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Description

Semiconductor memory cell arrangement and a method for producing it

The invention relates to a semiconductor memory cell arrangement with dynamic memory cells, DRAMs for short, that in each case have a selection transistor and a memory capacitor. In the case of such a DRAM cell arrangement, the information is stored in the memory cell in the form of electric charges, the memory states "0" and "1" respectively corresponding to a positively and negatively charged memory capacitor. The selection transistor and the memory capacitor of the memory cell are connected to one another in this case in such a way that when the selection transistor is driven via a word line the charge of the capacitor can be read in and out via a bit line. The main outlay in the development of the technology of DRAM cell arrangements consists in creating reliably operating DRAMs with a high packing density, that is to say a low space requirement per memory cell. It is particularly important in this case that the memory capacitor have a memory capacity that ensures an adequate read signal and is, however, insensitive to α particles. In order to ensure satisfactory memory capacity even in the case of a small cell area, memory capacitors have been developed that use the third dimension. Such three-dimensional memory capacitors are designed chiefly in the form of trench capacitors that are produced such that there is etched into the semiconductor substrate a trench that is filled up with a dielectric layer and a first memory electrode, the semiconductor substrate serving as second memory electrode. The selection transistor of the DRAM cell is usually constructed on the planar semiconductor surface next to the trench capacitor. Such a cell arrangement with a trench capacitor and a planar selection transistor requires at least a chip area of $8F^2$, F representing the minimum pattern size that can be produced by lithography with the technology

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in use. In order to be able to increase further the packing density of the DRAM cells, from generation to generation of memories the pattern size F has been reduced, on the one hand, and the overall chip area has been enlarged, on the other hand. However, problems arise in the case of this DRAM development because of excessively low chip yield, extreme rises in costs owing to the downscaling of patterns in the chip production and ever smaller ratios of capacitor capacitance to bit line length. For this reason, attempts are also being made in developing the technology of DRAMs to downscale the cell area of the DRAMs in order to be able to increase the packing density. One possibility for downscaling the cell size of the DRAM consists in this case of designing the selection transistor in three dimensions in a way similar to the memory capacitor. Various DRAM cell concepts are already known in which a trench capacitor is connected to a selection transistor constructed substantially vertically as a MISFET. In the case of the known DRAM cell designs with a vertical MISFET transistor and trench capacitor, there is the problem, however, that the active zone between the source electrode and the drain electrode is influenced by a word or bit line, adjacent to the DRAM cell, that is not used to control the relevant DRAM cell. This can lead, in particular in the case of the small pattern sizes of the DRAMs, to a leakage current through the active zone of the MISFET and thus to a loss of information in the memory cell. In order to exclude influencing of the active zone of a vertical MISFET transistor, and thereby to prevent leakage currents, US 5,519,236 proposes a semiconductor memory cell arrangement in the case of which the active zone between the source electrode and the drain electrode of the vertical selection transistor is completely surrounded by a gate structure, as a result of which the active zone is shielded from adjacent word and/or bit lines. The known cell arrangement is constructed in

this case such that trenches and pillars are executed in an arrangement with the pattern of a chessboard in the semiconductor substrate, the memory capacitor being executed in a trench, and the associated selection transistor being executed vertically in an adjacent pillar, and a gate electrode layer completely surrounding the active layer of the selection transistor. The gate electrode layer can in this case be part of a word line assigned to the DRAM. A bit line of the DRAM cell is, furthermore, arranged such that it runs, in a fashion offset perpendicularly from the trench capacitor, over the column of the associated vertical selection transistor, and is connected to the source electrode thereof. The chessboard pattern used in US 5,519,236 for arranging the DRAM cells has, however, a large space requirement such that the maximum packing density of the DRAM cells on the semiconductor substrate remains limited. Furthermore, in the case of the design of the DRAM cell in accordance with US 5,519,236 it is necessary for the purpose of patterning the word line to carry out a plurality of complicated lithography steps with mask processes that in turn necessitate a specific minimum cell size and thereby greatly limit the maximum packing density of the DRAM cell arrangement. It is therefore the object of the present invention to create a semiconductor memory cell arrangement with dynamic memory cells that renders possible a high packing density, that is to say a low space requirement per DRAM cell. This object is achieved by means of a semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 1 and of a method of producing such a semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 9 . Preferred refinements are specified in the dependent claims. In accordance with the invention, the dynamic memory cells with the trench capacitor and the associated selection transistor are respectively arranged following one another in the form of rows and/or columns. This configuration yields the maximum

possible packing density of the DRAM cells in three-dimensional space, and so the cell areas for the individual DRAM cells may be reduced to an area of size $4F^2$ to $6F^2$, F corresponding to the minimum pattern size of the lithography process used. Moreover, a maximum expansion of the cross section of the trench capacitors in relation to the cell area of the individual DRAM cells is possible owing to the matrix arrangement of the DRAM cells, as a result of which it is possible to achieve improved capacitance values of the trench capacitors.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, this three-dimensional dense packing of the individual DRAM cells can be achieved by virtue of the fact that the trench capacitor and the associated vertical selection transistor of the dynamic memory cells are formed substantially under an associated bit line. This yields the possibility of constructing the individual DRAM cells closely next to one another and simultaneously of ensuring a reliable shielding of the active zones of the selection transistors from adjacent word and bit lines by enclosing these active zones with the aid of the gate electrode structure.

In accordance with a further preferred embodiment, the regions with the vertical selection transistors, and the connection of the latter to the associated trench capacitors, are defined with the aid of the spacer technique, which renders it possible for these regions to be fixed in a self-adjusting fashion, and thus for there to be minimal pattern sizes for the DRAM cells.

