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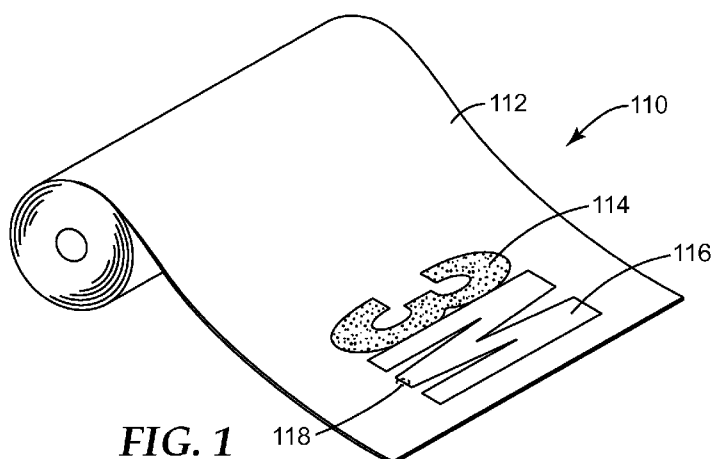
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(54) Title: EFFECTIVE MEDIA RETARDER FILMS WITH SPATIALLY SELECTIVE BIREFRINGENCE REDUCTION

**FIG. 1**

(57) Abstract: A retarder film provides a first light retardation and can be heat processed in one or more selected areas to provide a second light retardation in the selected area(s). The retarder film may have an absorption characteristic such that the heat processing can be carried out by selectively exposing the film to a suitable radiant beam. The retarder film is composed of a stack of contiguous ultrathin layers configured to provide an effective optical medium for visible light. Visible light propagates through the stack as an effective medium having effective refractive indices along principal x-, y-, and z-axes. At least some of the ultrathin layers possess intrinsic birefringence, and the effective indices of the stack are functions of the intrinsic refractive indices of the constituent ultrathin layers. The heat processing is carried out so that the ultrathin layer stack structural integrity is not substantially altered in the processed area(s).