



US 20040041972A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Yanagawa**

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2004/0041972 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Mar. 4, 2004**

(54) **LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE AND MANUFACTURING METHOD THEREOF**

**Publication Classification**

(51) **Int. Cl.<sup>7</sup> ..... G02F 1/1339**

(52) **U.S. Cl. .... 349/153**

(76) **Inventor: Kazuhiko Yanagawa, Mobara (JP)**

Correspondence Address:  
**ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP**  
**1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET**  
**SUITE 1800**  
**ARLINGTON, VA 22209-9889 (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

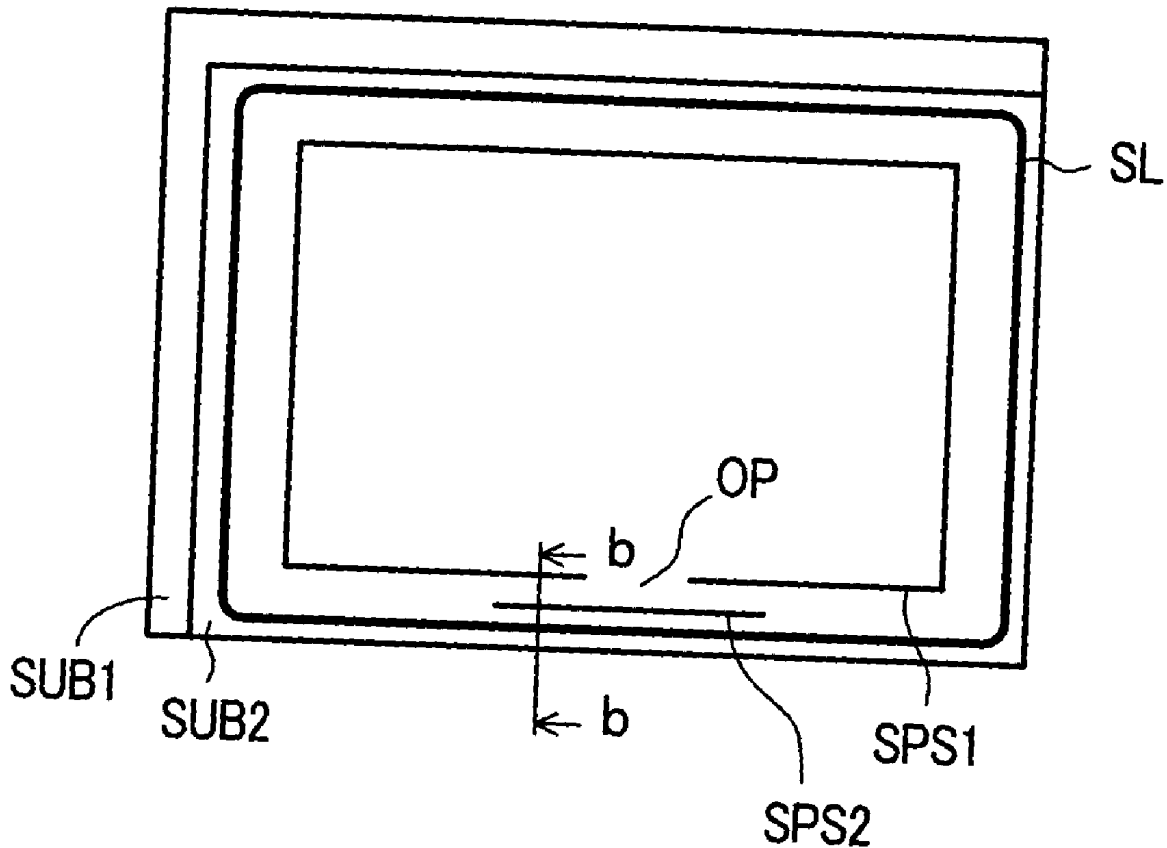
A seal material for isolating a liquid crystal from the outside is provided between substrates provided opposite to each other with the liquid crystal interposed therebetween. The seal material is formed as an annular pattern having no portion that encloses the liquid crystal in a part thereof. There is a first rib-like supporting strut for preventing contact between the liquid crystal and the seal material and a second rib-like supporting strut that is teamed with the first rib-like supporting strut to form a passage into which the liquid crystal flows from an opening formed in the first rib-like supporting strut serving as an exit the supporting struts being formed inside the seal material and between the substrates.

