



US 20250256219A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Maddox et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2025/0256219 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 14, 2025**

(54) **CONFETTI-EXPELLING TOY**

Publication Classification

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

A63H 37/00 (2006.01)

A63H 3/00 (2006.01)

A63H 11/20 (2006.01)

A63H 29/22 (2006.01)

A63H 31/00 (2006.01)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC *A63H 37/00* (2013.01); *A63H 11/20* (2013.01); *A63H 3/003* (2013.01); *A63H 29/22* (2013.01); *A63H 31/00* (2013.01)

(21) Appl. No.: **19/051,840**

(22) Filed: **Feb. 12, 2025**

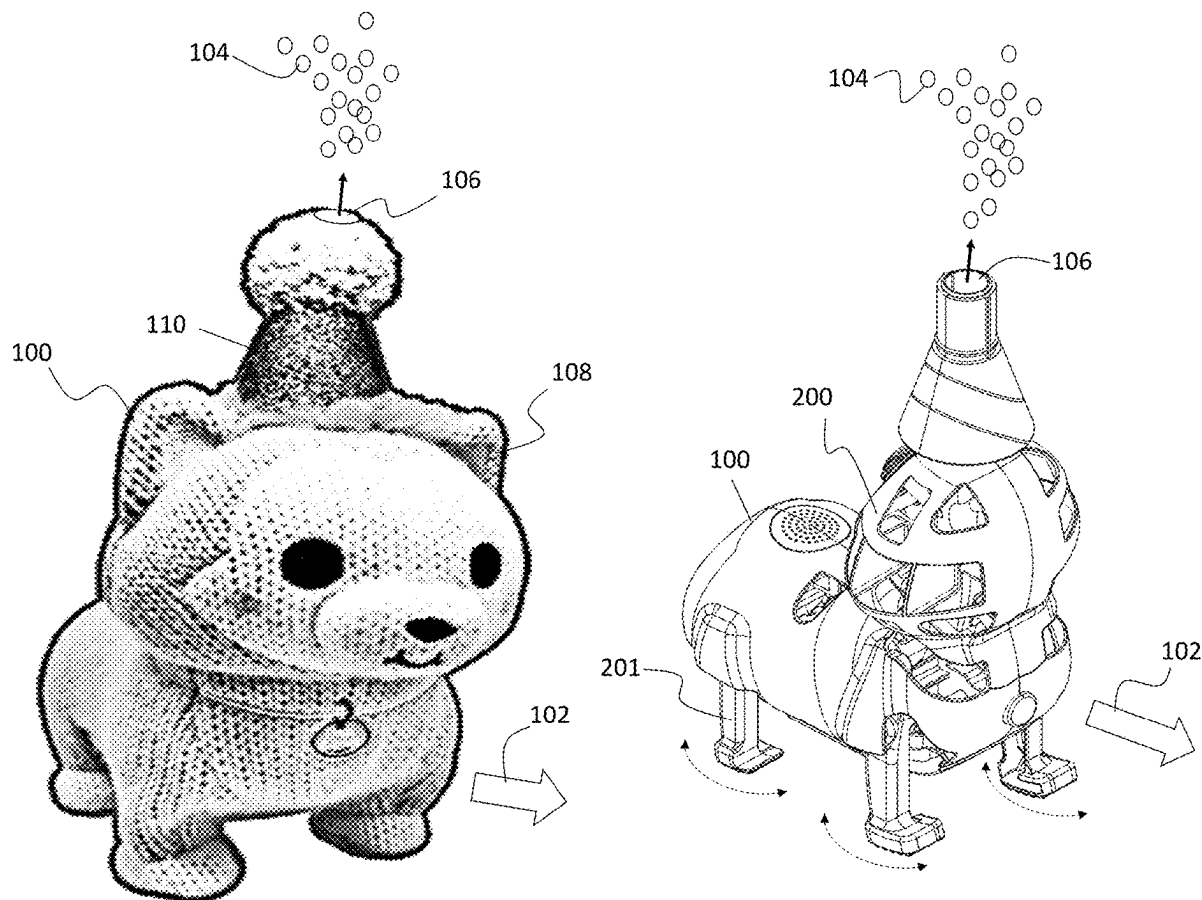
Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 63/553,101, filed on Feb. 13, 2024.

