EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

WALL MOUNTED, THREE DIMENSIONAL, VISUAL DISPLAY ELEMENT
WANDMONTIERTES ELEMENT FÜR DREIDIMENSIONALE VISUELLE ANZEIGEN
ÉLÉMENT D’AFFICHAGE VISUEL MURAL EN TROIS DIMENSIONS

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References cited:
US-S1- D 451 048 US-S1- D 457 462

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Description

Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to visual display items, and more particularly, to three dimensional, visual display elements which are adapted to be mounted to the surface of a wall.

Background of the Invention

Various products are known for mounting onto the surface of a wall which provide distinctive visual elements. These include, for example, posters, prints, pictures and the like, but can also include products such as life-sized pictures of sports figures, celebrities, fictional characters. However, unlike shelving units or the like, these visual elements are two dimensional, and typically lie flat on the wall.

Other two dimensional elements are known which provide a representation of three dimensional figures which appear to be coming out of the wall. As an example, Shutterstock Images (www.Shutterstock.com - Image No. 29804344) provides a print of a baseball surrounded by a “cracking” pattern which appears to be a baseball which has impacted, and cracked, the surface of a wall.

While this provides a distinctive visual appearance, it is merely a two dimensional image.

Light fixtures are known that project from a wall, but these do not include other visual elements.

Other products are known which simulate a three dimensional representation of a product coming through a glass window. Examples of these are half golf balls, or baseballs, adapted to be affixed to a glass surface, which includes a cracked or crazed decal which provides a cracked appearance to the glass.

US-A-D451 048 S discloses a decorative three dimensional visual display element comprising a visual element adapted to be mounted onto the surface of a window and a device simulating cracking of the window.

US-A-D457 462 S discloses a decorative three dimensional visual display element comprising a visual element adapted to be mounted onto the surface of a wall and a device simulating cracking of the wall surface.

However, these products do not provide any real functional utility, and provide only a limited 2 or 3 dimensional visual element.

To overcome these difficulties, it would be advantageous to provide a three dimensional visual element suitable to be affixed to a wall surface, which provides an improved visual effect, while preferably also providing a functional utility.

Summary of the Invention

One exemplary implementation of a three dimensional, visual display element of the present invention, is a portion of a sport ball, and preferably a half soccer ball which is adapted to be mounted onto the surface of a wall. The soccer ball representation is optionally, but preferably surrounded by a clear decal or other device such as a plate or disc, which is preferably affixed to the wall, and represents or simulates cracking or breaking of the wall in order to represent that the ball has impacted the wall, or is coming through or out of the wall.

In a further preferred feature of the present embodiment, the soccer ball (or other device) includes a light fixture, which can be turned on so as to provide lighting, or to act as a night light, or other lighting device. The light can be directly powered using a household power outlet, by use of battery power, or by use of a power adapter with an optional battery.

Where the device includes an electrical component, it is preferred that it also feature a controller that will automatically control the electrical component. As an example, for a night light function, these control features could include a light sensor to turn a night light on and off, timers to limit the time the night light is on, and the like.

A second exemplary implementation of a three dimensional, visual display element of the present invention, is a representation of a device or object (such as a car, or the like), an action figure, “superhero” or other fictional figure having a part, such as a body part, which at least partially extends away from the wall, and which can incorporate a shelving unit, at the end of an arm, for example. Other features might include a support for an electronic device such as a computer, computer monitor, radio, MP3 player, DVD or CD player, telephone, television, smoke detector, or the like.

In any case, the present invention provides a three dimensional, visual display element which can be mounted onto the surface of a wall, and which preferably includes a decal or other device that simulates cracking or breaking of the wall surface so as to create the appearance of a product crashing though, or impacting onto the wall.

Additionally, the present invention also provides a three dimensional, visual display element which preferably incorporates at least one functional feature, including, for example, a light, a shelf, hanger or hook, or which incorporates a product, or a support for a product, such as an electronic device, including, for example, a clock, phone, smart phone, PDA’s, radio, speakers, music player including an MP3, tape or CD player, a computer device, such as a computerized gaming system, or an accessory therefor, a DVD player, a television, smoke detector, computer monitor, or the like. In this manner, the three dimensional, visual element not only provides a distinctive visual display, but also incorporates a (multi-)functional utility.

Accordingly, in a most preferred embodiment, the present invention provides a three dimensional, visual display element which comprises: (i) a visual element that is adapted to be mounted onto the surface of a wall;
Detailed Description of the Invention

[0018] The visual element can be any suitable element that the user desires to display on the wall. Examples of the visual element can include sports equipment (e.g. baseballs, basketballs, soccer balls, hockey pucks, footballs, frisbees, or the like), nature themed products (e.g. rock outcroppings, tree limbs, or the like), sport figures, celebrities, fictional characters, and the like. The visual element preferably provides a representation of an actual device, but also can be an abstract visual element. The portion of the visual element that protrudes away from the wall is typically stationary, but might be moveable. For example, a fictional character's arm which protrudes from the wall, might be movable from one position to another.

