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(54) **DECORATIVE ARTIFICIAL PORTALS**

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(76) **Inventor: Russel Abrams, Alexandria, VA (US)**

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Correspondence Address:
**LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK
600 SOUTH AVENUE WEST
WESTFIELD, NJ 07090 (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention is directed to a decorative device for use in a hanging arrangement. The device includes a frame having a plurality of sides defining an opening. The frame includes a front side and a rear side. The frame gives the outward appearance of a portal of a building as viewed from the interior of the building. The device also includes a holding structure for removably securing a picture in the frame so that when a picture representative of an outdoor scene is held by the holding structure, the frame and the picture cooperate provide the appearance of looking through an open portal of an outdoor scene represented by the picture.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) **Provisional application No. 60/603,122, filed on Aug. 19, 2004.**

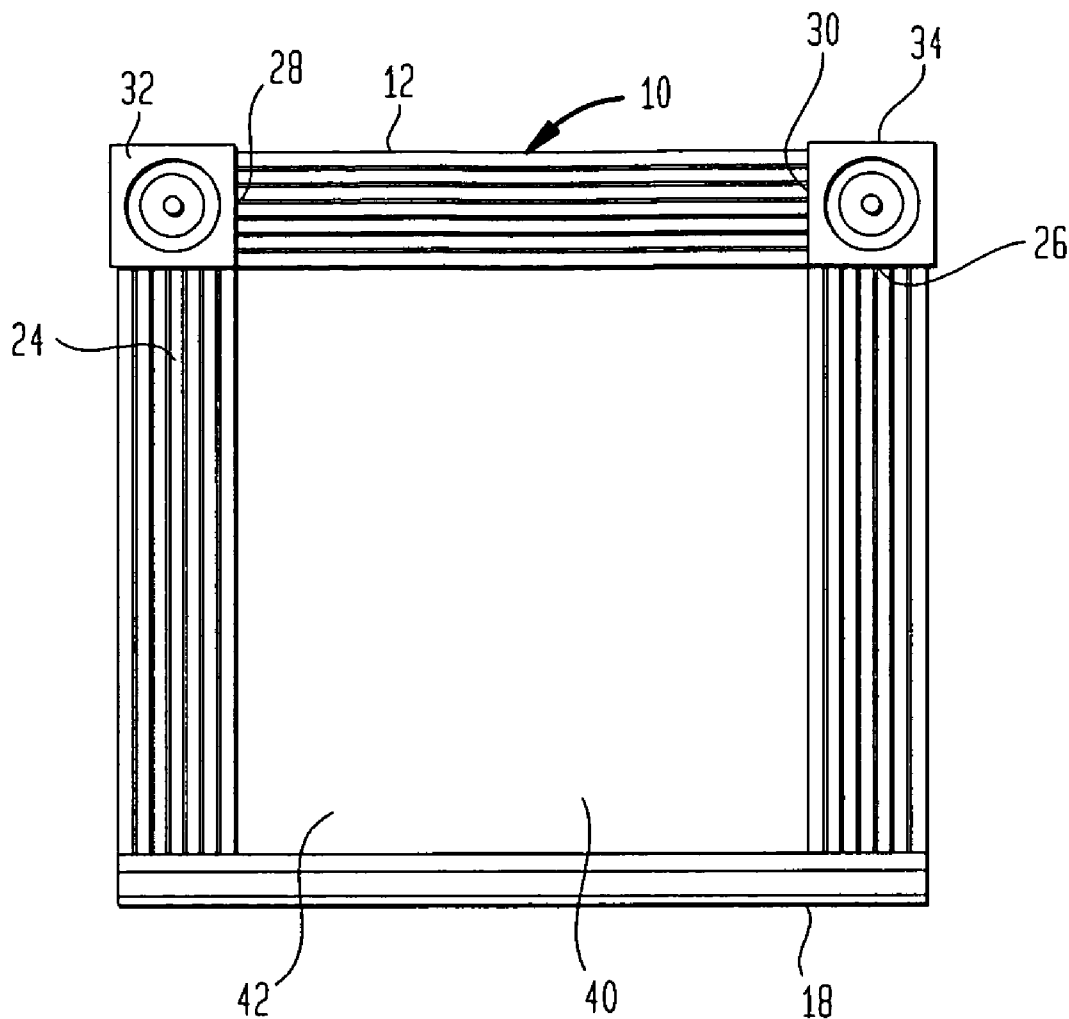


FIG. 1

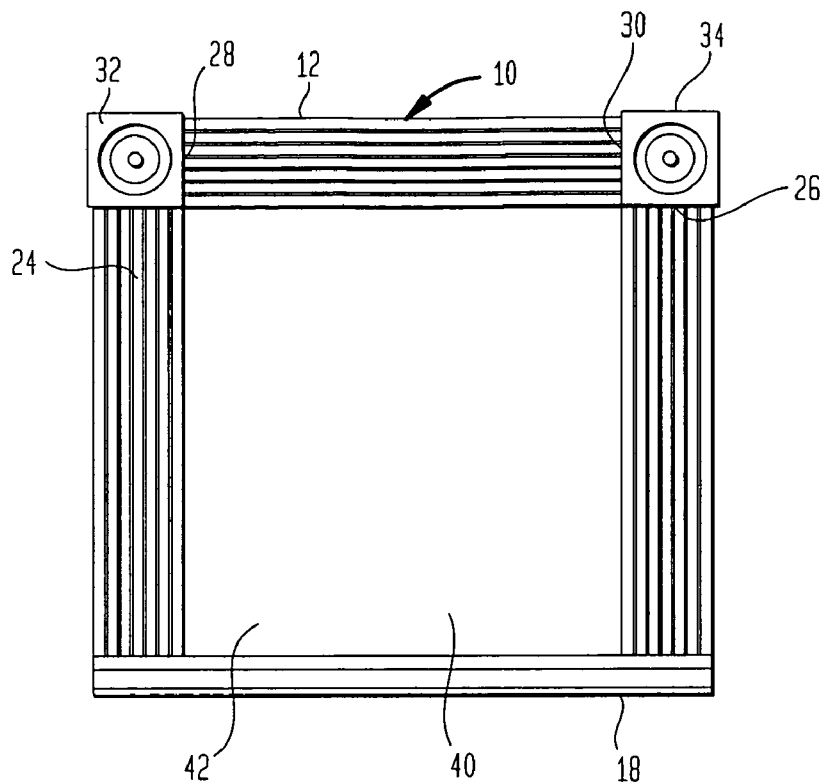


FIG. 2

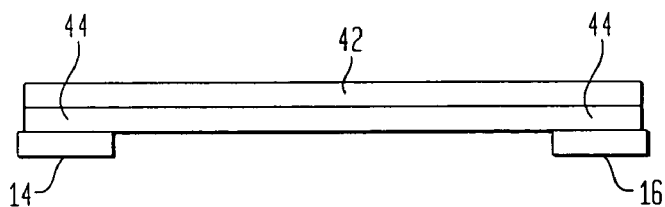


FIG. 3

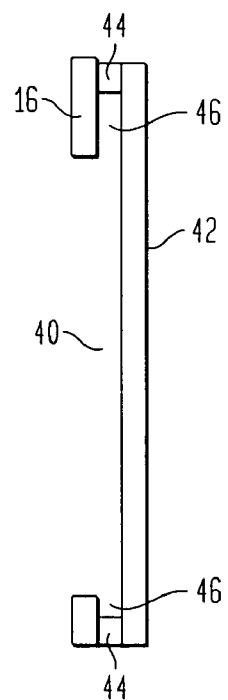


FIG. 4

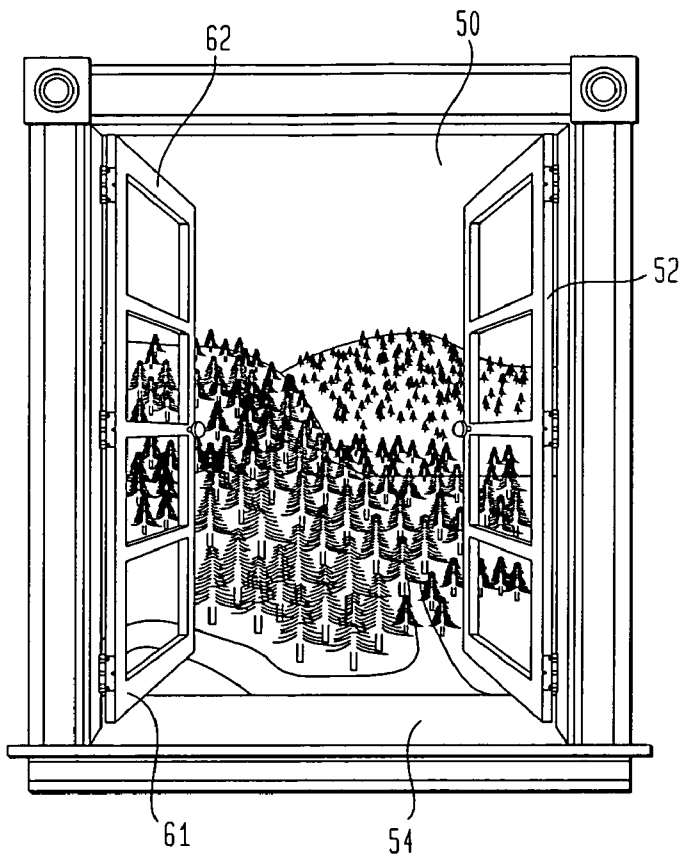
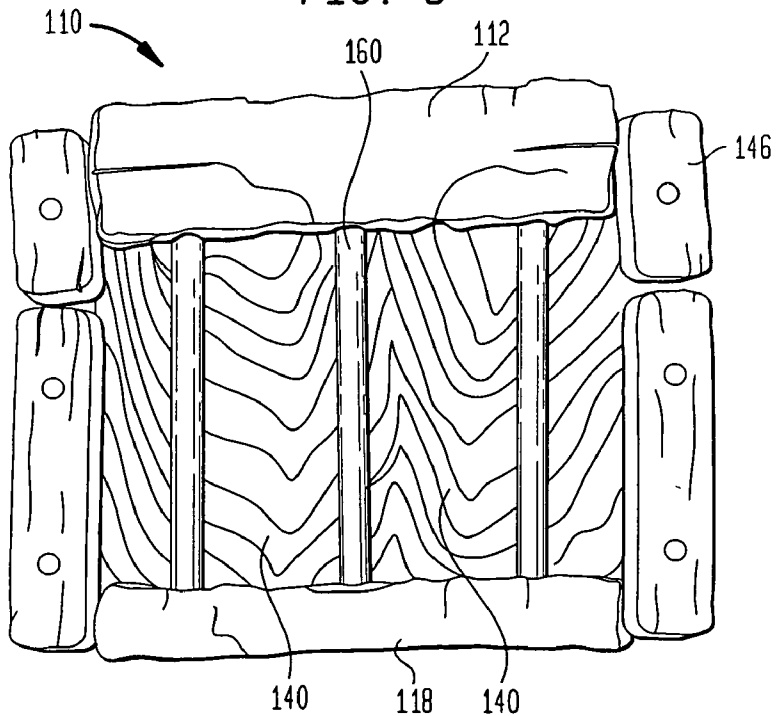


FIG. 5



DECORATIVE ARTIFICIAL PORTALS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of the filing date of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/603,122 filed Aug. 19, 2004, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to wall hangable decorations and particularly to a portal assembly capable of receiving a mural or picture therein.

[0003] Decorative hangings, such as pictures or photographs are often used to provide color and personality to a room. This is specifically warranted in rooms that are either devoid of windows or only have a minimum amount of exterior views. One such example commonly found especially in urban areas, is interior office spaces in large structures. The interior office spaces generally include a wall having a doorway and three additional walls having no portals whatsoever. The confined aspect of the room can cause one to feel depressed and isolated.

[0004] Basements and structures substantially below ground level are additional examples of confined spaces that may lack exterior views.

[0005] Prior art designs have tried to solve this problem by providing color and imagination to the room. Often a few simple decorative hangings such as photographs or pictures positioned correctly in a barren room help to lighten the mood of the room. Unfortunately, this may not remove the feeling of being confined in an enclosed space.

