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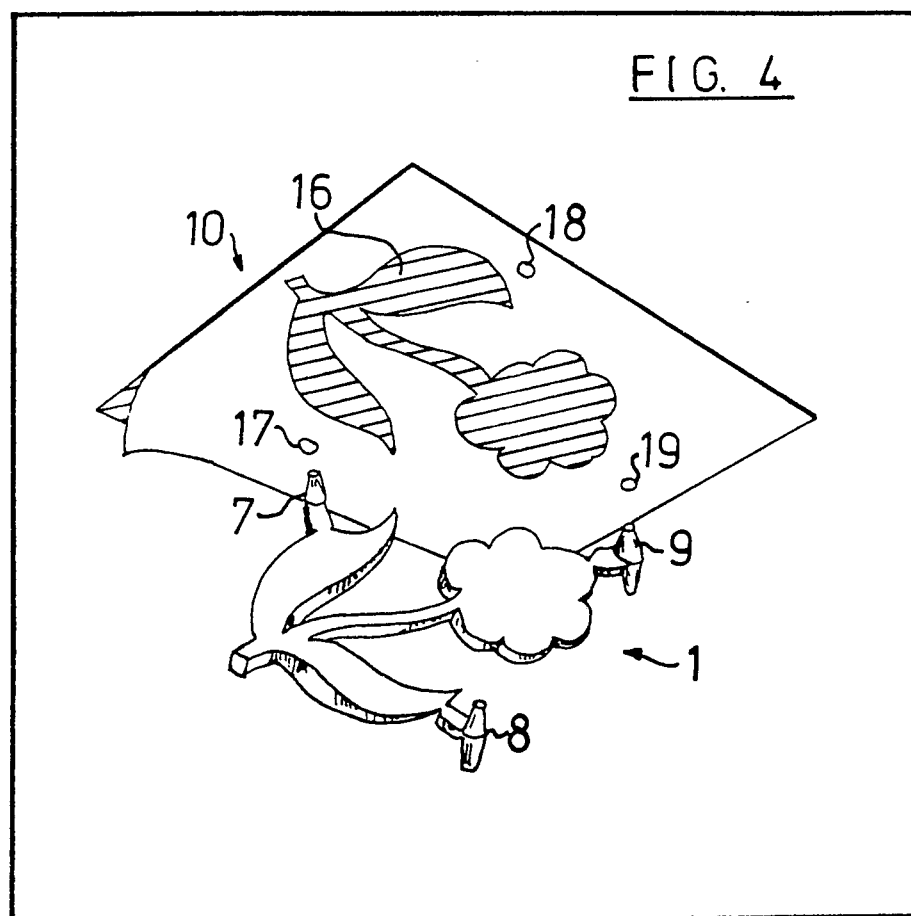
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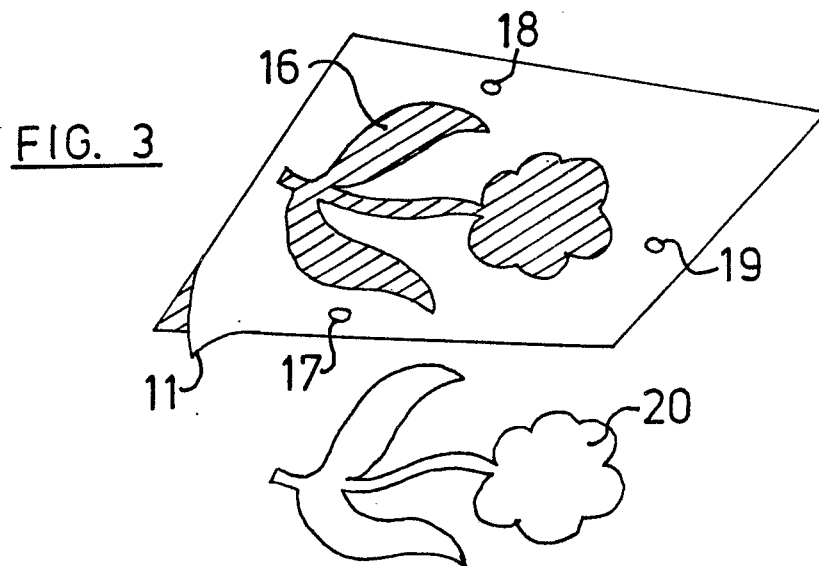
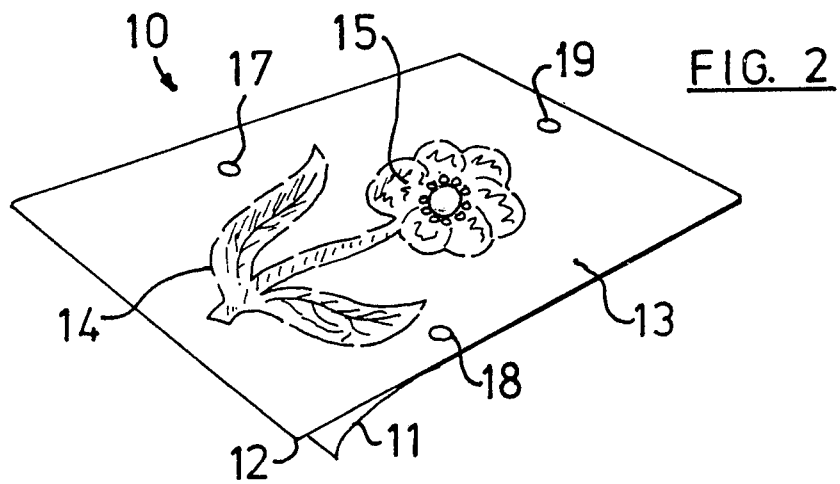
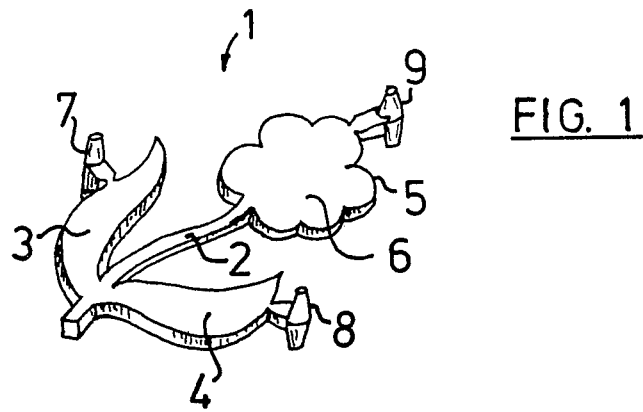
(54) **Surface ornamentation of an article**

