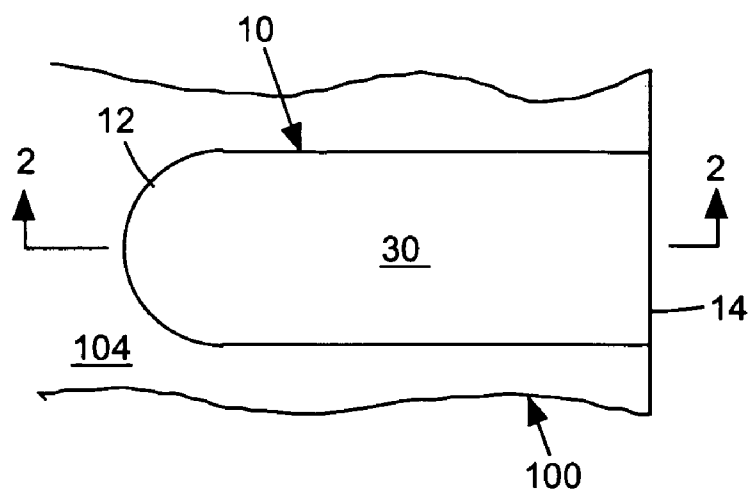


FIG. 1

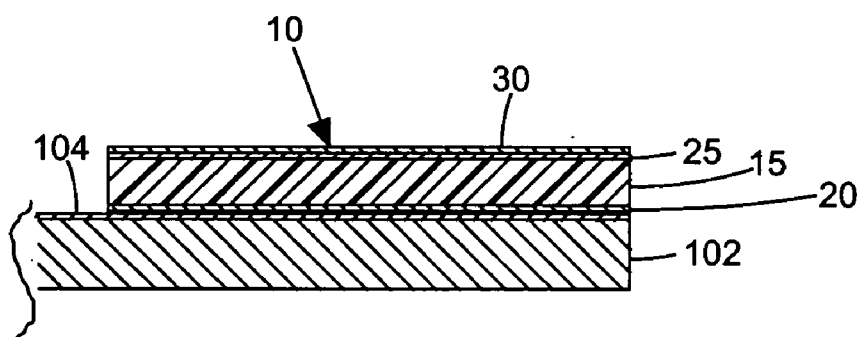


FIG. 2

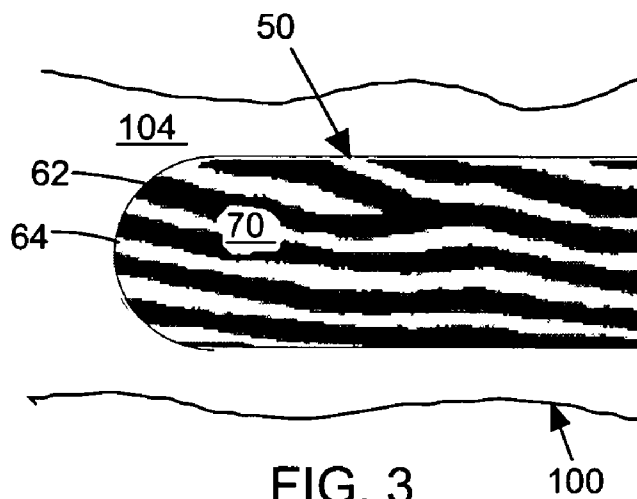


FIG. 3

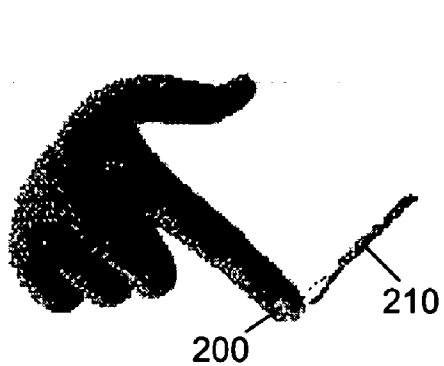


FIG. 4

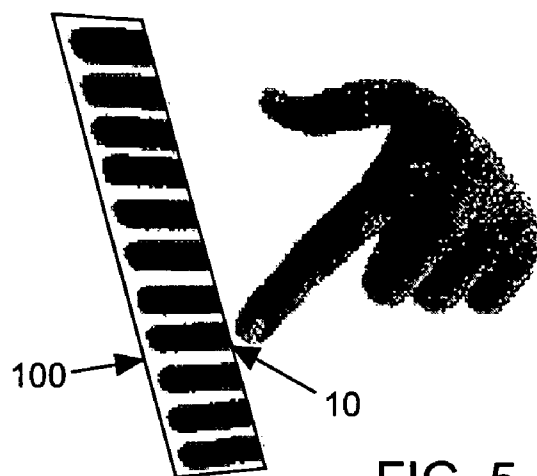


FIG. 5



FIG. 6

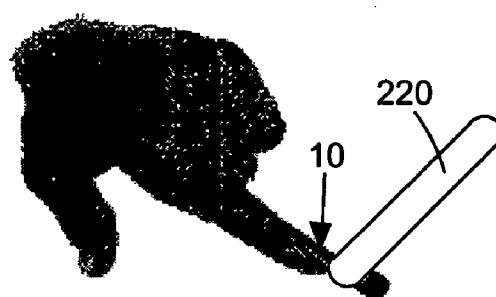


FIG. 7

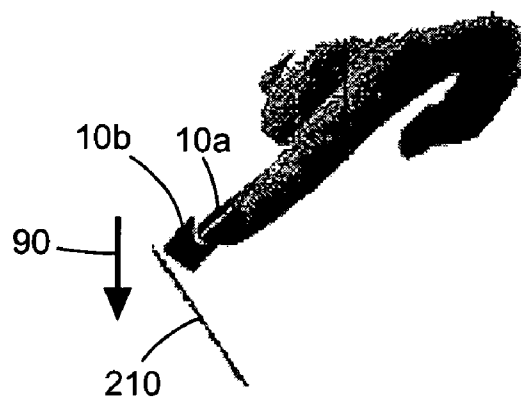


FIG. 8

NAIL VENEER APPLIQUE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to the adornment of human nails and, more particularly, to a nail veneer appliqué for human nails. Herein, it is to be understood that the term “nail” means “fingernail” or “toenail”.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] There are a number of known ways to adorn fingernails. The most common way is to apply nail polish, but the proper application of the polish can be labor intensive and its subsequent removal can be time consuming. As well, at least in the case of fingernails, it is quite common to use artificial nails. However, artificial nails add to the length of nails and cannot be matched to the length of the natural nail.

[0003] The present invention is directed to a novel nail veneer appliqué which can be quickly applied to or removed from a nail, which can be easily sized to the length of a natural nail, and which does not require users to apply a topcoat or to allow time for drying.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a nail veneer appliqué formable to the surface shape of a human nail, the appliqué comprising a pliable soft vinyl film and an adhesive coating the bottom surface of the film for releasably adhering the film to a nail surface. A solvent based vinyl ink layer is applied to the top surface of the film and an ultraviolet cured ink layer is applied to the solvent based ink layer as a topcoat.

[0005] During manufacture, the solvent based ink layer advantageously serves to shield the vinyl film from the damaging effects of ultraviolet energy (UV) that have been found to occur when a UV curable ink is applied directly to the vinyl film and then cured. From a user's perspective, the UV cured topcoat is advantageous because it is then unnecessary for the user to apply a topcoat and no drying time is required.

[0006] The solvent based ink layer may comprise a single layer or the combination of a plurality of sublayers. All layers including the topcoat and, if sublayers are used, the sublayers forming the solvent based ink layer, may be silkscreen printed layers. When sublayers together with a transparent topcoat are used, silkscreening enables appliqués to be produced with an endless variety of visual artistic or design appearances.

