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(54) **THIN FILM TRANSISTOR ARRAY PANEL**

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(76) Inventors: **Bum-Kee Baek**, Kyungki-do (KR);
Hyang-Shik Kong, Kyungki-do (KR);
Dai-Moe Kim, Kyungki-do (KR)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Correspondence Address:
McGuireWoods LLP
Suite 1800
1750 Tysons Boulevard
McLean, VA 22102 (US)

Disclosed is a simplified manufacturing method for liquid crystal displays. A gate wire including a gate line, a gate pad and a gate electrode is formed on an insulating substrate. Next, a gate insulating layer covering the gate wire, a semiconductor layer, an ohmic contact layer, and a data conductive layer are sequentially deposited, and a photoresist pattern is formed on the data conductive layer. Following this step, the data conductive layer, using the photoresist pattern as an etch mask, is etched to form a data wire including a data line, a source electrode, a drain electrode, and a data pad. Next, the photoresist pattern is reflowed to cover the portion between the source electrode and the drain electrode, and a portion of the ohmic contact layer adjacent to a periphery of the data wire. Subsequently, portions of the ohmic contact layer and the semiconductor layer, which are not covered by the photoresist pattern, are etched, and the photoresist pattern is removed. Next, a portion of the ohmic contact layer, which is not covered by the data wire, is etched to expose a portion of the semiconductor layer between the source electrode and the drain electrode that is a channel portion of a thin film transistor. Finally, a protection layer, a pixel electrode, a redundant gate pad and a redundant data pad are formed.

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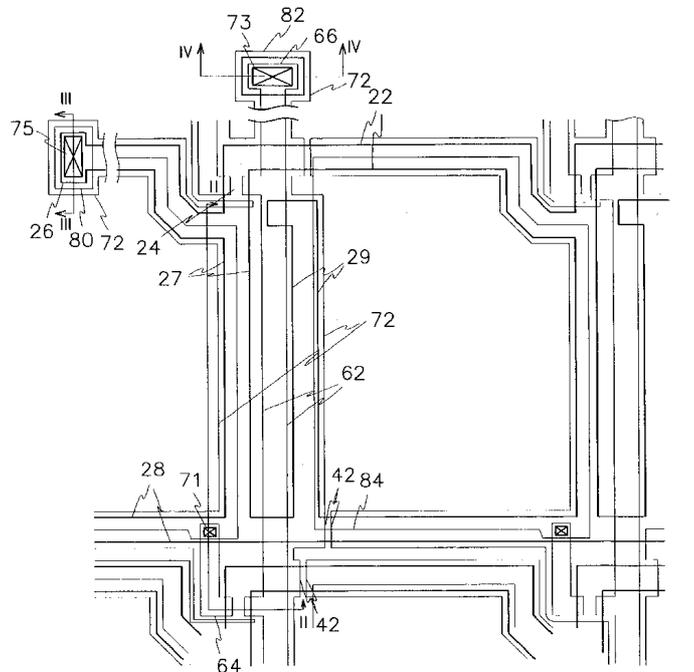