In accordance with a further preferred embodiment, the vertical selection transistors are defined, in particular, by spacers with differently doped regions such that a self-adjusting definition of the vertical selection transistors is yielded with the aid of selective etching processes relating to the different

doping. Furthermore, it is possible thereby for a connecting region between the lower electrode of the selection transistor and the inner electrode of the trench capacitor to be fixed precisely in a reliable fashion.

In accordance with a further preferred embodiment, the lower electrodes of the selection transistors are produced by doping implantation and outdiffusion, the conducting connection to the inner electrode of the trench capacitor also being doped, and thus a self-adjusting connection being produced.

In accordance with a further preferred embodiment, the patterning of the upper electrode of the selection transistors is performed with the aid of the trench isolation technique, that ensures reliable insulation in conjunction with minimal process outlay.

The introduction of the gate electrode layer sequence around the active region of the selection transistors is carried out according to a further preferred embodiment with the aid of the spacer technique such that a self-adjusting and space-saving production of the word line regions is possible without lithographic processes.

In accordance with a further preferred embodiment, in order, in particular, to produce a staggered bit line connection, a supporting structure is constructed between the selection transistors, which belong in each case to consecutive bit lines, but to the same word line. These supporting structures are produced with the aid of the spacer technique such that they can be constructed to be self-adjusting and space-saving.

The invention will be explained in more detail with the aid of the attached drawings, in which:

figures 1 to 12 show a first embodiment of a semiconductor memory cell arrangement according to the invention, figures 1 to 11 reproducing method steps for producing this semiconductor memory cell arrangement, and in this case partial figure B illustrating a plan view, partial figure A a cross section along the line AA, and partial figure C a cross section along the line CC;

figure 13 shows a second embodiment of the semiconductor memory cell arrangement according to the invention, partial figure B reproducing a plan view, partial figure A a cross section along the line AA, and partial figure C a cross section along the line CC;

figure 14 shows a plan view of a third embodiment after the process step for producing the trench capacitors;

figure 15 shows a plan view of a fourth embodiment after the process step for producing the trench capacitors; and

figure 16 shows a circuit diagram of a dynamic read/write memory.

It is preferred to make use in dynamic read/write memories (DRAMs) of so-called 1-transistor cells whose circuit diagram is shown in figure 16. These 1-transistor cells comprise a memory capacitor 1 and a selection transistor 2. The selection transistor 2 is preferably designed in this case as a field effect transistor. This field effect transistor has a first electrode 21 and a second electrode 23, between which there is arranged an active region 22 in which it is possible to construct a current-conducting channel between the first electrode 21 and the second electrode

23. Arranged above the active region 22 is an insulating layer 24 and a gate electrode 25 that can act as a plate capacitor that can be used to influence the charge carrier density in the active region 22. The field effect transistor 2, also abbreviated below as MISFET, is of the enhancement type here, that is to say a flow of current between the first electrode 21 and the second electrode 23 via the active zone 22 is not set up until the application of a threshold voltage across the gate electrode 25.

The second electrode 23 of the MISFET 2 is connected via a connecting line 4 to a first electrode 11 of the memory capacitor 1. The second electrode 12 of the memory capacitor 1 is connected, in turn, to a capacitor plate 5 that is preferably common to all the memory capacitors of the DRAM cell arrangement. The first electrode 21 of the MISFET 2 is connected to a bit line 6 in order to be able to read in and out the information stored in the memory capacitor 1 in the form of charges. The read-in and read-out operation is controlled in this case via a word line 7 that is connected to the gate electrode 24 of the MISFET 2, in order by applying a voltage to produce a current-conducting channel in the active zone 22 between the first electrode 21 and the second electrode 23. Figure 12 shows a first embodiment according to the invention of a semiconductor memory cell arrangement with DRAM cells as illustrated in the circuit diagram according to figure 16. In the embodiment shown, the minimal pattern size F that can be produced with the aid of the lithography technique described is 0.1 µm. This means that the bit and word lines and the contact holes generally have a width of approximately 0.1 µm. However, it must be borne in mind that the figures illustrated are not true to scale. Moreover, the invention is not limited to the said pattern sizes. In the plan view shown in figure 12B of the semiconductor memory cell arrangement, the dashed line defines a DRAM

cell 10. These DRAM cells are arranged substantially longitudinally below bit lines 6 that run equidistantly at a spacing on the memory arrangement in the x-direction. Running perpendicular to these bit lines 6 in a y-direction in a fashion buried in the semiconductor substrate and likewise at equidistant spacings, are word lines 7 that intercept the bit lines 6 in the region of the DRAM cells 10 in each case. Figure 12A shows a cross section through the semiconductor cell arrangement along a bit line 6, and figure 12C shows the cross section through the semiconductor cell arrangement along a word line 7. The DRAM cells, which are substantially aligned along the bit line 6, are composed of pillars 101, in which the MISFET selection transistors 2 are substantially constructed, and trenches 102, in which the memory capacitors 1 are substantially constructed.

The cell arrangement shown is produced using silicon semiconductor technology, a weakly doped p-substrate serving as base. Executed in this p-semiconductor substrate 103 is a buried plate (not shown) in the form of a strong n-dopant that serves as a common second outer electrode 12 for all the trench capacitors of the cell arrangement. As is shown in figure 12A, there are constructed in the semiconductor substrate equally spaced trenches that make contact with the buried n-doped plate and can have any desired shape, but are preferably oval or rectangular in construction. These trenches are lined in their lower part with a dielectric layer 13 and filled up with n-doped polysilicon in this region. This n-doped polysilicon filling constitutes the first inner electrode 11 of the memory capacitor 1. It is preferred to use SiO_2 as dielectric layer 13 in the trench for the purpose of insulating the electrodes. The MISFET selection capacitors 2 are respectively constructed in the semiconductor pillars 101 between the trenches which, as is shown by the cross section according to

figure 12A, extend below the bit line 6. This MISFET transistor has the second electrode 23 in the form of a highly doped n-layer in the region of the upper end of the polysilicon layer 11 in the trench, that is to say the inner electrode of the trench capacitor. The active layer 22, which is weakly p-doped, is then constructed on this n-layer. The first electrode 21 is applied in turn as a highly doped n-layer to this active region 24. A conducting connection 4 is formed through the dielectric layer 13 lining the trench between the second electrode 23 of the MISFET transistor 2 and the inner electrode 11 of the trench capacitor 1. The connection 4 is formed between the second electrode 23 of the selection transistor 2 and the inner polysilicon electrode 11 of the memory capacitor 1 and in this case preferably comprises an n-doped polysilicon layer.

