



(43) **Pub. Date:** **Apr. 9, 2009**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 24, 2008**

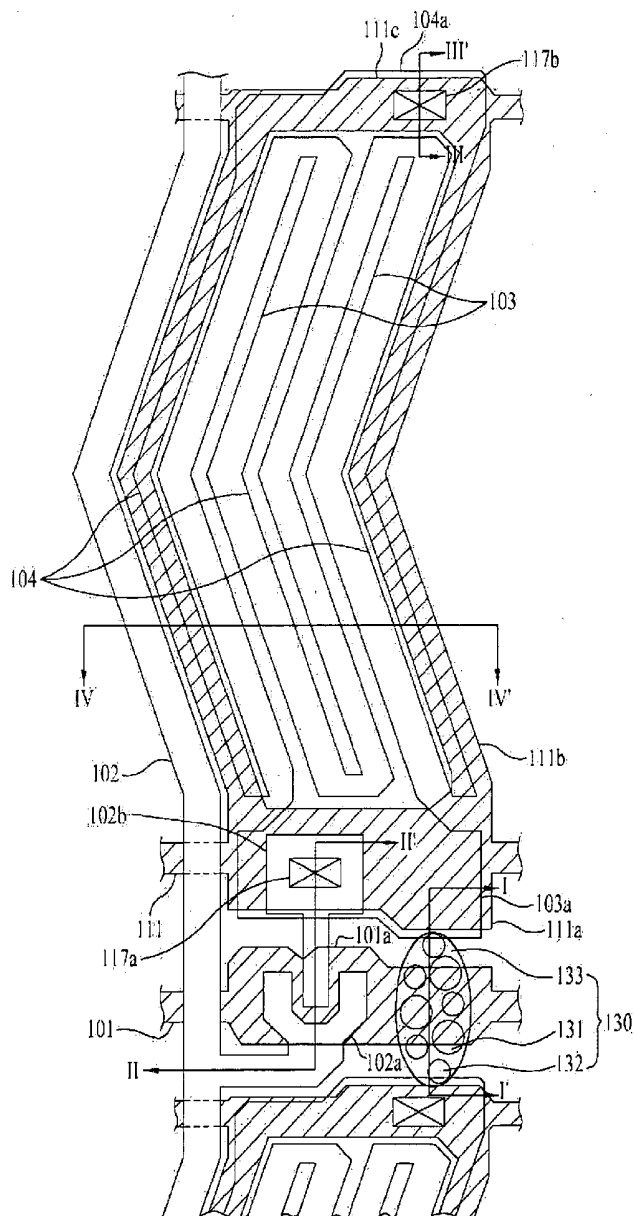


FIG. 1

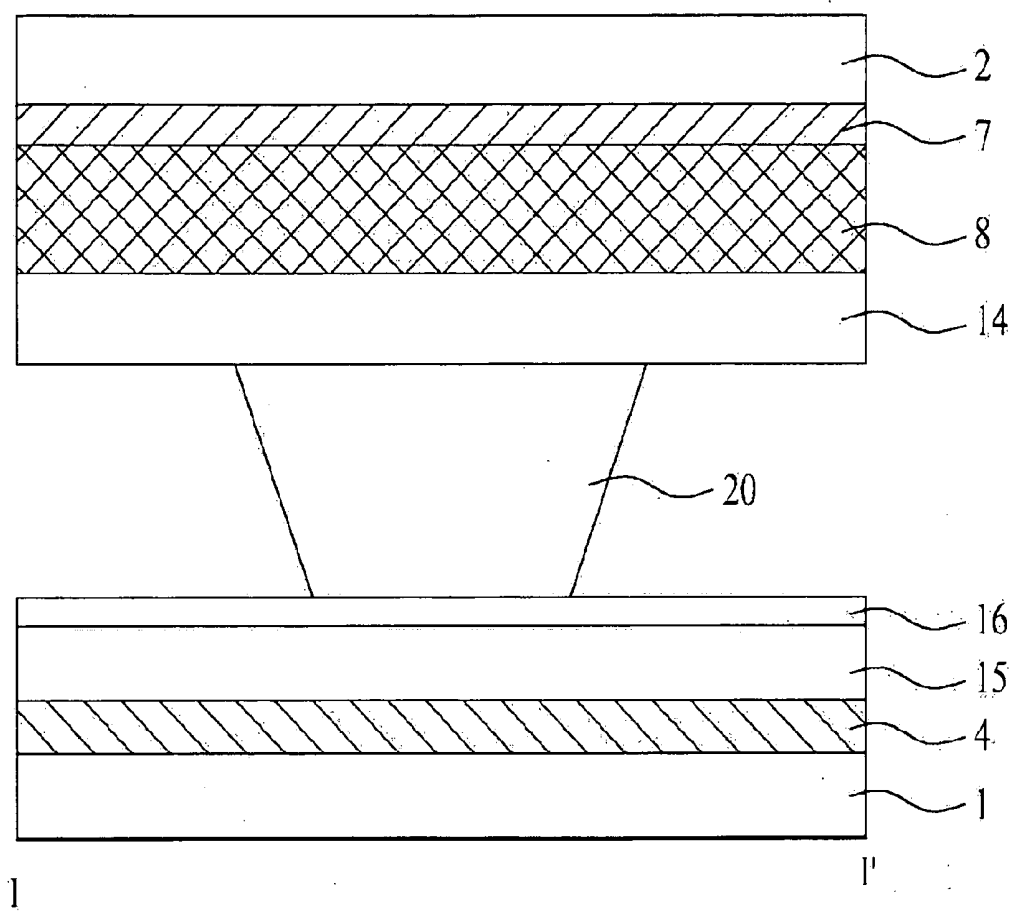


FIG. 2

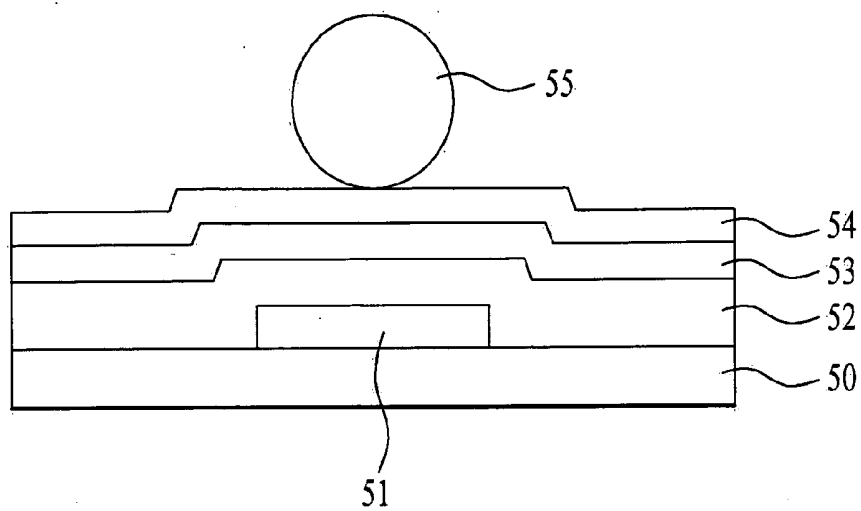
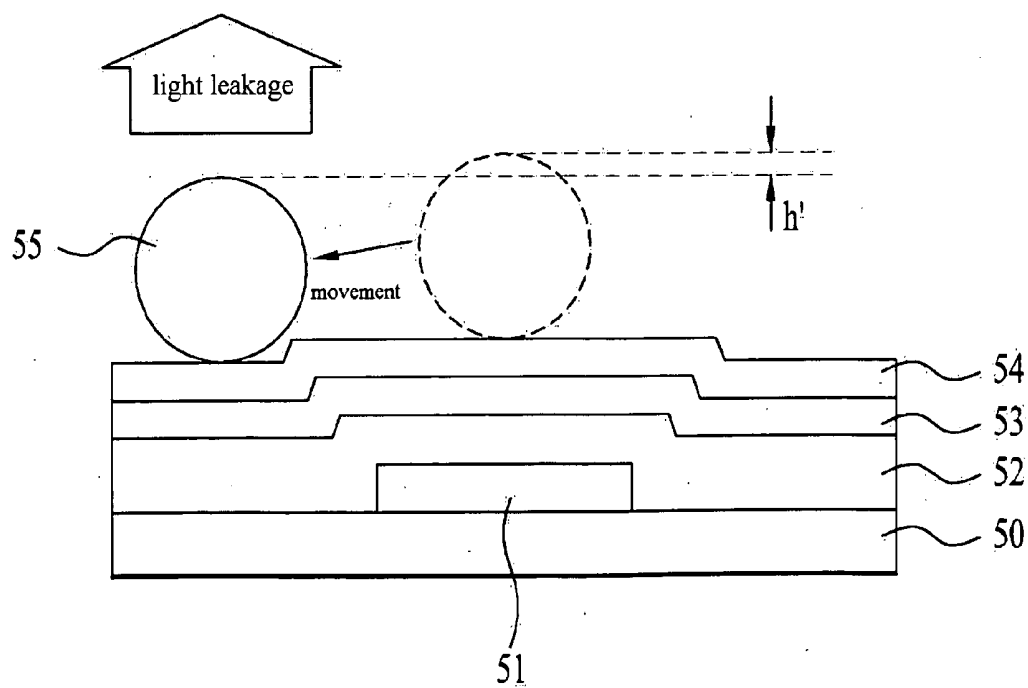


