

Device and method for metalizing wafers

The invention relates to a device for metalizing wafers having the features of the introductory part of claim 1. The invention also relates to methods for metalizing wafers.

In the prior art, the electrolytic metalization of wafers, in particular microchip wafers (e.g. with copper), is known. The known metalization is carried out in the individual wafer mode, which means that a single wafer is processed, i.e. metalized, for each method and process chamber. The wafer to be metalized (e.g. a microchip wafer) is usually dipped into an electrolyte with its front side at the bottom. During the process (metalization), electrolyte is set flowing continuously in a laminar fashion and parallel to the wafer surface. In order to establish and maintain this state of flow, increased attention is required and complicated devices are necessary.

One disadvantage of the known procedure is that, because of long process times (many minutes to hours), the metalization is very expensive, since only one wafer respectively can be run in each process and process chamber. The larger the structures on the surface of the microchip wafer which have to be filled with metal, the longer the process times.

In view of the fact that it is to be expected that microchips will increasingly be integrated vertically (a plurality of microchip layers one above another, in which contact with one another has to be made), the filling of wide and deep channels (what are known as through silicon vias) which, in the finished microchip, are used as vertical conductor tracks, with an electrically conductive metal, for example copper, is

required. These channels can have widths of some micrometers and depths of up to 100 micrometers and more.

The invention is based on the object of providing a device of the generic type mentioned at the beginning with which the metalization of wafers, in particular microchip wafers, in batch operation is possible with good success.

This object is achieved by a device which has the features of claim 1.

Preferred and advantageous refinements of the devices according to the invention are the subject matter of the sub-claims.

One advantage of the device according to the invention is the small space required per wafer, in particular microchip wafer, to be metalized. For example, only little electrolyte is required for each wafer, which is the case in particular when, with the device according to the invention, a sealed electrolyte volume is present for each wafer.

The device according to the invention, which has at least one but preferably a plurality of holding arrangements for the simultaneous metalization of a plurality of wafers (microchip wafers), can be dipped into an electrolysis bath with the wafer front side pointing upward as an "open batch", that is to say with an open electrolyte chamber, and after that it is at least partly moved together (in order to save space), or else the holding arrangements are closed entirely ("closed batch").

In the case of the device according to the invention, it is also possible to close the holding arrangements for the individual wafers from the start and to fill each of the chambers provided for electrolyte in the holding arrangements with electrolyte via feed lines and discharge lines.

If the device according to the invention is used as a "closed batch", the chamber which is available for the electrolyte for each wafer is defined by the wafer, the frame and the upper closure plate, which is possibly a base plate of a further holding arrangement.

Within the context of the invention, provision can be made for the device according to the invention to be set vibrating with the aid of an eccentric, so that the result is a vibrating body of electrolyte. The frequency can be set fixedly or selectively variably or randomly variably.

If the device according to the invention is dipped into an electrolysis bath with the wafer front side pointing upward, it is preferred for the individual holding arrangements not yet to be pushed together, in order that the electrolyte can flow out of the bath between the holding arrangements and gas can escape. As soon as the device according to the invention is positioned in the electrolyte, the holding arrangements for the wafers can be pushed together, partly or wholly, if a "closed batch" is used.

If, in the case of the device according to the invention, work is carried out with "closed batch", the result is enrichment of metal ions during the metalization process, on account of the closed body of electrolyte. This can be compensated for by appropriate process control.

The device according to the invention permits process management which makes electrolytic metalization of large microchip structures in batch operation possible with minimal space required. In this way, costs can be saved.

Further details and features of the invention can be gathered from the following description of a preferred exemplary embodiment.

Fig. 1 shows an exploded illustration of a holding arrangement of a device according to the invention, fig. 2 a part of the holding arrangement in section, fig. 3 a holding arrangement (without upper closure plate) in oblique view, fig. 4 a base plate with anode network, seen from below, fig. 5 a clamping element in oblique view, fig. 6 a device according to the invention having a plurality of holding arrangements "opened", and fig. 7 the device from fig. 6 with closed holding arrangements.