[0019] The decal or other device for simulating cracking or breaking of the wall, can be a solid disc or plate, but more preferably is provided by a clear, flexible plastic film having a mild adhesive for temporary attachment to the wall, without causing damage to the wall itself, or any existing wall covering. The cracking or breaking design can be printed on to the disc, plate or flexible plastic film, and typically, the disc, plate or plastic film will be provided around the outside of the visual element.

[0020] For a round visual element (such as a soccer ball), the disc, plate or plastic film may have a generally circular shape, but for other visual elements, the shape and size of the disc, plate, or plastic film shape can change to match the shape and size of the visual elements.

[0021] Preferably, the visual element is "life sized" so as to be essentially the same size as the actual device. For example, a soccer ball light would preferably have a soccer ball shell which is the regulation size of a soccer ball.

[0022] The visual element can be manufactured from any suitable material depending on its intended use. These materials include wood, cardboard, paper, ceramics, metal or the like. Most preferably though, the visual elements are made from plastic materials which can be formed into the appropriate shape using any suitable technique. These techniques might include blow moulding, injection moulding, vacuum forming, or the like.

[0023] Combinations of various material might also be used, and the visual elements can be painted, or otherwise coloured in order to provide realistic visual representations. When used as a light or nightlight, plastics are particularly preferred, particularly when all or part of the plastic material of the element is translucent.

[0024] The visual element can be attached to the wall using any suitable devices, including glue or other adhesives, screws, bolts, nails, wire, or any other suitable devices or materials. The attachment devices can be essentially permanent devices, or can be temporary such as in the case of the attachment of a seasonal product (for example).

[0025] The functional feature is typically the incorporation of a light, to act as a light or nightlight, or a shelf or other holding device, such as a hook, hanger, basket, pocket, box or the like, or can incorporate various devices directly into the visual element itself, such as those electronic devices previously mentioned. In the case of a lighted product, the light can be any suitable light, including lights such as incandescent lights, fluorescent lights, compact fluorescent lights, LED lights or the like, which can be powered using household wiring, or through the use of replaceable or rechargeable batteries. The lighted product might also include multiple lighting elements, or may include multi-coloured light elements or features.

[0026] Where necessary, the functional feature can include direct control of features such as volume, channel, displays, or power on/off functions, but remote control of any or all of these functional features using suitable wireless technologies might also be incorporated. Additionally, the functional feature or device can include other devices such as light or motion sensors, to control its functions.

[0027] The visual element is typically a standard image. However, the image might also be personalized for the particular user. This might include design elements from the user (e.g. the user's photographs), or information such as licence plate numbers, for the like, or can include stickers or decals for the user to customize the visual elements. The stickers or decals might also be changeable to suit the user's wishes.

[0028] Further, while the present invention is preferably adapted to be attached to a wall, it might also be modified so as to be attached to a floor, or even more preferably, a ceiling of a room. Additionally, the device might also be attached to devices such as furniture such as doors, windows, desks, cabinets, dressers, tabletops, or the like.

[0029] Additionally, other secondary visual elements can be included to add to the impact of the first visual elements. For example foam bricks or boards might be included in the area around the first visual element, in order to enhance the impression of the device coming out of the wall.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0030] Embodiments of this invention will now be described by way of example only in association with the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a soccer ball light showing a representation of one embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a cross-sectional view of the soccer ball light of Figure 1, showing additional details; and

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a fictional character
Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0031] The novel features which are believed to be characteristic of the present invention, as to its structure, organization, use and method of operation, together with further objectives and advantages thereof, will be better understood from the following drawings in which a presently preferred embodiment of the invention will now be illustrated by way of example only. In the drawings, like reference numerals depict like elements.

[0032] It is expressly understood, however, that the drawings are for the purpose of illustration and description only and are not intended as a definition of the limits of the invention.

[0033] Referring to Figure 1 a soccer ball light 10 according to the present invention is shown. The soccer ball shell 12 is manufactured from a semi-circular, translucent plastic material. The soccer ball shell 12 is of regulation size for a soccer ball, and is coloured black and white so as to appear authentic. However, any suitable colour scheme or design might be used.

[0034] Soccer ball shell 12 is mounted onto wall 14, and around the perimeter of shell 12 is a decal 16 printed onto a clear, flexible plastic film 18 which represents a series of cracks within the wall. In practice, decal 16 would preferably be applied to the wall first, and then shell 12 would be mounted approximately in the centre of film 18.

