(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
27 August 2009 (27.08.2009)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2009/103129 A1

(51) International Patent Classification:
A47B 97/04 (2006.01) *A47G 1/16* (2006.01)
A47F 7/00 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/AU2009/000203

(22) International Filing Date:
20 February 2009 (20.02.2009)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
2008900807 20 February 2008 (20.02.2008) AU

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(81) Designated States *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available)*: ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— *with international search report (Art. 21(3))*

WO 2009/103129 A1

(54) Title: TRIPOD FOR ARTIST'S EASEL OR OTHER EQUIPMENT

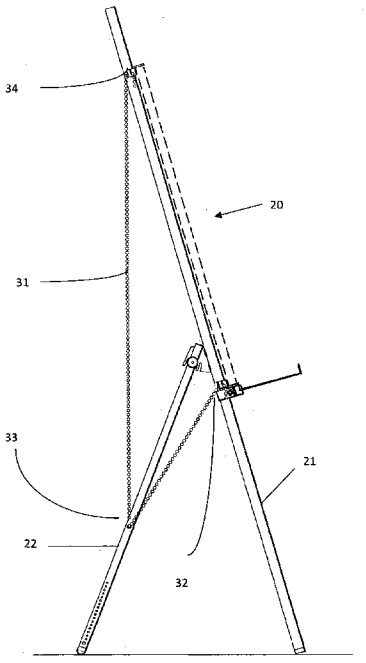


Figure 3

(57) Abstract: A tripod including three support legs with at least one support leg mounted to be selectively moved relative to one other support leg and be positioned at an adjacent closed position or be positioned at an in use position with support legs located at angles relative to each other; and one or more flexible ties are provided for connecting at various lengths between the support legs or members connected thereto at connection points and dependent on the selected angle of support legs relative to each other to stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

TRIPOD
FOR ARTIST'S EASEL OR OTHER EQUIPMENT

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a tripod for an artist's easel, tripod for a display board or projection screen, or a tripod for other equipment. Although the invention has been particularly developed for use as part of an artist's easel, the tripod can have other applications as referred to above.

BACKGROUND ART

Such tripods conventionally consist of three legs joined to each other and extending downwardly and outwardly to form three ground or floor engaging lower ends to provide a self-supporting structure which carries means to mount a backing board or display board or stretched canvas for an artist to use or display final image.

Such tripods also conventionally have a pair of front legs and a single rear leg, which in the case of an artist's easel supports a backing board for a painting. With the forces applied brush or pencil pressure by an artist the structure can prove to be unstable leading to a likelihood of toppling over. It is known from only one example located in patent literature, and therefore not commonly known, to provide a tripod as part of an artists easel where there is a single front support leg and two rear support legs and which provides for a more stable working structure, particularly as an easel for artists. However, it is also known to provide tripods which are capable of being collapsed or adapted to be assembled and disassembled for ease of transportation from one location to another, although this invention is also applicable to tripods, which are rigid, fixed structure.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a tripod for an artist's easel, or for any of the other uses referred to above, which is more stable than known tripods as well as being either a rigid structure, or collapsible or capable of being assembled and disassembled when required for ease of transportation.

However another important aim is to provide a more rigid and therefore more supportive easel.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the invention there is provided a tripod for supporting an item for use or for display, including three support legs, which in use extend downwardly from a central area, and further including one or more cross members at or above the central area, the tripod further including one or more flexible ties provided for connection between connection points on lower portions of one or more of the support legs away from the central area and connection points on an outer portion of the one or more cross members to stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

The connection points on the cross members are laterally outer to the connection points on the support legs.

In one form the tripod can have a central leg with two fitting elements each for receiving a detachable support leg to form the three support legs. The central leg extends above the central area for providing a support to the cross members.

In another form the tripod can have at least one support leg mounted to at least pivotably move relative to one other support leg and one or more flexible ties provided for connection between connection points on one or more of the support legs away from the pivot point at the central area to stabilise and add rigidity to the structure. Two of the support legs can be pivotably mounted to the third support leg.

The length of the, or each, flexible tie between connection points is adjustable. The adjustability is achieved by a series of projections formed along at least portions of the length of the or each tie to selectively engage on either side of slots or holes in the support legs, or members connected thereto.

In the case of a tripod for an artist's easel a support for a backing board is carried by the front support leg of the tripod and the, or each, flexible tie is detachably connected

to the support for the backing board. The tripod can be an artist's easel incorporating a tripod as defined.

Also the invention provides a tripod including three support legs which in use extend downwardly from a central area for supporting one or more support members that can support a display item or backing board or support structure or the like and with at least one support leg mounted able to be selectively moved or disconnected relative to one other support leg and be positioned at an adjacent closed position or be positioned at an in use position with support legs located at angles relative to each other; and one or more flexible ties are provided for connecting at various lengths between the support legs and the display item or backing board or support structure or the like at outer connection points; whereby the selected angle and relative spacing of connection by one or more flexible ties between the support legs and the display item or backing board or support structure or the like can stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

The flexible ties can extend between at least two of the support legs and the display item or backing board or support structure or the like and be able to be selectively adjusted positioned at an in use position relative to each other.

The one or more flexible ties can attach between at least two spaced connection points on the one or more support legs or members connected thereto, and with at least two connection points spaced away from the merging of the one or more support legs.

The tripod can have a cross member mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs and wherein one or more flexible ties extend from two opposing spaced lateral points of the cross member to at least one of the support legs.

A flexible tie is mounted at one point on one support leg or cross member and can extend around or through a connection at a spaced second point on one of the display item or backing board or support structure or cross member and mounted adjustably at a spaced third point on one of the or cross member to provide required tension to

stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

The cross member can be mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs and wherein one or more flexible ties extend from two opposing spaced lateral points of the cross member to at least one of the support legs wherein at least two connection points are on either lateral side of the merging point of the support legs wherein a tensioned array complementary to the tripod formation of the support legs is formed by the support legs, cross members, and flexible ties to form a stable and supportive structure. Alternatively the cross member mounted can be to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs and wherein one or more flexible ties extend from two opposing spaced lateral points of the cross member to at least one of the support legs wherein at least two connection points are on either vertical side of the merging point wherein a tensioned array complementary to the tripod formation of the support legs is formed by the support legs, cross members, and flexible ties to form a stable and supportive structure.

At least one or more flexible ties attach between connection points on a cross member mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs, the connection points spaced at lateral points outer to the support legs relative to the merging point of the support legs.

