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(54) **NOVELTY ARTICLES FOR FAMOUS PERSONS AND METHOD FOR MAKING SAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

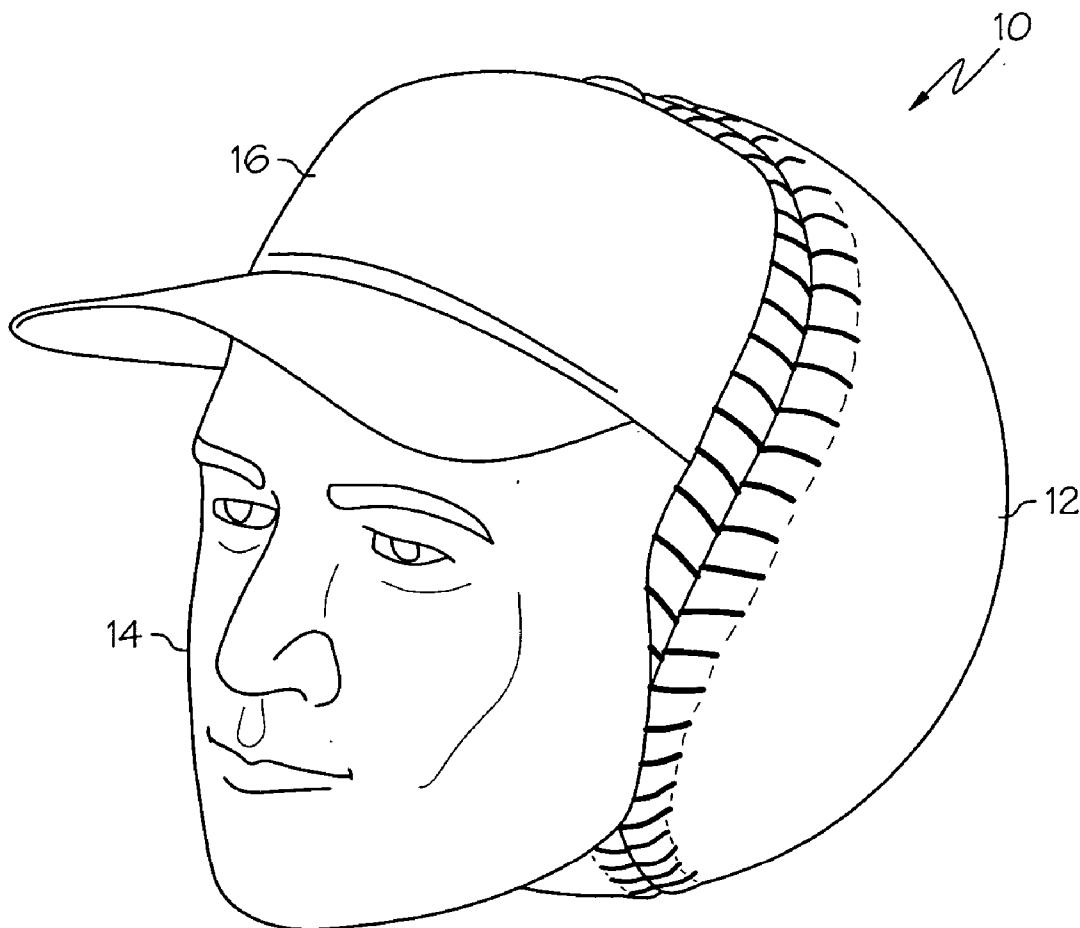
A novelty article and method for making same. A three-dimensional digital model of a face of a famous person is obtained. A three-dimensional digital model of an article associated with the fame of the famous person is obtained. The digital models are merged to create a merged three-dimensional digital model, wherein the face of the famous person is positioned on the article of fame in the merged three-dimensional digital model. A physical three-dimensional novelty article is created based on the merged three-dimensional digital model. In one embodiment, the famous person is an athlete and the article of fame is a ball.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) **Provisional application No. 60/446,478, filed on Feb. 10, 2003.**



