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(54) **LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY CELL AND
LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY**

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11, 2003, now Pat. No. 7,339,644.

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G02F 1/1333 (2006.01)

G02F 1/1337 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** 349/122; 349/138; 349/129

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 349/122,
349/138

See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An array substrate, a gate insulating layer, and a data line are deposited sequentially on a liquid crystal cell. At a part of this configuration, a planarizing layer covers the gate insulating layer and the data line. The planarizing layer has a groove formed right above the data line. A common electrode is formed on internal walls of the groove and on the flat surface of the planarizing layer corresponding to the shoulders of the groove. A pixel electrode is formed on the flat surface with a certain distance from the common electrode.

11 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets

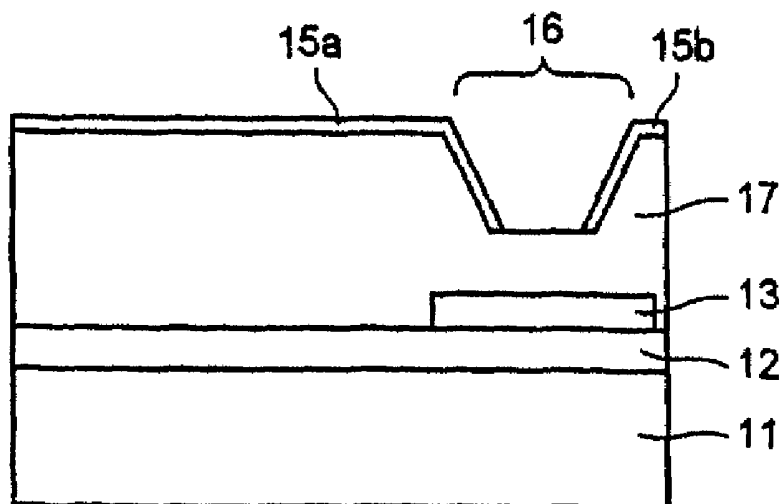


FIG. 1

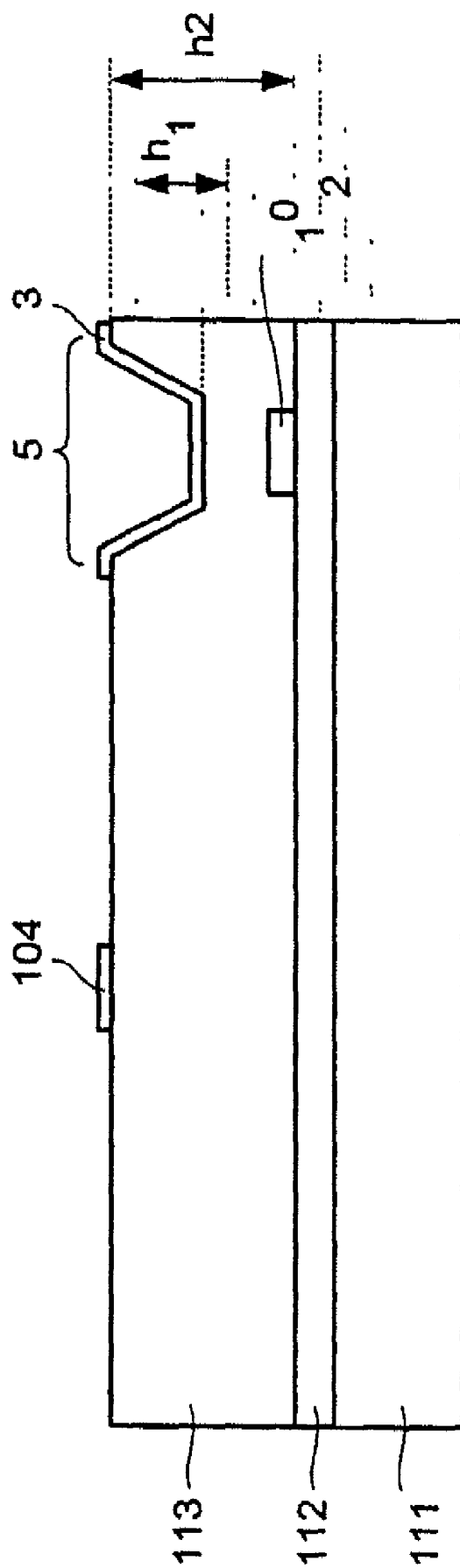


FIG.2A

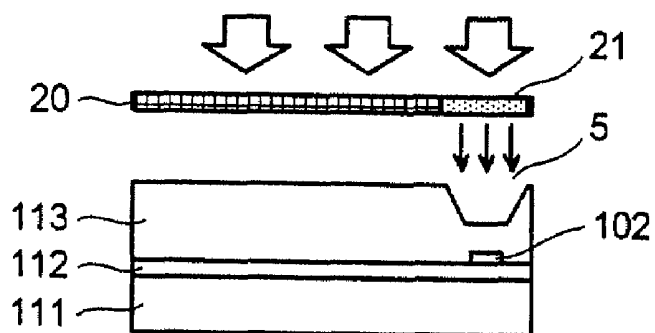
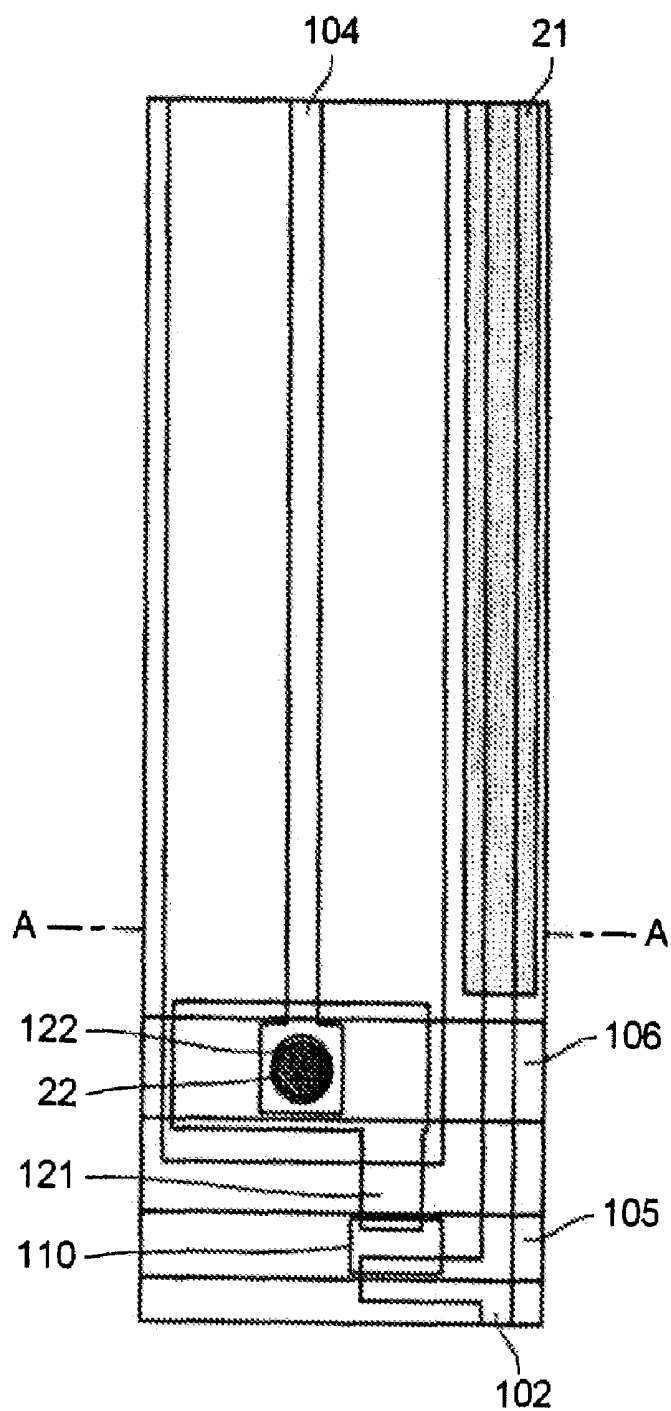


