SHALLOW TRENCH ISOLATION FOR STRAINED SILICON PROCESSES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is related to integrated circuit (IC) devices and to processes of making IC devices. More particularly, the present invention relates to a method of forming trench isolation structures on substrates or layers including germanium.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Integrated circuits (ICs) include a multitude of transistors formed on a semiconductor substrate. Various methods of forming transistors on a semiconductor substrate are known in the art. Generally, transistors are isolated from each other by insulating or isolation structures.

One method of forming transistors on a silicon substrate involves the well-known Local Oxidation of Silicon (LOCOS) process. A conventional LOCOS process typically includes the following simplified steps. First, a silicon nitride layer is thermally grown on the silicon substrate. Generally, conventional LOCOS processes require a high quality, thermally grown silicon nitride layer to avoid delamination and other processing problems. Next, using a lithography and etch process, the nitride layer is selectively removed to produce a pattern where transistor source/drain areas are to be located. After patterning the source/drain areas, a field oxide is grown. As oxide growth is inhibited where the nitride layer still remains, the oxide only grows on the silicon substrate exposed during the source/drain patterning step. Finally, after oxide growth is complete, the remaining portions of the nitride layer are removed, leaving only the oxidized source/drain areas on the exposed silicon substrate.

Another process for forming insulating structures and defining source and drain regions is a shallow trench isolation (STI) process. A conventional STI process typically includes the following simplified steps. First, a silicon nitride layer is thermally grown or deposited onto the silicon substrate. Next, using a lithography and etch process, the silicon nitride layer is selectively removed to produce a pattern where transistor source/drain areas are to be located. After patterning the source/drain areas, the substrate is etched to form trenches. After the trenches are formed, a liner is thermally grown on the exposed surfaces of the trench. The liner oxide is typically formed at a very high temperature in a hydrochloric (HCl) acid ambient. An insulative material, such as, silicon dioxide (SiO_2), is blanket deposited over the nitride layer and the liner oxide within the trench. The insulative material is polished to create a planar surface. The nitride layer is subsequently removed to leave the oxide structures within the trenches.

Shallow trench isolation (STI) structures are utilized in strained silicon (SMOS) processes. SMOS processes are utilized to increase transistor (MOSFET) performance by increasing the carrier mobility of silicon, thereby reducing resistance and power consumption and increasing drive current, frequency response

and operating speed. Strained silicon is typically formed by growing a layer of silicon on a silicon germanium substrate or layer.

The silicon germanium lattice associated with the silicon germanium substrate is generally more widely spaced than a pure silicon lattice, with spacing becoming wider with a higher percentage of germanium. Because the silicon lattice aligns with the larger silicon germanium lattice, a tensile strain is created in the silicon layer. The silicon atoms are essentially pulled apart from one another.

Relaxed silicon has a conductive band that contains six equal valence bands. The application of tensile strain to the silicon causes four of the valence bands to increase in energy and two of the valence bands to decrease in energy. As a result of quantum effects, electrons effectively weigh 30 percent less when passing through the lower energy bands. Thus, the lower energy bands offer less resistance to electron flow. In addition, electrons meet with less vibrational energy from the nucleus of the silicon atom, which causes them to scatter at a rate of 500 to 1000 times less than in relaxed silicon. As a result, carrier mobility is dramatically increased in strained silicon compared to relaxed silicon, providing an increase in mobility of 80% or more for electrons and 20% or more for holes. The increase in mobility has been found to persist for current fields up to 1.5 megavolts/centimeter. These factors are believed to enable a device speed increase of 35% without further reduction of device size, or a 25% reduction in power consumption without a reduction in performance.

The use of germanium in SMOS processes can cause germanium contamination problems for IC structures, layers, and equipment. In particular, germanium outgassing or outdiffusion can contaminate various components associated with the fabrication equipment and integrated circuit structures associating with the processed wafer. Further, germanium outgassing can negatively impact the formation of thin films. In addition, germanium outdiffusion can cause germanium accumulation or "pile-up" at the interface of the liner, thereby causing reliability issues for the STI structure.

