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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MOLDED COATING ON CMC

Abstract

A coating system includes a mold having a flexible wall defining a mold cavity, a component disposed in the mold cavity, there being a coating gap defined between the component and the flexible wall of the mold cavity, and either a molding slurry or a solidified molding slurry filling the coating gap.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION [0001] This application is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/401,721 filed on Aug. 13, 2021, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 63/065,665 filed Aug. 14, 2020.

BACKGROUND

[0002] A gas turbine engine typically includes a fan section, a compressor section, a combustor section and a turbine section. Air entering the compressor section is compressed and delivered into the combustion section where it is mixed with fuel and ignited to generate a high-speed exhaust gas flow. The high-speed exhaust gas flow expands through the turbine section to drive the compressor and the fan section. The compressor section typically includes low and high pressure compressors, and the turbine section includes low and high pressure turbines.

[0003] Airfoils and other engine components that are subjected to severe operating environments are typically formed of a superalloy and may include barrier coatings to extend durability. Ceramic matrix composite (“CMC”) materials are also being considered for airfoils and other engine components. Among other attractive properties, CMCs have high temperature resistance and oxidation resistance. Despite these attributes, however, there are unique challenges to implementing CMCs in airfoils.

SUMMARY

[0004] A coating system according to an example of the present disclosure includes a mold having a flexible wall that defines a mold cavity. A component is disposed in the mold cavity, and there is a coating gap defined between the component and the flexible wall of the mold cavity. Either a molding slurry or a solidified molding slurry fills the coating gap.

[0005] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the mold is formed of silicone.

[0006] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the mold includes one or more bumpers spacing the component from the flexible wall.

[0007] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the component includes one or more cooling holes, and the one or more bumpers plug the one or more cooling holes.

[0008] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the component is a gas turbine engine component formed of ceramic.

[0009] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the molding slurry and the solidified molding slurry contain silica.

[0010] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the molding slurry and the solidified molding slurry contain siliconoxycarbide.

[0011] A coating system according to an example of the present disclosure includes a mold that has a flexible wall that defines a mold cavity that is configured in geometry to receive a component therein such that there is a coating gap defined between the component and the flexible wall of the mold cavity to receive a molding slurry.

[0012] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the mold is formed of silicone.

[0013] In a further embodiment of any of the foregoing embodiments, the mold includes one or more bumpers projecting in the mold cavity.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The various features and advantages of the present disclosure will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description. The drawings that accompany the detailed description can be briefly described as follows.

[0015] FIG. 1 illustrates a system and method for molding a coating on a CMC component.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] Gas turbine engine components may be formed of ceramic matrix composites (“CMC”). Generally speaking, a CMC includes ceramic (or sometimes graphite) fibers (typically referred to as yarns, composed of bundles of filaments) disposed in a ceramic matrix. One example CMC of interest in gas turbine engines includes SiC fibers in a SiC matrix. Due to the undulation between yarns, the methods of fabricating the CMC, or other factors, the surface of the CMC is typically relatively rough (e.g., in comparison to the same or similar component that is cast from superalloy). For instance, the roughness may be 1000 microinches Ra or greater, which in turn may affect aerodynamic performance. To the extent that a coating is deposited over the as-formed surface of the CMC, such as by a spray process, the coating may serve to somewhat smooth over the roughness. However, in many cases the smoothing effect may be negligible, since the coating mostly conforms to the underlying rough surface of the CMC and thereby substantially reproduces the roughness or undulation in its own surface. In this regard, as will be described below, the system and method disclosed herein may be used to fabricate a coating in a manner that facilitates smoothing of a CMC surface.

[0017] FIG. 1 schematically illustrates a coating system 20, which is also used herein to represent a related method of molding a coating. The description herein is based on an airfoil (e.g., a vane or blade) as the subject component 22, although it is to be understood that this disclosure is applicable to other CMC components, such as but not limited to, blade outer air seals and combustor liners.

[0018] The system 20 includes a mold 24 that has a flexible wall 24a that defines a mold cavity 26 therein. Although shown with one mold cavity 26, the mold 24 may alternatively have two or more mold cavities for co-molding coatings onto several components at once. As an example, the flexible wall 24a is formed of flexible material, such as silicone, in order to impart flexibility and temperature resistance for processing. The silicone, or other elastomeric or resilient material, may be selected to be firm enough to be self-supporting, so as to substantially maintain its shape when at rest yet permit deflection within the applicable molding pressures.

