

ment, the number of tokens acquired by the player during a period of super big bonus can be made uniform without regard to a difference between levels of skill of players.

[0165] The invention has been described in association with embodiments which are considered to be most practical and preferable at this point in time. However, the invention is not limited to the embodiment described in the specification and is susceptible to modifications, as required, that fall within the scope of the gist or concept of the invention read from claims and the entire specification. A slot machine involving such modifications must be construed to fall within the technical scope of the invention. For instance, as a matter of course, modifications provided below fall within the scope of the invention.

[0166] In the embodiment, the invention has been described by taking, as an example of an electro-optical panel, the left reel liquid-crystal panel **21**, the center reel liquid-crystal panel **22**, the right reel liquid-crystal panel **23**, and the liquid-crystal panel **80**, all using an electro-optical substance. As a matter of course, the invention is not limited to the embodiment. The invention is characterized in that the non-mask areas NM whose shapes coincide with a contour of a specific symbol are arranged at the paylines L1 through L5 under predetermined conditions. Hence, any panel may be employed, so long as the optical transparency of the panel can be adjusted. As a matter of course, any electro-optical substance may be used, so long as the substance changes in transparency in accordance with a voltage or a current. For example, an organic electro luminescence panel may be employed.

[0167] The first and second substrates constituting the liquid-crystal panel **80** of the second embodiment are made of glass. As in the case of the first embodiment, the boards may be formed from plastic. In short, any material can be employed, so long as a plurality of types of mask images can be displayed.

[0168] In the second embodiment, a mask image is displayed on the liquid-crystal panel **80** during a period of super big bonus. However, the mask image may be displayed at a certain probability. In this case, the CPU **31** performs an internal lottery operation. On the basis of a result of the internal lottery operation, a determination is made as to whether or not a mask image is to be displayed. When a mask image is to be displayed, a display command C1 is generated. In contrast, when no mask image is to be displayed, the display command C1 is not produced.

[0169] As has been described, a slot machine of the invention enables a player to be clearly informed of rules of a game and enables a less-skilled player to enjoy playing games.

What is claimed is:

1. A slot machine, comprising:

a plurality of reels, each provided with a plurality of symbols including at least one special symbol;

at least one payline, extending across the reels;

at least one electro-optical panel, including a first transparent substrate and a second transparent substrate which sandwiches an electro-optical substance therebetween, at least one of the first transparent substrate and the second transparent substrate formed with at least

one bored portion having a shape substantially coincident with an contour of the special symbol, the electro-optical panel disposed in front of each of the reels such that the bored portion is placed on the payline; and

a controller, which controls a state of the electro-optical substance in accordance with a predetermined rule to adjust a transparency of the electro-optical panel.

2. A slot machine, comprising:

a plurality of reels, each provided with a plurality of symbols including at least one special symbol;

at least one payline, extending across the reels;

an electro-optical panel, including a first transparent substrate and a second transparent substrate which sandwiches an electro-optical substance therebetween, the electro-optical panel disposed so as to cover at least one of the reels; and

a controller, which displays at least one mask image on the electro-optical panel in accordance with a predetermined rule, the mask image including a mask area and at least one non-mask area having a shape substantially coincident with an contour of the special symbol, and having a transparency higher than a transparency of the mask area, the mask image displayed such that the non-mask area is placed on the payline.

3. The slot machine as set forth in claim 2, wherein at least one of transparent electrodes formed on opposing faces of the first transparent substrate and the second transparent substrate has a shape substantially coincident with the non-mask area.

4. The slot machine as set forth in claim 2, wherein the electro-optical panel including a plurality of pixels arranged in a matrix manner, so that a transparency of each of the pixels is adjustable.

5. The slot machine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

a main body, which houses the reels therein; and

a door, attached to the main body, the door formed with a transparent window through which a player is able to see the reels,

wherein the electro-optical panel disposed along an inner face of the transparent window.

6. The slot machine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a random number selector, which determines one of a plurality of lottery results including at least one special lottery result corresponding to the special symbol, to generate internal information indicating the determined one of the lottery results,

wherein the controller makes the electro-optical panel translucent when the internal information indicates that the determined one of the lottery results is the special lottery result.

7. The slot machine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a random number selector, which determines one of a plurality of lottery results including a plurality of special lottery results corresponding to a plurality of special symbols, to generate internal information indicating the determined one of the lottery results, wherein:

a plurality of electro-optical panels are provided in association with the plurality of special symbols;