United States Patent

Follett

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[54] NOVELTY BATHING GARMENT

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **2/67,** 161/159

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A41d 7/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 2/67, 243; 161/159, 6; 128/517, 580

[56] **References Cited**

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Primary Examiner—H. Hampton Hunter
Attorney—Robert W. Black

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A novelty bathing garment is provided which gives a bather the appearance of wearing a sponge from the sea. The garment is composed of an outer layer of natural or artificial sponge and an inner layer next to the body of a bather of a fabric liner affixed to the inner surface of the sponge outer layer. The sponge outer layer is of a thickness such that a portion of the pores in the sponge layer extends nearly or completely through the layer making the inner fabric liner visible or nearly visible therethrough and the remaining pores giving the garment when worn by the bather the appearance the bather is wearing a sponge. Besides the natural color of sponge, the sponge outer layer can be of any color and/or of varying colors to give many decorative effects.

7 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures

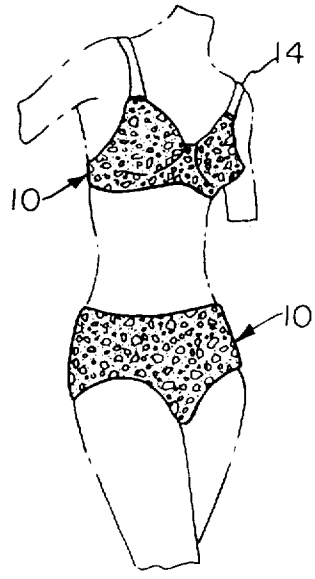


FIG. 1

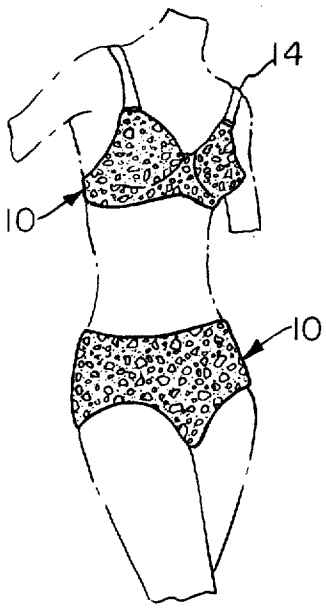


FIG. 2

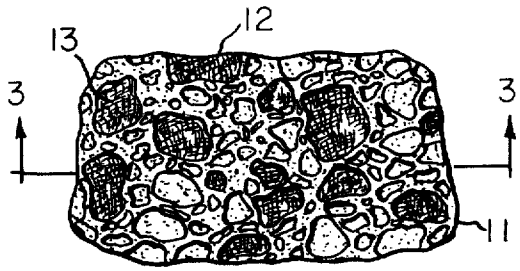


FIG. 3

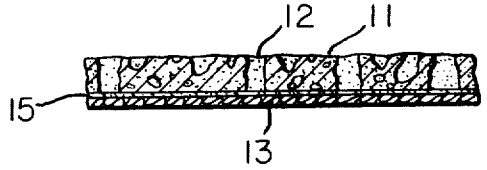


FIG. 4

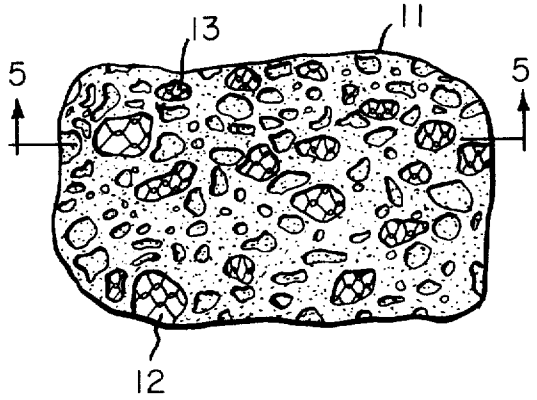
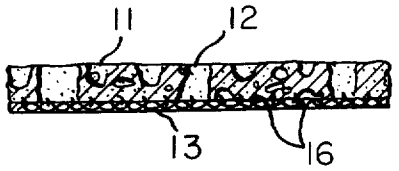


FIG. 5



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NOVELTY BATHING GARMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to novelty bathing garments and more particularly to novelty bathing garments made from natural or artificial sponges.