[0006] Additional prior art designs have attempted to reduce the feeling of being confined in an enclosed space by providing murals. The murals may be created on a barren wall and capture a scene that gives the appearance of looking outdoors. The murals may reduce the dreariness of the room and the aspect of feeling confined. Unfortunately, murals, similar to pictures, have another drawback. They are not easily changed. Therefore, once a person invests in purchasing a mural or hiring an artist to create one, they cannot easily change the scene depicted without incurring an additional cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention is directed to a decorative device for use in a hanging arrangement. The device includes a frame having a plurality of sides defining an opening. The frame includes a front side and a rear side. The frame gives the outward appearance of a portal of a building as viewed from the interior of the building. The device also includes a holding structure for removably securing a picture in the frame so that when a picture representative of an outdoor scene is held by the holding structure, the frame and the picture cooperate provide the appearance of looking through an open portal of an outdoor scene represented by the picture.

[0008] The frame may include decorative elements projecting at least partially across the opening. The decorative elements may have the appearance of elements of a portal

while the holding structure is adapted to hold the picture to the rear of the decorative elements. The decorative elements may stimulate the appearance of windowpane holders. In addition, the decorative elements may include a pair of elements simulating opposite sides of a casement window in a partially opened position, each element of the pair including a generally trapezoidal lattice.

[0009] In an alternate embodiment, the holding structure may include a back panel at least partially removed from the frame so as to form a groove therebetween. The slot being opened to an exterior of the frame.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a plan view of one embodiment of the present invention;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a top view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a plan view of an additional embodiment of the present invention; and

[0014] FIG. 5 is a plan view of an additional embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] FIG. 1 illustrates one embodiment of the present invention. A portal 10 may be constructed using various construction materials. The portal 10 is preferably constructed to give the appearance that one is looking through an opening. For example, portal 10 may include top molding 12 and two side moldings 14 and 16. Portal 10 may further include a sill 18 disposed at the bottom edges 20, 22 of side moldings 14 and 16, respectively. The sill, along with the moldings as shown in FIG. 1, may be constructed to give a window-like appearance. The portal 10 may further include blinds or, as shown in FIG. 4, shutters 23 attached to inside edges of side moldings 14 and 16 using common techniques known in the art.

[0016] As shown in FIG. 1, top edges 24, 26, of side moldings 14 and 16, respectively, may be connected to edges 28, 30 of top molding 12 by rosettes 32 and 34. In additional embodiments, other construction material may replace the rosettes or the moldings may be disposed adjacent to one another using various cuts and miters. For example, edges 24 and 26, as well as edges 28 and 30 may include a 45°-mitered edge that enables the edges to abut one another to form a perpendicular angle.

[0017] In a preferred embodiment, material used to form the portal 10 may be wood such as pine, oak and the like. Portal 10 may also be constructed out of most other rigid material such as plastic, metal and combinations thereof.

[0018] With reference to FIG. 1, top molding 12, side moldings 14, 16, and sill 18 define opening 40 therebetween. A back panel 42 is positioned adjacent the moldings 12, 14, 16 and sill 18. As shown in FIG. 2, back panel 42 is preferably disposed remote to side moldings 14 and 16. This can be accomplished by placing a plurality of blocks 44 between the two elements.

[0019] In a preferred embodiment as shown in FIG. 3, at least one side of the portal 10 includes a groove 46. Groove

46 is positioned adjacent back panel 42, blocks 44 and side moldings 14 and/or 16. Groove 46 enables a picture once correctly positioned to be securely held in place between back panel 42 and moldings 12, 14 and 16. Thus, in a preferred embodiment, the picture has a dimension slightly larger than the dimension of opening 40. Although groove 46 is shown with respect to side molding 16, the groove may extend to all corners of the portal.

[0020] In a preferred embodiment, at least one side of the portal 10 includes slot 49. Slot 49 is opened to the exterior of the portal as shown in FIG. 3, in order that a picture or poster may be slidably received by the portal through slot 46. Once the picture is received through slot 49 and securely positioned within groove 46, it may be viewed through opening 40.