FIG. 2

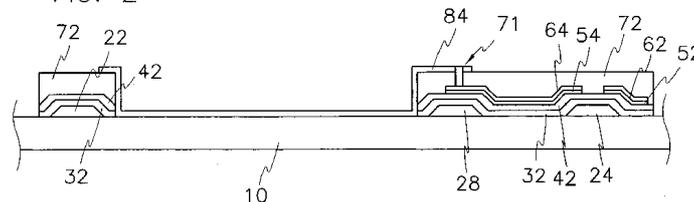


FIG. 3

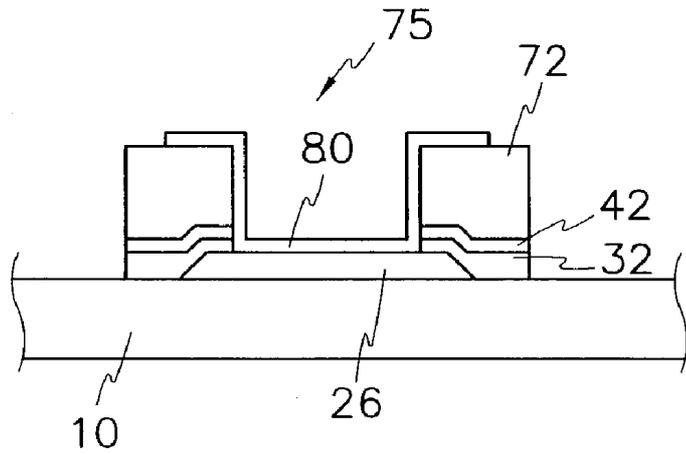


FIG. 4

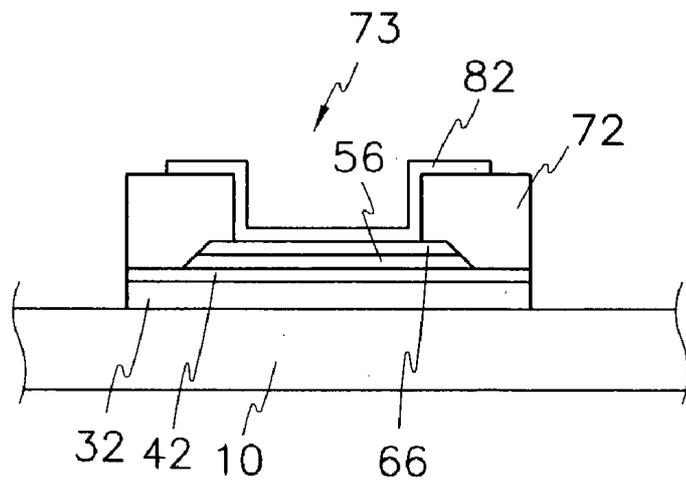


FIG. 5A

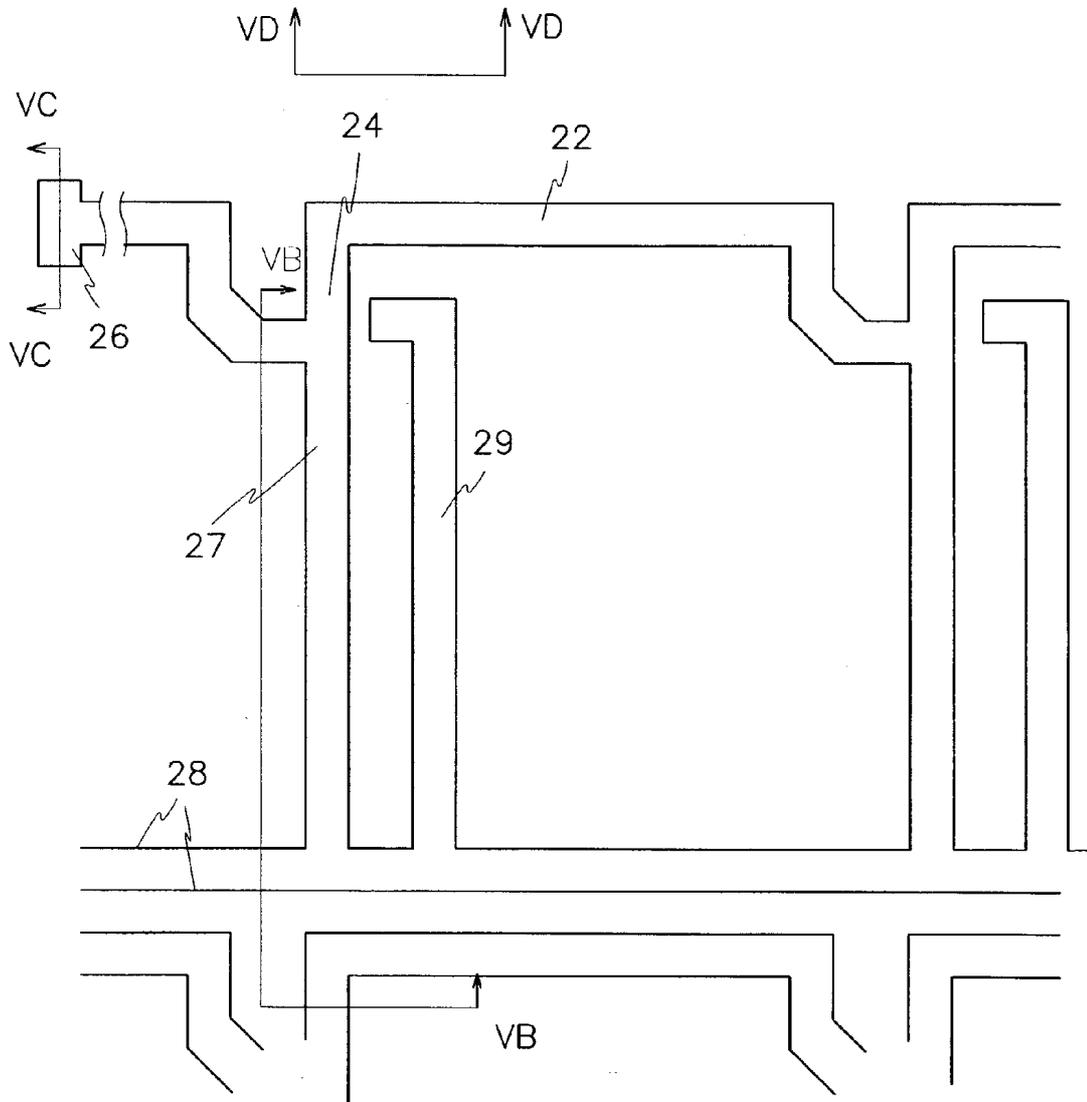


FIG. 5B

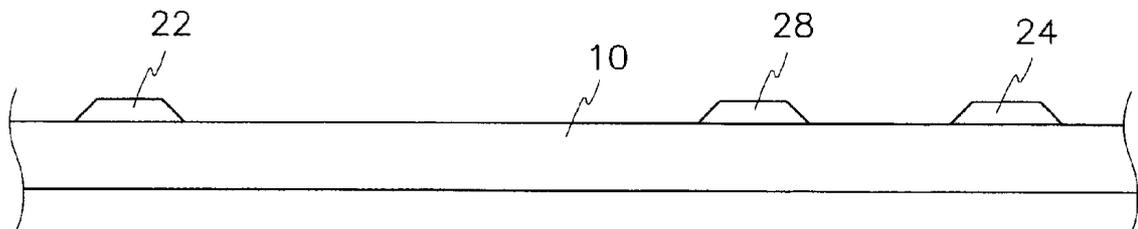


FIG. 5C

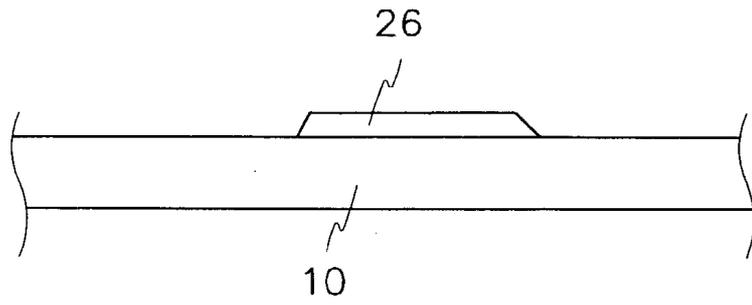


FIG. 5D