(57)

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a mobile toy and, more particularly, to a walking toy animal that expels confetti.



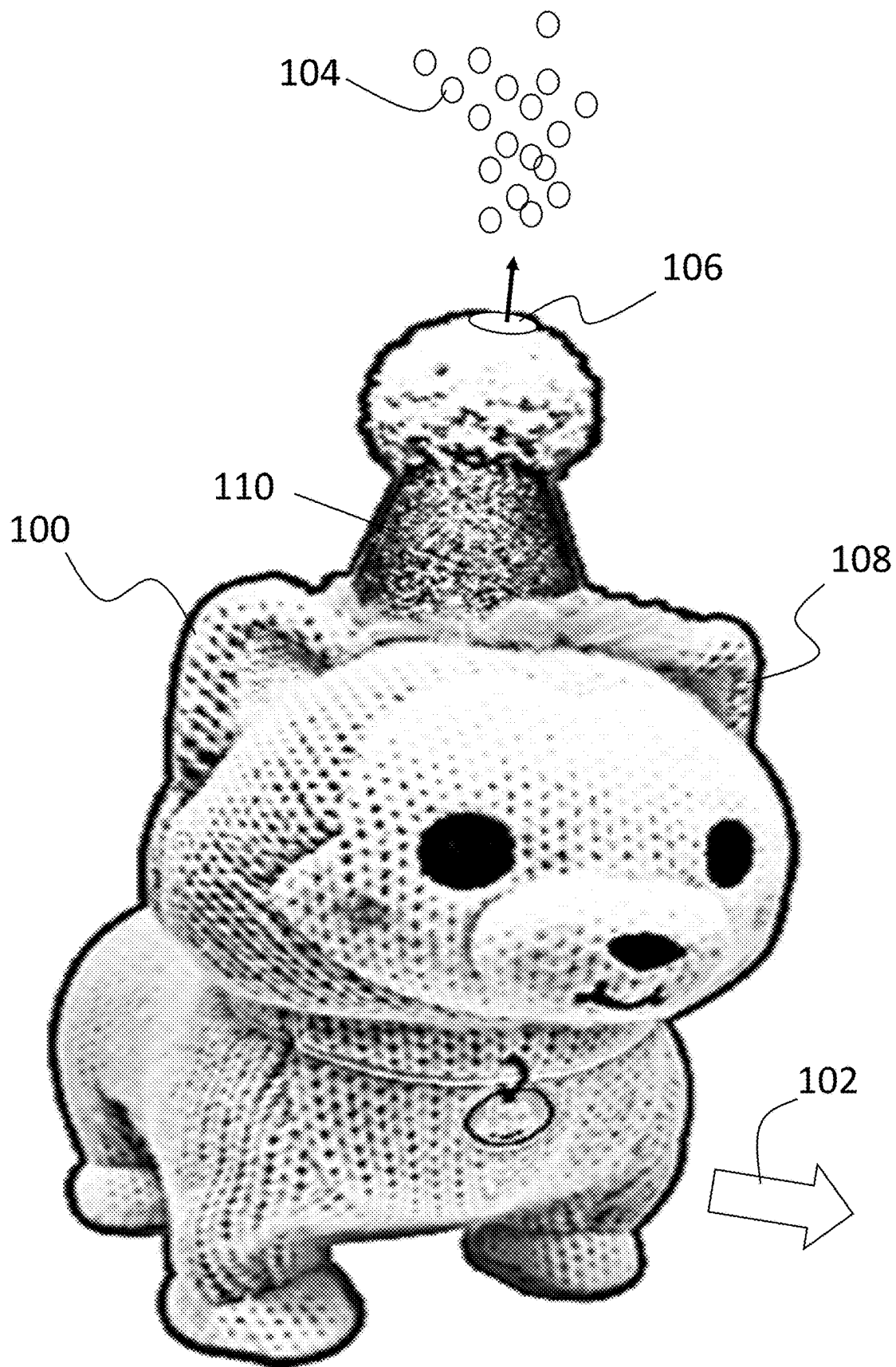


FIG. 1A

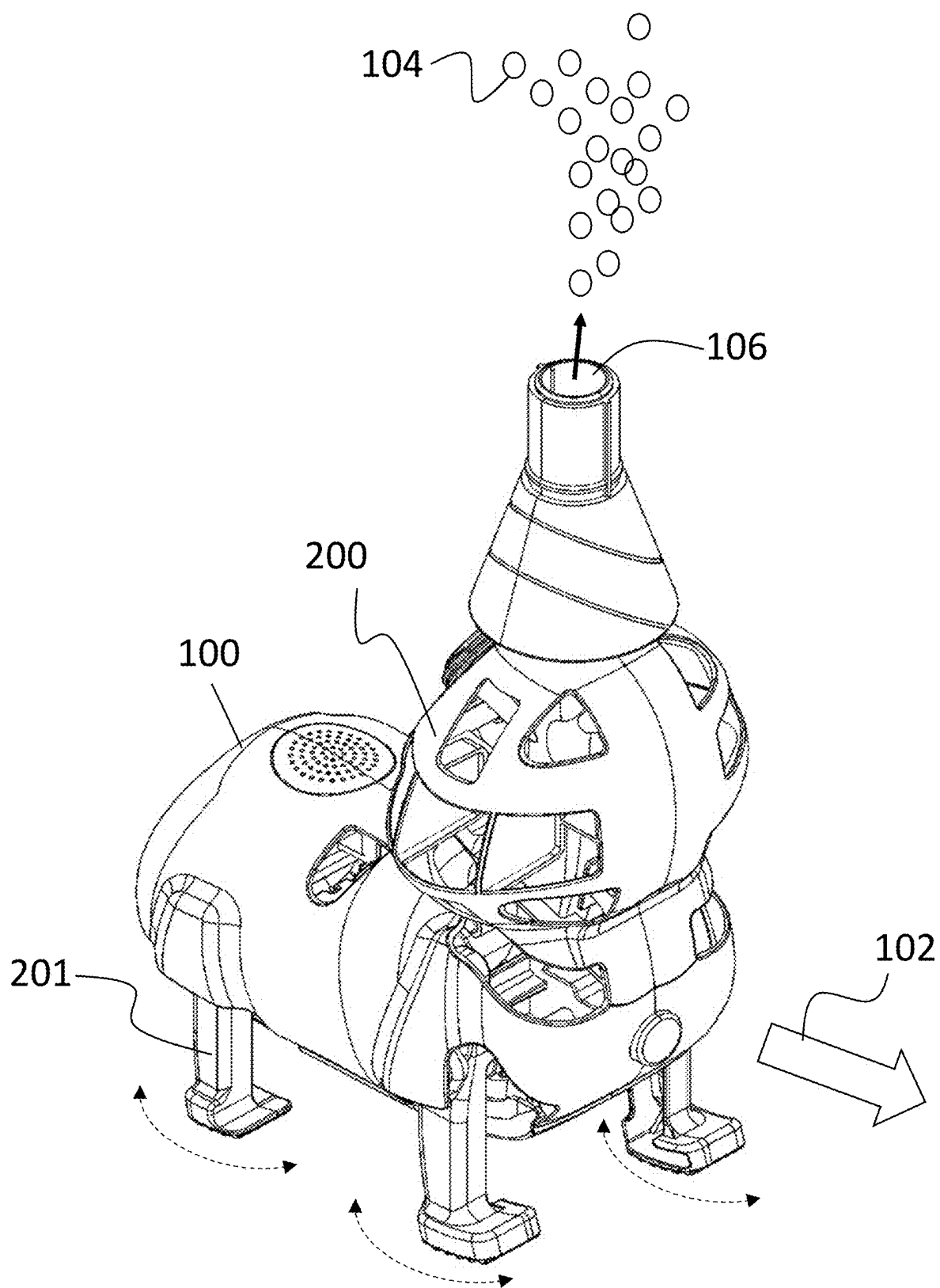


FIG. 1B

200

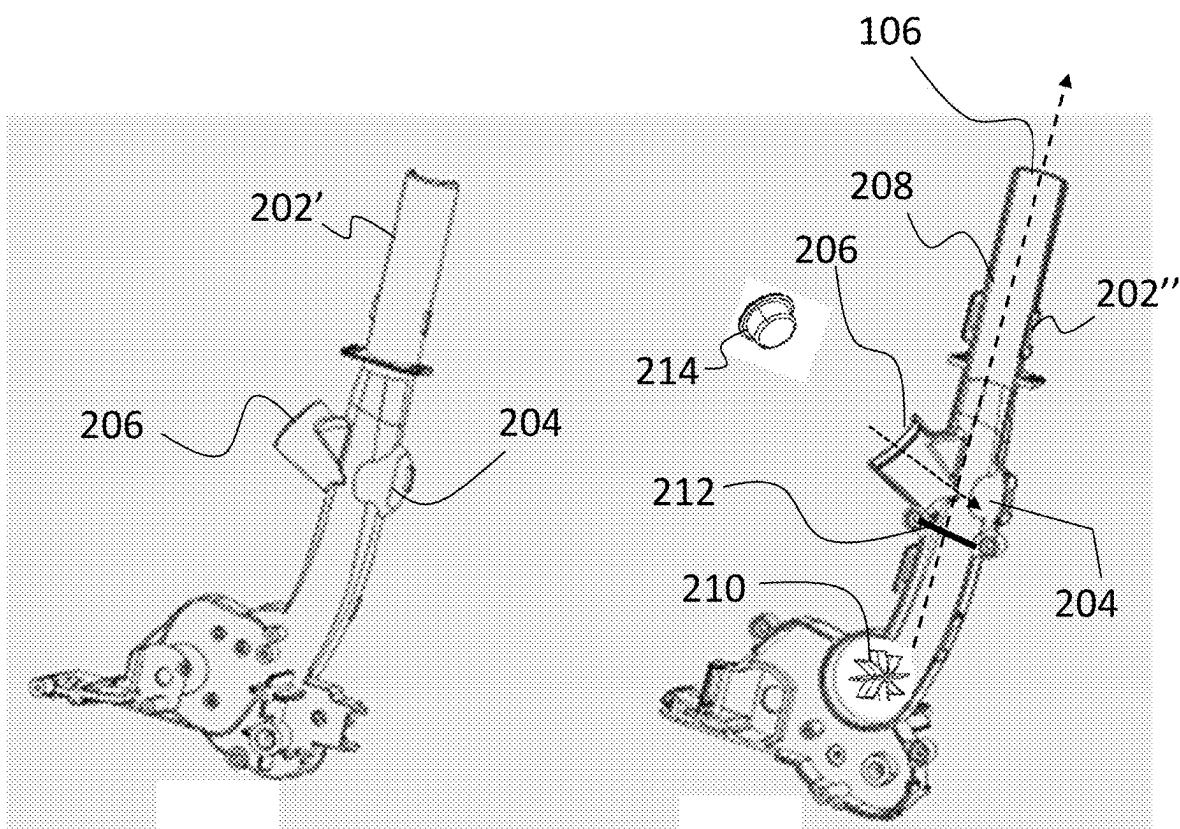


FIG. 2

100

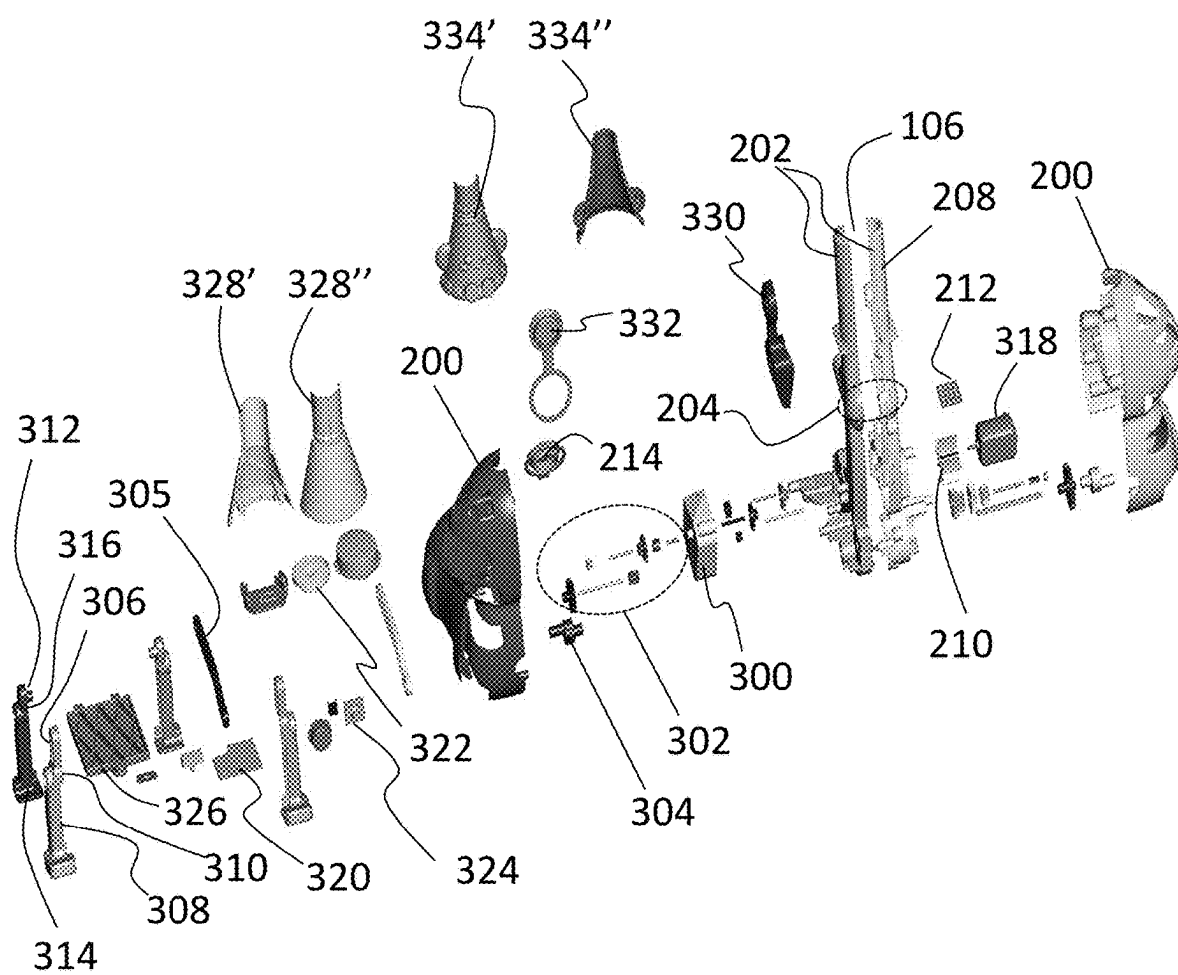


FIG. 3

CONFETTI-EXPELLING TOY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This is a non-provisional application claiming the benefit of priority of U.S. Ser. No. 63/553,101, filed on Feb. 13, 2024, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(1) Field of Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a mobile toy and, more particularly, to a walking toy animal that expels confetti.

(2) Description of Related Art