(57) An article (1) having a surface to be ornamented with a self-adhesive label forming part of a second layer of a composite sheet material (10) having a first or backing layer is provided with locating means (7, 8, 9) which cooperate with locating means (17, 18, 19) of the composite sheet material (10) for accurately locating the self-adhesive label relative to the

article surface. The composite sheet material (10) is provided with cut and/or weakening lines (16) to facilitate detachment of a part of the backing layer therefrom to expose a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the label. After the latter has been pressed against the article surface, the remainder of the composite sheet is peeled away from the article leaving the label adhered to the article. The locating means (7, 8 and 9) are then broken off.



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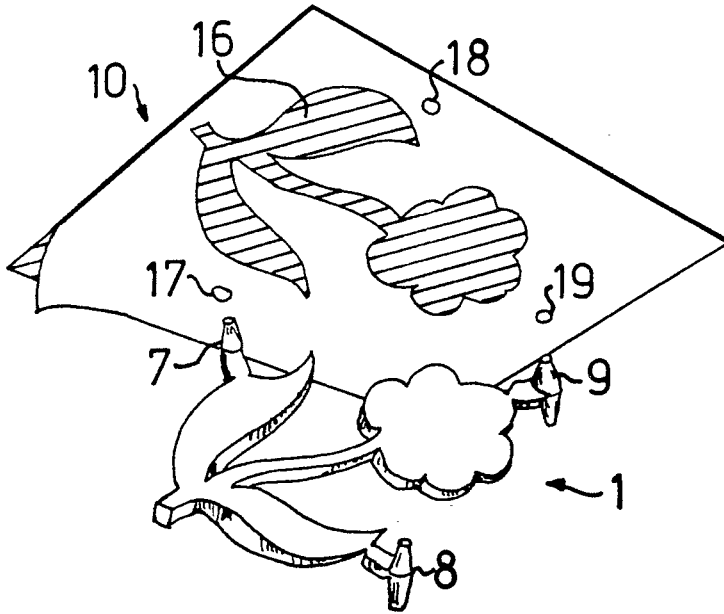