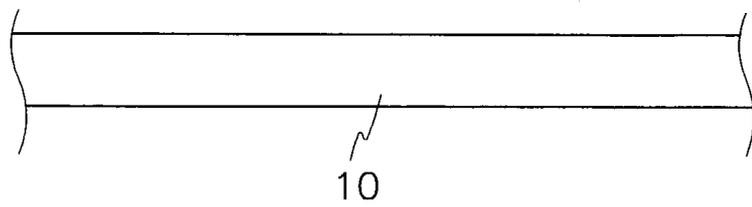


FIG. 6A

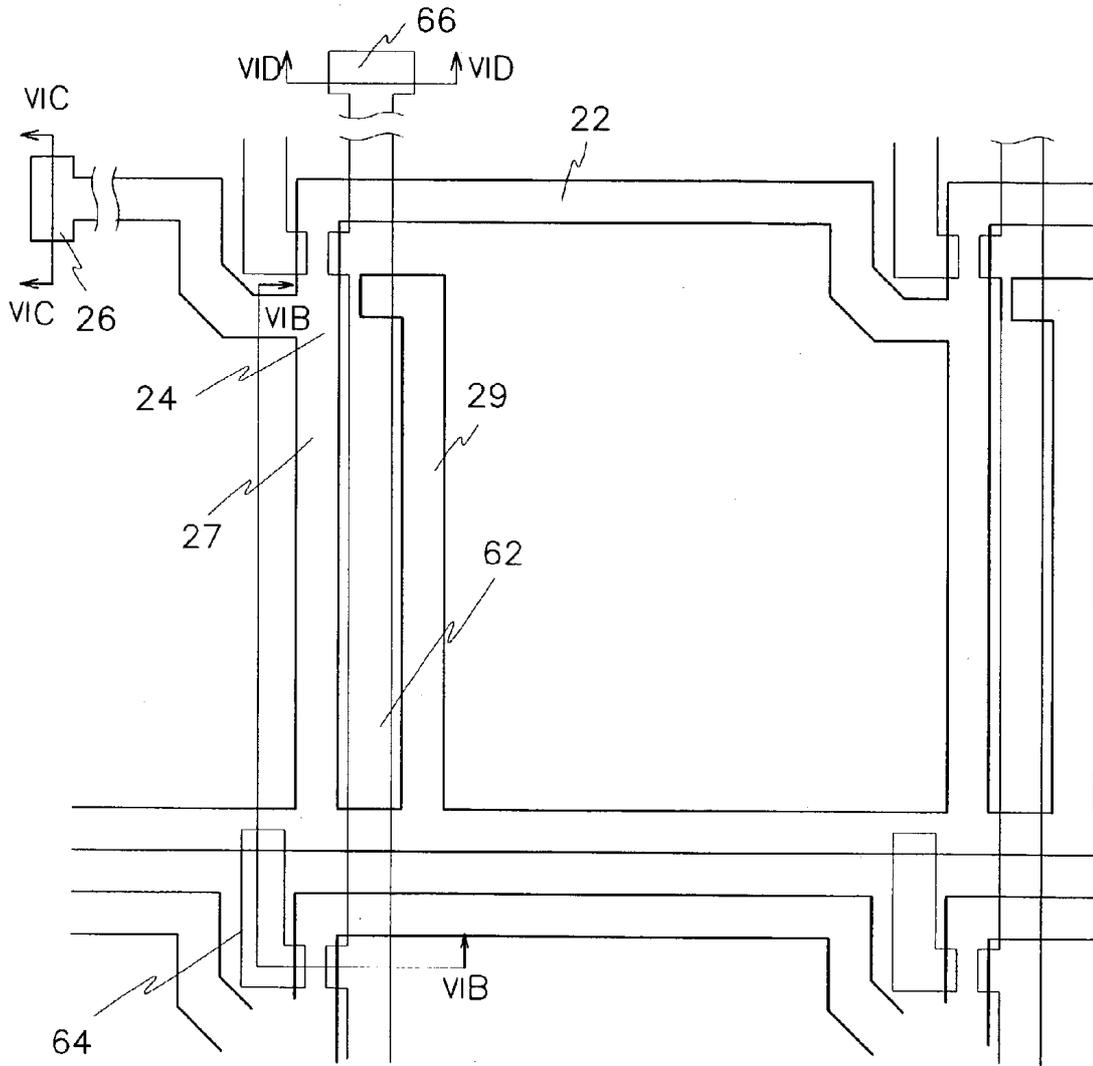


FIG. 6B

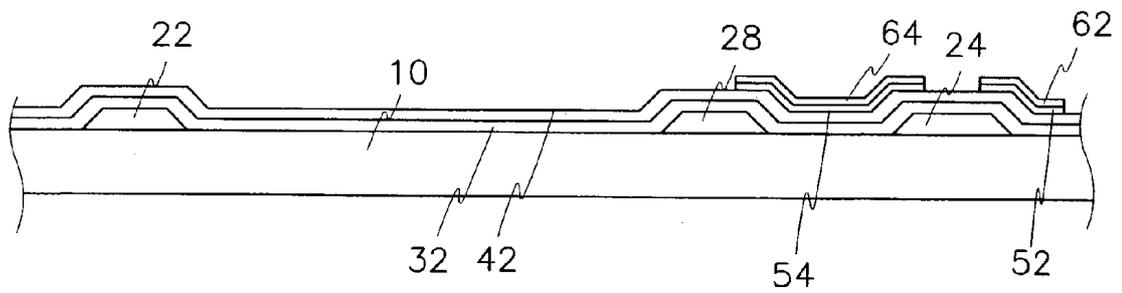


FIG. 6C

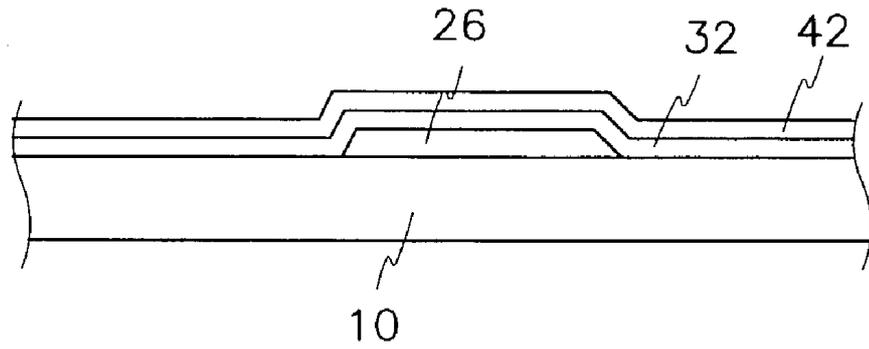
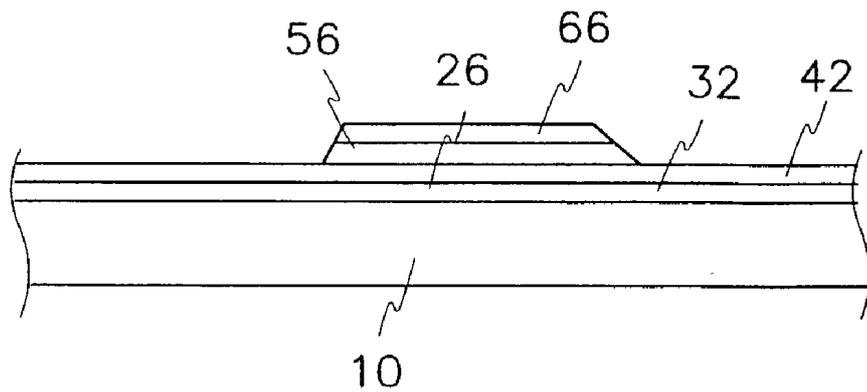


FIG. 6D



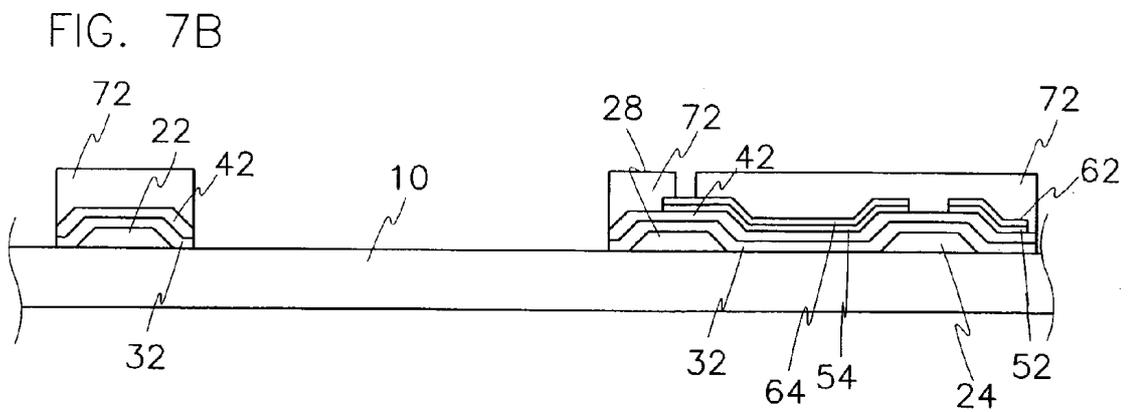
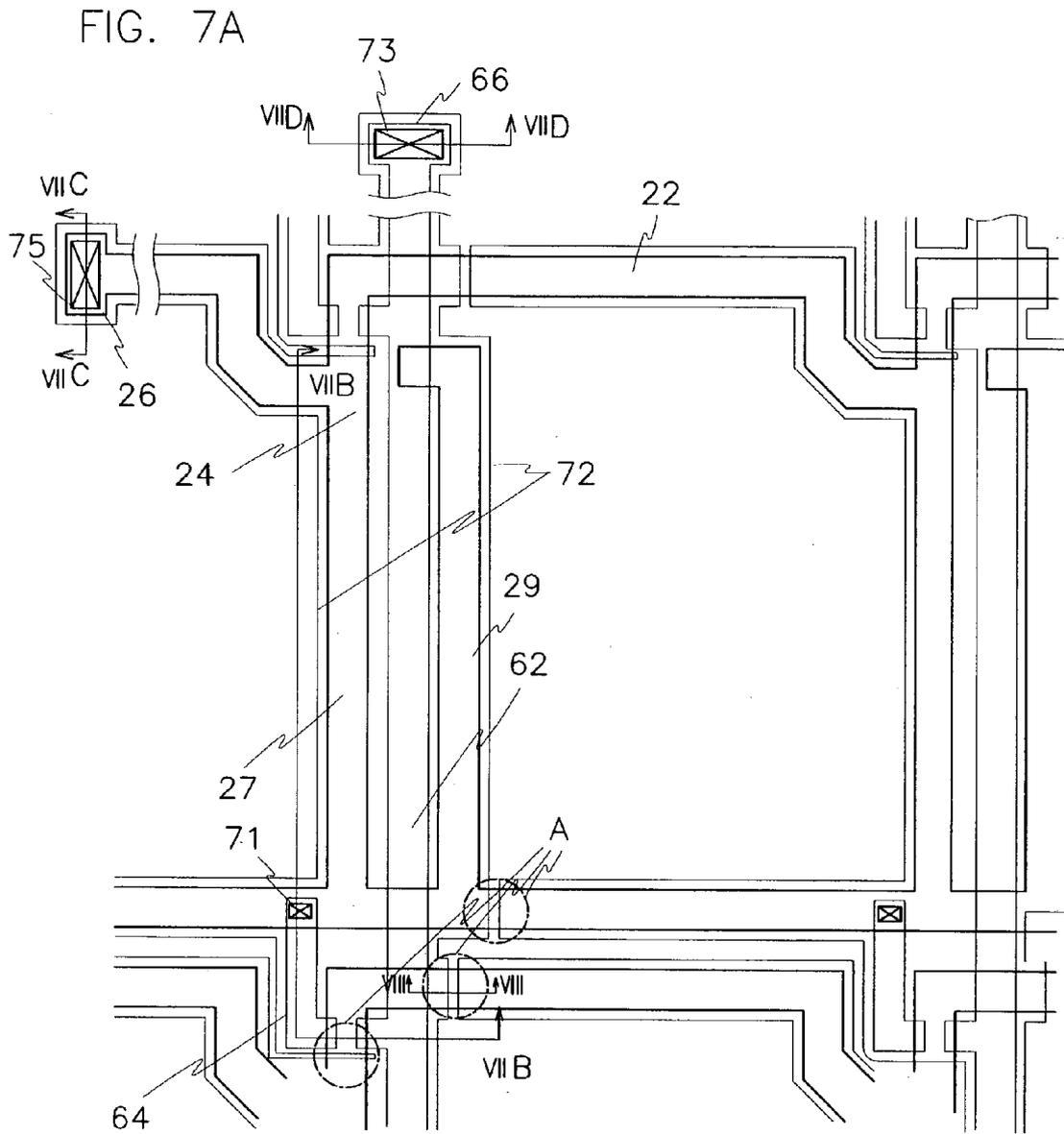


