ABSTRACT

An improved apparatus and method is provided for storing semiconductor wafer carriers, and for loading wafers or wafer carriers to a fabrication tool. The apparatus comprises a plurality of storage locations positioned above the fabrication tool. The apparatus receives wafer carriers via a factory load port. The wafer carriers are transported between the factory load port and the storage locations via a first robot, and are transported between the fabrication tool load port and the storage locations via a second robot. Both robots access the respective load port from overhead, thus eliminating the need for a front loader robot, and reducing the apparatus' footprint. Each robot may access overhead factory transportation systems to provide further flexibility in wafer carrier transport. Additionally, the apparatus of the present invention may include a mechanism for opening pod type wafer carriers and for extracting wafers therefrom.

This Sheet Has Been Replaced

