

UNSYMMETRICAL LIGAND SOURCES, REDUCED
5 SYMMETRY METAL-CONTAINING COMPOUNDS, AND
SYSTEMS AND METHODS INCLUDING SAME

This application claims priority to U.S. Patent Application Serial No.
11/169,082, filed June 28, 2005, which is incorporated herein by reference in its
10 entirety.

BACKGROUND

The scaling down of integrated circuit devices has created a need to
incorporate high dielectric constant materials into capacitors and gates. The
15 search for new high dielectric constant materials and processes is becoming
more important as the minimum size for current technology is practically
constrained by the use of standard dielectric materials. Dielectric materials
containing alkaline earth metals can provide a significant advantage in
capacitance compared to conventional dielectric materials. For example, the
20 perovskite material SrTiO_3 has a disclosed bulk dielectric constant of up to 500.

Unfortunately, the successful integration of alkaline earth metals into
vapor deposition processes has proven to be difficult. For example, although
atomic layer deposition (ALD) of alkaline earth metal diketonates has been
disclosed, these metal diketonates have low volatility, which typically requires
25 that they be dissolved in organic solvent for use in a liquid injection system. In
addition to low volatility, these metal diketonates generally have poor reactivity,
often requiring high substrate temperatures and strong oxidizers to grow a film,
which is often contaminated with carbon. Other alkaline earth metal sources,
such as those including substituted or unsubstituted cyclopentadienyl ligands,
30 typically have poor volatility as well as low thermal stability, leading to
undesirable pyrolysis on the substrate surface.

New sources and methods of incorporating high dielectric materials are being sought for new generations of integrated circuit devices.

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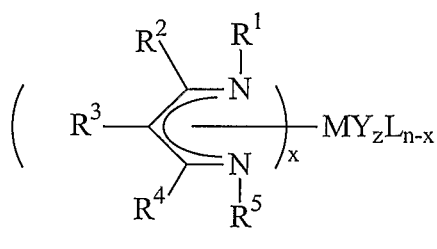
SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides metal-containing compounds (i.e., metal-containing complexes) that include at least one β -diketiminato ligand, and methods of making and using, and vapor deposition systems including the same. The presently disclosed metal-containing compounds have reduced symmetry compared to known homoleptic complexes with symmetrical ligands. The reduced symmetry may result from the unsymmetric ligands themselves, the coordination of different types of ligands, or both. Reduced symmetry may lead to desirable properties (e.g., one or more of higher vapor pressure, lower melting point, and lower sublimation point) for use in vapor deposition methods.

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In one aspect, the present invention provides a method of forming a metal-containing layer on a substrate (e.g., a semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly) using a vapor deposition process. The method can be useful in the manufacture of semiconductor structures. The method includes: providing a substrate; providing a vapor including at least one compound of the formula (Formula I):

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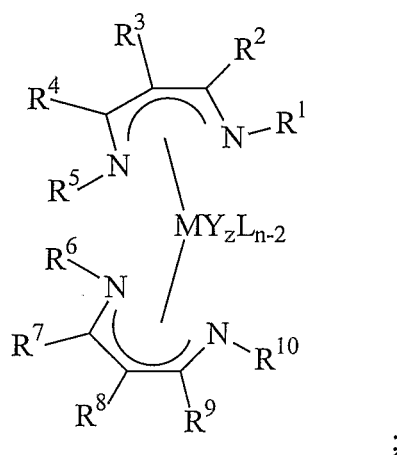


and contacting the vapor including the at least one compound of Formula I with the substrate (and typically directing the vapor to the substrate) to form a metal-containing layer on at least one surface of the substrate. The reduced symmetry compound of the formula (Formula I) includes at least one unsymmetrical β -diketiminato ligand, wherein M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof; each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n

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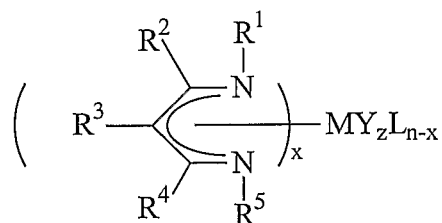
represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; x is from 1 to n ; and each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group; with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

- 5 In another aspect, the present invention provides a method of forming a metal-containing layer on a substrate (e.g., a semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly) using a vapor deposition process. The method can be useful in the manufacture of semiconductor structures. The method includes: providing a substrate; providing a vapor including at least one compound of the formula
- 10 (Formula II):



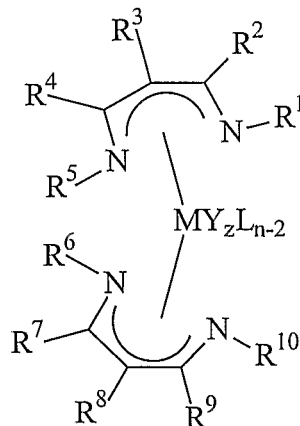
- and contacting the vapor including the at least one compound of Formula II with the substrate (and typically directing the vapor to the substrate) to form a metal-containing layer on at least one surface of the substrate. The reduced symmetry
- 15 compound of the formula (Formula II) includes two different symmetrical β -diketiminato ligands, wherein: M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof; each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group; and
- 20 $R^1 = R^5$, $R^2 = R^4$, $R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$.

In another aspect, the present invention provides metal-containing compounds having at least one unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand, precursor compositions including such compounds, vapor deposition systems including such compounds, and methods of making such compounds. Such metal-containing compounds include those of the formula (Formula I):



wherein: M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof; each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; and x is from 1 to n; and each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group; with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 . The present invention also provides sources for unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligands, and methods of making same, which are useful for making metal-containing compounds having at least one unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand.

In another aspect, the present invention provides metal-containing compounds having two different symmetrical β -diketiminate ligands, precursor compositions including such compounds, vapor deposition systems including such compounds, and methods of making such compounds. Such metal-containing compounds include those of the formula (Formula II):

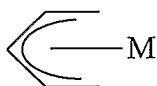


wherein: M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof; each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; each $R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9$, and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group; and $R^1 = R^5, R^2 = R^4, R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$.

Advantageously, the reduced symmetry metal-containing compounds of the present invention include elements of asymmetry that may lead to desirable properties (e.g., one or more of higher vapor pressure, lower melting point, and lower sublimation point) for use in vapor deposition methods.

Definitions

As used herein, formulas of the type:



are used to represent pentadienyl-group type ligands (e.g., β -diketiminate ligands) having delocalized electron density that are coordinated to a metal. The ligands may be coordinated to the metal through one, two, three, four, and/or five atoms (i.e., η^1 -, η^2 -, η^3 -, η^4 -, and/or η^5 -coordination modes).

As used herein, the term "organic group" is used for the purpose of this invention to mean a hydrocarbon group that is classified as an aliphatic group, cyclic group, or combination of aliphatic and cyclic groups (e.g., alkaryl and aralkyl groups). In the context of the present invention, suitable organic groups for metal-containing compounds of this invention are those that do not interfere with the formation of a metal oxide layer using vapor deposition techniques. In the context of the present invention, the term "aliphatic group" means a saturated or unsaturated linear or branched hydrocarbon group. This term is used to encompass alkyl, alkenyl, and alkynyl groups, for example. The term "alkyl group" means a saturated linear or branched monovalent hydrocarbon group including, for example, methyl, ethyl, *n*-propyl, isopropyl, *tert*-butyl, amyl, heptyl, and the like. The term "alkenyl group" means an unsaturated, linear or branched monovalent hydrocarbon group with one or more olefinically unsaturated groups (i.e., carbon-carbon double bonds), such as a vinyl group. The term "alkynyl group" means an unsaturated, linear or branched monovalent

hydrocarbon group with one or more carbon-carbon triple bonds. The term "cyclic group" means a closed ring hydrocarbon group that is classified as an alicyclic group, aromatic group, or heterocyclic group. The term "alicyclic group" means a cyclic hydrocarbon group having properties resembling those of aliphatic groups. The term "aromatic group" or "aryl group" means a mono- or polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon group. The term "heterocyclic group" means a closed ring hydrocarbon in which one or more of the atoms in the ring is an element other than carbon (e.g., nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, etc.).

As a means of simplifying the discussion and the recitation of certain terminology used throughout this application, the terms "group" and "moiety" are used to differentiate between chemical species that allow for substitution or that may be substituted and those that do not so allow for substitution or may not be so substituted. Thus, when the term "group" is used to describe a chemical substituent, the described chemical material includes the unsubstituted group and that group with nonperoxidic O, N, S, Si, or F atoms, for example, in the chain as well as carbonyl groups or other conventional substituents. Where the term "moiety" is used to describe a chemical compound or substituent, only an unsubstituted chemical material is intended to be included. For example, the phrase "alkyl group" is intended to include not only pure open chain saturated hydrocarbon alkyl substituents, such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, *tert*-butyl, and the like, but also alkyl substituents bearing further substituents known in the art, such as hydroxy, alkoxy, alkylsulfonyl, halogen atoms, cyano, nitro, amino, carboxyl, etc. Thus, "alkyl group" includes ether groups, haloalkyls, nitroalkyls, carboxyalkyls, hydroxyalkyls, sulfoalkyls, etc. On the other hand, the phrase "alkyl moiety" is limited to the inclusion of only pure open chain saturated hydrocarbon alkyl substituents, such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, *tert*-butyl, and the like.

As used herein, "metal-containing" is used to refer to a material, typically a compound or a layer, that may consist entirely of a metal, or may include other elements in addition to a metal. Typical metal-containing compounds include, but are not limited to, metals, metal-ligand complexes, metal salts, organometallic compounds, and combinations thereof. Typical metal-containing

layers include, but are not limited to, metals, metal oxides, metal silicates, and combinations thereof.

As used herein, "a," "an," "the," and "at least one" are used interchangeably and mean one or more than one.

5 As used herein, the term "comprising," which is synonymous with "including" or "containing," is inclusive, open-ended, and does not exclude additional unrecited elements or method steps.

10 The terms "deposition process" and "vapor deposition process" as used herein refer to a process in which a metal-containing layer is formed on one or more surfaces of a substrate (e.g., a doped polysilicon wafer) from vaporized precursor composition(s) including one or more metal-containing compounds. Specifically, one or more metal-containing compounds are vaporized and directed to and/or contacted with one or more surfaces of a substrate (e.g., semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly) placed in a deposition chamber.

15 Typically, the substrate is heated. These metal-containing compounds form (e.g., by reacting or decomposing) a non-volatile, thin, uniform, metal-containing layer on the surface(s) of the substrate. For the purposes of this invention, the term "vapor deposition process" is meant to include both chemical vapor deposition processes (including pulsed chemical vapor deposition

20 processes) and atomic layer deposition processes.

 "Chemical vapor deposition" (CVD) as used herein refers to a vapor deposition process wherein the desired layer is deposited on the substrate from vaporized metal-containing compounds (and any reaction gases used) within a deposition chamber with no effort made to separate the reaction components. In

25 contrast to a "simple" CVD process that involves the substantial simultaneous use of the precursor compositions and any reaction gases, "pulsed" CVD alternately pulses these materials into the deposition chamber, but does not rigorously avoid intermixing of the precursor and reaction gas streams, as is typically done in atomic layer deposition or ALD (discussed in greater detail

30 below).