FIG. 3



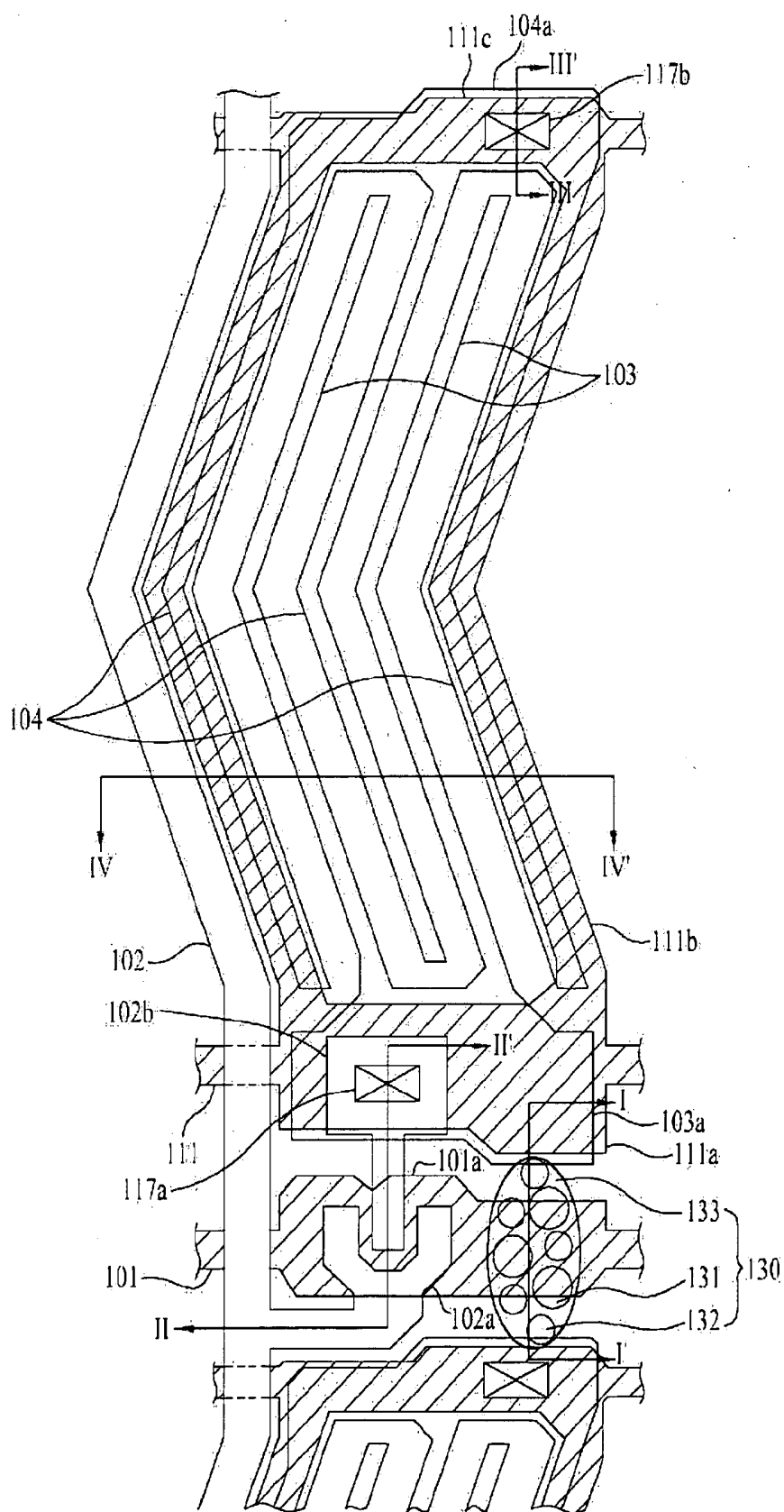


FIG. 5

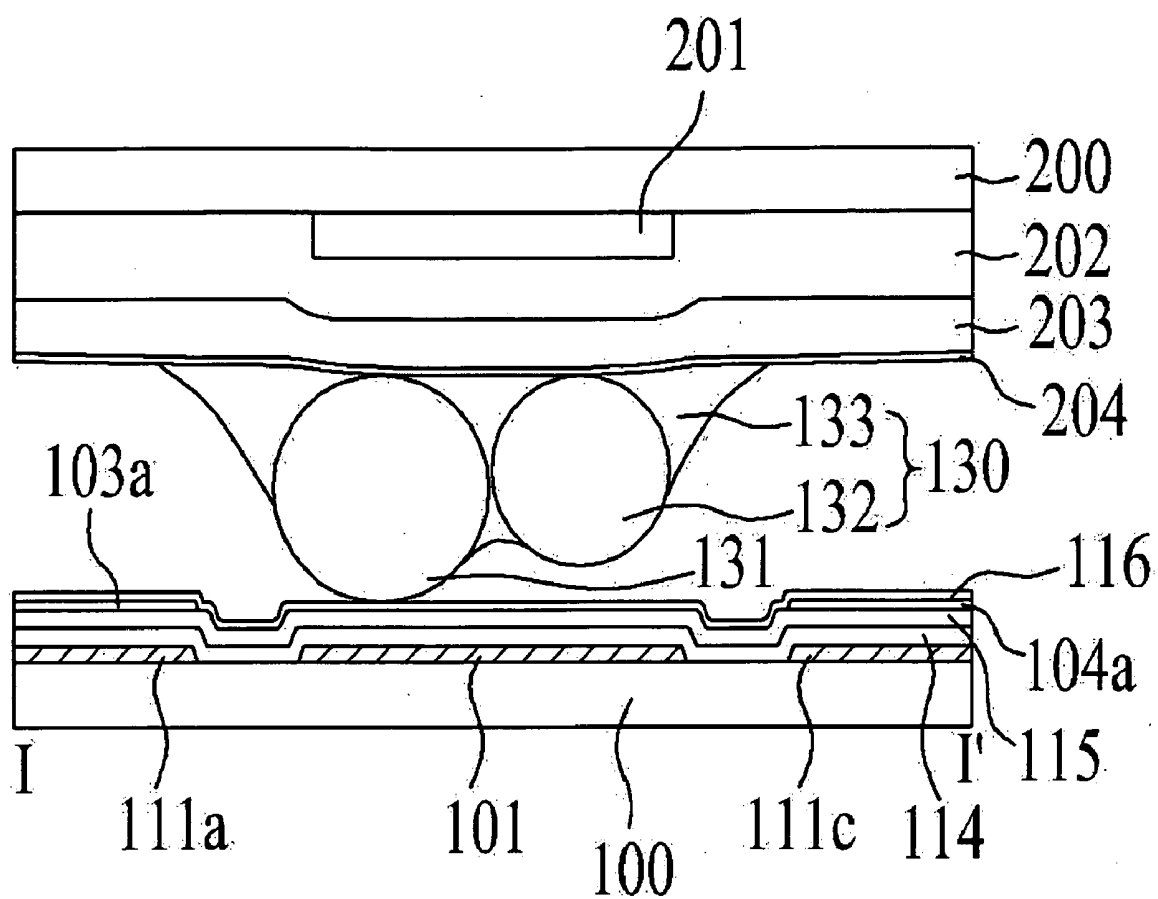


FIG. 6

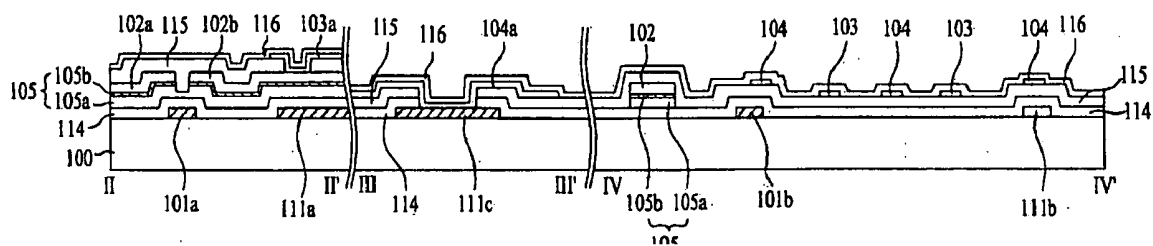