FIG.2B



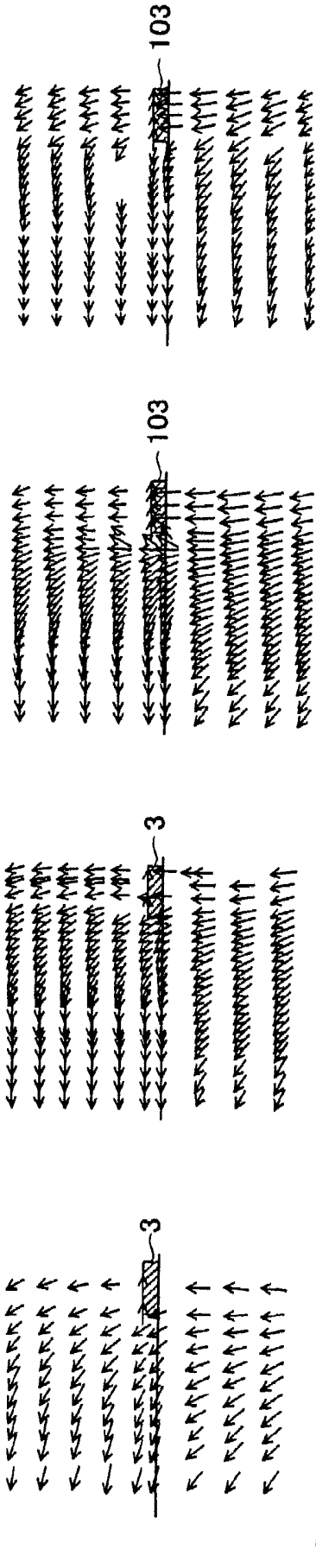


FIG. 4

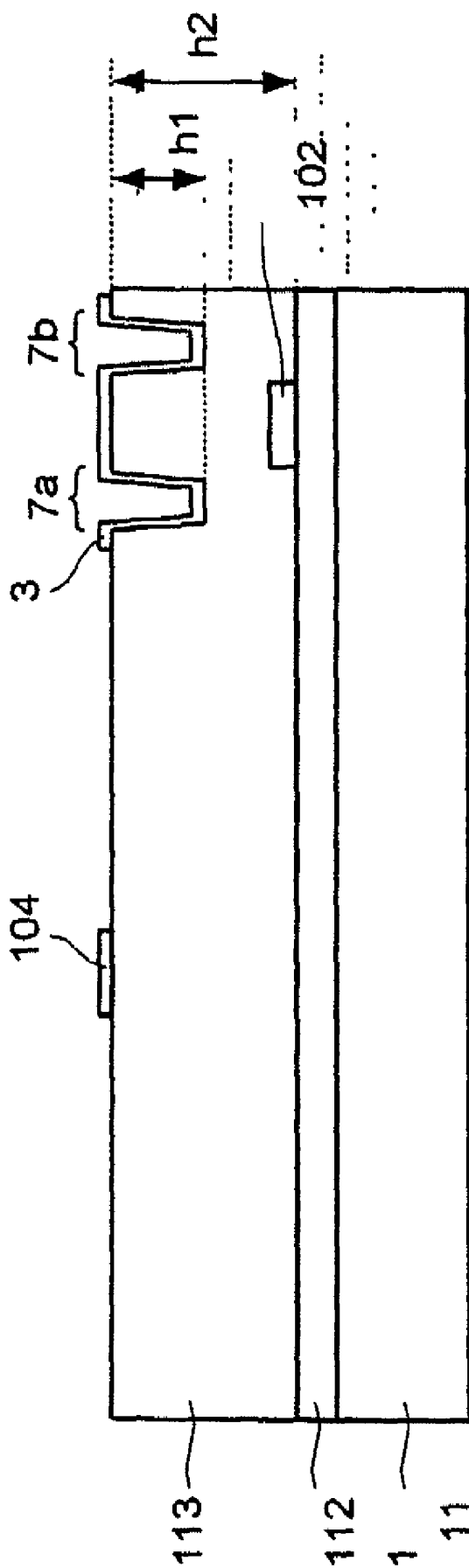


FIG.5A

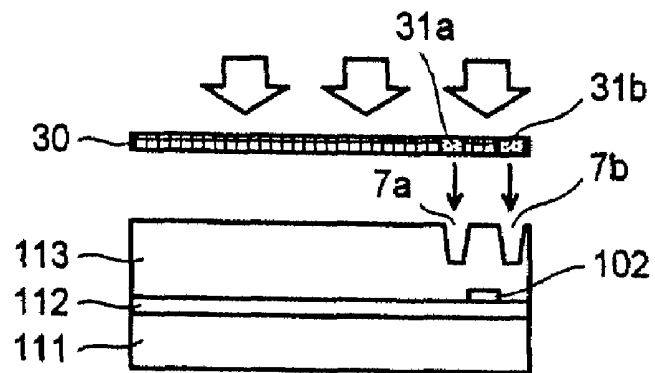


FIG.5B

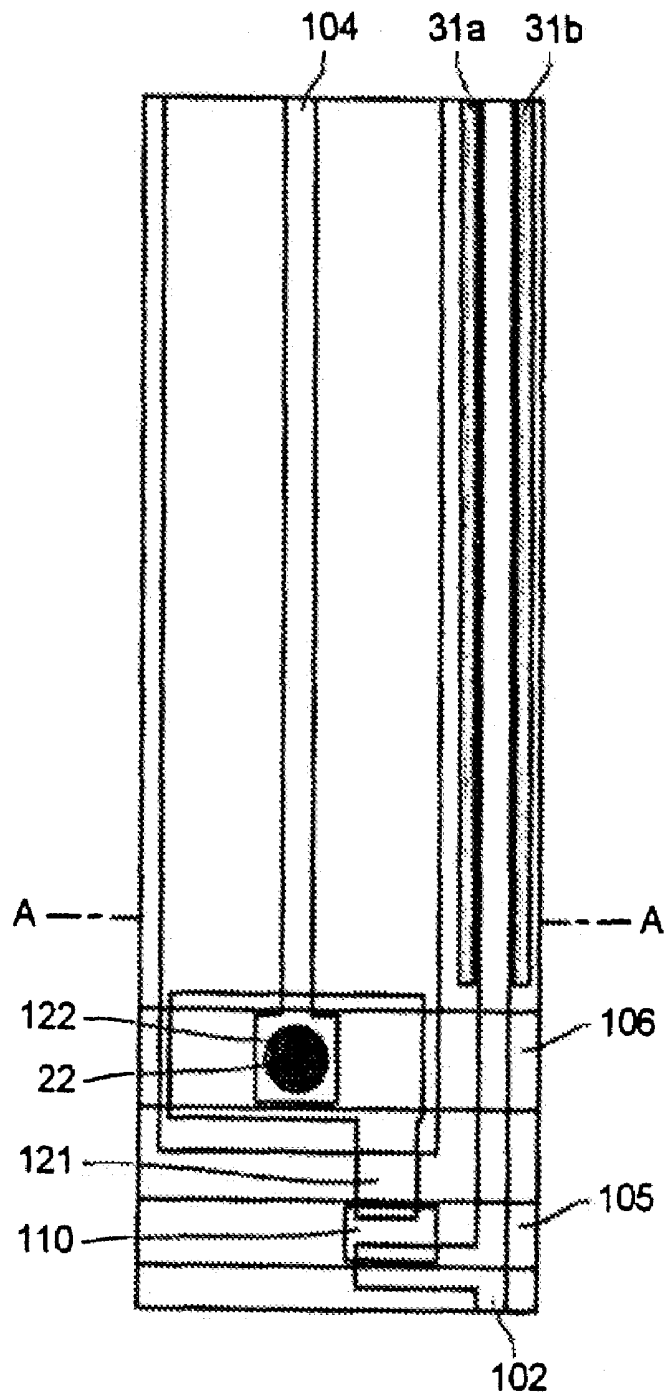


FIG. 6A

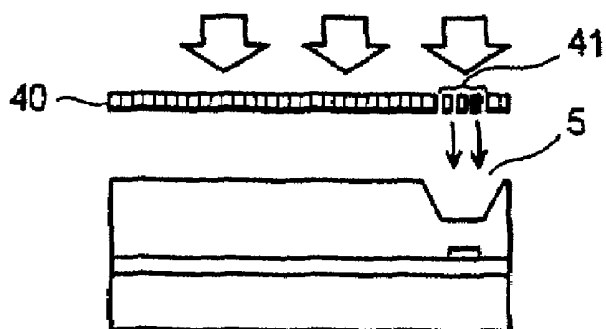


FIG. 6B

