

[54] **MAT FOR MOUNTING PRINTS**

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[58] **Field of Search**..... 40/158, 158 B, 63, 104.18, 40/158 A, 124.4

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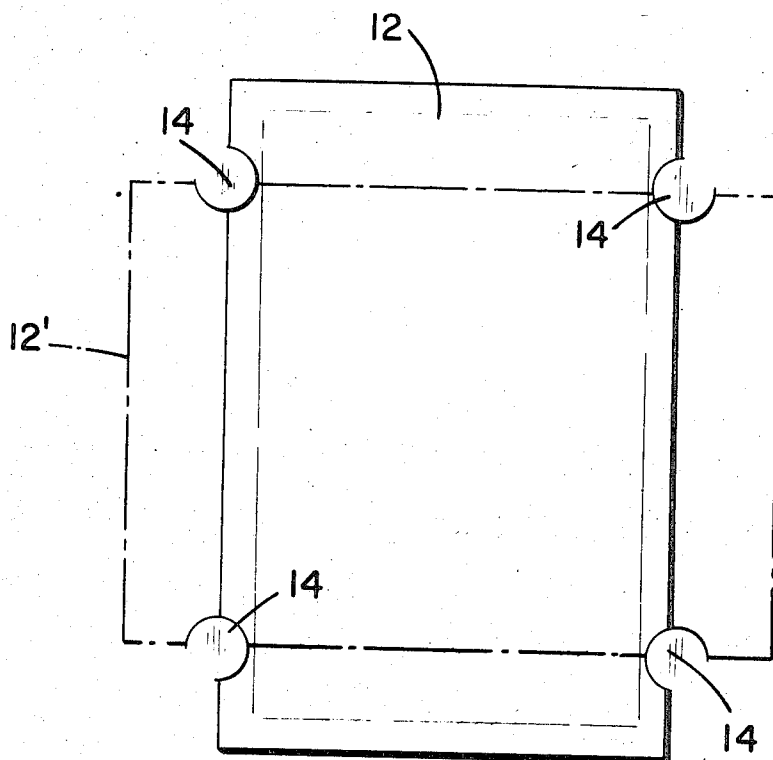
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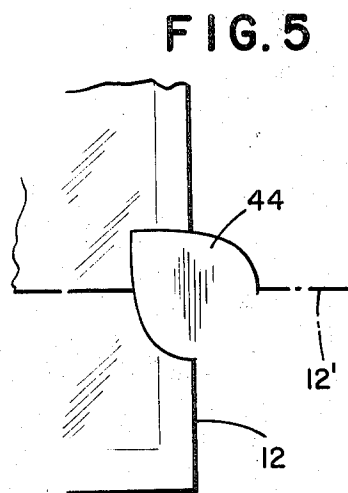
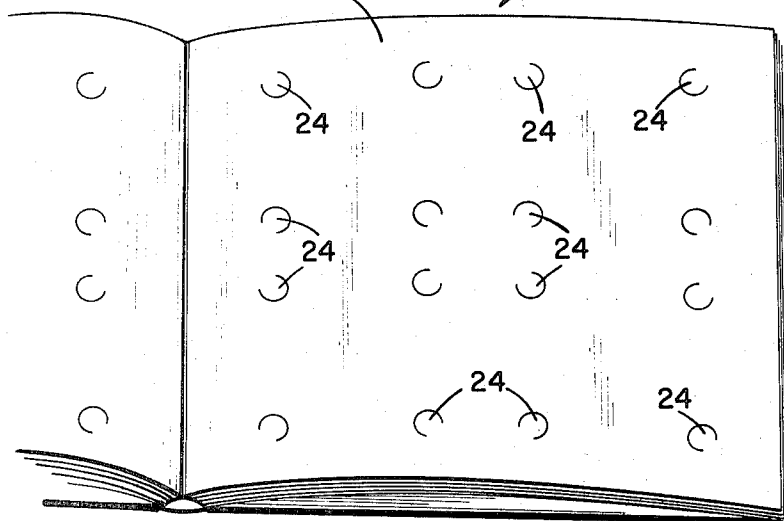
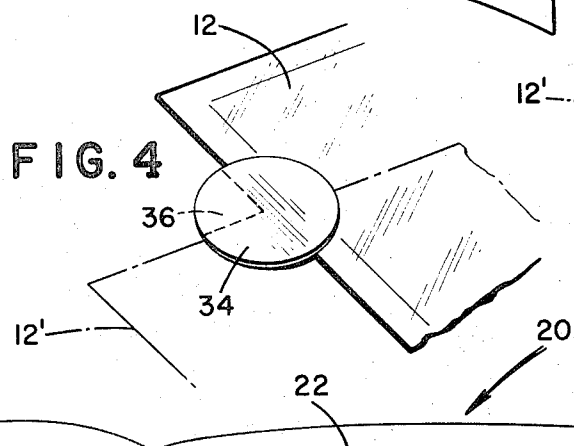
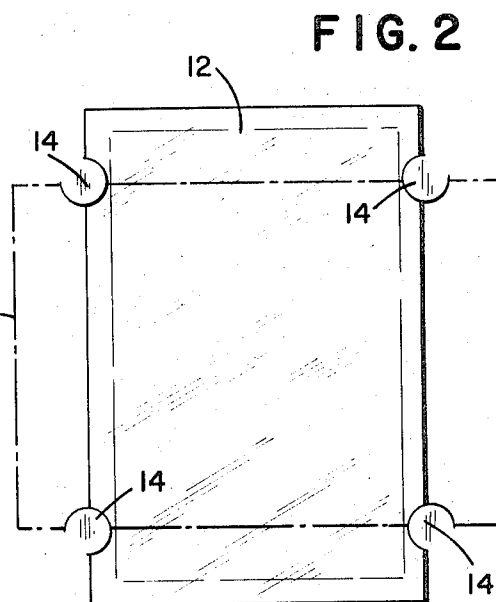
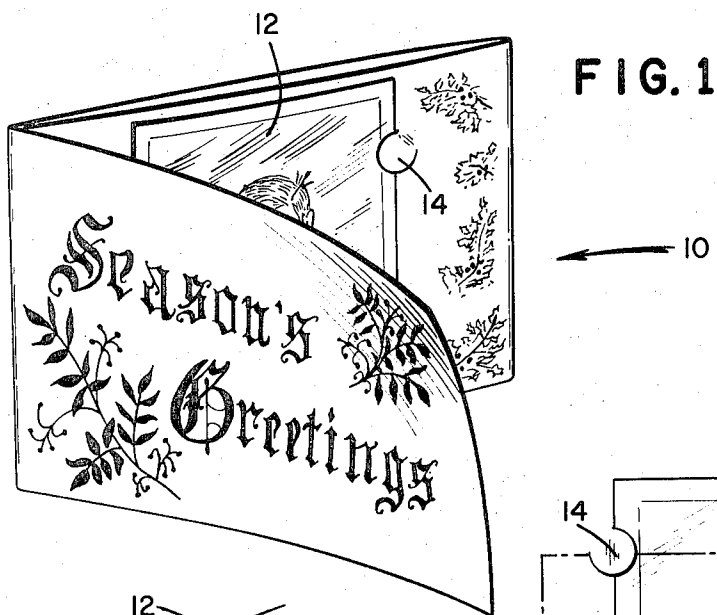
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A mat is provided having inwardly directed tab means on each of the four corners of a square, the sides of the square measuring substantially the same as the width or narrower dimension of an elongated rectangular print which it is desired to mount. With this arrangement the print can be mounted with its longer dimension disposed either vertically or horizontally, by engaging its side edges under either the confronting vertical edges or the confronting horizontal edges of the four tab means, respectively.

