

MANIFOLD ASSEMBLY AND METHOD OF USE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Manifold assemblies can be used for change-outs of filters. However, there is a need for improved manifold assemblies.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0002] An embodiment of the invention provides a manifold assembly for use with a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting, the manifold assembly comprising (a) an upper adjustable frame arrangement comprising a block comprising a through hole for receiving the first fitting, a first side wall, a second side wall, a front wall, and a rear wall, the rear wall including a locking pin opening and a cavity for receiving a linear guide comprising a grooved plate, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block and is arranged to guide the adjustable frame arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle arranged on the first side wall; a slot in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end, wherein the slidable locking pin can be extended from the block through the locking pin opening upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening to lock the adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening; (b) a lower frame arrangement comprising a through hole for receiving the second fitting; and (c) a manifold frame connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening.

[0003] In another embodiment, a method for engaging a filter capsule in a manifold assembly is provided, the method comprising placing a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting into a manifold assembly comprising (a) an upper adjustable frame

arrangement comprising a block comprising a through hole for receiving the first fitting, a first side wall, a second side wall, a front wall, and a rear wall, the rear wall including a locking pin opening and a cavity for receiving a linear guide comprising a grooved plate, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block and is arranged to guide the adjustable frame arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle arranged on the first side wall; a slot in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end, wherein the slidable locking pin can be extended from the block through the locking pin opening upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening to lock the adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening; (b) a lower frame arrangement comprising a through hole for receiving the second fitting; and (c) a manifold frame connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening; placing the second fitting into the through hole of the lower frame arrangement; moving the upper adjustable frame arrangement from the first position to the second position and placing the first fitting in the through hole of the upper adjustable frame arrangement; and moving the movable handle to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING(S)

[0004] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a manifold assembly according to an embodiment of the invention, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is locked in the second position. Figure 1 also shows illustrative upper and lower connection port fittings.

[0005] Figure 2 is an exploded view of the manifold assembly shown in Figure 1.

[0006] Figure 3 is an exploded view of an upper adjustable frame arrangement in the manifold assembly shown in Figure 1.

[0007] Figure 4A is a cross-sectional view of the lower frame arrangement in the manifold assembly shown in Figure 1, also showing the lower connection port fitting including a second fluid fitting fluid port, wherein the lower connection port fitting nut is also shown in cross-sectional view.

[0008] Figure 4B shows a cross-sectional view of an illustrative connection port fitting connected to the manifold assembly, also including a portion of a conduit passing through the fitting, wherein the conduit is in fluid communication with the manifold assembly.

[0009] Figure 5A is a perspective view of a manifold assembly shown in Figure 1, wherein the movable handle has been moved to unlock the upper adjustable frame arrangement, and the upper adjustable frame arrangement is unlocked in the second position.

[0010] Figure 5B shows a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting about to be placed in the manifold assembly shown in Figure 5A, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement has been moved vertically and upwardly to the first position, and the movable handle has been moved to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position before placing the filter capsule in the manifold assembly.

[0011] Figure 5C shows, in side view, that the filter capsule is kept vertically and moved horizontally to be placed in the manifold assembly, wherein the movable handle has been moved to unlock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and the second fitting is engaged with the second fitting flow port.

[0012] Figure 5D shows the filter capsule placed in the manifold assembly shown in Figure 5C, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement has been moved vertically and downwardly to the second position, the moveable handle has been moved to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, and the first fitting is engaged with the first fitting flow port, such that radial seals are formed between the first fitting and the first fitting flow port, and between the second fitting and the second fitting fluid flow port.

[0013] Figure 6 is a front view of the embodiment of the manifold assembly shown in Figure 1, showing that, if the filter capsule has been inserted, the filter capsule is in the correct position and the upper adjustable frame arrangement is locked in the second position

when the top wall of the upper adjustable frame arrangement is aligned with the inwardly facing arrows labeled “locked.”

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0014] In accordance with an embodiment of the invention, a manifold assembly for use with a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting is provided, the manifold assembly comprising (a) an upper adjustable frame arrangement comprising a block comprising a through hole for receiving the first fitting, a first side wall, a second side wall, a front wall, and a rear wall, the rear wall including a locking pin opening and a cavity for receiving a linear guide comprising a grooved plate, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block and is arranged to guide the adjustable frame arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle arranged on the first side wall; a slot in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end, wherein the slidable locking pin can be extended from the block through the locking pin opening upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening to lock the adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening; (b) a lower frame arrangement comprising a through hole for receiving the second fitting; and (c) a manifold frame connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening.