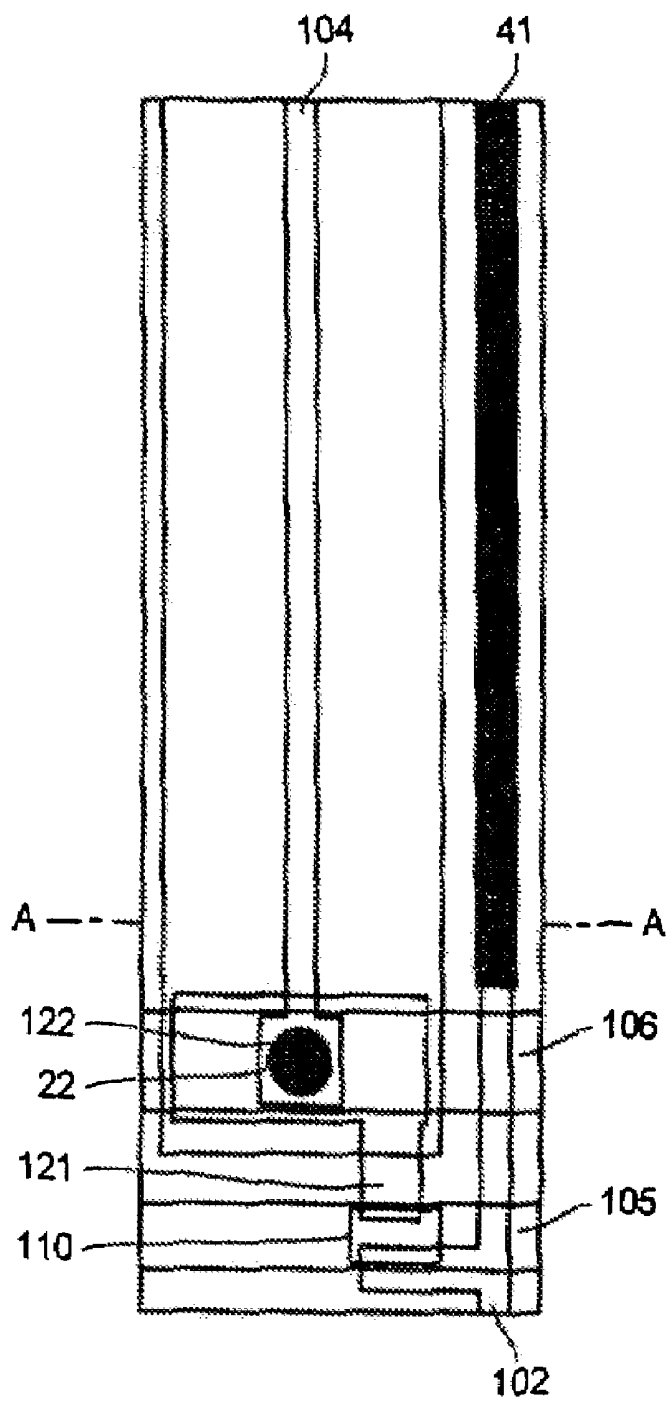


FIG. 7A

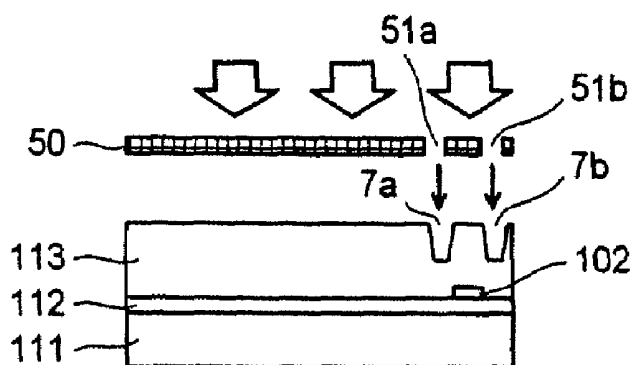


FIG. 7B

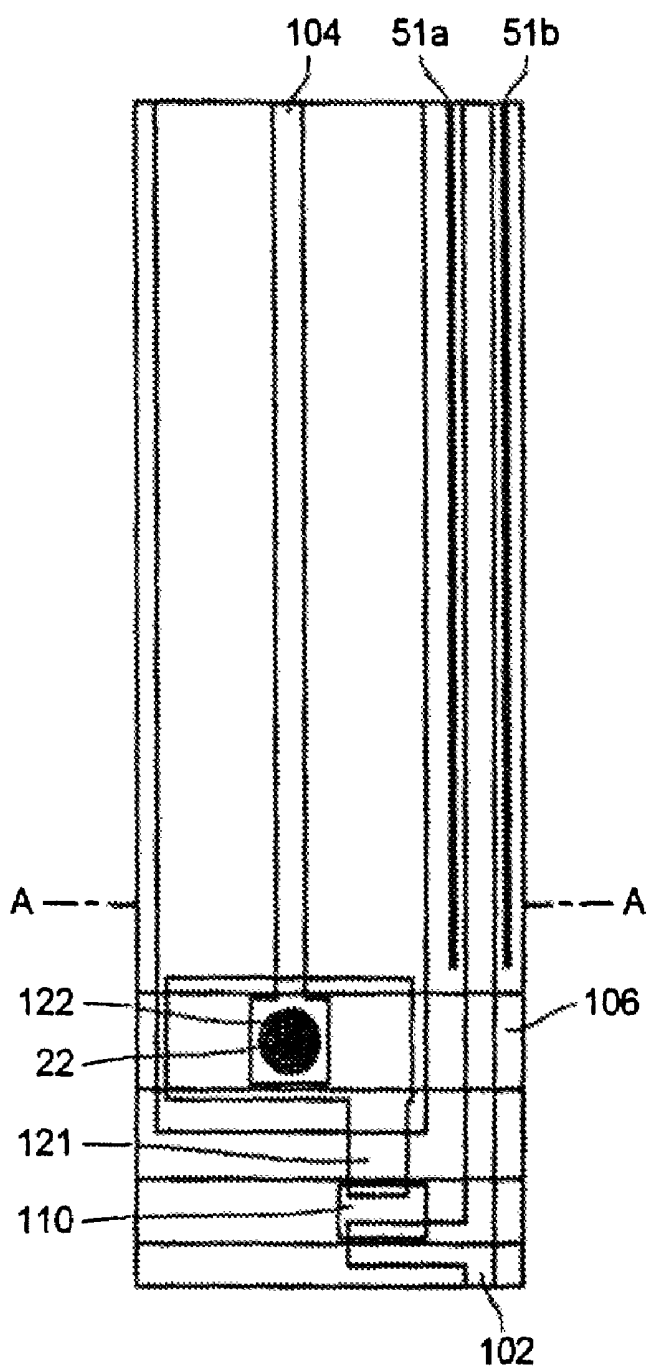


FIG. 8A

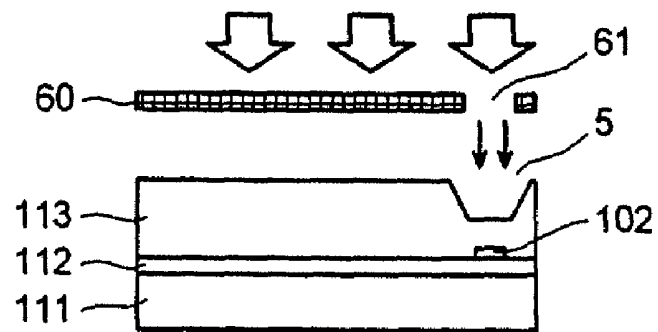


FIG. 8B

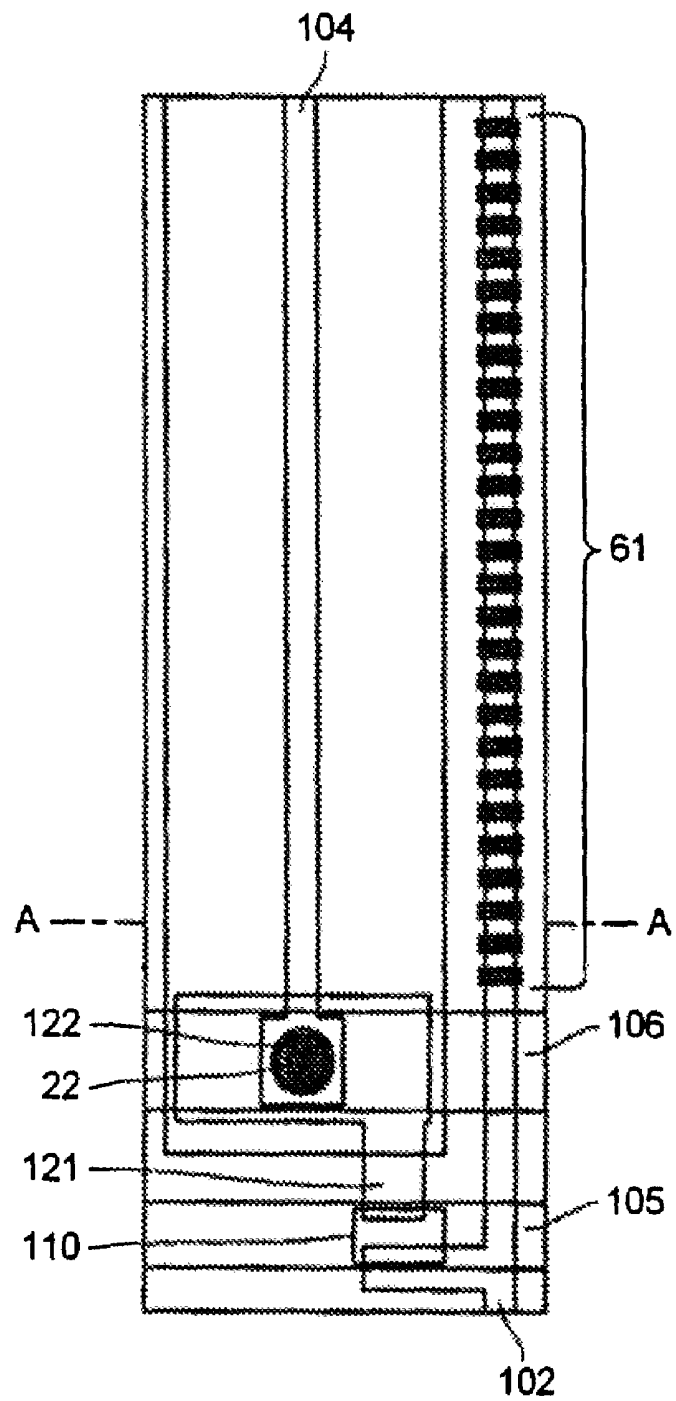


FIG.9A

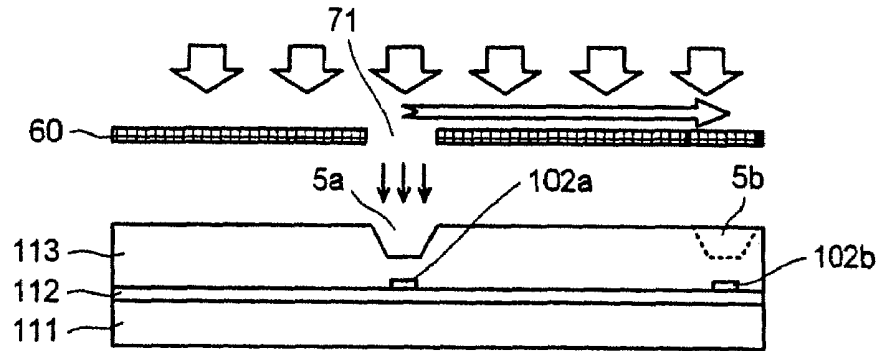