Furthermore, introduced vertically on an insulating layer 104, which is applied to the inner electrode 11 of the trench capacitor, between the pillar of the selection transistor belonging to the trench capacitor and the pillar of the selection transistor belonging to the trench capacitor following thereupon, is a layer sequence that substantially extends over the entire active region 22 of the selection transistor and consists of a thin gate insulating layer 24, preferably of SiO_2, a gate electrode layer 25, preferably of polysilicon, and a further current-conducting layer, preferably of tungsten, which serves as word line 7. As shown by the cross sections along the bit line in figure 12A and the word line in figure 12C, this layer sequence encloses the pillar of the selection transistor around the entire active region 24. The gate electrode layer sequence around the active region 24 of the selection transistor 2 is bounded by an insulating layer 105, preferably of Si_3N_4, that extends along the selection transistor 2 from the upper electrode 21 via the gate electrode layer sequence as far as the insulating layer 104 on the inner electrode 11 of the

trench capacitor 1. The region between the insulating layers 105, which delimit the gate electrode layer sequences of adjacent DRAM cells in the region of a trench, is preferably filled up by an SiO_2 layer 106. Reciprocal influencing of the active zones of consecutive selection transistors is reliably prevented by the surrounding gate. This means that no corresponding leakage currents can occur through the active zones of the MISFETs, and thus that no information losses can occur in the memory cells. As the cross section in figure 12C shows, a supporting pillar 108 is constructed between consecutive pillars with the selection transistors on the semiconductor substrate between the selection transistors that respectively belong to consecutive bit lines 6 but to the same word line 7. This supporting pillar 108 in this case preferably extends parallel to the pillar 101 with the selection transistor, there being constructed in each case between a pillar 101 of the selection transistor and a supporting pillar 108, which preferably consists of polysilicon, a layer sequence in the case of which an insulating layer 109 of SiO_2 runs up to the level of the active region 24 of the selection transistor, and on which the gate electrode layer sequence is then arranged vertically, and which is subsequently covered by the insulating layer 105 that extends beyond a supporting pillar 108 between two consecutive selection transistor pillars. The upper electrode 21 of the selection transistor 2 is connected, furthermore, to the associated bit line 6 via a pillar-like current-conducting layer 110. The current-conducting layer 110 preferably consists in this case of polysilicon, and the bit line 6 of tungsten. The free space between the bit lines is filled up by the SiO_2 layer 106. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement according to the invention, as it is shown in the exemplary embodiment according to figure 12, is distinguished in that the DRAM memory cells 10 are arranged in matrix form, the DRAM cells

being configured such that the vertical selection transistor 2 and the trench capacitor 1 run respectively below the associated bit line 6, and the memory cells are respectively arranged in the form of rows one below another. A maximal three-dimensional packing density of the DRAM cells can be produced, and thus a cell arrangement with a minimum cell area can be achieved, by means of this arrangement. Furthermore, it is ensured in the case of the configuration according to the invention that the active region of the selection transistors is completely surrounded by the gate electrode layer sequence and the associated word line 7, such that it is possible to avoid influence exerted by adjacent word and bit lines that do not belong to the relevant DRAM cell. In the exemplary embodiment according to figure 12, a minimum spacing is possible between two adjacent word lines of 2F (F corresponding to the minimum pattern size). In the exemplary embodiment shown in figure 12, it is also possible to interconnect the DRAM cells by constructing the supporting pillars 108 between adjacent bit lines, it always being possible for two bit lines to be staggered with one another. In accordance with the invention, a minimum cell size of $5F^2$ to $6F^2$ can be achieved given a staggered bit line interconnection. Instead of the staggered bit line interconnection shown in figure 12, the invention can also be applied to other known bit line interconnections. Figure 13B shows a plan view of a semiconductor memory cell arrangement for a so-called open bit line interconnection. With this second embodiment, the supporting structure shown in figure 12 is eliminated such that, although in the case of a cross section along a bit line 6 as illustrated in figure 13A the same cross section is yielded as in the case of the first embodiment in figure 12A, a cross section as shown in figure 13C results along a word line.

In the cross section shown in figure 13C, there is

constructed along a word line 7 between two selection transistors that belong to adjacent bit lines 6 a layer sequence in which there is arranged in each case on the SiO_2 layer 109 around the active layer of the selection transistors a gate electrode layer sequence with the gate dielectric 34 and the gate electrode layer 25 that is respectively connected to the layer for the word line 7. A minimum cell size of $4F^2$ to $5F^2$ is possible by means of this arrangement.