FIG. 7

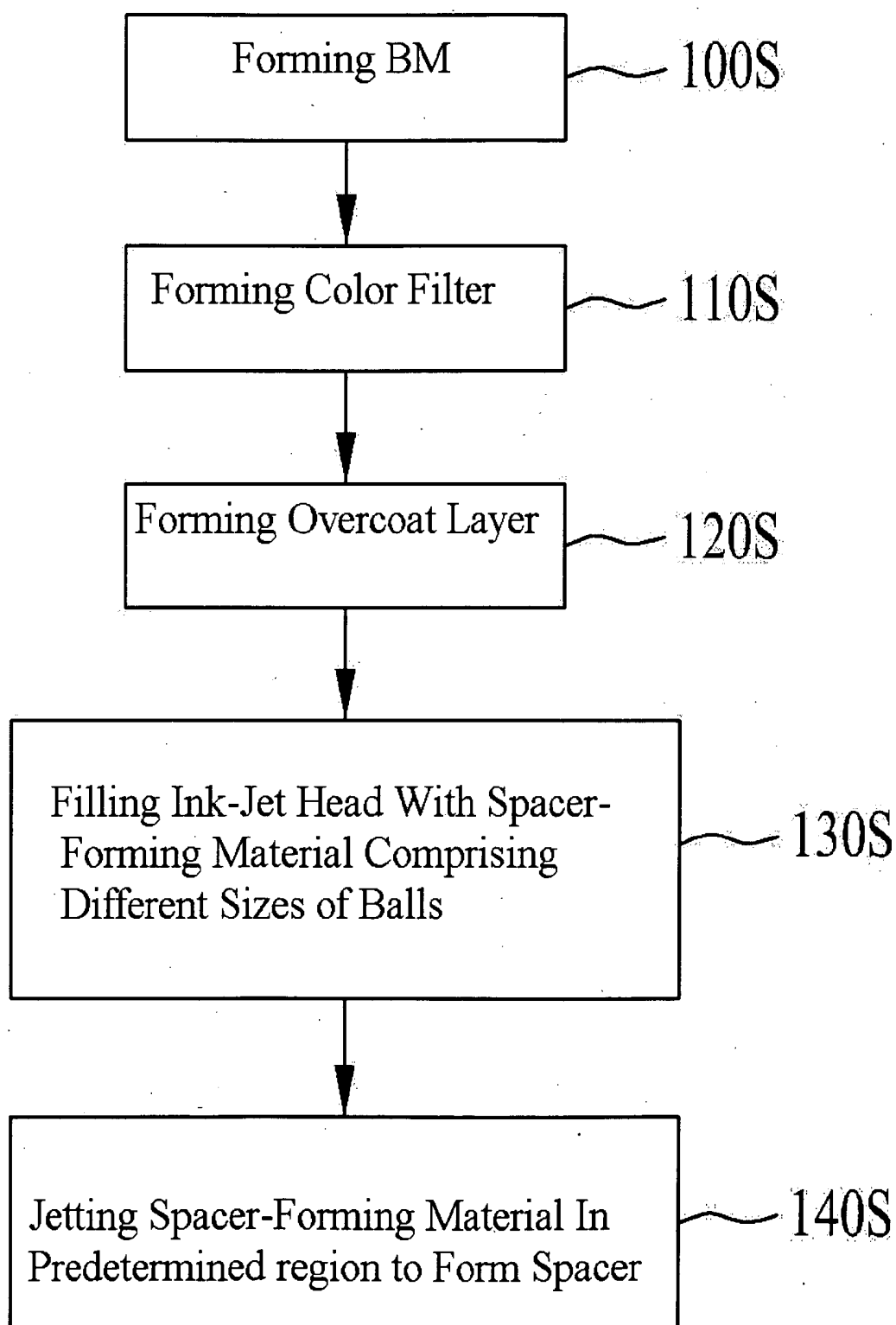


FIG. 8

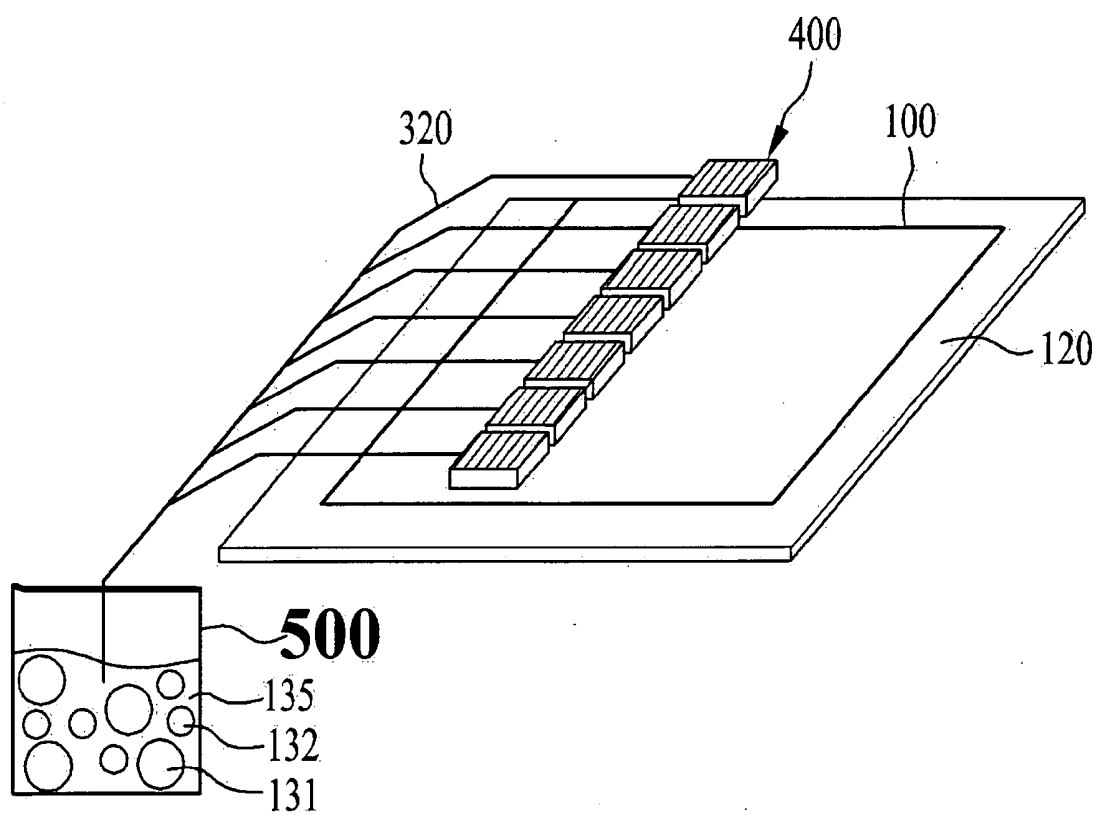
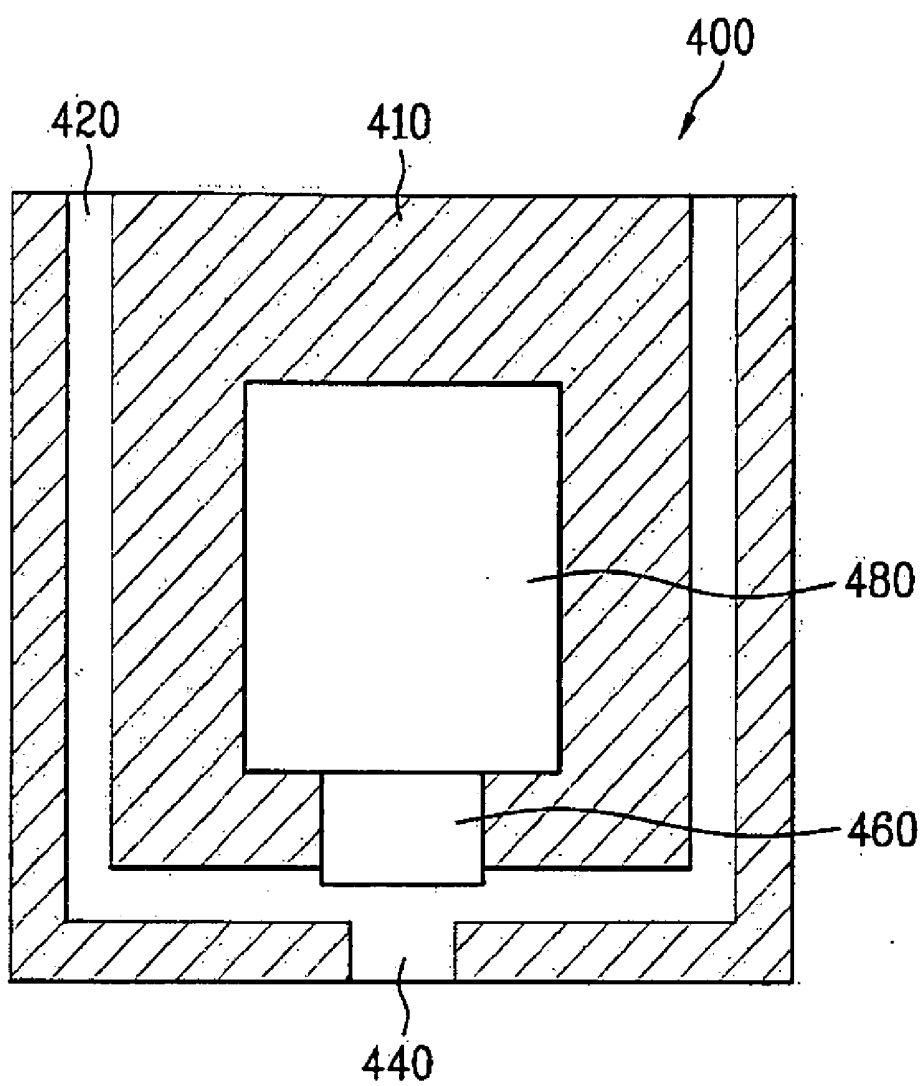