FIG. 4

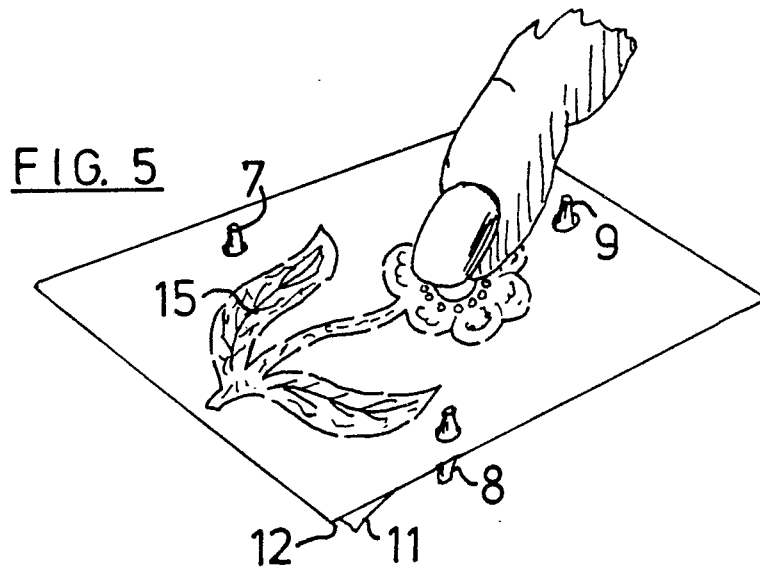


FIG. 5

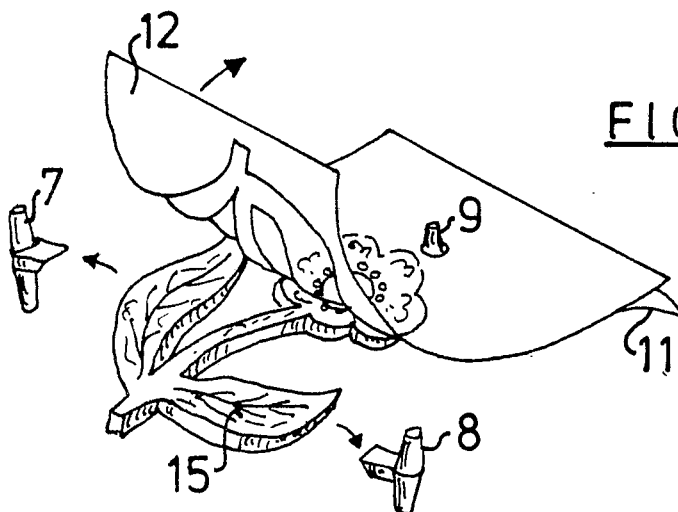


FIG. 6

FIG. 7

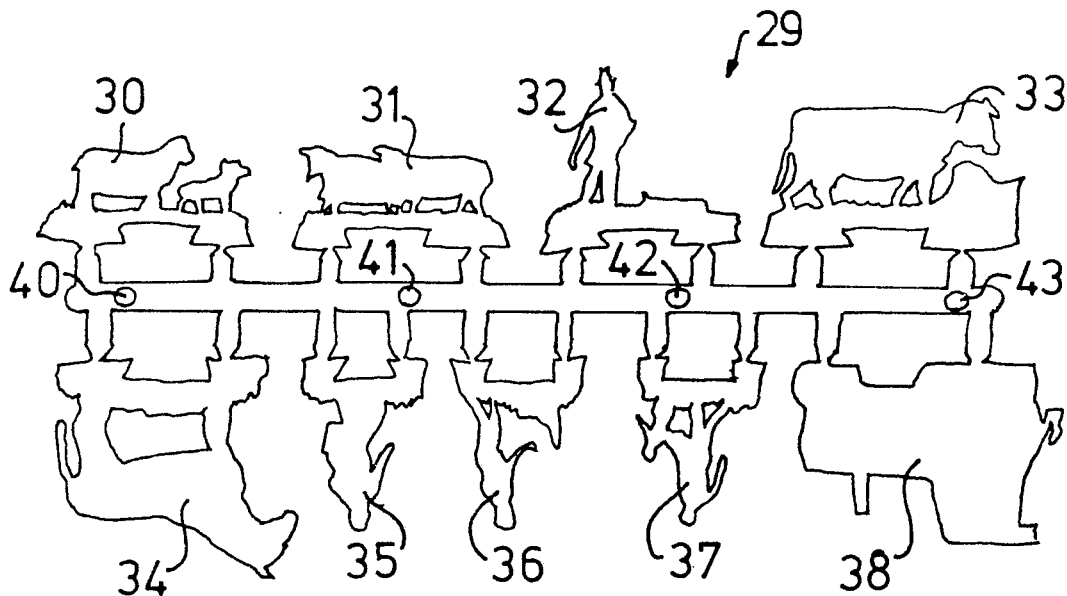
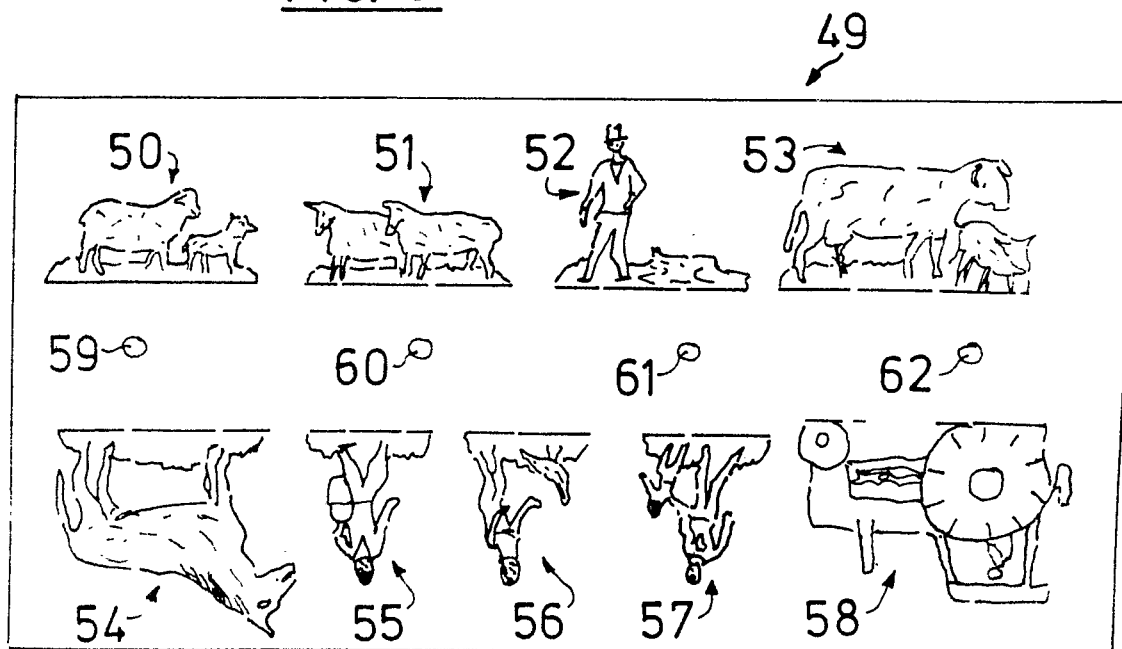


FIG. 8



SPECIFICATION

Surface ornamentation of an article

This invention relates to a method of ornamenting a surface of an article. Although the invention may be applied to ornamenting one or more surfaces of many different types of article, the invention is primarily intended for ornamenting a substantially laminar figurine (such as a toy soldier), typically moulded from a plastics material. In this specification the term "figurine" is intended to include any scale model or imitation figure (animal or human), plant or article, or combinations thereof, adapted to be supported in an upright position by means of a base member.

It is known to mould substantially laminar figurines from plastics material resulting in the production of laminar figurines in plain colours and having no surface embellishments or ornamentation to depict surface features of the figurines. In order to animate these silhouette-like, laminar figurines it is conventional to embellish or ornament one or both flat surfaces of the laminar figurines to depict surface features of the figurines and give the figurines three-dimensional appearances. By way of example a silhouette-like laminar figurine depicting a horse and cavalry rider would typically be ornamented to show the dress of the cavalry rider together with the features of the horse such as its head, tail, mane and the horse's ancillary equipment such as its bridle and reins.