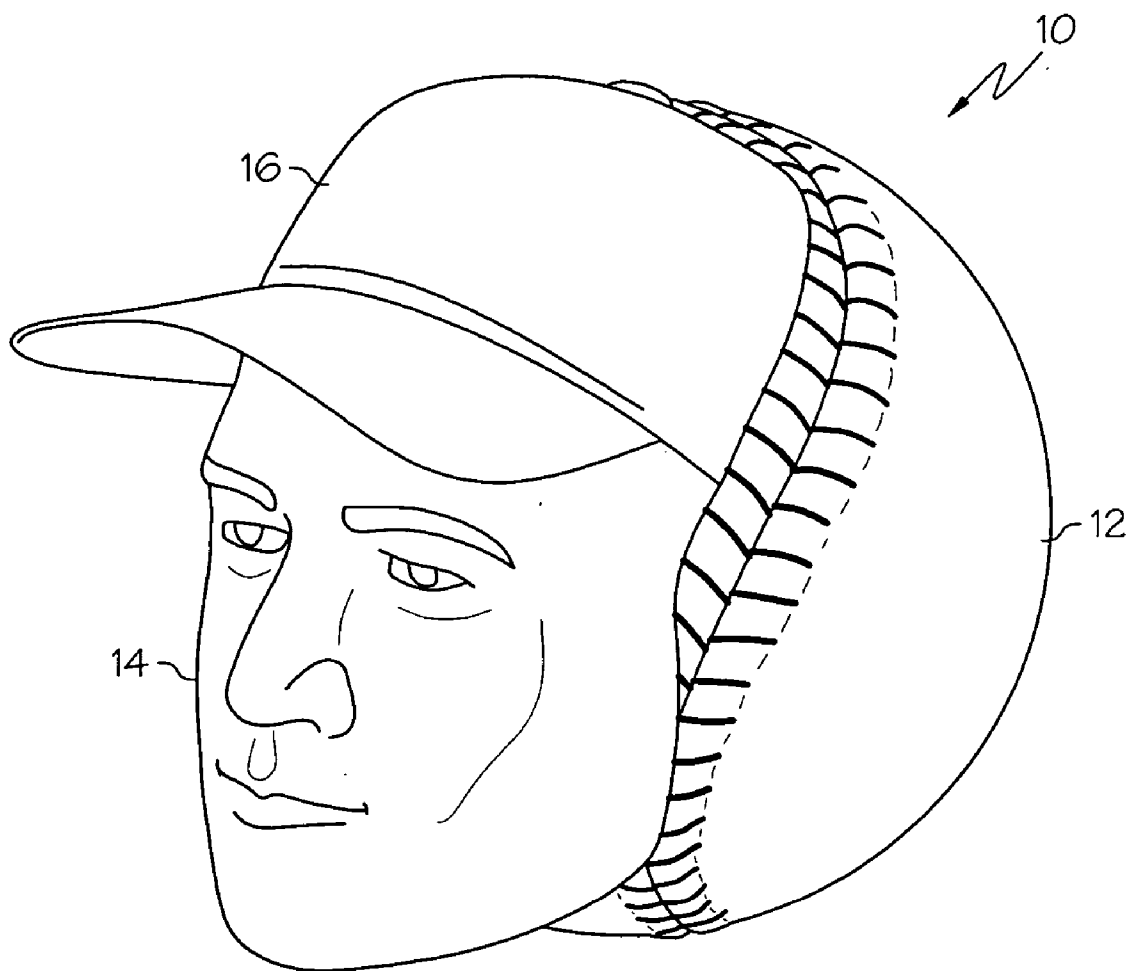


FIG. 1

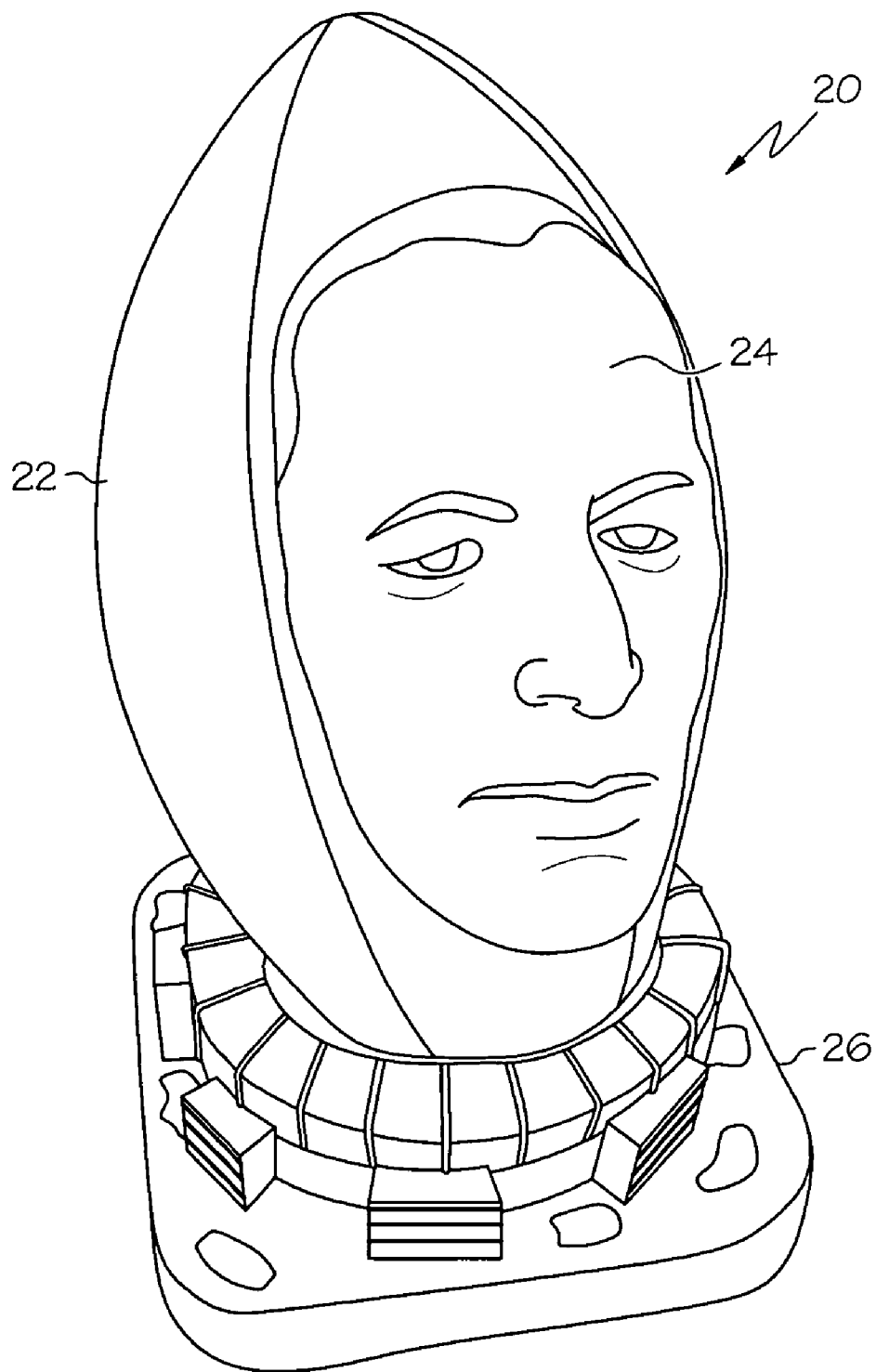


FIG. 2

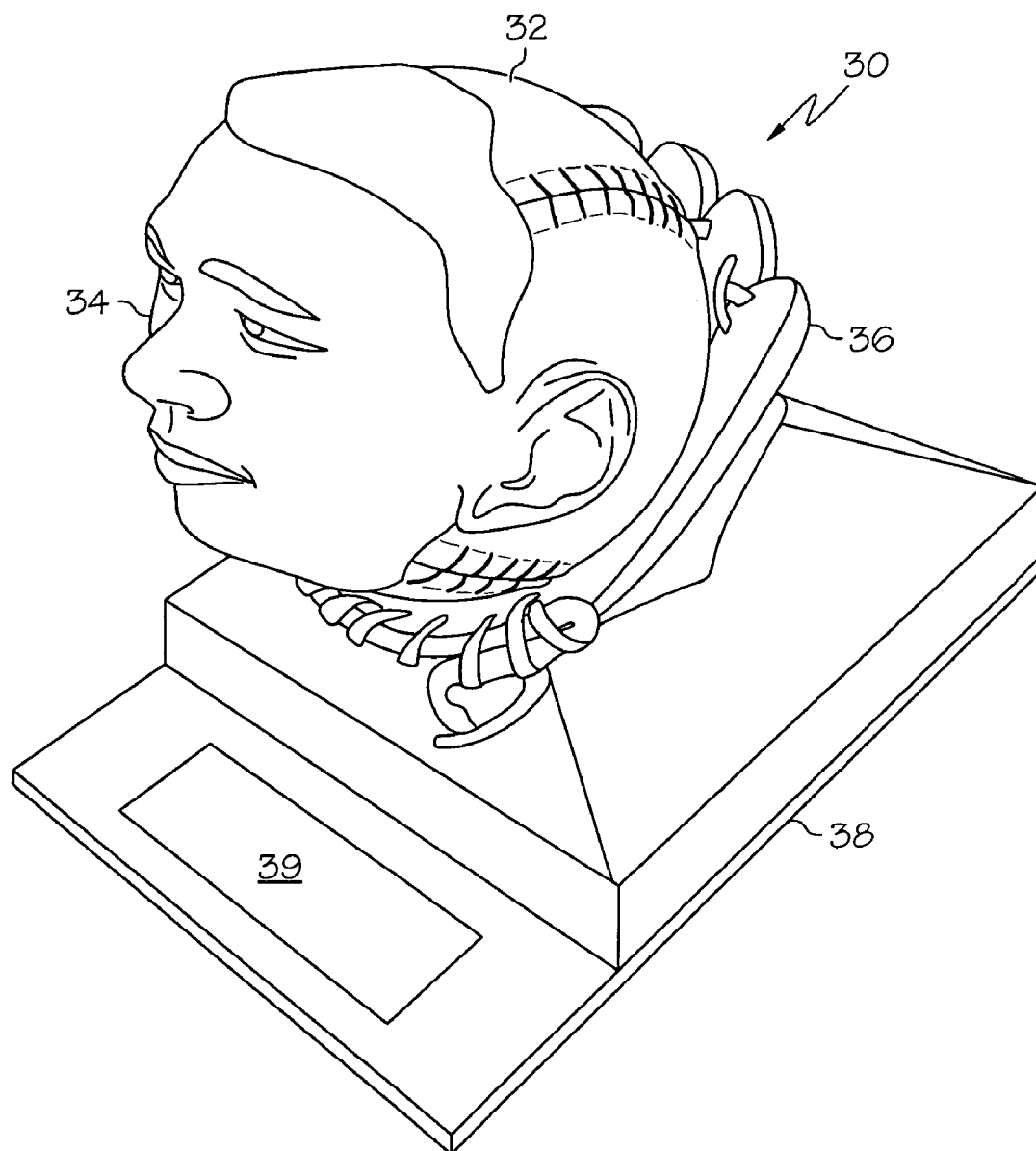


FIG. 3

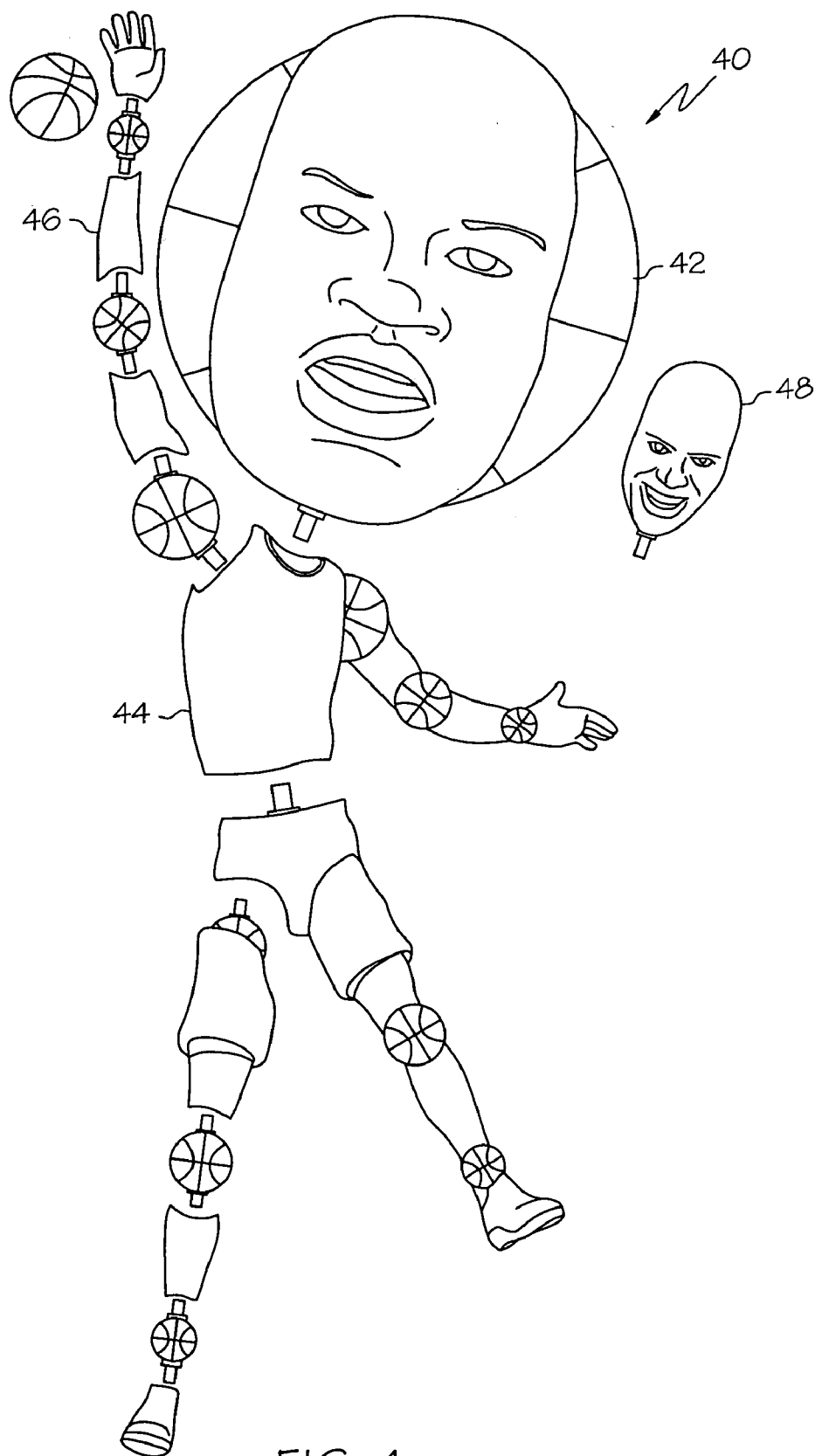


FIG. 4

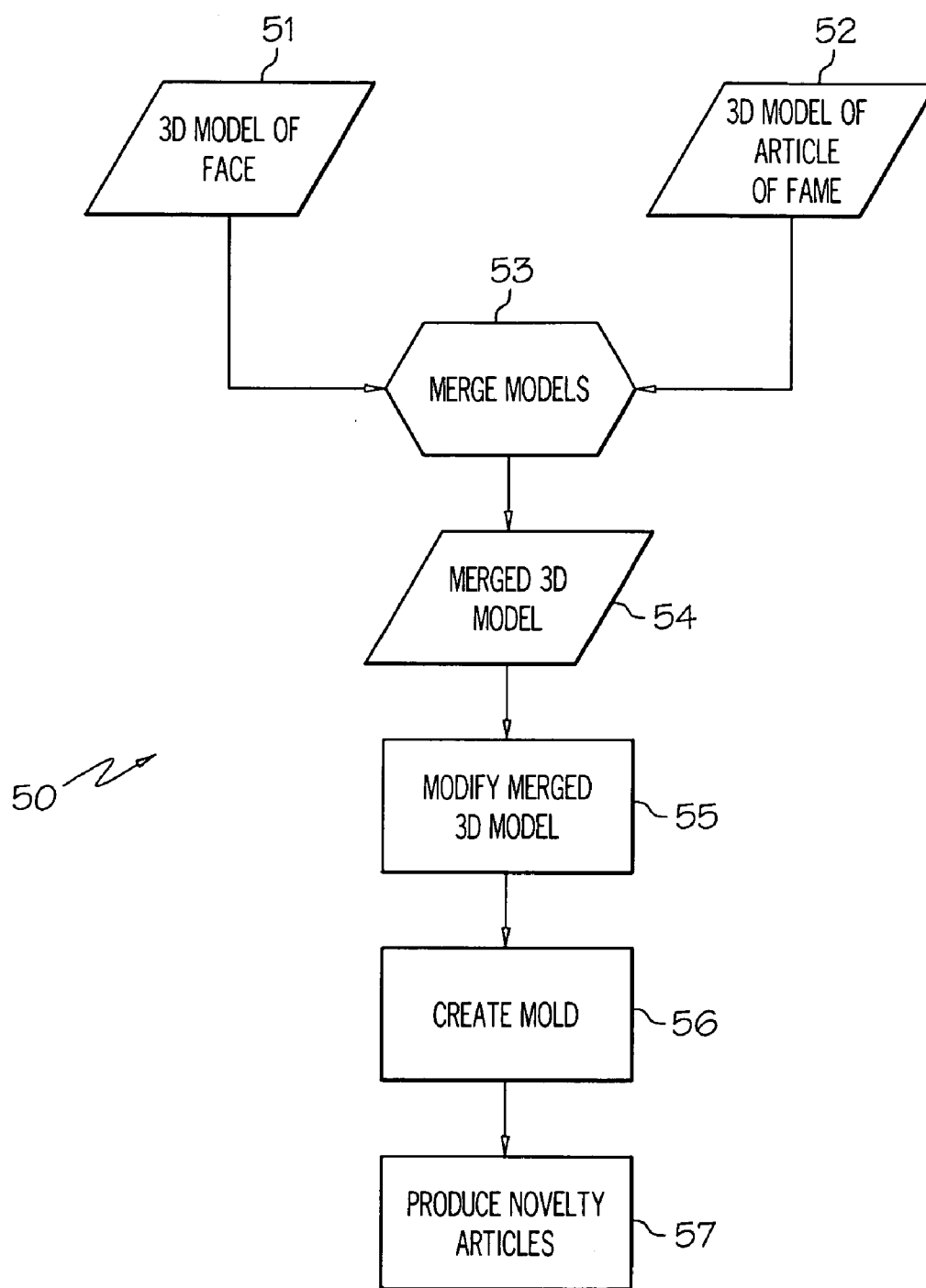


FIG. 5

NOVELTY ARTICLES FOR FAMOUS PERSONS AND METHOD FOR MAKING SAME

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/446,478 filed Feb. 10, 2003.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The present invention relates to novelty articles for famous persons and a method of making same. Whether called a collectable, memorabilia, souvenir, promotional product, toy, or the like, the public finds novelty articles extremely popular. Novelty articles have taken a variety of forms and are used in connection with a wide variety of personas. For instance, novelty articles are produced in connection with a variety of living or deceased famous persons, including, for example, celebrities, athletic stars, actors and actresses, musicians and composers, politicians and other leaders, historical figures, and the like. No one, however, has previously made a novelty article for famous persons in accordance with the present invention.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] One example of the invention is a method for creating a novelty article. A three-dimensional digital model of a face of a famous person is obtained. A three-dimensional digital model of an article associated with the fame of the famous person is obtained. The digital models are merged to create a merged three-dimensional digital model, wherein the face of the famous person is positioned on the article of fame in the merged three-dimensional digital model. A physical three-dimensional novelty article is created based on the merged three-dimensional digital model.

[0004] Another example of the present invention is a sports novelty article relating to a famous athlete. The article comprises a three-dimensional representation of a ball associated with the sport from which the famous athlete is associated. The article also comprises a three-dimensional representation of the face of the famous athlete, the representation of the face being positioned on the representation of the ball. Optionally, the ball continues from the face to form the remainder of the athlete's head such that the relative size of the representation of the ball and the representation of the face is such that the ball is generally the size of the representation of the athlete's head.