[0019] The mold cavity 26 generally tracks the design shape of the component 22 but is larger than the component 22, as will be discussed further below. The mold 24 may be provided in two (or more) separable pieces, which may be referred to as mold halves or sections. If economic, the mold 24 may alternatively be of one-piece construction, for a single use in which it is destroyed for removal. The separable pieces of the mold 24 can be brought together into a closed state (shown in FIG. 1), with alignment guides if necessary, to define the mold cavity 26. From the closed state, the separable pieces of the mold 24 can be separated, i.e., opened, to permit insertion of the component 22 into the mold cavity 26 or removal of the component 22 from the mold cavity 26. Such opening and closing of the mold 24 can be performed in an automated machine or manually.

[0020] As shown in FIG. 1, the mold cavity 26 is somewhat larger than the component 22 such that there is a coating gap 28 defined between the component 22 and the flexible wall 24a of the mold

cavity **26**. Although not limited, in this example the mold **24** includes one or more bumpers **30** that serve as stand-offs to space the component **22** a set distance apart from the flexible walls **24a** of the mold **24**. Such bumpers **30** may be integral with the mold **24**, such as silicone posts that protrude from the flexible wall **24a**. The shape of the bumpers **30** is not necessarily limited, although it may be desirable to minimize the size to reduce interference with the molding process. As examples, the bumpers **30** may be cylindrical or pyramidal.

[0021] As shown in the inset in FIG. **1**, the bumper **30** extends into a cooling hole **22a** in the component **22**. The bumper **30** has a relatively tight fit in the cooling hole **22a** so as to plug and seal the cooling hole against infiltration of coating slurry (described below). For example, each bumper **30** may extend into a corresponding cooling hole **22a** in the component **22**. If fewer bumpers **30** than cooling holes **22a** are used, the cooling holes **22a** may be separately plugged, such as with wax or the like.

[0022] The component **22** is generally positioned such that the coating gap **28** is of uniform thickness, although it is also contemplated that the component **22** be offset in the mold cavity or that the height of the bumpers **30** may vary in order to provide regions of the coating gap **28** with different thicknesses. The thickness may generally be from about 100 micrometers to about 1000 micrometers.

[0023] The mold **24** further includes at least one injection port **32** and at least one vent port **34**. The injection port or ports **32** are fluidly connected with the coating gap **28** and serve to receive molding slurry **36** that is introduced into the mold **24**, such as by a syringe, plunger, screw, pump, funnel, or other equipment. The vent port or ports **34** are also fluidly connected with the coating gap **28** at a downstream location from the injection port or ports **32**. The vent port or ports **34** serve to vent air from the mold **24** and receive overflow molding slurry to ensure that the coating gap **28** fills.

[0024] In the molding process, the component **22** is first inserted into the mold cavity **26**. For example, the mold **24** is in the open position and the component **22** is seated into one of the mold halves on the respective bumpers **30**. Such a placement can be performed by an automated machine or manually. Once the component **22** is properly seated, the other mold half of the mold **24** is closed around the component **22**.

[0025] Next, the molding slurry **36** is introduced into the mold cavity **26**. For example, the molding slurry **36** is injected through the injection port or ports **32**, such as by syringe, plunger, screw, pump, funnel, or other equipment. The molding slurry **36** is fluid and flows into the mold cavity **26** and through the coating gap **28**. The flexible walls **24a** of the mold **24** may deflect somewhat under the pressure of the molding slurry **36**, which allows for manufacturing tolerances in the geometry of the component **22**. The molding slurry **36** fills the coating gap **28**, contacting the component **22** so as to overcoat the component surface roughness. Any excess molding slurry **36** vents through the vent port **34**. Additionally, the relatively small thickness of the coating gap **28** serves to contain the molding slurry **36** and thereby limit mobility of the powder particles and thus facilitate avoidance of particle settling. Optionally, the mold **24** may be vibrated and/or rotated during or after filling and/or drying to facilitate displacement of the air the mold cavity **26** and help prevent particulate settling in the slurry prior to drying.