FIG.9B

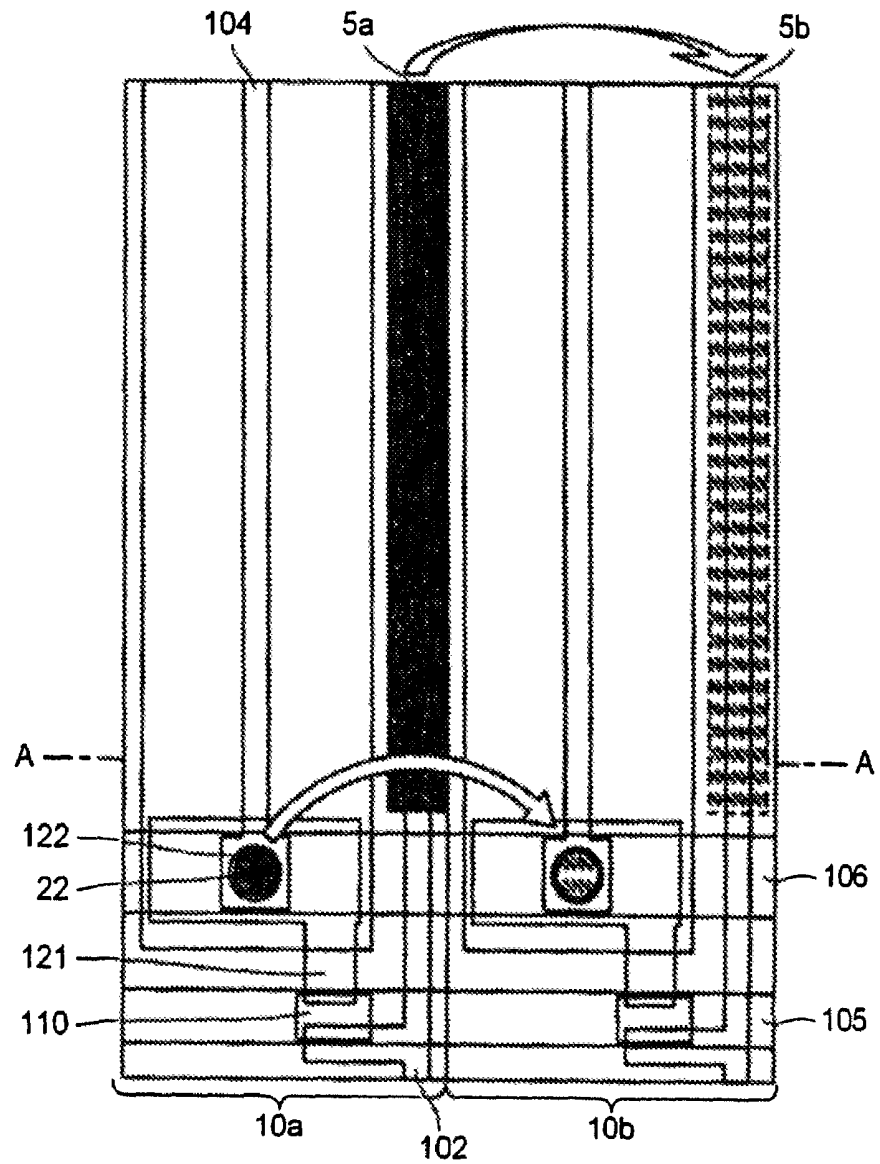


FIG. 10A

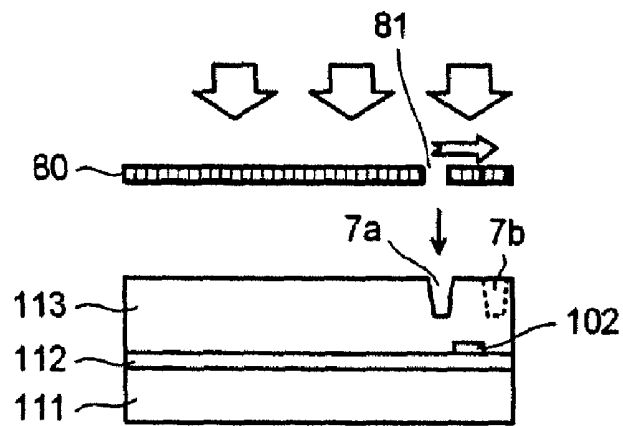


FIG. 10B

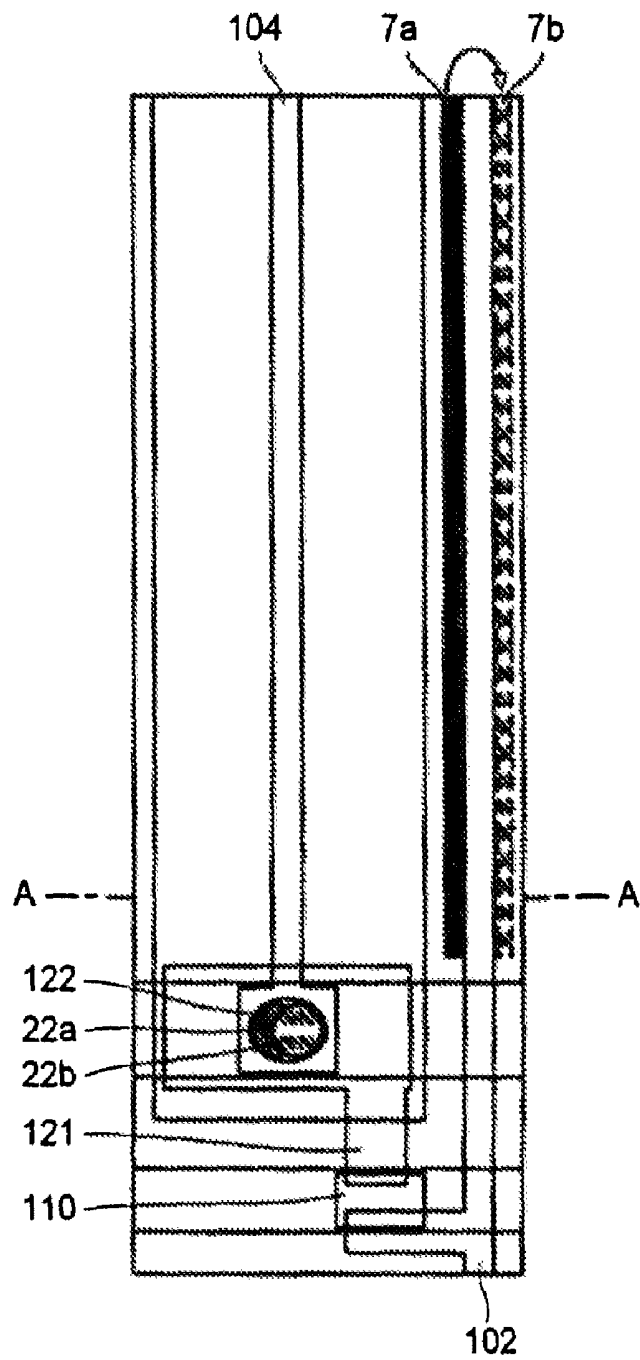


FIG. 11A

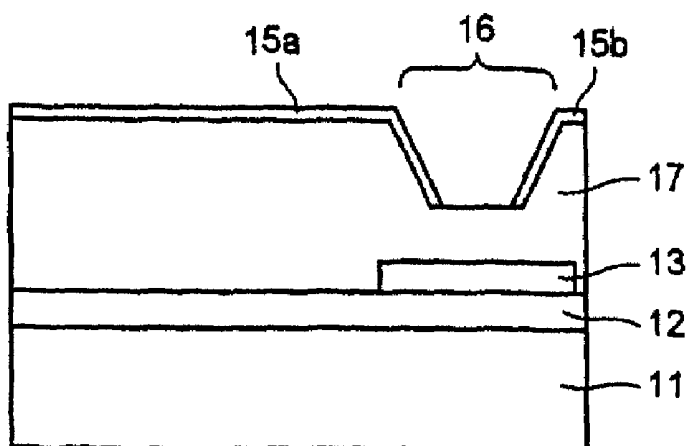
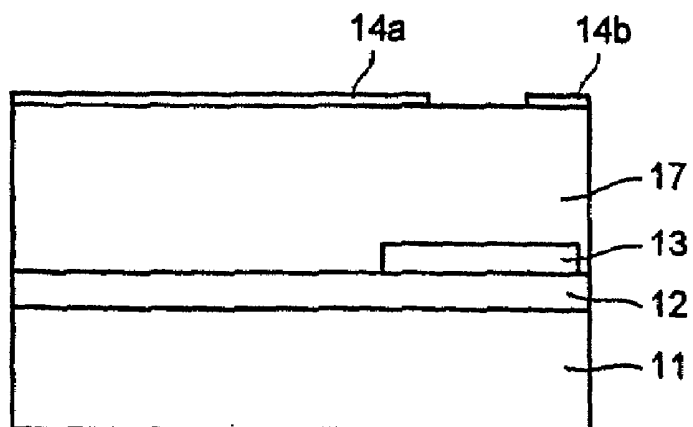
FIG. 11B
PRIOR ART