5 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures





MAT FOR MOUNTING PRINTS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to mats for mounting photographic and other prints. More particularly, it relates to a new and novel arrangement wherein a mat is provided with four uniquely disposed tabs, designed so that an elongated rectangular print can be mounted either vertically or horizontally.

2. Description of the Prior Art

A common manner for displaying and storing photographs and other prints is to mount them onto a mat, a mat for purposes of this invention including a stiff sheet of mounting board or paper, an album page, a greeting card surface, or any other sheet-like element on which it is desired to mount a print for viewing.

The most common form of print mounting device in use for photographs is the triangular shaped pocket or corner open on its diagonal side, and prepared with an adhesive on its rear surface. Four of these mounting corners are individually secured to a mat surface where it is desired to mount a print, one corner being attached to the mat at the location of each corner of the print. While such mounting corners have been used successfully for many years, their individual installation requires both time and a certain degree of skill. For certain commercial uses, therefore, they are less than ideal, because of the diseconomies involved.

In particular, the use of such conventional mounting corners is not suited for use in greeting cards of the type wherein a photograph is to be mounted, such as is in common use at the Christmas season. Christmas cards in particular are usually mailed in considerable quantity, and the use of the conventional mounting corner is therefore usually to expensive and time consuming. In addition, the use of such mounting corners is frequently objected to for aesthetic reasons. Thus, there have been attempts to develop suitable alternatives, for mats in general and greeting cards in particular.

One such alternative has been to simply cut diagonal slits in the mat where each of the four corners of a print are to lie, either a single slit whereby a pocket is formed to receive the print corner, or a pair of closely spaced slits that form a band beneath which the print corner is slipped. This arrangement is well suited to greeting cards, for it eliminates the step of attaching separate mounting elements to the mat surface, avoiding both the economic and the aesthetic problems mentioned earlier. Mats with such slits, moreover, can be easily and quickly manufactured. However, this slit concept of itself fails like the conventional mounting corners to solve another problem, faced particularly in the production of greeting cards.

The most common configuration for a photographic print is that of an elongated rectangle, a typical print measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. Depending on the subject and the composition of the picture, the print can need to be oriented either horizontally or vertically for proper viewing, and either arrangement can be faced when preparing greeting cards, or when mounting pictures in an album or elsewhere.

Thus, those who are faced with furnishing greeting cards, albums and the like face two choices when using the previously described slit method for mounting prints. Either they must furnish two sets of slits on the mat for each print to be mounted, one set for horizontal

mounting and the other for vertical mounting, or they must stock two different mats, one for each print orientation. The former approach results in a mat with an extra set of slits in it, and which therefore presents an unsightly appearance. The latter approach requires the manufacturer and retailer to stock two complete lines of mats for each print size, one for vertical prints, and one for horizontal prints.

There is thus need for a print mounting arrangement that will accommodate either vertical or horizontal prints, which presents an aesthetic appearance, and which can be easily and economically manufactured. The present invention is directed toward satisfying that need.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In the present invention a mat is provided with four inwardly directed tab means positioned at the corners of a square, each side of the square measuring the same or slightly greater than the width or narrower dimension of an elongated rectangular print which is to be mounted. With this arrangement, the print can be mounted horizontally by engaging its side edges under the confronting horizontal portions of the tab means, or vertically by engaging said edges under the confronting vertical portions of the tab means. Thus, universal mounting capability is provided, with only one set of four tab means for each print.

The tab means in the preferred embodiment of the invention are simply cut or punched in the mat itself, thus preserving the advantages of the older, earlier described slit arrangements. In another embodiment, the tabs are separable elements secured to the mat, much like the common mounting corner. In either arrangement, the shape of the inwardly projecting portions of the tabs can be varied as desired, and the unique universal mounting capability of the invention is present.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a mat having a single set of means to mount an elongated rectangular photographic or other print in either a vertical or a horizontal position.

Another object is to provide a tab arrangement that can be easily and economically manufactured, and which presents a pleasing aesthetic appearance.

Other objects and many of the attendant advantages of the invention will become readily apparent from the following Description of the Preferred Embodiments, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a Christmas greeting card having a mat made according to the preferred embodiment of the invention, wherein an elongated rectangular print is shown mounted in a vertical orientation;

FIG. 2 is a plan view of the mat of FIG. 1, showing how the print can be mounted either vertically or horizontally, and showing the arrangement of the tabs at the four corners of a square;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an album having a mat provided with sets of tab means, for mounting several prints;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged, fragmentary view of a second embodiment of the invention, wherein a separate tab

element is adhesively secured to the mat at each corner of a square; and

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary view similar to FIG. 2, wherein the tab assumes a heart shape, such as might be desirable for St. Valentine's Day greeting cards, and is intended to illustrate that the tab configuration is largely a matter of choice.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2 of the drawings, a greeting card is indicated at 10, and consists of an elongated rectangular strip of light cardboard or the like with the end portions thereof folded inwardly upon the center portion, one of the end portions, which constitutes the cover of the card, overlying the other inwardly folded end portion, which constitutes a mat for mounting a photograph 12. The exterior of the cover of the card has a suitable greeting imprinted thereon, and the mat portion of the card is provided with the print mounting arrangement of the invention.

It is to be understood that greeting cards of configurations other than that shown can be employed with the invention, and indeed it is again noted that a mat as that word is employed herein is to be construed to mean any sheet-like element on which it is desired to mount a print for viewing.