 The term "atomic layer deposition" (ALD) as used herein refers to a vapor deposition process in which deposition cycles, preferably a plurality of

consecutive deposition cycles, are conducted in a process chamber (i.e., a deposition chamber). Typically, during each cycle the precursor is chemisorbed to a deposition surface (e.g., a substrate assembly surface or a previously deposited underlying surface such as material from a previous ALD cycle), forming a monolayer or sub-monolayer that does not readily react with additional precursor (i.e., a self-limiting reaction). Thereafter, if necessary, a reactant (e.g., another precursor or reaction gas) may subsequently be introduced into the process chamber for use in converting the chemisorbed precursor to the desired material on the deposition surface. Typically, this reactant is capable of further reaction with the precursor. Further, purging steps may also be utilized during each cycle to remove excess precursor from the process chamber and/or remove excess reactant and/or reaction byproducts from the process chamber after conversion of the chemisorbed precursor. Further, the term "atomic layer deposition," as used herein, is also meant to include processes designated by related terms such as, "chemical vapor atomic layer deposition", "atomic layer epitaxy" (ALE) (see U.S. Patent No. 5,256,244 to Ackerman), molecular beam epitaxy (MBE), gas source MBE, or organometallic MBE, and chemical beam epitaxy when performed with alternating pulses of precursor composition(s), reactive gas, and purge (e.g., inert carrier) gas.

As compared to the one cycle chemical vapor deposition (CVD) process, the longer duration multi-cycle ALD process allows for improved control of layer thickness and composition by self-limiting layer growth, and minimizing detrimental gas phase reactions by separation of the reaction components. The self-limiting nature of ALD provides a method of depositing a film on a wide variety of reactive surfaces, including surfaces with irregular topographies, with better step coverage than is available with CVD or other "line of sight" deposition methods such as evaporation or physical vapor deposition (PVD or sputtering).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a vapor deposition system suitable for use in methods of the present invention.

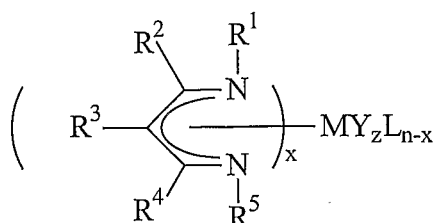
5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides metal-containing compounds (i.e., metal-containing complexes) that include at least one β -diketiminato ligand, and methods of making and using, and vapor deposition systems including the same. In some embodiments, the at least one β -diketiminato ligand can be in the η^5 -
10 coordination mode. In some embodiments, the metal-containing compounds are homoleptic complexes (i.e., complexes in which the metal is bound to only one type of ligand) that include unsymmetrical β -diketiminato ligands. In other embodiments, the metal-containing compounds are heteroleptic complexes (i.e., complexes in which the metal is bound to more than one type of ligand)
15 including at least one β -diketiminato ligand, which can be symmetric or unsymmetric. Thus, the presently disclosed metal-containing compounds have reduced symmetry compared to known homoleptic complexes with symmetrical ligands. The reduced symmetry may result from the unsymmetric ligands themselves, the coordination of different types of ligands, or both. Reduced
20 symmetry may lead to desirable properties (e.g., one or more of higher vapor pressure, lower melting point, and lower sublimation point) for use in vapor deposition methods.

COMPOUNDS WITH AT LEAST ONE UNSYMMETRICAL LIGAND

In one embodiment, metal-containing compounds including at least one unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand, and precursor compositions including such compounds, are disclosed. Such compounds include a compound of the formula

5 (Formula I):



M is a Group 2 metal (e.g., Ca, Sr, Ba), a Group 3 metal (e.g., Sc, Y, La), a Lanthanide (e.g., Pr, Nd), or a combination thereof. Preferably M is Ca, Sr, or Ba. Each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; and x is from 1 to n.

Each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group (e.g., an alkyl group, and preferably, for example, an alkyl moiety); with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 . In certain embodiments, R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 are each independently hydrogen or an organic group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms (e.g., methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, *sec*-butyl, *tert*-butyl). In certain embodiments, R^1 = isopropyl and R^5 = *tert*-butyl. In certain embodiments, R^2 and/or R^4 are methyl. In certain embodiments, R^3 is H. Such an exemplary compound of Formula I is the compound in which R^2 = R^4 = methyl, R^3 = H, R^1 = isopropyl, and R^5 = *tert*-butyl.

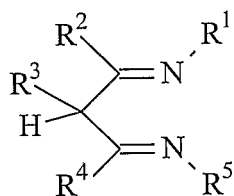
L can represent a wide variety of anionic ligands. Exemplary anionic ligands (L) include halides, alkoxide groups, amide groups, mercaptide groups, cyanide, alkyl groups, amidinate groups, guanidinate groups, isoureate groups, β -diketonate groups, β -iminoketonate groups, β -diketiminate groups, and combinations thereof. In certain embodiments, L is a β -diketiminate group having a structure that is the same as that of the β -diketiminate ligand shown in Formula I. In other certain embodiments, L is a β -diketiminate group (e.g.,

symmetric or unsymmetric) having a structure that is different than that of the β -diketiminate ligand shown in Formula I.

Y represents an optional neutral ligand. Exemplary neutral ligands (Y) include carbonyl (CO), nitrosyl (NO), ammonia (NH₃), amines (NR₃), nitrogen (N₂), phosphines (PR₃), alcohols (ROH), water (H₂O), tetrahydrofuran, and combinations thereof, wherein each R independently represents hydrogen or an organic group. The number of optional neutral ligands (Y) is represented by z, which is from 0 to 10, and preferably from 0 to 3. More preferably, Y is not present (i.e., z = 0).

In one embodiment, a metal-containing compound including at least one unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand can be made, for example, by a method that includes combining components including an unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand source, a metal source, optionally a source for a neutral ligand Y, and a source for an anionic ligand L, which can be the same or different than the unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand source. Typically, a ligand source can be deprotonated to become a ligand.

An exemplary method includes combining components including: a ligand source of the formula (Formula III):



or a tautomer thereof;

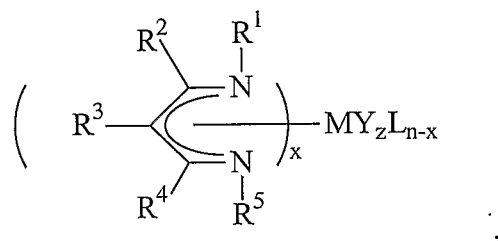
a source for an anionic ligand L (e.g., as described herein); optionally a source for a neutral ligand Y (e.g., as described herein); and a metal (M) source under conditions sufficient to form the metal-containing compound. Preferably, the components are combined in an organic solvent (e.g., heptane, toluene, or diethyl ether), typically under mixing or stirring conditions, and allowed to react at a convenient temperature (e.g., room temperature or below, refluxing or above, or an intermediate temperature) for a length of time to form a sufficient amount of the desired product. Preferably, the components are combined under an inert atmosphere (e.g., argon), typically in the substantial absence of water.

The metal (M) source can be selected from the group consisting of a Group II metal source, a Group III metal source, a Lanthanide metal source, and combinations thereof. Exemplary metal sources include, for example, a M(II) bis(hexamethyldisilazane), a M(II)

5 bis(hexamethyldisilazane)bis(tetrahydrofuran), or combinations thereof.

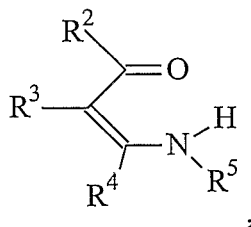
Each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group (e.g., an alkyl group, and preferably, for example, an alkyl moiety), with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

10 The method provides a metal-containing compound of the formula (Formula I):



wherein M, L, Y, R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 are as defined above, n represents the valence state of the metal, z is from 0 to 10, and x is from 1 to n.

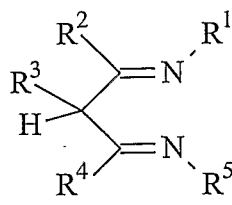
15 Unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand sources can be made, for example, using condensation reactions. For example, exemplary unsymmetrical β -diketiminate ligand sources can be made by a method including combining components including an amine of the formula R^1NH_2 ; a compound of the formula (Formula V):



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or a tautomer thereof; and

an agent capable of activating the carbonyl group for reaction with the amine, under conditions sufficient to provide a ligand source of the formula (Formula III):



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, or a tautomer thereof.

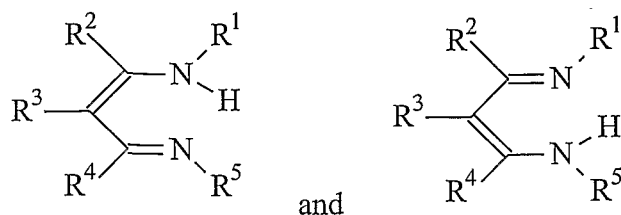
Preferably, the components are combined in an organic solvent (e.g., heptane, toluene, or diethyl ether), typically under mixing or stirring conditions, and allowed to react at a convenient temperature (e.g., room temperature or below, refluxing or above, or an intermediate temperature) for a length of time to form a sufficient amount of the desired product. Preferably, the components are combined under an inert atmosphere (e.g., argon), typically in the substantial absence of water.

Each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an alkyl moiety having 1 to 10 carbon atoms (e.g., methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, *sec*-butyl, *tert*-butyl), with the proviso that one of more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 . Accordingly, the present invention also provides ligand sources of Formula III. In certain embodiments, $\text{R}^1 =$ isopropyl and $\text{R}^5 = \text{tert}$ -butyl. In certain embodiments, R^2 and/or R^4 are methyl. In certain embodiments, R^3 is H. Such an exemplary compound of Formula III is the compound in which $\text{R}^2 = \text{R}^4 =$ methyl, $\text{R}^3 = \text{H}$, $\text{R}^1 =$ isopropyl, and $\text{R}^5 = \text{tert}$ -butyl.

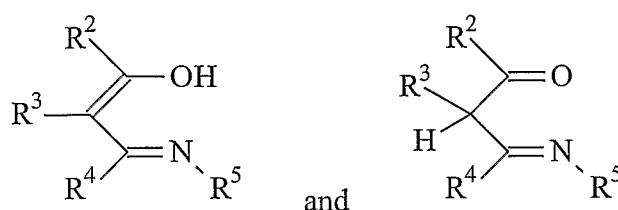
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Tautomers of compounds of Formula III and Formula V include isomers in which a hydrogen atom is bonded to another atom. Typically, tautomers can be in equilibrium with one another.

Specifically, the present invention contemplates tautomers of Formula III including, for example,

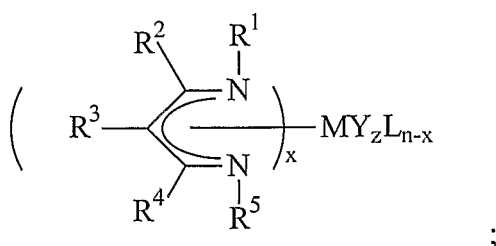


5 Similarly, the present invention contemplates tautomers of Formula V including, for example,

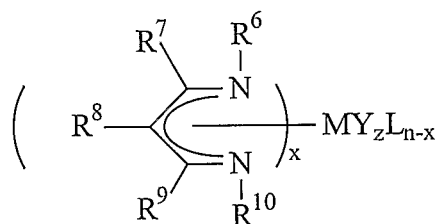


Suitable agents capable of activating a carbonyl group for reaction with
 10 an amine are well known to those of skill in the art and include, for example, alkylating agents. Exemplary alkylating agents include triethyloxonium tetrafluoroborate, dimethyl sulfate, nitrosoureas, mustard gases (e.g., 1,1-thiobis(2-chloroethane)), and combinations thereof.