Also in accordance with the invention is provided a method of providing a stable tripod including the steps of:

a. providing a set of three support legs able to form a tripod;

b. providing an upper extension member which in use extends from the tripod and supports;

c. providing a laterally extending cross member extending across the upward extension of the tripod and forming a holding support for an article;

d. providing one or more flexible ties;

e. connecting the one or more flexible ties between at least two connection points either vertical side of the merging point of the support legs;

wherein a tensioned array complementary to the tripod formation of the support legs

is formed by the support legs, cross members, and flexible ties to form a stable and rigidly supportive structure. The flexible ties can connect between the support legs and the cross member or holding support or the flexible ties can connect between the support legs and the article being supported. The flexible ties can also connect between connection points on the support legs and laterally outwardly located connection points on the cross member or holding support or the article being supported.

It can be seen that the invention through the use of flexible ties connected at variable lengths between selective connection points can cause a linked torsional array that substantially improves rigidity of structure and therefore useful supportiveness of articles such as pictures. However the structure still allows disassembly and ready transport and can be formed of substantially lightweight materials providing support far beyond expected for such lightweight structure.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the invention is more readily understood, a preferred embodiment of the invention, as applied to an artists easel, will now be described by way of illustration only with reference to the drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a front view of the easel;

Figure 2 is a rear view of the easel of figure 1;

Figure 3 is a side view of the easel of figure 1;

Figure 4 and 5 are enlarged views of the manner in which the flexible ties of the easel of figure 1 are detachably connected to the front and rear legs;

Figure 6 is a view of the lower portions of the rear legs of the easel of figure 1, whereby their legs can be adjusted;

Figures 7 and 8 are perspective views of the detachable connections between the front and rear legs of the easel of figure 1;

Figures 9 and 10 are perspective views of the connections between the front leg and upper and lower supports for a backing board for a painting or display, and which allows for the positions of the supports to be adjusted up and down the length of the front leg of the tripod of the easel of figure 1; and

Figure 11 is a perspective view of a way in which a tray for artist's equipment can be detachably supported on the easel.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

Referring to Figures 1 to 3 of the drawings, the artists easel incorporating the tripod of this preferred embodiment and generally indicated as 20, includes a single tubular front leg 21, and two tubular rear legs 22 and 23. Each leg has a domed foot 24 of rubber or other friction generating type material to minimise slippage of the ends of the legs along the surface 25 on which the easel is supported. The rear legs 22 and 23 are detachably connected to the front leg 21 by a bracket 25 in a manner to be later described with reference to Figures 7 and 8. A horizontal lower support member 26 is detachably connected to the front leg by a clamping mechanism 27, and a horizontal upper support member 28 is detachably connected to the front leg by a similar clamping mechanism 27, both of which clamping mechanisms will be later described with reference to Figures 9 and 10 of the drawings. The lower and upper support members 26 and 28 support a backing board 29 for a canvas or paper upon which the artist produces the painting. The clamping mechanisms 27 allow the positions of the support members 26 and 28 to be adjusted up and down the front leg, as well as allowing them to be slid completely off the front leg during disassembly of the easel for transportation purposes. The positions of the support members may be adjusted to suit the working height requirements of the artist and the size of the backing board 29.

The lower ends of the rear legs 22 and 23 are telescopic, as more particularly later described with reference to Figure 6 of the drawings, to maintain a horizontal disposition of the supports of the backing board 29 when the easel is on sloping surfaces.

In order to structurally stabilise the tripod of the easel, when assembled for use by the artist, two flexible ties 31 are provided, one detachably connected at 32 to the end of the lower support member 26 on one side of the easel then passing through holes 33 approximately midway along the length of the rear leg on the same side of the easel and then upwardly to a detachable connection 34 at the end of the upper support

member on the opposite side of the easel. The other flexible tie is connected in the same but in the reverse direction across the easel.

The manner in which the flexible ties 31 are detachably connected at 32 and 34, and positioned within the holes 33 through the rear legs 22 and 23 will now be described with reference to Figures 4 and 5 of the drawings. Each of the flexible ties have a series of spaced apart sperical protrusions have a series of spaced apart spherical protrusions 35 formed as part of, or applied around, the ties, and may be provided along the entire lengths of the ties, or only along their end portions and those portions within lengths of the ties which are to engage within the holes 33 through the rear legs. The protrusions 35 can also be formed by tying a plurality of overlying knots in the ties, when they are made from string, rope or similar material capable of being knotted.

The attachments 32 and 34 are achieved by selectively engaging those portions of the ties between adjacent protrusions in slots 36 formed in the flanges carried by the relevant ends of the lower and upper support members 26 and 28. The required lengths of the ties between the attachments 32 and 34, and thus the tension of the ties between the attachments and the rear legs is adjusted by whatever pair of protrusions engage on opposite sides of the slots 36 and the sides of the holes 33 through the rear legs 22 and 23.

Referring to Figure 6 of the drawings, the telescopic lower ends of the rear legs are provided by inner leg members 22a or 23a received within the ends of the rest of the respective legs, and selected holes 22b or 23b through the inner leg portions aligned with selected holes 22c or 23c through the surrounding rest of the leg, with a pin 37 being inserted through the aligned holes to hold the inner leg members at the adjusted positions. Although in this embodiment the lengths of both rear legs, to thus adjust the horizontal disposition of the easel, it can be sufficient to provide for telescopic adjustments of one leg only.

Referring to Figures 7 and 8 of the drawings, the connections of the upper ends of the

rear legs 22 and 23 at a position along the length of the front leg 21, includes the bracket 25 which is of inverted V-shaped configuration and has an overlying hook member 25a the ends of which extend downwardly on either side of the top of the bracket and into slots 25b in the upper ends of the walls of the rear legs whilst button-like members 25c carried by clamping screws 25d engage in one of a plurality of slots 25e in the lower edges of the bracket 25. The particular slot 25e chosen determines the angle between the rear legs and the front leg and is selected in accordance with what the user requires. The rear legs are detachably connected to the bracket, and this to the front leg, by sliding the tops of the front legs upwardly whereby the slots 25b engage with the hook member 25a and the button-like members engage within selected ones of the slots 25e, whereafter the clamping screws 25d are tightened to hold the rear legs in position.

With reference to Figures 9 and 10 of the drawings, there is shown the clamping mechanisms 27 for attaching the lower and upper support members 26 and 28 to the front leg 21, whereby their positions are adjustable up and down the front leg, or to allow them to be completely removed from the leg. The clamping member consists of a clamping bracket 27a having a connecting flange 27b at either end, and an intervening U-shaped section 27c partly surrounding the front leg to be slid relative thereto. In this embodiment the flanges 27b are bolted, riveted or otherwise attached, top the lower and upper support members at 27d. The U-shaped section also has lugs 27e extending outwardly from the other side of the leg, whilst a clamping bolt 27f with a finger engageable head 27g and when tightened draws the bracket into tight engagement with the leg to clamp the respective support member 26 or 28 to the front leg.