One prior method for ornamenting one of each side of a silhouette-like, laminar figurine has involved painting on the desired design. However, this method is extremely time-consuming and intricate designs are difficult to reproduce accurately. Furthermore, if the painting is carried out in the factory the cost of the finished figurine is excessive.

Other prior proposals for ornamenting one of each side of a silhouette-like, laminar figurine have comprised applying thereto an ornamented transfer which is released from its backing layer by a liquid such as water (hereinafter such a transfer will be referred to as a "liquid-release transfer") or adhering thereto a dry, ornamented label (preferably a label of self-adhesive type). However, with these prior proposals it has been found difficult accurately to locate the liquid-release transfer or label upon the surface to be ornamented. Furthermore, in the case of figurines having intricate outlines and/or having comparatively long and narrow parts to be ornamented, it has been found particularly difficult to locate the liquid-release transfers or labels on the surfaces to be ornamented without the liquid-release transfers or labels tearing or crinkling during their application.

Finally, another prior proposal for ornamenting one or each side of a laminar figurine has involved the use of an ornamented transfer which is released from its backing layer on the application of heat thereto (hereinafter such a transfer will be referred to as a "heat-release transfer"). In this

prior proposal the heat-release transfer is located over the surface to be ornamented and heat is then applied, by means of special heating apparatus, to the heat-release transfer to cause the ornamented layer of the heat-release transfer to be transferred onto the surface to be ornamented. However this prior proposal suffers from the disadvantages that the ornamenting method is comparatively costly to perform thereby increasing the cost price of the finished, ornamented figurine and that the use of the special heating apparatus means that the ornamenting method has to be performed in the factory prior to sale and cannot be performed at home by a purchaser of the figurine.

The present invention seeks to provide a method of ornamenting a surface of an article which method is comparatively cheap, simple and accurate to perform.

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of ornamenting a surface of an article by the application thereto of an ornamented label forming part of a composite sheet material provided with first locating means, the article being provided with second locating means and the label having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one of its sides and an ornamented design viewable from its other side, the method comprising positioning the composite sheet material relative to the article so that the said first locating means cooperate with the said second locating means to locate accurately the ornamented label of the composite sheet material relative to, and with the pressure-sensitive coating of the ornamented label facing, the said surface to be ornamented and to resist subsequent relative movement between the article and the ornamented label, pressing the ornamented label against the surface to be ornamented so that the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the label adheres thereto, and detaching the ornamented label from the remainder of the composite sheet material so that the latter becomes detached from the said article whilst the label remains adhered to the surface to be ornamented.

Suitably the said second locating means are detached from the article after the ornamented label has been adhered to the surface to be ornamented.

Preferably the method comprises, as an initial step, detaching from the composite sheet material a detachable part of a backing or first layer to expose the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the said ornamented label.

According to another aspect of the present invention there is provided in combination an article having a surface or surfaces to be ornamented and a composite sheet material having first locating means and carrying at least one ornamented label having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one of its sides and an ornamented design viewable from its other side, the said article having second locating means

cooperable with the said first locating means to enable the ornamented label(s) of the composite sheet material to be accurately positioned relative to the surface(s) of the article to be ornamented and to resist subsequent relative movement between the accurately located label(s) and the article thereby to enable the label(s) subsequently to be pressed against the surface(s) to be ornamented so that the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating(s) of the label(s) adhere thereto and to be detached from the composite sheet material.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the composite sheet material comprises a first layer and a second layer provided on one of its sides with an ornamented surface and on its other side with a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating to which the first layer is detachably adhered, the said second layer being cut and/or weakened to define the peripheral edge of the or each ornamented label and the said first layer being cut and/or weakened to facilitate detachment of a part or parts of the first layer from the composite sheet material to expose the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the or each ornamented label. Conveniently the said first locating means are spaced from the said detachable part of parts of the said first layer.

Preferably the first locating means comprises at least one through hole formed in the composite sheet material and the second locating means comprises at least one projecting portion adapted to pass through said at least one through hole for accurately positioning the or each ornamented label relative to the or each surface to be ornamented.

Preferably the article to be ornamented is in substantially laminar form.

Suitably the composite sheet material is provided with at least one through cut to sever the first and second layers and define the label edge(s), each edge-defining cut consisting of at least two cut lines in each layer separated by uncut portions of the layer.

The invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a substantially laminar article having a flat surface to be ornamented,

Figure 2 is a perspective view of one side of a composite sheet material employed for ornamenting the article shown in Figure 1, Figures 3 to 6 show various stages in a method according to the invention for ornamenting the article shown in Figure 1 employing the composite sheet material shown in Figure 2,

Figure 7 is a plan showing a set of substantially laminar articles moulded from a plastics material and detachably connected to a common, branched sprue, the articles having flat surfaces to be ornamented, and

Figure 8 is a plan of a composite sheet material employed for ornamenting the articles shown in Figure 7.

Figure 1 shows a figurine in the form of an imitation model plant blank 1 moulded in substantially laminar form from a plastics material and having a stalk portion 2, a pair of leaf portions 2, 4 and a flower portion 5. The free or 'lower' end of the stalk portion 2 is intended to be fitted in a base member (not shown) for supporting the plant blank 1 in an upright position. The plant blank 1 has a pair of opposed, unornamented flat surfaces (only one surface 6 of which can be seen in Figure 1) and has three locating means in the form of locating projections or pegs 7, 8 and 9 detachably connected to the leaf portion 3, the leaf portion 4 and the flower portion 5, respectively, and which extend in opposite directions out of the plane of the plant blank 1.

Figure 2 shows a composite sheet material, generally designated 10, comprising a backing or first layer 11 and a second layer 12 having, one of its surfaces 13 ornamented and its other surface provided with a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating 28 (shown in cross-hatched lines in Figures 3 and 4) to which the first layer 11 is removably adhered. The layer 12 is provided with spaced apart cut-lines 14 which define the peripheral edge or border of a self-adhesive label 15 having, on its surface 13, a plant ornamentation for ornamenting one of the flat surfaces 6 of the plant blank 1. The cut-lines 14 enable the label 15 to be easily detached from the layer 12. The backing layer 11 is provided with an endless cut line 16 in the same position as the cut-lines 14. The provision of the endless cut line 16 enables a part 20 of the layer 11 to be removed from its adherence to the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating 28 to reveal the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the label 15. Locating means in the form of through holes 17, 18 and 19 are formed in the sheet material 10 for receiving the locating pegs 7, 8 and 9, respectively. The through holes 17, 18 and 19 are thus oriented similarly to the locating pegs 7, 8 and 9 and are positioned to enable the self adhesive label 15 to be accurately positioned on the surface 6 of the article 1 to be ornamented.

In order to ornament the surface 6, the part 20 of the layer 11 is initially removed from the composite sheet material 10 to expose the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the label 15 as shown in Figure 3. The locating pegs 7, 8 and 9 of the plant blank 1 are then located in the corresponding holes 17, 18 and 19, respectively, of the sheet material 10 as shown in Figures 4 and 5. Once all the pegs are located in their respective holes, ensuring that the label 15 is accurately located relative to the surface 6 of the plant blank 1, finger pressure is applied to the ornamented surface of the self-adhesive label 15 (see Figure 5) so that the latter is adhered to the surface 6. The composite sheet material 10 is then peeled away from the plant blank 1, the label 15 becoming detached from the layer 12 along the cut-lines 14 (see Figure 6) and remaining adhered to the surface 6 to ornament the latter.

In a similar manner the other flat surface of the

plant blank 1 may be ornamented with another ornamented self-adhesive label (not shown) forming part of another composite sheet material (also not shown). Once of the plant blank 1 has been fully ornamented the locating pegs 7, 8 and 9 are broken off (see Figure 6) and the stalk portion 2 is fitted into a base member (not shown).

It will be appreciated that the method of ornamenting the plant blank 1 described above may be performed at home by a purchaser buying the plant blank 1, and the composite sheet material 10. The provision of the cooperating locating means on the plant blank 1 and the composite sheet material 10 ensures that the purchaser is able to accurately position the label 15 on the surface 6. Furthermore, the method out-lined above ensures that narrow portions (such as the stalk portion 2) of the plant blank 1 can be ornamented relatively easily.