[0005] The foregoing brief description of certain examples of the invention should not be used to limit the scope of the present invention. Other examples, features, aspects, embodiments, and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following description, which is by way of illustration, one of the best modes contemplated for carrying out the invention. As will be realized, the invention is capable of other different and obvious aspects, all without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the drawings and descriptions should be regarded as illustrative in nature and not restrictive.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0006] While the specification concludes with claims which particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, it is believed the present invention will be better understood from the following description taken in conjunc-

tion with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numerals identify the same elements and in which:

[0007] **FIG. 1** illustrates an example of a novelty article combining the face of a famous person with an article associated with the fame of the famous person;

[0008] **FIG. 2** illustrates an example of a novelty article combining the face of a famous person with an article associated with the fame of the famous person;

[0009] **FIG. 3** illustrates an example of a novelty article combining the face of a famous person with an article associated with the fame of the famous person;

[0010] **FIG. 4** illustrates an example of a novelty article combining the face of a famous person with an article associated with the fame of the famous person; and

[0011] **FIG. 5** is a flowchart of an illustrative method for creating a novelty article.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] **FIG. 1** illustrates an example of a novelty article (10). A three-dimensional representation of the face of a famous person (14), in this case a famous baseball player, is positioned on a three-dimensional representation of an article associated with the fame of the person (the "article of fame") (12), in this case a baseball. In addition to the famous person's face (14), the novelty article (10) can include other features associated with the likeness of the famous person, such as a hat, hair, glasses, masks, and the like. For instance, the present example includes the bill of the baseball hat (16). In addition, a base (not shown) can be integrally formed with the novelty article (10) so it could be free-standing. Optionally, the novelty article can include various insignia, whether three-dimensional or printed, related to the famous person. For instance, the novelty article (10) shown in **FIG. 1** could include the player's name, team logo, and/or jersey number, such as on the ball portion (12), on a base, on a tag, or elsewhere.

[0013] The novelty article can be made from a variety of materials, including, for example, foam, plastic, rubber, metal, stone, ceramic, resin, candy, soap, and the like. The novelty article can be a uniform color or multi-colored, with the facial features and article of fame having true tones or artificial tones. The size of the novelty article can vary widely. For instance, the novelty article could be proportionate to the actual head size of the famous person, could be reduced in size such that the novelty article is a handheld item or smaller, or could be an enlarged to be bigger than the famous person's head. As shown in the example of **FIG. 1**, the ball portion (12) of the novelty article (10) is reproduced in actual size while the face portion (14) is reduced in size to fit on the ball (12).

[0014] The face portion (14) of the novelty article (10) of **FIG. 1** is a generally realistic likeness of the famous person; however, the facial expression can be varied or exaggerated or be a caricature or cartoon-like rendering. In one variation, the face of the famous person is textured similar to the texture of the article of fame. For instance, in the case of a baseball star, the stitching on the baseball could extend onto the face of the baseball star. As a further example, in the case of a soccer star, the checked pattern of the soccer ball could continue onto the face of the soccer star. In another variation,

the geometry of the facial features could be modified to mimic the shape of the article of fame.