FIG. 9



LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY AND METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING THE SAME

[0001] This application claims the benefit of Korean Patent Application No. 2007-97933, filed on Sep. 28, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a liquid crystal display (LCD) device. More particularly, the present invention relates to a liquid crystal display (LCD) device and a method for manufacturing the same, capable of maintaining a cell gap and preventing press defects caused by application of external pressure via the use of ball spacers.

[0004] 2. Discussion of the Related Art

[0005] With the progress of a information-dependent society, the demand for various display devices has increased. To meet such demands, efforts have recently been made to research flat panel display devices such as liquid crystal displays (LCDs), plasma display panels (PDPs), electro-luminescent displays (ELDs) and vacuum fluorescent displays (VFDs). Some types of such flat panel displays are being practically applied to various appliances for display purposes.

[0006] Of these, LCDs are currently most widely used as substitutes for cathode ray tubes (CRTs) in association with mobile image display devices because LCDs offer advantages such as superior picture quality, lightweight, slimness, and low power consumption. Various applications of LCDs are being developed in association with not only mobile image display devices such as monitors of notebook computers, but also monitors of TVs to receive and display broadcast signals, and monitors of laptop computers.

[0007] Successful application of such LCDs to diverse image display devices depends on whether or not the LCDs can realize desired high picture quality including high resolution, high brightness, large display area, and the like, while maintaining desired characteristics of lightweight, slimness and low power consumption.

[0008] Hereinafter, the structure of a related art LCD device will be described with reference to the attached drawings.

[0009] FIG. 1 is a plan view illustrating a related art LCD provided with a column spacer.

[0010] As shown in FIG. 1, a related art LCD array region comprises gate lines 4 and data lines (not shown) that cross each other to define pixel regions, thin film transistors (TFT) each formed at a crossing between the gate lines 4 and the data lines, and pixel electrodes 6 formed in each of the pixel regions. The array region further comprises column spacers 20 uniformly spaced apart from one another, to maintain a cell gap. In FIG. 1, column spacers 20 are arranged at respective pixels, each of which includes three sub-pixels, i.e., R, G and B sub-pixels.

[0011] As shown in FIG. 1, each column spacer 20 is arranged in a region provided above the gate line 4. That is, the gate line 4 is arranged on a first substrate 1, a gate insulating film 15 is arranged over the entire surface of the first substrate 1 including the gate line 4, and a passivation film 16 is arranged on the gate insulating film 15.

[0012] Meanwhile, a second substrate 2 comprises a black matrix layer 7 to shield non-pixel regions (portions where gate lines, data lines and thin film transistors are formed) other than the pixel regions. In addition, R, G and B color

filter layers are formed at respective pixel regions on the second substrate 2 including the black matrix layer 7, and a common electrode 14 is arranged over the entire surface of the second substrate 2 including the color filter layers 8.

[0013] The column spacers 20 are formed on portions of the common electrode 14 corresponding to the gate lines 4. Accordingly, the first and second substrates 1 and 2 are joined together such that the column spacers 20 are arranged on the gate lines 4.

[0014] The column spacers 20 are formed in an array process of the first substrate 1 or the second substrate 2. The column spacers 20 are fixedly formed in the form of columns with a certain height on the predetermined substrate.

[0015] The column spacers 20 are fixed in specific positions and thus do not move, when liquid crystals are dropped to form a liquid crystal layer. Advantageously, the column spacers do not inhibit the liquid crystals from flowing. However, the column spacers have a large area in contact with the corresponding substrate, thus disadvantageously causing display defects, e.g., touch defects.

[0016] The LCDs including afore-mentioned column spacers suffer from the following problems.

[0017] A region, where the liquid crystal panel of the related art column spacers-comprising LCDs is touched in a certain direction by hand or other objects, is stained. This stain is formed upon touch and is thus referred to as a "touch stain". As such, the stain is observed on the screen and thus is also called a "touch defect". Such a touch defect is considered to be attributed to the high frictional force which is caused by the large contact area between the column spacer and the corresponding substrate, as compared to related art ball spacer structures. That is, because column spacers have a large area in contact with the corresponding substrate, as compared, for example, to ball spacers, after upper and lower substrates shift towards each other upon touching, they take a long time to return to an original state and stains thus remain until they completely return to the original state.

[0018] Accordingly, efforts have been made to use ball spacers in liquid crystal panels. In these cases, the ball spacers move and deviate from their original positions during fabrication and use due to their mobility. Thus, causing other problems. Research is being conducted on solving these problems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0019] Accordingly, the present invention is directed to a liquid crystal display (LCD) device and a method for manufacturing the same that substantially obviates one or more problems due to limitations and disadvantages of the related art.

[0020] An advantage of the present invention is to provide a liquid crystal display (LCD) device and a method for manufacturing the same, capable of maintaining a cell gap and preventing press defects caused by application of a predetermined external pressure via the use of ball spacers.

[0021] Additional advantages, and features of the invention will be set forth in part in the description which follows and in part will become apparent to those having ordinary skill in the art upon examination of the following or may be learned from practice of the invention. These and other advantages of the invention may be realized and attained by the structure particularly pointed out in the written description and claims hereof as well as the appended drawings.

[0022] To achieve these and other advantages and in accordance with the purpose of the present invention, as embodied and broadly described herein, a liquid crystal display device comprises: a first substrate and a second substrate facing each other; a plurality of gate lines and a plurality of data lines formed in respective non-pixel regions on the first substrate such that the gate lines and the data lines cross each other to define pixel regions; a plurality of thin film transistors formed at intersections between the gate lines and the data lines; a black matrix layer formed on the second substrate in portions corresponding to the non-pixel regions; a plurality of spacers formed in predetermined portions provided on the black matrix layer between the first and second substrates, wherein each spacer includes one or more first balls having a first diameter, one or more second balls having a second diameter smaller than the first diameter, and a solid to aggregate the first and second balls together; and a liquid crystal layer filled between the first substrate and the second substrate.

[0023] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description of the present invention are exemplary and explanatory and are intended to provide further explanation of the invention as claimed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] The accompanying drawings, which are included to provide a further understanding of the invention and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this application, illustrate embodiment(s) of the invention and together with the description serve to explain the principle of the invention. In the drawings:

[0025] FIG. 1 is a sectional view illustrating a related art liquid crystal display device;

[0026] FIG. 2 is a sectional view illustrating a liquid crystal display device using a ball spacer;

[0027] FIG. 3 is a sectional view illustrating a state in which the ball spacer of FIG. 2 moves upon fabrication or use;

[0028] FIG. 4 is a plan view illustrating a liquid crystal display device;

[0029] FIG. 5 is a sectional view illustrating a liquid crystal display device including spacers formed along the line I-I' of FIG. 4;

[0030] FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken along the lines II-II', III-III' and IV-IV' of FIG. 5;

[0031] FIG. 7 is a flow chart illustrating a method for manufacturing a second substrate of the liquid crystal display device according to the present invention;

[0032] FIG. 8 is a schematic view illustrating an inkjet system used for the formation of spacers; and

[0033] FIG. 9 is a view illustrating a head of the inkjet system of FIG. 8.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] Hereinafter, an LCD device and a method for manufacturing the same according to the present invention will be described with reference to the attached drawings.