[0015] In another embodiment, a method for engaging a filter capsule in a manifold assembly is provided, the method comprising placing a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting into a manifold assembly comprising (a) an upper adjustable frame arrangement comprising a block comprising a through hole for receiving the first fitting, a first side wall, a second side wall, a front wall, and a rear wall, the rear wall including a locking pin opening and a cavity for receiving a linear guide comprising a grooved plate, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block and is arranged to guide the adjustable frame

arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle arranged on the first side wall; a slot in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end, wherein the slidable locking pin can be extended from the block through the locking pin opening upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening to lock the adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening; (b) a lower frame arrangement comprising a through hole for receiving the second fitting; and (c) a manifold frame connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening; placing the second fitting into the through hole of the lower frame arrangement; moving the upper adjustable frame arrangement from the first position to the second position and placing the first fitting in the through hole of the upper adjustable frame arrangement; and moving the movable handle to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position.

[0016] Advantageously, filter capsules can be installed in a manifold assembly, readily connected and disconnected, and changed-out quickly in confined spaces. Additionally, filter capsules can be installed with an easy motion without individually connecting each filter capsule fitting to the manifold assembly. Moreover, filter capsules can be inserted into the manifold assembly and engaged without rotating the filter capsule.

[0017] Embodiments of the invention can be used with a variety of filters and filter capsules, including, for example, those available from Pall Corporation (East Hills, NY). The filter and filter capsules are suitable for filtering a variety of fluids, including, but not limited to, a broad range of slurries and liquids, such as chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) slurries.

[0018] Each of the components of the invention will now be described in more detail below, wherein like components have like reference numbers.

[0019] Figures 1 and 2 show an embodiment of a manifold assembly 600 comprising an upper adjustable frame arrangement 100 comprising a block 150 comprising a top wall 151 and a bottom wall 152, a through hole 101 (shown in Figure 3) for receiving the first fitting, the through hole passing through the top wall and the bottom wall; a first side wall 153, a second side wall 154, a front wall 155, and a rear wall 156, the rear wall including a locking pin opening 156A and a cavity 156B for receiving a linear guide 190 comprising a grooved plate 191 that slides on a rail 192, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block via rail 192 (wherein the rail is mounted to the block via retainers 193A and 193B such as bolts and/or screws or a press-fit) and is arranged to guide the adjustable frame arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle 175 arranged on the first side wall, the slidable handle having a front wall or face 171; a slot 176 in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin 177 arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end 177A that can be withdrawn toward the block (e.g., into the block) and extended from the block (e.g., through the locking pin opening 156A) upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer (two retainers 175A and 175B such as bolts and/or screws (or a press-fit) connected to locking pin 177 at openings 175C and 175D are shown) passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening 195A to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening 195B to lock the adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening; (b) a lower frame arrangement 200 comprising a through hole 201 for receiving the second fitting; and (c) a manifold frame 300 connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening.

[0020] In the illustrated embodiment, the upper adjustable frame arrangement has a general “L” shape, such that the block includes a lower second front wall 155A, and a lower second bottom wall 152A, and portions of the side walls 153 and 154 facing the manifold frame 300 extend from top wall 151 to lower second bottom wall 152A, and other portions of the side walls 153 and 154 extend from top wall 151 to bottom wall 152.

[0021] Optionally, as shown in Figures 1 and 3, the slidable locking pin 177 is prevented from running out of locking pin opening 154A by retaining ring 178, and optional locating pin 177' is connected to locking pin 177 (e.g., by threads or a press-fit), wherein locating pin 177' provides end 177A and locking pin 177 can be slid through retaining ring 178 and end 177A can be slid into first opening 195A or second opening 195B. Alternatively, slidable locking pin 177 itself may have end 177A.

[0022] In the illustrated embodiment (e.g., as shown in Figures 1 and 2), the lower frame arrangement 200 comprises a top wall 251 and a bottom wall 252 wherein the through hole 201 for receiving the second fitting passes through the top wall and the bottom wall; a first side wall 253, a second side wall 254, a front wall 255, and a rear wall 256.

