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- (71) **Applicant: TOKYO ELECTRON LIMITED** [JP/JP]; 3-1 Akasaka 5-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 107-6325 (JP).
- (71) **Applicant (for JP only): TOKYO ELECTRON U.S. HOLDINGS, INC.** [US/US]; 2400 Grove Boulevard, Austin, Texas 78741 (US).
- (72) **Inventors: CATANO, Christopher;** NanoFab 300 South 255 Fuller Rd., Suite 214, Albany, New York 12203 (US). **BYRNS, Brandon;** NanoFab 300 South 255 Fuller Rd.,

Suite 214, Albany, New York 12203 (US). **REDNOR, Matthew;** NanoFab 300 South 255 Fuller Rd., Suite 214, Albany, New York 12203 (US). **SHEARER, Jeffrey;** NanoFab 300 South 255 Fuller Rd., Suite 214, Albany, New York 12203 (US).

- (74) **Agent: MEHIGAN, Jason;** Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc., 2400 Grove Boulevard, Austin, Texas 78741 (US).

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- (54) **Title:** METHODS AND STRUCTURES FOR IMPROVING ETCH PROFILE OF METALLIC LAYER

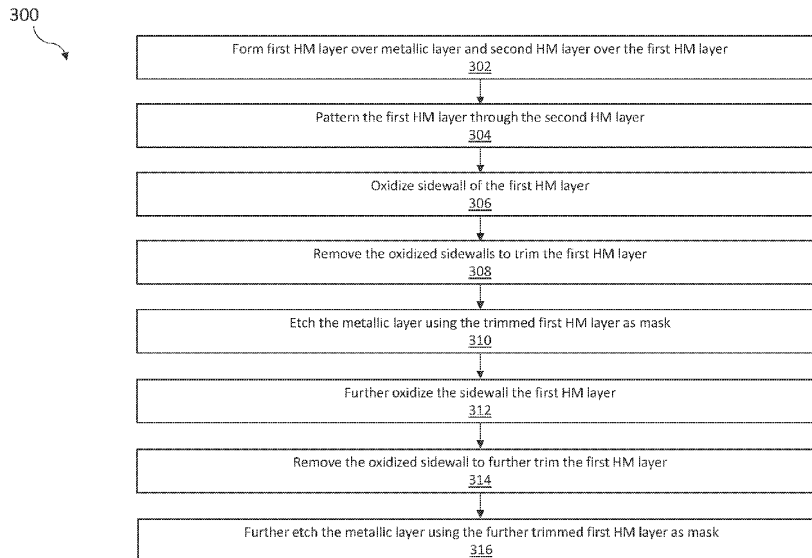


FIG. 3

- (57) **Abstract:** A method for fabricating semiconductor devices is disclosed. The method includes sequentially forming at least a first hardmask layer and a second hardmask layer over a metallic layer. The method includes patterning the second hardmask layer and then the first hardmask layer. The method includes oxidizing a sidewall of the patterned first hardmask layer. The method includes removing the oxidized sidewall of the first hardmask layer. The method includes etching the metallic layer using a remaining portion of the first hardmask layer as a mask.

[Continued on next page]

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