What is claimed is:

1. A coupling device for a manipulator comprising:

a clamping fixture configured for fixedly connecting to the manipulator, and an adapter for fixedly clamping to the clamping fixture,

wherein the clamping fixture includes a locking mechanism configured to engage a protuberance or recess of the adapter,

wherein at least one side of said clamping fixture is an elongated, rectangular shape,

wherein the adapter includes a locking opening provided with side widenings,

wherein the locking mechanism includes two laterally shiftable locking elements and an actuating member disposed between said locking elements, the locking elements being supported within said clamping fixture to be shifted laterally outwardly by the actuating member and inserted into the side widenings of the locking opening to fixedly secure the adapter to the clamping fixture,

wherein said clamping fixture defines an elongated slotted recess with said locking mechanism arranged centrally along the length of said slotted recess of the clamping fixture, and

said adapter includes an elongated, T-shaped body including a base in which said locking opening is defined, the base of the adapter being configured and arranged for insertion into the slotted recess of the clamping fixture.

2. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that said locking mechanism is arranged in the middle of the clamping fixture and the locking opening in the middle of the adapter.

3. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that said adapter is configured as a one-piece, unitary body.

4. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that said slotted recess of the clamping fixture is defined top and bottom by a ledge, each of which is machined with a guide slot for lateral travel guidance of the locking elements.

5. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that said clamping fixture as well as the adapter are at least twice as wide as they are high and a

centering pin is arranged on the clamping fixture on each side of the locking mechanism, each centering pin being designed to cooperate with one centering opening each correspondingly machined in the base of the adapter.

6. The coupling device as set forth in claim 5, characterized in that the T-shaped body of said adapter comprises two legs extending from the base at right angles.

7. The coupling device as set forth in claim 6, characterized in that each leg includes a front side facing the base that forms an abutment face for contacting the adapter on being clamped to an end face of the clamping fixture.

8. The coupling device as set forth in claim 6, characterized in that said adapter is provided in a transitional portion from the base to each leg with a protuberance, the protuberances being matched to a slotted recess of the clamping fixture such that the adapter is mounted in the slotted recess with a close fit vertically between each protuberance and the slotted recess once the adapter is securely clamped to the clamping fixture.

9. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that said actuating member is shiftable between a retracted basic position and an advanced active position, the actuating member in the advanced active position being designed to urge the two locking elements into the side widenings of the locking opening such that the locking elements are in one or more of positive contact and non-positive contact with clamping faces partly defining the side widenings.

10. The coupling device as set forth in claim 9, characterized in that said actuating member is configured matching the two locking elements such that in the active position of the actuating member a self-locking effect is achieved between the actuating member and the locking elements in contact with the clamping faces of the adapter.

11. The coupling device as set forth in claim 9, characterized in that said actuating member is configured wedge-shaped in featuring two conically tapered side faces, each locking element being provided with a flat pressure face facing the actuating member and corresponding to a respective side face of the actuating member, the

spacing and angle between the two side faces of the actuating member being selected so that in the advanced active position of the actuating member a self-locking effect is achieved between the actuating member and the locking elements in contact with the clamping faces of the adapter.

12. The coupling device as set forth in claim 9, characterized in that each locking element is configured substantially cylindrically with a plurality of planar surface portions, the planar surface portions of each locking element including a flat pressure face matching the clamping faces of the adapter.

13. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that each locking element of said clamping fixture is assigned at least one spring-loaded device by which each locking element is biased in the direction of the actuating member.

14. The coupling device as set forth in claim 9, characterized in that said locking mechanism comprises a spring-loaded clamping piston coupled to the actuating member so as to urge the actuating member into the active position by the effect of pressure springs.

15. The coupling device as set forth in claim 14, characterized in that said clamping piston is designed to overcome the spring-loaded force via one of a pneumatic, electrical, or hydraulic device to achieve a retracted starting position of the clamping piston.

16. The coupling device as set forth in claim 9, characterized in that said clamping faces of the adapter partly defining the side widenings are angled relative to the direction of movement of the actuating member such that the adapter on being secured to the clamping fixture is advanced to the clamping fixture by the locking element in contact with the clamping faces of the adapter.

17. The coupling device as set forth in claim 16, characterized in that said clamping faces of the adapter are angled between 30° and 60° relative to the direction in which the actuating member is shifted.

18. The coupling device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the locking opening has a central insertion portion that is bounded laterally by the side widenings, and wherein the locking elements are shifted laterally outwardly by the actuating member from a starting position in which the locking elements are disposed entirely within the central insertion portion.