[0035] In Figure 2, it can be seen that shell 12 protrudes from wall 14, and is held onto wall 14 by attachment of ring 30. Housed within shell 12 is a battery 20 which is connected to a series of LED light elements 22. A wireless sensor switch 24 is provided which is operated by a remote control (not shown), or a motion sensor (not shown) so as to turn LED light elements 22 on or off, as desired. Sensor switch 24 also includes a timer element which automatically turns LED lights elements 22 off after a set period of time (e.g., 60 minutes).

[0036] A standard light switch might also be used in place of the wireless sensor switch.

[0037] In Figure 3, a representation of a fictional character 40 is shown which includes portions of character 40 protruding from wall 14, surrounded by decal 16A, on a film 18A, which decal shows cracks and breaks within wall 14. The head and upper torso 44 and one hand 46 of character 40 extend from wall 14. Located with the palm of hand 46 is a shelf 48 adapted to hold an MP3 player, and wiring is provided within arm 46 to connect it to a multi-functional clock, radio, MP3 player 50 located on head 44.

[0038] A finger 52 extends from hand 46, and can be used as a hook for hanging clothing or the like.

[0039] Around the outside of decal film 18A, other secondary visual elements in the nature of plastic brick representations might also be add to suggest that bricks have, or are, in the process of falling out of the wall.

[0040] Thus, it is apparent that there has been provided, in accordance with the present invention, a three dimensional visual display element, which fully satisfies the goals, objects, and advantages set forth hereinbefore. Therefore, having described specific embodiments of the present invention, it will be understood that alternatives, modifications and variations thereof may be suggested to those skilled in the art, and that it is intended that the present specification embrace all such alternatives, modifications and variations as fall within the scope of the appended claims.

[0041] Additionally, for clarity and unless otherwise stated, the word "comprise" and variations of the word such as "comprising" and "comprises", when used in the description and claims of the present specification, is not intended to exclude other additives, components, integers or steps.

[0042] Moreover, the words "substantially" or "essentially", when used with an adjective or adverb is intended to enhance the scope of the particular characteristic; e.g., substantially planar is intended to mean planar, nearly planar and/or exhibiting characteristics associated with a planar element.

[0043] Further, use of the terms "he", "him", or "his", is not intended to be specifically directed to persons of the masculine gender, and could easily be read as "she", "her", or "hers", respectively.

[0044] Also, while this discussion has addressed prior art known to the inventor, it is not an admission that all art discussed is citable against the present application.

Claims

1. A three dimensional, visual display element which comprises:

   a visual element (10) that is adapted to be mounted onto the surface of a wall (14), the visual element having a shell (12) being made of a translucent plastic material, the visual element being configured such that the shell protrudes outward from the surface of the wall (14);

   a film (18) affixable to a surface of the wall, the film having one or more images to simulate cracking or breaking of the wall surface, the film being positioned so as to surround the shell to represent that the shell is coming through the wall; and

   a functional device or feature characterised in that the functional device or feature comprises a light (22) positioned within the visual element and configured to emit light visible from outside of the visual element.

2. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said visual element (10) has the appearance
of a portion of a piece of sports equipment.

3. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said visual element (10) has the appearance of a portion of a soccer ball.

4. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said cracking or breaking of the wall surface is simulated by a decal (16), printed on the film (18).

5. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said visual element (10) is a representation of a device or object, an action figure, a "superhero" or other fictional figure having a part which at least partially extends away from the wall (14).

6. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least part of the visual element (10) is moveable from one position to another.

7. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said film (18), is a clear, flexible plastic film having an adhesive for temporary attachment to a wall (14).

8. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said visual element (10) is "life sized" so as to be essentially the same size as the device that is to be replicated.

9. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 additionally comprising, in combination with said visual element (10), additional visual elements.

10. A three dimensional element as claimed in claim 9 wherein said additional visual elements have the appearance of bricks or boards.

11. The three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 wherein said visual element (10) is configured to be mounted to the surface of the wall (14) with screws, bolts, or nails.

12. The three dimensional element as claimed in claim 11 wherein said visual element (10) is configured to be mounted to the surface of the wall (14) such that said film is positioned between said visual element (10) and said surface of the wall (14).

13. The three dimensional element as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a battery (20) for powering said light (22).