FIG. 7C

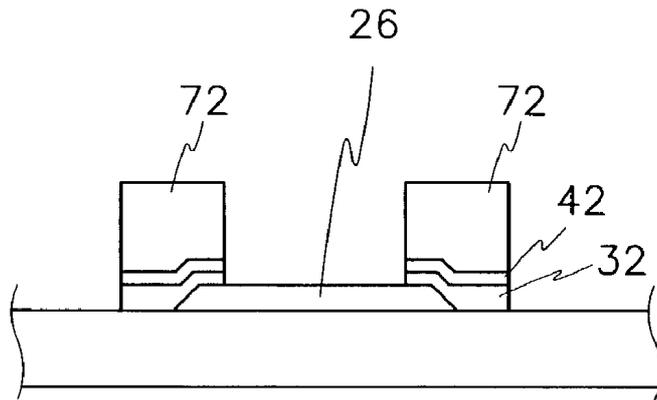


FIG. 7D

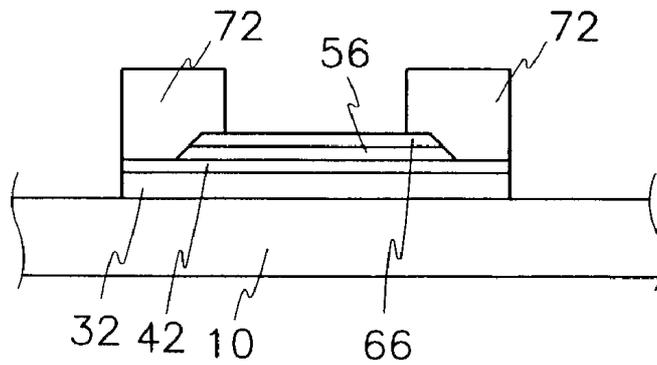


FIG. 8A

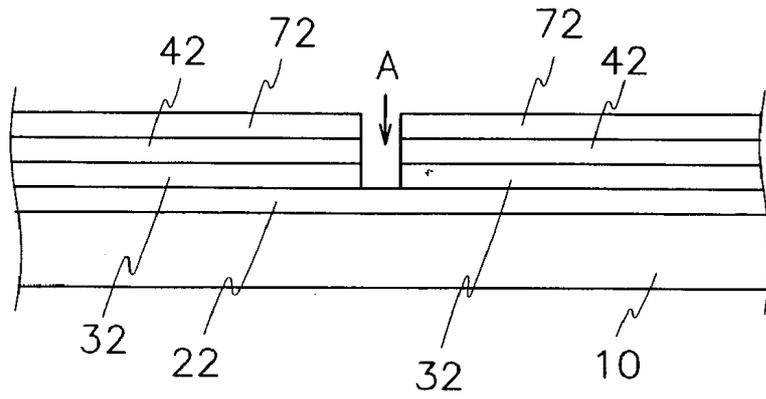


FIG. 8B

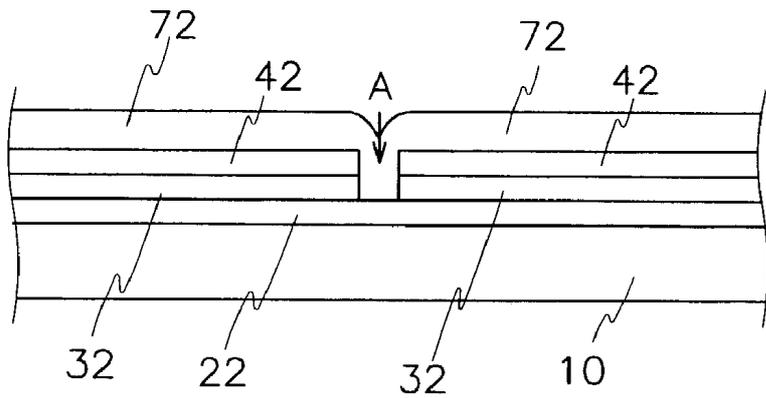


FIG. 9A

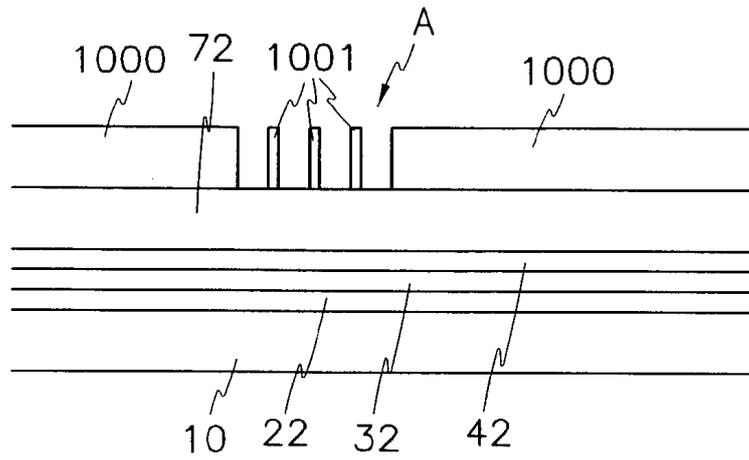


FIG. 9B

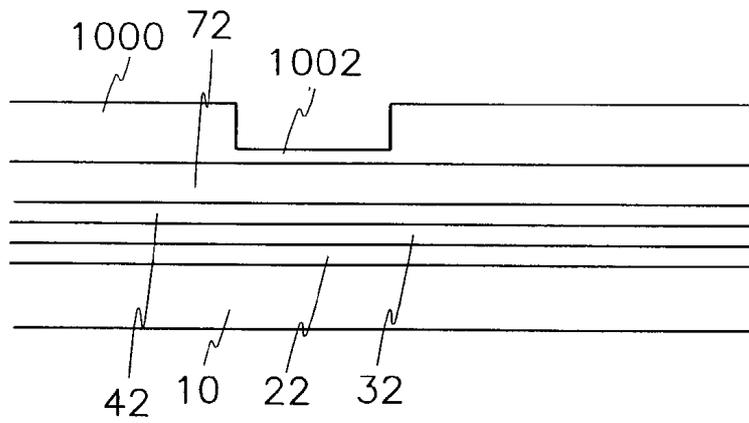


FIG. 9C

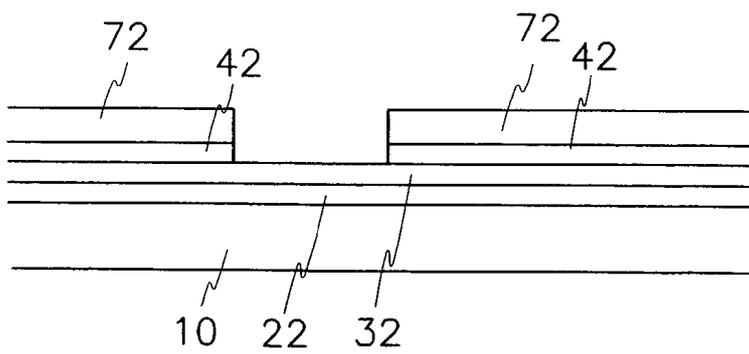


FIG. 11

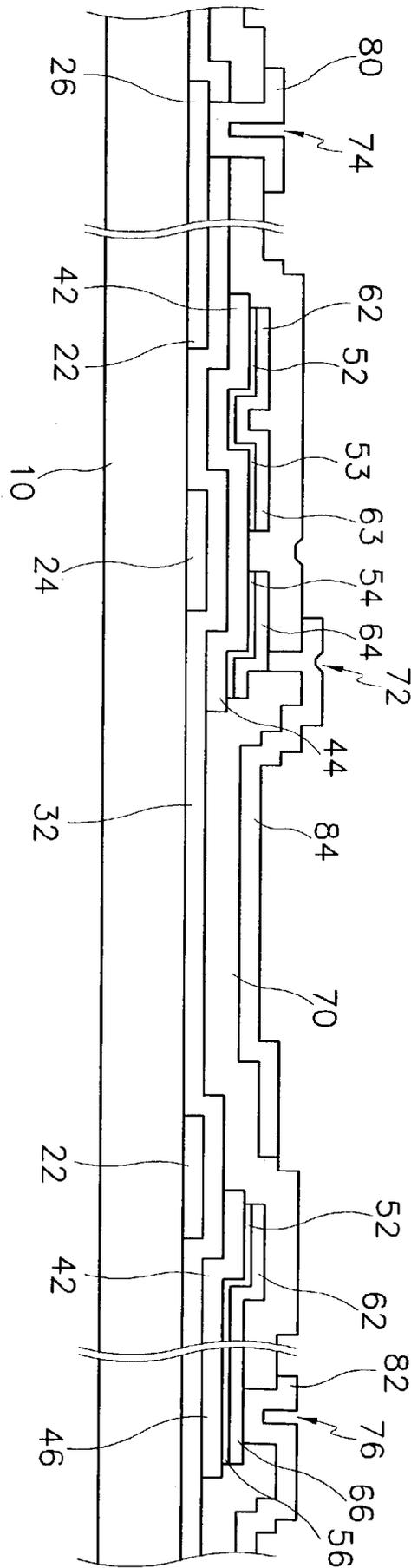


FIG. 12A

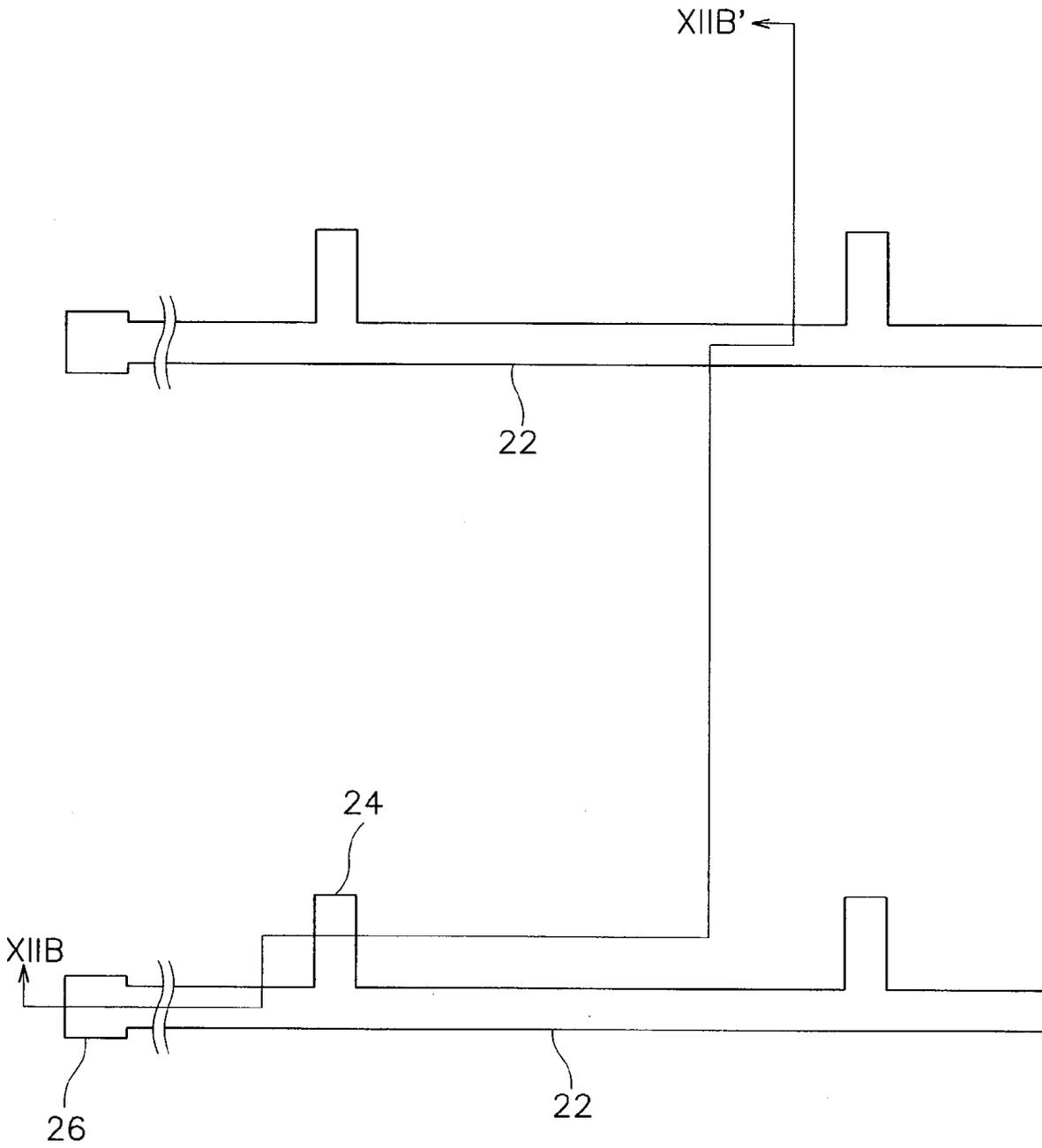


FIG. 12B

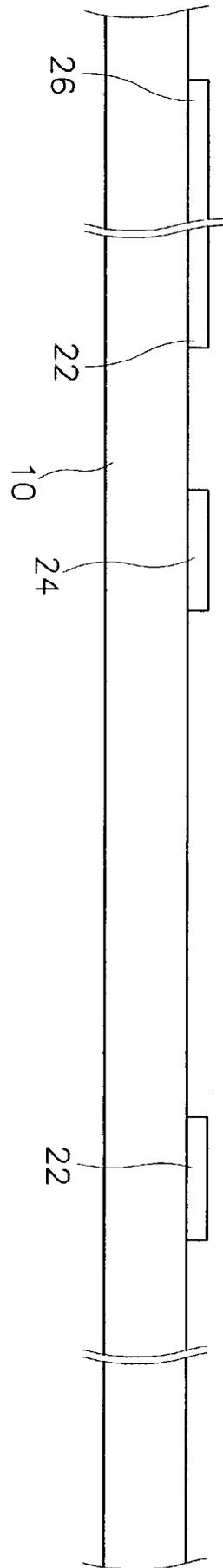


FIG. 13

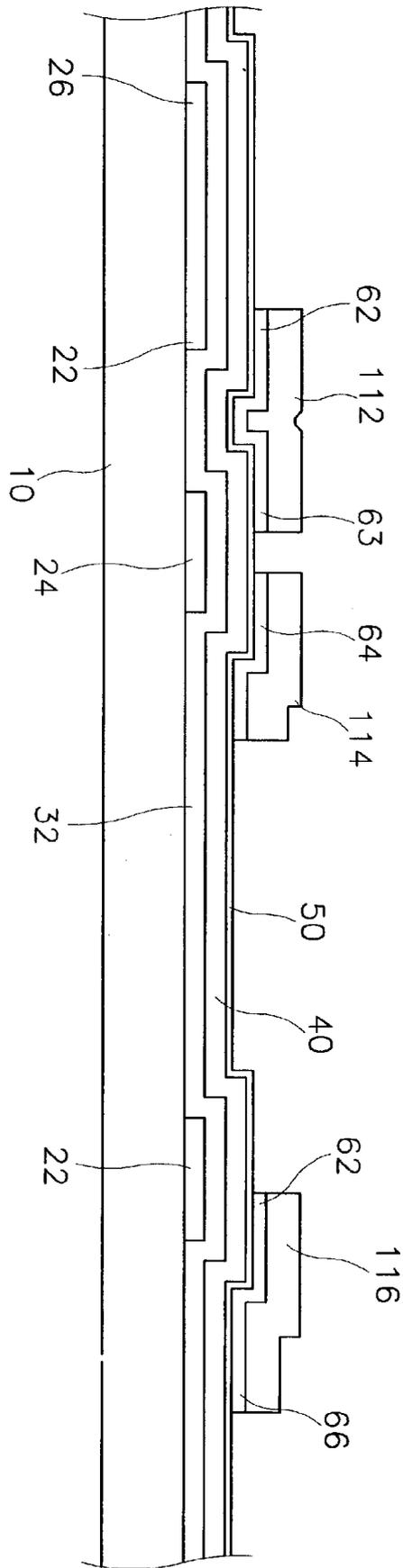


FIG. 14

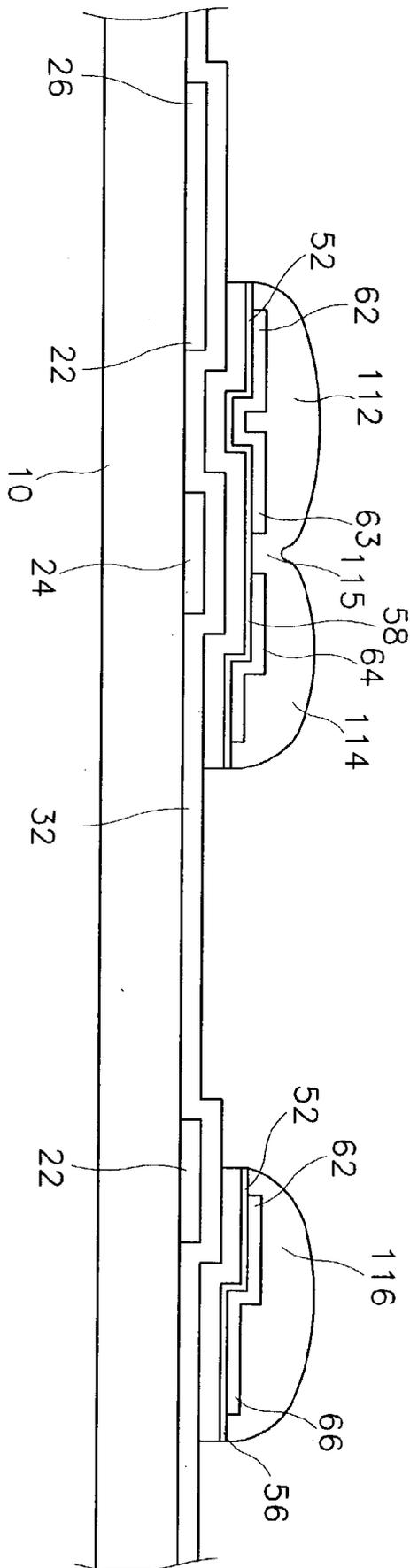


FIG. 15A

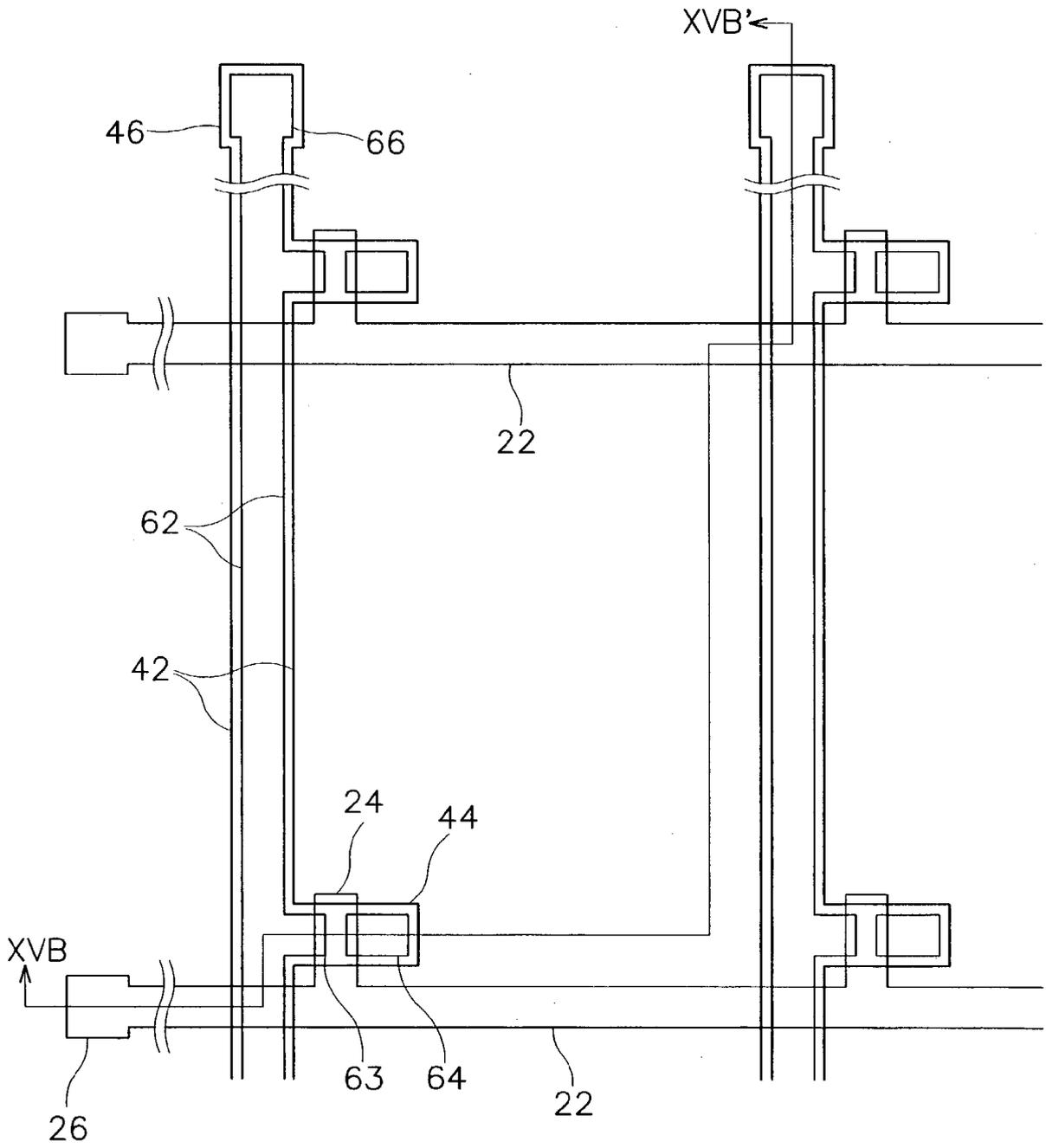


FIG. 15B

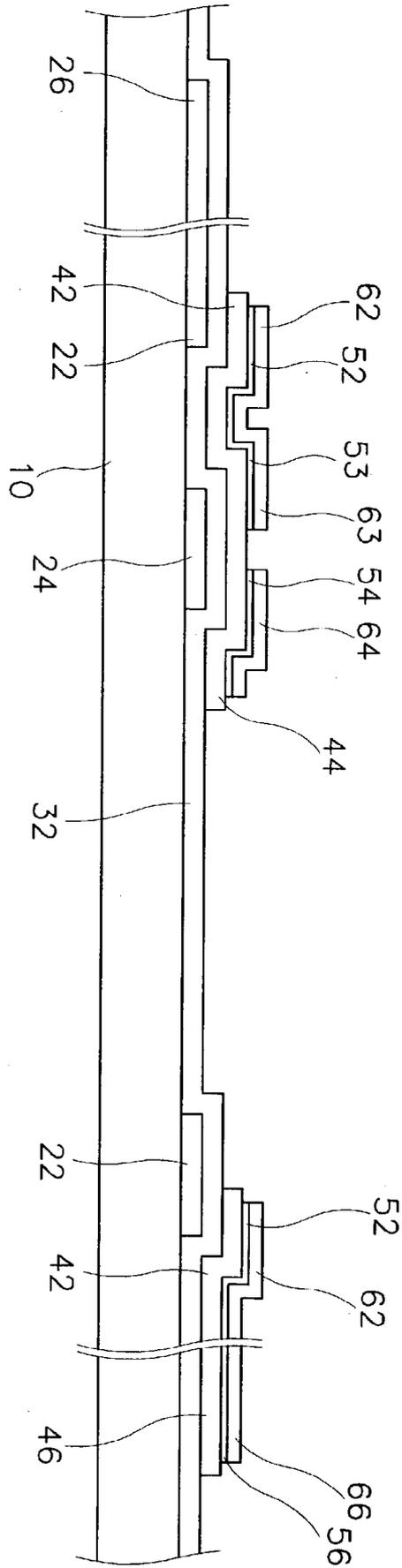


FIG. 16A

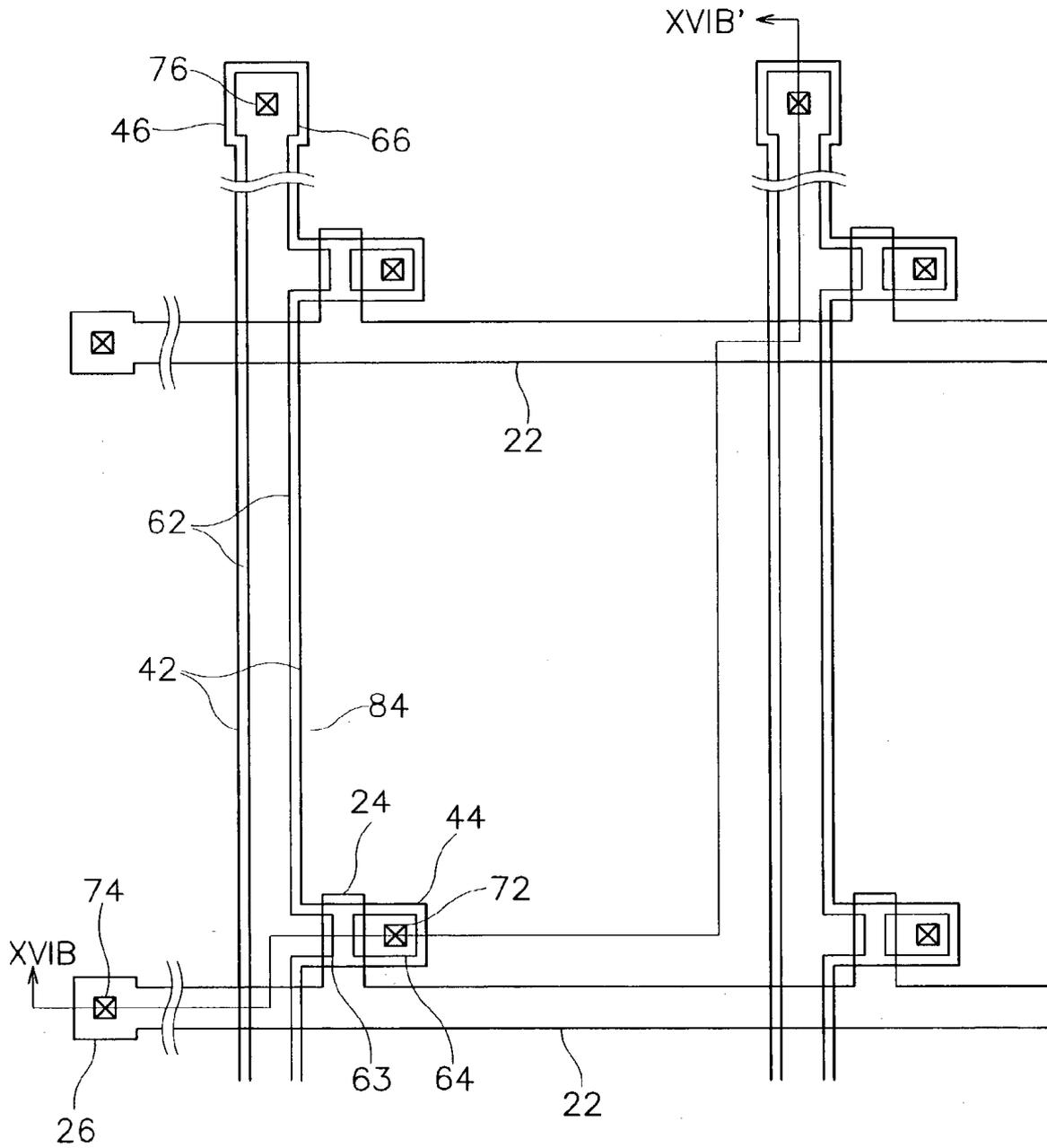
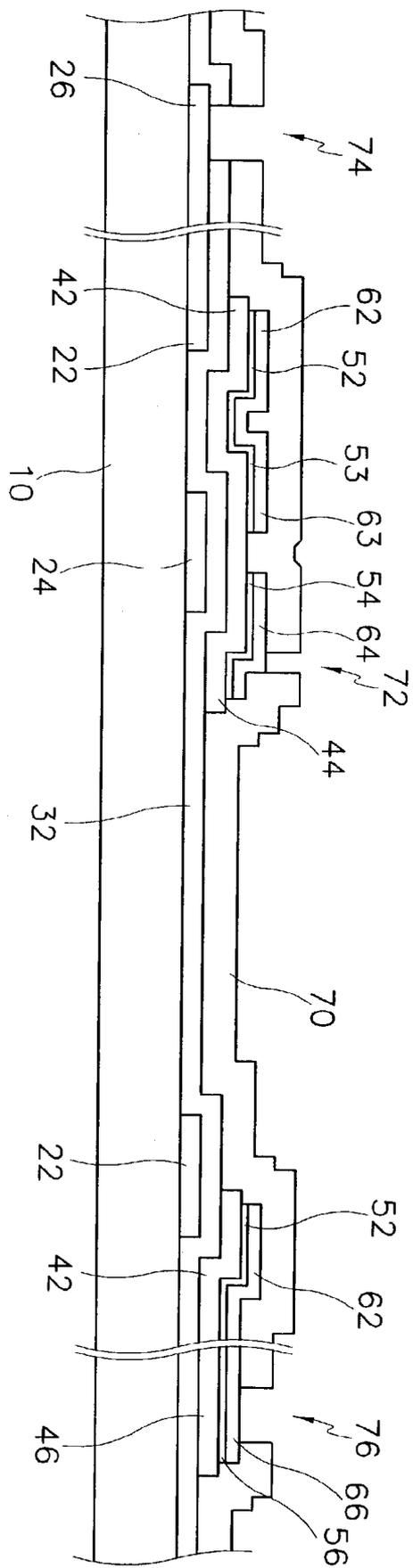


FIG. 16B



THIN FILM TRANSISTOR ARRAY PANEL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] (a) Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to thin film transistor (TFT) array panels for a liquid crystal display (LCD) and a method for manufacturing the same using four photolithography steps.

[0003] (b) Description of the Related Art

[0004] An LCD is one of the most widely used FPDs (flat panel displays). The LCD includes two panels having electrodes for generating electric fields and a liquid crystal layer interposed between the two panels. The transmittance of incident light is controlled by the intensity of the electric field applied to the liquid crystal layer.

[0005] The field-generating electrodes are typically provided at both or one of the panels, and one of the panels includes switching elements such as thin film transistors.