(21) **Appl. No.: 10/636,559**

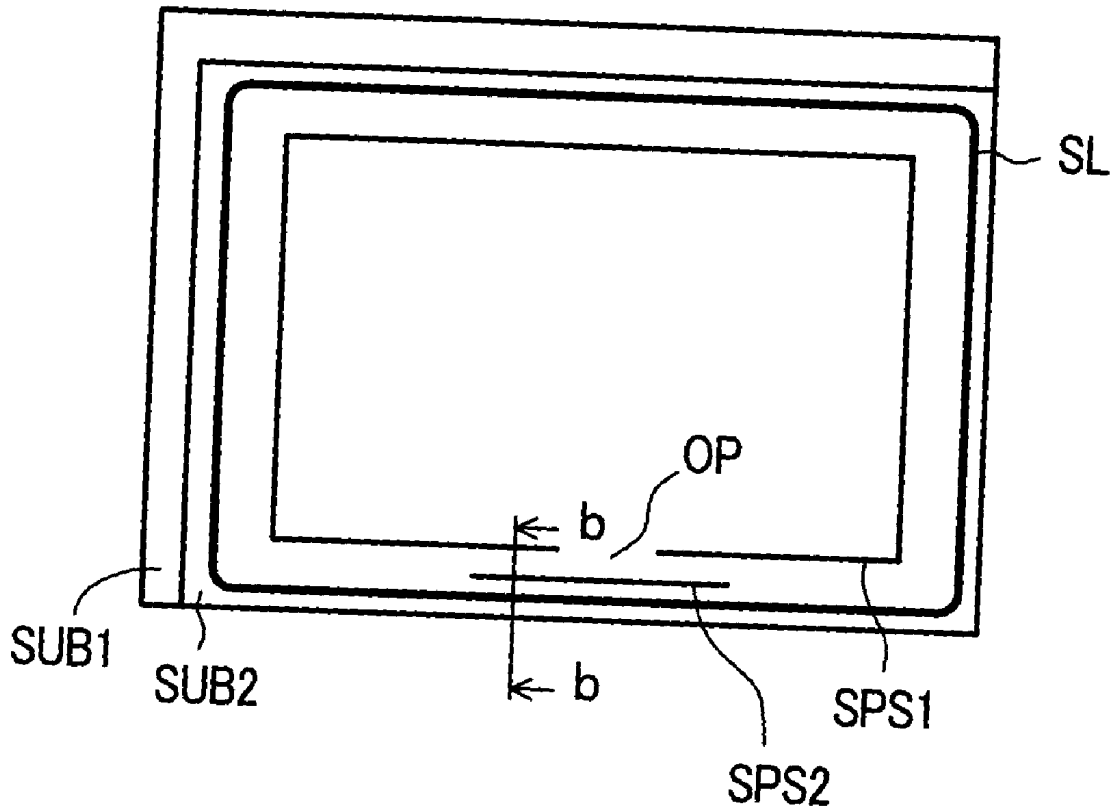
(22) **Filed: Aug. 8, 2003**

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

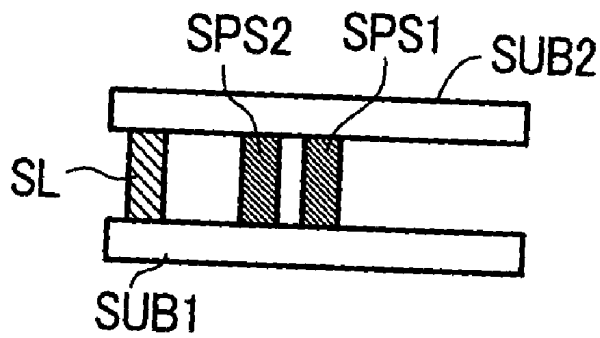
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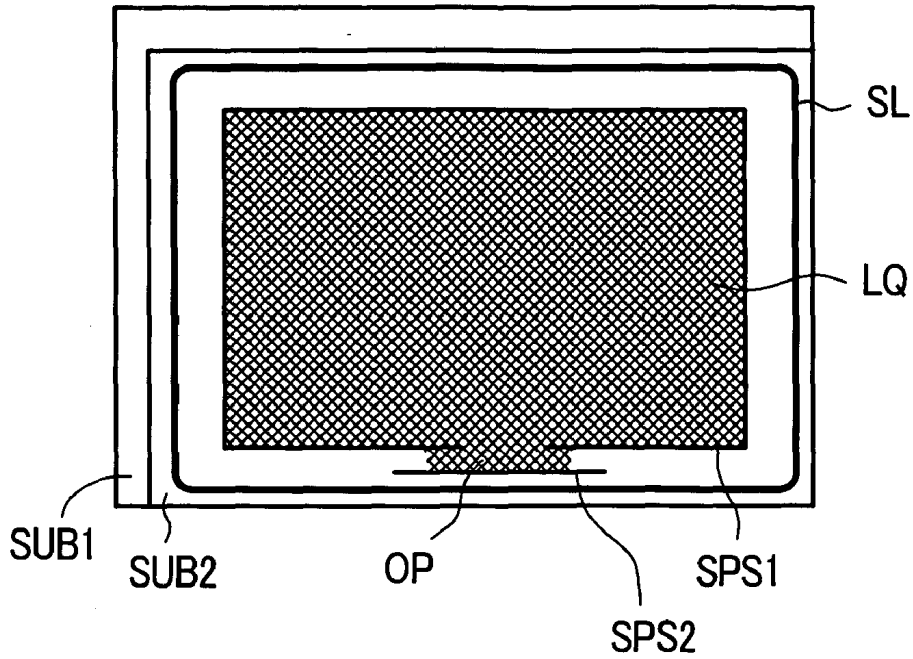
*FIG. 1A*