Additional metal-containing compounds including at least one
 15 unsymmetrical β -diketiminato ligand can be made, for example, by ligand exchange reactions between a metal-containing compound including at least one unsymmetrical β -diketiminato ligand and a metal-containing compound including at least one different β -diketiminato ligand. Such an exemplary method includes combining components including a compound of the formula
 20 (Formula I):



and a compound of the formula (Formula VI):

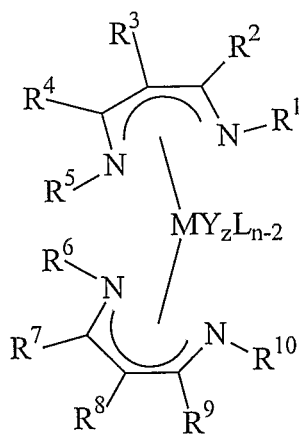


under conditions sufficient to form the metal-containing compound. Preferably,
 5 the components are combined in an organic solvent (e.g., heptane, toluene, or diethyl ether), typically under mixing or stirring conditions, and allowed to react at a convenient temperature (e.g., room temperature or below, refluxing or above, or an intermediate temperature) for a length of time to form a sufficient amount of the desired product. Preferably, the components are combined under
 10 an inert atmosphere (e.g., argon), typically in the substantial absence of water.

Each M is a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, or a combination thereof; each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; and x is from 1 to n.

15 Each R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, and R¹⁰ is independently hydrogen or an organic group; and the β-diketimate ligands shown in Formula I and Formula VI have different structures, with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R¹ is different than R⁵, R² is different than R⁴, R⁶ is different than R¹⁰, or R⁷ is different than R⁹.

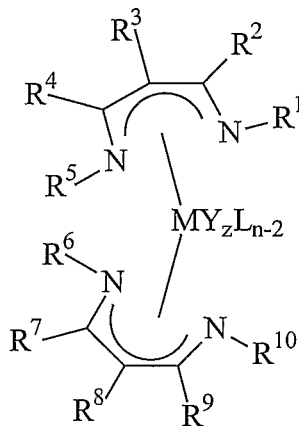
20 The method can provide a metal-containing compound of the formula (Formula II):



wherein M, L, Y, R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, n, and z are as defined above, and the two β -diketiminato ligands shown in Formula II have different structures.

5 HETEROLEPTIC COMPOUNDS WITH DIFFERENT SYMMETRICAL LIGANDS

In another embodiment, compounds that are heteroleptic metal-containing compounds including different symmetrical β -diketiminato ligands, and precursor compositions including such compounds, are disclosed. Such
 10 compounds include a compound of the formula (Formula II):



M is a Group 2 metal (e.g., Ca, Sr, Ba), a Group 3 metal (e.g., Sc, Y, La), a Lanthanide (e.g., Pr, Nd), or combinations thereof. Preferably M is Ca, Sr, or Ba. Each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a
 15 neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; and z is from 0 to 10.

Each R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, and R¹⁰ is independently hydrogen or an organic group (e.g., an alkyl group, and preferably, for example, an alkyl moiety); R¹ = R⁵, R² = R⁴, R⁶ = R¹⁰, and R⁷ = R⁹; and the two β -diketiminato ligands shown in Formula II have different structures. In certain
 20 embodiment, each R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, and R¹⁰ is independently hydrogen or an organic group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms (e.g., methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, *sec*-butyl, *tert*-butyl). In certain embodiments, R¹ = R⁵ = *tert*-butyl, and R⁶ = R¹⁰ = isopropyl. In certain embodiments, R², R⁴, R⁷, and/or R⁹ are methyl. In certain embodiments, R³ and/or R⁸ are H. Such an

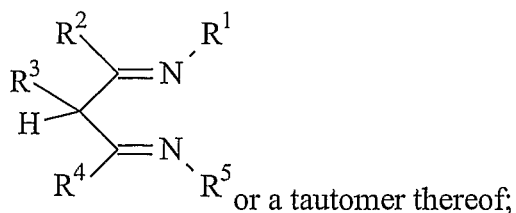
exemplary compound of Formula II is the compound in which $R^2 = R^4 = R^7 = R^9$
 $=$ methyl, $R^3 = R^8 = H$, $R^1 = R^5 = \textit{tert}$ -butyl, and $R^6 = R^{10} =$ isopropyl.

L represents a wide variety of optional anionic ligands. Exemplary
 anionic ligands (L) include halides, alkoxide groups, amide groups, mercaptide
 5 groups, cyanide, alkyl groups, amidinate groups, guanidinate groups, isoureate
 groups, β -diketonate groups, β -iminoketonate groups, β -diketiminate groups, and
 combinations thereof. In certain embodiments, L is a β -diketiminate group
 having a structure that is the same as that of one of the β -diketiminate ligands
 shown in Formula II. In other certain embodiments, L is a β -diketiminate group
 10 (e.g., symmetric or unsymmetric) having a structure that is different than either
 of the β -diketiminate ligands shown in Formula II.

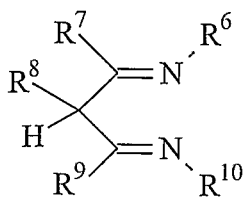
Y represents an optional neutral ligand. Exemplary neutral ligands (Y)
 include carbonyl (CO), nitrosyl (NO), ammonia (NH₃), amines (NR₃), nitrogen
 (N₂), phosphines (PR₃), alcohols (ROH), water (H₂O), tetrahydrofuran, and
 15 combinations thereof, wherein each R independently represents hydrogen or an
 organic group. The number of optional neutral ligands (Y) is represented by z,
 which is from 0 to 10, and preferably from 0 to 3. More preferably, Y is not
 present (i.e., $z = 0$).

In one embodiment, a metal-containing compound including different
 20 symmetrical β -diketiminate ligands can be made, for example, by a method that
 includes combining components including at least two different symmetrical β -
 diketiminate ligand sources and a metal source. Symmetrical β -diketiminate
 ligand sources can be made as described, for example, in El-Kaderi et al.,
Organometallics, 23:4995-5002 (2004).

25 An exemplary method includes combining components including: a
 ligand source of the formula (Formula III):



a ligand source of the formula (Formula IV):



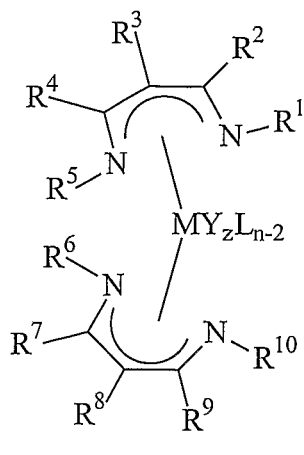
or a tautomer thereof; and

- optionally a source for an anionic ligand L (e.g., as described herein); optionally a source for a neutral ligand Y (e.g., as described herein); and a metal (M) source
- 5 under conditions sufficient to form the metal-containing compound. Preferably, the components are combined in an organic solvent (e.g., heptane, toluene, or diethyl ether), typically under mixing or stirring conditions, and allowed to react at a convenient temperature (e.g., room temperature or below, refluxing or above, or an intermediate temperature) for a length of time to form a sufficient
- 10 amount of the desired product. Preferably, the components are combined under an inert atmosphere (e.g., argon), typically in the substantial absence of water.

- The metal (M) source is a Group II metal source, a Group III metal source, a Lanthanide metal source, or a combination thereof. Exemplary metal sources include, for example, a M(II) bis(hexamethyldisilazane), a M(II)
- 15 bis(hexamethyldisilazane)bis(tetrahydrofuran), or combinations thereof.

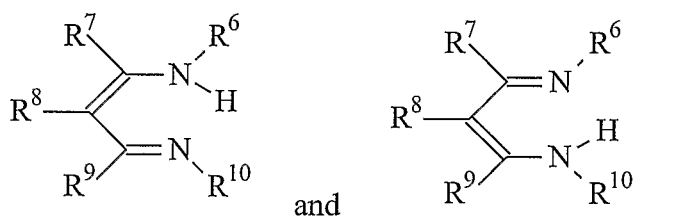
Each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group (e.g., an alkyl group, and preferably, for example, an alkyl moiety); $\text{R}^1 = \text{R}^5$, $\text{R}^2 = \text{R}^4$, $\text{R}^6 = \text{R}^{10}$, and $\text{R}^7 = \text{R}^9$, and the ligand sources shown in Formula III and Formula IV have different structures.

The method can provide a metal-containing compound of the formula
(Formula II):

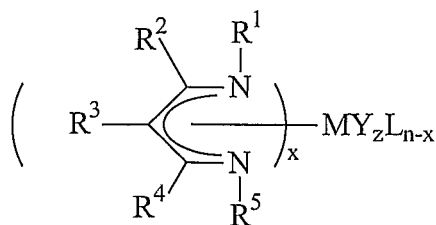


wherein M, L, Y, R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, and R¹⁰ are as defined above,
n represents the valence of the metal, and z is from 0 to 10.

Specifically, the present invention contemplates tautomers of Formula IV including, for example,

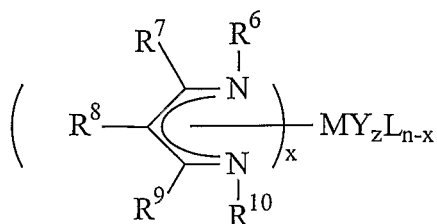


In another embodiment, a metal-containing compound including different symmetrical β -diketiminate ligands can be made, for example, by ligand exchange reactions between metal-containing compounds including different symmetrical β -diketiminate ligands. Such an exemplary method includes combining components including a compound of the formula (Formula I):



15

and a compound of the formula (Formula VI):

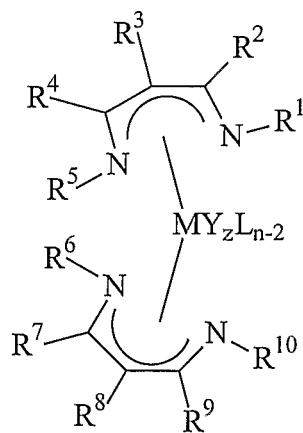


under conditions sufficient to form the metal-containing compound. Preferably,
 5 the components are combined in an organic solvent (e.g., heptane, toluene, or diethyl ether), typically under mixing or stirring conditions, and allowed to react at a convenient temperature (e.g., room temperature or below, refluxing or above, or an intermediate temperature) for a length of time to form a sufficient amount of the desired product. Preferably, the components are combined under
 10 an inert atmosphere (e.g., argon), typically in the substantial absence of water.

Each M is a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, or a combination thereof; each L is independently an anionic ligand; each Y is independently a neutral ligand; n represents the valence state of the metal; z is from 0 to 10; and x is from 1 to n.

15 Each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group; $\text{R}^1 = \text{R}^5$, $\text{R}^2 = \text{R}^4$, $\text{R}^6 = \text{R}^{10}$, and $\text{R}^7 = \text{R}^9$; and the β -diketiminate ligands shown in Formula I and Formula VI have different structures.

The method can provide a metal-containing compound of the formula
 20 (Formula II):



wherein M, L, Y, R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, n, and z are as defined above.