[0006] In general, a thin film transistor array panel is manufactured by a photolithography process using a plurality of photomasks. Conventionally, five or six photolithography steps are employed. Since the photolithography process is expensive, it is desirable to reduce the number of photolithography steps. Even though manufacturing methods using only four photolithography steps have been suggested, these proposed methods are not easy to implement.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new manufacturing method for a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display using four photolithography steps.

[0008] It is another object of the present invention to prevent the current leakage in a liquid crystal display. Another object of the present invention is to reduce the step coverage of thin film transistor array panels for liquid crystal displays.

[0009] In order to achieve these and other objects, according to the present invention, a semiconductor layer and a protection layer of organic insulating material are patterned in a single step. Also, according to the present invention, a photoresist (PR) pattern is reflowed to form an upper layer. Thus, the reflowed PR pattern is used to form a lower layer under the upper layer such that the lower layer is extended outside the upper layer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a layout view of a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along line II-II of FIG. 1.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line III-III of FIG. 1.

[0013] FIG. 4 is cross-sectional view taken along line IV-IV of FIG. 1.

[0014] FIGS. 5A, 6A and 7A are layout views illustrating, in order, sequential steps of manufacturing a thin film transistor array panel according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIGS. 5B, 6B and 7B are cross-sectional views taken along lines VB-VB, VIB-VIB and VIIB-VIIB of FIGS. 5A, 6A and 7A, respectively.

[0016] FIGS. 5C, 6C and 7C are cross-sectional views taken along lines VC-VC, VIC-VIC and VIIC-VIIC of FIGS. 5A, 6A and 7A, respectively.

[0017] FIGS. 5D, 6D and 7D are cross-sectional views taken along lines VD-VD, VID-VID and VIID-VIID of FIGS. 5A, 6A and 7A, respectively.

[0018] FIGS. 8A-8B and 9A-9C are cross-sectional views taken along line VIII-VIII of FIG. 7A.

[0019] FIG. 10 is a layout view of a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 11 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XI-XI of FIG. 10.

[0021] FIG. 12A is a layout view illustrating a first step in manufacturing a thin film transistor array panel according to the second embodiment of the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 12B is a cross-sectional view taken along the line XII-XII' of FIG. 12A.

[0023] FIGS. 13 and 14 are cross-sectional views illustrating manufacturing steps following that of FIG. 12A taken along the line XII-XII' of FIG. 12A.

[0024] FIG. 15A is a layout view illustrating the thin film transistor array panel in a manufacturing step following that of FIG. 14.

[0025] FIG. 15B is a cross-sectional view taken along line XV-V' of FIG. 15A.

[0026] FIG. 16A is a layout view illustrating the thin film transistor array panel in a manufacturing step following that of FIG. 15A.

[0027] FIG. 16B is a cross-sectional view taken along line XV-V' of FIG. 16A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0028] The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which preferred embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. In the drawings, the thickness of layers and regions are exaggerated for clarity. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout. It will be understood that when an element such as a layer, region or substrate is referred to as being "on" another element, it can be directly on the other element or intervening elements may also be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being "directly on" another element, there are no intervening elements present.

[0029] The number of steps in a manufacturing method according to the present invention can be reduced by pat-

terning a semiconductor layer and a protection layer of organic insulating material in a single step.

[0030] First, the structure of a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display produced through a method according to the first embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to FIGS. 1 to 4.

[0031] FIG. 1 is a layout view of a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display according to the first embodiment of the present invention, and FIGS. 2, 3 and 4 are cross-sectional views taken along lines II-II, III-III and IV-IV of FIG. 1, respectively.

[0032] A gate wire and a storage wire, which are made of metal or conductive material such as aluminum (Al) or aluminum alloy (Al alloy), molybdenum (Mo) or molybdenum-tungsten (MoW), and chromium (Cr), are formed on an insulating substrate 10. The gate wire includes a gate line (scanning signal line) 22 extending in the horizontal direction (in FIG. 1), a gate pad 26 connected to an end of the gate line 22 and transmitting a scanning signal from an external circuit to the gate line 22, and a gate electrode 24 that is a part of a thin film transistor. The storage wire includes a storage line 28 parallel with the gate line 22, a storage electrode 27 interconnecting the storage line 28 and the gate line 22, and a storage electrode 29 branched from the storage line 28. The storage wire forms a storage capacitance along with a pixel electrode 84, which will be described hereinafter. It is possible not to form the storage electrodes 27 and 29 if a storage capacitance between the pixel electrode 84 and the gate line 22 is sufficient.

[0033] The gate wire and the storage wire may have a multi-layered structure or a single-layered structure. When the gate wire and the storage wire are formed in a multi-layered structure, it is preferable that one layer is made of a material having a low resistivity and another layer is made of a material having a good contact with other materials. Double layers of Cr/Al (or Al alloy) and Al/Mo are examples of materials of such properties.

[0034] A gate insulating layer 32 of silicon-nitride (SiNx) and a semiconductor layer 42 of a semiconductor material such as hydrogenated amorphous silicon are formed on the gate wire and the storage wire to cover them. The gate insulating layer 32 and the semiconductor layer 42 are similar in shape to the gate wire and the storage wire.

[0035] An ohmic contact layer 52, 54 and 56 made of a material such as n+ amorphous silicon doped with N-type impurities of a high concentration is formed on the semiconductor layer 42. A data wire made of conductive materials such as Mo or MoW, Cr and Al or Al alloy is formed on the ohmic contact layer pattern 52, 54 and 56. The data wire includes a data line 62 extending in the vertical direction (in FIG. 1) and has a source electrode of the TFT, a data pad 66 connected to an end of the data line 62 and transmitting image signals from an external circuit to the data line 62, and a drain electrode 64 located opposite to the source electrode 62 with respect to the gate electrode 24. The data wire and the ohmic contact layer pattern 52, 54 and 56 have the same shape.

[0036] The data wire may have a multi-layered structure like the gate wire. When the data wire has a multi-layered structure, it is preferable that one layer is made of a material having a low resistivity and another layer is made of a

material having a good contact with other materials. The ohmic contact layer pattern 52, 54 and 56 serves to reduce the contact resistance between the semiconductor layer 42 and the data wire, and has the same layout as the data wire.

[0037] A protection layer 72 made of organic insulating material and covering the data wire is formed on the semiconductor layer 42. The protection layer 72 has contact holes 71 and 73 respectively exposing the drain electrode 64 and the data pad 66, and a contact hole 75 exposing the gate pad 26 along with the gate insulating layer 32 and the semiconductor layer 42.

[0038] The pixel electrode 84, which receives an image signal and generates an electric field with a common electrode of an upper panel, is formed on the substrate 10 of a pixel region defined by the gate line 22 and the data line 62. The pixel electrode 84 is made of a transparent conductive material such as ITO (indium tin oxide). The pixel electrode 84 is connected to the drain electrode 64 physically and electrically through the contact hole 71, and receives image signals from the drain electrode 64.

[0039] A redundant gate pad 80 and a redundant data pad 82 respectively connected to the gate pad 26 and the data pad 66 through the contact holes 75 and 73 are formed on the gate pad 26 and the data pad 66. Since these redundant pads 80 and 82 protect the pads 26 and 66 and provide additional adhesiveness between an external circuit and the pads 26 and 66, they are optional. The pixel electrode 84 overlaps the gate lines 22 and the storage wire to form a storage capacitance.

[0040] In this embodiment, although transparent ITO is used for the pixel electrode 82, an opaque-conductive material may be used in a reflective type LCD.

[0041] Furthermore, to prevent a parasitic channel from being formed on the gate line 22 and the storage line 28 when scanning signals are applied, the semiconductor layers 42 of adjacent pixel regions are separated by the gate line 22 and the storage line 28. If adjacent data lines 62 are electrically connected through the semiconductor layer 42, the parasitic channel in the semiconductor layer 42 may leak currents, and the image signals applied to the data lines 62 interfere with each other. Accordingly, the semiconductor layers 42 between adjacent data lines 62 must be separated from each other.

[0042] A method for manufacturing a thin film transistor array panel according to a first embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to the FIGS. 5A to 7D and FIGS. 1 to 4.

[0043] FIGS. 5A, 6A and 7A are layout views illustrating a method for manufacturing of a thin film transistor array panel according to the first embodiment of the present invention. FIGS. 5B, 6B and 7B show a TFT portion, a pixel portion and a storage portion. FIGS. 5C, 6C and 7C show a gate pad portion and FIGS. 5D, 6D and 7D show a data pad portion.

[0044] As shown in FIGS. 5A to 5D, a gate metal is deposited on a substrate 10 and patterned by a first photolithography process to form a gate wire including a gate line 22, a gate electrode 24 and a gate pad 26, and a storage wire including a storage line 28 and storage electrodes 27 and 29. As described previously, the gate wire and the storage wire

are made of metal or conductive material such as aluminum (Al) or aluminum alloy, molybdenum (Mo) or molybdenumtungsten (MoW), and chromium (Cr).

[0045] As shown in FIGS. 6A to 6D, following the above, a gate insulating layer 32 of silicon nitride, a semiconductor layer 42 of hydrogenated amorphous silicon, an amorphous silicon layer heavily doped with N-type impurities such as phosphorus, and a data metal layer are deposited in this order. Next, the data metal layer is patterned by a second photolithography process to form a data wire including a data line 62 having a source electrode, a drain electrode 64, and a data pad 66. Then, the doped amorphous silicon layer that is not covered by the data wire is etched to form an ohmic contact layer 52, 54, 56 under the data metal layer.

[0046] Next, as shown in FIGS. 7A to 7D, a photo-sensitive organic insulating layer is deposited and etched along with the gate insulating layer 32 and the semiconductor layer 42 by a third photolithography process to form a protection layer 72 having contact holes 71 and 73 exposing the drain electrode 64 and the data pad 66, and a contact hole 75 exposing the gate pad 26 along with the gate insulating layer 32, and the semiconductor layer 42. At this time, as shown in FIG. 7A, the protection layer 72, the semiconductor layer 42 and the gate insulating layer 32 cover (in an identical pattern) the gate wire, the storage wire, and the data wire, respectively. Here, a part of the protection layer 72 enclosing the data pad 66 and having the contact hole 73 is different from parts of the gate insulating layer 32 and the semiconductor layer 42.

[0047] At this time, if amorphous silicon is left remaining on the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage line 28, adjacent data lines 62 become electrically connected and data signals interfere with each other because of the current leakage between each pair of data lines 62. Accordingly, it is preferable that parts of the semiconductor layers 42 on the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage line 28 are removed to separate adjacent data lines 62, i.e., to sever the electrical connection between adjacent data lines 62. This is realized by removing portions of the protection layer 72 and the semiconductor layer 42 corresponding to portions A in FIG. 7A. However, because the contact hole 75 must be simultaneously formed, the portion of the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage line 28 corresponding to portions A are exposed. At this time, by a reflow process, the gate insulating layer 32 or the protection layer 72 may cover the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage line 28 at areas corresponding to portions A, preventing the exposure of gate wire in these areas. This will be described in detail hereinafter. At this time, a profile of the protection layer 72 may be sloped.