[0035] FIG. 2 is a sectional view illustrating a liquid crystal display device using a ball spacer. FIG. 3 is a sectional view illustrating a phenomenon in which movement of the ball spacer of FIG. 2 occurs.

[0036] As shown in FIG. 2, in the liquid crystal display device using a ball spacer, the ball spacer 55 is arranged on the structure including a black matrix layer 51, a color filter layer

52, an overcoat layer 53 and an alignment film 54 arranged on a second substrate 50 in this order.

[0037] A method in which the ball spacer 55 is dotted in a desired position by ink-jetting has been suggested. After the ball spacer 55 is formed in the desired position, it moves from the desired position due to an applied external force during the formation process or an applied impact in use, as shown in FIG. 3. Thus, disadvantageously causing light leakage. That is, when the ball spacer 55 deviates from the original desired position, it comes out of the portion provided above the black matrix layer 51 and rolls toward a side of the portion. At this time, a height difference between the top of the ball spacer 55 which is dotted in the initial position, and the top of the ball spacer 55 which is arranged in the final position occurs, which is substantially comparable to the thickness of the black matrix layer 51. Such a height difference may cause variation in the cell gap after the ball movement. In addition, the height difference involves problems in that an aperture ratio is decreased due to the ball spacer 55 arranged out of regions provided by the black matrix layer, and scattering occurs on the surface of the ball spacer 55 which moves into a pixel region. Furthermore, the ball spacer 55 arranged in the pixel region results in a distorted orientation of liquid crystal, thus causing light leakage.

[0038] The ball spacer 55 of FIG. 2 is dispersedly formed on the surface provided with the alignment film 54.

[0039] Meanwhile, in an attempt to solve the problems occurring during the formation of the movable ball spacer, a method for forming spacers has been suggested, in which ball ingredients are mixed with a solid that can be adhered to the surface where the spacer is to be formed and the mixture is ink-jetted in desired positions to fix spacers therein.

[0040] Hereinafter, an LCD device including spacers formed by ink-jetting and a method for manufacturing the same will be illustrated.

[0041] FIG. 4 is a plan view illustrating a liquid crystal display device. FIG. 5 is a sectional view illustrating a liquid crystal display device including the spacer formed along the line I-I' of FIG. 4. FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken along the lines II-II', III-III' and IV-IV' of FIG. 5.

[0042] As shown in FIGS. 4 to 6, the liquid crystal display device according to the present invention comprises: a first substrate 100 and a second substrate 200 facing each other; a plurality of gate lines 101 and a plurality of data lines 102 arranged on the first substrate 100 such that the gate lines 101 and the data lines 102 cross each other to define pixel regions; thin film transistors (TFTs) located at each crossing of an associated data line and gate line; pixel electrodes 103 and common electrodes 104 alternately arranged in the respective pixel regions; and a liquid crystal layer (not shown) sealed between the first substrate 100 and the second substrate 200.

[0043] Hereinafter, the structure provided on the first substrate 100 will be described in detail.

[0044] A plurality of gate lines 101 and a plurality of data lines 102 are arranged on the first substrate 100, such that the gate lines 101 and the data lines 102 cross each other, to define pixel regions. In addition, common lines 111 are arranged on the first substrate 100 such that the common lines 111 extend in a direction substantially parallel to the gate lines 101.

[0045] In addition, thin film transistors are located at respective crossings of the data lines 101 and the gate lines 102. Each thin film transistor includes: a gate electrode 101a protruding from the associated gate line 101; a gate insulating film 114 formed over the entire surface of the first substrate

100 including the gate electrodes **101a**, the gate lines **101** and the common lines **101**; a “U”-shaped source electrode **102a** and a drain electrode **102b** arranged at both sides of the gate electrode **101a** such that the drain electrode **102b** is partially located in the “U”-shaped source electrode **102a**; and semiconductor layers **105** (**105a**, **105b**) arranged in regions including portions under the source electrode **102a** and the drain electrode **102b**, and channel portions between the source electrode **102a** and the drain electrode **102b**. The semiconductor layers **105** include an amorphous silicon layer **105a** and an impurity semiconductor layer (n+ layer) **105b** arranged thereon. The impurity semiconductor layer **105b** is formed by removing the channel region present between the source electrode **102a** and the drain electrode **102b**. The shape of the source electrode **102a** is not limited to the “U”-shape and may be “-”- or “L”-shaped.

[0046] The data line **102** has a central bent portion at each sub-pixel such that the data line **102** forms a zigzag line. The common line **111** is integrally formed with a storage electrode **111a** at each pixel and the storage electrode **111a** is connected to a common electrode connection electrode **111b** which lies adjacent to both sides of the data line **102** and protrudes in parallel to the data line **102**. As mentioned above, the data line **102** crosses the gate line **101** and has a bent portion at each pixel. Preferred embodiments of the present invention are not limited thereto and the data line **102** may perpendicularly cross the gate line **101**, or may be tilted at a predetermined angle with respect to the gate line **101**. In the illustrated drawings, the reason for imparting the bent portion to the data line **102** at each pixel is that the common electrode **104** and the pixel electrode **103** extend in parallel to the data line, and a vertically symmetrical electric field is thus generated, on the basis of the bent portion, which allows for orientation of liquid crystals in different directions and thus leads to an improvement in viewing angle.

[0047] The common electrode **104** and the pixel electrode **103** constitute a transparent electrode in the same layer at each pixel region and have alternately arranged portions. The common electrode **104** is partially overlapped with the common electrode connection electrode **111b** arranged therebeneath. A second common electrode connection electrode **111c** which extends in parallel to the gate line **101** has as an electrical contact a second contact portion **117b**, which passes through the passivation film **115** and the gate insulating film **114** interposed between the common electrode **104** and the second common electrode connection electrode **111c**.

[0048] In addition, the pixel electrode **103** is branched from the second storage electrode **103a** overlapping the first storage electrode **111a**, and has as an electrical contact a first contact portion **117a** which passes through the passivation film **115** interposed between the pixel electrode **103** and the drain electrode **102b**.

[0049] In addition, a first alignment film **116** is arranged over the entire surface of the passivation film **115** including the pixel electrode **103**, the common electrode **104**, the second storage electrode **103a** and the third common connection electrode **104a**.

[0050] The structure provided on the second substrate **200** will be illustrated in more detail.

[0051] The second substrate **200** comprises a black matrix layer **201** to shield light to regions (i.e., portions corresponding to the gate lines, the data lines and the thin film transistors) other than the pixel regions; R, G and B color filter layers **202** to render colors in the corresponding pixel regions; and an

overcoat layer **203** arranged over the entire surface of the black matrix layer **201** and the color filter layers **202**.

[0052] The second substrate **200** further comprises a second alignment film **204** arranged on the overcoat layer **203**, and spacers **130** arranged in different regions provided by the black matrix layer **201** on the second alignment film **204**.

[0053] The spacers **130** include one or more first balls **131** having a first diameter, one or more second balls **132** having a second diameter, and a solid material **133** to cohere the first balls **131** and the second balls **132** in the form of aggregates and adhere them to a surface of the second alignment film **204**.

[0054] In this case, the spacers **130** comprise the first and second balls **131** and **132** that are different from each other in size. The first diameter of the first balls **131** is larger than the second diameter of the second balls **132**.

[0055] In addition, the spacers **130** are arranged on the black matrix layer **201** in the structure provided on the second substrate **200**, and at the same time, on the gate lines **101**, the common lines **111** and other lines arranged in the same layer as these lines in the structure provided on the first substrate **100**. The spacers **130** are arranged within the width of the black matrix layer **201** due to the solid **133**. In FIG. 4, the spacers **130** are oval in the plane. The reason for the shape is that the spacers **130** are formed by spraying a spacer-forming material in a liquid state in the corresponding region from a head (not shown) of an ink-jet system, allowing the liquid spacer-forming material to be suitably spread, followed by being cured. Consequently, since the liquid spacer material exhibits spreadability, prior to being jetted and then cured, the spacers **130** have an oval horizontal cross-section. Accordingly, the horizontal cross-section shapes of the spacers **130** which include the first and second balls **131** and **132** are not limited to circles.