A device 1 according to the invention has one or more holding arrangements 3, four in the exemplary embodiment shown in the drawings.

Each of the holding arrangements 3, as shown in particular by figs. 1 and 2, has the following parts:

A base plate 5 made of electrically insulating material, on the upper side 7 of which a circular depression 9 (recess) is provided, into which a wafer 11 to be treated, in particular a microchip wafer, can be inserted, the front side 13 of which, i.e. the side on which are located the channels which are to be filled with metal, for example copper, by electrolytic metalization in an electrolyte, points upward.

Placed on the edge region of the wafer 11 is a ring 15 of electrically conductive material serving as cathode, which can be connected to a voltage source via a tag 17, in order to polarize the wafer 11 as cathode. Within the ring 15 which serves as cathode, in order to connect the wafer 11 to the negative terminal of a voltage source with the effect of polarizing as cathode, an annular seal 19, in particular an O-ring, is inserted.

Above the described arrangement comprising base plate 5, wafer 11, ring 15 (cathode) and sealing ring 19, there is placed a frame 21 made of electrically insulating material, in which a recess 23, which delimits the chamber 27 for electrolyte laterally, is provided. The frame 21 has, for example, a height of no more than 20 mm.

On the frame 21 of insulating material with its recess 23, an annular seal 25, for example an O-ring, is placed around the recess 23. The seal 25 can also be received in an annular groove in the frame 21 (cf. fig. 2).

In order to complete the holding arrangement 3, an upper closure plate, which is possibly a base plate 5 of a further holding arrangement 3, is placed on the seal 25 on the frame 21.

As fig. 2 shows, the chamber 27, which is filled with electrolyte for the electrolytic metalization of the wafer 11, is defined by the frame 21, by the wafer 11 and by the upper closure plate, which can in particular be the base plates of another holding arrangement 3.

The holding arrangement 3 can (not shown) be assigned a heating/cooling arrangement, in order to keep the holding arrangement 3 at the respectively required temperature (to control the temperature).

In the exemplary embodiment shown (cf. fig. 2), provision is made for the upper closure plate, which can be the base plate 5 of a further holding arrangement 3, to carry on its underside an anode network 29 (cf. fig. 4), which is equipped with a tag 31 in order to be able to connect the anode network 29 on the underside of the closure plate (base plate 5) to the positive terminal of a voltage source.

In order to compensate for the voltage drop from the outer edge of the wafer 11 to the middle of the wafer 11, the underside of the base plate 5 having the anode network 29 can be convex. Additionally or alternatively, the density of the conductors forming the anode network 29 can increase toward the center of the anode network 29. The anode network 29 is thus woven more densely toward the middle.

In the exemplary embodiment shown, consideration has been given to providing a plurality of holding arrangements 3 one above another in the device 1 according to the invention. It is therefore preferred for the upper closure plate of holding arrangements 3 to be formed by the base plate 5 (with anode network 29) of the next upper holding arrangement 3, as is the case in the exemplary embodiment shown in the drawings (figs. 6 and 7).

In order to press the base plate 5 ("anode plate") and the frame 21 ("cathode frame"), which both consist of insulating material, against each other in order to connect them to each other in a liquid-tight manner, at

the lateral edges of the base plate 5 and of the frame 21 there are provided projections 33 (tongues) projecting outward, which taper in a wedge shape toward both sides and to which clamping elements 35 are assigned. The clamping elements 35 have, on their side facing the base plate 5 and the frame 21, a groove 37, which forks in the shape of a Y into two branches 39 (cf. fig. 5).

In the open position, the tongues 33 of the base plate 5 and frame 21 are provided in the branches 39 of the groove 37, so that the base plate 5 is spaced apart from the frame 21. By means of displacing the clamping elements 35 in a plane parallel to the plane of the base plate 5 and the frame 21, the aforementioned constituent parts (base plate 5 and frame 21) of the holding arrangement 3 according to the invention can be pressed against each other. This position of use of base plate 5 and frame 21 of the holding arrangement 3 is shown in fig. 2 and fig. 3. The devices with which the clamping elements 35 are displaced along the guide rods 41, i.e. brought closer to each other, in order to move the individual holding arrangements 3 together, are not illustrated.