[0048] First, a method for covering with the protection layer 72 the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage wire 28 through a reflow process will be described in detail.

[0049] FIGS. 8A and 8B are the cross-sectional views taken along line VIII-VIII of portion A in FIG. 7A. FIG. 8A is a cross-sectional view before a reflow process, and FIG. 8B is a cross-sectional view after the reflow process.

[0050] As shown in FIG. 8A, when forming the contact holes 75, 73 and 71 exposing the gate pad 26, the data pad 66 and the drain electrode 64, respectively, the gate line 22 is exposed by removing the protection layer 72, the semi-

conductor layer 42 and the gate insulating layer 32 corresponding to portions A to remove the semiconductor layer 42 under adjacent data lines 62. Because the etch selectivity of the data metal layer prevents further etching, the semiconductor layer and the gate insulating layer underlying the data pad 66 and the drain electrode 64 are not removed.

[0051] Next, as shown in FIG. 8B, by the reflow process, the parts of the protection layer 72, which is made of organic and reflowable material, flow into opening A, and the gate line 22 is covered with the protection layer 72. This method is used when the protection layer 72 is made of organic and reflowable material.

[0052] A method for leaving the gate insulating layer 32 intact on the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage wire 28 through a reflow process will now be described in detail. FIGS. 9A to 9C are cross-sectional views taken along line VIII-VIII of portion A in FIG. 7A. FIG. 9A is a cross-sectional view before a reflow process. FIG. 9B is a cross-sectional view after the reflow process and FIG. 9C is a cross-sectional view after an etch process.

[0053] As shown in FIG. 9A, formed in a third photolithography process are a photoresist pattern 1000 having an opening A on the gate line 22 and a plurality of minute patterns 1001 provided on the protection layer 72 in the opening A.

[0054] Next, if the reflow process is executed, as shown in FIG. 9B, the minute patterns 1001 are reflowed into the opening A, and a photoresist layer 1002 is formed on the protection layer 72 corresponding to the position of the opening A.

[0055] Next, as shown in FIG. 9C, the protection layer 72, the semiconductor layer 42 and the gate insulating layer 32 are etched to expose the gate pad 26 (see FIG. 7C). At this time, although the protection layer 72 and the semiconductor layer 42 come to be divided into two portions with respect to opening A, the gate insulating layer 32 covering the gate line 22 is not divided, because of the photoresist layer 1002 formed in opening A.

[0056] By using minute patterns of reflowable photoresist as described above, even if the substrate 10 at pixel regions and the gate pad 26 at pad portions are exposed, the gate insulating layer 32 over the gate line 22, gate electrode 24, and storage line 28 remain intact.

[0057] At this time, it is preferable that the amorphous silicon of opening A is completely removed by controlling the thickness of the photoresist layer 1002. If the photoresist layer 1002 is thin, the portion of the gate insulating layer 32 in opening A may be etched. In this method, the reflowable photoresist 1000, 1001 and 1002 is used rather than the reflowable protection layer 72 of the previous method. However, when the reflowable protection layer 72 is used as in the previous method, minute patterns are formed as the protection layer and reflowed such that a thin layer is formed as a protection layer in the opening A, thereby leaving the gate insulating 32 intact.

[0058] This method of using a reflow process for a selective etching may be used for manufacturing other semiconductor devices. That is, one etch process may not expose the storage line 28, gate line 22, and gate electrode 24 in one area while exposing the substrate 10 and the gate pad 26 in the other area.

[0059] Subsequently, aluminum and aluminum alloy not covered by the protection layer 72 and exposed such as the gate pad 26, are removed by performing an etch process over an entire surface to improve contact quality with indium tin oxide (ITO). When the gate wire is made of aluminum or aluminum alloy of the upper layer, and the lower layer of chromium, molybdenum or molybdenum alloy, the lower layer of chromium, molybdenum or molybdenum alloy of the gate pad 26 is exposed.

[0060] Next, as shown in FIGS. 1 to 4, indium tin oxide (ITO) is deposited and patterned by fourth photolithography processes to form a pixel electrode 84 connected to the drain electrode 64, a redundant gate pad 80 connected to the gate pad 26 and a redundant data pad 82 connected to the data pad 66 through the contact hole 71, 75 and 73. The pixel electrode 84, the redundant gate pad 80 and the redundant data pad 82 contact with chromium, molybdenum or molybdenum alloy of the drain electrode 64, the gate pad 26 and the data pad 66.

[0061] In the first embodiment of the present invention, the pad portion has a dual-layered structure including the upper layer of ITO and the lower layer of chromium, molybdenum or molybdenum alloy. When the pad portion is a triple-layered structure, a conductive layer made of aluminum or aluminum alloy may be provided.

[0062] In the previous embodiment, the protection layer and the semiconductor layer are simultaneously patterned to reduce the number of masks. However, severe step coverage makes the upper layers structurally weak. To overcome this problem, it is preferable that a lower layer be formed to extend past outside an upper layer. This will be described in detail hereinafter.

[0063] First, the structure of a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display according to a second embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to FIGS. 10 to 11

[0064] FIG. 10 is a layout view of a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display according to the second embodiment of the present invention, and FIG. 11 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XI-XI of FIG. 10.

[0065] A gate wire and a storage wire, which are made of conductive material such as aluminum (Al) or aluminum alloy, molybdenum (Mo) or molybdenum-tungsten (MoW), and chromium (Cr), are formed on an insulating substrate 10. The gate wire includes a gate line (scanning signal line) 22 extending in the horizontal direction (in FIG. 10), a gate pad 26 connected to an end of the gate line 22 and transmitting a scanning signal from an external circuit to the gate line 22, and a gate electrode 24 that is a part of a thin film transistor. The gate line 22 forms a storage capacitance along with a pixel electrode 84, which will be described hereinafter. Storage electrodes overlapping the pixel electrode 84 may be provided if the storage capacitance between the pixel electrode 84 and the gate line 22 is not sufficient.

[0066] The gate wire may have a multi-layered structure or a single-layered structure. When the gate wire has a multi-layered structure, it is preferable that one layer is made of a material having a low resistivity and another layer is made of a material having a good contact with other materials. Double layers of Cr/Al (or Al alloy) and Al/Mo are such examples.

[0067] A gate insulating layer 32 of silicon-nitride (SiNx) covers the gate wire.

[0068] A semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 made of such a material as hydrogenated amorphous silicon is formed on the gate insulating layer 30. An ohmic contact pattern 52, 53, 54 and 56 of a material such as n+ silicon amorphous hydride doped with N-type impurities at a high concentration is formed on the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46.

[0069] A data wire made of conductive materials such as Mo or MoW, Cr, Al or Al alloy and Ta is formed on the ohmic contact pattern 52, 53, 54 and 56. The data wire includes a data line 62 extending in the vertical direction (in FIG. 10), a data pad 66 connected to an end of the data line 62 and transmitting image signals from an external circuit to the data line 62, a source electrode 63 that is a part of a thin film transistor and branched from the data line 62, and a drain electrode 64 located opposite to the source electrode 63 with respect to the gate electrode 24.

[0070] The data wire may have a multi-layered structure like the gate wire. When the data wire has a multi-layered structure, it is preferable that one layer is made of a material having a low resistivity and another layer is made of a material having a good contact with other materials.

[0071] The ohmic contact layer pattern 52, 53, 54 and 56 reduces the contact resistance between the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 and the data wire, having the same layout as the data wire. Here, an edge of the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 is extended outside the data wire 62, 63, 64 and 66, and a channel of the thin film transistor is formed in the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 between the source electrode 63 and the drain electrode 64.

[0072] A protection layer 70 made of silicon-nitride (SiNx) or organic insulating material is formed on the gate insulating layer 32 to cover the data wire and the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46. The protection layer 70 has contact holes 72 and 76 respectively exposing the drain electrode 64 and the data pad 66, and a contact hole 74 exposing the gate pad 26.

[0073] The pixel electrode 84, which receives an image signal and generates an electric field in cooperation with a common electrode of an upper panel, is formed on the protection layer 70 of a pixel region defined by the gate line 22 and the data line 62. The pixel electrode 84 is made of a transparent conductive material such as ITO (indium tin oxide). The pixel electrode 84 is connected to the drain electrode 64 physically and electrically through the contact hole 72, and receives image signals from the drain electrode 64.

[0074] A redundant gate pad 80 and a redundant data pad 82 respectively connected to the gate pad 26 and the data pad 66 through the contact holes 74 and 76 are formed on the gate pad 26 and the data pad 66. Since these redundant pads 80 and 82 protect the pads 26 and 66 and provide additional adhesiveness between an external circuit and the pads 26 and 66, they are optional. The pixel electrode 84 overlaps the gate line 22 to form a storage capacitance.

[0075] In this embodiment, although transparent ITO is taken as an example of the material of the pixel electrode 82, it is possible to use an opaque-conductive material in a reflective type LCD.

[0076] A manufacturing method of a thin film transistor array panel according to a second embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to the FIGS. 12A to 16B and FIGS. 10 to 11.

[0077] First, as shown in FIGS. 12A and 12B, a conductive layer of material such as metal is deposited on a substrate 10 with a thickness of 1,000 to 3,000 Å by using a sputtering deposition method, and patterned by a first photolithography process by using a wet or dry etch process to form a gate wire including a gate line 22, a gate electrode 24 and a gate pad 26.

[0078] Next, as shown in FIG. 13, a gate insulating layer 32 of silicon nitride with a thickness of 1,500 to 5,000 Å, a semiconductor layer 42 made of hydrogenated amorphous silicon with a thickness of 500 to 2,000 Å, and a doped amorphous silicon layer heavily doped with impurities such as phosphorus with a thickness of 300 to 600 Å are deposited, in this order, by a chemical vapor deposition process.

[0079] Then, a conductive layer of material such as metal is deposited with a thickness of 1,500 to 3,000 Å by using a sputtering deposition method, and photoresist is coated with a thickness of 10,000 to 20,000 Å on the conductive layer. The photoresist is exposed and developed using a second mask, which is used for a data wire, to form a photoresist pattern 112, 114 and 116. The portion of the conductive layer not covered by the photoresist pattern 112, 114, 116 is etched to form a data wire, the data wire including a data line 62, a source electrode 63, a drain electrode 64 and a data pad 66 on the doped amorphous silicon layer.

[0080] Next, as shown in FIG. 14, the photoresist pattern 112, 114 and 116 is reflowed such that a new photoresist pattern 115 covering the doped amorphous silicon 50 between the source electrode 63 and the drain electrode 64 is formed, and a periphery of the data wire is completely covered by the photoresist pattern 112, 114 and 116. Subsequently, portions of the doped amorphous silicon layer 50 and the amorphous silicon layer 40 not covered by the data wire 62, 64 and 66 are etched to form an ohmic contact layer 52, 56, and 58 and a semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 to be extended outside the data wire 62, 64 and 66.