Patentansprüche

1. Dreidimensionales, visuelles Anzeigeelement, umfassend:

   1. ein visuelles Element (10), welches dafür geeignet ist, auf die Oberfläche einer Wand (14) montiert zu werden, wobei das visuelle Element eine Hülle (12) hat, die aus durchsichtigem Plastikmaterial hergestellt ist, wobei das visuelle Element so gestaltet ist, dass die Hülle nach außen von der Oberfläche der Wand (14) vorsteht;
   2. eine Folie (18), die der Oberfläche der Wand befestigbar ist, wobei die Folie ein oder mehr Bilder hat, um ein Zersplitten oder Zerbrechen der Wandoberfläche zu simulieren, wobei die Folie (18) so positioniert ist, dass sie die Hülle umgibt um darzustellen, dass die Hülle durch die Wand hindurch tritt und eine funktionelle Einrichtung oder Merkmal, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die funktionelle Einrichtung oder Merkmal ein Licht (22) umfasst, welches innerhalb des visuellen Elements positioniert ist und so gestaltet ist, dass es Licht abgibt, welches von außen des visuellen Elements sichtbar ist.
   3. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei das visuelle Element (10) das Erscheinungsbild eines Bereiches eines Sportausrüstungsteils hat.
   4. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei das visuelle Element (10) das Erscheinungsbild eines Bereiches eines Fußballs hat.
   5. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei das visuelle Element (10) eine Darstellung eines Geräts oder Objekts ist, eine Action-Figur, ein "Superheld" oder eine andere fiktive Figur, die einen Teil hat, der sich zumindest teilweise von der Wand (14) weg erstreckt.
   6. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei mindestens ein Teil eines visuellen Elements (10) von einer Position zu einer anderen bewegbar ist.
   7. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Folie (18) eine klare, flexible Plastikfolie ist, die einen Klebstoff zur temporären Befestigung an einer Wand (14) hat.
   8. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei das visuelle Element (10) "lebensgroß" ist, um zumindest im Wesentlichen die selbe Größe zu haben wie das Gerät, das nachgebildet werden soll.
Element (10) zusätzliche visuelle Elemente umfasst.

10. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 9, wobei die zusätzlichen visuellen Elemente das Erscheinungsbild von Ziegeln oder Brettern haben.

11. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, wobei das visuelle Element (10) so gestaltet ist, dass es an die Oberfläche der Wand (14) mit Schrauben, Bolzen oder Nägeln montiert wird.

12. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 11, wobei das visuelle Element (10) so gestaltet ist, dass es so an der Oberfläche der Wand (14) montiert wird, dass sich die Folie zwischen dem visuellen Element (10) und der Oberfläche der Wand (14) befindet.

13. Dreidimensionales Element nach Anspruch 1, welches des Weiteren eine Batterie (20) zur Stromversorgung des Lichts (22) umfasst.

Revendications

1. Elément d'affichage visuel tridimensionnel comprenant :
   un élément visuel (10) qui est adapté pour être fixé sur la surface d’un mur (14), l’élément visuel ayant une coque (12) réalisée à partir d’un matériau en plastique translucide, l’élément visuel étant configuré de telle sorte que la coque fait saillie vers l’extérieur à partir de la surface du mur (14) ;
   un film (18) pouvant être fixé à une surface du mur, le film ayant une ou plusieurs images pour simuler un craquage ou une fissure de la surface du mur, le film (18) étant positionné de façon à entourer la coque afin de montrer que la coque ressort du mur ; et
   un dispositif ou une caractéristique opérationnelle, caractérisé en ce que le dispositif ou la caractéristique opérationnelle comprend une lumière (22) positionnée à l’intérieur de l’élément visuel et configurée pour émettre une lumière visible à partir de l’extérieur de l’élément visuel.

2. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit élément visuel (10) a l’apparence d’une pièce d’équipement sportif.

3. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit élément visuel (10) a l’apparence d’une partie d’un ballon de football.

4. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit craquage ou fissure de la surface du mur est simulé par une décalcomanie (16) imprimée sur le film (18).

5. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit élément visuel (10) est une représentation d’un dispositif ou d’un objet, un personnage d’action, un « super-héros » ou un autre personnage de fiction dont une partie s’étend, au moins en partie, en éloignement du mur (14).

6. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel au moins une partie de l’élément visuel (10) peut être déplacée d’une position à une autre.

7. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit film (18) est un film en plastique flexible, transparent, ayant un adhésif en vue d’une fixation temporaire à un mur (14).

8. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit élément visuel (10) est de « grandeur nature » de façon à avoir essentiellement la même taille que celle du dispositif à reproduire.

9. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, comprenant en outre, en association avec le dit élément visuel (10), des éléments visuels supplémentaires.

10. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 9, dans lequel lesdits éléments visuels supplémentaires ont l’apparence de briques ou de panneaux.

11. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le dit élément visuel (10) est configuré pour être fixé à la surface du mur (14) à l’aide de vis, de boulons ou de clous.

12. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 11, dans lequel le dit élément visuel (10) est configuré pour être fixé à la surface du mur (14) de telle sorte que le dit film est positionné entre le dit élément visuel (10) et ladite surface du mur (14) .

13. Elément visuel tridimensionnel selon la revendication 1, comprenant en outre une batterie (20) pour alimenter ladite lumière (22).
Fig. 3
REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

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