With reference to Figure 11 of the drawings, and with some reference to Figures 9 and 10, the outer ends of the lugs 27e of the clamping bracket have downwardly opening slots 27h formed therein to produce tongues 27i. In this embodiment a tray 37 with an upstanding front flange 37a and a rear horizontal flange 37b to engage over the lower support member 26, is provided to carry artist's equipment, such as brushes and paints. A pair of holes 37c through the base of the tray engages over the tongues 27i

of the clamping mechanism 27 to support the tray on the easel.

Other modifications, employing the spirit of the invention, will be evident to persons skilled in the art without any inventiveness and are included within the scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.

CLAIMS

1. A tripod for supporting an item for use or for display, including three support legs, which in use extend downwardly from a central area, and further including one or more cross members at or above the central area, the tripod further including one or more flexible ties provided for connection between connection points on lower portions of one or more of the support legs away from the central area and connection points on an outer portion of the one or more cross members to stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

2. A tripod according to claim 1 wherein in use the connection points on the cross members are laterally outer to the connection points on the support legs.

3. A tripod according to claim 1 including a central leg with two fitting elements each for receiving a detachable support leg to form the three support legs.

4. A tripod according to claim 3 wherein the central leg extends above the central area for providing a support to the cross members.

5. A tripod according to claim 1 or 2 with at least one support leg mounted to at least pivotably move relative to one other support leg and one or more flexible ties provided for connection between connection points on one or more of the support legs away from the pivot point at the central area to stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

6. A tripod according to claim 5 having two support legs pivotably mounted to the third support leg.

7. A tripod according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the length of the, or each, flexible tie between connection points is adjustable.

8. A tripod according to claim 7 wherein the adjustability is achieved by a series of projections formed along at least portions of the length of the or each tie to

selectively engage on either side of slots or holes in the support legs, or members connected thereto.

9. A tripod according to any one of the preceding claims wherein in the case of a tripod for an artist's easel a support for a backing board is carried by the front support leg of the tripod and the, or each, flexible tie is detachably connected to the support for the backing board.

10. An artist's easel incorporating a tripod as defined in any one of the preceding claims.

11. A tripod including three support legs which in use extend downwardly from a central area for supporting one or more support members that can support a display item or backing board or support structure or the like and with at least one support leg mounted able to be selectively moved or disconnected relative to one other support leg and be positioned at an adjacent closed position or be positioned at an in use position with support legs located at angles relative to each other;

and one or more flexible ties are provided for connecting at various lengths between the support legs and the display item or backing board or support structure or the like at outer connection points;

whereby the selected angle and relative spacing of connection by one or more flexible ties between the support legs and the display item or backing board or support structure or the like can stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

12. A tripod according to claim 11 wherein the flexible ties can extend between at least two of the support legs and the display item or backing board or support structure or the like and be able to be selectively adjusted positioned at an in use position relative to each other.

13. A tripod according to claim 11 or 12 wherein the one or more flexible ties attach between at least two spaced connection points on the one or more

support legs or members connected thereto, and with at least two connection points spaced away from the merging of the one or more support legs.

14. A tripod according to claim 11, 12 or 13 having a cross member mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs and wherein one or more flexible ties extend from two opposing spaced lateral points of the cross member to at least one of the support legs.

15. A tripod according to any one of claims 11 to 14 wherein a flexible tie is mounted at one point on one support leg or cross member and can extend around or through a connection at a spaced second point on one of the display item or backing board or support structure or cross member and mounted adjustably at a spaced third point on one of the or cross member to provide required tension to stabilise and add rigidity to the structure.

16. A tripod according to any one of claims 7 to 11 having a cross member mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs and wherein one or more flexible ties extend from two opposing spaced lateral points of the cross member to at least one of the support legs wherein at least two connection points are on either lateral side of the merging point of the support legs wherein a tensioned array complementary to the tripod formation of the support legs is formed by the support legs, cross members, and flexible ties to form a stable and supportive structure.

17. A tripod according to any one of claims 7 to 12 having a cross member mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs and wherein one or more flexible ties extend from two opposing spaced lateral points of the cross member to at least one of the support legs wherein at least two connection points are on either vertical side of the merging point wherein a tensioned array complementary to the tripod formation of the support legs is formed by the support legs, cross members, and flexible ties to form a stable and supportive structure.

18. A tripod according to any one of claims 7 to 13 wherein at least one or more

flexible ties attach between connection points on a cross member mounted to extend across an upper extension of at least one of the support legs, the connection points spaced at lateral points outer to the support legs relative to the merging point of the support legs.

19. A method of providing a stable tripod including the steps of:
    a. providing a set of three support legs able to form a tripod;
    b. providing an upper extension member which in use extends from the tripod and supports;
    c. providing a laterally extending cross member extending across the upward extension of the tripod and forming a holding support for an article;
    d. providing one or more flexible ties;
    e. connecting the one or more flexible ties between at least two connection points either vertical side of the merging point of the support legs;

    wherein a tensioned array complementary to the tripod formation of the support legs is formed by the support legs, cross members, and flexible ties to form a stable and rigidly supportive structure.

20. A method of providing a stable tripod according to claim 19 wherein the flexible ties connect between the support legs and the cross member or holding support.

21. A method of providing a stable tripod according to claim 19 wherein the flexible ties connect between the support legs and the article being supported.

22. A method of providing a stable tripod according to claim 19, 20 or 21 wherein the flexible ties connect between connection points on the support legs and laterally outwardly located connection points on the cross member or holding support or the article being supported.

