

## ABSTRACT

### **Title of Invention: Purging Apparatus and Purging Method**

The object of the present invention is to shorten a purge operation time of a purging apparatus. A pod opener 21 is an apparatus for purging the inside of a reticle pod 1 having a pod cover 5 and an openable bottom lid 7 by supplying and discharging a clean gas to and from the inside of the reticle pod 1. The pod opener 21 comprises a stage 25, an elevator driving mechanism 41, a latch mechanism 13, and a supplying-discharging section 49. The stage 25 can attach and remove the bottom lid 7 to and from the pod cover 5. The elevator driving mechanism 41 can move the stage 25. The latch mechanism 13 serves to move a latch member 15 contrived to lock the bottom lid 7 to the pod cover 5 such that it cannot be detached and to release the locked state of the bottom lid 7. The supplying-discharging section 49 is contrived to start purging before the latch member 15 has completed an operation of locking the bottom lid 7 to the pod cover 5.

Fig. 5