[0026] The composition of the molding slurry **36** may be varied in accordance with the desired composition of the final coating and to optimize flow properties through the mold **24**. For example, the molding slurry **36** contains a carrier liquid, such as water or organic solvent, and coating powder particles. In one example based on a SiC/SiC CMC, the coating powder particles include silica, siliconoxycarbide, or both, which ultimately form a final coating that serves as a bond coat that will underlie one or more additional topcoats on the component **22**.

[0027] After the coating gap **28** is filled, the molding slurry **36** is solidified. For a water- or solvent-based slurry, the solidifying includes drying in order to remove the water or solvent, leaving the coating powder particles as a green coating on the surface of the component **22**. Such drying may

include heating the molding slurry **36** while in the coating gap **28** in the mold cavity **26**, such as by heating the coating system **20** in a thermal chamber or the like. In one further example, the composition of the molding slurry **36** also includes a binder that strengthens the green coating. Such a binder may be an organic binder, such as but not limited to, wax or cross-linkable polymer. The molding of the mold slurry **36** can be repeated in the same or different mold **24** if needed in order to build up a desired coating thickness. Additionally, if bumpers **30** are used and the bumpers **30** leave holes in the green coating (that do not correspond to cooling holes in the component **22**), the holes may be filled with patch material comprising the same coating powder.

[0028] After solidification, the green coating is consolidated to form a final coating on the component **22**. For example, the component **22** is removed from the mold **24** and heated to a temperature at which the coating powder sinters or fuses. The final coating has a coating surface roughness that is less than the component surface roughness. For example, the final coating has a surface roughness of less than 200 Ra. This is due to the molding slurry **36** smoothing over the component surface roughness. Reproduction of the roughness of the component **22** in the surface of the coating may be reduced because the surface of the coating is formed against the relatively smooth surface of the mold wall **24a** in the molding process. For coating powder particles that include silica and siliconoxycarbide, the final coating includes a silica matrix with the siliconoxycarbide dispersed there through. After consolidation, the component **22** may be subjected to one or more additional coating processes to deposit one or more topcoats, such as but not limited to, one or more additional silica and/or siliconoxycarbide layers, and/or one or more ceramic layers (e.g., a Hf-, Y-, and/or Yb-containing layers).

[0029] Although a combination of features is shown in the illustrated examples, not all of them need to be combined to realize the benefits of various embodiments of this disclosure. In other words, a system designed according to an embodiment of this disclosure will not necessarily include all of the features shown in any one of the FIGURES or all of the portions schematically shown in the FIGURES. Moreover, selected features of one example embodiment may be combined with selected features of other example embodiments.

[0030] The preceding description is exemplary rather than limiting in nature. Variations and modifications to the disclosed examples may become apparent to those skilled in the art that do not necessarily depart from this disclosure. The scope of legal protection given to this disclosure can only be determined by studying the following claims.

Claims

1. A coating system comprising: a mold having a flexible wall defining a mold cavity; a component disposed in the mold cavity, there being a coating gap defined between the component and the flexible wall of the mold cavity; and either a molding slurry or a solidified molding slurry filling the coating gap.
2. The coating system as recited in claim 1, wherein the mold is formed of silicone.
3. The coating system as recited in claim 1, wherein the mold includes one or more bumpers spacing the component from the flexible wall.
4. The coating system as recited in claim 3, wherein the component includes one or more cooling holes, and the one or more bumpers plug the one or more cooling holes.
5. The coating system as recited in claim 1, wherein the component is a gas turbine engine component formed of ceramic.
6. The coating system as recited in claim 1, wherein the molding slurry and the solidified molding slurry contain silica.
7. The coating system as recited in claim 1, wherein the molding slurry and the solidified molding slurry contain siliconoxycarbide.
8. A coating system comprising: a mold having a flexible wall defining a mold cavity that is

configured in geometry to receive a component therein such that there is a coating gap defined between the component and the flexible wall of the mold cavity to receive a molding slurry.

9. The coating system as recited in claim 8, wherein the mold is formed of silicone.

10. The coating system as recited in claim 8, wherein the mold includes one or more bumpers projecting in the mold cavity.