Germanium outgassing can be particularly problematic at the very high temperatures and HCl ambient environments associated with the liner of a shallow trench isolation (STI) structure. For example, conventional STI liner oxide processes can utilize temperatures of approximately 1000°C which enhance germanium outgassing.

Thus, there is a need for an STI liner which can be formed in a low temperature process. Further still, there is a need for a process of forming high quality oxides with good compatibility and yet are not susceptible to germanium outgassing. Further still, there is a need for an SMOS trench liner formation process. Yet further, there is a need for a liner formation process that is not as susceptible to germanium outgassing. Further still, there is a need for an STI process that does not utilize high temperature to thermally grow liners.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An exemplary embodiment relates to a method of manufacturing an integrated circuit. The integrated circuit includes trench isolation regions in a substrate including germanium. The method includes forming a

mask layer above the substrate, and selectively etching the mask layer to form apertures associated with locations of the trench isolation (STI) regions. The method also includes forming trenches in the substrate at the locations, providing a semiconductor or metal layer within the trenches in a low temperature process, and forming oxide liners using the semiconductor or metal layer in the trenches of the substrate.

Yet another exemplary embodiment relates to a method of forming shallow trench isolation regions in a semiconductor layer. The method includes providing a hard mask layer above the semiconductor layer, providing a photoresist layer above the hard mask layer, and selectively removing portions of the photoresist layer in a photolithographic process. The method further includes removing the hard mask layer at the locations, forming trenches in the hard mask layer under the locations, providing a conformal semiconductor layer in the trenches, and converting the conformal semiconductor layer into an oxide liner in the trenches.

Yet another exemplary embodiment relates to a method of forming a liner in a trench in a germanium containing layer. The method includes selectively etching the germanium containing layer to form the trench, providing a semiconductor layer in the trench in a low temperature process, and forming an oxide liner from the semiconductor layer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Exemplary embodiments will become more fully understood from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like parts, and wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a cross-sectional view schematic drawing of a portion of a silicon germanium substrate including a strained silicon layer, an oxide layer, a hard mask layer and a photoresist layer in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of a shallow trench isolation (STI) process;

FIGURE 2 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 1, showing a lithographic patterning step;

FIGURE 3 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 2, showing a selective etching step for the hard mask layer;

FIGURE 4 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 3, showing a selective etching step for the oxide layer;

FIGURE 5 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 4, showing a selective etching step for the strained silicon layer;

FIGURE 6 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 5, showing a selective etching step for the germanium silicon substrate;

FIGURE 7 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 6, showing a low temperature liner formation step;

FIGURE 8 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 7, showing a gate formation step;

FIGURE 9 is a general block diagram showing a shallow trench isolation process for the portion illustrated in FIGURE 1

FIGURE 10 is a cross-sectional view schematic drawing of a portion of a silicon germanium substrate including a strained silicon layer, an oxide layer, a hard mask layer and a photoresist layer in accordance with another exemplary embodiment of a shallow trench isolation (STI) process;

FIGURE 11 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 10, showing a lithographic patterning step;

FIGURE 12 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 11, showing a selective etching step for the hard mask layer;

FIGURE 13 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 12, showing a selective etching step for the oxide layer;

FIGURE 14 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 13, showing a selective etching step for the strained silicon layer;

FIGURE 15 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 14, showing a selective etching step for the germanium silicon substrate;

FIGURE 16 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 15, showing a semiconductor deposition step;

FIGURE 17 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 16, showing a liner formation step;

FIGURE 18 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 17, showing a selective liner removal step;

FIGURE 19 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 18, showing a trench fill step;

FIGURE 20 is a cross-sectional view of the portion illustrated in FIGURE 19, showing a gate formation step; and

FIGURE 21 is a general block diagram showing a shallow trench isolation process for the portion illustrated in FIGURE 10 in accordance with another exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF REFERRED EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

FIGURES 1 through 9 illustrate a method of manufacturing an integrated circuit (IC) in accordance with an exemplary embodiment. The method illustrated in FIGURES 1 through 9 reduces germanium outgassing and outdiffusion problems associated with silicon germanium layers or structures. The process can be used in a shallow trench isolation (STI) process or any process requiring a liner oxide and utilizing germanium or other substance prone to outgassing at high temperature. Advantageously, a liner oxide layer can be formed at low temperature and yet provide a high quality oxide with good compatibility. For the purposes of the embodiment described with reference to FIGURES 1-9, a low temperature process refers to a process performed at a temperature of less than approximately 700°C.