Referring now in particular to FIG. 2, the mat of the card 10 is shown to have four tabs 14 cut therein, each tab being formed integrally with the mat by cutting a three-quarter circle in the mat with a stamping die or by some other suitable means. The tabs 14 are arranged so that the centers thereof overlie the corners of a square, each side of the square measuring substantially the same as the width or narrower dimension of the elongated rectangular photograph 12. The tabs 14 are all inwardly directed, with a tab 14 in one corner confronting a tab 14 in the diagonally opposite corner, and with the quarter circle of each tab 14 that is not cut away being bi-sectioned by a diagonal line passing through the diagonally opposite corners of the square on which the tabs 14 are all arranged. The un-cut quarter circle portion of each tab 14, of course, serves to maintain the tab connected with the mat.

With the arrangement shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the print 12 can be mounted either vertically as shown by the full lines in FIG. 2, or horizontally, as is indicated by the phantom lines at 12'. In the former case, the inwardly directed, confronting vertically extending portions of each pair of horizontally aligned tabs 14 overlie the print 12 along its side edges, and in the latter case the confronting, inwardly directed horizontal portions of each pair of substantially vertically aligned tabs 14 similarly engage the side edges of the print 12'.

It is readily seen from FIGS. 1 and 2 that the four tab arrangement of the invention is capable of mounting a given size print in either a vertical or a horizontal orientation, thus eliminating the need to manufacture and stock two types of cards 10 for each given size of elongated rectangular print. This in effect results in a halving of the inventory that must be maintained for each size print, and also in less tooling and other production costs. Further, it is evident that the arrangement of the invention presents a pleasing aesthetic appearance, thus eliminating sales resistance common with some other mounting arrangements.

The tab arrangement of the invention, as has been stated, is of course adaptable to other mats than that of a greeting card, such as the mats or pages of a photo album. FIG. 3 shows an album 20 comprised of mats 22, the mat 22 having four sets of tabs 24 cut therein, so that four different prints can be mounted, each in either a horizontal or a vertical orientation, as required for viewing.

While the integral tab formation arrangement of FIGS. 1-3 is the preferred embodiment of the invention, it is also contemplated that the invention can be implemented utilizing separately formed tab elements, if desired. Such an arrangement is illustrated in FIG. 4, wherein a circular tab 34 is separately formed, one quarter of the circle on the rear surface of the tab having an adhesive coating 36 thereon. The tabs 34 are mounted much like the conventional mounting corners, at the corners of a square as shown in FIG. 2. Obviously, such separately formed tab elements could also be riveted or otherwise secured to a mat, if desired.

The circular tab configuration of FIGS. 1-4 is simple and aesthetically pleasing, as well as functional. However, it is contemplated that if desired other configurations for the tab are possible, the only requirement being that portions of each tab project inwardly both horizontally and vertically so that the side edges of a print mounted either horizontally or vertically can be engaged. Referring now to FIG. 5, one such variation of a tab configuration is shown wherein a tab 44 formed in the same manner as the tabs 14 and 24 is generally heart shaped, a configuration that would be well adapted for St. Valentine's Day greeting cards, for example.

Obviously, many other variations and modifications of the present invention are possible.

I claim:

1. An arrangement for mounting an elongated rectangular print in either a horizontal or a vertical position, comprising: a mat; and four inwardly directed tabs carried by said mat and arranged at the four corners of a square, each side of the said square having a length corresponding substantially to the narrower dimension of said elongated rectangular print, the corners of the square underlying the central portions of said tabs, and each tab being free of said mat at least over an arc length of 270 degrees centered on the said corner of said square underlying the central portion of the inwardly directed tab and measured inwardly and around from the extension beyond said corner of one of the sides of said square to the extension beyond said corner of the adjacent side of said square.

2. An arrangement as recited in claim 1, wherein said tabs are formed integrally with the mat, by cutting a non-continuous formation in the mat at each corner of said square.

3. An arrangement as recited in claim 2, wherein said tabs comprise three-quarter circles, with the centers of said circles overlying the corners of said square, and with the non-cut portions of each tab being bi-sectioned by a diagonal line drawn through diagonally opposite corners of said square.

4. An arrangement as recited in claim 1, wherein said tabs are formed separately from said mat, and are secured thereto.

5. An arrangement as recited in claim 1, wherein said mat is provided with a plurality of sets of four of said tabs.

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