[0056] At this time, the spacers **130** thus formed have a size comparable to the diameter of the first balls **131**, and take the form of aggregates in which the first balls **131** and the second balls **132** are adhered to one another through the solid material **133**. For this reason, the spraying may be partially carried out at a height slightly higher than the first balls **131**. However, the liquid spacer-forming material is sprayed from the head and then spread, to form spacers **130** having a diameter comparable to that of the first ball **131**. The first and second balls **131** and **132** have a substantially spherical shape.

[0057] The difference in diameter between the first and second balls **131** and **132** constituting the spacers **130**, which is represented by “ ΔH ”, is about 0.05 to 1.0 μm . In this case, the first diameter of the first balls **131** corresponds to the thickness of the liquid crystal layer interposed between the first and second substrates **100** and **200**, i.e., a cell gap and is determined within the range of about 2.0 to about 5.0 μm . Accordingly, the second diameter corresponds to the difference between the first diameter and ΔH .

[0058] It is preferable that ΔH , the difference in height between the first and second balls **131** and **132**, be about 0.2 to 0.6 μm when taking into consideration efficient improvement in both touch defects and gravity defects.

[0059] In this case, regions where the second balls **132** are arranged in the spacers **130** are low in level. As such, each spacer **130** has portions that differ from each other in level. Accordingly, in the portion of the spacer **130** where the first ball **131** is arranged, the surface of the first ball **131** is partially in contact with the first alignment film **116** provided on the first substrate **100**, and in the portion where the second ball

132 is arranged, the second ball **132** is spaced apart from the surface of the first alignment film **116** provided on the first substrate **100** by the distance (ΔH), corresponding to the diameter difference between the first and second balls **131** and **132**.

[0060] Accordingly, in the spacer **130**, the first ball **131** functions to maintain the cell gap, and the second ball **132** comes in contact with the outmost surface (i.e., the first alignment film **116**) of the structure provided on the first substrate **100**, when a predetermined external pressure is applied to the external surfaces of the first and second substrates **100** and **200**, and thus shares the pressure along with the first ball **131**, thereby preventing plastic deformation or breakage of the first ball **131** which results from concentration of pressure on the first ball **131** alone. As a result, it is possible to prevent press defects which are caused by the plastic deformation or damage of the first ball **131**.

[0061] The spacer **130** can function to secure the cell gap based only on the partial contact between the spherical first ball **131** and the first alignment film **116**. For this reason, although the first ball **131** is partially pressed by a predetermined pressure, it has a dot-like narrow contact area in contact with the first alignment film **116**. Consequently, upon touch operations in which the first substrate **100** or the second substrate **200** is pushed in one direction, the surface friction force between the spacer **130** and the corresponding substrate can be reduced. Accordingly, the first and second substrates **100** and **200** shift in different directions and then readily return to their original states, thus preventing touch defects.

[0062] The spacer **130** is formed through an ink-jetting process using a predetermined head. At this time, the head is filled with an uncured liquid spacer-forming material and provided with a nozzle to spray the material in a predetermined region. The spacer is formed by jetting the spacer-forming material in the corresponding region through the nozzle and curing the material.

[0063] The spacer-forming material comprises the first and second balls **131** and **132**, a liquid thermosetting binder in a liquid state prior to curing, and a solvent.

[0064] Each spacer includes one or more of the first balls **131** and one or more of second balls **132**. In the process of each ink-jetting for forming the spacer, respective balls are not jetted separately in corresponding regions, but respective drops comprising one or more first balls **131** and one or more second balls **132** are jetted therein.

[0065] The first and second balls **131** and **132** constitute the head, along with the liquid thermosetting binder and the solvent. Although the ink-jetting is performed only once, the spacer **130** including balls which are different from each other in size can be formed.

[0066] The spacer **130** is formed in accordance with an ink-jetting method, which is performed by jetting the spacer-forming material from the head in predetermined positions on the second alignment film **204**. Upon each jetting, the head comprises at least one first ball and at least one second ball, to render the cured spacer **130** to have at least one first ball and at least one second ball. The spacer-forming material contained in the head comprises: a liquid material (represented by reference numeral "135" in FIG. 8) consisting of about 1 to 20 wt % of a thermosetting binder in a liquid state of the solid **133**, and the remaining weight of a solvent (not shown); and about 0.1 to 3 wt % of the first and second balls **131** and **132**, with respect to the total weight of the liquid material (thermosetting binder and the solvent).

[0067] In the process of ink-jetting, such a spacer-forming material including the plurality of balls is jetted in the corresponding region and then cured at about 80° C. to about 300° C. As a result, the liquid thermosetting binder is cured and then solidified in the form of aggregates including the plurality of first and second balls **131** and **132**, while the solvent is vaporized.

[0068] The solid **133** is an uncured form of the thermosetting binder. For example, the solid includes at least one organic compound selected from acrylic, urethane, epoxy and silicone compounds. Specific examples of acrylic compounds may include ethyl methacrylate, N-butyl methacrylate, isobutyl methacrylate, dicyclopentanyl methacrylate, benzyl methacrylate, glycidyl methacrylate, 2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate, methacrylic acid isobornyl methacrylate and styrene polymers, and combinations thereof.

[0069] The solvent is selected from those that have a boiling point of about 60° C. to about 300° C. For example, glycol ether may be used as the solvent. Examples of useful glycol ethers include propylene glycol methyl ether (PGME), dipropylene glycol methyl ether (DGME), tripropylene glycol methyl ether (TGME), propylene glycol methyl ether acetate (PGMEA), dipropylene glycol methyl ether acetate (DGMEA), propylene glycol n-propyl ether (PGPE), dipropylene glycol n-propyl ether (DGPE), propylene glycol n-butyl ether (PGBE), dipropylene glycol n-butyl ether (DGBE), tripropylene glycol n-butyl ether (TGBE), propylene glycol phenyl ether (PGPE), propylene glycol diacetate (PGD), dipropylene glycol dimethyl ether (DGDE), diethylene glycol ethyl ether (DGEE), diethylene glycol methyl ether (DGME), diethylene glycol n-butyl ether (DGBE), diethylene glycol hexyl ether (DGHE), diethylene glycol n-butyl ether acetate (DGBEA), ethylene glycol propyl ether (EGPE), ethylene glycol n-butyl ether (EGBE), ethylene glycol hexyl ether (EGHE), ethylene glycol n-butyl ether acetate (EGBEA), triethylene glycol methyl ether (TGME), triethylene glycol ethyl ether (TGEE), triethylene glycol n-butyl ether (TGBE), ethylene glycol phenyl ether (EGPE) and ethylene glycol n-butyl ether mixtures (EGBEM).

[0070] Preferably, the solvent has a surface tension of about 20 to about 80 dynes/cm, a viscosity of about 1 to about 30 cP and a density of about 0.8 to about 1.2 g/cc at ambient temperature. Based on these properties, the solvent is vaporized and removed during curing at about 80 to 300° C.

[0071] In addition, the first and second balls **131** and **132** may be made of an organic compound, for example, divinylbenzene. The first and second balls **131** and **132** can be distinguished from other components, in that the first and second balls **131** and **132** are present in the form of a white powder, while the solid and the solvent are in a liquid state. If necessary, the first and second balls **131** and **132** may be subject to surface-treatment prior to being mixed into the spacer-forming material so that they can be distinguished from other liquid components.

[0072] Meanwhile, with respect to the content ratio of the first and second balls **131** and **132** of the spacer **130**, the relatively large number of the second balls **132** is formed. The ratio between the first and second balls **131** and **132** is in the range of about 1:2 to 1:100. That is, in order to increase the liquid crystal margin range in which the levels of both touch defects and gravity defects are zero, the spacers **130** are formed, such that the number of the first balls **131** that exhibits high sensitivity to touch defects is smaller than that of the second balls **132** with respect to the total number of balls.

[0073] As mentioned above, the spacers 130 may be formed on the second alignment film 204. Alternatively, in reverse, after the spacers 130 are formed on the overcoat layer 203 or the common electrode, the second alignment film 204 may be formed on the overcoat layer 203 or the common electrode including the spacers 130.

[0074] The spacers 130 have a two-dimensional oval-like shape within the range of the width of the black matrix layer 201. That is, the number of the first and second balls 131 and 132 increases towards the center of the spacers, and on the other hand, the number of the first and second balls 131 and 132 decreases towards the edge of the spacers. The solid 133 prevents the jetted first and second balls 131 and 142 from being dispersed in portions where the spacers 130 are to be formed, instead being aggregated. Thus, the solid 133 functions to fix the first and second balls 131 and 132 on the second alignment film 204 or the overcoat layer 203.

[0075] Meanwhile, the color filter layer 202 may be arranged in pixel regions together with the black matrix layer 201, as shown in the drawings. In some cases, the color filter layer 202 may be selectively arranged only in pixel regions, or partially or entirely overlapped with the black matrix layer 201 in portions provided by the black matrix layer 201.