FIG. 12A
PRIOR ART

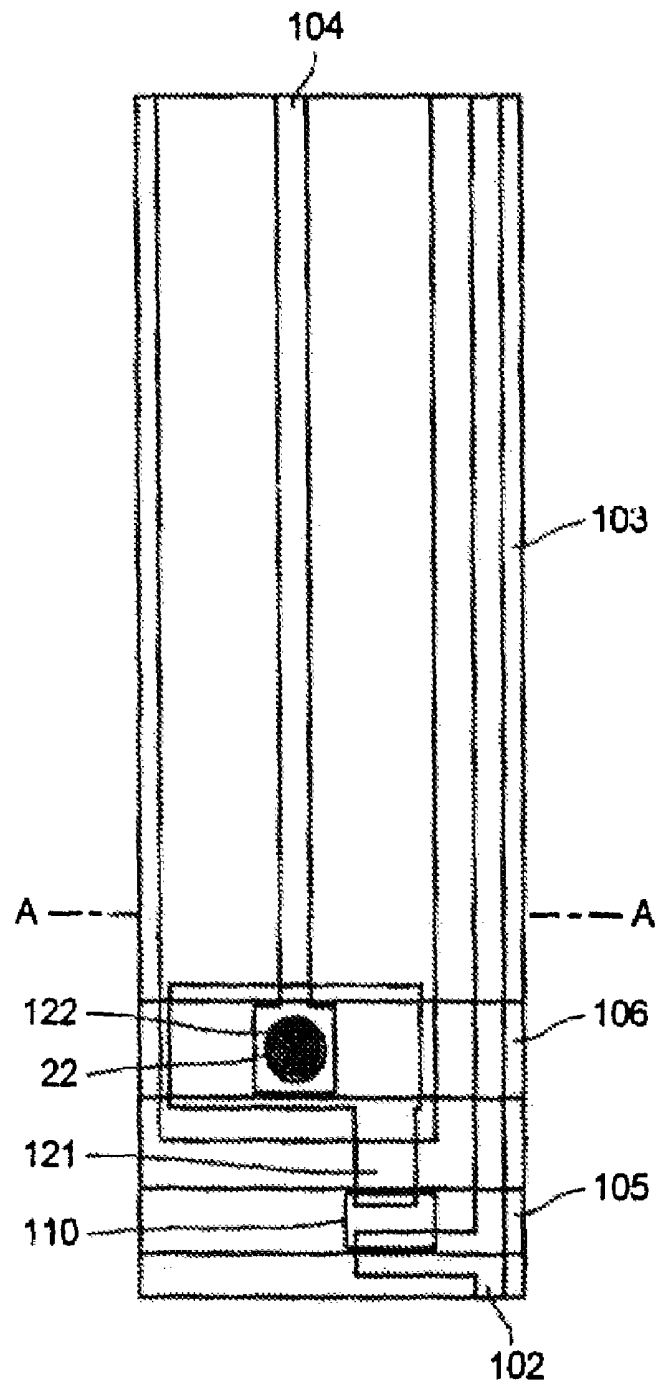


FIG. 12B
PRIOR ART

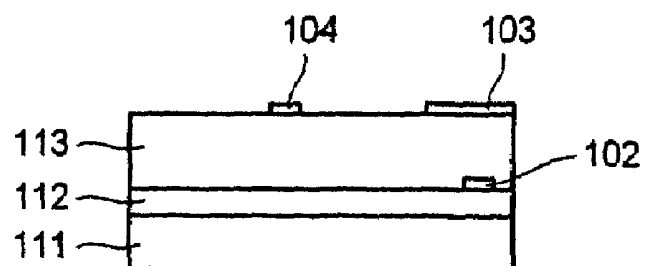


FIG. 13A
PRIOR ART

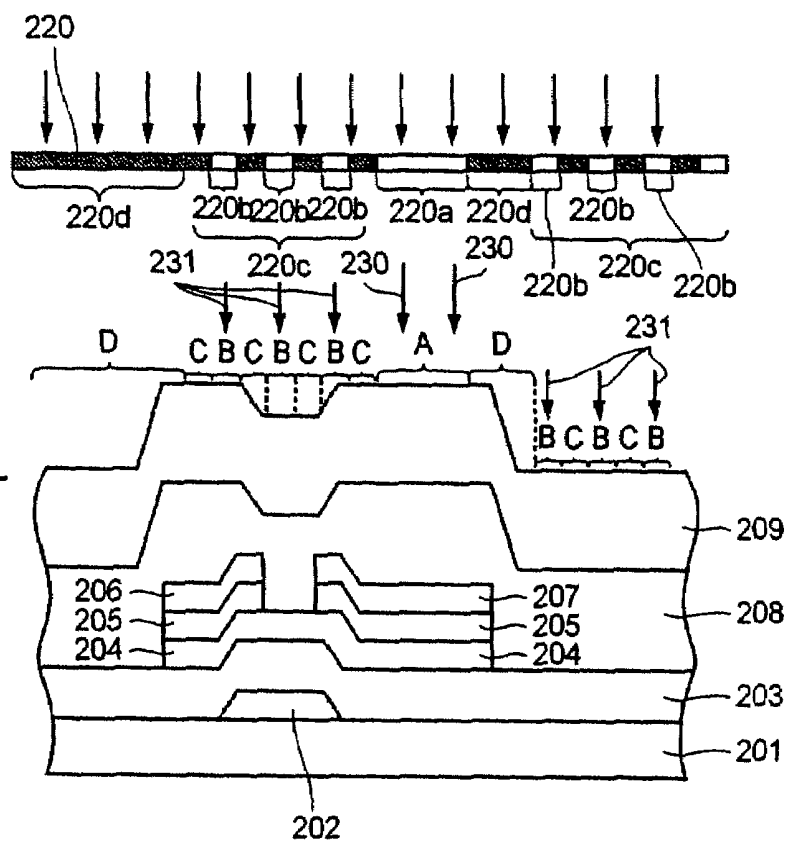
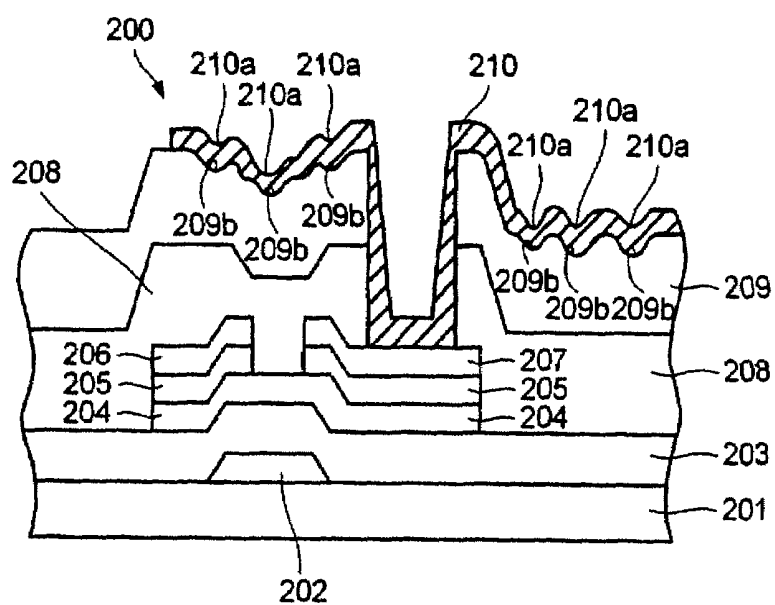


FIG. 13B
PRIOR ART



LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY CELL AND LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a divisional application of U.S. application Ser. No. 10/732,489 filed Dec. 11, 2003, which is based upon and claims the benefit of priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-368854 filed on Dec. 19, 2002, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1) Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a liquid crystal display cell and a liquid crystal display that are characterized in a positional relationship between a data line and either a pixel electrode or a common electrode and in their shapes. Particularly, the present invention relates to a liquid crystal display cell and a liquid crystal display of an in-plane-switching type, respectively.

2) Description of the Related Art

A twisted nematic (hereinafter, "TN") liquid crystal display cell, which has a pixel electrode and a common electrode that are disposed so as to sandwich a liquid crystal layer, is well known, while an in-plane-switching (hereinafter, "IPS") liquid crystal display cell is proposed and is being put to practical use. The IPS liquid crystal display cell applies an electric field to a liquid crystal molecule in a direction parallel to a substrate, thereby to control the orientation of the liquid crystal molecule. Based on this mechanism, the IPS liquid crystal display cell has voltage holding characteristics and wide view field angle superior to those of the TN liquid crystal display cell that applies an electric field in a direction perpendicular to a substrate.

FIGS. 12A and 12B are schematic diagrams of a partial configuration of a conventional IPS liquid crystal display cell. FIG. 12A is a top plan view of this IPS liquid crystal display cell. FIG. 12B is a cross-sectional view of this configuration cut along a line A-A in FIG. 12A. According to the conventional IPS liquid crystal display cell, as illustrated in FIG. 12A, a pixel electrode **104** and a common electrode **103** extend in parallel. The **104** pixel electrode is connected to a source electrode **121** of a lower layer via a through-hole **122** formed in a planarizing layer **113**. The common electrode **103** is connected to a power supply line (not illustrated). The planarizing layer **113** is formed to cover an upper surface of a gate insulating layer **112**, a data line **102** formed on the gate insulating layer **112**, and a channel arrangement (not illustrated) of a thin-film transistor (TFT) **110** formed on the gate insulating layer **112**.

The gate insulating layer **112** is formed to cover an upper surface of an array substrate **111**, and a scan line **105** formed on the array substrate **111**. The scan line **105** also functions as a gate electrode of the TFT **110**. The data line **102** is disposed so that a portion of the data line in its longitudinal direction is right below the common electrode **103** as illustrated in the drawings. A protrusion part of the data line **102** also functions as a drain electrode of the TFT **110**. Therefore, the TFT **110** functions as a switching element that is turned ON or OFF based on a voltage of the scan line **105**, that is, a scan signal. When the TFT **110** is ON, a voltage of the data line **102**, that is, a pixel signal, is supplied to the pixel electrode **104** via the source electrode **121** and the through-hole **122**.

In FIG. 12A, an auxiliary wire **106** is positioned on the same layer as the scan line (i.e., gate electrode) **105**, and

forms a capacitor with the pixel electrode **104** on the upper layer to hold the TFT **110** in the ON state. With the above arrangement, a voltage can be applied in one direction to a liquid crystal that is positioned between the common electrode **103** and the pixel electrode **104**. As a result, the orientation of the liquid crystal in the in-plane direction can be achieved. For simplification, FIGS. 12A and 12B do not illustrate a cross-sectional view of the TFT **110**, a liquid crystal layer positioned on the common electrode **103** and the pixel electrode **104**, a color filter positioned on the liquid crystal layer, and members that are essential to construct the liquid crystal display cell on a counter substrate that fixes the color filter.

As illustrated in FIG. 12B, the common electrode **103** and the pixel electrode **104** are formed on the planarizing layer **113** with a predetermined distance. However, according to this configuration, an electric field is generated between the common electrode **103** and the data line **102** that is positioned on the layer lower. Moreover, an electric field is generated even between the common electrode **103** and the pixel electrode **104**. Particularly, a disturbance of the electric field becomes remarkable in the vicinity of the pixel electrode where a potential variation occurs according to a pixel signal. As this disturbance affects the orientation of the liquid crystal, the picture quality is lowered as a result. Therefore, as illustrated in FIG. 12B, a configuration of shielding the electric field generated between the pixel electrode **104** and the data line **102** is proposed. The common electrode **103** that has a larger width than that of the data line **102** is formed right above the data line **102** (see, Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. H11-119237).