[0023] In the illustrated embodiment (e.g., Figure 1), the manifold frame 300 has a front face 355 and a rear face 356 includes a washer 195 arranged in cavity 196 in the front face, wherein the washer has the first and second openings 195A, 195B; however, the washer is optional and the openings can be directly in face 355 the manifold frame.

[0024] The upper adjustable frame arrangement and the lower frame arrangement can be connected to the manifold frame as known in the art, e.g., by screws and/or bolts.

[0025] Figure 1 also shows an upper connection port fitting 701 and a lower connection port fitting 702.

[0026] As will be discussed in more detail below, each of the upper and lower frame arrangements is configured for receiving a filter capsule fitting, via the through hole 101 in the upper frame arrangement, and via the through hole 201 in the lower frame arrangement.

[0027] Figures 1 and 2 show upper and lower connection port fittings 701 and 702, comprising, respectively, nuts 701A and 702A, and hollow bodies 701B and 702B. The illustrative hollow body shown in Figure 3 includes first fitting fluid flow port 701C, and the illustrative hollow body shown in Figure 4A includes a second fitting fluid flow port 702C. Typically, as shown in Figure 4B, the hollow bodies and nuts include corresponding threads, and an end of a hollow body is configured to fit tightly into the interior diameter of a conduit (tubing; shown here with a flared end) such that the conduit can provide fluid communication with the manifold assembly when the nut is tightened on the threads of the hollow body.

While not shown in the Figures, the hollow bodies can be attached to the frame arrangements as known in the art, e.g., by threads, press-fitting, etc.

[0028] A variety of connection port fittings are suitable for use in accordance with embodiments of the invention, and are known in the art.

[0029] In accordance with an embodiment of a method for engaging a filter capsule in a manifold assembly, and using Figures 5A-5D for reference (wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement 100 of the manifold assembly is initially moved from the second position (Figure 5A) to the first position (Figure 5B)), a filter capsule 900 having a first fitting 901 and a second fitting 902 is placed into an embodiment of the manifold assembly, moving the filter capsule horizontally while kept vertically and the filter capsule is moved downwardly while kept vertically while the second fitting is placed in the through hole 201 (Figure 5C).

[0030] As shown in Figures 1, 5B, and 5D, when the upper adjustable frame arrangement is locked in the first or second position, the handle face 171 will be in the same plane as block front wall 155. Thus, if the handle face is not in the same plane as the block front wall, the user will know that the locking pin is not in the first or second opening and the upper frame arrangement is not locked in position.

[0031] Upon moving the handle 175 horizontally to unlock the upper adjustable frame arrangement from the first position (Figure 5C), the upper adjustable frame arrangement is moved downwardly to the second position, the first fitting is placed in through hole 101, and the handle is moved to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position (Figure 5D).

[0032] Accordingly, the filter capsule can be inserted into the manifold assembly and engaged without rotating the filter capsule.

[0033] In some embodiments, the manifold assembly includes an indicator showing the operator of the assembly that the filter capsule has been installed in the correct position and/or that the upper adjustable frame arrangement is locked in the second position. As shown in Figure 6, if the filter capsule has been inserted, the filter capsule is in the correct position and the upper adjustable frame arrangement is locked in the second position when

the top wall 151 of the upper adjustable frame arrangement is aligned with the inwardly facing arrows labeled “locked.”

[0034] Preferably, filter capsules can be installed in the manifold assembly and radial seals are formed between the first fitting and the first fitting fluid flow port and between the second fitting and a second fitting fluid flow port.

[0035] In those embodiments for use with a filter capsule having different configurations for the filter inlet fitting and the filter outlet fitting, the through holes can be sized such that the filter capsule can only be installed one way in the manifold assembly, ensuring the correct orientation of the filter capsule during use.

[0036] Fluid can be passed through the filter capsule to filter the fluid. The filter capsule first fitting can be a filter inlet fitting or a filter outlet fitting. Typically, the filter capsule first fitting is an outlet fitting, such that, during filtration, the filtered fluid passes from the filter outlet fitting, and through the first fitting fluid flow port.

[0037] Once filtration is completed, the manifold can be placed in the first fitting disengagement position after moving the movable plate and the rotating the handle, and the filter capsule can be removed, and a new capsule inserted.

[0038] All references, including publications, patent applications, and patents, cited herein are hereby incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each reference were individually and specifically indicated to be incorporated by reference and were set forth in its entirety herein.