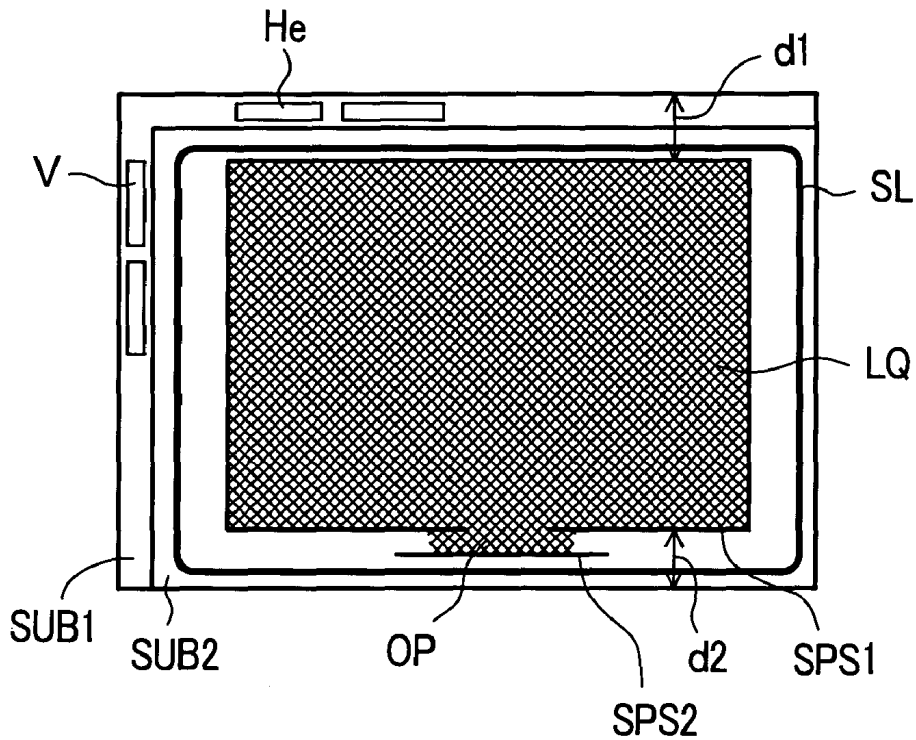
*FIG. 1B*



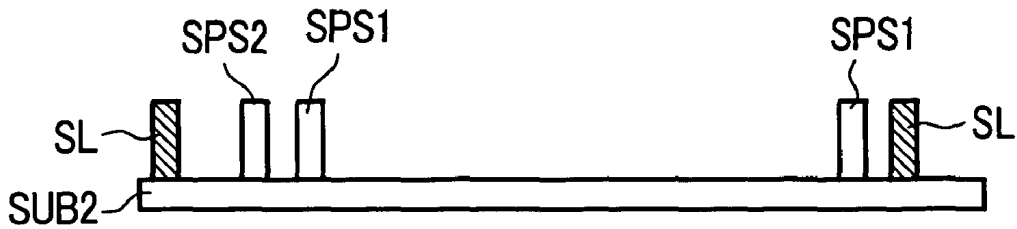
*FIG. 2*



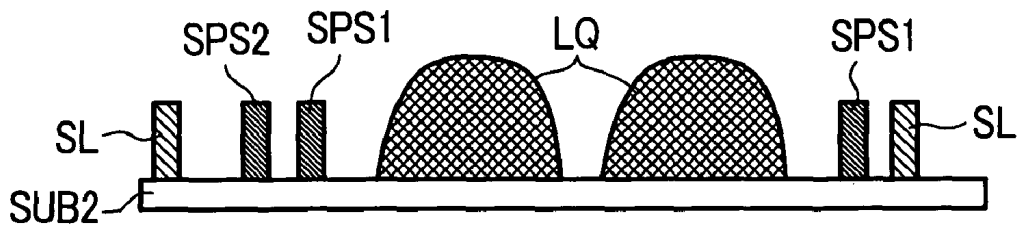
*FIG. 3*



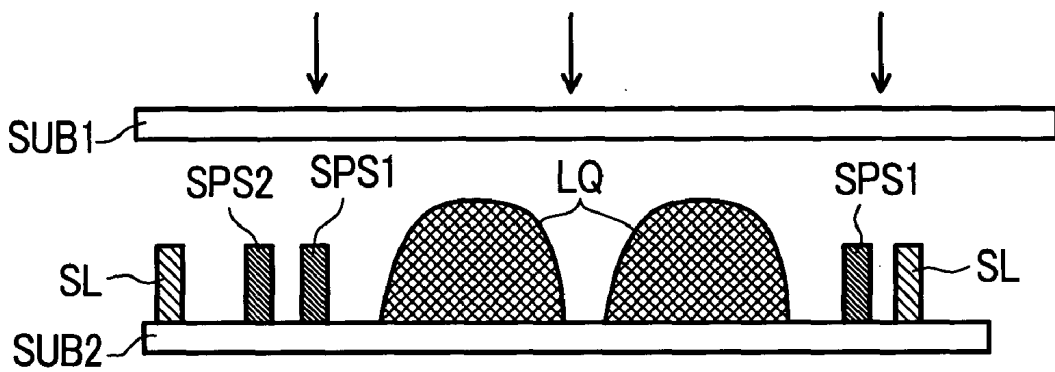