OTHER METAL-CONTAINING COMPOUNDS

5 Precursor compositions that include a metal-containing compound that includes at least one β -diketiminato ligand can be useful for depositing metal-containing layers using vapor deposition methods. In addition, such vapor deposition methods can also include precursor compositions that include one or more different metal-containing compounds. Such precursor compositions can
10 be deposited/chemisorbed, for example in an ALD process discussed more fully below, substantially simultaneously with or sequentially to, the precursor compositions including metal-containing compounds with at least one β -diketiminato ligand. The metals of such different metal-containing compounds can include, for example, Ti, Ta, Bi, Hf, Zr, Pb, Nb, Mg, Al, and combinations
15 thereof. Suitable different metal-containing compounds include, for example, tetrakis titanium isopropoxide, titanium tetrachloride, trichlorotitanium dialkylamides, tetrakis titanium dialkylamides, tetrakis hafnium dialkylamides, trimethyl aluminum, zirconium (IV) chloride, pentakis tantalum ethoxide, and combinations thereof.

20

VAPOR DEPOSITION METHODS

The metal-containing layer can be deposited, for example, on a substrate (e.g., a semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly). "Semiconductor substrate" or "substrate assembly" as used herein refer to a semiconductor
25 substrate such as a base semiconductor layer or a semiconductor substrate having one or more layers, structures, or regions formed thereon. A base semiconductor layer is typically the lowest layer of silicon material on a wafer or a silicon layer deposited on another material, such as silicon on sapphire. When reference is made to a substrate assembly, various process steps may have been previously
30 used to form or define regions, junctions, various structures or features, and openings such as transistors, active areas, diffusions, implanted regions, vias,

contact openings, high aspect ratio openings, capacitor plates, barriers for capacitors, etc.

“Layer,” as used herein, refers to any layer that can be formed on a substrate from one or more precursors and/or reactants according to the deposition process described herein. The term “layer” is meant to include layers specific to the semiconductor industry, such as, but clearly not limited to, a barrier layer, dielectric layer (i.e., a layer having a high dielectric constant), and conductive layer. The term “layer” is synonymous with the term “film” frequently used in the semiconductor industry. The term “layer” is also meant to include layers found in technology outside of semiconductor technology, such as coatings on glass. For example, such layers can be formed directly on fibers, wires, etc., which are substrates other than semiconductor substrates. Further, the layers can be formed directly on the lowest semiconductor surface of the substrate, or they can be formed on any of a variety of layers (e.g., surfaces) as in, for example, a patterned wafer.

The layers or films formed may be in the form of metal-containing films, such as reduced metals, metal silicates, metal oxides, metal nitrides, etc., as well as combinations thereof. For example, a metal oxide layer may include a single metal, the metal oxide layer may include two or more different metals (i.e., it is a mixed metal oxide), or a metal oxide layer may optionally be doped with other metals.

If the metal oxide layer includes two or more different metals, the metal oxide layer can be in the form of alloys, solid solutions, or nanolaminates. Preferably, these have dielectric properties. The metal oxide layer (particularly if it is a dielectric layer) preferably includes one or more of BaTiO₃, SrTiO₃, CaTiO₃, (Ba,Sr)TiO₃, SrTa₂O₆, SrBi₂Ta₂O₉ (SBT), SrHfO₃, SrZrO₃, BaHfO₃, BaZrO₃, (Pb,Ba)Nb₂O₆, (Sr,Ba)Nb₂O₆, Pb[(Sc,Nb)_{0.575}Ti_{0.425}]₂O₃ (PSNT), La₂O₃, Y₂O₃, LaAlO₃, YAlO₃, Pr₂O₃, Ba(Li,Nb)_{1/4}O₃-PbTiO₃, and Ba(0.6)Sr(0.4)TiO₃-MgO. Surprisingly, the metal oxide layer formed according to the present invention is essentially free of carbon. Preferably metal-oxide layers formed by the systems and methods of the present invention are essentially free of carbon, hydrogen, halides, phosphorus, sulfur, nitrogen or compounds thereof. As used

herein, "essentially free" is defined to mean that the metal-containing layer may include a small amount of the above impurities. For example, for metal-oxide layers, "essentially free" means that the above impurities are present in an amount of less than 1 atomic percent, such that they have a minor effect on the chemical properties, mechanical properties, physical form (e.g., crystallinity), or electrical properties of the film.

Various metal-containing compounds can be used in various combinations, optionally with one or more organic solvents (particularly for CVD processes), to form a precursor composition. Advantageously, some of the metal-containing compounds disclosed herein can be used in ALD without adding solvents. "Precursor" and "precursor composition" as used herein, refer to a composition usable for forming, either alone or with other precursor compositions (or reactants), a layer on a substrate assembly in a deposition process. Further, one skilled in the art will recognize that the type and amount of precursor used will depend on the content of a layer which is ultimately to be formed using a vapor deposition process. The preferred precursor compositions of the present invention are preferably liquid at the vaporization temperature and, more preferably, are preferably liquid at room temperature.

The precursor compositions may be liquids or solids at room temperature (preferably, they are liquids at the vaporization temperature). Typically, they are liquids sufficiently volatile to be employed using known vapor deposition techniques. However, as solids they may also be sufficiently volatile that they can be vaporized or sublimed from the solid state using known vapor deposition techniques. If they are less volatile solids, they are preferably sufficiently soluble in an organic solvent or have melting points below their decomposition temperatures such that they can be used in flash vaporization, bubbling, microdroplet formation techniques, etc.

Herein, vaporized metal-containing compounds may be used either alone or optionally with vaporized molecules of other metal-containing compounds or optionally with vaporized solvent molecules or inert gas molecules, if used. As used herein, "liquid" refers to a solution or a neat liquid (a liquid at room temperature or a solid at room temperature that melts at an elevated

temperature). As used herein, "solution" does not require complete solubility of the solid but may allow for some undissolved solid, as long as there is a sufficient amount of the solid delivered by the organic solvent into the vapor phase for chemical vapor deposition processing. If solvent dilution is used in
5 deposition, the total molar concentration of solvent vapor generated may also be considered as a inert carrier gas.

"Inert gas" or "non-reactive gas," as used herein, is any gas that is generally unreactive with the components it comes in contact with. For example, inert gases are typically selected from a group including nitrogen,
10 argon, helium, neon, krypton, xenon, any other non-reactive gas, and mixtures thereof. Such inert gases are generally used in one or more purging processes described according to the present invention, and in some embodiments may also be used to assist in precursor vapor transport.

Solvents that are suitable for certain embodiments of the present
15 invention may be one or more of the following: aliphatic hydrocarbons or unsaturated hydrocarbons (C3-C20, and preferably C5-C10, cyclic, branched, or linear), aromatic hydrocarbons (C5-C20, and preferably C5-C10), halogenated hydrocarbons, silylated hydrocarbons such as alkylsilanes, alkylsilicates, ethers, polyethers, thioethers, esters, lactones, nitriles, silicone oils, or compounds
20 containing combinations of any of the above or mixtures of one or more of the above. The compounds are also generally compatible with each other, so that mixtures of variable quantities of the metal-containing compounds will not interact to significantly change their physical properties.

The precursor compositions of the present invention can, optionally, be
25 vaporized and deposited/chemisorbed substantially simultaneously with, and in the presence of, one or more reaction gases. Alternatively, the metal-containing layers may be formed by alternately introducing the precursor composition and the reaction gas(es) during each deposition cycle. Such reaction gases may typically include oxygen, water vapor, ozone, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides,
30 hydrogen, hydrogen sulfide, hydrogen selenide, hydrogen telluride, hydrogen peroxide, ammonia, organic amines, hydrazines (e.g., hydrazine, methylhydrazine, symmetrical and unsymmetrical dimethylhydrazines), silanes,

disilanes and higher silanes, diborane, plasma, air, borazene (nitrogen source), carbon monoxide (reductant), alcohols, and any combination of these gases. For example, oxygen-containing sources are typically used for the deposition of metal-oxide layers. Preferable optional reaction gases used in the formation of metal-oxide layers include oxidizing gases (e.g., oxygen, ozone, and nitric oxide).

Suitable substrate materials of the present invention include conductive materials, semiconductive materials, conductive metal-nitrides, conductive metals, conductive metal oxides, etc. The substrate on which the metal-containing layer is formed is preferably a semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly. A wide variety of semiconductor materials are contemplated, such as for example, borophosphosilicate glass (BPSG), silicon such as, e.g., conductively doped polysilicon, monocrystalline silicon, etc. (for this invention, appropriate forms of silicon are simply referred to as "silicon"), for example in the form of a silicon wafer, tetraethylorthosilicate (TEOS) oxide, spin on glass (i.e., a thin layer of SiO_2 , optionally doped, deposited by a spin on process), TiN, TaN, W, Ru, Al, Cu, noble metals, etc. A substrate assembly may also contain a layer that includes platinum, iridium, iridium oxide, rhodium, ruthenium, ruthenium oxide, strontium ruthenate, lanthanum nickelate, titanium nitride, tantalum nitride, tantalum-silicon-nitride, silicon dioxide, aluminum, gallium arsenide, glass, etc., and other existing or to-be-developed materials used in semiconductor constructions, such as dynamic random access memory (DRAM) devices, static random access memory (SRAM) devices, and ferroelectric memory (FERAM) devices, for example.

For substrates including semiconductor substrates or substrate assemblies, the layers can be formed directly on the lowest semiconductor surface of the substrate, or they can be formed on any of a variety of the layers (i.e., surfaces) as in a patterned wafer, for example.

Substrates other than semiconductor substrates or substrate assemblies can also be used in methods of the present invention. Any substrate that may advantageously form a metal-containing layer thereon, such as a metal oxide layer, may be used, such substrates including, for example, fibers, wires, etc.

A preferred deposition process for the present invention is a vapor deposition process. Vapor deposition processes are generally favored in the semiconductor industry due to the process capability to quickly provide highly conformal layers even within deep contacts and other openings.

5 The precursor compositions can be vaporized in the presence of an inert carrier gas if desired. Additionally, an inert carrier gas can be used in purging steps in an ALD process (discussed below). The inert carrier gas is typically one or more of nitrogen, helium, argon, etc. In the context of the present invention, an inert carrier gas is one that does not interfere with the formation of the metal-
10 containing layer. Whether done in the presence of a inert carrier gas or not, the vaporization is preferably done in the absence of oxygen to avoid oxygen contamination of the layer (e.g., oxidation of silicon to form silicon dioxide or oxidation of precursor in the vapor phase prior to entry into the deposition chamber).

15 Chemical vapor deposition (CVD) and atomic layer deposition (ALD) are two vapor deposition processes often employed to form thin, continuous, uniform, metal-containing layers onto semiconductor substrates. Using either vapor deposition process, typically one or more precursor compositions are vaporized in a deposition chamber and optionally combined with one or more
20 reaction gases and directed to and/or contacted with the substrate to form a metal-containing layer on the substrate. It will be readily apparent to one skilled in the art that the vapor deposition process may be enhanced by employing various related techniques such as plasma assistance, photo assistance, laser assistance, as well as other techniques.

25 Chemical vapor deposition (CVD) has been extensively used for the preparation of metal-containing layers, such as dielectric layers, in semiconductor processing because of its ability to provide conformal and high quality dielectric layers at relatively fast processing times. Typically, the desired precursor compositions are vaporized and then introduced into a deposition
30 chamber containing a heated substrate with optional reaction gases and/or inert carrier gases in a single deposition cycle. In a typical CVD process, vaporized precursors are contacted with reaction gas(es) at the substrate surface to form a

layer (e.g., dielectric layer). The single deposition cycle is allowed to continue until the desired thickness of the layer is achieved.