[0003] Mobile and walking toys have long been known in the art. By way of example, four-legged wind-up animals have been conceived that allow a user to wind a gear and, upon releasing the gear, the gear unwinds to cause the animal to walk. Other figurines and toys are battery operated and include various motors and mechanics to allow them to walk or otherwise traverse a surface. While operable for motion, such toys have never been devised to expel micro-projectiles, such as confetti.

[0004] Thus, a continuing need exists for a mobile toy that is operable for both motion and projection of confetti.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0005] The present invention relates to a mobile toy and, more particularly, to a walking toy animal that expels confetti.

[0006] Finally, as can be appreciated by one in the art, the present invention also comprises a method for forming and using the invention described herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed descriptions of the various aspects of the invention in conjunction with reference to the following drawings, where:

[0008] FIG. 1A is an illustration of a confetti-expelling toy in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention;

[0009] FIG. 1B is an illustration of the confetti-expelling toy in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention, depicting the toy with a plush covering removed for illustrative purposes;

[0010] FIG. 2 is an illustration of an internal blower mechanism in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention; and

[0011] FIG. 3 is an exploded-view illustration of the confetti-expelling toy in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] The present invention relates to a mobile toy and, more particularly, to a walking toy animal that expels confetti. The following description is presented to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the invention

and to incorporate it in the context of particular applications. Various modifications, as well as a variety of uses in different applications will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the general principles defined herein may be applied to a wide range of embodiments. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments presented, but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

[0013] In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without necessarily being limited to these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form, rather than in detail, in order to avoid obscuring the present invention.