As explained above, FIGS. 12A and 12B illustrate the configurations of the liquid crystal display cells. A known method of forming the planarizing layer (see Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. 2002-107744) as a technique relevant to the present invention will be described. In FIGS. 13A and 13B, a reference numeral **201** denotes a glass substrate, **202** denotes a gate electrode, and **203** denotes a gate insulating layer. A reference numeral **204** denotes a semiconductor layer, **205** denotes an ohmic contact layer, **206** denotes a source electrode, and **207** denotes a drain electrode. A reference numeral **208** denotes a passivation film, **209** denotes a planarizing film, **209b** and **210a** denote grooves, and **210** denotes a pixel electrode. A reference numeral **220** denotes a photo mask, **220a** denotes an aperture, **220b** denotes a slit, **220c** denotes a slit section, and **220d** denotes a shielding section. Reference numerals **230** and **231** denote light. FIG. 13A illustrates a state that the flat film **209** is exposed. FIG. 13B illustrates a state that the pixel electrode **210** is formed after etching the planarizing film **209**.

In order to increase an irregular reflection of light by the pixel electrode **210** effective in a reflecting liquid crystal display device, this method of forming the planarizing film **209** has a main object of forming an uneven surface on the pixel electrode **210** in a simple method. For this purpose, an uneven surface needs to be formed on the planarizing film **209** that is positioned beneath the pixel electrode **210**. This formation method has the following characteristics. A plurality of slits **220b** each having a width of which resolution is smaller than an exposure resolution are provided on the photo mask **220** that is used in a process of exposing the planarizing film **209**. By utilizing a diffraction phenomenon (i.e., interference fringe) of light due to the slit **220b**, electrical energy having different sizes between the fringes is irradiated onto the surface of the planarizing film **209**.

However, the conventional IPS liquid crystal display cell illustrated in FIG. 12 (hereinafter, "first conventional cell")

requires the following. In order to sufficiently shield the electric field that is generated between the data line **102** and the pixel electrode **104**, the amount of the electric field directed from the data line **102** toward the common electrode needs to be large. In other words, the common electrode **103** needs to have a larger width than the width of the data line **102**. However, the increase in the width of the common electrode **103** causes the aperture ratio of the liquid crystal display cell to decrease.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to at least solve the problems in the conventional technology.

A liquid crystal display cell according to one aspect of the present invention includes a substrate; an insulating layer formed on the substrate; a data line that is formed on the insulating layer and is supplied with a pixel signal; a planarizing layer that covers the data line and the insulating layer, has a groove above the data line, and has a flat surface on a shoulder of the groove; a common electrode formed on internal walls of the groove and on the flat face; a pixel electrode formed on the planarizing layer; a scan line supplied with a scan signal; a switching element that controls a voltage of the pixel electrode based on the scan signal and the pixel signal; and a liquid crystal layer disposed on the planarizing layer.

A liquid crystal display cell according to another aspect of the present invention includes a first substrate; an insulating layer formed on the first substrate; a data line that is formed on the insulating layer and is supplied with a pixel signal; a planarizing layer that covers the data line and the insulating layer, has a groove above the data line, and has a flat surface on a shoulder of the groove; a pixel electrode formed on internal walls of the groove and on the flat face; a scan line supplied with a scan signal; a switching element that controls a voltage of the pixel electrode based on the scan signal and the pixel signal; a liquid crystal layer disposed on the planarizing layer; a second substrate that is disposed so that the liquid crystal layer is disposed between the second substrate and the planarizing layer; and a common electrode formed on the second substrate.

A liquid crystal display according to another aspect of the present invention includes a liquid crystal display panel including the liquid crystal display cells that are arranged in a matrix shape; a data line driving circuit that is electrically connected to the data line to supply the pixel signal to the data line; and a scan line driving circuit that is electrically connected to the scan line to supply the scan signal to the scan line. Each of the liquid crystal display cells corresponds to the liquid crystal display cell according to the present invention.

The other objects, features and advantages of the present invention are specifically set forth in or will become apparent from the following detailed descriptions of the invention when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of a liquid crystal display cell according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 2A and 2B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming a groove on a planarizing layer in the liquid crystal display cell according to the first embodiment;

FIGS. 3A to 3D are illustrations of electric field distributions in the vicinity of a common electrode;

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of a liquid crystal display cell according to a second embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 5A and 5B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming two grooves on a planarizing layer in the liquid crystal display cell according to the second embodiment;

FIGS. 6A and 6B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming a groove right above a data line in a third embodiment;

FIGS. 7A and 7B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming two grooves on both sides of a data line in the third embodiment;

FIGS. 8A and 8B are schematic diagrams that explain about another method of forming a groove right above a data line in the third embodiment;

FIGS. 9A and 9B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming a groove right above a data line in a fourth embodiment;

FIGS. 10A and 10B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming two grooves on both sides of a data line in the third embodiment;

FIG. 11A is a cross-sectional view of a part of a TN liquid crystal display cell to which the present invention is applied, and FIG. 11B is a cross-sectional view of the corresponding part of the conventional TN liquid crystal display cell;

FIGS. 12A and 12B are schematic diagrams of a part of a configuration of a conventional IPS liquid crystal display cell; and

FIGS. 13A and 13B are illustrations indicating a method of forming a conventional planarizing film.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Exemplary embodiments of a liquid crystal display cell and a liquid crystal display according to the present invention will be explained below with reference to the accompanying drawings. It should be noted that these embodiments do not limit the present invention.

A liquid crystal display cell according to a first embodiment of the present invention will be explained first. According to the first embodiment, the IPS liquid crystal display cell has a groove, which is formed on a planarizing layer right above a data line, and a common electrode formed in the groove.

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of the liquid crystal display cell according to the first embodiment. FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a portion corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. 12A. In FIG. 1, portions common to those in FIG. 12A are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. As illustrated in FIG. 1, the planarizing layer **113** has a groove **5** formed right above the data line **102**. A common electrode **3** is formed on internal walls (i.e., an internal surface and a bottom surface) of the groove **5**, and a flat surface of the planarizing layer **113** corresponding to shoulders of the groove **5**. It is preferable that a depth **h1** of the groove **5** is about a half of a thickness **h2** between the top (i.e., the flat surface) and the bottom of the planarizing layer **113**. When the thickness **h2** of the planarizing layer **113** is 4 micrometers, for example, the depth **h1** of the groove **5** is preferably about 2 micrometers. When the thickness **h2** of the planarizing layer **113** is larger than 4 micrometers, a parasitic capacitance between the data line **102** and the common electrode **3** becomes large, and this affects the responsiveness of an image signal transmitted to the data line **102**. The width of the groove **5** is preferably equivalent to or larger than the width of the data line **102**.

A method of forming the groove **5** will be explained next. FIGS. 2A and 2B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming the groove **5** on the planarizing layer **113**

in the liquid crystal display cell according to the first embodiment. According to this method, a photo mask **20** in a gray tone having a light transmission factor smaller than 100% is used at a position where the groove **5** is formed, that is, at a position right above the data line **102**. FIG. **2A** is a cross-sectional view similar to that in FIG. **1**. FIG. **2B** is a top plan view of the liquid crystal display cell of which cross section cut along the line A-A corresponds to the portion illustrated in FIG. **2A**. Portions common to those illustrated in FIGS. **12A** and **12B** are designated with like reference numerals in FIGS. **2A** and **2B**, and their explanation is omitted.

The planarizing layer **113** is formed with a positive type low dielectric photosensitive polymer. This polymer is coated on a channel of the TFT not illustrated and the data line **102** to cover these portions, and the polymer is cured to obtain the planarizing layer. The groove **5** is formed on the planarizing layer **113** obtained in this way. Basically, the through-hole **122** needs to be formed on the planarizing layer **113** to electrically connect between the pixel electrode **104** and the source electrode **121**. Therefore, the photo mask **20** that is used to form the groove **5** includes a pattern **22** of the through-hole. The through-hole pattern **22** is an aperture that completely transmits light (ultraviolet rays). On the other hand, the portion corresponding to the groove **5** has a gray tone portion **21** that transmits only a part of irradiated light as illustrated in FIG. **2A**.

The same quantity of light is irradiated onto the photo mask **20** disposed on the planarizing layer **113** during the same period. In this case, a sufficiently large quantity of light is transmitted through the through-hole pattern **22**, with a result that the portion from the flat surface to the source electrode **121** of the TFT is exposed and modified. However, a small quantity of light is transmitted through the gray tone portion **21**, with a result that only a portion from the flat surface to a certain depth is modified. In other words, in the development processing after the exposure, the groove **5** having the depth **h1** illustrated in FIG. **1** can be obtained.

After developing the planarizing layer **113**, that is, after forming the through-hole **122** and the groove **5**, the process shifts to the formation of the pixel electrode **104** and the common electrode **3**. The pixel electrode **104** and the common electrode **3** are formed according to a deposition using the same mask. The electrodes **104** and **3** are made of a material having conductivity and excellent light transmission characteristics, such as indium tin oxide (ITO) or indium zinc oxide (IZO). In the deposition processing of the pixel electrode **104**, a conductive path is also formed to have an electrical contact with the source electrode in the lower layer via the through-hole as well as on the planarizing layer **113** as illustrated in FIG. **1**.

FIGS. **3A** to **3D** illustrate electric field distributions in the vicinity of the common electrode. FIG. **3A** illustrates an electric field distribution when the depth **h1** of the groove **5** is 2 micrometers in the configuration according to the present embodiment illustrated in FIG. **1**. FIG. **3B** illustrates an electric field distribution when the depth **h1** of the groove **5** is 1 micrometer in the configuration according to the present embodiment illustrated in FIG. **1**. FIG. **3C** illustrates an electric field distribution in the configuration according to the first conventional cell. FIG. **3D** illustrates an electric field distribution in the configuration according to the second conventional cell. As illustrated in FIG. **3C**, according to the first conventional cell, a large disturbance of the electric field is observed at the edge of the common electrode **103**. On the other hand, according to the second conventional cell, this disturbance is decreased. Against these conventional cells, the liquid crystal display cell according to the present

embodiment has the common electrode **3** formed within the groove **5** having the depth of 2 micrometers. Therefore, substantially no disturbance of the electric field is observed. When the groove **5** has the depth of 1 micrometer, it is clear that the disturbance of the electric field can be decreased as compared with the first conventional cell illustrated in FIG. **3C**.