A possible process sequence for producing a semiconductor memory cell arrangement as illustrated in figure 12 is described in detail with the aid of figures 1 to 11. The starting material is a p-doped silicon substrate S1. After several cleaning steps, an SiO_2 layer (not illustrated) with a thickness of approximately 8 nm is deposited on this starting material. An Si_3N_4 layer S2 with a thickness of approximately 200 nm is then produced on this oxide layer. An SiO_2 layer with a thickness of approximately 800 nm is applied in turn to this nitride layer. This layer sequence serves as masking layer for the following trench etching. A mask is then used to carry out photolithography to define the trench capacitors. After this photolithography process, anisotropic etching of the masking layer is performed, CHF_3 and O_2, for example, being used for oxide etching, and C_2F_6 and O_2 being used for nitride etching. After production of the etching mask for the trenches in which the memory capacitors are to be constructed, the resist mask for the photolithography is removed. The silicon layer is then etched anisotrophically down to a depth of approximately 10 µm with HBr and HF, in order to expose the trenches for the memory capacitors. Subsequently, a buried plate is formed in the silicon substrate for the common second electrode of the memory capacitors, use preferably being made of an arsenic glass. For this purpose, an arsenic glass layer is preferably produced with a thickness of approximately 2 nm. A polymer

photoresist, preferably PMMA, with a thickness of approximately 500 nm is then produced on this arsenic glass layer and fills up the etched trenches. This polymer photoresist layer is then etched back outside the trenches to a thickness of approximately 2 µm, for example with O_2. Subsequently, the arsenic glass above the polymer photoresist in the trenches is etched away, for example with HF, and then the polymer photoresist layer in the trenches is removed, for example with O_2. Arsenic is diffused from the arsenic glass into the p-doped silicon in order to produce a buried strongly n-doped layer that forms the common outer electrode of all the memory capacitors of the semiconductor memory cell arrangement. The remaining arsenic glass is then removed with the aid of HF etching.

In order to produce the dielectric layer of the memory capacitors in trenches, an ONO (Oxide Nitride Oxide) deposition is undertaken, a layer thickness S3 of approximately 3 nm being selected. Subsequently, the deposition of highly n-doped polysilicon S4 with a thickness of approximately 200 nm is performed in order to fill up the trenches. The projecting polysilicon outside the trenches is subsequently etched back. The ONO dielectric that projects above the trenches is removed with the aid of HF. Preferably using the TEOS method, an SiO_2 layer approximately 20 nm thick is then produced and etched away anisotropicly with CHF_3 and O_2 in the region of the trenches. Subsequently, highly doped polysilicon with a thickness of approximately 200 nm is deposited once again and etched back up to approximately 800 nm, thus producing a pattern in plan view as shown in figure 1B. Figure 1A shows a cross section along the line AA through the trenches for the memory capacitors.

As an alternative to the oval shape, shown in figure 1B, of the trenches for the memory capacitors, it is also possible to produce trenches for the memory

capacitors with a different shape such as is illustrated, for example in figures 14 and 15. In particular, it is possible thereby to select trench shapes that render possible a relatively large surface of the side wall and thus an enlarged memory capacity of the capacitor.

For example, it is possible via the shape of the trenches of the trench capacitors to determine the shape of the ribs in which the vertical selection transistors are arranged. If the trenches are formed with a rectangular shape, the interspaces between the ribs with the selection transistors are, for example, smaller in the direction of the word line than in the direction of the bit lines, as a result of which continuous and mutually separated word lines are formed by means of spacer deposition.

After the construction of the memory capacitors in trenches in the semiconductor substrate as shown in figures 1A and 1B, the selection transistors are patterned. The first step for this purpose is to apply a thin Si_3N_4 layer S5 with a thickness of approximately 4 nm. An undoped layer S6 of amorphous silicon with a thickness of approximately 20 nm is deposited on this Si_3N_4 layer S5. This amorphous silicon is then etched back, for example with C_2F_6 and O_2, such that the amorphous silicon remains only at the side walls of the trenches and thus forms spacers. Subsequently, the spacers are highly doped on one side on the side walls in the trenches, it being possible to undertake both n-doping and p-doping. Figure 2A and figure 2B show the silicon wafer after this last process step, the doping layer being denoted by S7.

A separation of the amorphous silicon spaces is now performed with the aid of a photolithography step. When the photolithography step is performed with the aid of the hard-surface mask method, the first step after the

TEOS method is to apply an oxide layer S8 with a thickness of approximately 80 nm. This oxide is then patterned, for example with the aid of CHF_3 and O_2 etching, and the amorphous silicon spacers S6, S7 are selectively removed, for example with C_2F_6 and O_2, at the exposed sites. After this process step, a plan view of the semiconductor pattern is produced, as shown in figure 3B. It can be seen clearly here that the amorphous silicon spacers S6, S7 are removed in the exposed trench regions. Figure 3A shows a cross section through the silicon wafer along a remaining oxide path S8. After the selective etching of the amorphous silicon spacers S6, S7 in the trenches, the oxide S8 is completely removed, for example with CHF_3 and O_2. As an alternative to the outlined hard-surface mask photolithography process, it is also possible to use a conventional resist mask instead of the oxide mask.

After the removal of the oxide mask, a thermal activation of the dopants in the amorphous silicon spacer S7 on one trench side is carried out, the amorphous silicon spacers S6, S7 being recrystallized. The undoped silicon spacer S6 is then removed with the aid of a further photolithography step. For this purpose, a polymer photoresist S9, preferably PMMA, with a thickness of approximately 500 nm is firstly spun on. This polymer layer is then etched back completely outside the trenches, for example with O_2. Subsequently, the undoped silicon spacer is removed selectively relative to the doped silicon spacer, which is either strongly p- or n-doped. The ONO layer is then etched back isotropically by approximately 40 nm with HF. After this process step, a plan view of the silicon wafer as shown in figure 4B results. Figure 4A shows a cross section along the line AA.