Fig. 5 shows a clamping element 35 on an enlarged scale, and the groove 37 which divides in the shape of a Y into two branches 39.

In fig. 6, a device 1 according to the invention having a plurality of holding arrangements 3 is shown in the opened state ("open batch"), but without any "upper" closure plate on the uppermost holding arrangement 3. The clamping elements 35 are guided such that they can be displaced on guide rods 41 oriented at right angles to the plane of the holding arrangements 3, wherein the guide rods 41 can be displaced transversely with

respect to their longitudinal extent, i.e. in a direction parallel to the plane of the holding arrangements 3, by actuating means, not shown, in order to open or to close the respective holding arrangements 3 via the clamping elements 35.

In each holding arrangement 3, between base plate 5 and frame 21, a wafer 11 (microchip wafer) to be treated (metalized) is inserted, for example with the aid of a handling device (gripper) that is usual for wafers 11, in such a way that said wafer comes to lie with its front side up in the holder 9 in the lower base plate 5 (anode plate). In principle, it is possible to carry out the metalization if the device 1 assumes a position ("open batch") according to fig. 6, wherein a common electrolyte for the treatment of all the wafers 11 provided in the individual holding arrangements 3 is provided.

Figs. 6 and 7 also show that the tongues 33 and the clamping elements 35 of successive (adjacent) holding arrangements 3 are arranged offset with respect to one another, in order that the holding arrangements 3 can be displaced out of the mutually spaced position (open batch) shown in fig. 6 into the position resting on one another (closed batch) shown in fig. 7, without the clamping elements 35 hindering or preventing this movement.

Within the context of the invention, provision is advantageously made for the holding arrangements 3 of the device 1 according to the invention, as shown in fig. 7, to be brought closer to one another by displacing the clamping elements 35 along the guide rods 41, so that the frame 21 of each holding arrangement 3 comes into contact with the base plate 5 of the next upper holding arrangement 3 (sealed off by

the sealing ring 25). Thus, the base plate 5 of the respective upper holding arrangement 3 simultaneously forms the closure plate of the next lower holding arrangement 3 ("closed batch"). In this case, in each holding arrangement 3, the chamber 27 shown in fig. 2, which is filled with electrolyte, is closed off, so that a predetermined volume of electrolyte is available for the metalization of a microchip wafer 11 by means of electrolysis. The chambers 27 of the holding arrangements 3, which chambers are provided to receive electrolyte, can be filled with/emptied of electrolyte independently of one another via feed lines and the discharge lines. This results in the advantages outlined in the introduction to the description. The devices with which a plurality of holding arrangements 3 arranged above one another can be pressed against each other by displacing the clamping elements 35 along the guide rods 41 (position according to fig. 7) are not illustrated.

In order to assist the electrolysis and therefore the metalization of the wafers, in particular when use is made of the device 1 according to the invention with holding arrangements 3 according to fig. 7 placed closely against one another ("closed batch"), the device 1 as a whole can be set vibrating while the electrolysis is carried out. To this end, in the exemplary embodiment shown (figs. 6 and 7), a motor 43 with eccentric is connected to at least one of the guide rods 41, so that a vibrating body of electrolyte results. The frequency can be set fixedly or selectively variably or randomly variably.

In the embodiment shown in fig. 8, an individual module, comprising covering and base part, is provided for each wafer. In the embodiment shown in fig. 8, the covering is not at the same time the wafer holder

located above. Thus, the embodiment shown in fig. 8 constitutes individual reactor modules which are arranged one above another in sequence, so that a batch mode of operation is possible.

