

[54] PUPPET TOY  
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 206/DIG. 9

[57] ABSTRACT

A pair of hand operable puppets are attached to a sheet. The sheet is attached to covers which can be closed to form an enclosed package containing the puppets and their support sheet. The covers are provided with access openings therethrough which permits access to the interiors of the puppets.

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12 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures

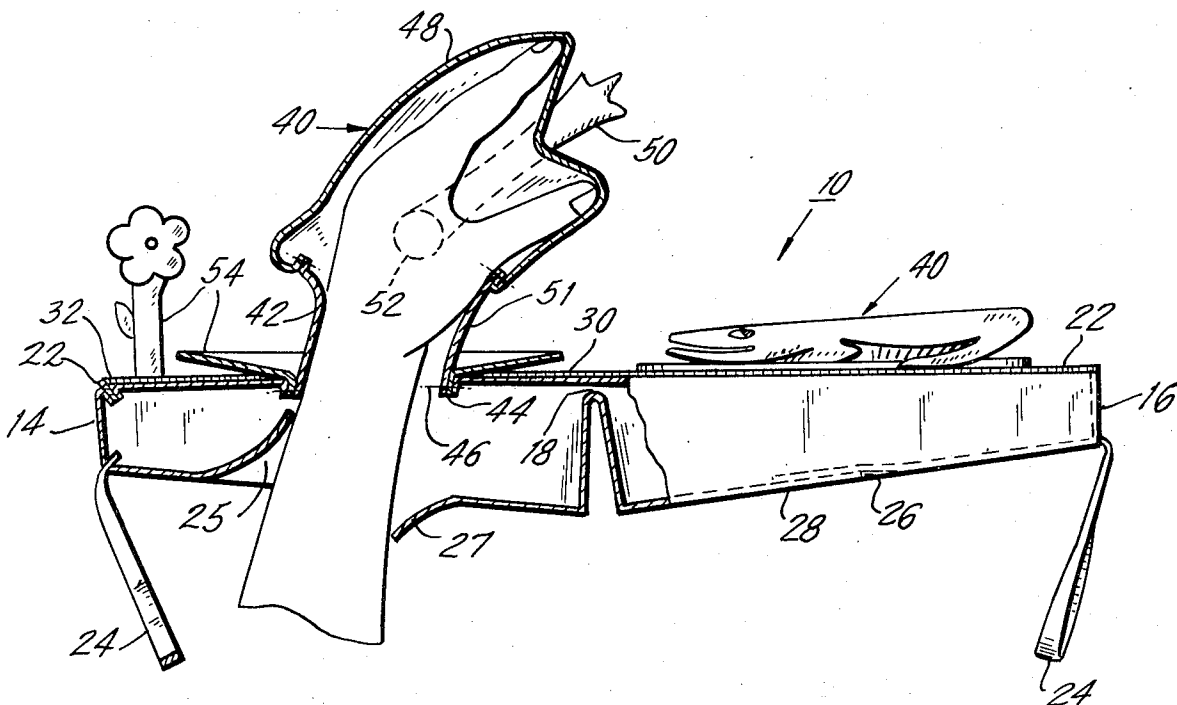


FIG. 1.

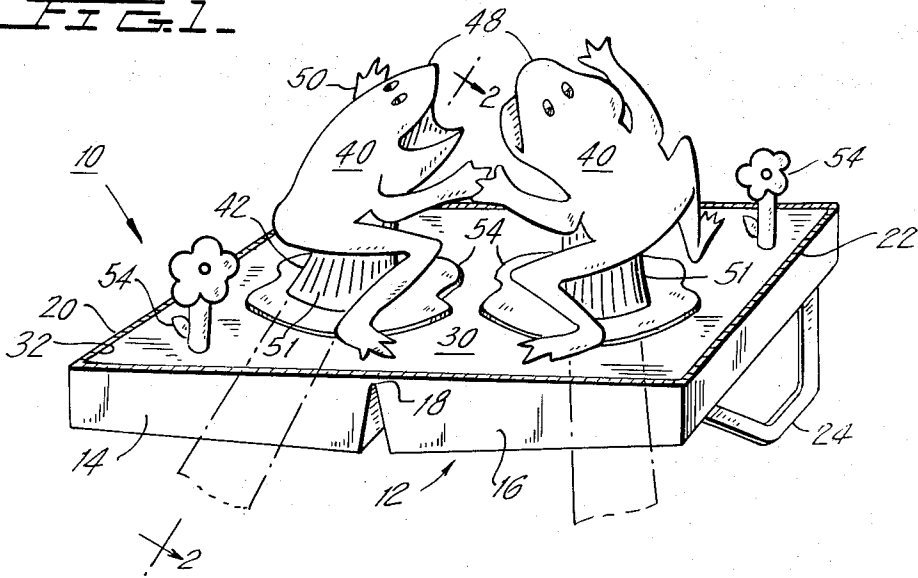


FIG. 2.