[0076] Hereinafter, a method for manufacturing the structure of the first substrate 100 including the thin film transistors, the common electrodes and the pixel electrodes will be illustrated in detail.

[0077] A metal such as Mo, Al or Cr is deposited on a first substrate 100 and is then patterned through photolithographic processes to simultaneously form a plurality of gate lines 101, gate electrodes 101a, common lines 111 extending parallel to the gate lines 101, first storage electrodes 111a integrally formed with the common lines 111, and first common electrodes 111b and second common electrodes 111c branched from the first storage electrodes 111a and protruded in pixel regions. At this time, the gate electrodes 101a are formed in predetermined positions provided by pixel regions such that they are protruded from the gate lines 201, and the first storage electrodes 111a, the first common connection electrodes 111b and the second common connection electrodes 111c are formed in the boundaries between adjacent pixel regions.

[0078] Then, an inorganic insulating material is deposited over the first substrate 100 provided with the gate lines 101, the common lines 111, the gate electrodes 101a, the first storage electrodes 111a, and the first and second common connection electrodes 111b and 111c, to form a gate insulating film 114.

[0079] Subsequently, an amorphous silicon layer 105a and an impurity semiconductor layer 105b are sequentially deposited on the gate insulating film 114.

[0080] A metal such as Mo, Al or Cr is deposited on the resulting structure and a photosensitive film is applied thereto. For example, the photosensitive film may be a negative photosensitive film.

[0081] The portions where the data lines, source electrodes and drain electrodes are formed define a light-transmission part, the channel portions of the semiconductor layers define a light-semitransmission part, and the remaining portions defined a light-shielding part. In this regard, masks (not shown) that correspond to the light-shielding part are positioned on the photosensitive film.

[0082] Subsequently, the photosensitive film is exposed to light and is then developed through the masks, to form a first photosensitive film pattern such that the portions provided by

the light-transmission part remain unetched, the portions provided by the light-semi-transmission part are partially removed, and the portions provided by the light-shielding part are completely removed. The metal material is patterned using the first photosensitive film pattern (not shown) in accordance with photolithographic processes. The first photosensitive film pattern includes a first pattern which has a bent portion in each pixel region, while crossing the gate line 101, and a second pattern (corresponding to the light-transmission part where the source and drain electrodes are formed, including the light-semitransmission part of the masks) which is connected to the first pattern at the intersection of the gate line 101 and extends toward the pixel region. After the patterning of the metal using the first photosensitive film pattern, data lines 102 which cross the gate lines 101 and have a bent portion at respective pixel regions are formed, and dummy patterns (not shown) connected to the data lines 102 are formed in portions corresponding to the second pattern.

[0083] Subsequently, the impurity semiconductor layer 105b and the amorphous silicon layer 105a are selectively removed using the data lines 102 and the dummy patterns as masks.

[0084] Subsequently, with respect to the first photosensitive film pattern (not shown), the first photosensitive film pattern is subjected to ashing such that the photosensitive film provided by the light-semi-transmission part of the mask which has a relatively smaller thickness is removed, to form a second photosensitive film (not shown).

[0085] Subsequently, the portions, where the metal 102 (located in the same layer as the data line 102) and the impurity semiconductor layer 105b of the dummy pattern are exposed, are selectively removed using the second photosensitive pattern as a mask, to form source electrodes 102a and drain electrodes 102b and to pattern the impurity semiconductor layer 105b arranged thereunder. In this process, the impurity semiconductor layer 105b interposed between the source electrode 102a and the drain electrode 102b is removed. The removed region is defined as a channel portion. The source electrode 102a is formed in the "U" shape that protrudes from the data line 102 toward the pixel region. The drain electrode 102b is spaced apart from the source electrode 102a by a predetermined distance and is partially embedded in the "U" shape of the source electrode 102a.

[0086] Subsequently, a passivation film 115 is deposited over the gate insulating film 114 provided with the data lines 102, the source electrodes 102a and the drain electrodes 102b. At this time, the passivation film 115 is generally made of an inorganic material e.g., SiNx. In order to increase an aperture ratio of liquid crystal cells, low dielectric organic materials such as benzocyclobutene (BCB), spin on glass (SOG) and acryl may be used.

[0087] Subsequently, a portion of the passivation film 115 is selectively etched in predetermined portions on the drain electrode 102b to form a first contact portion 117a, and the passivation film 115 and the gate insulating film 114 provided in predetermined portions on the second common connection electrode 111c are selectively removed to form a second contact portion 117b.

[0088] Subsequently, a transparent electrode is deposited over the passivation film 115 including the first and second contact portions 117a and 117b and is then selectively removed, to form a plurality of common electrodes 104 which are partially overlapped with the common electrode connection electrodes 111b at respective pixels and spaced apart

from one another, third common connection electrodes **104a** overlapping the second common connection electrodes **111c** and connecting the common electrodes **104** in pixel regions of the common electrodes **104**, and a plurality of pixel electrodes **103** alternating with the common electrodes **104**.

[0089] Subsequently, a first alignment film **116** is formed over the entire surface of the passivation film **115** including the pixel electrode **103** and the common electrodes **104**.

[0090] Hereinafter, a manufacturing method performed on the second substrate of the liquid crystal display device according to the present invention will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0091] FIG. 7 is a flow chart illustrating a method for manufacturing the second substrate of the liquid crystal display device according to the present invention. FIG. 8 is a schematic view illustrating an inkjet system to form spacers. FIG. 9 is a view illustrating a head of the inkjet system of FIG. 8.

[0092] As shown in FIGS. 4, 5 and 7 to 9, first, a black matrix layer **201** is formed on the second substrate **200** in a region other than the pixel regions (**100S**), which serves to shield light of portions corresponding to gate lines, data lines and thin film transistors, other than the pixel regions.

[0093] Subsequently, R, G and B color filter layers **202** for rendering colors at respective pixels are formed (**110S**).

[0094] Subsequently, an overcoat layer **203** is formed over the black matrix layer **201** and the color filter layers **202**. (**120S**).

[0095] Subsequently, a second alignment film **204** is formed on the overcoat layer **203**.

[0096] Subsequently, a head **400** is filled with the aforementioned spacer material consisting of first balls having a first diameter, second balls having a second diameter smaller than the first diameter, the liquid thermosetting binder and the solvent (**130S**). At this time, the head **400** is filled with a liquid material **135** consisting of the solvent and the thermosetting binder, supplied through a supply pipe **420** equipped therein. The first balls **131** and the second balls **132** are present in an amount not more than 0.1 to 3.0 wt %, with respect to the total weight of the liquid material **135**.

[0097] The predetermined spacer-forming material is jetted in predetermined portions of the black matrix layer **201** on the second alignment film **204** through a nozzle **440** mounted in the head **400** and then cured to form spacers **130** (**140S**). In the process of heating, after the jetting, the volatile solvent is removed and the liquid thermosetting binder is cured, as shown in FIG. 5. The first and second balls **131** and **132** are aggregated together to form a solid **133** to be adhered to the second alignment film **204**.

[0098] Meanwhile, the ink-jetting process used for the spacer formation will be illustrated below.

[0099] Preferably, the head mounted in an ink-jetting system used for the ink-jetting process further includes a discharge means to transfer a predetermined material supplied from a supply pipe to a nozzle and discharge it to the outside. Preferably, the discharge means includes a piezoelectric device arranged opposite the nozzle such that the supply pipe is interposed between the nozzle and the piezoelectric device, and a voltage applier connected to the piezoelectric device to apply a voltage thereto.

[0100] The piezoelectric device exhibits the piezoelectric effect. The term "piezoelectric effect" refers to a phenomenon in which when a pressure is applied to a crystal substrate in a predetermined direction, positive and negative electric charges corresponding to the external force are generated on

opposite surfaces of the crystal substrate. Such a phenomenon was first discovered in 1880 by the French brothers Jacques Curie and Pierre Curie. Thereafter, the fact that one crystal substrate generates only a slight piezoelectricity, and on the other hand, when the substrate is overlapped with several pieces of metal foils, it generates greatly increased piezoelectricity, was also discovered. Furthermore, the fact that the crystal substrate has inherent vibrations, and is combined with the piezoelectric device to create stronger vibration, when elastic vibration corresponds to electric vibration, was discovered.

[0101] Based on such a phenomenon, piezoelectric devices were designed to be utilized in a variety of applications. Crystal, tourmaline, Rochelle salts, etc. are used as materials for piezoelectric devices. Recently known artificial crystals such as barium titanate, ammonium dihydrogen phosphate and ethylenediamine tartrate are also used as materials for piezoelectric devices.

