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(54) Title: WELDING APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR WELDING TUBULAR END PORTIONS

(57) Abstract

A system for joining a pair of abutted thermoplastic end portions (38, 40) utilizes a transparent sleeve (116) extending around the outer surface of the tubular end portions (38, 40) to be joined and a mandrel (150) on the inner surface. An infrared heating element (136) provides radiant heat through the transparent sleeve (116) to melt and fuse the tubular end portions (38, 40). The tubular end portions (38, 40) may be visually monitored through the transparent sleeve (116) during the welding process.