**FIG 4A**



**FIG. 4B**



**FIG. 4C**



**FIG. 4D**

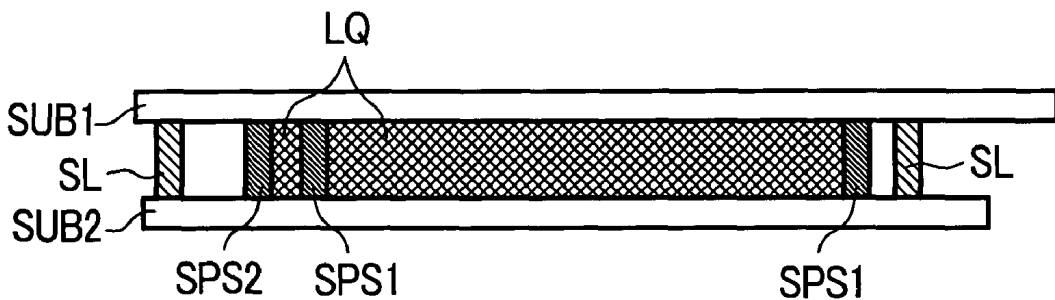


FIG. 5

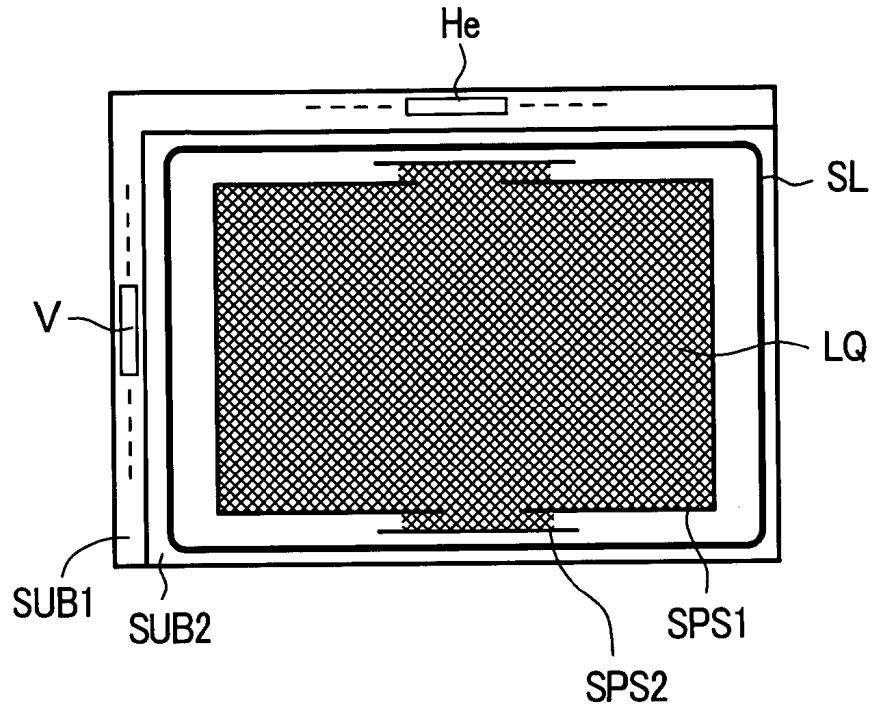
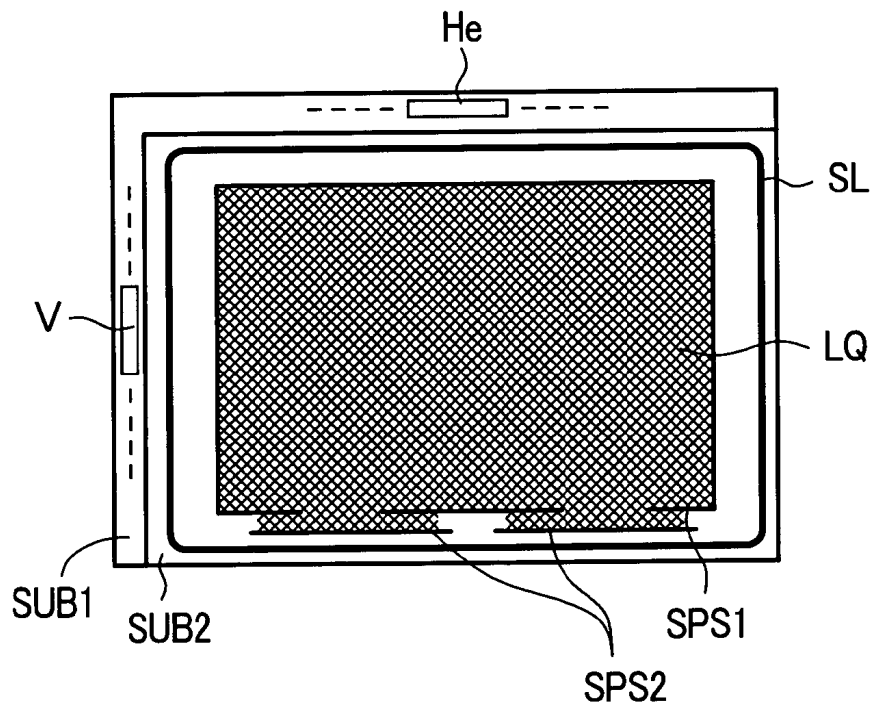
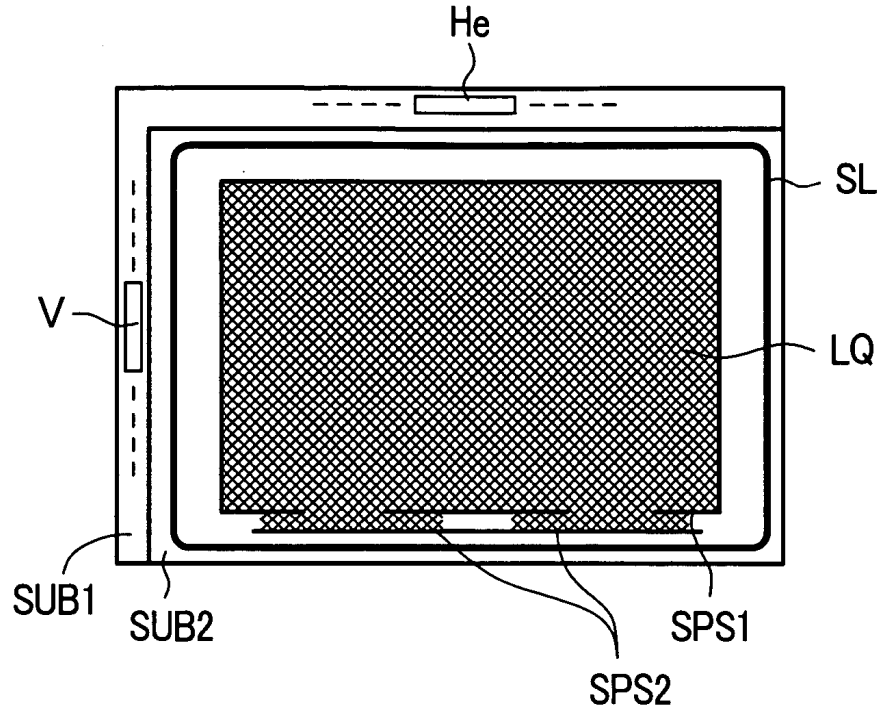