[0014] The reader's attention is directed to all papers and documents which are filed concurrently with this specification and which are open to public inspection with this specification, and the contents of all such papers and documents are incorporated herein by reference. All the features disclosed in this specification, (including any accompanying claims, abstract, and drawings) may be replaced by alternative features serving the same, equivalent or similar purpose, unless expressly stated otherwise. Thus, unless expressly stated otherwise, each feature disclosed is only one example of a generic series of equivalent or similar features.

[0015] Furthermore, any element in a claim that does not explicitly state "means for" performing a specified function, or "step for" performing a specific function, is not to be interpreted as a "means" or "step" clause as specified in 35 U.S.C. Section 112, Paragraph 6. In particular, the use of "step of" or "act of" in the claims herein is not intended to invoke the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 112, Paragraph 6.

[0016] Please note, if used, the labels left, right, front, back, top, bottom, forward, reverse, clockwise and counter clockwise have been used for convenience purposes only and are not intended to imply any particular fixed direction. Instead, they are used to reflect relative locations and/or directions between various portions of an object.

(1) Description

[0017] As shown in FIG. 1, the present disclosure provides a mobile toy **100** that is devised to impart both motion **102** and expel a collection of particles **104** out of an aperture **106**. A non-limiting example of such particles includes confetti (e.g., paper confetti or foil confetti, etc.). The toy **100** can be formed to resemble a variety of items, non-limiting examples of which include a vehicle, a robot, or an animal. As shown in FIG. 1A, in this example, the mobile toy **100** is formed to represent an animal, such as a cat. The example as depicted includes a soft cloth or plush covering **108** that imparts the visual features of the animal.

[0018] For further understanding, FIG. 1B depicts the toy **100** with the soft covering removed to depict the components that allow the toy **100** to operate as devised. Notably, the mobile toy **100** is devised to include any suitable components as may be necessary to both impart motion **102** to the toy **100** and, separately, expel the particles **104**. For example, the mobile toy **100** includes a body portion **200** having an internal blower mechanism (described

in further detail below) that is configured to receive/hold confetti 102 and project the confetti 102 from the aperture 106.

[0019] The blower mechanism 200 is depicted in FIG. 2 and includes any suitable

[0020] components as necessary to hold and selectively expel confetti from the toy. As a non-limiting example, the blower mechanism 200 is embedded within the body portion and formed of two housing shell halves 202' and 202" that collectively form a blower housing 202. The blower housing is formed to include a confetti cavity 204 for holding and then expelling the confetti. Angled downward and into the confetti cavity 204 is a cavity entrance 206. Further, flowing away and upwards from the confetti cavity 204 is an elongated exit channel 208 that terminates in the aperture 106. While the toy can be designed such that the cavity entrance 206 and exit channel 208 are the same pathway or orifice, in one aspect as described and illustrated, the cavity entrance 206 is a distinct pathway from that of the exit channel 208.

[0021] The housing also includes a blower paddle wheel 210 (e.g., powered by a blower motor attached within the body portion) that is in fluid communication with the confetti cavity 204. Importantly, a screen or sieve 212 is positioned between the confetti cavity 204 and paddle wheel 210 to hold confetti and prevent confetti from falling down into or otherwise onto the paddle wheel 210. The sieve 212 has holes that are smaller than the size of the particles or confetti, thereby allowing air to pass therethrough while preventing the particles from falling down onto the paddle wheel 210.

[0022] In operation, a user would position confetti through the cavity entrance 206 and into the confetti cavity 204. A cavity entrance cap 214 is used to seal the cavity entrance 206 and prevent air or confetti from being expelled from the entrance. When activated, the blower motor rotates the paddle wheel 210 to cause air to force any confetti or particles within the confetti cavity 204 up and out of the exit channel 208 and aperture 106.

[0023] Further and referring again to FIG. 1B, the mobile toy 100 includes a motion apparatus comprised of any suitable components as may be necessary to cause mobile motion of the toy 100. For example, in one aspect of the motion apparatus, the toy 100 includes wheels and associated motors, etc. to cause the toy to roll upon a surface. In this aspects, the motor(s) are positioned within the body portion and attached with wheels that project outward from the body portion to allow for selective motion of the toy 100. In another aspect and as illustrated, the toy 100 can be devised to represent an animal with a plurality of legs 201, such as four. In this aspect and as understood by those skilled in the art, the motion apparatus includes walking legs 200, motors (i.e., walking motors to cause the toy to walk), gears, linkages, and other component as may be necessary to allow the toy 100 to walk through a walking motion with the plurality of legs 201, thereby causing the toy to move across a surface. Several walking leg configurations are known to those skilled in the art, non-limiting examples of which include those disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,004,185 and 6,273,782, both of which are incorporated herein by reference.