2. Prior Art

There are bathing garments of many kinds in the prior art composed of conventional fabrics and fabric structures and even foam rubber to give padded and buoyant swim wear. These latter garments usually fulfill some functional purpose and they have very little, if any, decorative appeal. Also, most of the fabrics are similar in material construction appearance, lack association of the garment to water, and do not give a novel visual appearance such as a three-dimensional effect. There is no visible appearance that the bather is associated with his bathing environment. Thus, it would be desirable to provide a bathing garment which appears to bring the bather closer to his bathing environment or natural habitat.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

According to the present invention there is provided a novelty bathing garment composed of an outer layer of natural or artificial sponge and an inner layer next to the body of fabric liner affixed to the inner surface of said sponge outer layer, said sponge outer layer of a thickness such that a portion of the pores in said sponge layer extends nearly or completely through said layer, making the inner fabric layer visible or nearly visible therethrough, and the remaining pores giving the garment when worn by a bather the appearance the bather is wearing a sponge.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a two-piece bathing garment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged fragmentary view of the outer surface of the bathing garment having no see-through beyond the fabric layer;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line 3—3 of FIG. 2 showing the fabric adhered to the sponge;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary view of the outer surface of the bathing garment having see-through beyond a netlike fabric liner; and,

FIG. 5 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line 5—5 of FIG. 4 showing the fabric stitched to the sponge.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

Referring to the drawings, the bathing garment **10** is composed of an outer layer of natural or artificial sponge **11** having a multiplicity of pores **12** of varying sizes. The sponge layer is of a thickness such that some of the pores extend nearly or completely through the sponge layer, making the inner fabric liner **13** visible or nearly visible therethrough. By varying the sponge thickness and the sponge pore size, and by making the inner fabric layer of a contrasting background such as a different color or skin color, a very interesting and decorative effect can be obtained in which the bather wearing the garment appears to be wearing a three-dimensional material coming from a bathing environment. By making fabric liner **13** of a netlike material, an over-all see-through effect can be obtained. The bathing garment can be supported by the usual shoulder or neck straps **14** of any suitable material. It can be a one-piece or two-piece garment, and, if desired, it can be made as a strapless garment.

The sponge outer layer is made from natural sponge

(phylum porifera — the elastic porous mass of interlacing horny fibers which forms the internal skeleton of certain marine animals) or artificial sponge cut into sheets usually one-sixteenth inch to one-half inch in thickness. Sheets can be easily made by cutting the sponge into sheets of desired thickness when the sponge is saturated with a liquid such as wax or water which is solidified therein. Artificial sponge sheets can be manufactured by the usual known techniques. The sponge should be, and remain, resilient, i.e., it should not get rigid when subjected to alternate wettings and dryings. In order to diminish water absorbency, the sponge sheet or the bathing garment itself can be treated with a water-proofing material or a water-repellent material. This material can be applied by spraying, dipping, or the like, according to usual techniques.

Since the sponge is inherently weak, a liner is employed to give support and strength to the sponge, and give added comfort to the wearer. The liner is usually a fabric or scrim which can be in the form of a body stocking of cotton, linen, ramie, elastomeric fabrics or of man-made fiber-fabrics such as rayon, nylon, acrylic or polyester, preferably thin, which is tightly or loosely woven or netlike. Non-woven fabrics can also be used. For example, non-woven cellulosics such as paper or non-woven, spun-bonded polymeric materials such as polyolefins and polyesters can be employed.

The fabric liner is affixed to a surface of the sponge sheet or the inner surface of the sponge in bathing garment form in any desired manner. For example, the sponge can be united with the fabric by cementing the two together at spots or over the entire surface with any appropriate adhesive **15** as shown in FIG. 3, especially an adhesive which is water insensitive. Also, the two layers can be stitched together **16** as shown in FIG. 5 or adhered by heat and pressure (melt bonded) where the nature of the materials permits. For example, artificial sponge resilient material can be formed in situ on the inner fabric liner, with the inherent ability to seal and adhere to the fabric liner when the sponge is formed.

What is claimed is:

1. A novelty bathing garment composed of an outer layer of natural or artificial marine sponge having a wide range of pore sizes and an inner layer next to the body of fabric liner affixed to the inner surface of said sponge outer layer, said sponge outer layer of a thickness such that a portion of the pores in said sponge layer extend completely through said layer, making the inner fabric layer visible therethrough and a portion of the remaining pores extend nearly through said layer, the total effect giving the garment when worn by a bather the appearance the bather is wearing a marine sponge.

2. The bathing garment of claim 1 wherein the fabric liner inner layer is stitched to the inner surface of said sponge and the outer layer is one-sixteenth inch to one-half inch in thickness.

3. The bathing garment of claim 1 wherein the fabric liner inner layer is adhesively bonded to the inner surface of said sponge and the outer layer is one-sixteenth inch to one-half inch in thickness.

4. The bathing garment of claim 3 wherein the fabric liner and sponge layer are of different colors.

5. The bathing garment of claim 1 wherein the fabric liner is of a netlike material so as to give the bathing garment an over-all see-through effect.

6. The bathing garment of claim 1 wherein the sponge outer layer is a sponge sheet formed by cutting a sponge saturated with a liquid which is solidified therein.

7. The bathing garment of claim 6 wherein the liquid is water.

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