Referring to FIGURES 1 through 9, a cross-sectional view of a portion **12** of an integrated circuit (IC) is illustrated. Portion **12** is subjected to process **100** (FIGURE 9) to form a shallow trench isolation (STI) structure. Portion **12** includes an oxide layer **18** provided over a strained silicon layer **16**. Layer **16** is provided over a semiconductor substrate **14** or a germanium-containing layer or substrate. Substrate **14** can be provided above a substrate **13**.

Substrate **13** is optional and portion **12** can be provided with substrate **14** as the bottom-most layer. The embodiment described with reference to FIGURES 10-21 shows a substrate **114** without a substrate, such as, substrate **13** (FIGURE 1) beneath it. Substrate **13** can be the same material or a different material than substrate **14**. In one embodiment, substrate **13** is a semiconductor substrate such as a silicon substrate upon which silicon germanium substrate **14** has been grown.

Portion **12** can be any type of semiconductor device, or portion thereof, made from any of the various semiconductor processes, such as a complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) process, bipolar process, or other semiconductor process. Portion **12** may be an entire IC or a portion of an IC, and may include a multitude of electronic component portions.

Substrate **14** is preferably silicon germanium or other semiconductor material including germanium, and can be doped with P-type dopants or N-type dopants. Substrate **14** can be an epitaxial layer provided on a semiconductor or an insulative base, such as substrate **13**. Furthermore, substrate **14** is preferably a composition of silicon germanium (Si_{1-X} Ge_X, where X is approximately 0.2 and is more generally in the range of 0.1-0.4). Layer **14** can be grown or deposited.

In one embodiment, layer **14** is grown above layer **13** by chemical vapor deposition (CVD) using disilane (Si_2H_6) and germane (GeH_4) as source gases with a substrate temperature of approximately 650°C, a disilane partial pressure of 30 mPa and a germane partial pressure of 60 mPa. Growth of silicon germanium material may be initiated using these ratios, or alternatively, the partial pressure of germanium may be gradually increased beginning from a lower pressure or zero pressure to form a gradient composition. Alternatively, a silicon layer can be doped by ion implantation with germanium or other processes can be utilized to form layer **14**. Preferably, layer **14** is grown by epitaxy to a thickness of less than approximately 5000 Å (and preferably between approximately 1500 Å and 4000 Å).

A strained silicon layer **16** is formed above layer **14** by an epitaxial process. Preferably, layer **16** is grown by CVD at a temperature of approximately 600°C or less. Layer **16** can be a pure silicon layer and have a thickness of between approximately 50 and 150Å.

Pad oxide film or oxide layer **18** is provided on layer **16**. Layer **18** is optional. Layer **18** is preferably thermally grown on top of substrate **16** to a thickness of between approximately 100 and 300 Å. Layer **16** serves as a buffer layer and can be thermally grown in a conventional high temperature process by heating to approximately 1000°C in an oxygen atmosphere. Germanium outdiffusion or outgassing are not a problem at this point due to the presence of layer **18**.