[0021] As shown in FIG. 4, in a preferred embodiment, picture 50 may be placed between back panel 42 and moldings 12, 14 and 16. The picture 50 may then be viewed through opening 40 as observed by a viewer. Additionally, casements 23 are designed and constructed to give picture 50 a more significant three-dimensional aspect. Casements 23 extend inward across opening 40 and preferably include trapezoidal edges 61 and 62 attached to long rail 63 and short rail 64. The dimension of the four elements creates an appearance of looking through a portal. Picture 50 and casements 23 are preferably designed using a trompe l'oeil effect.

[0022] As previously mentioned, picture 50 is slideably received through slot 49 by portal 10. This enables picture 50 to be removed from portal 10 and replaced with an alternate picture. In this way, as a person becomes disenchanted with a scene displayed in portal 10, they may remove the scene or picture and replace it with a different scene or picture. This eliminates the dreariness of observing the same scene over large spans of time.

[0023] Although not shown in the figures, portal 10 preferably includes various fastening members that allow the portal to be positioned on a wall. The fasteners may include any common techniques known in the art.

[0024] Although the present invention has been described with reference to a window, it is not limited thereto. For example, portal 10 may be designed having various geometric shapes such as an open door, a porthole, a peephole, any shaped window and the like.

[0025] In addition to the embodiments already described, the present invention may have a more humorous tone as well as a child-friendly persona. For instance, as shown in FIG. 5, portal 110 may resemble a barred window giving a prison-like ambience. Portal 110 may be constructed similar to portal 10, yet with brick or concrete sides defining opening 140. Bars 160 may extend from top portal 112 to bottom portal 118. Bars 160 help to provide the prison-like atmosphere to a room where portal 110 is hung and displayed. Similar to portal 10, portal 110 is adapted to slidably receive a picture or scene therein. With the picture received within grooves 146 and slot 149 of portal 110, the scene may be viewed through opening 140 by an observer. In order to complete the prison-like persona, the picture (not shown in the figures) may display a scene of a prison courtyard or such. Preferably the picture is created using trompe l'oeil which provides a more three-dimensional representation.

Once a person becomes bored with the scene in the picture, the picture may be easily removed via slot 149 and replaced with a new scene.

[0026] An additional embodiment (not shown in the figures) may include the portal taking the shape of a window of a car or a rear and side-view mirror.

[0027] The present invention may be packaged so as to include a decorative hanging portal as well as a plurality of pictures. Each picture may illustrate a different landscape or scene. Thereby allowing a person to choose what particular landscape they wish to view. The pictures may be completely different from one another or have a common reference point. For instance, the portal may be marketed with twelve pictures with each picture portray a different time of the year. This allows a person to change the picture in conjunction with the seasons changing.

[0028] Although the invention herein has been described with reference to particular embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles and applications of the present invention. It is therefore to be understood that numerous modifications may be made to the illustrative embodiments and that other arrangements may be devised without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

1. A decorative device for use in a hanging arrangement comprising:

a frame having a plurality of sides, said plurality of sides defining an opening, said frame having a front side and a rear side, said frame, when viewed from said front side, having the appearance of a portal of a building as viewed from the interior of the building; and

a holding structure for removably securing a picture in said frame so that when a picture representative of an outdoor scene is held by said holding structure, said frame and said picture cooperatively provide the appearance of looking through an open portal at the outdoor scene represented by said picture.

2. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said frame includes decorative elements projecting at least partially across said opening, said decorative elements having the appearance of elements of an portal, said holding structure being adapted to hold the picture to the rear of said decorative elements.

3. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein said decorative elements simulate the appearance of window pane holders.

4. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein said decorative elements include a pair of elements simulating opposite sides of a casement window in a partially-open position, each element of the pair including a generally trapezoidal lattice.

5. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said holding structure includes a back panel at least partially remote from said frame so as to form a groove therebetween, said frame defining a slot positioned between said back panel and at least one of said plurality of sides, said slot being opened to an exterior of said frame

6. A decorative device for use in a hanging arrangement comprising:

a frame having a plurality of sides, said plurality of sides defining an opening, said frame having a front side and

a rear side, said frame, when viewed from said front side, having the appearance of a portal of an interior space as viewed from the interior; and

a holding structure for removably securing a picture in said frame so that when a picture representative of an

outdoor scene is held by said holding structure, said frame and said picture cooperatively provide the appearance of looking through an open portal at the outdoor scene represented by said picture.

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