[0039] The use of the terms “a” and “an” and “the” and “at least one” and similar referents in the context of describing the invention (especially in the context of the following claims) are to be construed to cover both the singular and the plural, unless otherwise indicated herein or clearly contradicted by context. The use of the term “at least one” followed by a list of one or more items (for example, “at least one of A and B”) is to be construed to mean one item selected from the listed items (A or B) or any combination of two or more of the listed items (A and B), unless otherwise indicated herein or clearly contradicted by context. The terms “comprising,” “having,” “including,” and “containing” are to be construed as open-ended terms (i.e., meaning “including, but not limited to,”) unless

otherwise noted. Recitation of ranges of values herein are merely intended to serve as a shorthand method of referring individually to each separate value falling within the range, unless otherwise indicated herein, and each separate value is incorporated into the specification as if it were individually recited herein. All methods described herein can be performed in any suitable order unless otherwise indicated herein or otherwise clearly contradicted by context. The use of any and all examples, or exemplary language (e.g., “such as”) provided herein, is intended merely to better illuminate the invention and does not pose a limitation on the scope of the invention unless otherwise claimed. No language in the specification should be construed as indicating any non-claimed element as essential to the practice of the invention.

[0040] Preferred embodiments of this invention are described herein, including the best mode known to the inventors for carrying out the invention. Variations of those preferred embodiments may become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art upon reading the foregoing description. The inventors expect skilled artisans to employ such variations as appropriate, and the inventors intend for the invention to be practiced otherwise than as specifically described herein. Accordingly, this invention includes all modifications and equivalents of the subject matter recited in the claims appended hereto as permitted by applicable law. Moreover, any combination of the above-described elements in all possible variations thereof is encompassed by the invention unless otherwise indicated herein or otherwise clearly contradicted by context.

CLAIMS

1. A manifold assembly for use with a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting, the manifold assembly comprising:
 - (a) an upper adjustable frame arrangement comprising a block comprising a through hole for receiving the first fitting, a first side wall, a second side wall, a front wall, and a rear wall, the rear wall including a locking pin opening and a cavity for receiving a linear guide comprising a grooved plate, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block and is arranged to guide the upper adjustable frame arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle arranged on the first side wall; a slot in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end, wherein the slidable locking pin can be extended from the block through the locking pin opening upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening;
 - (b) a lower frame arrangement comprising a through hole for receiving the second fitting; and,
 - (c) a manifold frame connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening.

2. The manifold assembly of claim 1, further comprising an indicator showing an operator of the manifold assembly that the filter capsule has been installed in the correct position and/or that the upper adjustable frame arrangement is locked in the second position

3. A method for engaging a filter capsule in a manifold assembly, the method comprising placing a filter capsule having a first fitting and a second fitting into a manifold assembly comprising:

- (a) an upper adjustable frame arrangement comprising a block comprising a through hole for receiving the first fitting, a first side wall, a second side wall, a front wall, and a rear wall, the rear wall including a locking pin opening and a cavity for receiving a linear guide comprising a grooved plate, wherein the linear guide is mounted to the block and is arranged to guide the upper adjustable frame arrangement vertically between a first position and a second position; a slidable handle arranged on the first side wall; a slot in the first side wall; a slidable locking pin arranged in the block, the slidable locking pin having an end, wherein the slidable locking pin can be extended from the block through the locking pin opening upon slidably moving the handle horizontally, wherein the slidable handle is connected to the slidable locking pin by at least one retainer passing through the slot in the first side wall, wherein the slidable handle can move the slidable locking pin to slide the locking pin end into a first opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the first position, and to slide the locking pin end into a second opening to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position, wherein the upper adjustable frame arrangement is movable along the linear guide between the first and the second positions when the locking pin end is not in the first opening or the second opening;
- (b) a lower frame arrangement comprising a through hole for receiving the second fitting; and,

- (c) a manifold frame connected to the upper adjustable frame arrangement and connected the lower frame arrangement, the manifold frame including the first opening and the second opening;
placing the second fitting into the through hole of the lower frame arrangement; moving the upper adjustable frame arrangement from the first position to the second position and placing the first fitting in the through hole of the upper adjustable frame arrangement; and moving the movable handle to lock the upper adjustable frame arrangement in the second position.
- 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising passing fluid through the filter capsule.