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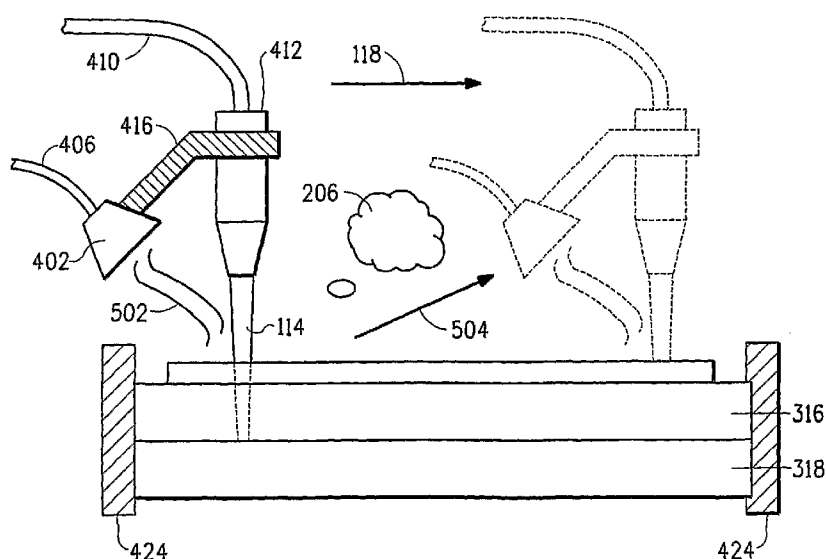
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(54) Title: LASER WELDING APPARATUS AND LASER WELDING METHOD



(57) Abstract: A laser welding method and apparatus especially suitable for laser welding polymer articles having low light transmissivity at the wavelength used for laser welding. A protective region is provided to the articles being welded that is designed to protect the irradiated surface from degrading during welding.