

images onto the curved transparent layer from a video display. The plurality of symbols indicate a randomly selected outcome of the wagering game. The curved transparent layer can be moving as well.

[0012] In another embodiment, a gaming machine for playing a wagering game includes a housing having a display region, a controller for conducting the wagering game and a video display coupled to the controller. The video display simulates mechanical reels of a slot machine in the display region. The video display further displays images of a plurality of symbols that indicate a randomly selected outcome of the wagering game. The images include at least one imperfection associated with a mechanical reel.

[0013] In another embodiment, a gaming machine for playing a wagering game includes a housing having a display region, a controller for conducting the wagering game and a video display coupled to the controller. The video display simulates mechanical reels of a slot machine in the display region and displays images of a plurality of symbols that indicate a randomly selected outcome of the wagering game. The images include at least one imperfection associated with a mechanical reel and the images can be rendered with a real-time 3-D engine.

[0014] The present invention can also be considered a gaming machine that includes a housing having a display region, a video display, a controller for conducting the wagering game, and at least one sensor coupled to the controller. The sensor provides locational information concerning a location of the player relative to the display region. The video display is coupled to the controller and displays images that simulate mechanical reels of a slot machine in the display region. The images include a plurality of symbols that indicate a randomly selected outcome of the wagering game. The images undergo alterations in response to the locational information.

[0015] In another embodiment, a method of operating a gaming machine includes receiving a wager to play a wagering game and sensing a location of a player at the gaming machine. The method further includes displaying video images of symbols across a display region of the gaming machine, and in response to a change in the location, altering the video images of the symbols.

[0016] In a further embodiment of the present invention, a method of operating a gaming machine includes receiving a wager to play a wagering game and sensing the environment around the gaming machine. The method further includes displaying video images of symbols across a display region of the gaming machine, and in response to a change in the environment, altering the video images of the symbols.

[0017] The present invention can also be considered a gaming machine for playing a wagering game that includes a housing having a display region, a controller for conducting the wagering game, and a video projector coupled to the controller for simulating mechanical reels of a slot machine in the display region. The display region includes a plurality of projection surfaces secured to floating screen assemblies. The video projector projects images of a plurality of symbols that indicate a randomly selected outcome of the wagering game. The images are projected onto the projection surfaces within the display region.

[0018] In another embodiment, a gaming system for playing a slots game includes a controller for conducting the

slots game, a display area having a plurality of floating screen assemblies that include projection surfaces, and a video projector coupled to the controller. The video projector projects an image onto the projection surfaces. The image contains a plurality of symbols. The plurality of symbols indicates a randomly selected outcome of the slots game. The plurality of symbols in the projected image move to simulate mechanical reels of the slots game.

[0019] In a further embodiment of the present invention, a method of conducting a slots game includes conducting the slots game at a gaming terminal having a plurality of floating screen assemblies. The method further includes projecting images of a plurality of symbols onto display surfaces of the floating screen assemblies. The plurality of symbols indicates a randomly selected outcome of the slots game.

[0020] The above summary of the present invention is not intended to represent each embodiment or every aspect of the present invention. The detailed description and Figures will describe many of the embodiments and aspects of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] The foregoing and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings.

[0022] FIG. 1A is a perspective view of a free standing gaming machine embodying the present invention;

[0023] FIG. 1B is a perspective view of a handheld gaming machine embodying the present invention;

[0024] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a control system suitable for operating the gaming machines of FIGS. 1a and 1b;

[0025] FIG. 3 is a side view of the display region of the gaming machine in accordance with one embodiment of the invention;

[0026] FIGS. 4A and 4B are a side view and a perspective view, respectively, of the display region of the gaming machine in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

[0027] FIGS. 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D are side views of the display region of a gaming machine illustrating various projection systems in accordance with other embodiments of the invention;

[0028] FIGS. 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D and 6E are side views of the display region of a gaming machine illustrating various support and drive systems in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

[0029] FIGS. 7A and 7B are top views of the display region of a gaming machine illustrating additional projection systems in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

[0030] FIGS. 8A and 8B are side views of the display region of a gaming machine illustrating additional projection systems in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

[0031] FIGS. 9A and 9B are a side view and an end view, respectively, of the display device for use in the display region of the gaming machine in accordance with yet another embodiment of the invention;