As explained above, the IPS liquid crystal display cell according to the first embodiment has the groove formed on the planarizing layer portion right above the data line, and has the common electrode formed in the groove. Therefore, a distance between the data line **102** and the common electrode **3** becomes small, and the common electrode **3** can absorb most of the electric field generated due to the data line **102**. As a result, the influence that the data line **102** gives to the pixel electrode **104** can be minimized.

A liquid crystal display cell according to a second embodiment of the present invention will be explained next. According to the second embodiment, the IPS liquid crystal display cell has two grooves formed on a planarizing layer positioned at both sides of a data line, and has a common electrode formed in each groove.

FIG. **4** is a schematic diagram of the liquid crystal display cell according to the second embodiment. FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view of a portion corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. **12A**. In FIG. **4**, portions common to those in FIG. **1** are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. As illustrated in FIG. **4**, the planarizing layer **113** has grooves **7a** and **7b** formed at both sides of the data line **102**. The common electrode **3** is formed on internal walls (i.e., internal surface and a bottom surface) of the grooves **7a** and **7b**, respectively, and the flat surface of the planarizing layer **113** corresponding to shoulders of the grooves **7a** and **7b**. It is preferable that the depth **h1** of the grooves **7a** and **7b** is about a half of the thickness **h2** of the planarizing layer **113** other than the grooves **7a** and **7b**, like in the groove **5** explained in the first embodiment. The widths of the grooves **7a** and **7b** are preferably equivalent to or larger than the width of the data line **102**, respectively.

A method of forming the grooves **7a** and **7b** will be explained next. FIGS. **5A** and **5B** are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming the grooves **7a** and **7b** on the planarizing layer **113** in the liquid crystal display cell according to the second embodiment. According to this method, a photo mask **30** in a gray tone is used at positions where the grooves **7a** and **7b** are formed, that is, positions at both sides of the data line **102**. FIG. **5A** is a cross-sectional view similar to that in FIG. **4**. FIG. **5B** is a top plan view of the liquid crystal display cell of which cross section cut along the line A-A corresponds to the portion illustrated in FIG. **5A**. Portions common to those illustrated in FIGS. **2A** and **2B** are designated with like reference numerals in FIGS. **5A** and **5B**, and their explanation is omitted. The photo mask **30** also has a pattern other than gray tones **31a** and **31b**, that is, the through-hole pattern **22**, like the photo mask **20** explained in the first embodiment.

The same quantity of light is irradiated onto the photo mask **30** disposed on the planarizing layer **113** during the same period. In this case, a sufficiently large quantity of light is transmitted through the through-hole pattern **22**, with a result that the portion from the flat surface to the source electrode **121** of the TFT is exposed and modified. However, a small quantity of light is transmitted through the gray tones **31a** and **31b**, with a result that only a portion from the flat surface to a certain depth is modified. In other words, in the development processing after the exposure, the grooves **7a** and **7b** having the depth **h1** respectively illustrated in FIG. **4** can be obtained.

After developing the planarizing layer **113**, that is, after forming the through-hole **122** and the grooves **7a** and **7b**, the process shifts to the formation of the pixel electrode **104** and the common electrode **3**, in a similar manner to that explained in the first embodiment.

As explained above, the IPS liquid crystal display cell according to the second embodiment has the grooves formed on the planarizing layer portion at both sides of the data line, and has the common electrode formed within each groove. Therefore, effects similar to those obtained in the first embodiment can be obtained. Further, in the liquid crystal display cell according to the second embodiment, the common electrode **103** right above the data line **102** is positioned on the flat surface of the planarizing layer **113**, with a sufficient distance. Therefore, the parasitic capacitance between the data line **102** and the common electrode **103** can be minimized. As a result, a more stable liquid crystal can be achieved.

A liquid crystal display cell according to a third embodiment of the present invention will be explained next. In the third embodiment, another example of a method of forming the groove on the planarizing layer **113** illustrated in the first and the second embodiments will be explained. A configuration obtained is similar to that illustrated in FIG. **1** or FIG. **4**. In the first and the second embodiments, in forming the groove on the planarizing layer **113**, the photo mask in the gray tone is used at the position corresponding to the groove. In the third embodiment, a photo mask having a slit of a width of which resolution is smaller than the exposure resolution (or a width smaller than a diffraction limit) is used at this position.

FIGS. **6A** and **6B** are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming a groove right above the data line in the third embodiment. FIG. **6A** is a cross-sectional view similar to that illustrated in FIG. **1**. FIG. **6B** is a top plan view of a portion corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. **6A**. In FIGS. **6A** and **6B**, portions common to those in FIGS. **2A** and **2B** are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. In FIGS. **6A** and **6B**, a photo mask **40** has a slit portion **41** at a position where the groove **5** is formed, that is, at a position right above the data line **102**. Particularly, this slit portion **41** has a plurality of slits that extend in a longitudinal direction, each slit having a width of which resolution is smaller than the exposure resolution. The photo mask **40** also has a pattern other than the pattern of the slit portion **41**, that is, the through-hole pattern **22**, like the photo mask **20** explained in the first embodiment.

The same quantity of light is irradiated onto the photo mask **40** disposed on the planarizing layer **113** during the same period. A sufficiently large quantity of light is transmitted through the through-hole pattern **22**, with a result that the portion from the flat surface to the source electrode **121** of the TFT is exposed and modified. However, in the slit portion **41**, an incident ray spreads due to the diffraction. The light density becomes small, with a result that only a portion from the flat surface to a certain depth of the planarizing layer **113** is modified. In other words, in the development processing after the exposure, the groove **5** having the depth **h1** illustrated in FIG. **1** can be obtained.

After developing the planarizing layer **113**, that is, after forming the through-hole **122** and the groove **5**, the process shifts to the formation of the pixel electrode **104** and the common electrode **3** as explained in the first embodiment.

FIGS. **7A** and **7B** are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming grooves at both sides of the data line. FIG. **7A** is a cross-sectional view similar to that illustrated in FIG. **4**. FIG. **7B** is a top plan view of a portion

corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. **7A**. In FIGS. **7A** and **7B**, portions common to those in FIGS. **2A** and **2B** are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. In FIGS. **7A** and **7B**, a photo mask **50** has slit portions **51a** and **51b** at positions where the grooves **7a** and **7b** are formed, that is, at both sides of the data line **102**. Particularly, the slit portions **51a** and **51b** have at least one slit that extends in a longitudinal direction, each slit having a width of which resolution is smaller than the exposure resolution. The photo mask **50** also has a pattern other than the pattern of the slit portions **51a** and **51b**, that is, the through-hole pattern **22**, like the photo mask **20** explained in the first embodiment.

The same quantity of light is irradiated onto the photo mask **50** disposed on the planarizing layer **113** during the same period. A sufficiently large quantity of light is transmitted through the through-hole pattern **22**, with a result that the portion from the flat surface to the source electrode **121** of the TFT is exposed and modified, like the photo mask **40** illustrated in FIG. **6A** and FIG. **6B**. However, in the slit portions **51a** and **51b**, only a portion from the flat surface to a certain depth of the planarizing layer **113** is modified. In other words, in the development processing after the exposure, the grooves **7a** and **7b** having the depth **h1** illustrated in FIG. **4** can be obtained.

Each slit that constitutes the slit portion does not need to extend in the longitudinal direction of the data line **102** as illustrated in FIG. **6** and FIG. **7**, and the slits can be laid out in parallel. FIGS. **8A** and **8B** are schematic diagrams that explain about this example. FIG. **8A** is a cross-sectional view similar to that illustrated in FIG. **4**. FIG. **8B** is a top plan view of a portion corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. **8A**. In FIGS. **8A** and **8B**, a slit portion **61** of a photo mask **60** has a width of which resolution is smaller than the exposure resolution. The slit portion **61** has a plurality of slits formed with a certain interval between them in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the data line **102**. In FIGS. **8A** and **8B**, portions common to those in FIGS. **2A** and **2B** are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. While FIGS. **8A** and **8B** illustrate the groove **5** formed right above the data line **102**, a photo mask having a slit similar to the slit portion **61** can also be used when the grooves **7a** and **7b** are formed at both side of the data line **102** as illustrated in FIGS. **7A** and **7B**.

As explained above, the IPS liquid crystal display cell according to the third embodiment can use the photo mask having the slit of a width of which resolution is smaller than the exposure resolution. With this arrangement, a groove is formed on the planarizing layer as explained in the first and the second embodiments.

A liquid crystal display cell according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention will be explained next. In the fourth embodiment, another example of forming a groove on the planarizing layer **113** illustrated in the first and the second embodiments will be explained, like in the third embodiment. A configuration obtained is similar to that illustrated in FIG. **1** or FIG. **4**. In the first and the second embodiments, in forming the groove on the planarizing layer **113**, the photo mask in the gray tone is used at the position corresponding to the groove. In the fourth embodiment, the gray tone portion is an aperture that entirely transmits light. The photo mask having this aperture is shifted to a position of forming a separate groove in the middle of the exposure.

FIGS. **9A** and **9B** are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming a groove right above the data line in the fourth embodiment. FIG. **9A** is a cross-sectional view similar to that illustrated in FIG. **1**. FIG. **9B** is a top plan view

of a portion corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. 9A. In FIGS. 9A and 9B, portions common to those in FIGS. 2A and 2B are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. In FIGS. 9A and 9B, a photo mask 70 has an aperture 71 at a position where the groove 5 is formed, that is, at a position right above the data line 102. The width of the aperture 71 does not need to have a resolution smaller than the exposure resolution. The photo mask 70 also has a pattern other than the pattern of the slit portion 41, that is, the through-hole pattern 22, like the photo mask 20 explained in the first embodiment.