[0015] As shown in FIG. 1, the baseball player's face (14) is positioned on the ball (12) such that the ball continues from the face (14) to form the remainder of the baseball player's head. As shown in the present example, the relative size of the ball (12) and the face (14) is such that the ball (12) is generally the size of the player's head. While the size and shape of the ball will rarely, if ever, be the exact size and shape of an athlete's head, "generally the size" can be defined within the following mathematical range:

$$V_B/2 \leq V_H - V_F \leq V_B$$

[0016] wherein,

[0017] V_B =volume of the ball prior to combining with the face;

[0018] V_H =volume of the head prior to combining with the ball; and

[0019] V_F =volume of the face (i.e., the portion of the head volume, V_H , outside the volume of the ball, V_B , in the combined novelty article).

[0020] If V_B and V_H are not precisely known, their values can be estimated by projecting the surfaces of the ball and face, respectively, to generate approximate volumes. It should be recognized that the foregoing range is merely illustrative and that a novelty article may be made outside such range. While the foregoing volumetric range is illustrated using a ball, it will be readily understood to one with ordinary skill in the art that similar calculations may be made using any article of fame, sports related or otherwise.

[0021] Optionally, the novelty article may include voice signal technology. This may include one or more recorded audio signals capable of playback. The recorded audio may include messages, sounds, music or other audio content related to the famous person. For instance, the baseball player represented in FIG. 1 could record a variety of unique phrases, whether inspirational, humorous or otherwise. The voice signal technology may also include speech recognition functionality so the novelty article is interactive.

[0022] The novelty article can be solid or hollow. If hollow, the novelty article can optionally be openable to reveal a cavity. The cavity could be very small or large enough to function, for instance, as a toy chest. Optionally, the novelty article could be distributed with a removable item positioned in the cavity, such as a bounce ball, toy, car, miniatures, candy, stickers, trading cards, action figures, and the like. If the cavity is openable, it could also closeable using a variety of closing mechanisms known in the art, such as, for example, snaps, zippers, fasteners, closures, interference fits, barbs, and the like. Further, when opened the novelty article could form two or more pieces, which may be separable or attached to one another, such as by a hinge. In one embodiment, the novelty article is made from an elastomeric material and is openable and reversible to reveal a second face. For instance, if a famous athlete plays more than one sport, the first face and article of fame could be associated with the first sport, while the second reversible face and article of fame could be associated with the second sport. As another example, the first face could be a likeness, while the second reversible face could be a caricature.

[0023] As shown in the example of FIG. 1, the representations of the face (14) and article of fame (12) are proportional to the respective objects in all three dimensions. It is contemplated, however, the representations of the face and/or article could be disproportionate in one or more of the three dimensions. For instance, the face could be flattened similar to the embossing on a coin, but nevertheless retain a three-dimensional quality. Similarly, the article of fame may be flattened. In one embodiment, the face and article of fame are both flattened. Accordingly, the flattened novelty article can take the form of a coin, sticker, magnet or the like. Alternatively, the flattened novelty article can be with combined with other articles, such as jewelry, hats, pillows, backpacks, and the like.

[0024] The three-dimensional combined face and article of fame, whether proportional or disproportionate, can be used as a novelty article by itself; however, it can also be included on clothing, including, for example, on hats, shoes, shirts, pants, and the like. The combined face and article of fame can also be included on other soft items, including, for example, on backpack, pillows, and the like. In addition, the combined face and article of fame can be included on jewelry, including, for example, belt buckles, ear rings, bracelet, rings, watches, and the like. The combined face and article of fame can also be included on utilitarian articles, either as an adornment or integrated with a variety of other articles, including, for example, on pens on pencils, key chains, car mirror dangles, Christmas tree ornaments, candy dispensers, furniture accents, knobs, utensils, plates, straws, computer mouse, lamp, clock, and the like. If the combined face and article of fame is hollow, it can also be used as a coffee mugs, water bottle, thermos and the like, or openable in the form of a lunch box, bank, toy chest and the like. The foregoing should serve merely as examples and are not limiting to the variations contemplated by the inventor.

[0025] While the example in FIG. 1 combines a sports star with a sports ball, it should be recognized that the novelty article can be made combining the face of any famous person with any article associated with the fame of the person. For instance, the face can be combined with an object of play related to a sport, including, for example, soccer balls, baseballs, footballs, rugby balls, hockey pucks, golf balls, volleyballs, tennis balls, bowling balls, billiard balls, throwing discs, boxing glove, and the like. The face can be combined with other objects related to the sport, including, for example, golf clubs, lacrosse sticks, tennis rackets, baseball bats, hockey sticks, paddles, skate boards, surf boards, and the like. The face can also be combined with motorized objects, including, for example, motorcycles, race cars, and the like. In addition, the face can be combined with venues related to a sport, including, for example, wrestling rings, stadiums, and the like. The face can also be combined with trophy objects related to a sport, including, for example, wrestling title belts or buckles, trophies, cups, and the like. Beyond sports, the famous person and/or the article of fame could be unrelated to sports. For instance, the face of a famous rock and roll star can be combined with the body of the star's guitar or a microphone, the President's face can be combined with the White House, and the like. The foregoing should serve merely as examples and are not limiting to the variations contemplated by the inventor.

[0026] FIG. 2 illustrates another example of a novelty article (20) comprising a three-dimensional representation

of the face of a famous person (24), in this case a famous football player, is positioned on a three-dimensional representation of an article associated with the fame of the person (22), in this case a football. The novelty article (20) in the present embodiment includes a decorative stand (26), which may be fixed or separable from the combined face (24) and article of fame (22). In the present example, the stand (26) takes the form of the home stadium of the football player's team; however, a wide variety of variations may also be used, such as, for example, a wrestling ring, tennis court, hockey goal, baseball mitt, kicking tee, pitcher's mound, racket, and the like. The stands may be sold or otherwise provided separately. Further, consumers may be able to choose between a range of different stands. In another embodiment, a given stand could hold multiple novelty articles, so, for instance, several players from the same team could be collected and displayed together.

[0027] FIG. 3 illustrates another example of a novelty article (30) comprising a three-dimensional representation of the face of a famous person (34), in this case a famous baseball player, is positioned on a three-dimensional representation of an article associated with the fame of the person (32), in this case a baseball. In the present example, the face (34) is distorted to mimic the roundness of the baseball (32). In particular, the face (34) is rounded as if the facial features, ears and hair were merging out of the ball (32). The color of the textured or modified face may be the flesh color of the famous person, the color of the article of fame, or an altogether different color. The example of FIG. 3 further includes a separate stand (36), in the form of a baseball mitt, to hold the novelty article (30). Further, stand (36) is supported by a base (38), which includes a plate (39) with identifying information, such as the player's name, team, number, and the like.

[0028] FIG. 4 illustrates another example of novelty article (40) comprising a three-dimensional representation of the face of a famous person, in this case a famous basketball player, is positioned on a three-dimensional representation of an article associated with the fame of the person, in this case a basketball. The combined face and article of fame (42) of the present example is positioned as the head of a figurine (44). Here the figurine (44) is wearing the uniform of the team on which the player plays. The figurine (44) may be static or opposable. In the present embodiment, the combined face and article of fame (44) is hollow and contains a plurality of interlocking segments from which the figurine (44) may be assembled. As illustrated here, the right side of the figurine (44) is an assembled arrangement while three right side is an exploded arrangement. In addition, a proportionally sized head (48) is also provided, which may be interchanged with the combined face and article of fame (42).