Typical CVD processes generally employ precursor compositions in vaporization chambers that are separated from the process chamber wherein the deposition surface or wafer is located. For example, liquid precursor compositions are typically placed in bubblers and heated to a temperature at which they vaporize, and the vaporized liquid precursor composition is then transported by an inert carrier gas passing over the bubbler or through the liquid precursor composition. The vapors are then swept through a gas line to the deposition chamber for depositing a layer on substrate surface(s) therein. Many techniques have been developed to precisely control this process. For example, the amount of precursor composition transported to the deposition chamber can be precisely controlled by the temperature of the reservoir containing the precursor composition and by the flow of an inert carrier gas bubbled through or passed over the reservoir.

A typical CVD process may be carried out in a chemical vapor deposition reactor, such as a deposition chamber available under the trade designation of 7000 from Genus, Inc. (Sunnyvale, CA), a deposition chamber available under the trade designation of 5000 from Applied Materials, Inc. (Santa Clara, CA), or a deposition chamber available under the trade designation of Prism from Novellus, Inc. (San Jose, CA). However, any deposition chamber suitable for performing CVD may be used.

Several modifications of the CVD process and chambers are possible, for example, using atmospheric pressure chemical vapor deposition, low pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD), plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD), hot wall or cold wall reactors or any other chemical vapor deposition technique. Furthermore, pulsed CVD can be used, which is similar to ALD (discussed in greater detail below) but does not rigorously avoid intermixing of precursor and reactant gas streams. Also, for pulsed CVD, the deposition thickness is dependent on the exposure time, as opposed to ALD, which is self-limiting (discussed in more detail below).

Alternatively, and preferably, the vapor deposition process employed in the methods of the present invention is a multi-cycle atomic layer deposition (ALD) process. Such a process is advantageous, in particular advantageous over a CVD process, in that it provides for improved control of atomic-level thickness and uniformity to the deposited layer (e.g., dielectric layer) by providing a plurality of deposition cycles. The self-limiting nature of ALD provides a method of depositing a film on a wide variety of reactive surfaces including, for example, surfaces with irregular topographies, with better step coverage than is available with CVD or other "line of sight" deposition methods (e.g., evaporation and physical vapor deposition, i.e., PVD or sputtering). Further, ALD processes typically expose the metal-containing compounds to lower volatilization and reaction temperatures, which tends to decrease degradation of the precursor as compared to, for example, typical CVD processes. *See, for example*, U.S. Application Serial No. 11/168,160 (entitled "ATOMIC LAYER DEPOSITION SYSTEMS AND METHODS INCLUDING METAL BETA-DIKETIMINATE COMPOUNDS"), filed June 28, 2005.

Generally, in an ALD process each reactant is pulsed sequentially onto a suitable substrate, typically at deposition temperatures of at least 25°C, preferably at least 150°C, and more preferably at least 200°C. Typical ALD deposition temperatures are no greater than 400°C, preferably no greater than 350°C, and even more preferably no greater than 250°C. These temperatures are generally lower than those presently used in CVD processes, which typically include deposition temperatures at the substrate surface of at least 150°C, preferably at least 200°C, and more preferably at least 250°C. Typical CVD deposition temperatures are no greater than 600°C, preferably no greater than 500°C, and even more preferably no greater than 400°C.

Under such conditions the film growth by ALD is typically self-limiting (i.e., when the reactive sites on a surface are used up in an ALD process, the deposition generally stops), insuring not only excellent conformality but also good large area uniformity plus simple and accurate composition and thickness control. Due to alternate dosing of the precursor compositions and/or reaction gases, detrimental vapor-phase reactions are inherently eliminated, in contrast to

the CVD process that is carried out by continuous co-reaction of the precursors and/or reaction gases. (See Vehkamäki et al, "Growth of SrTiO₃ and BaTiO₃ Thin Films by Atomic Layer Deposition," Electrochemical and Solid-State Letters, 2(10):504-506 (1999)).

- 5 A typical ALD process includes exposing a substrate (which may optionally be pretreated with, for example, water and/or ozone) to a first chemical to accomplish chemisorption of the species onto the substrate. The term "chemisorption" as used herein refers to the chemical adsorption of vaporized reactive metal-containing compounds on the surface of a substrate.
- 10 The adsorbed species are typically irreversibly bound to the substrate surface as a result of relatively strong binding forces characterized by high adsorption energies (e.g., >30 kcal/mol), comparable in strength to ordinary chemical bonds. The chemisorbed species typically form a monolayer on the substrate surface. (See "The Condensed Chemical Dictionary", 10th edition, revised by G.
- 15 G. Hawley, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., New York, 225 (1981)). The technique of ALD is based on the principle of the formation of a saturated monolayer of reactive precursor molecules by chemisorption. In ALD one or more appropriate precursor compositions or reaction gases are alternately introduced (e.g., pulsed) into a deposition chamber and chemisorbed onto the
- 20 surfaces of a substrate. Each sequential introduction of a reactive compound (e.g., one or more precursor compositions and one or more reaction gases) is typically separated by an inert carrier gas purge. Each precursor composition co-reaction adds a new atomic layer to previously deposited layers to form a cumulative solid layer. The cycle is repeated to gradually form the desired layer
- 25 thickness. It should be understood that ALD can alternately utilize one precursor composition, which is chemisorbed, and one reaction gas, which reacts with the chemisorbed species.

- Practically, chemisorption might not occur on all portions of the deposition surface (e.g., previously deposited ALD material). Nevertheless,
- 30 such imperfect monolayer is still considered a monolayer in the context of the present invention. In many applications, merely a substantially saturated monolayer may be suitable. A substantially saturated monolayer is one that will

still yield a deposited monolayer or less of material exhibiting the desired quality and/or properties.

A typical ALD process includes exposing an initial substrate to a first chemical species A (e.g., a metal-containing compound as described herein) to
5 accomplish chemisorption of the species onto the substrate. Species A can react either with the substrate surface or with Species B (described below) but not with itself. Typically in chemisorption, one or more of the ligands of Species A is displaced by reactive groups on the substrate surface. Theoretically, the chemisorption forms a monolayer that is uniformly one atom or molecule thick
10 on the entire exposed initial substrate, the monolayer being composed of Species A, less any displaced ligands. In other words, a saturated monolayer is substantially formed on the substrate surface. Practically, chemisorption may not occur on all portions of the substrate. Nevertheless, such a partial monolayer is still understood to be a monolayer in the context of the present invention. In
15 many applications, merely a substantially saturated monolayer may be suitable. In one aspect, a substantially saturated monolayer is one that will still yield a deposited monolayer or less of material exhibiting the desired quality and/or properties. In another aspect, a substantially saturated monolayer is one that is self-limited to further reaction with precursor.

20 The first species (e.g., substantially all non-chemisorbed molecules of Species A) as well as displaced ligands are purged from over the substrate and a second chemical species, Species B (e.g., a different metal-containing compound or reactant gas) is provided to react with the monolayer of Species A. Species B typically displaces the remaining ligands from the Species A monolayer and
25 thereby is chemisorbed and forms a second monolayer. This second monolayer displays a surface which is reactive only to Species A. Non-chemisorbed Species B, as well as displaced ligands and other byproducts of the reaction are then purged and the steps are repeated with exposure of the Species B monolayer to vaporized Species A. Optionally, the second species can react with the first
30 species, but not chemisorb additional material thereto. That is, the second species can cleave some portion of the chemisorbed first species, altering such monolayer without forming another monolayer thereon, but leaving reactive sites

available for formation of subsequent monolayers. In other ALD processes, a third species or more may be successively chemisorbed (or reacted) and purged just as described for the first and second species, with the understanding that each introduced species reacts with the monolayer produced immediately prior to its introduction. Optionally, the second species (or third or subsequent) can include at least one reaction gas if desired.

Thus, the use of ALD provides the ability to improve the control of thickness, composition, and uniformity of metal-containing layers on a substrate. For example, depositing thin layers of metal-containing compound in a plurality of cycles provides a more accurate control of ultimate film thickness. This is particularly advantageous when the precursor composition is directed to the substrate and allowed to chemisorb thereon, preferably further including at least one reaction gas that reacts with the chemisorbed species on the substrate, and even more preferably wherein this cycle is repeated at least once.

Purging of excess vapor of each species following deposition/chemisorption onto a substrate may involve a variety of techniques including, but not limited to, contacting the substrate and/or monolayer with an inert carrier gas and/or lowering pressure to below the deposition pressure to reduce the concentration of a species contacting the substrate and/or chemisorbed species. Examples of carrier gases, as discussed above, may include N₂, Ar, He, etc. Additionally, purging may instead include contacting the substrate and/or monolayer with any substance that allows chemisorption by-products to desorb and reduces the concentration of a contacting species preparatory to introducing another species. The contacting species may be reduced to some suitable concentration or partial pressure known to those skilled in the art based on the specifications for the product of a particular deposition process. ALD is often described as a self-limiting process, in that a finite number of sites exist on a substrate to which the first species may form chemical bonds. The second species might only react with the surface created from the chemisorption of the first species and thus, may also be self-limiting. Once all of the finite number of sites on a substrate are bonded with a first species, the first species will not bond to other of the first species already bonded with the

substrate. However, process conditions can be varied in ALD to promote such bonding and render ALD not self-limiting, e.g., more like pulsed CVD.

Accordingly, ALD may also encompass a species forming other than one monolayer at a time by stacking of a species, forming a layer more than one atom or molecule thick.

The described method indicates the "substantial absence" of the second precursor (i.e., second species) during chemisorption of the first precursor since insignificant amounts of the second precursor might be present. According to the knowledge and the preferences of those with ordinary skill in the art, a determination can be made as to the tolerable amount of second precursor and process conditions selected to achieve the substantial absence of the second precursor.

Thus, during the ALD process, numerous consecutive deposition cycles are conducted in the deposition chamber, each cycle depositing a very thin metal-containing layer (usually less than one monolayer such that the growth rate on average is 0.2 to 3.0 Angstroms per cycle), until a layer of the desired thickness is built up on the substrate of interest. The layer deposition is accomplished by alternately introducing (i.e., by pulsing) precursor composition(s) into the deposition chamber containing a substrate, chemisorbing the precursor composition(s) as a monolayer onto the substrate surfaces, purging the deposition chamber, then introducing to the chemisorbed precursor composition(s) reaction gases and/or other precursor composition(s) in a plurality of deposition cycles until the desired thickness of the metal-containing layer is achieved. Preferred thicknesses of the metal-containing layers of the present invention are at least 1 angstrom ($\text{\AA}$), more preferably at least 5 $\text{\AA}$, and more preferably at least 10 $\text{\AA}$. Additionally, preferred film thicknesses are typically no greater than 500 $\text{\AA}$, more preferably no greater than 400 $\text{\AA}$, and more preferably no greater than 300 $\text{\AA}$.

The pulse duration of precursor composition(s) and inert carrier gas(es) is generally of a duration sufficient to saturate the substrate surface. Typically, the pulse duration is at least 0.1, preferably at least 0.2 second, and more preferably

at least 0.5 second. Preferred pulse durations are generally no greater than 5 seconds, and preferably no greater than 3 seconds.