A barrier or hard mask layer **22** is provided over oxide layer **18**. Preferably, mask layer **22** is silicon nitride (Si_3N_4) provided at a thickness of between approximately 300 and 1000 Å by a deposition or thermal growth process. Preferably, mask layer **22** is provided in a CVD or growth process. A low pressure, plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) process can also be utilized. A conventional thermal nitride process using a dichlorosilane (SiH_2Cl_2), ammonia (NH_3) and nitrogen (N_2) mixture at a high temperature (e.g., 600°C or above) can be used. The PECVD process for depositing nitride uses silane (SiH_4), nitrogen (N_2), and ammonia (NH_3) with a power of between approximately 550 and 650 watts at 400°C. An ammonia (NH_3) silane (SiH_4/N_2) mixture plasma, as opposed to a $N_2/NH_3/SiCl_2H_2$ associated with conventional CVD or growth process, can be used to form mask layer **22**.

A photoresist layer **24** is spun on top of mask layer **22**. Preferably, photoresist layer **24** is any commercially available i-line or deep UV photoresist such as (Shipley Corp., MA) SPR 955 (i-line) UV5 (deep UV). In FIGURES 1 and 2, photoresist layer **24** is selectively removed via photolithographic process to leave apertures **34** in accordance with a step **102** (FIGURE 9) of process **100** using pattern **28**. In FIGURE 3, mask layer **22** is etched via a dry-etching process so that apertures **34** reach oxide layer **18** in accordance with a step **104** of process **100** (FIGURE 9). The dry-etching process is selective to silicon nitride with respect to oxide layer **24**. Layer **24** can be stripped after layer **22** is etched.

In FIGURE 4, the etch process is changed to etch through silicon dioxide material and layer **18** is etched so that apertures **34** reach layer **16** in accordance with step **104** of process **100** (FIGURE 9). Layer **18** can be etched in a dry etching process. Alternatively, other etching techniques can be utilized to remove selected portions of layer **18**. Photoresist layer **24** (FIGURE 1) can be removed before or after oxide layer **18** is etched.

In FIGURE 5, the etch process is changed to etch through silicon material. Strained silicon layer **16** can be removed in accordance with a dry-etching process so that apertures **34** reach substrate **14**.

In FIGURE 6, substrate **14** is etched through apertures **34** to form trenches for shallow trench isolation structures in accordance with a step **106** of process **100** (FIGURE 9). The trenches preferably have a width corresponding to that of apertures **34**. The trenches preferably have a depth of between approximately 1500 and 4000 Å and a width of 0.18-1.50 nm or less. The trenches can have a trapezoidal cross-sectional shape with the narrower portion being at the bottom. The embodiment discussed with reference to FIGURES

10-21 shows trenches having a trapezoidal cross-sectional shape. Substrate **14** is preferably etched in a dry-etching process to form the trenches. Substrate **14** can be etched in the same step as layer **16**.

Although described as being etched in a dry etching process, the trenches can be formed in any process suitable for providing apertures in layer **14**. In one embodiment, the apertures for the trenches are provided all the way through layer **14** to substrate **13**. Alternatively, the bottom of the trenches associated with apertures **34** may not reach substrate **13**, depending upon the thickness of layer **14**. In an embodiment in which substrate **13** is not provided, substrate **14** is deeper than the trenches associated with apertures **34**.

In FIGURE 7, liners **38** are formed in the trenches associated with apertures **34**. Preferably, liners **38** are oxide (e.g., silicon oxide or silicon dioxide) material formed in a low temperature process. In one embodiment, liners **38** are between approximately 200 and 500 Å thick and are provided over the bottom and side walls of the trench. In one embodiment, layers **22** and **18** are stripped before the formation of liners **38**. In a preferred embodiment, layers **28** and **22** are not stripped until after the trenches are filled.

Liners **38** can be formed on layers **16**, **18**, and **22**, although they are shown in FIGURE 8 as being formed on substrate **14** only. The embodiment discussed with reference to FIGURES 10-21 shows liners **138** formed on layers **116**, **118**, and **122** and also above layer **122**.

According to one embodiment, liners **38** are formed in an advantageous ultraviolet light ozone (UVO) process. In one embodiment, portion **12** including the trenches associated with apertures **34** are provided in an oxygen atmosphere and subjected to ultraviolet light. In one embodiment, the trenches upon being exposed to UV light react to form ozone (O_3) and atomic oxygen (O) by absorbing UV light having a wavelength of approximately 185 nm. Once formed, the ozone can undergo further decomposition to form additional atomic oxygen by absorbing UV light having a wavelength of about 254 nm.