It can clearly be seen that a cutout S10 in the upper edge of the inner polysilicon layer S4 of the trench capacitor is exposed. The connection of the inner

electrode of the trench capacitor to the associated selection transistor is then produced in this region. The illustrated process cycle for constructing this contact pad with the aid of spacers permits self-adjusting patterning of this contact pad, and thus the possibility of producing extremely small cell patterns. The technique of one-sided doping of the silicon spacer is particularly decisive in this case, selected etching processes of the spacer pattern thereby being possible. Exact self-adjusting fixing of the contact pad between the trench capacitor and the associated selection capacitor is thereby achieved.

After the isotropic backetching of the ONO layer S3, which serves to fix the contact pad with the inner electrode of the trench capacitor, this contact pad is then filled up. The first step is the complete removal of the PMMA layer S9, for example with O_2. Subsequently, the remaining doped polysilicon spacer S7 is etched away, and undoped amorphous silicon S11 with a layer thickness of approximately 15 nm is deposited on the semiconductor pattern. This amorphous silicon is subsequently etched back isotropically with C_2F_6 and O_2 such that the amorphous silicon is again removed completely other than at the contact pad in the trench. The silicon wafer after this process step is shown in plan view in figure 5B and in cross section along the line AA in figure 5A.

After the contact pad is filled up, there is then performed in preparation for the patterning of the selection transistor in the pillar next to the trench a process cycle in which, preferably after the TEOS method, oxide S12 with a thickness of approximately 80 nm is firstly deposited. This SiO_2 layer is then etched back by approximately 130 nm with CHF_6 and O_2 such that the pillars between the trenches in the region of the upper Si_3N_4 layer are exposed. This Si_3N_4 layer is then removed completely for example with H_3PO_4.

Subsequently, the SiO_2 layer is then etched back once more by 10 nm with O_2. The silicon wafer after this process step is shown in plan view in figure 6B and in the cross section along the line AA in figure 6A.

Subsequently, the vertical selection transistors are constructed laterally relative to the memory capacitors arranged in the trenches. In order to define the n-channel transistor regions, high n-doping, preferably by means of arsenic doping, is introduced in the cell field in a first step by ion implantation and stretches after the outdiffusion to a depth of approximately 100 nm with a doping of $5 \times 10^{19}/cm^3$. This upper n-doped layer S13 fixes the first electrode of the transistor. In order to construct the second electrode, preferably likewise by ion implantation with arsenic, there is constructed in the cell field a buried layer S14 in the case of which the depth of the maximum is preferably in the region of approximately 400 nm, a vertical layer thickness of approximately 200 nm being produced after the outdiffusion. A doping of approximately $5 \times 10^{18}/cm^3$ is selected for this n-layer. A doping of the contact pad S11 between the second electrode and the inner electrode of the trench capacitor is also carried out simultaneously by means of the last outdiffusion step.

After the production of the first electrode and the second electrode, the channel region is defined by a well implantation. For this purpose, ion implantation is carried out, preferably with boron, for the purpose of p-doping, a doping of $1 \times 10^{16}/cm^3$ at a depth of approximately 1 µm being produced, for example. The well S15 is then produced by outdiffusion, it also being possible to perform the outdiffusion step together with the subsequent gate oxidation step. The starting voltage of the n-channel transistor, which is designed to be self-locking, is fixed by setting the doping in the p-well S1. Figure 7B shows a plan view of the silicon wafer after the definition of the selection

transistor. Figure 7A illustrates a cross section along the line AA of figure 7B, and figure 7C illustrates a cross section along the line CC of figure 7B. The production of the second electrode by ion implantation and outdiffusion permits a self-adjusting joining of the inner electrode of the trench capacitor, since the contact pad is also automatically doped by the outdiffusion.

After the definition of the first and second electrode regions, and of the channel area of the selection transistors, these selection transistors are isolated in the vertical, that is to say y-direction with the aid of trench isolation (STI) technology. For this purpose, the first step in a process cycle is to use the photolithography technique to pattern an Si_3N_4 layer S16 that is deposited with a thickness of approximately 100 nm. The nitride layer S16 is selectively etched in this case with C_2F_6 and O_2, for example, such that strips of the nitride layer remain in the x-direction over the trench capacitors and fix the region of the selection capacitors respectively belonging to the trench capacitors. After the removal of the resist mask, the silicon layer exposed between the trench capacitors is then etched to a depth of approximately 600 nm, for example with C_2F_6 and O_2. After conclusion of this process step, the silicon wafer is shown in plan view in figure 8B, in cross section along the line AA in figure 8A, and in cross section along the line CC in figure 8C. A simple patterning and isolation of the selection transistors is achieved in the y-direction by means of the selected trench isolation technique, and so the isolation is possible with the aid of a low process outlay.

In a further process cycle, a spacer structure is subsequently produced between the selection transistors in the vertical direction, in order to produce a semiconductor memory cell arrangement with a staggered

bit line pattern, as illustrated in the embodiment in figure 12. The first step for this purpose is to use the TEOS method to deposit an SiO_2 layer with a thickness of approximately 50 nm. Subsequently, spacer etching of the oxide layer S12 is performed with C_2F_6 and O_2, overetching of approximately 80 nm being executed. Selectively undoped polysilicon with a thickness of approximately 550 nm is then grown on in the exposed trenches between the spacers such that a supporting pattern is produced. Optionally, the supporting pattern can also be produced by disconnection and backetching of silicon, Si_3N_4 and other suitable materials. After production of the supporting pattern, a plan view of the silicon wafer as shown in figure 9B results. Figure 9A shows a cross section along the line AA, and figure 9C a cross section along the line CC.

If, instead of a staggered bit line interconnection as shown in figure 12, the aim is to use an open bit line interconnection as shown in the embodiment according to figure 13, there is no need for a supporting pattern, and so it is possible to eliminate the process cycle that leads from the process image of figure 8 to the process image of figure 9.