23. A tripod substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawings.

24. A method of providing a tripod substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawings.

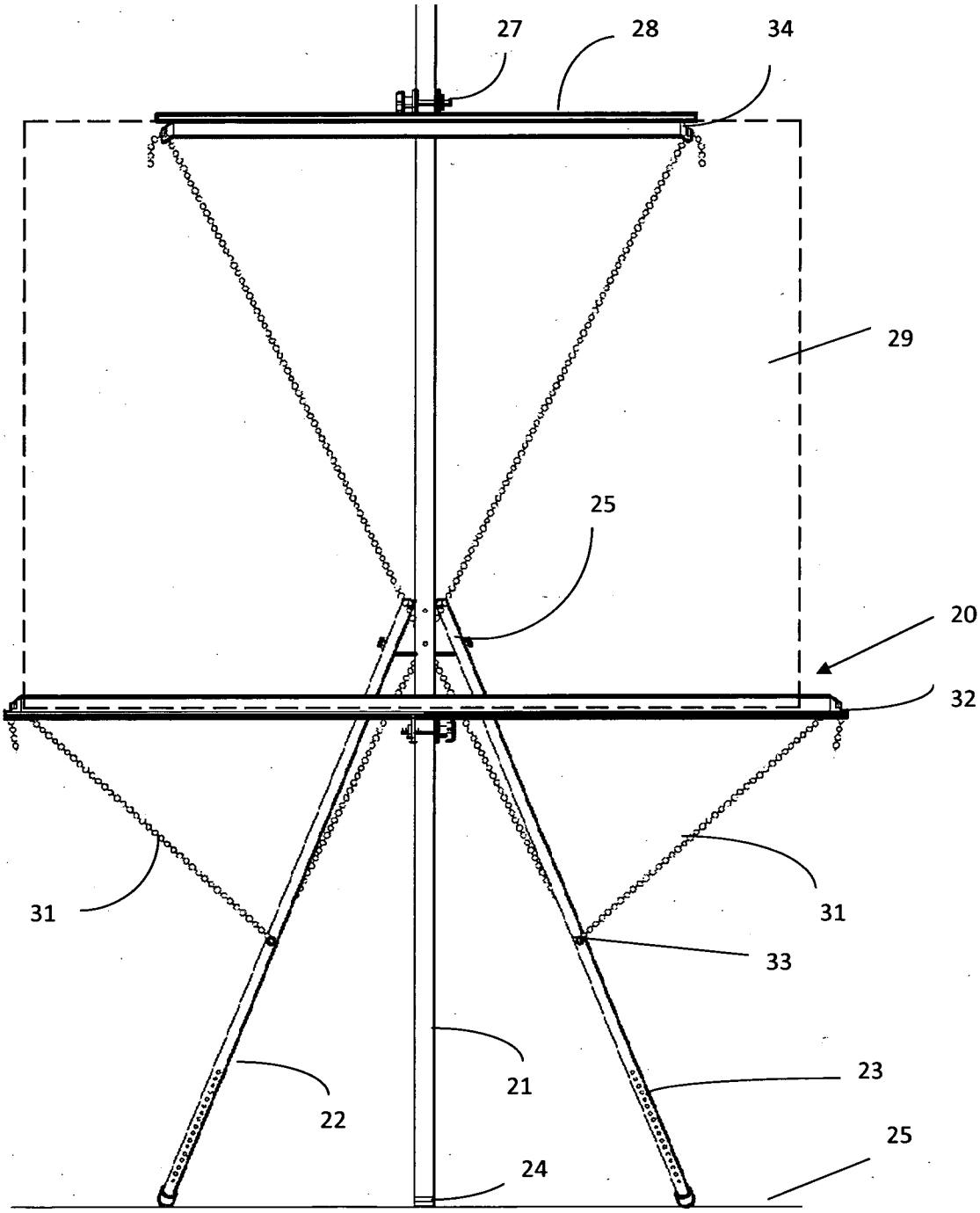


Figure 1

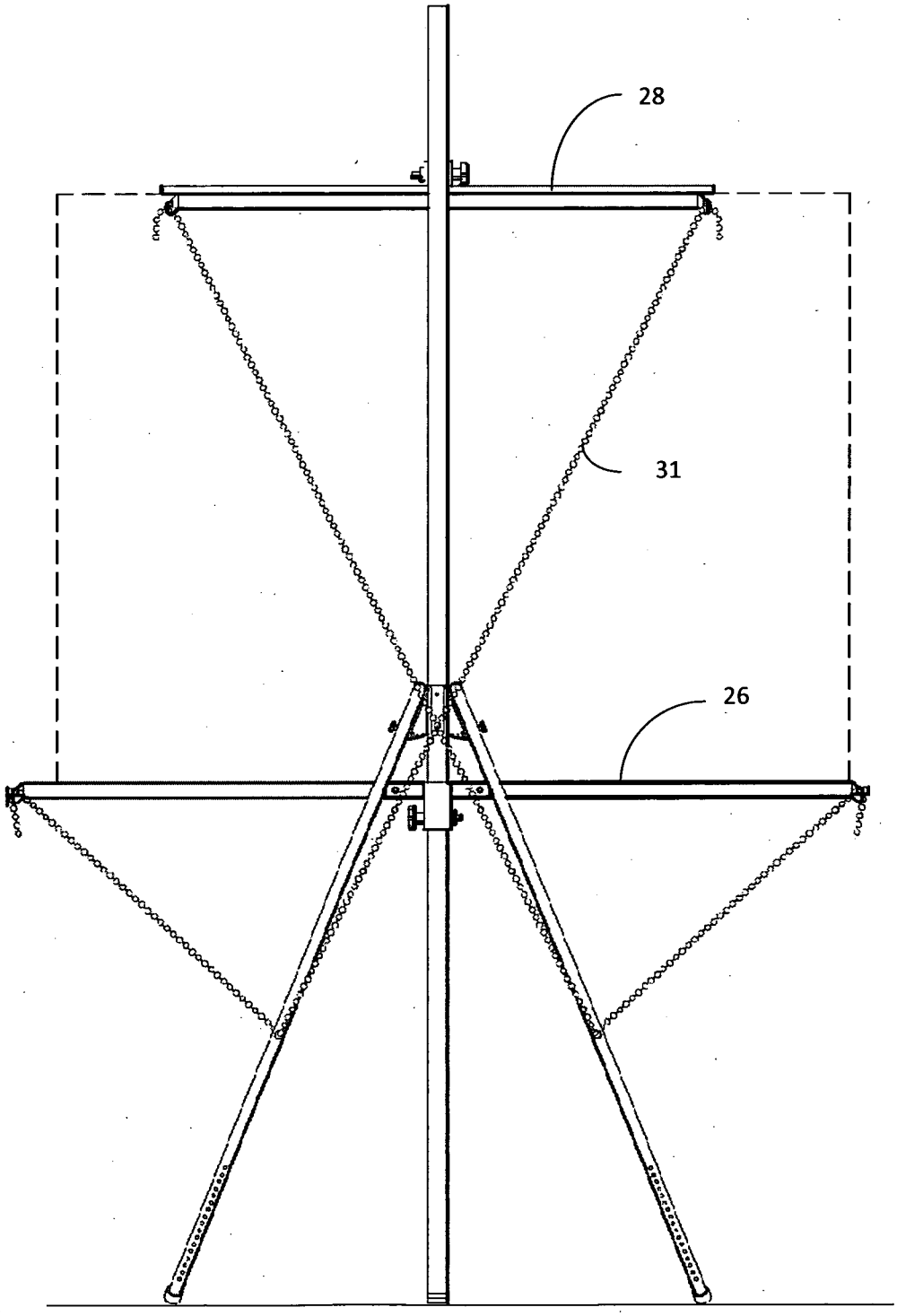


Figure 2

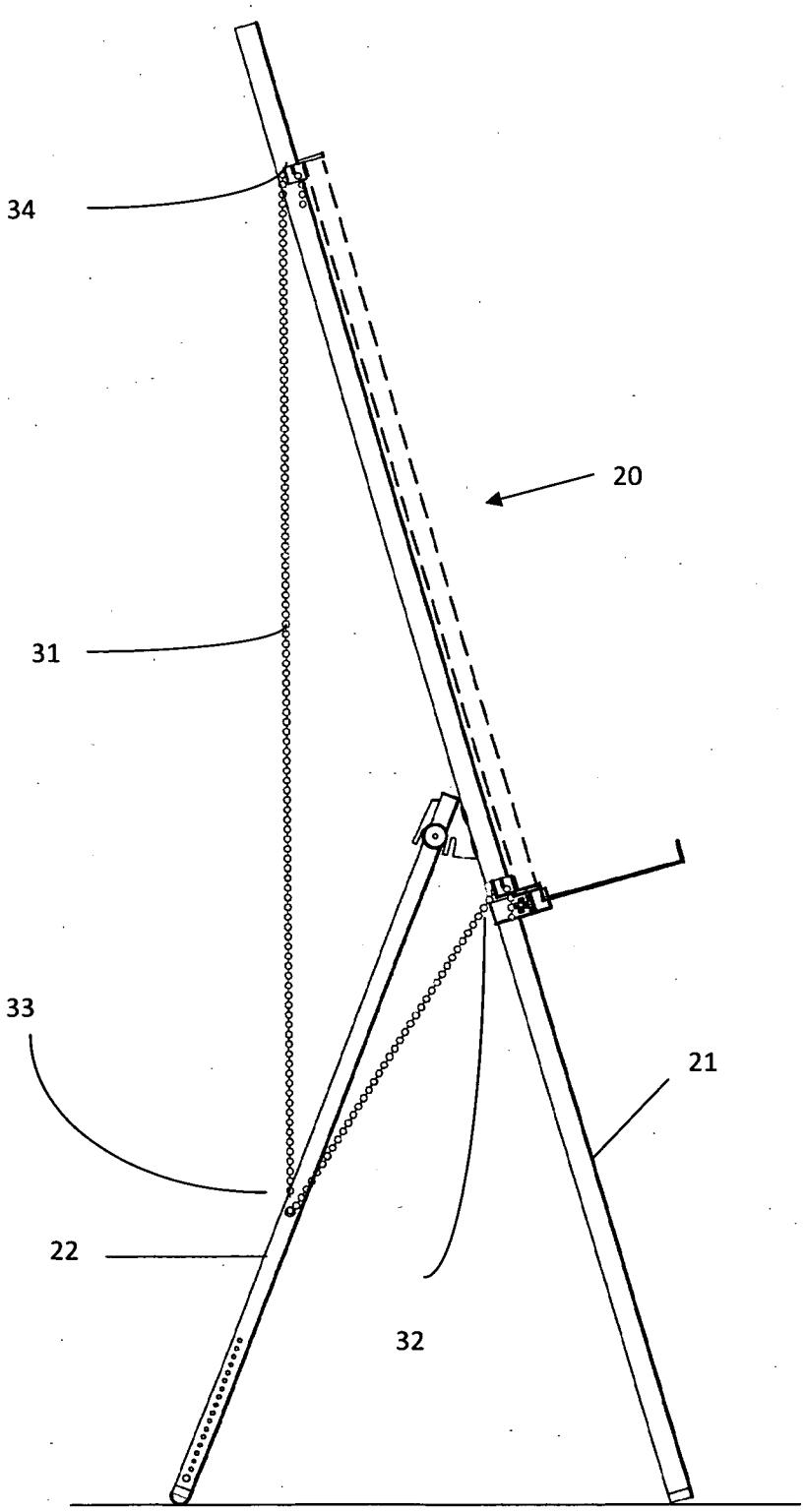


Figure 3

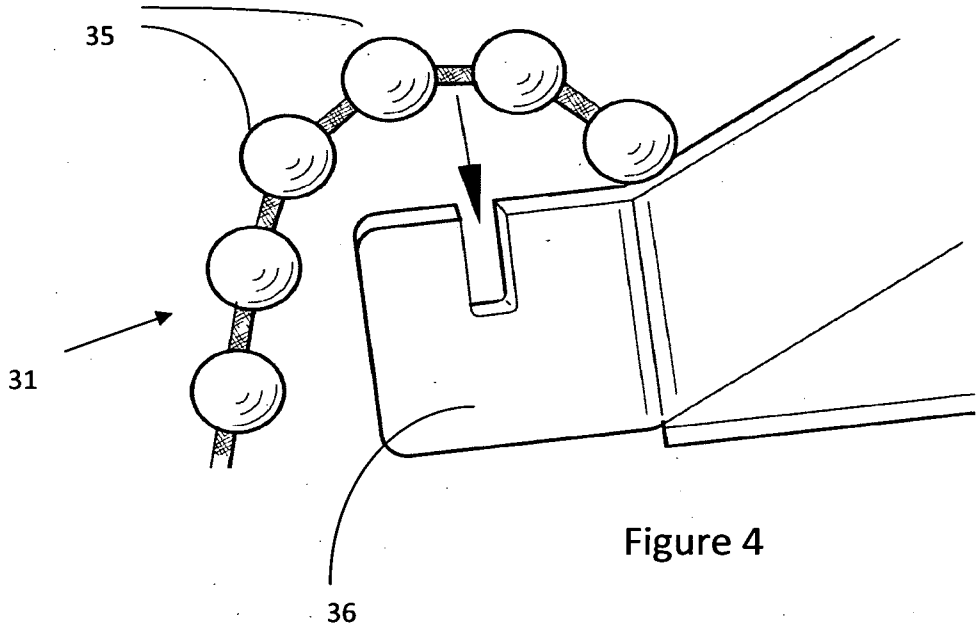


Figure 4

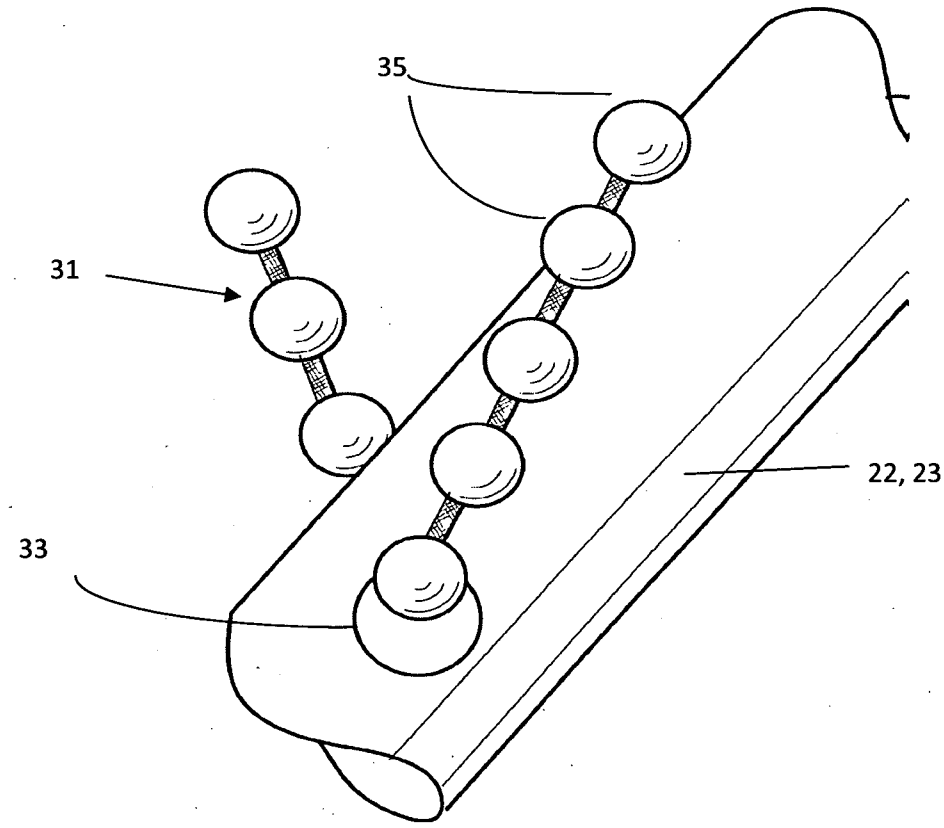


Figure 5