[0007] The invention will now be described in more detail with reference to the drawings in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is top view of a nail veneer appliqué in accordance with the present invention when positioned atop a supporting liner, the latter of which is partially cut away.

[0009] FIG. 2 is cross-section view, not to scale, taken along section line 2-2 in FIG. 1.

[0010] FIG. 3 is top view of another nail veneer appliqué in accordance with the present invention, also when positioned atop a supporting liner.

[0011] FIGS. 4 through 8 are a progressive series of Figures illustrating the use of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, there is shown a nail veneer appliqué generally designated 10 positioned atop a supporting liner generally designated 100. As indicated in FIG. 6, liner 100 conveniently may carry a plurality of appliqués sized the same as or differently from appliqué 10 to accommodate differing fingernail sizes.

[0013] Applique 10 extends from a cuticle end 12 to a nail tip end 14 and comprises a pliable soft vinyl film 15, an adhesive 20 coating the bottom surface of the film for releasably adhering the film to the surface of a human nail; a solvent based vinyl ink layer 25 applied by silkscreen printing to the top surface of film 15; and a UV cured ink layer 30 applied as a topcoat by silkscreen printing to ink layer 25 (before UV treatment but after ink layer 25 has dried).

[0014] Preferably the vinyl film 15 is about 2 mil in thickness and the adhesive 20 is a rubber based adhesive. While other adhesives might be used, a rubber based adhesive allows the appliqué to be more easily lifted from a nail. This is desirable not only for the purpose of permanently removing the appliqué from a nail, but also to allow the appliqué to be easily repositioned on the nail if there is any initial misalignment.

[0015] Both UV curable inks and solvent based vinyl inks are commercially available from a variety of sources. However, in the case of solvent based vinyl inks, it has been found that the selection of ink may have a discernable impact on product performance. Presently, NAZDAR™ GS solvent based inks available from Nazdar Company, Shawnee, Kans., are preferred. Generally, it may be noted that to avoid avoid toxicity, none of the inks used should include lead additives.

[0016] Liner 100 is standard paper stock coated with a release layer 104 to which appliqué 10 is releasably adhered until such time as the appliqué is removed for use.