The production of the supporting pattern is followed by the production of a top oxide on the memory capacitors for the purpose of insulating them. An Si_3N_4 layer is completely removed for this purpose in a first step with H_3PO_4. Thereafter the remaining SiO_2 layer is etched back to a depth of approximately 380 nm with CHF_3 and O_2, the etching process not being selective in relation to Si_3N_4. The result of this is that the pillars with the transistor patterns and the supporting structures are completely exposed. Subsequently, a trench top oxide S18 with a thickness of preferably 40 nm is produced for the purpose of insulating the memory capacitors. The silicon wafer after this process

step is shown in plan view in figure 10B, in cross section along the line AA in figure 10A, and in cross section along the line CC in figure 10C.

After the production of the trench top oxide S18, the gate pattern for the selection transistors are produced, as are the word lines, in a further process sequence. A gate dielectric S19, preferably as a thermal oxide with a thickness of approximately 4 nm, is grown on for this purpose in a first process step. An approximately 20 nm thick polysilicon layer S20 that is highly n-doped is then subsequently deposited. This polysilicon layer S20 serves as gate electrode for the selection transistors. The word lines connecting the individual gate electrodes are then produced. The first step for this purpose is to produce an approximately 2 nm thick barrier layer (not shown) of tungsten nitride on which tungsten is then deposited with a layer thickness S21 of approximately 20 nm.

In order for the gate electrodes of the selection transistors and the associated word lines to be patterned, the polysilicon layer S20, the barrier layer and the tungsten layer S21 are then etched off anisotropically by approximately 50 nm, preferably by means of C_2F_6 and O_2, so as to form spacers from the gate electrode pattern and the word line pattern around the pillars with the selection transistors, the active regions between the upper and lower electrodes in the pillars being completely embraced by the selection transistors. After this spacer patterning of the gate electrodes and of the word lines, a thin approximately 20 nm thick Si_3N_4 layer S22 is deposited in a further process step, and an approximately 200 nm thick SiO_2 layer S23 is then produced on it, preferably with the aid of the TEOS method. This oxide layer S23 is then ground flat up to the top edge of the nitride layer S22, preferably with the aid of chemico-mechanical polishing. The nitride is selectively etched off subsequently with C_2F_6 and O_2. After backetching of the

oxide, preferably with HF, by approximately 40 nm, a pattern results in the silicon wafer as shown in the plan view of figure 11B, in cross section along the line AA in figure 11A, and in cross section along the line CC in figure 11C.

Starting from the process pattern shown in figure 11, the polysilicon contacts for the upper electrodes of the selection transistors, and the tungsten metallization for constructing the bit lines are then produced such that a DRAM memory cell arrangement results as shown in figures 12A to C. If, as an alternative, the process sequence for constructing a supporting pattern is dispensed with, the result is a DRAM memory cell arrangement as shown in figures 13A to C.

Owing to the process cycle according to the invention, it is possible to produce a DRAM memory cell arrangement, with the trench capacitors and vertical selection transistors, in the case of which the active zone of the selection transistors is completely surrounded by the gate and word line pattern, and which is distinguished by a minimum space requirement. The maximum packing density of the DRAM cells is achieved, in particular, by the use of a self-adjusting memory patterning for the word lines, as explained above.

As an alternative to the embodiments shown, it is within the scope of the invention to use anisotropic and/or crystal-oriented processes for expanding the trench capacitors, in particular, in order, in addition to the trench shapes shown in figure 1B, figure 14 and figure 15, also to achieve further cross sections for the memory capacitors with the aid of which the memory capacity of these capacitors can likewise be expanded.

It is also within the scope of the invention beyond the exemplary embodiments illustrated above to modify the

specified dimensions, concentrations, materials and processes in a suitable way in order to produce the DRAM memory cell arrangement according to the invention. In particular, it is possible in this case to have recourse to known process sequences for constructing the selection transistors, chiefly of the source/drain zones. Furthermore, there is the possibility of complementary design of the conductivity type of the doped zones in the semiconductor pattern. Moreover, the specified dielectrics can also be replaced by other known dielectrics. Instead of silicon oxide, it is possible, for example, to use silicon nitride, aluminum oxide, zirconium oxide, oxide-nitride mixtures and low k materials. Instead of the ONO intermediate layer in the memory capacitors, it is also possible to use other known dielectrics with a high dielectric constant such as, for example, aluminum oxide, zirconium oxide, tantalum oxide, hafnium oxide, perovskite, in particular BST. Instead of using tungsten to construct the spacer patterns for the word lines, it is also possible, for example, to use silicides such as, for example, tungsten silicide or silicides of titanium and cobalt, or doped polysilicon. Furthermore, in addition to the illustrated layers, further layer sequences can be introduced into the semiconductor pattern, in particular to construct barriers in order to avoid instances of undesired diffusion. In the final analysis, selectivities and mask sequences can be modified in a suitable way in the illustrated patterning processes, without departing from the range of the invention.

The features of the invention that are disclosed in the foregoing description, the drawings and the claims can be significant both alone and in any desired combination for the implementation of the invention in its various refinements.

With reference to figure 13A, the vertical selection

transistor 2 of the DRAM memory cell comprises an upper electrode 21 that is n^+-doped, an active intermediate layer 22 that is weakly p-doped, and a lower electrode 23 that is likewise n^+-doped. Additionally introduced into the lower electrode 23 is an outdiffusion D whose dopant is outdiffused from the inner electrode 11 of the trench capacitor 1 through the conducting connection 4 into the lower electrode 23.