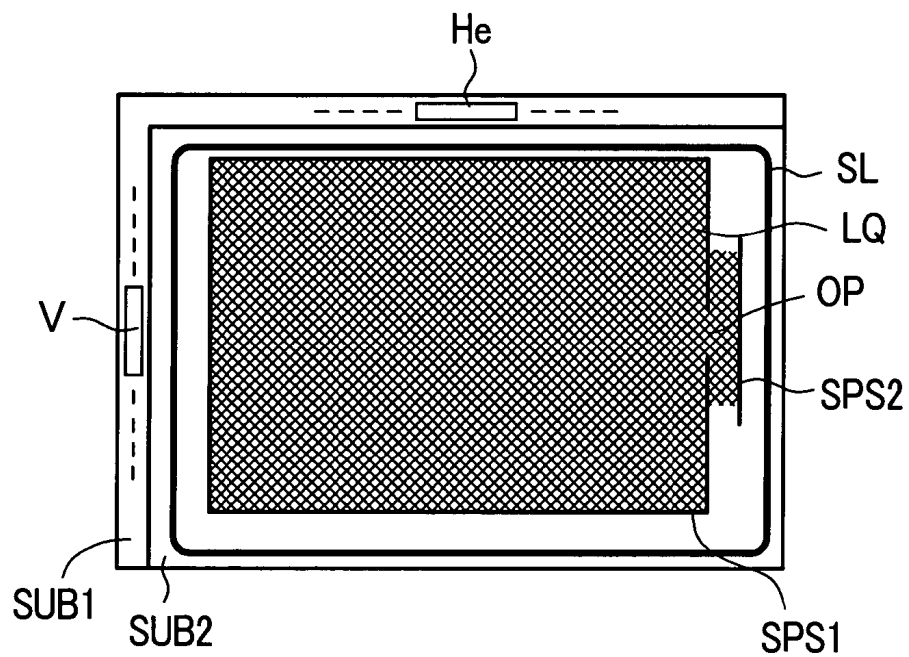
FIG. 6



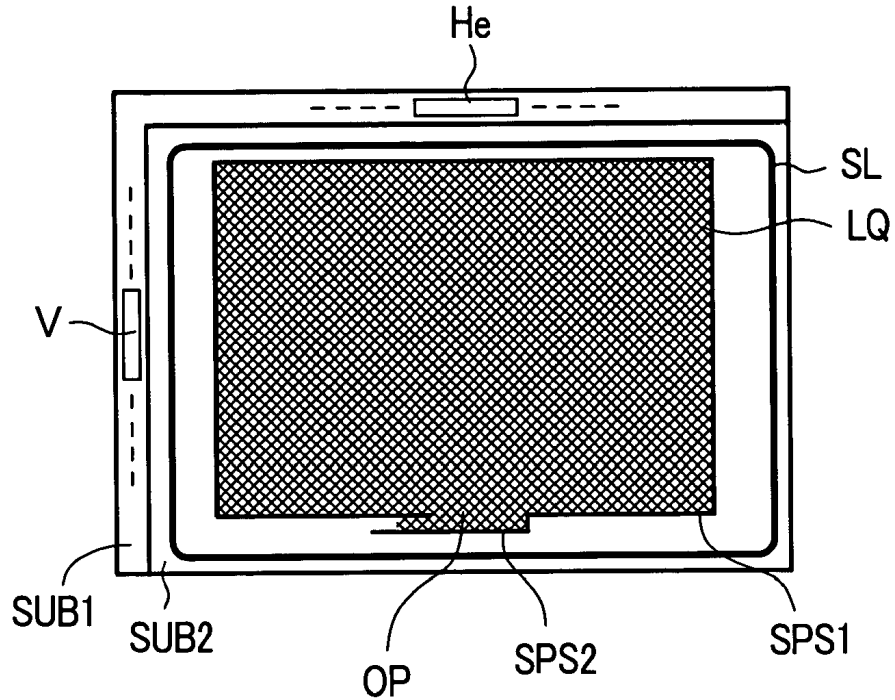
*FIG. 7*



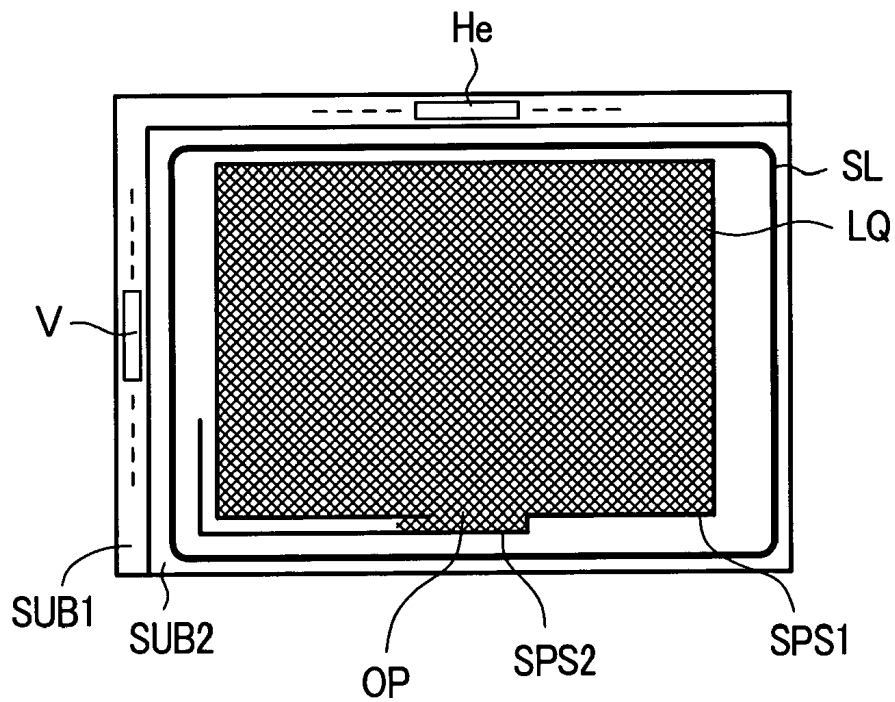
*FIG. 8*



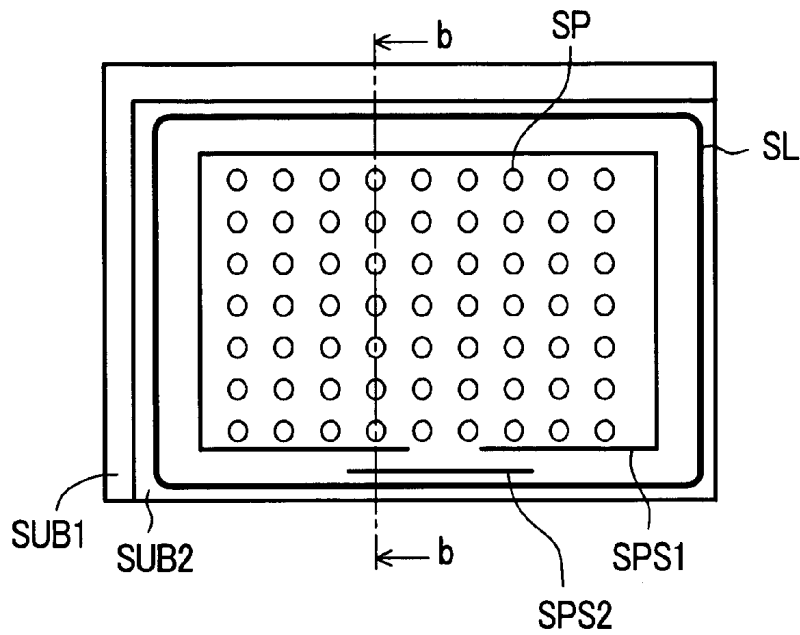
*FIG. 9*



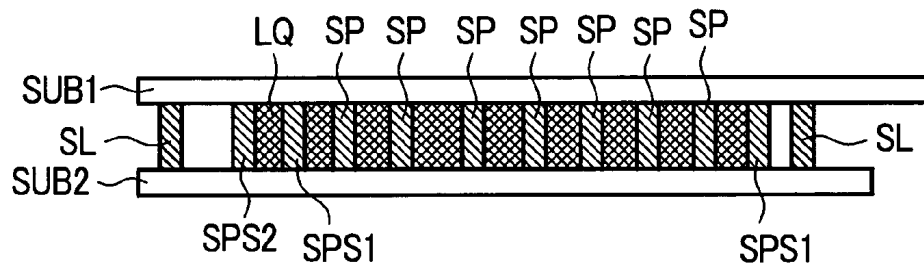
*FIG. 10*



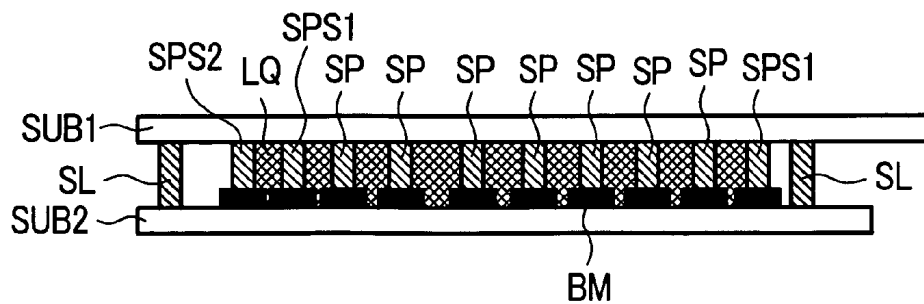
**FIG 11A**



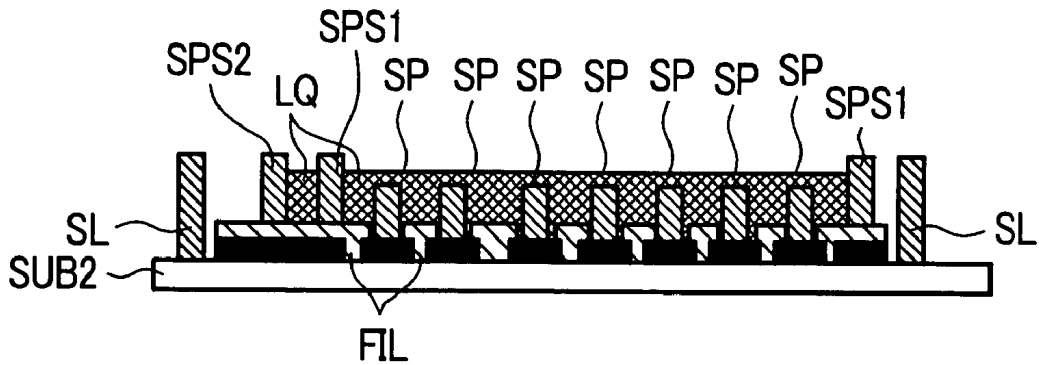
**FIG. 11B**



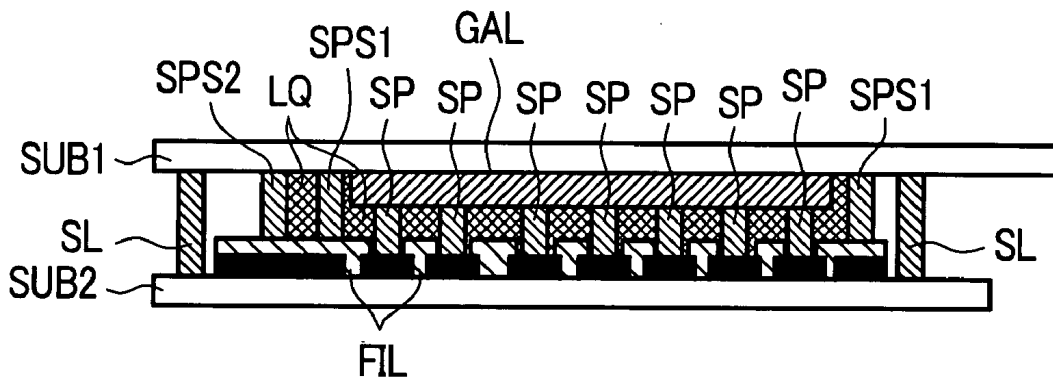