[0024] As yet another example and as shown in FIG. 3, the walking motor 300 is included within the body portion 200. A series of axles and gears 302 project out from the walking

motor 300 and are operably connected with a cam 304. The cam 304 passes through a hole in a linkage 305 and then slidably passes through a slot 306 in a front leg 308. The front leg 308 is pivotally connected 310 to the body portion 200 at an offset from the cam 304 (and slot 306) such that rotation of the cam 304 causes the front leg 308 to swing forwards and backwards in a walking motion. To coordinate motion with a rear leg 314, a post 312 in the rear leg 314 is rotatably connected to the linkage 305. Further, the rear leg 314 is pivotally connected 316 to the body portion 200 at an offset from the post 312 such that rotation of the cam 304 causes both the front and rear legs 308 and 314 to swing forward and backwards in the walking motion. While described with respect to one side of the body (e.g., right side), as shown, similar mechanics are applied to both sides of the toy 100.

[0025] Also shown in FIG. 3 is the paddle wheel 210 and associated blower motor 318. As noted above, the paddle wheel 210 and sieve 212 are positioned within the blower housing 202 to secure and then expel confetti from the confetti cavity 204.

[0026] In some aspects the toy 100 includes an integrated circuit 320, a speaker 322 and any other components (e.g., wires, batteries, gears, etc.) as may be necessary to provide the desired features or functions. For example, in one aspect, the toy 100 is activated through depression of an activation button 324. Activating the toy 100 causes the walking motor(s) to activate and move the legs (depicted as element 201 in FIG. 1B), thereby causing the toy 100 to walk. Sounds, lights, or other features can also be activated. Notably, the blower motor 318 is activated to cause confetti to be expelled from the confetti cavity 204. The blower motor 318 can be activated randomly, while the toy 100 is walking or otherwise in motion, or after the toy 100 ceases mobile motion, depending on the desired programming.

[0027] Also shown in FIG. 3 is a battery compartment cover 326, funnel halves 328' and 328" that collectively form a funnel 328, a shovel 330, the cavity entrance cap 214, and an aperture cap 332. As can be appreciated by those skilled in the art, the battery compartment cover 326 is used to secure batteries when included within the toy 100. Further, the shovel 330 is for use by a user to gather and position confetti through the funnel 328 into the confetti cavity 204. The aperture cap 332 can be used to seal the top of the blower mechanism where the aperture 106 is.

[0028] In one aspect and as illustrated in FIG. 1, the toy 100 can be designed to appear as a four-legged animal wearing a party hat 110. In this aspect the party hat 110 conceals the blower mechanism such that upon activation, the blower motor causes confetti to be expelled from the party hat 100. Referring again to FIG. 3, the party hat is shaped and maintains its form by two party hat halves 334' and 334" that are affixed around the exit channel 208 of the blower mechanism to conceal the blower mechanism and exit channel 208.

[0029] Finally, while this invention has been described in terms of several embodiments, one of ordinary skill in the art will readily recognize that the invention may have other applications in other environments. It should be noted that many embodiments and implementations are possible. Further, the following claims are in no way intended to limit the scope of the present invention to the specific embodiments described above. In addition, any recitation of "means for" is intended to evoke a means-plus-function reading of an

element and a claim, whereas, any elements that do not specifically use the recitation “means for”, are not intended to be read as means-plus-function elements, even if the claim otherwise includes the word “means”. Further, while particular method steps have been recited in a particular order, the method steps may occur in any desired order and fall within the scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A confetti expelling toy, comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a confetti cavity within the housing, the confetti cavity in fluid communication with a blower wheel and an exit;
 - a sieve positioned between the blower wheel and exit;
 - a motion apparatus connected to the housing, the motion apparatus configured to cause the confetti expelling toy to traverse a surface.
2. The confetti expelling toy as set forth in claim 1, wherein the toy is formed to resemble a four legged animal, with the motion apparatus having four legs, one or more motors, gearing, and linkages to cause the four legs to move and, thereby, move the toy.

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