In comparison to the predominantly thermally driven CVD, ALD is predominantly chemically driven. Thus, ALD may advantageously be
5 conducted at much lower temperatures than CVD. During the ALD process, the substrate temperature may be maintained at a temperature sufficiently low to maintain intact bonds between the chemisorbed precursor composition(s) and the underlying substrate surface and to prevent decomposition of the precursor composition(s). The temperature, on the other hand, must be sufficiently high to
10 avoid condensation of the precursor composition(s). Typically the substrate is kept at a temperature of at least 25°C, preferably at least 150°C, and more preferably at least 200°C. Typically the substrate is kept at a temperature of no greater than 400°C, preferably no greater than 300°C, and more preferably no greater than 250°C, which, as discussed above, is generally lower than
15 temperatures presently used in typical CVD processes. Thus, the first species or precursor composition is chemisorbed at this temperature. Surface reaction of the second species or precursor composition can occur at substantially the same temperature as chemisorption of the first precursor or, optionally but less preferably, at a substantially different temperature. Clearly, some small variation
20 in temperature, as judged by those of ordinary skill, can occur but still be considered substantially the same temperature by providing a reaction rate statistically the same as would occur at the temperature of the first precursor chemisorption. Alternatively, chemisorption and subsequent reactions could instead occur at substantially exactly the same temperature.

25 For a typical vapor deposition process, the pressure inside the deposition chamber is at least 10^{-8} torr (1.3×10^{-6} Pa), preferably at least 10^{-7} torr (1.3×10^{-5} Pa), and more preferably at least 10^{-6} torr (1.3×10^{-4} Pa). Further, deposition pressures are typically no greater than 10 torr (1.3×10^3 Pa), preferably no greater than 1 torr (1.3×10^2 Pa), and more preferably no greater than 10^{-1} torr
30 (13 Pa). Typically, the deposition chamber is purged with an inert carrier gas after the vaporized precursor composition(s) have been introduced into the

chamber and/or reacted for each cycle. The inert carrier gas/gases can also be introduced with the vaporized precursor composition(s) during each cycle.

The reactivity of a precursor composition can significantly influence the process parameters in ALD. Under typical CVD process conditions, a highly reactive compound may react in the gas phase generating particulates, depositing prematurely on undesired surfaces, producing poor films, and/or yielding poor step coverage or otherwise yielding non-uniform deposition. For at least such reason, a highly reactive compound might be considered not suitable for CVD. However, some compounds not suitable for CVD are superior ALD precursors. For example, if the first precursor is gas phase reactive with the second precursor, such a combination of compounds might not be suitable for CVD, although they could be used in ALD. In the CVD context, concern might also exist regarding sticking coefficients and surface mobility, as known to those skilled in the art, when using highly gas-phase reactive precursors, however, little or no such concern would exist in the ALD context.

After layer formation on the substrate, an annealing process may be optionally performed *in situ* in the deposition chamber in a reducing, inert, plasma, or oxidizing atmosphere. Preferably, the annealing temperature is at least 400°C, more preferably at least 600°C. The annealing temperature is preferably no greater than 1000°C, more preferably no greater than 750°C, and even more preferably no greater than 700°C.

The annealing operation is preferably performed for a time period of at least 0.5 minute, more preferably for a time period of at least 1 minute. Additionally, the annealing operation is preferably performed for a time period of no greater than 60 minutes, and more preferably for a time period of no greater than 10 minutes.

One skilled in the art will recognize that such temperatures and time periods may vary. For example, furnace anneals and rapid thermal annealing may be used, and further, such anneals may be performed in one or more annealing steps.

As stated above, the use of the compounds and methods of forming films of the present invention are beneficial for a wide variety of thin film applications

in semiconductor structures, particularly those using high dielectric materials. For example, such applications include gate dielectrics and capacitors such as planar cells, trench cells (e.g., double sidewall trench capacitors), stacked cells (e.g., crown, V-cell, delta cell, multi-fingered, or cylindrical container stacked capacitors), as well as field effect transistor devices.

A system that can be used to perform vapor deposition processes (chemical vapor deposition or atomic layer deposition) of the present invention is shown in Figure 1. The system includes an enclosed vapor deposition chamber 10, in which a vacuum may be created using turbo pump 12 and backing pump 14. One or more substrates 16 (e.g., semiconductor substrates or substrate assemblies) are positioned in chamber 10. A constant nominal temperature is established for substrate 16, which can vary depending on the process used. Substrate 16 may be heated, for example, by an electrical resistance heater 18 on which substrate 16 is mounted. Other known methods of heating the substrate may also be utilized.

In this process, precursor compositions as described herein, 60 and/or 61, are stored in vessels 62. The precursor composition(s) are vaporized and separately fed along lines 64 and 66 to the deposition chamber 10 using, for example, an inert carrier gas 68. A reaction gas 70 may be supplied along line 72 as needed. Also, a purge gas 74, which is often the same as the inert carrier gas 68, may be supplied along line 76 as needed. As shown, a series of valves 80-85 are opened and closed as required.

The following examples are offered to further illustrate various specific embodiments and techniques of the present invention. It should be understood, however, that many variations and modifications understood by those of ordinary skill in the art may be made while remaining within the scope of the present invention. Therefore, the scope of the invention is not intended to be limited by the following example. Unless specified otherwise, all percentages shown in the examples are percentages by weight.

EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1: *Synthesis and Characterization of a Ligand Source of Formula III, with $R^1 = \text{tert-butyl}$; $R^5 = \text{isopropyl}$; $R^2 = R^4 = \text{methyl}$; and $R^3 = \text{H}$:*

5 *N-isopropyl-(4-tert-butylimino)-2-penten-2-amine.*

An oven-dry 1-L Schlenk flask was charged with 38.0 g of triethyloxonium tetrafluoroborate (0.2 mol) and 75 mL diethyl ether under argon atmosphere, and fitted with an addition funnel. 250 mL of dichloromethane and 28.2 grams of N-isopropyl-4-amino-3-penten-2-one (0.2 mol) were charged into
10 the addition funnel and this solution was added dropwise, then stirred for 30 minutes. A solution of 21 mL *tert*-butyl amine (0.2 mol) and 25 mL dichloromethane was charged into the addition funnel and added to the reaction solution, which was then stirred overnight. Volatiles were then removed *in vacuo* and the resulting yellow-orange solid was washed with two 100 mL
15 aliquots of cold ethyl acetate while the flask was placed in an ice-bath. After decanting off each ethyl acetate wash, the yellow solid residue was added to a mixture of 500 mL benzene and 500 mL water containing 8.0 g sodium hydroxide (0.2 mol). The mixture was stirred for three minutes, then the organic phase was separated. The aqueous phase was extracted three times, each with
20 100 mL diethyl ether portions. All the organic phases were combined, dried over sodium sulfate and concentrated on a rotary evaporator. The crude product was then distilled through a 20 cm glass-bead packed column and short path still head. The desired product was collected in 96% pure form at 34-42 °C, 40 mTorr (5.3 Pa) pressure. The only impurity observed by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GCMS) was N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-amine. The amount of N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-amine
25 formed may be limited by limiting the reaction time (e.g., 30 minutes after addition of the *tert*-butyl amine). Allowing the reaction to stir overnight may result in the formation of more N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-amine.
30

EXAMPLE 2: *Synthesis and Characterization of a Metal-containing Compound of Formula I, with $M = \text{Sr}$ ($n = 2$); $R^1 = \text{tert-butyl}$; $R^5 = \text{isopropyl}$; $R^2 = R^4 = \text{methyl}$; $R^3 = \text{H}$; $x = 2$; and $z = 0$: Strontium bis(*N*-isopropyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato).*

- 5 In a dry box, a 500 mL Schlenk flask was charged with 13.819 g of strontium bis(hexamethyldisilazane)bis(tetrahydrofuran) (25 mmol) and 100 mL toluene. A second Schlenk flask was charged with 9.800 g of *N*-isopropyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-amine (50 mmol) and 100 mL toluene. The ligand solution was added to the strontium solution, immediately producing a bright
10 yellow reaction solution, which was stirred for 60 hours. Volatiles were then removed *in vacuo*. The crude product, a bright yellow solid, was charged into a sublimator in dry box. The sublimator was attached to a vacuum manifold in a fume hood, evacuated to less than 100 mTorr (13 Pa) and heated to 115 °C. A total of 8.204 g of off-white crystalline solid was sublimed in three batches
15 (68.5% yield). Elemental Analysis calculated for $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{46}\text{N}_4\text{Sr}$: Sr, 18.3%. Found 18.5%. ^1H nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) (C_6D_6 , 25°C, δ) 4.234 (s, 2H, β -CH), 3.586 (septet, $J=6.0$ Hz, 2H, $\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)_2$), 1.989 (s, 6H, α -C- CH_3 (isopropyl side)), 1.907 (s, 6H, α -C- CH_3 (*tert*-butyl side)), 1.305 (s, 18H, $\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_3$), 1.200 (d, $J=6.0$ Hz, 12H, $\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)_2$); $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ (C_6D_6 , 25°C, δ) 161.19 (s, α -C- CH_3 (isopropyl side)), 160.44 (s, α -C- CH_3 (*tert*-butyl side)), 88.33 (s, β -CH), 54.07
20 (s, $\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_3$), 49.86 (s, $\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)_2$), 32.44 (s, $\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_3$), 26.50 (s, $\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)_2$), 24.84 (s, α -C- CH_3 (*tert*-butyl side)), 22.09 (s, α -C- CH_3 (isopropyl side)).

- EXAMPLE 3: *Synthesis and Characterization of a Metal-containing Compound of Formula II, with $M = \text{Sr}$ ($n = 2$); $R^1 = R^5 = \text{tert-butyl}$; $R^6 = R^{10} = \text{isopropyl}$; $R^2 = R^4 = R^7 = R^9 = \text{methyl}$; $R^3 = R^8 = \text{H}$; and $z = 0$: Strontium (*N*-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)(*N*-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato).*

- 30 In a dry box, a 500 mL Schlenk flask was charged with 5.526 g of strontium bis(hexamethyldisilazane) (10 mmol) and 100 mL toluene. A solution of 2.104 g *N*-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-amine (10 mmol, prepared according to literature) in 20 mL toluene was added to the reaction

flask. The reaction solution was stirred for 18 hours. A solution of 1.823 g N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-amine (10 mmol, prepared according to literature) in 20 mL toluene was added to the reaction flask. The reaction solution was then stirred an additional 24 hours. Volatiles were removed *in vacuo* to afford a red-brown solid, which was charged into a sublimator in a dry box (4.70 g, 9.98 mmol). The sublimator was evacuated on a vacuum manifold in a hood and heated. At around 80 °C, the pot residue appeared to begin to melt and bump. A yellow-brown condensate was collected on the cold finger while heating the pot at 112 °C at 115 mTorr (15.3 Pa). 2.856 g of a yellow semi-crystalline but somewhat oily solid was recovered from the cold-finger (59.7% yield). Analysis by proton NMR indicates that the sublimed material consists of a 1:1:1 mixture of the title compound with Strontium bis(N-isopropyl-(4-isopropyl imino)-2-penten-2-aminato) and Strontium bis(N-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato). The material also contains a 0.3 relative ratio of N-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-amine. The chemical shifts for the title compound are as follows: ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 25°C, δ) 4.218 (s, 2H, β-CH), 3.586 (septet, *J*=6.0 Hz, 2H, CH(CH₃)₂), 1.990 (s, 6H, α-C-CH₃ (*tert*-butyl)), 1.865 (s, 6H, α-C-CH₃ (isopropyl)), 1.325 (s, 18H, C(CH₃)₃), 1.172 (d, *J*=6.0 Hz, 12H, CH(CH₃)₂); ¹³C {¹H} (C₆D₆, 25°C, δ) 160.95 (s, α-C-CH₃ (isopropyl)), 160.79 (s, α-C-CH₃ (*tert*-butyl)), 90.05 (s, β-CH (*tert*-butyl)), 86.51 (s, β-CH (isopropyl)), 53.99 (s, C(CH₃)₃), 49.93 (s, CH(CH₃)₂), 32.81 (s, C(CH₃)₃), 25.06 (s, CH(CH₃)₂), 24.83 (s, α-C-CH₃ (*tert*-butyl)), 22.05 (s, α-C-CH₃ (isopropyl)). Elemental Analysis calculated for C₂₄H₄₆N₄Sr: Sr, 18.3%. Found 17.5%.