**FIG. 12**



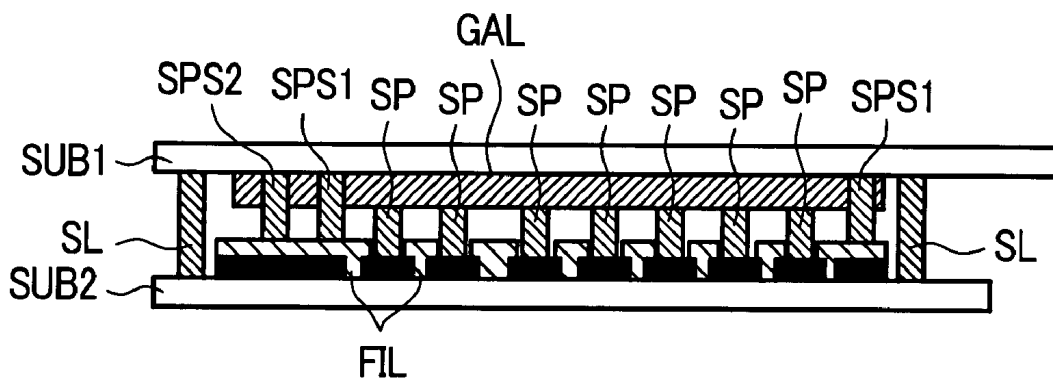
**FIG. 13**



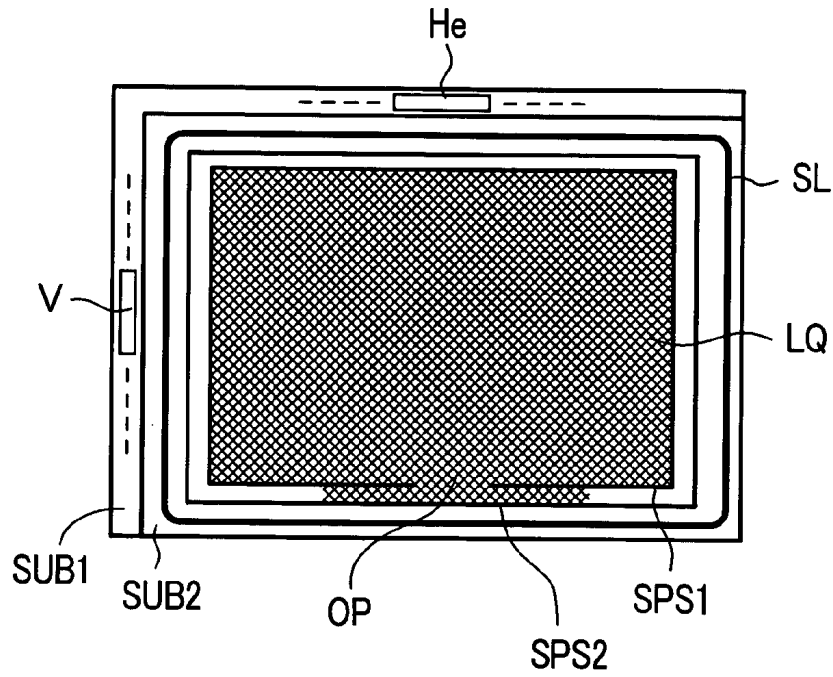
**FIG. 14**



**FIG. 15**



*FIG. 16*



*FIG. 17*

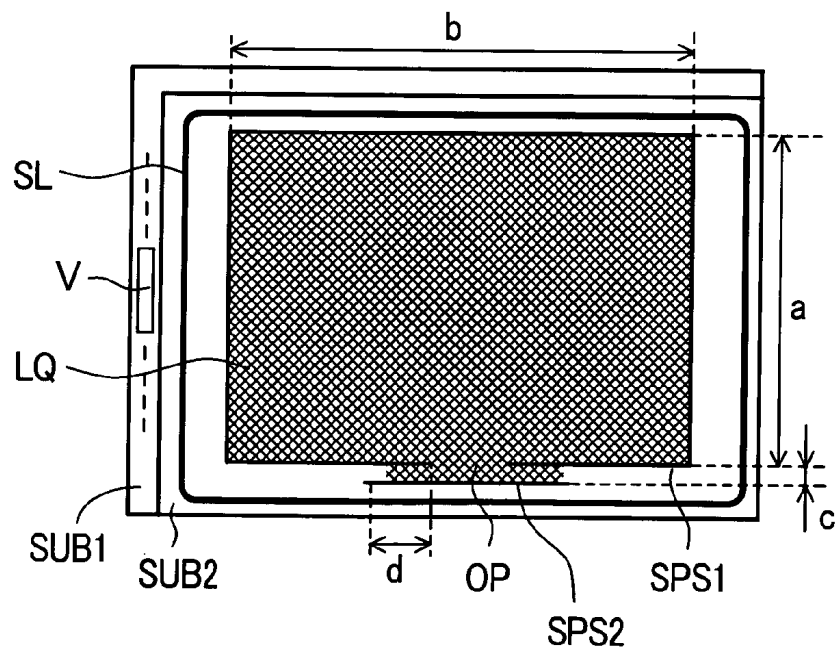


FIG. 18A

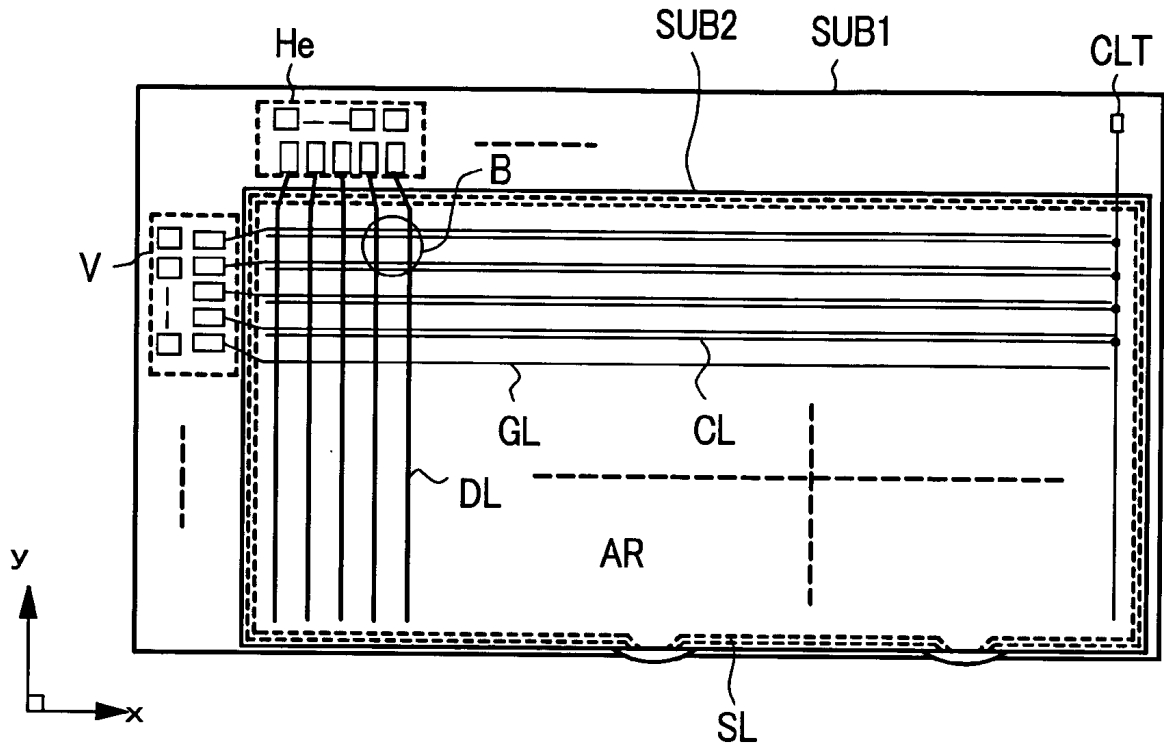
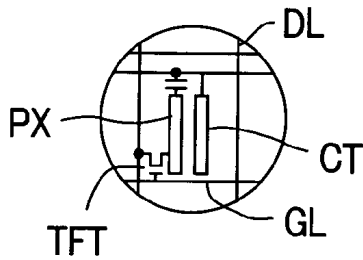


FIG. 18B



## LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE AND MANUFACTURING METHOD THEREOF

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### [0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a liquid crystal display device and a method of manufacturing the same and, in particular, to a liquid crystal display device having a configuration in which a liquid crystal maintained by a seal material on one substrate is enclosed by overlaying another substrate on the same and a method of manufacturing the same.