[0029] FIG. 5 illustrates an example of a method (50) for creating a novelty article. At steps (51) and (52), a three-dimensional digital model of a face of a famous person and three-dimensional digital model of an article of fame is obtained, respectively. The act of obtaining could be achieved in a variety of ways, including, without limitation, scanning, downloading a file, graphically generating a file, and the like. During step (53), the digital models (51, 52) are merged to create a merged three-dimensional digital model (54) wherein the face of the famous person positioned on the article of fame. Optional step (55) involves modifying the

merged model (54), such as, for example, colorizing, texturing, adding or deleting features, or otherwise changing the merged model. A mold is then created during step (56) based on the merged model (54), whether modified or unmodified. Once a mold is created, the novelty articles can then be produced during step (57). Accordingly, the foregoing illustrates one technique for creating a physical three-dimensional novelty article based on the merged digital model.

EXAMPLE 1

[0030] This example starts with the Head & Face Color 3D Scanner Model 3030RGB/PS made by Cyberware. The Model 3030 is an advanced, general-purpose implementation of Cyberware's 3D digitizing technology. The 3030 incorporate a rugged, self-contained optical range-finding system, whose dynamic range accommodates varying lighting conditions and surface properties. Entirely software controlled, the 3030 requires no user adjustments in normal use. In operation, the 3030 emits a safe, low intensity laser on an object to create a lighted profile. A high-quality video sensor captures this profile from two viewpoints. The system can digitize thousands of these profiles in a few seconds to capture the shape of the entire object. Simultaneously, a second video sensor in the 3030 acquires color information.

[0031] The scanning process captures an array of digitized points, with each point represented by x, y, and z coordinates for shape and 24-bit RGB coordinates for color. The 3030 transfers this data via a SCSI interface to a graphics workstation for immediate viewing and modification. Color information in 3D digitizing makes available nearly all the information a graphics application needs to fully describe an object. In addition to enhancing realism in graphic models, color denotes boundaries that are not obvious from shape alone. Color indicates surface texture and reflectance. And by marking an object's surface before digitizing, one can use color to transfer ideas from the object to the graphic model.

[0032] In specialized applications, color can reveal characteristics such as skin discoloration, the locations of landmarks, or other features. Working in the infrared region, a customized color subsystem could even detect surface temperature. The PS motion system is designed to scan the head and face of live subjects quickly, comfortably, and safely. Because the system moves the digitizer while the subject remains stationary, the PS works well in many applications involving subjects that are inconvenient to move during digitizing.

[0033] The PS platform is popular for use in medical applications, such as reconstructive and/or plastic surgery and burn mask design. Similarly, designers of products such as helmets, which must fit the human head closely, find the PS motion system ideal. It also serves well for personal portrait sculpture, which the athlete's head is digitized, then reproduced on an automated milling machine or rapid prototyping system with remarkable fidelity.

[0034] The PS motion system has only one manual adjustment (the scan head height) and is otherwise completely controlled by software running on a graphics workstation. Cyberware software provides specific features for controlling the PS. The Head & Face Color 3D Scanner Bundle also includes the CySurf software that provides a means for converting scan data into a NURBS surface.

[0035] Software gives the user total control of the 3030 operating on a graphics workstation. Software tools available from Cyberware allow the user to manipulate and analyze the 3D models in a variety of ways. The user can automatically measure attributes such as area and volume. The user can edit models with operations such as clipping, scaling, and image cut and paste. One can also use popular third-party programs to work with the 3D models. Cyberware supplies translation tools that convert the scanner's data array to a form readable by most third-party programs. The Cyberware data format is in the public domain, so it is possible to create special-purpose translation routines.

[0036] In the present example, the 3030 Scanhead is used to scan the athlete's head and the 3030 Motion System is used to scan the article of fame. Once the scans of the face and article of fame are produced it will go to the next phase which is taking the data into software allowing the three-dimensional scans to be surfaced, modeled, image morphing, and merging of files can be created to form one object.

[0037] Cyberware CySlice v3 features the new subdivision surfaces (SUBD) fitting tool, SUBDS are becoming widely accepted in the CGI community as an alternative to NURBS. CySlice v3 allows users to fit SUBD surfaces to dense polymeshes, and as with the NURBS fitting tools, color and bump/normal/displacement maps can then be calculated. Surfacing CySlice retains all of the capabilities of version 2, so the user can easily generate IGES 128 NURBS surfaces from any Ply file. Cyberware also provides translators to convert STL (Stereo Lithography) and OBJ (Alias I Wavefront) files to the Ply file format, opening up CySlice to users who do not necessarily use a Cyberware Rapid 3D Digitizer. The software allows the user to create NURBS surfaces in a free-form manner. Also the user can manipulate any portion of the surface at any time; UV density can be altered, boundary curves can be modified by moving existing control and end points, or by adding or subtracting control points.

[0038] CySlice also allows the user to save a template surface; this feature allows the user to define a template for an object that contains all of the control points, boundary curves, and surface parameters. This template can then be applied to any similar object so that the user need to create a surface only one time, apply that surface to subsequent models, thus saving many hours of user interaction.

[0039] CySlice is used to extract polylines and splines from polygonal meshes. These polylines or splines can then be imported into modeling software as an aid to the construction of spline surfaces. You can either cut a whole lot of equally spaced parallel sections through the polygonal mesh, or draw individual slice lines along key features. These slices can then be edited for consistent start points and direction. And finally the slice lines can be interpolated with reduced vertex count polylines (IGES 106), or with NURBS splines (IGES 126).

[0040] While other software could be used in place of CySlice v3, the following lists the major features of CySlice v3:

[0041] Remove Junk: Delete unwanted faces.

[0042] Fill Holes: Fill all holes automatically, or step through them one at a time for filling.

[0043] Selective Smoothing: Interactively smooth regions with the smooth brush.

[0044] Selective Decimation: Adaptively reduce all faces or just those in selected regions networks

[0045] Shape Points: The building block. Place, and then move them over the polymesh in real time.

[0046] Boundary Curves: Simply connect shape points to create boundary curves.

[0047] NURBS/SUBD Patches: Fill any bounded region with a patch fits to polymesh.

[0048] Always Tangent: Can be toggled off/on for individual boundaries.

[0049] Active Networks: Move a shape point, curves update, affected patches are refitted.

[0050] Multi-resolution: Quickly define simple networks, and then output detailed surfaces.

[0051] Mirroring: Build a network on half an object, and then mirror it to complete the surface.

[0052] Templates: Copy networks between similar shaped objects. Produce clean morph targets.

[0053] Stitching: Join smaller patches together. Make single patch heads.

[0054] Texture Maps: Extract color and displacement maps. Lightweight surfaces, detailed render.