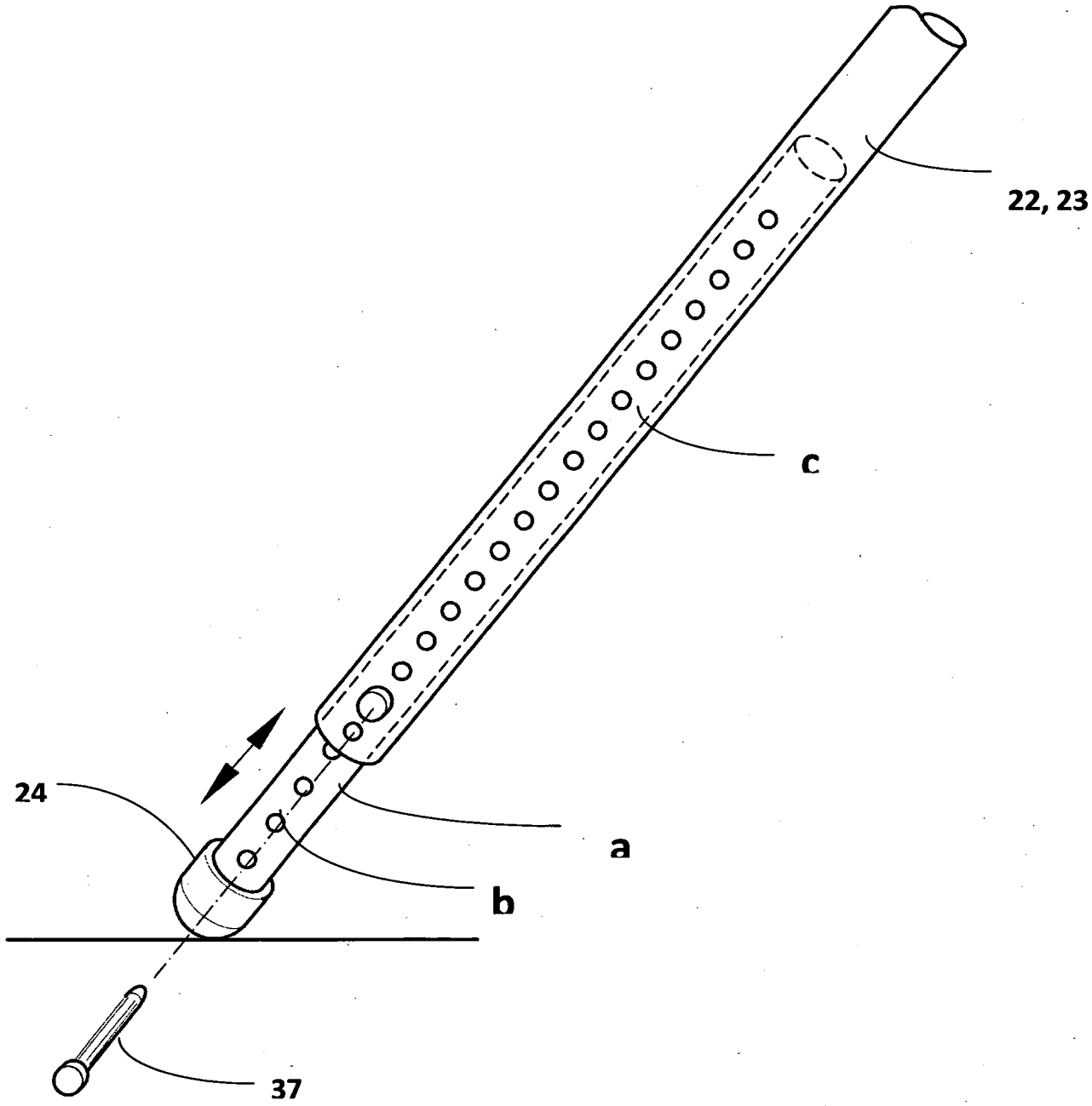


Figure 6

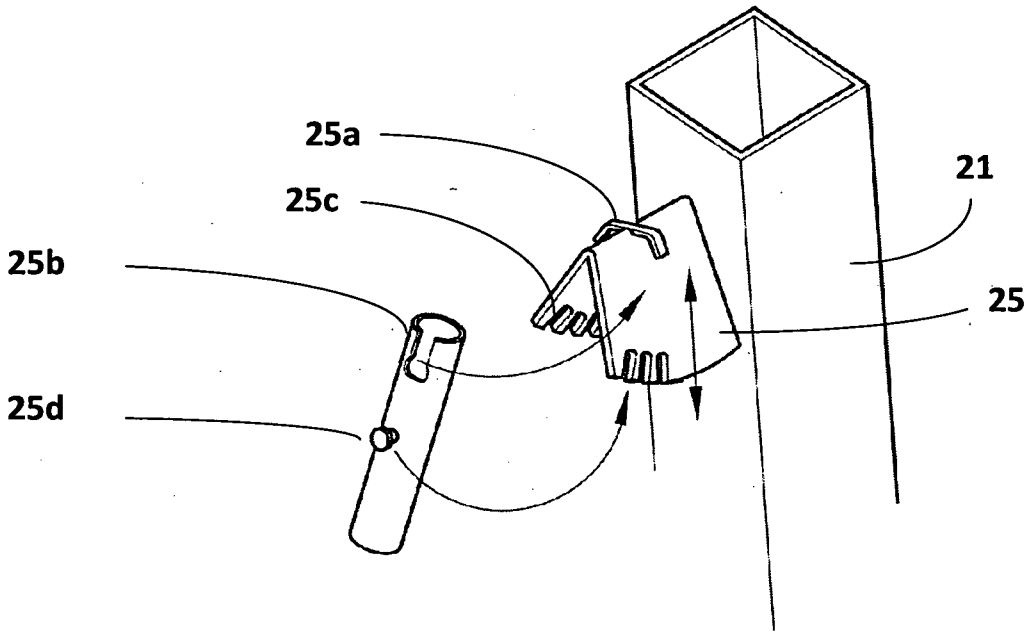


Figure 7

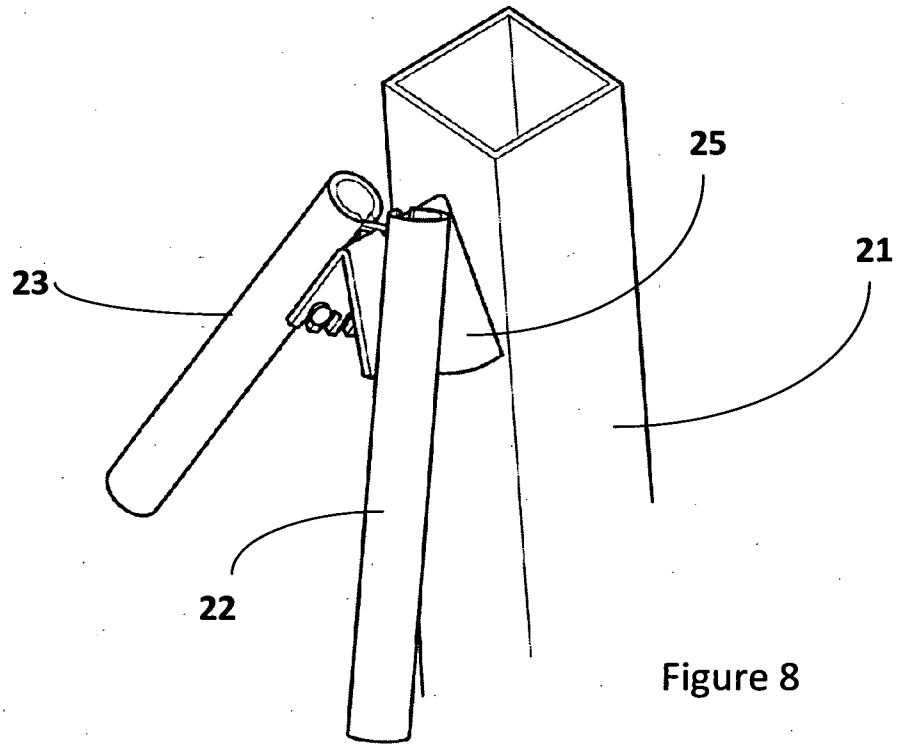


Figure 8

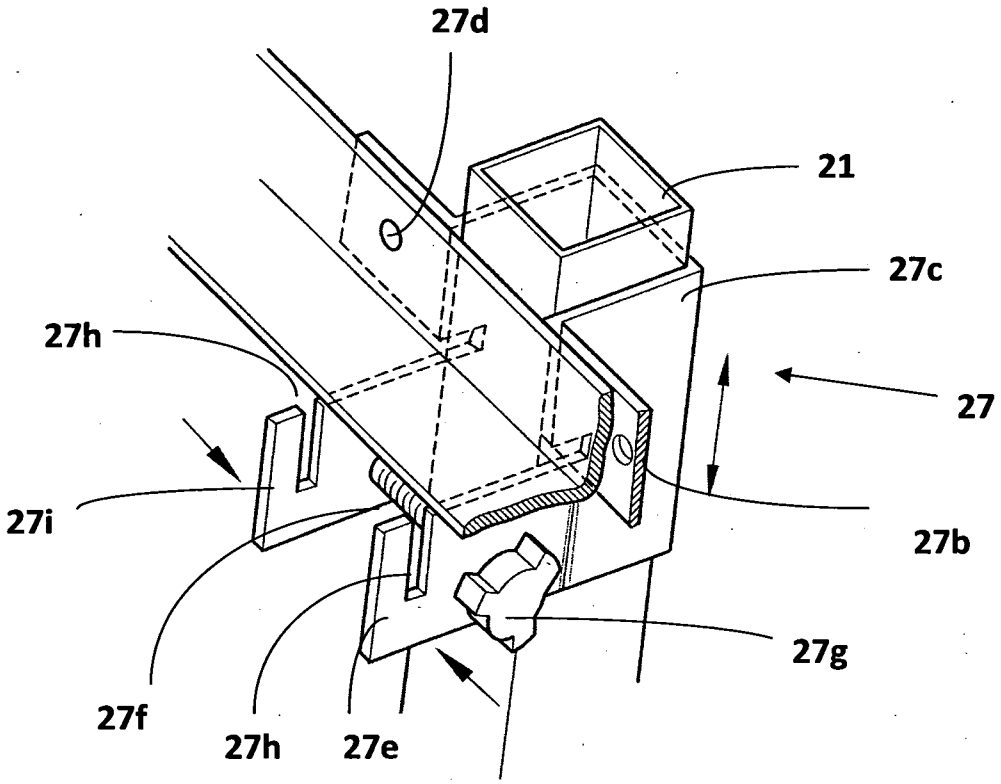


Figure 9

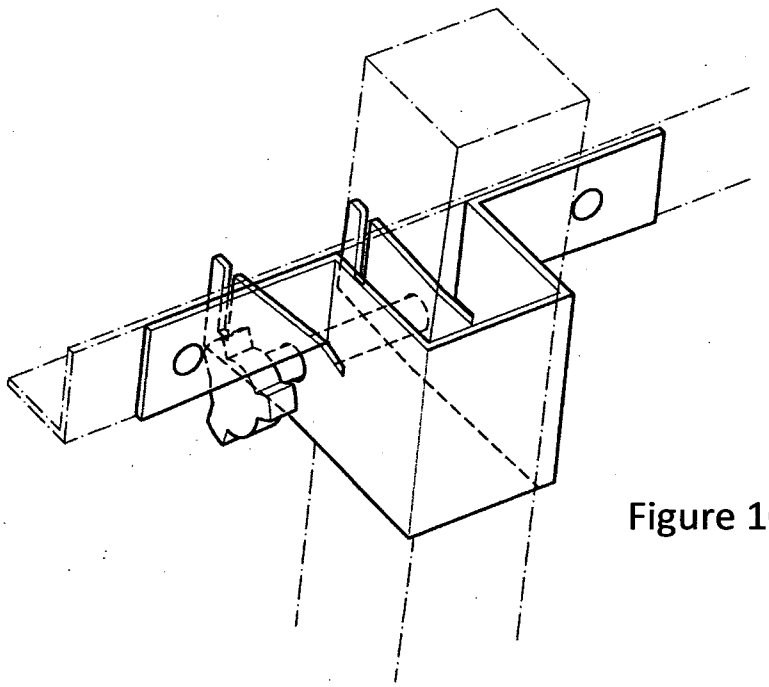


Figure 10

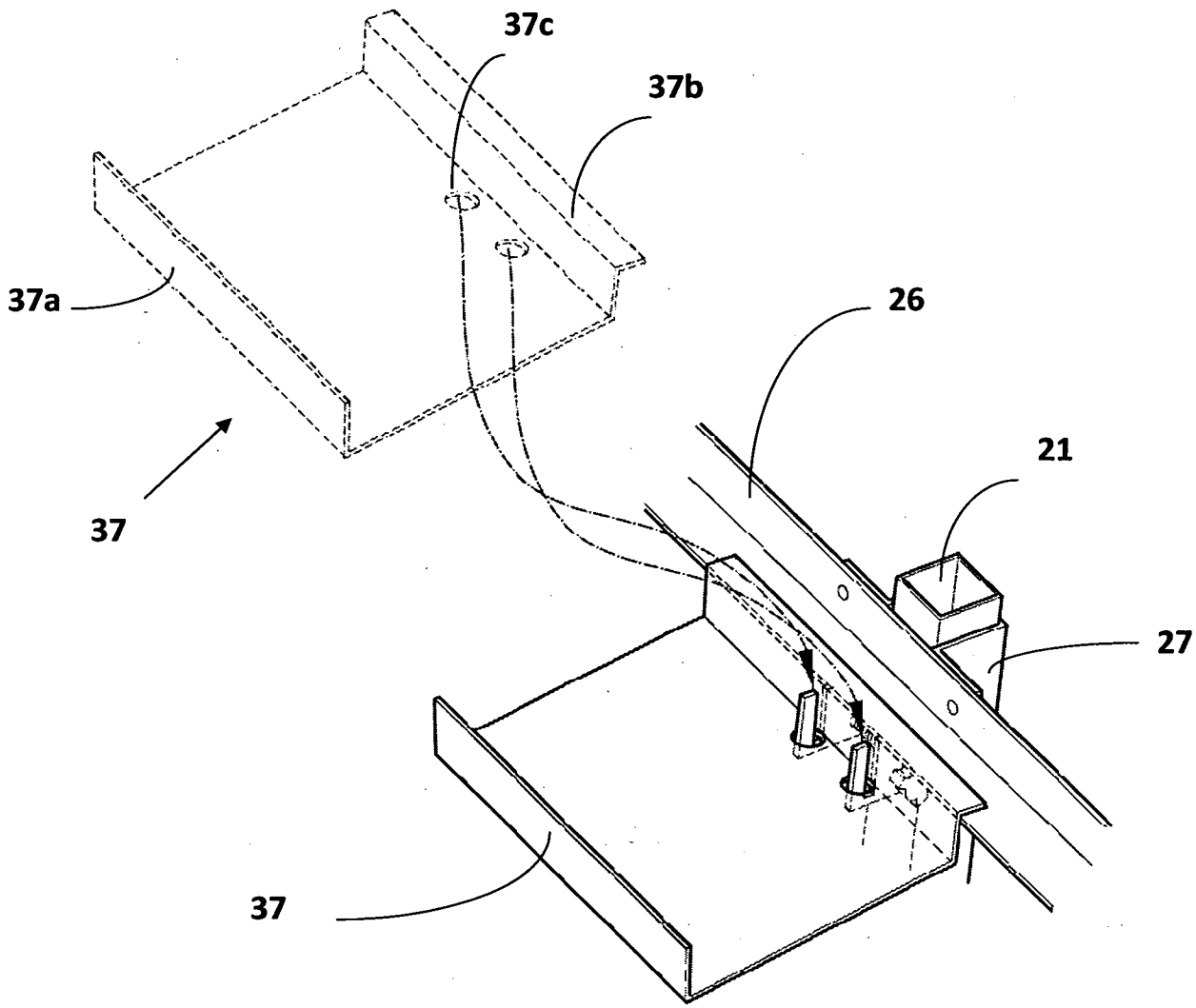


Figure 11

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/000203

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl.

A47B 97/04 (2006.01) *A47F 7/00* (2006.01) *A47G 1/16* (2006.01)

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
WPI, EPODOC F16M11/IC A47B 97/04 A47F 7/00 A47G 1/16 key words TRIPOD+, STAND+, EASEL+, TIES, ROPES, CORDS, STRAP+, BEAM?, ARM?, CROSS_MEMBER?, LEDGE, CABLE?, THREE_LEG+

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5337996 A (KALISH) 16 August 1994 Whole document (please refer to figs 1-28)	1-22
A	US 4690363 A (KOVES) 1 September 1987 Whole document	1-22
A	US 2064232 A (TEPPER) 15 December 1936 Whole document	1-22

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C ☒ See patent family annex

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"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
03 April 2009	7 APR 2009

Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/000203

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☒ Claims Nos.: **23 & 24**
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
The claims do not comply with Rule 6.2(a) because they rely on references to the description and/or drawings.

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a)

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.

☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/000203

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member
US	5337996	NONE
US	4690363	NONE
US	2064232	NONE

Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.

END OF ANNEX