[0081] Next, the photoresist pattern 112, 114, 115 and 116 is removed, and also removed is the doped amorphous silicon layer not covered by the data wire such that the ohmic contact layer 58 under the source and drain electrodes 63 and 64 is divided into two portions 53 and 54, thereby exposing the semiconductor pattern 44 between the source and drain electrodes 63 and 64. At this time, the ohmic contact layer pattern 52, 53, 54 and 56 and the data wire have the same layout.

[0082] Here, as shown in FIG. 14, because portions of the photoresist pattern 112, 114, 115 and 116 corresponding to where the ohmic contact layer 52, 56 and 58 is not covered by the data wire 62, 63, 64 and 66, are thinner than other portions of the photoresist pattern 112, 114, 115 and 116, it is possible to change the order of the above method and remove the first amorphous silicon layer not covered by the data wire, after which the photoresist pattern 112, 114, 115 and 116 is removed. In this etch process, both dry or wet etch methods can be used, and it is preferable that etching is performed under the condition where the data wire and the

gate insulating layer 32 are not easily etched, while the photoresist pattern 112, 114, 115 and 116 and the amorphous silicon layer are easily etched.

[0083] Furthermore, after the data wire 62, 63, 64 and 66 is formed, the exposed doped amorphous silicon layer is etched to form the ohmic contact layer 52, 53, 54 and 56 (see FIG. 15B).

[0084] Next, as shown in FIGS. 16A and 16B, an organic insulating material is coated by using a spin coating method or silicon nitride is deposited by using a chemical vapor deposition method to form a protection layer 70 with a thickness of more than 3,000 Å. Subsequently, the protection layer 70 is etched along with the gate insulating layer 32 and the semiconductor layer 42 by a third photolithography process to form contact holes 72, 76 and 74 respectively exposing the drain electrode 64, data pad 66, and gate pad 26.

[0085] Finally, as shown in FIGS. 10 to 11, indium tin oxide (ITO) is deposited and patterned by a fourth photolithography process to form a pixel electrode 84 connected to the drain electrode 64 through the contact hole 72, a redundant gate pad 80 connected to the gate pad 26 through the contact hole 74, and a redundant data pad 82 connected to the data pad 66 through the contact hole 76.

[0086] In this embodiment according to the present invention, the data wire, the ohmic contact layer 52, 53, 54 and 56, and the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 are formed by using a single mask, thereby minimizing the total number of masks required. Further, the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46 is formed extending outside the data wire such that the step coverage of the triple layer, realized through the data wire, the ohmic contact layer 52, 53, 54 and 56, and the semiconductor pattern 42, 44 and 46, is formed in two steps. Accordingly, the structure of the protection layer 70 and the pixel electrode 84 may become less fragile.

[0087] This method may also be adapted to the first embodiment. The photoresist pattern to form the protection layer is reflowed and the reflowed photoresist pattern can be used to etch the semiconductor layer or the gate insulating layer.

[0088] In the present invention, the manufacturing process of a thin film transistor panel for a liquid crystal display is simplified by reducing the number of masks required in the process. As a result, manufacturing costs may be minimized. The leakage of current from the liquid crystal display can also be reduced, and the step coverage of the layers is strengthened.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for manufacturing a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display, comprising the steps of:

forming by a first photolithography process a gate wire, including a gate line, a gate electrode connected to the gate line and a gate pad that receives an external gate signal, on an insulating substrate;

depositing sequentially a gate insulating layer covering the gate wire, a semiconductor layer, an ohmic contact layer, and a first conductive layer;

patterned by a second photolithography process, the first conductive layer to form a data wire including a data

line intersecting the gate line, a source electrode connected to the data line and extended over the gate electrode, a drain electrode located opposite to the source electrode with respect to the gate electrode and a data pad that receives an external data signal;

removing portions of the ohmic contact layer not covered by the data wire;

depositing a protection layer;

patterning by a third photolithography process, the protection layer to form a first contact hole exposing the drain electrode, along with the semiconductor layer and the gate insulating layer;

depositing a second conductive layer; and

patterning the second conductive layer to form a pixel electrode connected to the drain electrode through the first contact hole of the protection layer.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the protection layer is made of reflowable organic insulating material.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the semiconductor layer on the gate line between adjacent data lines is divided in the third photolithography process.

4. The method of claims 3, wherein the third photolithography process removes portions of the protection layer, the semiconductor layer and the gate insulating layer on the gate line to divide the semiconductor layer between adjacent data lines, and

wherein the protection layer is reflowed to cover the exposed portion of the gate line.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein a second contact hole exposing the gate pad and a third contact hole exposing the data pad are formed while forming the first contact hole.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the gate wire is formed in a single-layered or a multi-layered structure of aluminum, aluminum alloy, chrome, molybdenum, or molybdenum alloy.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein an upper layer of the multi-layered structure is made of aluminum or aluminum alloy, if the gate wire is formed in a multi-layered structure.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of removing the upper layer of the gate pad after covering an exposed part of the gate line.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the second conductive layer is indium tin oxide.

10. A method for manufacturing a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display, comprising the steps of:

forming by a first photolithography process a gate wire, including a gate line and a gate electrode connected to the gate line, on an insulating substrate;

depositing sequentially a gate insulating layer, a semiconductor layer, an ohmic contact layer, and a first conductive layer;

patterning by a second photolithography process the first conductive layer to form a data wire that includes a data line intersecting the gate line, a source electrode connected to the data line and extending to the gate electrode, and a drain electrode located opposite to the source electrode with respect to the gate electrode;

removing portions of the ohmic contact layer not covered by the data wire;

depositing a protection layer;

forming a photoresist pattern of a reflowable material by a third photolithography process, wherein the photoresist pattern has a first opening with a plurality of minute patterns at a position corresponding to a gate line and a second opening corresponding to the drain electrode;

reflowing the photoresist pattern to form a thin photoresist layer in the first opening;

exposing the drain electrode, and remaining portions of the gate insulating layer on the gate line of the first opening by patterning the protection layer, the semiconductor layer and the gate insulating layer, using the photoresist pattern including the thin photoresist layer as an etch mask;

depositing a second conductive layer;

patterning the conductive layer to form a pixel electrode connected to the drain electrode.

11. A thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display, comprising:

a gate wire formed on an insulating substrate and including a gate line and a gate electrode connected to the gate line;

a gate insulating layer covering the gate wire;

a semiconductor layer formed on the gate insulating layer;

an ohmic contact layer formed on the semiconductor layer;

a data wire including a data line intersecting the gate line, a source electrode connected to the data line and extending to the gate electrode, and a drain electrode located opposite to the source electrode with respect to the gate electrode, the data wire being formed on the ohmic contact layer and having the same layout as the ohmic contact layer;

a protection layer formed on the data wire and the semiconductor layer, and having a first contact hole exposing the drain electrode; and

a pixel electrode connected to the drain electrode through the first contact hole,

wherein a portion of the semiconductor layer on the gate line between adjacent data lines is divided, and

wherein peripheries of the gate insulating layer, the semiconductor layer, and the protection layer are substantially in an identical shape.

12. The thin film transistor array panel of claim 11, wherein the gate wire further includes a gate pad that is connected to and receives a signal from an external circuit, and the data wire further includes a data pad that is connected to and receives a signal from an external circuit, and

wherein the protection layer, the semiconductor layer and the gate insulating layer have a second contact hole and a third contact hole respectively exposing the gate pad and the data pad.

13. The thin film transistor array panel of claim 12, wherein the gate wire has a single-layered or multi-layered structure of aluminum, aluminum alloy, chrome, molybdenum, or molybdenum alloy.

14. A method for manufacturing a thin film transistor array panel for a liquid crystal display, comprising the steps of:

forming on an insulating substrate, a gate wire including a gate line and a gate electrode connected to the gate line;

depositing sequentially a gate insulating layer, a semiconductor layer, and a first conductive layer;

forming a photoresist pattern on the first conductive layer;

etching the first conductive layer by using the photoresist pattern as an etch mask to form a data wire including a data line intersecting the gate line, a source electrode connected to the data line and extending to the gate electrode, and a drain electrode located opposite to the source electrode with respect to the gate electrode;

reflowing the photoresist pattern to cover a portion between the source electrode and the drain electrode that forms a channel of the thin film transistor and a portion of the semiconductor layer adjacent to a periphery of the data wire;

etching a portion of the semiconductor layer not covered by the photoresist pattern to form a semiconductor pattern;

removing the photoresist pattern;

forming a protection layer pattern; and

forming a pixel electrode connected to the drain electrode.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the data wire and the semiconductor pattern are formed using a single mask.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the semiconductor pattern is extended outside the data wire.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the gate wire further includes a gate pad that is connected to and receives a signal

from an external circuit, and the data wire further includes a data pad that is connected to and receives a signal from an external circuit, and the protection layer pattern and the gate insulating layer have contact holes exposing the gate pad and the data pad, and

wherein the method further comprises the step of forming a redundant gate pad and a redundant data pad, provided on a same layer as the pixel electrode and respectively connected to the gate pad and the data pad through the contact holes.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

forming an ohmic contact layer between the semiconductor layer and the data conductive layer;

etching the ohmic contact layer when etching the semiconductor layer; and

etching a portion of the ohmic contact layer not covered by the data wire before removing the photoresist pattern.

19. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

forming an ohmic contact layer between the semiconductor layer and the data conductive layer;

etching the ohmic contact layer when etching the semiconductor layer; and

etching a portion of the ohmic contact layer not covered by the data wire after removing the photoresist pattern.

20. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

forming an ohmic contact layer between the semiconductor layer and the data conductive layer; and

etching a portion of the ohmic contact layer not covered by the data wire after etching the data conductive layer.

* * * * *

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申请(专利权)人(译)	BAEK BUM-KEE 香港香植 KIM DAI-MOE		
当前申请(专利权)人(译)	SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS CO. , LTD.		
[标]发明人	BAEK BUM KEE KONG HYANG SHIK KIM DAI MOE		
发明人	BAEK, BUM-KEE KONG, HYANG-SHIK KIM, DAI-MOE		
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摘要(译)

公开了一种用于液晶显示器的简化制造方法。包括栅极线，栅极焊盘和栅电极的栅极线形成在绝缘基板上。接下来，依次沉积覆盖栅极线的栅极绝缘层，半导体层，欧姆接触层和数据导电层，并在数据导电层上形成光致抗蚀剂图案。在该步骤之后，蚀刻使用光致抗蚀剂图案作为蚀刻掩模的数据导电层，以形成包括数据线，源电极，漏电极和数据焊盘的数据线。接下来，回流光致抗蚀剂图案以覆盖源电极和漏电极之间的部分，以及与数据线的相邻的欧姆接触层的一部分。随后，蚀刻未被光致抗蚀剂图案覆盖的欧姆接触层和半导体层的部分，并去除光致抗蚀剂图案。接下来，蚀刻未被数据线覆盖的欧姆接触层的一部分，以暴露作为薄膜晶体管的沟道部分的源电极和漏电极之间的半导体层的一部分。最后，形成保护层，像素电极，冗余栅极焊盘和冗余数据焊盘。