The photo mask 70 is used at the time of forming a plurality of liquid crystal display cells in a matrix at one time. According to the photo mask explained in the first to the third embodiments, the through-hole pattern and the groove formation pattern are formed individually in all the liquid crystal display cells. However, according to the photo mask 70 used in the fourth embodiment, the through-holes are formed corresponding to all the liquid crystal display cells. On the other hand, the groove formation pattern is formed at every other scan line 105 or at every other data line 102. In other words, in the state that the photo mask is first fixed in the exposure process, the groove formation pattern is positioned in only liquid crystal display cells in odd columns or in only liquid crystal display cells in odd rows that constitute the matrix.

According to the exposure process explained so far, the photo mask does not need to be moved during the exposure. However, in the present embodiment, the photo mask 70 is moved at timing and in a distance explained below during the exposure. When the time necessary to form a through-hole is t , this photo mask 70 is moved momentarily by one liquid crystal display cell at time $t/2$ since the start of the exposure. After $t/2$ since this move, the exposure ends. This will be explained with reference to FIGS. 9A and 9B. The exposure is started in the state that a through-hole and a groove formation pattern are disposed on a liquid crystal display cell 10a. At time $t/2$, the aperture 71 of the photo mask 70 is moved to an adjacent liquid crystal display cell 10b as shown by an arrow mark. Then, the exposure is carried out during the time $t/2$.

With the above arrangement, exposure is carried out for the time t at a position where the through-hole of each liquid crystal display cell is formed. On the other hand, exposure is carried out for only the time $t/2$ at a position where the groove 5 is formed. This means that at the position where the groove 5 is formed, modification from the surface of the planarizing layer 113 to the channel of the TFT not illustrated cannot be given to the planarizing layer 113. In the development processing after the exposure, the groove 5 having the height $h1$ illustrated in FIG. 1 can be obtained.

The groove formation pattern may be formed at every two cells in stead of at every other cell. The formation position can be suitably designed according to the height $h1$ of the groove 5. In this case, the time interval of moving the photo mask 70 also needs to be adjusted.

FIGS. 10A and 10B are schematic diagrams that explain about a method of forming grooves at both sides of the data line according to the fourth embodiment. FIG. 10A is a cross-sectional view similar to that illustrated in FIG. 4. FIG. 10B is a top plan view of a portion corresponding to the portion cut along the line A-A in FIG. 10A. In FIGS. 10A and 10B, portions common to those in FIGS. 2A and 2B are designated with like reference numerals, and their explanation is omitted. In the above formation method explained with reference to FIGS. 9A and 9F, the distance of moving the photo mask 70 and the groove pattern formation position change based on the size of the liquid crystal display cell. According to the for-

mation method explained with reference to FIGS. 10A and 10B, the above moving distance and position change based on a distance between the groove formation positions sandwiching the same data line 102.

As illustrated in FIGS. 10A and 10B, when an aperture 81 moves during the exposure, areas 22a and 22b are partially exposed in superimposition during the move in the region where the through-hole 122 is formed. The through-hole is formed from the surface of the planarizing layer 113 to the channel of the TFT not illustrated, at only the superimposed portion.

As explained above, the IPS liquid crystal display cell according to the fourth embodiment uses the photo mask having the groove formation pattern at only a part of a plurality of groove formation positions. During the exposure, the photo mask is moved at a predetermined timing and in a predetermined distance. With this arrangement, the groove explained in the first and the second embodiments can be formed on the planarizing layer.

A liquid crystal display cell according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention will be explained next. In the fifth embodiment, the groove formation explained in the first embodiment is applied to the TN type liquid crystal display cell.

FIG. 11A is a cross-sectional view of a part of a TN type liquid crystal display cell to which the present invention is applied, and FIG. 11B is a cross-sectional view of the corresponding part of the conventional TN liquid crystal display cell. As illustrated in FIG. 11B, according to the conventional TN liquid crystal display cell, a data line 13 is formed on a gate insulating layer 12 that is formed on an array substrate 11. A planarizing layer 17 is formed to cover the data line 13 and the gate insulating layer 12. Pixel electrodes 14a and 14b of adjacent liquid crystal display cells are formed on the surface of the planarizing layer 17, with the data line 13 as a center.

In contrast to this conventional configuration, a groove 16 is formed on the planarizing layer 17 according to the method explained in the first, third, or fourth embodiment. Pixel electrodes 15a and 15b are formed on internal walls of the groove 16 and the surface of the planarizing layer 17, respectively. In order to avoid both pixel electrodes from being brought into contact with each other, the following arrangement is necessary. A front end of the pixel electrode 15a is formed at the left side of the groove 16, and a front end of the pixel electrode 15b is formed at the right side of the groove 16.

As explained above, according to the fifth embodiment, the configuration explained in the first embodiment can also be employed in the TN liquid crystal display cell. Effects similar to those in the first embodiment can also be obtained.

In the first to the fifth embodiments, a protection film may be present between the data line and planarizing layer.

It is needless to mention that a liquid crystal display that obtains the effects of the present invention can be provided based on a combination of a liquid crystal display panel, a scan line driving circuit, and a data line driving circuit. The liquid crystal display panel has the liquid crystal display cells explained in any one of the first to the fifth embodiments laid out in a matrix shape.

As explained above, according to the liquid crystal display cell and the liquid crystal display of the present invention, a pixel electrode or a common electrode is formed right above or at both sides of a data line that constitutes the liquid crystal display cell and within a groove of a planarizing layer. Therefore, there is an effect that the electrode formed within the groove achieves an effective shielding of the electric field of

11

the data line. A high-definition image display can be achieved without decreasing the aperture ratio.

Although the invention has been described with respect to a specific embodiment for a complete and clear disclosure, the appended claims are not to be thus limited but are to be construed as embodying all modifications and alternative constructions that may occur to one skilled in the art which fairly fall within the basic teaching herein set forth.

What is claimed is:

1. A liquid crystal display cell comprising:

- a first substrate;
- an insulating layer formed on the first substrate;
- a data line that is formed on the insulating layer;
- a planarizing layer that covers and contacts the data line and the insulating layer and has a groove formed above and overlapping with the data line, the groove having two shoulders, the planarizing layer having a flat surface on at least one of the shoulders of the groove;
- a pixel electrode formed on internal walls of the groove and on the flat surface;
- a scan line;
- a switching element for controlling a voltage of the pixel electrode based on a scan signal and a pixel signal;
- a liquid crystal layer disposed on the planarizing layer;
- a second substrate that is disposed such that the liquid crystal layer is disposed between the second substrate and the planarizing layer; and
- a common electrode formed on the second substrate.

2. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 1, wherein the planarizing layer has the groove right above the data line.

3. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 1, wherein the groove has a width that is equal to or larger than a width of the data line.

4. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 1, wherein the groove includes a first groove and a second groove that are disposed so as to sandwich a part of the planarizing layer that is disposed right above the data line.

5. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 4, wherein each of the first groove and the second groove has a width that is smaller than a width of the data line.

6. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 1, wherein the planarizing layer has flat surfaces on both of the shoulders of the groove, and

wherein the pixel electrode is formed on the internal walls of the groove and on the flat surfaces.

7. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 1, wherein the groove has a depth that is equal to or smaller than a half of a thickness between the flat surface and a bottom of the planarizing layer.

8. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 1, wherein the planarizing layer has a through-hole that electrically connects between the switching element and the pixel electrode.

12

9. A liquid crystal display comprising:

a liquid crystal display panel including the liquid crystal display cells that are arranged in a matrix shape, each of the liquid crystal display cells including:

- a first substrate;
- an insulating layer formed on the first substrate;
- a data line that is formed on the insulating layer;
- a planarizing layer that covers and contacts the data line and the insulating layer and has a groove formed above and overlapping with the data line, the groove having two shoulders, the planarizing layer having a flat surface on at least one of the shoulders of the groove;
- a pixel electrode formed on internal walls of the groove and on the flat surface;
- a scan line;
- a switching element for controlling a voltage of the pixel electrode based on a scan signal and a pixel signal;
- a liquid crystal layer disposed on the planarizing layer;
- a second substrate that is disposed such that the liquid crystal layer is disposed between the second substrate and the planarizing layer; and
- a common electrode formed on the second substrate;
- a data line driving circuit that is electrically connected to the data line to supply the pixel signal to the data line; and
- a scan line driving circuit that is electrically connected to the scan line to supply the scan signal to the scan line.

10. A liquid crystal display cell comprising:

- a first substrate;
- an insulating layer formed on the first substrate;
- a data line that is formed on the insulating layer;
- a planarizing layer that covers the data line and the insulating layer and has a groove formed above the data line, the groove having two shoulders, the planarizing layer having a flat surface on at least one of the shoulders of the groove;
- a pixel electrode formed on internal walls of the groove and on the flat surface;
- a scan line;
- a switching element for controlling a voltage of the pixel electrode based on a scan signal and a pixel signal;
- a liquid crystal layer disposed on the planarizing layer;
- a second substrate that is disposed such that the liquid crystal layer is disposed between the second substrate and the planarizing layer; and
- a common electrode formed on the second substrate, wherein the groove includes a first groove and a second groove that are disposed so as to sandwich a part of the planarizing layer that is disposed right above the data line.

11. The liquid crystal display cell according to claim 10, wherein each of the first groove and the second groove has a width that is smaller than a width of the data line.

* * * * *

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摘要(译)

阵列基板，栅极绝缘层和数据线依次沉积在液晶单元上。在该配置的一部分中，平坦化层覆盖栅极绝缘层和数据线。平坦化层具有形成在数据线正上方的凹槽。公共电极形成在凹槽的内壁上和平坦化层的平坦表面上，对应于凹槽的肩部。像素电极形成在平坦表面上，与公共电极相距一定距离。