In detail, the embodiment shown in fig. 8 is built up as follows:

On a base part 50 there lies a wafer 11, the front side of which points upward. Arranged between the base part 50 and the frame part 51 is a contact 52, which is in electrically conductive contact with the edge of the wafer 11. On the side of the frame part 51 that faces the wafer 11 (pointing downward toward the base part), a seal 54, in particular in the form of an O-ring, is received in an annular groove 53.

In addition, in the frame part 51 there is provided at least one conduit 55, through which electrolyte 56 can be led into the chamber in which the wafer 11 is received, and out of the chamber.

Seated on the frame part 51 is the upper covering 57 (cover plate), a grid-like anode 59, in particular an anode 59 in the form of a perforated plate or grid, being arranged between the cover plate 57 and the frame part 51 and held by annular seals 58 (O-rings).

In the embodiment shown in fig. 8, in the chamber above the wafer 11, so much electrolyte is put in that the anode 59 is submerged in the electrolyte, that is to say the electrolyte level 61 lies above the anode 59. Above the electrolyte level 61, in the space between base part and covering, a gas chamber 60 is provided, which is filled with an inert gas, for example nitrogen or argon or another gas that is inert under the process conditions.

The devices according to the invention, in particular the device from fig. 8, permit electrolyte to be pumped around during the process.

In principle, there is the possibility of gassing electrolyte with an inert gas outside the reactor before the filling of the reactor or, if electrolyte is pumped around during the process, even during the process.

As already indicated in conjunction with fig. 8, the gas chamber above the electrolyte is filled with an inert gas, so that inert gas is present during the process.

The rinsing water which is applied following the ending of the treatment of the wafer 11 can be gassed with an inert gas before it is used.

Following the conclusion of the method, the following process sequence can further be applied:

- drainage of the electrolyte out of the process chamber by means of suction or forcing out by increasing the pressure of the inert gas in the gas chamber,
- drying of the process chamber and of the wafer contained therein with inert gas,
- unloading the wafer following the drying,
- rinsing the wafer with water outside the process chamber,

- final (renewed) drying of the wafer outside the process chamber.

In summary, an exemplary embodiment of the invention can be described as follows:

A device 1 for metalizing wafers 11, in particular microchip wafers, in an electrolyte comprises a plurality of holding arrangements 3, wherein each holding arrangement 3 has a chamber 27 for the electrolyte which is separated from the holding chambers 27 for electrolyte in other holding arrangements 3, and wherein each wafer 11 is assigned a ring 15 serving as cathode and an anode network 29 as anode.

Patent claims

1. A device (1) for the electrolytic metalization of wafers, in particular microchip wafers (11), in an electrolyte, in particular in order to fill channels in microchip wafers with metal, in particular copper, having a chamber (27) to receive the electrolyte, having an anode (29), having a contact (15) in order to polarize the wafer (11) to be metalized as cathode, characterized in that at least one holding arrangement (3) for the wafer (11) to be metalized is provided, in that the holding arrangement (3) has
 - a base plate (5) made of electrically insulating material with a receiving region (9) for the wafer (11),
 - a frame (21) made of insulating material having a recess (23) which forms the chamber (27) for electrolyte,
 - a ring (15) of electrically conducting material serving as cathode,
 - a closure plate arranged on the side of the frame (21) facing away from the base plate (5) and covering the chamber (27) for electrolyte, and
 - an anode network (29), which is arranged on the side of the closure plate that faces the wafer (11), and
 - in that arrangements are provided in order to hold the base plate (5) and the frame (21) in contact with each other.
2. The device as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a seal (19) is provided between the base plate (5) and the frame (21).

3. The device as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the seal (19) is arranged within the ring (15) serving as cathode.
4. The device as claimed in claim 2 or 3, characterized in that the seal (19) is an annular seal.
5. The device as claimed in one of claims 2 to 4, characterized in that the seal (19) is clamped between the frame (21) and the wafer (11) lying on the base plate (5).
6. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the receiving region for the wafer (11) to be metalized is a depression (9) in the base plate (5).
7. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that a plurality of holding arrangements (3) are provided one above another, and in that the base plate (5) forms the closure plate of the holding arrangement (3) respectively arranged underneath.
8. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that on the base plate (5) and on the frame (21) there are provided preferably wedge-like projections (33) that point outward, on which the arrangements (35) for pressing base plate (5) and frame (21) against one another act.
9. The device as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the arrangements are clamping elements (35), which have grooves (37, 39) in which the projections (33) on the base plate (5) and on the frame (21) engage.