The atomic oxygen acts as a strong oxidizing agent. Both atomic oxygen and ozone may react with the silicon associated with layer **14** and/or layer **16** to form an oxide layer. Although liners **38** are shown only with layer **14**, liners **38** can also be grown on side walls associated with layer **16**. Exemplary UVO processes are discussed in United States Patent No. 6,168,961 issued to Vaccari on January 2, 2001. Any technique utilizing any UVO technique can be utilized according to this embodiment including adjustments of UVO energies and oxygen environments.

Advantageously, the UVO process is a low temperature process, thereby reducing germanium outdiffusion. Preferably, the UVO process is performed at a temperature of less than approximately 600°C. Although a low temperature is utilized, high quality and good compatibility liners **38** can be produced. In a most preferred embodiment, the UVO temperature process is performed at a temperature well below 600°C (e.g., below 550°C).

According to another embodiment, a dual frequency RF power PECVD process is utilized to form liners **38** at a temperature of between approximately 500 and 550°C. Preferably, the chemical vapor deposition process is performed at a low temperature (e.g., less than 700°C) and utilizes SiH_4 and O_2 gases. After the formation of a 200-500 Å thick layer for liners **38**, a quick rapid thermal anneal (RTA) using an N_2

ambient is performed at a temperature between approximately 900 and 1000°C (e.g., 950°C) for approximately 30 seconds. Applicant believes that the relatively short RTA time will not cause significant germanium outdiffusion or outgassing.

In yet another embodiment, liners **38** can be formed by an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique. Preferably, the ALD technique utilizes a temperature of approximately 700°C with a silane and oxygen atmosphere. According to an exemplary embodiment, a pulse cycle process is utilized for the ALD technique in which SiH_4 and O_2 gas flows are alternately turned on and off (pulsed) for between approximately 10 and 30 seconds.

In still another embodiment, liners **38** can be formed in a high density plasma oxide deposition (HDP) process similar to the CVD process discussed above. Preferably, the deposition processes do not utilize NH_3, instead utilizing silane at a temperature below 700°C. The HDP process preferably utilizes SiH_4 and O_2 gases and a temperature of between approximately 600 and 650°C. The HDP process utilizes high RF power (e.g., between approximately 4000 and 5000 watts).

In FIGURE 8, a layer of insulative material **40** is blanket deposited over layer **16** and within the trenches associated with apertures **34.** Insulative material **40** is preferably silicon dioxide deposited in a CVD process. Preferably, insulative material **40** is deposited in a tetraethylorthosilicate (TEOS) process. Alternatively, a boron phosphate silicon glass (BPSG) process can be utilized. Insulative material **40** is preferably between approximately 2000 and 8000 Å thick.

Insulative material **40** is removed by polishing/etching until a top surface of layer **16** is reached. The removal of insulative material **40** leaves oxide material within the trenches associated with apertures **34.** Insulative material **40** can be removed by a number of stripping or etching processes. Preferably, insulative material **40** is removed from above layer **16** by dry-etching.

In one embodiment, insulative material **40** is deposited after the trenches are formed and before layer **22** is stripped. The insulative material is polished or etched until layer **22** is reached. Layers **22** and **18** can be stripped in a subsequent process.