EXAMPLE 4: *Alternate Synthesis of the Metal-containing Compound Prepared and Characterized in Example 3 by Ligand Exchange Reactions Between Metal-containing Compounds Including Different Symmetrical β-Diketiminato Ligands.*

A 50 mL schlenk flask was charged with 0.50 g of bis(N-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)strontium (1 mmol), 0.45 g of bis(N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)strontium (1 mmol), and 20 mL toluene. The resulting solution was refluxed for 24 hours, then volatiles were removed *in vacuo*. A sample of the resulting yellow solid was submitted

for proton NMR analysis, and the results indicated approximately a 1:1:1 mixture of bis(N-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)strontium:bis(N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)strontium:(N-isopropyl-(4-isopropylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)(N-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-aminato)strontium, with approximately a 0.3 ratio of free N-*tert*-butyl-(4-*tert*-butylimino)-2-penten-2-amine.

The complete disclosures of the patents, patent documents, and publications cited herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety as if each were individually incorporated. Various modifications and alterations to this invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of this invention. It should be understood that this invention is not intended to be unduly limited by the illustrative embodiments and examples set forth herein and that such examples and embodiments are presented by way of example only with the scope of the invention intended to be limited only by the claims set forth herein as follows.

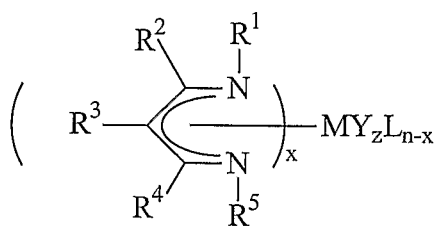
What is claimed is:

1. A method of forming a metal-containing layer on a substrate, the method comprising:

providing a substrate;

providing a vapor comprising at least one compound of the formula

(Formula I):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

x is from 1 to n; and

each R¹, R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ is independently hydrogen or an organic group;

with the proviso that one or more of the following apply:

R¹ is different than R⁵, or R² is different than R⁴;

and

contacting the vapor comprising the at least one compound of Formula I with the substrate to form a metal-containing layer on at least one surface of the substrate using a vapor deposition process.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein each R¹, R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ is independently hydrogen or an organic group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

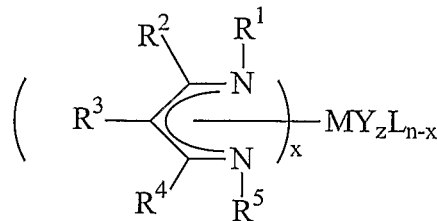
3. The method of claim 2 wherein R^1 = isopropyl; and R^5 = *tert*-butyl.
4. The method of claim 2 wherein $R^2 = R^4$ = methyl; and R^3 = H.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein R^1 = isopropyl; and R^5 = *tert*-butyl.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one L is selected from the group consisting of a halide, an alkoxide group, an amide group, a mercaptide group, cyanide, an alkyl group, an amidinate group, a guanidinate group, an isoureate group, a β -diketonate group, a β -iminoketonate group, a β -diketiminate group, and combinations thereof.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the at least one L is a β -diketiminate group having a structure that is the same as that of the β -diketiminate ligand shown in Formula I.
8. The method of claim 6 wherein the at least one L is a β -diketiminate group having a structure that is different than that of the β -diketiminate ligand shown in Formula I.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one L is a symmetric β -diketiminate group.
10. The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one L is an unsymmetric β -diketiminate group.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one Y is selected from the group consisting of a carbonyl, a nitrosyl, ammonia, an amine, nitrogen, a phosphine, an alcohol, water, tetrahydrofuran, and combinations thereof.

12. A method of manufacturing a semiconductor structure, the method comprising:

providing a semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly;

providing a vapor comprising at least one compound of the formula

(Formula I):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

x is from 1 to n; and

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group;

with the proviso that one or more of the following apply:

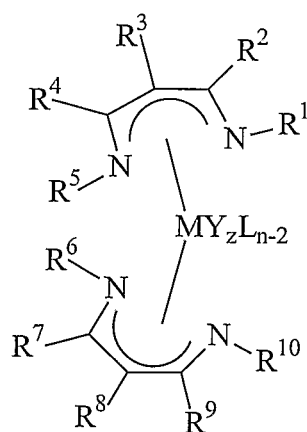
R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 ;

and

directing the vapor comprising the at least one compound of Formula I to the semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly to form a metal-containing layer on at least one surface of the semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly using a vapor deposition process.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising providing a vapor comprising at least one metal-containing compound different than Formula I, and directing the vapor comprising the at least one metal-containing compound different than Formula I to the semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the metal of the at least one metal-containing compound different than Formula I is selected from the group consisting of Ti, Ta, Bi, Hf, Zr, Pb, Nb, Mg, Al, and combinations thereof.
15. The method of claim 12 further comprising providing at least one reaction gas.
16. The method of claim 12 wherein the vapor deposition process is a chemical vapor deposition process.
17. The method of claim 12 wherein the vapor deposition process is an atomic layer deposition process comprising a plurality of deposition cycles.
18. A method of forming a metal-containing layer on a substrate, the method comprising:
- providing a substrate;
 - providing a vapor comprising at least one compound of the formula (Formula II):



wherein:

- M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;
- each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;
n represents the valence state of the metal;
z is from 0 to 10;
each $R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9$, and R^{10} is
independently hydrogen or an organic group;
 $R^1 = R^5, R^2 = R^4, R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$; and
the two β -diketiminate ligands shown in Formula II have
different structures; and

contacting the vapor comprising the at least one compound of Formula II
with the substrate to form a metal-containing layer on at least one surface of the
substrate using a vapor deposition process.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein each $R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9$, and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein $R^1 = R^5 = \textit{tert}$ -butyl; and $R^6 = R^{10} =$
isopropyl.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein $R^2 = R^4 = R^7 = R^9 = \text{methyl}$; and $R^3 = R^8 =$
H.

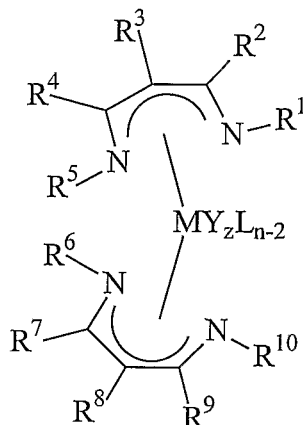
22. The method of claim 21 wherein $R^1 = R^5 = \textit{tert}$ -butyl; and $R^6 = R^{10} =$
isopropyl.

23. A method of manufacturing a semiconductor structure, the method comprising:

providing a semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly;

providing a vapor comprising at least one compound of the formula

(Formula II):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is

independently hydrogen or an organic group;

$R^1 = R^5$, $R^2 = R^4$, $R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$; and

the two β -diketiminato ligands shown in Formula II have different structures; and

directing the vapor comprising the at least one compound of Formula II to the semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly to form a metal-containing layer on at least one surface of the semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly using a vapor deposition process.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising providing a vapor comprising at least one metal-containing compound different than Formula II, and directing the vapor comprising the at least one metal-containing compound different than Formula II to the semiconductor substrate or substrate assembly.

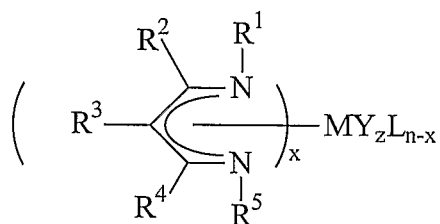
25. The method of claim 24 wherein the metal of the at least one metal-containing compound different than Formula II is selected from the group consisting of Ti, Ta, Bi, Hf, Zr, Pb, Nb, Mg, Al, and combinations thereof.

26. The method of claim 23 further comprising providing at least one reaction gas.

27. The method of claim 23 wherein the vapor deposition process is a chemical vapor deposition process.

28. The method of claim 23 wherein the vapor deposition process is an atomic layer deposition process comprising a plurality of deposition cycles.

29. A compound of the formula (Formula I):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

x is from 1 to n; and

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group;

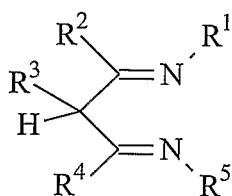
with the proviso that one or more of the following apply:

R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

30. The compound of claim 29 wherein each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms.
31. The compound of claim 30 wherein R^1 = isopropyl; and R^5 = *tert*-butyl.
32. The compound of claim 30 wherein R^2 = R^4 = methyl; and R^3 = H.
33. The compound of claim 32 wherein R^1 = isopropyl; and R^5 = *tert*-butyl.
34. The compound of claim 29 wherein M is selected from the group consisting of Ca, Sr, Ba, and combinations thereof.
35. The compound of claim 29 wherein at least one L is selected from the group consisting of a halide, an alkoxide group, an amide group, a mercaptide group, cyanide, an alkyl group, an amidinate group, a guanidinate group, an isoureate group, a β -diketonate group, a β -iminoketonate group, a β -diketimininate group, and combinations thereof.
36. The compound of claim 35 wherein the at least one L is a β -diketimininate group having a structure that is the same as that of the β -diketimininate ligand shown in Formula I.
37. The compound of claim 35 wherein the at least one L is a β -diketimininate group having a structure that is different than that of the β -diketimininate ligand shown in Formula I.

38. The compound of claim 37 wherein the at least one L is a symmetric β -diketiminato group.
39. The compound of claim 37 wherein the at least one L is an unsymmetric β -diketiminato group.
40. The compound of claim 29 wherein at least one Y is selected from the group consisting of a carbonyl, a nitrosyl, ammonia, an amine, nitrogen, a phosphine, an alcohol, water, tetrahydrofuran, and combinations thereof.
41. A method of making a metal-containing compound, the method comprising combining components comprising:

a ligand source of the formula (Formula III):



or a tautomer thereof;

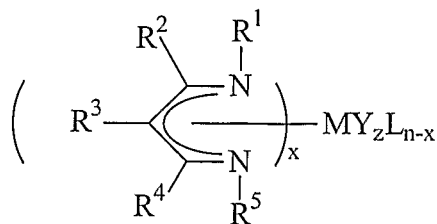
optionally a source for an anionic ligand L;

optionally a source for a neutral ligand Y; and

a metal (M) source;

wherein each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group, with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 ; and

wherein the metal (M) source is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal source, a Group 3 metal source, a Lanthanide metal source, and combinations thereof, under conditions sufficient to provide a metal-containing compound of the formula (Formula I):



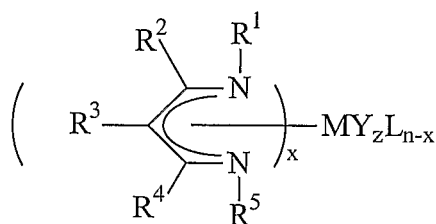
wherein M, L, Y, R¹, R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are as defined above, n represents the valence state of the metal, z is from 0 to 10, and x is from 1 to n.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein the metal (M) source comprises a M(II) bis(hexamethyldisilazane), a M(II) bis(hexamethyldisilazane)bis(tetrahydrofuran), or combinations thereof.