[0055] Shaders Definitions: Automatic generation of shaders for each patch. Hassle-free mapping.

[0056] Import NURBS Patches: Texture map tools work just as well with NURBS patches from other applications.

[0057] Import SUBD Surfaces: Texture map tools also work with subdivision surfaces imported from other applications.

[0058] NURBS/SUBDS/Polymeshes: Output NURBS patches, SUBD surfaces or quad polymeshes.

[0059] RIB Export & Render: Provides a link to your renderer for quick evaluation of mapped surfaces.

[0060] Multi-Platform: Intel Windows NT/2000, and SGI-IRIX 6.3+.

[0061] Optimized: Interactive, even with very detailed polymeshes.

[0062] Efficient: Low RAM impact. Run your modeling/animation applications at the same time.

[0063] The athlete sits in the scanning apparatus as a laser passes around their head. The laser works with computers to develop a three dimensional 'map' of the athletes head, with varying elevations to make up the features that make us all unique. The same process will take place for the article of fame only on a platform motion system scanner. This information is kept in the computers and is used by modeling programs to reconstruct the image. This reconstruction can be done digitally on the computer, to render an image that can be rotated and scaled, or it can be sent along to the next phase of the process—producing a hard copy.

[0064] After a successful scan, one way of producing an actual physical representation from the computer data uses

stereo-lithography. This can also be done to the digital image data for a CGI character. The first copy is produced in wax and can be sized by the prototyping machine to whatever scale is needed. After producing a highly detailed copy of the scanned athlete you'd think the process would be complete, but that's just the beginning. After the computer has taken its shot, it's time to add the human touch. Computers can make very accurate copies, but they just aren't able to add that spark that brings things to life, and this is where the sculptors come into the picture. Far from being a replacement for sculptors, the scans are just a tool to give the artists a base upon which to work. The sculptors at then make changes to the hard copies to make the likeness better. Computer scanning also captures color. The digital color information will be printed out to assist the in house painters to get the job done. Painters can get the skin tones perfect, add some shading and establish just the right look for hair or eyes. After the paint has been applied the finished prototype is sent on for approval.

[0065] The majority of the first stage models can be produce from Thermojet 3D Wax Printer. The machines may be called printers but they actually crank out full-blown wax sculpts with the most exact details from the surface scan data. The wax printer gets the data and starts from the bottom up. It lays down a hot, paper-thin layer of wax, and then cools. The next layer goes down hot, and it builds' up in that manner. After a while, you get an exact sculpt based on the and when done the sculptors get to tweak, and detail. Another 3D printer used is the Z Corporation—Post Process ZW4 Automated Waxter. The ZW4 Automated Waxter is an accessory used in conjunction with the Z Corporation. Three-Dimensional Printer. The ZW4 Waxter allows the user to infiltrate printed parts with paraffin wax to enhance strength, provide uniform part finish and color, or to create patterns suitable for investment casting. A third machine used is the Z Corporation—Z406 System, this system is a premium 3D Printer with the capability of printing in full-color, communicating important information about parts, including engineering data, labeling, highlighting and appearance simulation. The System is fast, convenient and easy to operate, allowing you to accelerate the design process and get your products to market ahead of the competition. Z Corporation offers a variety of materials for use with the Z406 System. You can use parts directly or infiltrate them to serve a wide range of modeling needs, all at an affordable price. Quick access to full-color concept models allows or engineers to accurately communicate design ideas.

[0066] Z Corporation's proprietary System Software accepts solid models in STL, PLY, VRML (WRL) and SFX file formats as input. Z Corporation's proprietary System Software accepts solid models in STL file format as input for monochrome parts and VRML, ZCP, PLY and SFX file formats as input for full color parts. System Software runs on Microsoft Windows 2000 and NT. Z Corporation—Z810 System is also used for to create a novelty article when a larger model is required. This system is a fast and inexpensive way to create large appearance prototypes for design review, mock-ups for form and fit testing, and patterns for casting applications. The large build volume allows you to print full-scale concept models for more effective communication with marketing, manufacturing, customers and suppliers. The Z810 System's color capability allows accurate representation of designs including FEA and other engineer-

ing data, further enhancing communication. Physical models can be created in plaster or starch-based materials and can be infiltrated to produce parts with a variety of material properties, satisfying a wide spectrum of modeling needs.

[0067] The Build Process involves:

[0068] 1. The Printer spreads a layer of powder from the feed box to cover the surface of the build piston.

[0069] 2. The Printer then prints binder solution onto the loose powder, forming the first cross-section. Where the binder is printed, the powder is glued together. The remaining powder is loose and supports the part as it is being printed.

[0070] 3. When the cross-section is complete, the build piston is lowered slightly, and a new layer of powder is spread over its surface. The process is repeated until the build is complete.

[0071] 4. The build piston is raised and the loose powder is vacuumed away, revealing the completed part.

[0072] The Post Processing can include infiltrating the finished part with various materials to improve its strength and durability. For a quick design review, parts can be left raw or "green". To quickly produce a more robust model, parts can be dipped in wax. For a robust model that can be sanded and painted, the part can be infiltrated with a resin or urethane. Some of the advantages include:

[0073] It is a fast 3D Printer.

[0074] Each layer is printed in seconds, reducing the time it takes to print a hand-held part to 1-2 hours.

[0075] Z Corporation's color 3D Printers can create parts from a full 24-bit palette of colors, resulting in multiple color prototypes. This functionality gives designers the data they need to create and collaborate more effectively throughout the design process.

[0076] Versatility in every step of the design process for design and reviewing the models before manufacturing and molding as well as functional testing. The option of infiltrating parts offers the opportunity to produce parts with a variety of material properties to serve a range of modeling needs.

[0077] After the artist has put all of his finishing touches into the models of the novelty article and all parties have approved them is time for molding. Depending on the final process roto-casting, injection molding, or blow molding. A final mold with all the proper legal line needs to be produced.

[0078] One popular process will be done with a CNC 5-Axis machine, making the tool out of aluminum. Another new technology form is using a ZCast Direct Metal Casting. The ZCast Direct Metal Casting process provides the ability to produce cast metal parts from a CAD file significantly faster and less expensively than traditional prototype casting methods. The process involves printing molds and cores on a 3D Printer directly from digital data, eliminating the pattern and core box production step in the traditional sand casting process. Metal is then poured into the 3D printed molds. The technology allows engineers to prototype parts in metal that were previously cost and time prohibitive. Z

Corporation's 406 Color 3D Printer and Z810 Large Format 3D Printer are optimized for use with ZCast materials.

[0079] Now that all the tools have been made its time for the manufacturing. Preferably, a design manufacturer is selected that specializes in roto-casting, electronic and digital voice recording products, specializing in industrial grade precision injection molding plastic products; and computer related electronic products including PCB assembly and testing. Some advantages for roto-casting, plastic injection, and blow molding are;

[0080] The wide selection of materials available such as rubber, urethane, latex, silicone, plastics all in rigid form or extremely stretchable.