Although material is shown in FIGURE 8 as being a single structure formed within the trenches (above the top surface and side surfaces of liners **38**) to a top surface of layer **16**, insulative material **40** may stop at a top surface of liners **38.**

After insulative material **40** is provided in the trenches associated with apertures **34**, a gate structure **44** can be provided. Gate structure **44** can be a conventional MOSFET gate structure, such as, a metal over oxide gate structure or polysilicon over oxide gate structure. In one embodiment, gate structure **44** is comprised of a tantalum nitride or titanium nitride gate conductor formed by a plasma vapor deposition sputtering technique. During sputtering, nitrogen (N_2) gas can be provided to modify the metal and nitrogen composition of the gate conductor. This modification can be used to adjust a work function associated with the gate structure **44.** For example, a 200 millivolt shift in threshold voltage can be achieved by adjusting the flow of nitrogen gas associated with gate structure **44.**

FIGURES 10 through 21 illustrate a method of manufacturing an integrated circuit (IC) in accordance with another exemplary embodiment. The method illustrated in FIGURES 10 through 21 reduces germanium outgassing and outdiffusion problems associated with silicon germanium structures. The process can be used in a shallow trench isolation (STI) process or any process requiring a liner oxide and utilizing germanium or other substance prone to outgassing at high temperature. Advantageously, a liner oxide layer can be formed from another layer formed at low temperature and yet provides a high quality oxide with good compatibility. Low temperature for the embodiment discussed with reference to FIGURES 10-21 is a temperature below approximately 900°C. Similar structures in FIGURES 1-8 have similar reference numerals (differing by 100) to the structures illustrated in FIGURES 10-20.

Referring to FIGURES 10 and 21, a cross-sectional view of a portion **112** of an integrated circuit (IC) is illustrated. Portion **112** (FIGURE 10) is subjected to process **200** (FIGURE 21) to form a shallow trench isolation (STI) structure. Portion **112** includes an oxide layer **118** provided over a strained silicon layer **116**. Layer **116** is provided over a semiconductor substrate **114** or a germanium containing layer or substrate. Substrate **114** can be provided above a substrate such as substrate **13** (FIGURE 1).

Portion **112** can be any type of semiconductor device, or portion thereof, made from any of the various semiconductor processes such as a complementary metal oxide semiconductor (COMs) process, bipolar process, or other semiconductor process. Portion **112** may be an entire IC or a portion of an IC including a multitude of electronic component portions.

Substrate **114** is preferably a silicon germanium or other semiconductor material including germanium, and can be doped with P-type dopants or N-type dopants. Substrate **114** can be an epitaxial layer provided on a semiconductor or an insulative base, such as substrate **13**. Furthermore, substrate **114** is preferably a composition of silicon germanium (Si_{1-X} Ge_X, where X is approximately 0.2 and is more generally in the range of 0.1-0.4). Substrate **114** can be part of a wafer and can be similar to substrate **14** (FIGURE 1).

A strained silicon layer **116** is formed above layer **114** by an epitaxial process. Preferably, layer **118** is grown by CVD at a temperature of approximately 600°C or less. Layer **118** can be a pure silicon layer and have a thickness of between approximately 50 and 150Å.

Pad oxide film or oxide layer **118** is provided on layer **116**. Layer **118** is optional. Layer **118** is preferably thermally grown on top of substrate **118** to a thickness of approximately 100-300 Å. Layer **118** serves as a buffer layer and can be thermally grown in a conventional high temperature process by heating to 1000°C in an oxygen atmosphere. Germanium outdiffusion and outgassing are not a problem at this point due to the presence of layer **118**.

A barrier or hard mask layer **122** is provided over oxide layer **118**. Preferably, mask layer **122** is silicon nitride (Si_3N_4) provided at a thickness of between approximately 300 and 1000 Å by a deposition or thermal growth process. Preferably, mask layer **122** is provided in a CVD or growth process and can be similar to layer **22** (FIGURE 1).

A photoresist layer **124** is spun on top of mask layer **122**. Preferably, photoresist layer **124** is any commercially available i-line or deep UV photoresist such as (Shipley Corp., MA) SPR 955 (i-line) UV5 (deep UV). In FIGURE 11, photoresist layer **124** is selectively removed via a photolithographic process to leave apertures **134** in accordance with a step **202** (FIGURE 21) of process **200** using pattern **128**.

In FIGURE 12, mask layer **122** is etched via a dry-etching process so that apertures **134** reach oxide layer **118** in accordance with a step **104** of process **200** (FIGURE 21). The dry-etching process is selective to silicon nitride with respect to oxide layer **124**. Layer **124** can be stripped after layer **122** is etched.