43. The method of claim 41 wherein M is selected from the group consisting of Ca, Sr, Ba, and combinations thereof.

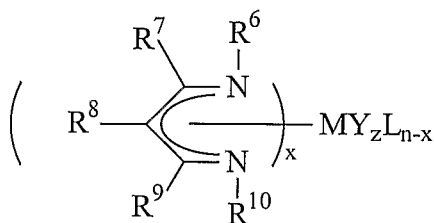
44. A method of making a metal-containing compound, the method comprising combining components comprising:

a compound of the formula (Formula I):



; and

a compound of the formula (Formula VI):



;

wherein:

each M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

each n represents the valence state of the metal;

each z is from 0 to 10;

each x is from 1 to n;

each $R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9$, and R^{10} is

independently hydrogen or an organic group; and

the β -diketiminato ligands shown in Formula I and

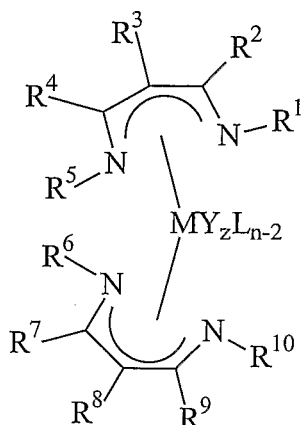
Formula VI have different structures;

with the proviso that one or more of the following apply:

R^1 is different than R^5 , R^2 is different than R^4 , R^6

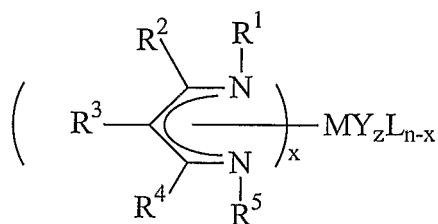
is different than R^{10} , or R^7 is different than R^9 ;

under conditions sufficient to provide a metal-containing compound of the formula (Formula II):



wherein M, Y, L, $R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9, R^{10}$, n, and z are as defined above.

45. A precursor composition for a vapor deposition process, the composition comprising at least one compound of the formula (Formula I):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

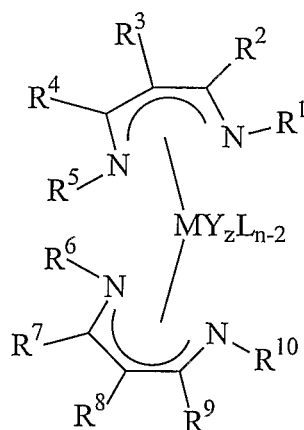
x is from 1 to n; and

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group;

with the proviso that one or more of the following apply:

R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

46. A compound of the formula (Formula II):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is

independently hydrogen or an organic group;

$R^1 = R^5$, $R^2 = R^4$, $R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$; and

the two β -diketiminato ligands shown in Formula II have different structures.

47. The compound of claim 46 wherein each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

48. The compound of claim 47 wherein $R^1 = R^5 = \text{tert-butyl}$; and $R^6 = R^{10} = \text{isopropyl}$.

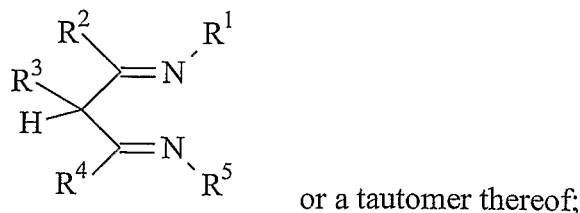
49. The compound of claim 47 wherein $R^2 = R^4 = R^7 = R^9 = \text{methyl}$; and $R^3 = R^8 = \text{H}$.

50. The compound of claim 49 wherein $R^1 = R^5 = \text{tert-butyl}$; and $R^6 = R^{10} = \text{isopropyl}$.

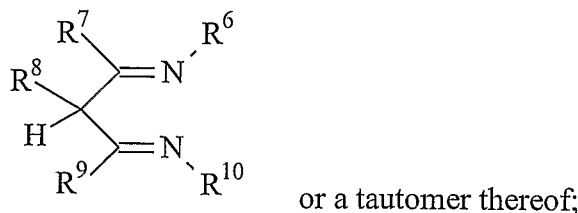
51. The compound of claim 46 wherein M is selected from the group consisting of Ca, Sr, Ba, and combinations thereof.

52. A method of making a metal-containing compound, the method comprising combining components comprising:

a ligand source of the formula (Formula III):



a ligand source of the formula (Formula IV):



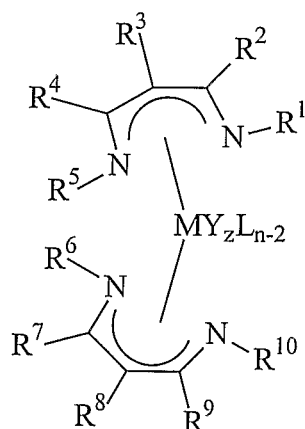
optionally a source for an anionic ligand L;

optionally a source for a neutral ligand Y; and

a metal (M) source;

wherein each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group; $R^1 = R^5$, $R^2 = R^4$, $R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$; and the ligand sources shown in Formula III and Formula IV have different structures; and

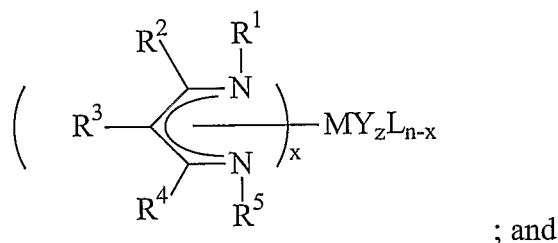
wherein the metal (M) source is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal source, a Group 3 metal source, a Lanthanide metal source, and combinations thereof, under conditions sufficient to provide a metal-containing compound of the formula (Formula II):



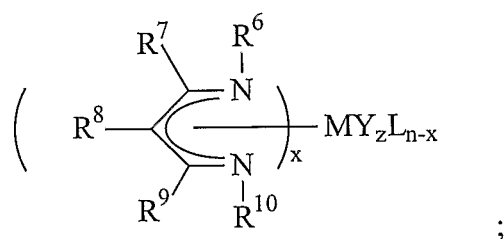
wherein M, Y, L, R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} are as defined above, n represents the valence state of the metal, and z is from 0 to 10.

53. A method of making a metal-containing compound, the method comprising combining components comprising:

a compound of the formula (Formula I):



a compound of the formula (Formula VI):



wherein:

each M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

each n represents the valence state of the metal;

each z is from 0 to 10;

each R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, and R¹⁰ is

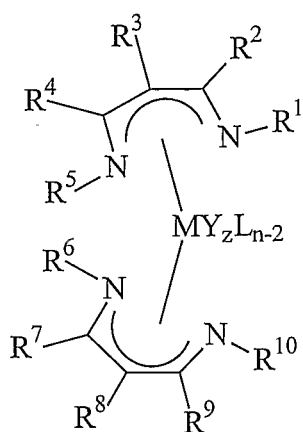
independently hydrogen or an organic group;

R¹ = R⁵, R² = R⁴, R⁶ = R¹⁰, and R⁷ = R⁹; and

the β-diketimate ligands shown in Formula I and

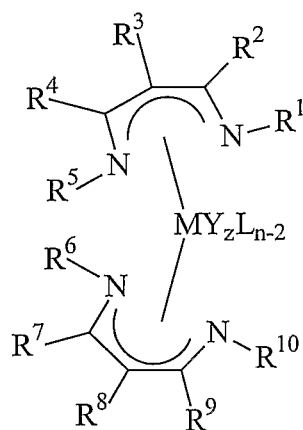
Formula VI have different structures;

under conditions sufficient to provide a metal-containing compound of the formula (Formula II):



wherein M, Y, L, R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, n, and z are as defined above, and the two β -diketiminate ligands shown in Formula II have different structures.

54. A precursor composition for a vapor deposition process, the composition comprising at least one compound of the formula (Formula II):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

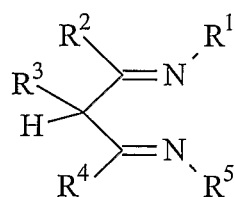
each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is independently hydrogen or an organic group;
 $R^1 = R^5$, $R^2 = R^4$, $R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$; and
 the two β -diketiminates shown in Formula II have different structures.

55. A ligand source of the Formula (III):



or a tautomer thereof,

wherein each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an alkyl moiety having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, with the proviso that one of more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

56. The ligand source of claim 55 wherein $R^1 = \text{tert-butyl}$ and $R^5 = \text{isopropyl}$.

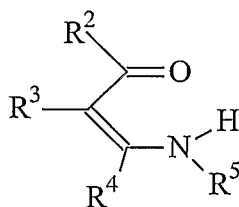
57. The ligand source of claim 55 wherein $R^2 = R^4 = \text{methyl}$, and $R^3 = \text{H}$.

58. The ligand source of claim 55 wherein $R^1 = \text{tert-butyl}$ and $R^5 = \text{isopropyl}$.

59. A method of making a β -diketiminates ligand source, the method comprising combining components comprising:

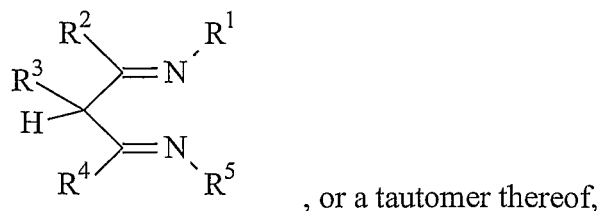
an amine of the formula $R^1\text{NH}_2$;

a compound of the formula (Formula V):



or a tautomer thereof; and

an alkylating agent, under conditions sufficient to provide a ligand source of the formula (Formula III):



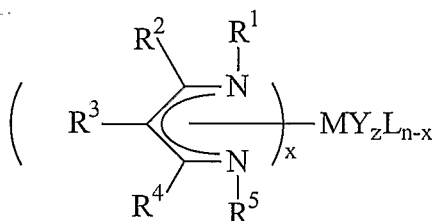
wherein each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an alkyl moiety having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, with the proviso that one or more of the following apply: R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

60. A vapor deposition system comprising:

a deposition chamber having a substrate positioned therein; and

at least one vessel comprising at least one compound of the formula

(Formula I):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

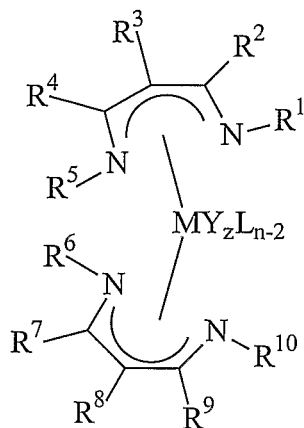
x is from 1 to n; and

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 is independently hydrogen or an organic group;

with the proviso that one or more of the following apply:

R^1 is different than R^5 , or R^2 is different than R^4 .

61. A vapor deposition system comprising:
 a deposition chamber having a substrate positioned therein; and
 at least one vessel comprising at least one compound of the formula
 (Formula II):



wherein:

M is selected from the group consisting of a Group 2 metal, a Group 3 metal, a Lanthanide, and combinations thereof;

each L is independently an anionic ligand;

each Y is independently a neutral ligand;

n represents the valence state of the metal;

z is from 0 to 10;

each R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , and R^{10} is

independently hydrogen or an organic group;

$R^1 = R^5$, $R^2 = R^4$, $R^6 = R^{10}$, and $R^7 = R^9$; and

the two β -diketiminate ligands shown in Formula II have different structures.