[0081] The end product is essentially stress-free

[0082] The molds are relatively inexpensive

[0083] The lead time for the manufacture of a mold is relatively short

[0084] Short production runs can be economically viable

[0085] There is no material wastage in that the full charge of material is normally

[0086] Consumed in making the part

[0087] It is possible to make multilayer products

[0088] Different types of product can be molded together on the one machine

[0089] Inserts are relatively easy to mold in

[0090] High quality graphics can be molded in

EXAMPLE 2

[0091] The following is an example of a process for creating an novelty article.

[0092] 1. Concepting and selecting the article of fame to be used and the product to be developed.

[0093] 2. Product design development and turnarounds showing multiple views of novelty articles to be produced.

[0094] 3. Three-dimensional scan of the head and face of the athlete with color 3D scanner model 3030.

[0095] 4. Three-dimensional scan of a sport article related to the athlete with color 3D scanner model 3030 motion platform scanner.

[0096] 5. Another form of scanning from sports article in some cases will be SCS, Touch Probe Laser Scanner, or Cloud Points.

[0097] 6. Transfer scan images to compare change to different format depending on application to be produced.

[0098] 7. Surface data development scan can now also be used as digital image data for CGI character. Convert data to NURBS using CySurf Imageware Surfacers Catia Alias Wavefront.

[0099] 8. Take surfaced data of all scans and use CySlice for merging and morphing objects together IGES 128Nurbs EGES126 Splines Cyberware Ply (for subdivision/surfaces and poly meshes).

[0100] 9. Additional design software to be used depending on product application, including STL, Alias Wave front, IGB 128, Imageware surfacer, OBJ, AutoCad 13, Autosketch, Tiffimage Files, and the like.

[0101] 10. Additional design stage, using systems such as UNIX Silicon Graphics, UNIX IBM, PC IBM.

[0102] 11. Final product design ready and can be out putted in Echo, Ply, 3D Studio, OBJ, STL, ASCII, DXF (3D Faces), DFX, IGES 106 110 112 124, VRML, IGES 128 Nurbs, Inventor, Digital Arts (SGI), MOVIE, BYU (SGI), SCR (MESH & SLICO) SGI.

[0103] 12. 3D output for concept models to various machines depending on application.

[0104] 13. ZCorporation WH automated waxer three dimensional printer or 3D thermoset wax printer generated from 3D files.

[0105] 14. A plastic model stereolithography plastic model ZCorporation Z406 or Z810 system for 3D print out physical plaster models.

[0106] 15. Molding 3D printout models in silicone rubber in order to pour workable clay wax for final sculpt modeling.

[0107] 16. Final modeling and sculpting to the wax is necessary to prepare for tooling.

[0108] 17. Sport licensor such as NFL, MLB, NHL, or NBA, as well as athlete is to approve the final model before going to tooling.

[0109] 18. Rescan approved model for product tooling design in Surfcam Master Cam or Cimatron.

[0110] 19. Tool making for plastic, rubber, latex, silicone and urethane parts.

[0111] 20. Make casting, such as ZCast direct metal casting, CNC 5Axis machine, legal line on every tool etched in, Pro/Engineer CAD/CAM system, Euclid Styler (previous Strim 100 CAD system), Sodilk EDM machine, Renishaw Cyclone digitizer.

[0112] 21. Rotocast in rubber and vinyl stamping machines; or

[0113] 22. Plastic injection; or

[0114] 23. Blow molding.

[0115] 24. Full SMT assembly and insert of voice signal technology and microrecorder software, such as FUJI high speed chip placer CP6-400, electrovert omniflo7, electrovert econopak, or dualwave solder system.

[0116] 25. Insert of fastener and final assembly of both 3D faces and skins of sport article, such as die bonding process, auto insertion for conventional components, wave soldering process, dip soldering process.

[0117] 26. Final works like and look like models and paint master ready for final inspection from sport licensor and athlete intervention testing.

[0118] 27. Exploded view drawing and controls tooling shots of final approved product photo shoot and contract samples.

[0119] 28. Mass production begins.

[0120] 29. Packaging, insert, decals and polybags, and shipping.

[0121] 30. Distribution to stores around the world.

[0122] Having shown and described various embodiments of the present invention, further adaptations of the methods and systems described herein can be accomplished by appropriate modifications by one of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the scope of the present invention. Several of such potential modifications have been mentioned, and others will be apparent to those skilled in the art. For instance, the present teaching are not limited to athletes and could be applied with any famous person and any article of fame. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention should be considered in terms of the following claims and is understood not to be limited to the details of structure and operation shown and described in the specification and drawings.

1. A method for creating a novelty article, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) obtaining a three-dimensional digital model of a face of a famous person;
- b) obtaining a three-dimensional digital model of an article associated with the fame of the famous person;
- c) merging the digital models to create a merged three-dimensional digital model, wherein the face of the famous person is positioned on the article of fame in the merged three-dimensional digital model; and
- d) creating a physical three-dimensional novelty article based on the merged three-dimensional digital model.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the famous person is an athlete.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the article of fame is a sports ball.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of creating comprises making a mold based on the combined three-dimensional digital model.

5. A novelty article made using the method of claim 1.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of obtaining a three-dimensional digital model of a face comprises scanning the face of a famous person to create a scanned image.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of merging comprises positioning the face relative to the article of fame such that the article of fame forms the remainder of the famous person's head.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the relative size of the article of fame and the face is such that the article of fame is generally the size of the famous person's head.

9. A sports novelty article, comprising the combination of:

- a) a three-dimensional representation of the face of a famous athlete; and

- b) a three-dimensional representation of an object related to the sport from which the famous athlete is associated;

wherein the representation of the face of the famous athlete is positioned on the representation of the related object.

10. The article of claim 9, wherein the combined three-dimensional representation of the face and three-dimensional representation of the related object is the head of a figurine.

11. The article of claim 10, wherein the figurine comprises the uniform of the famous athlete.

12. The article of claim 10, wherein the head of the figurine is hollow and the figurine can be positioned in the head.

13. The article of claim 9, wherein the face is a caricature of the famous athlete.

14. The article of claim 13, wherein the face of the famous athlete is textured similar to the texture of the related object.

15. The article of claim 9, further comprising the famous player's name, team logo, or jersey number.

16. The article of claim 9, further comprising voice signal technology.

17. The article of claim 9, further comprising an openable cavity.

18. The article of claim 17, further comprising a removable item positioned in the cavity.

19. The article of claim 17, wherein the article is reversible to display a second face.

20. The article of claim 9 combined with a pillow or backpack.

21. The article of claim 9, wherein the relative size of the representations of the related object and face are such that the related object is generally the size of the athlete's head.

22. A sports novelty article relating to a famous athlete, the article comprising:

- a) a three-dimensional representation of a ball associated with the sport from which the famous athlete is associated;
- b) a three-dimensional representation of the face of the famous athlete, the representation of the face being positioned on the representation of the ball such that the ball continues from the face to form the remainder of the athlete's head;

wherein the relative size of the representation of the ball and the representation of the face is such that the ball is generally the size of the representation of the head.

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