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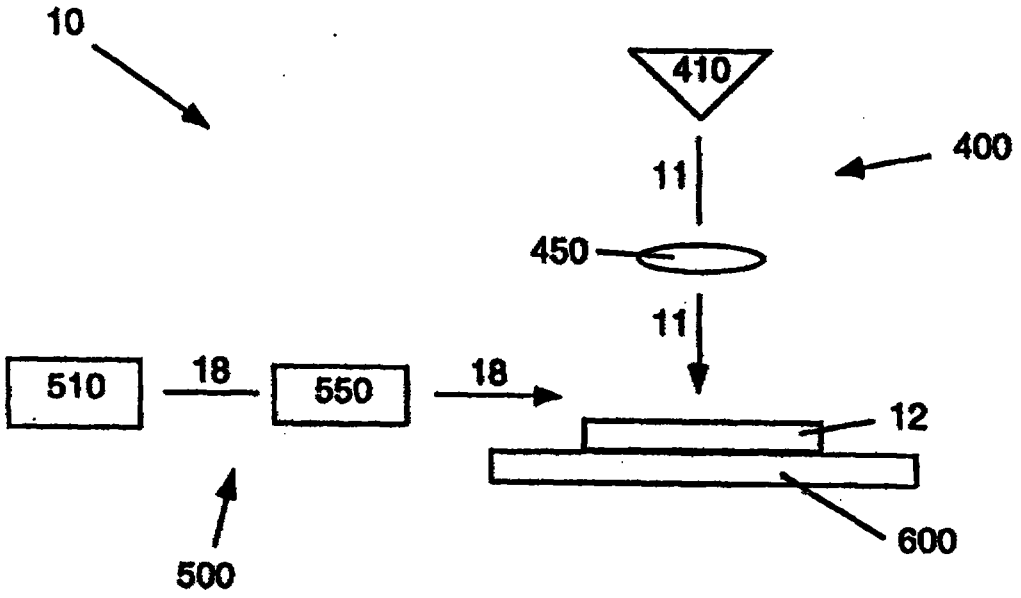
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(57) Abstract

An apparatus and method for selectively removing undesired material from the surface of a substrate provides a flow of inert gas over the undesired material susbtrate surface while irradiating the undesired material with energetic photons. The invention enables removal of undesired material without altering the physical properties of the material underlying or adjacent the removed, undesired material. The invention can be applied to produce changes in surface topography (including nano-structuring and surface planarization).

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