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CONFETTI-EXPELLING TOY

Abstract

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

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Background/Summary

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.

Description

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 mobile 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.

Claims

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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