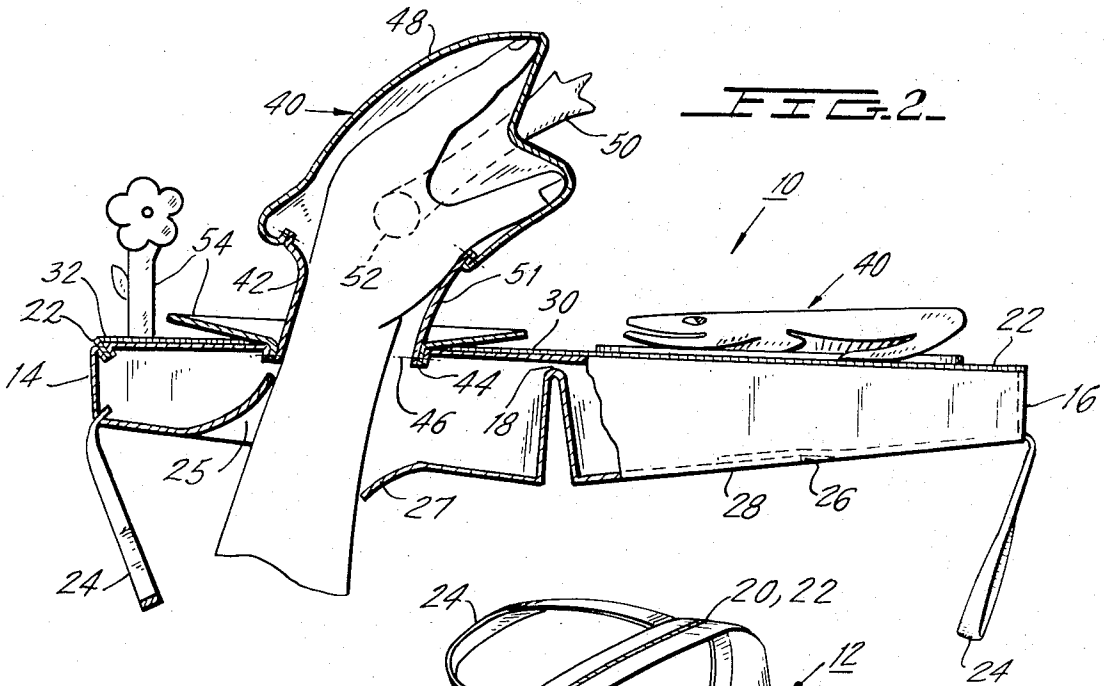
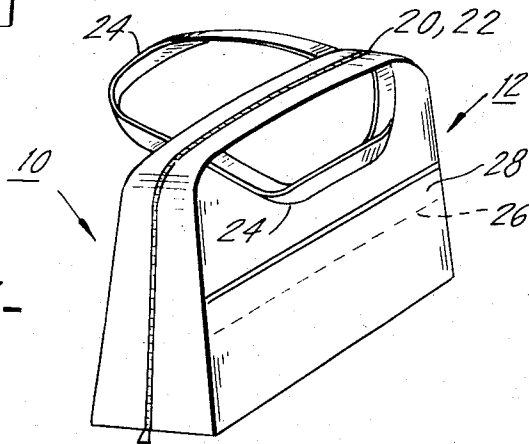


FIG. 3.



## PUPPET TOY

The present invention relates to a puppet toy, and particularly to a puppet toy comprising hand puppets which may be enclosed in a package.

A typical hand puppet is comprised of an open tube of material. One end is open to permit an operator to place his hand in the puppet. The other end of the tube is closed by a decorative covering, e.g., a human or animal head or body, or the like, which the puppet is intended to simulate.

Such puppets may be more enjoyable for the operator if he is manipulating more than one puppet at a time, e.g., one puppet on each hand.