10. The device as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the grooves (37) divide in a Y shape into two branches (39).
11. The device as claimed in claim 8 or 9, characterized in that the clamping elements (35) are guided such that they can be displaced on guide rods (41) at right angles to the plane of base plate (5) and frame (21).
12. The device as claimed in one of claims 9 to 11, characterized in that the clamping elements (35) for moving base plate (5) and frame (21) toward each other and away from each other can be displaced parallel to the plane of the frame (21) and the base plate (5).
13. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that arrangements comprising a base plate (5) and a frame (21) can be displaced from a position in which they are at a distance from each other into a position in which they rest on each other.
14. The device as claimed in claim 13, characterized in that, between the arrangements, seals (25), in particular annular seals, are provided, which are arranged between a frame (21) and a base plate (5) of an arrangement lying above, serving as closure plate.
15. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the holding arrangement (3) or the holding arrangements (3) is/are assigned at least one vibration generator (43).

16. The device as claimed in claim 15, characterized in that the vibration generator (43) is a vibration generator for generating vibrations with a fixed, selectively variable or randomly variable frequency.
17. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 16, characterized in that the temperature of the holding arrangement (3) can be controlled.
18. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 17, characterized in that, in a plurality of holding arrangements (3), the closed chambers (27) for electrolyte can be filled with electrolyte and emptied independently of one another.
19. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 18, characterized in that the anode network is woven increasingly more closely toward the middle.
20. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 19, characterized in that the surface of the base plate (5) that faces away from the wafer (11) is curved convexly.
21. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 20, characterized in that a gas chamber (60) is provided above the electrolyte (56) in the chamber for holding electrolyte (56).
22. The device as claimed in claim 21, characterized in that the gas chamber (60) is filled with an inert gas, in particular with nitrogen or argon.
23. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 22, characterized in that conduits are provided in

order to lead electrolyte (56) into the circuit during the operation of the device.

24. The device as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that the conduits are assigned at least one pump to pump electrolyte (56) around during the operation of the device.
25. The device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 24, characterized in that the device is assigned an arrangement for gassing electrolyte (56) during the operation of the device.
26. A method for the electrolytic metalization of wafers, in particular microchip wafers, in an electrolyte, preferably by using a device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 25, characterized in that the electrolyte is gassed with an inert gas before the metalization is carried out.
27. The method as claimed in claim 26, characterized in that the electrolyte is gassed outside the device.
28. The method as claimed in claim 26 or 27, characterized in that the electrolyte is pumped around during the metalization and is gassed outside the device.
29. A method for the electrolytic metalization of wafers, in particular microchip wafers, in an electrolyte, preferably by using a device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 25, characterized in that rinsing water is gassed before the rinsing of the wafer following the conclusion of the metalization.

30. A method for the electrolytic metalization of wafers, in particular microchip wafers, in an electrolyte, preferably by using a device as claimed in one of claims 1 to 25, characterized in that the electrolyte is removed and in that the device, in particular its chamber for holding the electrolyte and the wafer, is further dried, in particular by using inert gas, before the unloading of the wafer.
31. The method as claimed in claim 30, characterized in that the device is dried without rinsing the same.
32. The method as claimed in claim 30 or 31, characterized in that the wafer is rinsed and dried outside the device.
33. The method as claimed in claim 32, characterized in that the wafer is unloaded from the device following the drying of the latter, in that the wafer is rinsed with rinsing water, and in that the wafer is subsequently dried, in particular by using inert gas.
34. The method as claimed in claim 32 or 33, characterized in that the rinsing water is gassed before the rinsing of the wafer.