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(54) Title: GEMSTONE ALIGNMENT

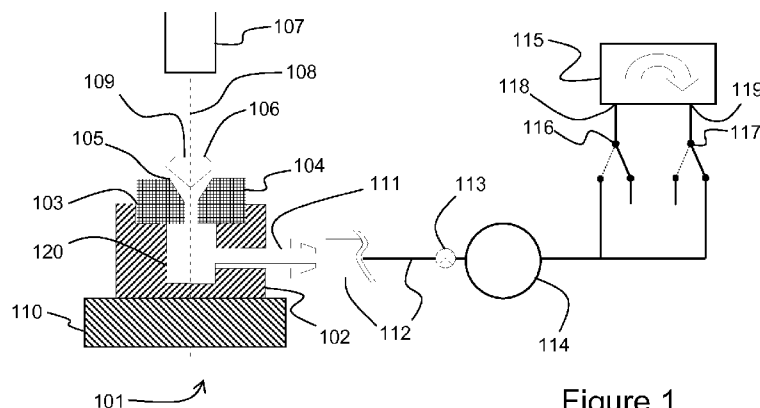


Figure 1

(57) Abstract: An apparatus and method for aligning a gemstone such as diamond (106) with a predetermined vertical axis (108) is described. The apparatus includes an upwardly extending nozzle (105) aligned with the vertical axis (108) and sized to allow the gemstone (106) to settle into it under the action of gravity so that the article is supported by the aperture. A fluid supply system supplies fluid to the nozzle (105) under sufficient pressure to support the article within or above the aperture. A fluid pressure control system controls the pressure of fluid supplied to the nozzle (105), so that it can be reduced gradually.