[0102] As shown in FIG. 8, the ink-jetting system includes a substrate stage **210**, a supply tank **300**, a head **300** and a pipe **320** connecting the supply tank **300** to the head **400**.

[0103] The substrate stage **210** serves to support the substrate **200** and is preferably movable in a certain direction.

[0104] The supply tank **300** stores a predetermined material e.g., an oriented material, and the stored material is supplied through the pipe **320** to the head **400**.

[0105] The head **400** may be plural in number, the number thereof may be suitably determined while taking into consideration the factors such as the size of the substrate, and the head **400** is preferably movable in a predetermined direction.

[0106] The structure of the head **400** will be illustrated with reference to FIG. 9.

[0107] As shown in FIG. 9, the head **400** may include a plurality of nozzles for discharging the spacer-forming material, and in this drawing, only one nozzle is illustrated.

[0108] The head **400** includes a head body **410**, a supply pipe **420**, a nozzle **440**, a piezoelectric device **460** and a voltage applier **480**.

[0109] The supply pipe **420** serves as a passage through which the predetermined material e.g. an oriented material flows. The passage allows the external predetermined material to be supplied into the head **400**.

[0110] The nozzle **440** has a predetermined portion which is connected with the supply pipe **420** and allows for discharge of the predetermined material.

[0111] The piezoelectric device **460** is arranged opposite the nozzle **440** such that the supply pipe **420** is interposed between the piezoelectric device **460** and the nozzle **440**. The piezoelectric device **460** causes mechanical deformation due to an applied voltage, thus contracting the passage of the supply pipe **420** and allowing the predetermined material from the supply pipe **420** to the outside through the nozzle **440**.

[0112] The voltage applier **480** applies a voltage to the piezoelectric device **460** and is connected thereto.

[0113] Hereinafter, a method for forming the spacers of the liquid crystal display device associated with an ink-jetting system will be illustrated with reference to FIGS. 8 and 9.

[0114] The supply tank **300** is filled with first and second balls **131** and **132** having different sizes, i.e., a first diameter and a second diameter, respectively, and a liquid material **135** consisting of a liquid thermosetting binder and a solvent.

[0115] When a gas, e.g., nitrogen is injected into the supply tank **300**, the supply tank **300** undergoes an increase in inter-

nal pressure, which causes the spacer-forming material present in the supply tank 300 to be supplied through the pipe 320 into the head 400. The pipe 320 used herein has a diameter larger than those of the first balls 131 and the second balls 132.

[0116] The spacer-forming material supplied into the head 400 is sprayed through the nozzle 440 present in the head 400 and discharged in the predetermined portions of the second alignment film 204 over the black matrix layer 201 on the second substrate 200. In this discharge process, since the spacer-forming material has slight spreadability and is oval in the plane, it is cured through a heating process to form a spacer 130.

[0117] The pipe 320 is connected with the supply pipe 420 in the head 400. Thus, the spacer-forming material supplied via the pipe 320 flows through the supply pipe 420 in the head 400. At this time, when the voltage applier 480 applies a voltage to the piezoelectric device 460, the piezoelectric device 460 causes mechanical deformation, thus contracting the passage of the supply pipe 420 and allowing the spacer-forming material to be discharged through the opposite nozzle 440.

[0118] At this time, at least one of the head 400 and the substrate stage 210 is movable in a predetermined direction. Accordingly, when a large area of the second substrate 200 is provided, the second substrate 200 is divided into portions and ink-jetting processes through the heads 400 provided in the ink-jetting system are carried out in respective portions.

[0119] An example where the liquid crystal display device according to the present invention employs an in-plane switching (IPS) mode was illustrated with reference to FIGS. 4 to 6. In the cases where the aforementioned first and second spacers are applied to TN-mode liquid crystal display devices in which pixel electrodes are formed at respective pixels and common electrodes are further formed on the second substrate, it is possible to obtain the same effects as in the example.

[0120] It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made in the present invention without departing from the spirit or scope of the inventions. Thus, it is intended that the present invention covers the modifications and variations of this invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A liquid crystal display device comprising:

- a first substrate and a second substrate facing each other;
- a plurality of gate lines and a plurality of data lines formed in respective non-pixel regions on the first substrate such that the gate lines and the data lines cross each other to define pixel regions;
- a plurality of thin film transistors formed at respective crossings between the gate lines and the data lines;
- a black matrix layer formed on the second substrate in portions corresponding to the non-pixel regions;
- a plurality of spacers formed in predetermined portions provided on the black matrix layer between the first and second substrates, wherein each spacer includes one or more first balls having a first diameter, one or more second balls having a second diameter smaller than the first diameter, and a solid material to aggregate the first and second balls together; and
- a liquid crystal layer filled between the first substrate and the second substrate.

2. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the first diameter of the first balls is about 2.0 to about 5.0 μm .

3. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 2, wherein the difference between the first diameter and the second diameter is about 0.05 to about 1.0 μm .

4. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 3, wherein the difference between the first diameter and the second diameter is about 0.2 to about 0.6 μm .

5. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the first ball and the second ball contained in the spacer is one or more, and the ratio of the first and second balls is about 1:2 to about 1:100.

6. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the spacer is formed by ink-jetting a spacer-forming material, followed by curing,

wherein the spacer-forming material comprises a liquid material consisting of a liquid thermosetting binder, a solvent, and about 0.1 to about 3.0 wt % of the first and second balls, with respect to a total weight of the liquid crystal layer,

wherein the liquid thermosetting binder is present in an amount of about 1.0 to about 20.0 wt %, based on the total weight of the liquid crystal.

7. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 6, wherein the solid of the spacer is formed through heating, to cure the liquid thermosetting binder and volatilize the solvent.

8. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 7, wherein the heating is carried out at about 80 to about 300° C.

9. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the solid material includes at least one of organic acrylic, urethane and epoxy compounds.

10. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the solid material includes a silicone compound.

11. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, further comprising a color filter layer formed on the second substrate including the black matrix layer.

12. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 11, further comprising an overcoat layer formed over the entire surface of the second substrate including the black matrix layer and the color filter layer.

13. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 11, further comprising a common electrode formed over the entire surface of the second substrate including the black matrix layer and the color filter layer.

14. The liquid crystal display device according to claim 12 or 13, further comprising:

- a first alignment film formed on the first substrate including the gate lines and the data lines; and
- a second alignment film formed on the overcoat layer or the common electrode arranged on the second substrate.

15. A method for manufacturing a liquid crystal display device comprising:

- preparing a first substrate and a second substrate;
- forming a plurality of gate lines and a plurality of data lines in respective non-pixel regions on the first substrate such that the gate lines and the data lines cross each other to define pixel regions;
- forming a plurality of thin film transistors at respective crossings between the gate lines and the data lines;
- forming a black matrix layer on the second substrate in portions corresponding to the non-pixel regions;

ink-jetting a spacer-forming material in predetermined portions provided on the black matrix layer between the first and second substrates to form spacers, wherein the spacer-forming material comprises one or more first balls having a first diameter, one or more second balls having a second diameter smaller than the first diameter, a liquid thermosetting binder and a solvent; and

forming a liquid crystal layer between the first substrate and the second substrate, and joining the first substrate to the second substrate.

16. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the first diameter of the first balls is about 2.0 to about 5.0 μm and the difference between the first diameter and the second diameter is about 0.05 to about 1.0 μm .

17. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the spacer-forming material comprises a liquid material consisting of the liquid thermosetting binder and the solvent, and about 0.1 to about 3.0 wt % of the first and second balls, with respect to the total weight of the liquid material,

wherein the liquid thermosetting binder is present in an amount of about 1.0 to about 20.0 wt %, based on about 100 wt % of the total weight of the liquid material.

18. The method according to claim **17**, further comprising: after formation of the spacers, heating the spacers to cure the liquid thermosetting binder and vaporize the solvent.

19. The method according to claim **18**, wherein the heating process is carried out at about 80 to about 300° C.

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专利名称(译)	液晶显示器及其制造方法		
公开(公告)号	US20090091702A1	公开(公告)日	2009-04-09
申请号	US12/232817	申请日	2008-09-24
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IPC分类号	G02F1/1339 G02F1/1333		
CPC分类号	G02F1/13392 G02F1/133707		
优先权	1020070097933 2007-09-28 KR		
其他公开文献	US7936434		
外部链接	Espacenet USPTO		

摘要(译)

本发明公开了一种液晶显示 (LCD) 装置及其制造方法 , 能够通过使用球间隔物保持单元间隙并防止由施加预定外部压力引起的压力缺陷。