The basic ornamenting method described above may be applied to ornamenting a plurality of articles detachably fixed to a common support with a plurality of ornamentations carried on a single sheet of composite sheet material. In particular Figure 7 shows a plastics moulding 29 comprising a plurality of substantially laminar figurine blanks 30 to 38 depicting, in silhouette form, farm animals, figures and machinery, and a branched moulding sprue 39 to which the blanks 30 to 38 are detachably connected. The sprue 38 is provided with locating projections 40 to 43 extending out of the plane of the moulding 29. In order to ornament the figurine blanks 30 to 38 a composite sheet material 49 is provided carrying a plurality of self-adhesive ornamented labels 50 to 58 orientated in the same relative disposition as the blanks 30 to 38, respectively. Holes 59 to 62 are formed in unornamented portions of the sheet material 49 which holes are designed to receive the locating projections 40 to 43, respectively, of the moulding 29 so that the labels 50 to 58 are accurately positioned above the figurine blanks 30 to 38, respectively. The self-adhesive labels 50 to 58 are applied to the blanks 30 to 38, respectively, in a similar manner to the application of the label 15 to the plant blank 1 as described with reference to Figures 1 to 6. In a similar manner, the opposite flat sides of the figurine blanks 30 to 38 may be ornamented with self-adhesive labels (not shown) of a different composite sheet material (also not shown). In this case it is essential for locating projections (not shown) to be formed on the opposite side of the moulding sprue 39.

The ornamenting method described above may be modified in many ways. In particular it may be preferred, for ease of manufacture, for the first and second layers of the composite sheet material to be provided with cut-lines in a single cutting operation. In this case the composite sheet material may be cut or perforated with non-continuous cuts or perforations which extend through both the first and second layers and which define the shape or peripheral edge of the

or each label formed in the sheet material. Alternatively it is even possible to sever the first and second layers completely around the or each peripheral edge of a label. In this case, in order to prevent the or each label from becoming prematurely detached from the composite sheet material, the latter may be provided with a third or front layer having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one surface to which the ornamented surface of the second layer is adhered.

In other embodiments of the invention, different cooperating locating means may be provided. For instance the locating means of the article to be ornamented need not be detachable and may form part of the finished, ornamented article. Instead of comprising one or more projections the locating means of the article to be ornamented may be in the form of a recessed surface corresponding to the shape of the composite sheet material and into which the latter is positioned for accurately locating the sheet material relative to the article to be ornamented. In this case the locating means of the sheet material comprises its peripheral edge. Whatever cooperating locating means are employed, it is desirable for the or each locating means of the composite sheet material to be spaced from the or each label when the latter forms part of the second layer of the composite sheet material.

Finally it will be appreciated that although the ornamenting method has been described with reference to ornamenting laminar figurines the method according to the invention may be applied to ornamenting a smooth, and preferably a substantially flat, surface of any suitable article. The article need not, of course, be moulded from plastics material. If the article is in the form of a laminar figurine, it could be stamped from sheet metal. In this latter case it would of course be necessary to provide the stamped sheet metal with some form of locating means for the composite sheet material.

Claims

1. A method of ornamenting a surface of an article by the application thereto of an ornamented label forming part of a composite sheet material provided with first locating means, the article being provided with second locating means and the label having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one of its sides and an ornamented design viewable from its other side, the method comprising positioning the composite sheet material relative to the article so that the said first locating means cooperate with the said second locating means to locate accurately the ornamented label of the composite sheet material relative to, and with the pressure-sensitive coating of the ornamented label facing, the said surface to be ornamented and to resist subsequent relative movement between the article and the ornamented label, pressing the ornamented label against the surface to be ornamented so that the pressure-sensitive

adhesive coating of the label adheres thereto, and detaching the ornamented label from the remainder of the composite sheet material so that the latter becomes detached from the said article whilst the label remains adhered to the surface to be ornamented.

2. A method according to claim 1, in which the said second locating means are detached from the article after the said ornamented label has been adhered to the surface to be ornamented.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, comprising, as an initial step, detaching from the composite sheet material a detachable part of a backing or first layer to expose the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the said ornamented label.

4. A combination of an article having a surface or surfaces to be ornamented and a composite sheet material having first locating means and carrying at least one ornamented label having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one of its sides and an ornamented design viewable from its other side, the said article having second locating means cooperable with the said first locating means to enable the ornamented label(s) of the composite sheet material to be accurately positioned relative to the surface(s) of the article to be ornamented and to resist subsequent relative movement between the accurately located label(s) and the article thereby to enable the label(s) subsequently to be pressed against the surface(s) to be ornamented so that the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating(s) of the label(s) adhere thereto and to be detached from the composite sheet material.

