

ABSTRACT**STAGE DRIVE METHOD AND STAGE UNIT, EXPOSURE APPARATUS, AND
DEVICE PRODUCING METHOD**

When a stage state is changed from a first state where one stage (WST1 (or WST2)) is positioned at a first region directly under a projection optical system (PL), to which liquid (Lq) is supplied, to a second state where the other stage (WST2 (or WST1)) is positioned at the first region, both stages are simultaneously driven in the X-axis direction while being maintained close to each other relative to the X-axis direction. As a consequence, the first state can be changed to the second state with the liquid supplied between the projection optical system and a specific stage directly under the system. This enables to reduce time from the completion of exposure operation at the one stage side to the start of exposure operation at the other stage side, enabling processing at high throughput. Further, since the liquid is always present on the image surface side of the optical projection system, occurrence of a water mark on an optical member, on the image surface side, of the projection optical system is prevented.

Fig. 7