Hand puppets may be inconvenient or unattractive to carry around and, therefore, may not be as frequently used as they might be were they more easily and attractively transportable.

In accordance with the present invention, at least one and preferably a plurality of hand operable puppets is attached to a support sheet. The sheet is, in turn, attached to covers which may be sealed together to form a closed, attractive, easily transported package. When the covers are separated, the puppet or puppets are exposed to view. To provide access into the interiors of the hand puppets, the covers are provided with access openings from their exteriors to the interior space beneath the sheet and below the puppets.

With this arrangement, the puppets need not stand alone. The support sheet may be provided with an appropriate decorative setting which cooperates with or augments the puppets and makes them appear more realistic to the operator. Furthermore, if a plurality of puppets are affixed to the sheet, the puppets can be so positioned and be of a type such that they can be interacted with each other, thereby increasing the enjoyment of the operator.

Accordingly, it is the primary object of the present invention to provide an improved puppet toy.

It is a further object of the present invention to increase the transportability and attractiveness of, and the enjoyment which may be realized from a manually operable puppet toy.

These and other objects of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the puppet toy of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a side elevation view in cross section and along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1 of the toy of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the closed package containing the toy.

Turning to the drawings, puppet toy 10 includes an exterior carrying case 12. The case is comprised of separate covers 14, 16 that are hingedly connected at 18 and that carry respective fastening means 20, 22 along their free edges. The fastening means may be fastened together in order to close the cover, form an attractive enclosed case 12, and completely package and protect below described puppets 40. Case 12 is formed of appropriate package material, e.g., leather or plastic, with sufficient flexibility for the cover to be opened and closed at hinge 18, yet with sufficient rigidity to support the puppets in the position illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. Case 12 may also be provided with attractive carrying handle 24.

Each of covers 14, 16 is provided with a respective slit opening 25, 26 through which an operator's hand

may be passed from the exterior of case 12 to the interior of the case beneath below described sheet 30 and the puppets. Slit openings 25, 26 are hidden by respective overlying flaps 27, 28, which obscure the slits and, if the flaps are tall enough, also create pockets in which other materials, e.g., books or accessories for use with the puppet toy, may be carried.

Turning to FIGS. 1 and 2, when case 12 is opened, it exposes support sheet 30. Sheet 30 is fastened around its entire periphery 32 to covers 14, 16 at a location on the covers such that when the covers are closed, as in FIG. 3, the sheet is adapted to be folded into case 12. Sheet 30 is of a size such that when covers 14, 16 are opened, the sheet is stretched sufficiently taut to enable an operator to place his hand into the interiors of the puppets 40 and to provide sheet 30 with the necessary rigidity and contour for the particular puppet toy arrangement 10. The material of sheet 30 is sufficiently flexible to enable it to be folded into the closed container 12, yet it has sufficient rigidity to support the puppets and any other items that may be positioned on sheet 30.

Secured at the outwardly facing side of sheet 30 is at least one, and preferably a plurality, of manually operable puppets 40. The puppets need not all be identical, although all share certain characteristics, which will be described. In addition, while two puppets 40 are illustrated, there may be any number of puppets extending up from sheet 30. Toy 10 may be used by one or simultaneously, by a number of people, depending upon the number of puppets. The puppets may be positioned predetermined distances apart and be oriented with respect to each other so that the puppets may be interacted with each other by the operator.

Every puppet is comprised of a hollow tubular body 42 of sheet material, which retains its form to some extent and which is decorated on its exterior with an appropriate decoration for the particular application of the puppet toy. The lower end of body 42 is secured around its periphery at 44 to the sheet 30. Sheet 30 has an appropriately shaped opening 46 therethrough to provide access through the sheet and into the interior of body 42.

The free end of body 42 is closed by an appropriate decorative covering 48, e.g., the head of a person or animal, etc. End enclosure 48 may be provided with various exterior decorations, hand or finger manipulable elements, or other gadgets well known in the puppet art.

At the option of the designer, a secondary hollow tubular body 50 may branch off from main tubular body 42 and the operator's fingers could enter secondary body 50 through opening 52 in the wall of body 42. Secondary tubular body 50 may simulate limbs, arms, etc.