5. A combination according to claim 4, in which the composite sheet material comprises a first layer and a second layer provided on one of its sides with an ornamented surface and on its other side with a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating to which the first layer is detachably adhered, the said second layer being cut and/or weakened to define the peripheral edge of the or each ornamented label and the said first layer being cut and/or weakened to facilitate detachment of a part or parts of the first layer from the composite sheet material to expose the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the or each ornamented label.

6. A combination according to claim 5, in which the said first locating means are spaced from the said detachable part or parts of the said first layer.

7. A combination according to any of claims 4 to 6, in which the first locating means comprises at least one through hole formed in the composite sheet material and the second locating means comprises at least one projecting portion adapted to pass through said at least one through hole for accurately positioning the or each ornamented label relative to the or each surface to be ornamented.

8. A combination according to claim 7, in which the or each projection is detachably connected to the said article for detachment

therefrom when the article has been ornamented.

9. A combination according to any of claims 4 to 8, in which the said article has a laminar shape and the or each surface to be ornamented is substantially flat.

10. A combination according to claim 9, in which the article is moulded from a plastics material.

11. A combination according to claim 10, in which the article comprises a moulding sprue having at least two parts detachably connected thereto and each having surfaces to be ornamented, and the composite sheet material carries at least two of said ornamented labels orientated similarly to the said article parts.

12. A combination according to claim 11, in which the said second locating means comprise at least two projections formed on the said moulding sprue and the said first locating means comprise at least two through holes formed in the composite sheet material.

13. A combination according to claim 5 or 6 or any of claims 7 to 12 when dependent on claim 5, in which the composite sheet material is provided with at least one through cut to sever both the first and second layers and define the peripheral edge of the or each ornamented label, each peripheral edge-defining cut consisting of at least two cut lines in each layer separated by uncut portions of the layer.

14. A method of ornamenting a surface of an article substantially as herein described with reference to, and as illustrated in, Figures 1 to 6 or Figures 1 to 6 as modified by Figures 7 and 8 of the accompanying drawings.

New Claims or Amendments to Claims filed on 4 May, 1982.

Superseded Claims 1, 4 and 11.

New or Amended Claims:—

1. A method of ornamenting a figurine-defining surface of an article by the application thereto of an ornamented label having the same shape as said figurine-defining surface and forming part of a composite sheet material provided with first locating means, the article being provided with second locating means and the label having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one of its sides and an ornamented design viewable from its other side, the method comprising positioning the composite sheet material relative to the article so that the said first locating means cooperate with the said second locating means to locate accurately the ornamented label of the composite sheet material relative to, and with the pressure-sensitive coating of the ornamented label facing, the said surface to be ornamented and to resist subsequent relative movement between the article and the ornamented label, pressing the ornamented label against the surface to be ornamented so that the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating of the label adheres thereto, and detaching the ornamented label from the remainder of the composite sheet material so that

the latter becomes detached from the said article whilst the label remains adhered to the surface to be ornamented.

- 5 4. A combination of an article having at least one figurine-defining surface to be ornamented and a composite sheet material having first locating means and carrying at least one ornamented label having the same shape or shapes as the figurine-defining surface or surfaces
- 10 to be ornamented having a pressure-sensitive adhesive coating on one of its sides and having an ornamented design viewable from its other side, the said article having second locating means
- 15 cooperable with the said first locating means to enable the ornamented label(s) of the composite sheet material to be accurately positioned relative to the figurine-defining surface(s) of the article to

- 20 be ornamented and to resist subsequent relative movement between the accurately located label(s) and the article thereby to enable the label(s) subsequently to be pressed against the figurine-defining surface(s) to be ornamented so that the pressure-sensitive adhesive coating(s) of the label(s) adhere thereto and to be detached
- 25 from the composite sheet material.

- 30 11. A combination according to claim 10, in which the article comprises a moulding sprue having at least two parts detachably connected thereto, each article part having a figurine-defining surface to be ornamented, and the composite sheet material carries at least two of said ornamented figurine-defining labels oriented similarly to the said article parts.