[0017] In FIG. 2, ink layer 25 is shown as a single layer. Typically, such a layer might be a selected solid color (e.g. a pink shade, a red shade, a mauve shade, etc.). However, it will be readily understood by those skilled in art of silkscreening that one or more additional layers of ink could be silkscreen printed atop layer 25. Layer 25 and each additional layer together may then be regarded as a composite layer of solvent based vinyl ink comprised of individual sublayers.

[0018] By way of example, FIG. 3 illustrates a nail veneer appliqué 50 which, apart from the inks, is essentially the same in size and construction as nail veneer appliqué 10. However, rather than displaying a continuous solid color, appliqué 50 displays a zebra strip design comprised of black stripes 62 on a white background 64. The white background is achieved with a white solvent based vinyl ink silkscreen printed on the underlying vinyl film (not shown in FIG. 3). The black stripes are achieved with a black solvent based vinyl ink silkscreen printed atop the white ink. A UV cured ink layer 70 is silkscreen printed atop both the white ink and the black ink.

[0019] Rather than printing black on white to achieve the visual appearance shown in **FIG. 3**, it will of course be apparent that the same effect could be achieved by printing white on black. As well, it will be readily apparent that a multitude of silkscreened designs or patterns other than a zebra stripe design, and which may embody two, three or more colors of solvent based inks may be employed to achieve a desired appearance.

[0020] In use, veneer appliqué **10** is applied as follows:

[0021] Preparatory Steps:

[0022] **STEP 1:** Using alcohol or other nail dehydrator, the user's hands, cuticles and nails are cleaned of any dirt, oils or creams.

[0023] **STEP 2:** As illustrated in **FIG. 4** in respect of one nail **200**, the cuticles are manicured and the nails are shaped in a conventional manner with a nail file **210**.

[0024] **STEP 3:** During colder temperatures or if the nails tend to be dry or flaky, it is considered desirable to apply a quick drying topcoat to the nail. Also, a topcoat may be desirable if the user uses a nail hardener or nail strengthening products. Otherwise, the ultimate quality of the bond between the adhesive surface of the veneer appliqué **10** and the nail may be degraded.

[0025] Application Steps:

[0026] **STEP 1:** As illustrated in **FIG. 5**, a veneer appliqué **10** sufficient in size to cover a given nail is selected and peeled from liner **100** (taking care not to touch that part of the adhesive surface which will be in contact with the nail).

[0027] **STEP 2:** As illustrated in **FIG. 6**, the selected veneer appliqué is centered and placed on the nail with cuticle end **12** as close to the cuticle as possible.

[0028] **STEP 3:** Once placed, then as illustrated in **FIG. 7** the veneer appliqué is smoothed down using a finger or suitable smoothing tool **220**. This is done by starting at the center of the veneer appliqué and working towards its edges and down towards the nail tip. If necessary, the veneer appliqué can be gently pulled to assist in forming it to the curvature of the nail. This step should be continued until the user is satisfied that the adhesive surface of the veneer appliqué has total contact with the nail, free of puckers or air bubbles.

[0029] **STEP 4:** After smoothing, any excess length which the veneer appliqué may have is folded down under the nail tip.

[0030] **STEP 5:** Then, as illustrated in **FIG. 8**, using a nail file **210** in a downward motion only as indicated by arrow, excess veneer appliqué **10b** is filed away taking care not to

lift it from the nail surface and not to leave any jagged edges. The remaining portion **10b** of veneer appliqué **10** remains adhered to the nail.

[0031] The applied veneer appliqué **10** may be subsequently removed simply by working a thumb nail under the edge of the appliqué near the cuticle, then gently pulling towards the nail tip to slowly peel the appliqué away.

[0032] While the foregoing embodiments have been described and illustrated with reference to veneer appliqués for fingernails, it will be obvious that the description is equally appropriate in relation to toenails.

[0033] A variety of changes, modifications and variations to the invention are possible within the spirit and scope of the claims which follow. The invention should not be considered as restricted to the specific embodiments that have been described and illustrated with reference to the drawings.

We claim:

1. A nail veneer appliqué formable to the surface shape of a human nail, said appliqué comprising:

(a) a pliable soft vinyl film having a top surface and a bottom surface;

(b) an adhesive coating the bottom surface of said film for releasably adhering said film to the surface of a human nail;

(c) a solvent based vinyl ink layer applied to the top surface of said film; and,

(d) an ultraviolet cured ink layer applied to said solvent based ink layer as a topcoat.

2. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 1, wherein said ultraviolet cured ink layer is transparent.

3. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 1, wherein said solvent based ink layer and said ultraviolet cured ink layer are silkscreen printed layers.

4. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 3, wherein said ultraviolet cured ink layer is transparent.

5. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 1, wherein said solvent based ink layer comprises a plurality of sublayers of differing inks.

6. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 5, wherein said ultraviolet cured ink layer is transparent.

7. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 5, wherein said solvent based ink sublayers and said ultraviolet cured ink layer are silkscreen printed layers.

8. A veneer appliqué as defined in claim 7, wherein said ultraviolet cured ink layer is transparent.

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