The vertical selection transistor 2 is constructed in a rib that has the width B. The width B is selected to be so small that the active intermediate layer 22, in which the channel of the transistor 2 is arranged, can be fully depleted. This is achieved, for example, by virtue of the fact that adjacent intermediate layers in adjacent ribs are arranged in a 2F raster. Here, F denotes the smallest periodic, lithographically image structure on the substrate. The width B of the ribs is designed to be substantially smaller than the interspaces between the ribs, such that the interspaces between the ribs in which the trench capacitors are arranged have a width of between 1F and 2F, and the ribs have the width B that results from 2F minus the width B of the trenches. The ribs therefore have a width B that is sublithographic.

The plan view of a memory cell field according to the invention is illustrated in figure 13B. The rib in which the selection transistor is formed has the width B and a length L. The length L runs in the direction of the word lines, and the width B in the direction of the bit lines. In this case, the length L is formed to be larger than the width B. The invention renders this possible by forming a continuous word line with the aid of a spacer arrangement deposited on the rib. The length L is selected such that the spacer depositions on adjacent ribs touch one another and thus form the continuous word line. Adjacent word lines are separated from one another along the bit line direction, since

the rib width B is formed to be smaller than the rib length L, such that adjacent spacer depositions do not touch one another in the direction of the bit line.

The lower electrode 23 extends in the rib along the entire length L and the entire width B such that no additional body contact with the active intermediate layer 22 can be formed. Consequently, no electric contact is made with the active intermediate layer 22 next to the upper electrode 21 and the lower electrode 23. This is also not necessary, since the invention advantageously constructs the rib with the width B to be so narrow so that it is completely depleted and thus the floating body effects disadvantageously occurring in field effect transistors can be avoided.

The lower electrode 23 is formed, for example, as a buried layer before the trench capacitors and the ribs of the memory arrangement are patterned, as a result of which the respective lower electrodes of the adjacent selection transistors are separated from one another. For this purpose, the lower electrode can be formed as an epitaxially grown-on layer that is formed with the aid of an appropriate n^+-doping. The active layer 22 is then likewise grown epitaxially onto the epitaxially grown-on layer 23. As an alternative, the lower electrode can be produced by means of implantation, the layer 23 being implanted with suitable implantation parameters as a buried layer.

The position and the thickness of the layer 23 from which the lower electrodes 23 are subsequently formed can be set very accurately with the aid of the said method.

The upper electrode 21 can subsequently be formed by means of implantation both before and after the formation of the trenches for the trench capacitors 1.

The gate electrode and the word line are formed by means of spacer technology. A layer that is also precipitated around the ribs of the selection transistors is deposited conformly (isotropically) for this purpose, for example. Directional (anistropic) etching is used to etch back the previously deposited layer such that a gate electrode is formed around the ribs. The individual gate electrodes around the ribs are continuous in the direction of the word line, since the spacing of the ribs in the direction of the word lines is so small that a continuous word line is produced.

The active intermediate layer 22 in which a channel of the vertical selection transistor 2 can be constructed is substantially arranged between the trenches 1 of adjacent memory cells. The controllable flow of current in the selection transistors takes place in this case substantially between the trenches.

The trench capacitor 1 and the associated vertical selection transistor 2 of the dynamic memory cell 10 can be arranged substantially below an associated bit line 6.

The minimum spacing between two adjacent word lines can be formed twice as large as the minimum pattern size of the lithography technique with the aid of which the memory cells are produced. The minimum spacing between two adjacent bit lines can likewise be formed twice as large as the minimum pattern size of the lithography technique with the aid of which the memory cells are produced, thus rendering possible memory cells that require a substrate surface of $4F^2$.

The supporting pillars according to the invention render possible memory cells that require a substrate surface of $6F^2$. The greater space requirement can be used for the purpose of implementing, for example, a

folded bit line concept in the case of which a read amplifier compares an active bit line with a nonactive bit line. In this case, it is possible according to the invention for the word line to be formed in a self-adjusting fashion without a mask both for the $4F^2$ memory cell and for the $6F^2$ memory cell, and this economizes on an additional space requirement for adjustment tolerances.

A region of the inner electrode of the trench capacitors 1 can be exposed in the selective etching of the doped, separated spacers.

The upper electrode 21 of the selection transistor 2 can be defined by a trench isolation process and formed by means of a subsequent implantation.

Patent claims:

1. A semiconductor memory cell configuration comprising:

bit lines;

word lines;

dynamic memory cells disposed in a matrix and having trench capacitors and vertical selection transistors, said trench capacitors being connected to associated ones of said vertical selection transistors in a substantially parallel direction to the bit lines, each of said dynamic memory cells having:

a trench capacitor having:

a block-shaped inner electrode;

a dielectric intermediate layer surrounding said inner electrode; and

an outer electrode in contact with said dielectric intermediate layer;

a vertical selection transistor disposed substantially above said trench capacitor and having:

a layer sequence disposed offset from said inner electrode of said trench capacitor, said layer sequence having:

a first electrode connected to a respective one of said bit lines;

an active intermediate layer; and

a second electrode connected to said inner electrode of said trench capacitor;

an insulating layer; and

a gate electrode layer connected to a respective one of said word lines, said gate electrode layer and said insulating layer completely surrounding said active intermediate layer, said one word line and said one bit line crossing one another; and

said trench capacitors and associated ones of said vertical selection transistors of said dynamic memory cells being disposed in rows respectively along said bit lines and in columns respectively along said word lines directly following one another and in each case with a substantially equal spacing from said bit lines.

2. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the active intermediate layer , in which a channel of the vertical selection transistor can be constructed, is arranged substantially between the trenches of adjacent trench capacitors .

3. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the dynamic memory cells are constructed such that substantially the selection transistor is arranged as a first column and substantially the trench capacitor is arranged as a second column.

4. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the trench capacitors of the dynamic memory cells are constructed such that in a semiconductor substrate it is the case that both equally spaced trenches are formed in an x-direction and equally spaced trenches are formed in a y-direction, said trenches being lined with a thin dielectric layer and being filled up with a block-shaped highly doped semiconductor layer as inner electrode and being covered by an insulating layer , the thin dielectric layer being in contact with a buried highly doped plate in the semiconductor substrate as outer electrode.

5. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that the trenches in which the trench capacitors of the dynamic memory cells are constructed are of oval, rectangular or square cross section.

6. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 4 or 5, characterized in that the selection capacitor is a MISFET transistor that, in the region of the upper end of the inner capacitor electrode, has the second electrode in the form of a highly doped layer on which a weakly doped layer is arranged as active region , and the first electrode is arranged as highly doped layer, a conductive connection being formed between the second electrode of the MISFET transistor and the inner electrode of the trench capacitor through the

dielectric layer lining the trench.

7. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that, between the column of the MISFET transistor belonging to the trench capacitor and the column of the MISFET transistor belonging to the trench capacitor following thereupon, there is introduced on the insulating layer that covers the inner electrode of the trench capacitor a gate electrode layer sequence that extends substantially around the entire active region of the MISFET transistor and comprises a gate dielectric layer , a gate electrode layer and a conducting layer that serves as word line.

8. The semiconductor memory cell arrangement as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that there is constructed between the selection transistors that belong to the same word line and, in each case, to consecutive bit lines a supporting column that preferably extends parallel to the column with the selection transistor, the gate electrode layer sequence being provided in each case between a column of the selection transistor and a supporting column of the gate electrode layer sequence.

9 A method for producing a semiconductor memory cell configuration with bit lines, word lines, and dynamic memory cells that in each case have a trench capacitor and a vertical selection transistor, which comprises:

forming trench capacitors in a matrix, the trench capacitors and associated ones of the vertical selection transistors of the dynamic memory cells respectively directly following one another in rows and in columns, each trench capacitor having a trench, a block-shaped inner electrode, a dielectric intermediate layer, and an outer electrode, the dielectric intermediate layer being formed in the trench and the inner electrode being subsequently introduced into the trench;

forming vertical selection transistors substantially above each of the trench capacitors, each vertical selection transistor having a layer sequence disposed offset from the inner electrode of a respective trench capacitor, the layer sequence having a first, upper electrode, an active intermediate layer, and a second, lower electrode, the second, lower electrode being connected to the inner electrode of the respective trench capacitor, and the first, upper electrode being connected to a respective one of the bit lines;

forming an insulating layer as gate oxide around the active intermediate layer, the insulating layer completely surrounding the intermediate layer;

depositing a gate electrode layer on the insulating layer and forming a respective one of the word lines from selection transistors along the columns adjacent to the gate electrode layer; and

forming a respective bit line along rows that cross a word line.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9, characterized by the process steps of:

- providing a semiconductor substrate;
- producing trenches in the semiconductor substrate;
- constructing the trench capacitors in the trenches;
- forming the columns for the vertical selection transistor and for connecting it to the associated trench capacitor with the aid of the spacer technique;
- producing a vertical layer sequence of second electrode , active region and first

electrode of the selection transistors ;

- applying and etching back a conductive layer such that a gate electrode layer is formed as spacer around the entire active region of the selection transistor , and the gate electrode layers of adjacent selection transistors touch one another and form a word line ;
- producing contacts to the source electrodes of the selection transistors ; and
- constructing the bit lines .

11. The method as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that before producing the trenches in the semiconductor substrate the lower, second electrode of the vertical layer sequence for the selection transistors is grown onto the substrate by means of epitaxial growth, a highly n-doped layer being formed for the lower, second electrode and being overgrown with a weakly doped layer for the active intermediate layer .

12. The method as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that before the production of the trenches in the semiconductor substrate the lower, second electrode of the vertical layer sequence for the selection transistors is formed by means of an implantation, n-dopant being introduced as buried layer into the substrate.

13. The method as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that after the production of the trenches in the semiconductor substrate the lower, second electrode of the vertical layer sequence for the selection transistor is formed by means of outdiffusion of dopant from the inner electrode of the trench capacitor .

14. The method as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that the trenches are defined with the aid of a

photolithographic step such that they are equally spaced in the semiconductor substrate in an x-direction and are also equally spaced in a y-direction, the trenches being of oval, rectangular or square cross section.

15. The method as claimed in one of claims 10 to 14, characterized in that the definition of the regions with the vertical selection transistors and the region with the connection to the associated trench capacitors covers the following process sequence:

- producing a spacer structure in the trenches above the trench capacitors ;
- one-sided doping of the spacer structure;
- splitting the spacer structure with the aid of a lithography step; and
- selectively etching the spacer structure on the basis of the differently doped spacer regions.

16. The method as claimed in claim 15, characterized in that the spacer is split with the aid of a hard-surface mask lithography process.

17. The method as claimed in one of claims 10 to 16, characterized in that outdiffusion (D) in the second electrode of the selection transistor is formed by outdiffusion of dopant from the inner electrode .

18. The method as claimed in one of claims 10 to 17, characterized in that the following process cycle is carried out in order to construct gate layer sequences;

- producing an insulating layer on the trench capacitors in the trenches;
- forming a gate dielectric layer , a gate electrode layer and a conducting layer, which serves as word line , around the pillars with the active region of the selection transistors ;

- anisotropically etching the gate electrode layer and the conducting layer in order to form spacers; and
- depositing an insulating layer.

19. The method as claimed in one of claims 10 to 19, characterized in that supporting pillars are constructed with the aid of the spacer technique between the selection transistors , which respectively belong to consecutive bit lines , but to the same word lines .

20. The method as claimed in claim 19, characterized in that a gate electrode layer sequence is constructed vertically between the supporting pillars and the pillars with the active region of the selection transistor.