In FIGURE 13, the etch process is changed to etch through silicon dioxide material and layer **118** is etched so that apertures **134** reach layer **116** in accordance with step **204** of process **200** (FIGURE 21). Layer **118** can be etched in a dry etching process. Alternatively, other etching techniques can be utilized to remove selected portions of layer **118**. Photoresist layer **124** (FIGURE 10) can be removed before or after oxide layer **118** is etched.

In FIGURE 14, the etch process is changed to etch through silicon material. Strained silicon layer **116** can be removed in accordance with a dry-etching process so that apertures **134** reach substrate **114**.

In FIGURE 15, substrate **114** is etched through apertures **134** to form trenches for a shallow trench isolation structure in accordance with a step **206** of process **200** (FIGURE 21). The trenches preferably have a width corresponding to apertures **134**. The trenches preferably have a depth of between approximately 1500 and 4000 Å and a width of 0.18-1.50 nm or below. The trenches can have a trapezoidal cross-sectional shape with the narrower portion being at the bottom. The trenches can also have other cross-sectional shapes. Substrate **114** is preferably etched in a dry-etching process to form the trenches. Substrate **114** can be etched in the same step as layer **116**.

Although described as being etched in a dry etching process, the trenches can be formed in any process suitable for providing an aperture in layer **114**. In one embodiment, the apertures for the trenches are provided all the way through layer **114** to another substrate (e.g., substrate **13** in FIGURE 1).

In FIGURE 16, a conformal layer **126** is formed in the trenches and above layer **122**. In one embodiment, layer **126** is a semiconductor or metal layer that can be formed at a low temperature (e.g., below 600°C). Layer **126** is preferably a layer that can be oxidized to form an insulative material such as an oxide liner. Most preferably, layer **126** is a 100-200Å thick amorphous silicon layer deposited by CVD at a temperature of 500-600°C. Layer **126** is deposited in accordance with step **208** of process **200** (FIGURE 21).

In another embodiment, layer **126** is a metal or semiconductor material deposited by atomic layer deposition (ALD) at low temperature. Layer **126** can be a silicon layer. The silicon layer can be non-amorphous.

Layer **126** is preferably provided in sidewalls of the trenches associated with apertures **124** of layer **114** and of layers **116**, **118** and **122**. Layer **126** is also provided on a top surface of layer **122**. In FIGURE 17, layer **126** is converted to an insulative material such as a liner oxide material **128**. Preferably, layer **126** (FIGURE 16) is formed into liner oxide material **128** in an oxidation process at a temperature of

approximately 900°C. Preferably, the oxidation process can occur at a higher temperature. Germanium outdiffusion is reduced due to the barrier associated with layer **126**. Preferably, the entire layer **126** is converted into liner oxide material **128**.

In FIGURE 18, layer **122** is planarized or etched to remove liner oxide material **128** from the top surface of layer **122**. Alternatively, layer **126** can be removed from top surface of layer **122** before liner oxide material **128** is formed. Liner oxide material **128** remains as liner **138** within the trenches associated with aperture **134**.

In FIGURE 18, liners **138** are formed in the trenches associated with apertures **134**. Preferably, liners **138** are oxide (e.g., silicon oxide or silicon dioxide) material formed by oxidizing a semiconductor or metal layer. In one embodiment, liners **138** are approximately 200-500 Å thick. In one embodiment, layers **122** and **118** are stripped before the formation of liners **138**. In a preferred embodiment, layers **128** and **122** are not stripped until after the trenches are filled.

In FIGURE 19, a layer **142** of insulative material **140** is blanket deposited over layer **116** and within trenches associated with apertures **134**. Insulative material **140** is preferably silicon dioxide deposited in an HDP process and similar to material **40** (FIGURE 8). Preferably, insulative material **140** is deposited in a silane (SiH_4) process. Alternatively, a boron phosphate silicon glass (BPSG) process can be utilized. Insulative material **140** is preferably between approximately 2000 and 8000 Å thick.