The intermediate portion 51 of body 42 is comprised of a material that is sufficiently yieldable and flexible to permit the puppet be twisted around, bent over, or otherwise manipulated and be interacted with other puppets, although the lower end of body 42 is fixedly positioned on sheet 30. Also, it is helpful if portion 51 is formed of a readily stretchable material and if the material causes body portion 51 to tend to decrease in length after the operator's hand is removed from the puppet interior. When sheet 30 and puppets 40 are folded into package 12, the short height portion 51 is more easily enclosed in the package. Forming portion

51 of a relatively loosely knitted, stretchable yarn would satisfy the foregoing specifications. Other suitable materials are known in the art.

An operator passes his hand from the exterior of case 12, through slit 25, to the open space beneath sheet 30, through opening 46 into puppet tubular body 42, into end closure 48 and, if applicable, into secondary tubular body 50. Slit 26 in cover 16 provides similar access to the other puppet, and so forth for every other puppet provided on sheet 30.

The visible surface of sheet 30 may be colored, textured and contoured to provide an environment that coordinates with the design of the puppets 40 affixed thereto. Sheet 30 may have some non-puppet elements 54 also secured thereto to better simulate a realistic environment. For example, if the puppets are animals, the environment of sheet 30 may be adapted to simulate the ground outdoors and element 54 might be a bush, other vegetation, a rock, etc.

When the operator is finished manipulating the puppets, he removes his hands through slit openings 25, 26, folds sheet 30, puppets 40 and any other objects on sheet 30 into case 12, brings covers 14, 16 together and fastens the case shut with fastening means 20, 22. To later be able to use the puppets, fastenings 20, 22 are reopened, covers 14, 16 are separated, and the operator's hands are passed through slits 25, 26 and into the puppets.

There has just been described a novel puppet toy which is adaptable for manipulating a plurality of puppets, which creates an environment in which the puppets may be used and which makes the puppets more attractively transportable.

Although there has been described a preferred embodiment of this novel invention, many variations and modifications will now be apparent to those skilled in the art. Therefore, this invention is to be limited, not by the specific disclosure herein, but only by the appended claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive privilege or property is claimed are defined as follows:

- 1. A puppet toy, comprising:
  - a package, comprising covers which may be brought together to close said package and which may be separated to open said package;
  - said package also comprising a puppet support which is fastened to said covers at locations such that when said covers are brought together, said support may be enclosed within said package;
  - at least one manually operable puppet fastened to said support, and having an interior into which the hand of an operator may be passed;
  - said package having an access opening which is positioned to permit an operator access into said puppet interior.
- 2. The puppet toy of claim 1, wherein said puppet comprises a tubular body, which defines said puppet

interior, with a first end of said tubular body being fastened to said support and with the other end of said body being capped by an end enclosure; said support including a second opening aligned with said body first end.

3. The puppet toy of claim 2, wherein a said cover is provided with said access opening extending through that said cover so that the hand of an operator may be passed from the exterior of said package into said puppet interior through said access and said second openings.

4. The puppet toy of claim 3, wherein said puppet tubular body is comprised of a yieldable, flexible, stretchable material that returns to an unstretched condition.

5. The puppet toy of claim 3, wherein said support is comprised of sheet material;

said covers are comprised of two cover sections and the two said cover sections are hingedly joined at one of their ends; said cover sections each carry fastening means so that they may be fastened together.

6. The puppet toy of claim 1, comprising at least two of said manually operable puppets which are fastened to and spaced apart from each other on said support, and each having a said interior into which the hand of an operator may be passed.

7. The puppet toy of claim 6, wherein each said cover is provided with a respective said access opening there-through so that the hand of an operator may be passed from the exterior of said package into said interior of one of said at least two said puppets through said access openings.

8. The puppet toy of claim 7, wherein each said puppet comprises a tubular body which defines said puppet interior; each said tubular body having a first end fastened to said support, and having another end which is capped by an end closure; said support including a respective second opening aligned with each said body first end.

9. The puppet toy of claim 8, wherein each said puppet tubular body is comprised of a yieldable, flexible, stretchable material that returns to an unstretched condition.

10. The puppet toy of claim 7, wherein said support is comprised of sheet material;

said covers are comprised of two cover sections and the two said cover sections are hingedly joined at one of their ends; said cover sections each carry fastening means so that they may be fastened together.

11. The puppet toy of claim 7, wherein said puppets are of a type such that and are oriented so as to be intertable with each other by the operator.

12. The puppet toy of claim 11, wherein said support is adapted with decoration which interacts with said puppets.

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