Insulative material **140** is removed by polishing/etching until a top surface of layer **122** is reached. The removal of insulative layer leaves oxide material **140** within the trenches associated with apertures **134**. Insulative layer **140** can be removed by a number of stripping or etching processes. Preferably, insulative material **140** is removed from above layer **122** by dry-etching.

In one embodiment, insulative layer **142** associated with material **140** is deposited after the trenches are formed and layers **122** and **116** are stripped. Insulative layer **142** is polished or etched until layer **122** is reached.

Although material is shown in FIGURE 19 as being a single structure formed within the trenches (above the top surface and side surfaces of liners **138**) to a top surface of layer **116**, insulative material **140** may stop at a top surface of liners **138**.

In FIGURE 20, after material **140** is provided in the trenches associated with apertures **134**, a gate structure **156** can be provided. Gate structure **156** can be a conventional MOSFET gate structure, such as, a metal over oxide gate structure or polysilicon over oxide gate structure. In one embodiment, gate structure **156** is covered with an oxide (e.g., silicon dioxide layer **154**) and a silicon carbide (SiC) layer **148**. Portion **112** is subjected to an anneal after layers **154** and **148** are provided. Layer **148** can prevent germanium outgassing.

The technique of using layers **148** and **154** can be particularly advantageous if layer **118** is not utilized with portion **112** and gate structure **156** is provided directly over a germanium containing substrate. In another embodiment, layer **148** can be a tantalum nitride (TaN), titanium nitride (TiN), tungsten nitride

(TuN), titanium/titanium nitride (Ti/TiN) layer of approximately 100 Å thick and layer **154** can be a silicon dioxide layer approximately 100 Å thick. The spacers associated with gate structure **156** can be silicon nitride.

It is understood that while the detailed drawings, specific examples, and particular values given provide a preferred exemplary embodiment of the present invention, it is for the purpose of illustration only. The shapes and sizes of trenches are not disclosed in a limiting fashion. The method and apparatus of the invention is not limited to the precise details and conditions disclosed. Various changes may be made to the details disclosed without departing from the spirit of the invention, which is defined by the following claims.

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of forming shallow trench isolation regions in a semiconductor layer, the method comprising:

providing a hard mask layer above the semiconductor layer;

providing a photoresist layer above the hard mask layer;

selectively removing portions of the photoresist layer at locations in a photolithographic process;

removing the hard mask layer at the locations;

forming trenches in the hard mask layer under the locations;

providing a conformal semiconductor layer in the trenches; and

converting the conformal semiconductor layer into an oxide liner in the trenches.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a pad oxide layer above a strained silicon layer before the step of providing a hard mask layer.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing an insulative material in the trenches to form the shallow trench isolation regions; and

removing the hard mask layer in a wet bath including acid.

4. A method of manufacturing an integrated circuit having trench isolation regions in a substrate including germanium, the method comprising:

forming a mask layer above the substrate;

selectively etching the mask layer to form apertures associated with locations of the trench isolation regions;

forming trenches in the substrate at the locations;

providing a semiconductor or metal layer within the trenches in a low temperature process; and

forming oxide liners using the semiconductor or metal layer in the trenches of the substrate.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the semiconductor or metal layer includes amorphous semiconductor material.

6. A method of forming a liner in a trench in a germanium containing layer, the method comprising:

selectively etching the germanium containing layer to form the trench;

providing a semiconductor layer in the trench in a low temperature process; and

forming an oxide liner from the semiconductor layer.

7. The method of claim 4 or 6, wherein the low temperature process is a deposition process performed at a temperature below 600°C.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the low temperature process is a chemical vapor deposition process involving amorphous silicon.

9. The method of any one of claims 1 or 4, further comprising providing an insulative material in the trenches to form the trench isolation regions.

10. The method of any one of claims 1, 4, and 6, wherein the oxide liners are formed is an oxidation process.