#### [0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] A liquid crystal display device is constituted by substrates serving as an envelope provided opposite to each other with a liquid crystal interposed therebetween and a multiplicity of pixels provided in the direction in which the liquid crystal spreads. The liquid crystal is enclosed within a space between the substrates with a seal material that also secures one of the substrates to the other substrate.

[0005] Referring to the enclosure of the liquid crystal in such a case, a configuration is known in which the liquid crystal maintained by the seal material on one of the substrates is enclosed by overlaying the other substrate on the same. Specifically, a configuration is known in which the seal material is formed on one of the substrates; the liquid crystal is dispensed to an appropriate amount in an area surrounded by the seal material; and the other substrate is thereafter overlaid and secured to the seal material (see JP-A-2001-337335).

[0006] A liquid crystal display device having such a configuration makes it possible to provide a liquid crystal display panel with a size greater than that achievable with a method in which a cell is formed with substrates and a seal material and in which a liquid crystal is introduced through a liquid crystal sealing port formed in a part of the seal material, for example.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In the case of a liquid crystal display device having such a configuration, however, it is difficult to control the appropriate amount of the liquid crystal when it is dispensed, which frequently results in an outflow of a redundant portion of the liquid crystal beyond the seal material when the other substrate is overlaid.

[0008] In this case, the liquid crystal that has flowed out beyond the seal material is susceptible to contamination for some reason; the contamination spreads also in the liquid crystal within the seal material; and the contamination that has thus spread can result in the problem of reduction in display quality.

[0009] For example, when a thermosetting material having high bonding strength is used as the seal material, a liquid crystal may be contaminated to a degree at which irregularities of luminance can occur when it contacts the seal material that has not set yet. This holds true for a photo-setting seal material.

[0010] The invention has been conceived under such circumstances, and it is an object of the invention to provide a

liquid crystal display device in which contamination of the liquid crystal does not spread and a method of manufacturing the same.

[0011] Typical features of the invention disclosed in the present application will now be briefly described below.

[0012] (1) A liquid crystal display device according to the invention is characterized in that it has a seal material for isolating a liquid crystal from the outside provided between substrates that are opposite to each other with the liquid crystal interposed therebetween, the seal material being formed as a portion that encloses the liquid crystal in a part thereof or an annular pattern having no trace of the same, a first rib-like supporting strut provided inside the seal material and between the substrates to prevent the liquid crystal from contacting the seal material, and a second rib-like supporting strut that, in combination with the first rib-like supporting strut, forms a passage into which the liquid crystal flows out from an opening serving as an exit formed in the first rib-like supporting strut.

[0013] (2) A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device according to the invention is a method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device in which a liquid crystal is dispensed into an area surrounded by a seal material on one substrate on which the seal material is formed and in which another substrate is overlaid in a face-to-face relationship, the method being characterized in that it has the steps of forming a first rib-like supporting strut inside the seal material formed on the substrate, the first supporting strut being substantially concentric with the seal material and having an opening in a part thereof, forming a second rib-like supporting strut outside the first rib-like supporting strut, the second supporting strut being formed with a length to sufficiently face the opening, and dispensing the liquid crystal within an area surrounded by the first rib-like supporting strut.

[0014] (3) For example, a liquid crystal display device according to the invention is characterized in that it has a seal material for isolating a liquid crystal from the outside provided between substrates that are opposite to each other with the liquid crystal interposed therebetween, a rib-like supporting strut provided inside the seal material and between the substrates to prevent the liquid crystal from contacting the seal material, and strut-like spacers positioned at a multiplicity of pixels formed in an area surrounded by the rib-like supporting strut, wherein the strut-like spacers and the rib-like supporting strut are formed such that the height of the top of the rib-like supporting strut above the top surface of the substrate to which it is secured is greater than the height of the top of the strut-like spacers and wherein a gap adjusting layer is formed on a liquid crystal side of the other substrate provided opposite to the above-mentioned substrate at least in a region that is opposite to the strut-like spacers.

[0015] (4) For example, a liquid crystal display device comprising: first and second substrates with liquid crystal layer therebetween; seal material formed on the first substrate enclosing a space between the first and the second substrate;

[0016] means for maintain the liquid crystal display and avoid contact with the seal material.

[0017] (5) For example, a liquid crystal display device comprising: first and second substrates with liquid crystal

layer therebetween; seal material formed on the first substrate enclosing space between the first and the second substrate; means for control gap between the first and the second substrate by adjusting the area fulfilled by the liquid crystal.

[0018] The invention is not limited to the above-described configurations, and various modifications may be made within the scope of the technical teaching of the invention.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] **FIGS. 1A and 1B** show configurations of an embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0020] **FIG. 2** illustrates an advantage of the liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0021] **FIG. 3** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0022] **FIGS. 4A to 4D** are a flow chart showing an embodiment of a method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0023] **FIG. 5** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0024] **FIG. 6** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0025] **FIG. 7** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0026] **FIG. 8** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0027] **FIG. 9** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0028] **FIG. 10** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0029] **FIGS. 11A and 11B** show configurations of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0030] **FIG. 12** is a sectional view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0031] **FIG. 13** is a sectional view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0032] **FIG. 14** is a sectional view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0033] **FIG. 15** is a sectional view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0034] **FIG. 16** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention;

[0035] **FIG. 17** is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention; and

[0036] **FIG. 18** shows a general configuration of an embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0037] Embodiments of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention will now be described with reference to the drawings.

[0038] [First Embodiment]

[0039] (General Configuration)

[0040] **FIG. 18A** is a plan view of a general configuration of an embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention. **FIG. 18A** shows a configuration of pixels of the same using an equivalent circuit diagram. **FIG. 18B** shows an example of an equivalent circuit of a pixel.

[0041] First, there is a pair of transparent substrates SUB1 and SUB2 that are provided opposite to each other with a liquid crystal interposed therebetween, and the liquid crystal is enclosed with a seal material SL that also secures the transparent SUB2 to the other substrate SUB1.

[0042] On a surface of the liquid crystal side of the transparent substrate SUB1 surrounded by the seal material SL, there is formed gate signal lines GL that extend in an x-direction and that are in parallel with each other in a y-direction and drain signal lines DL that extend in the y-direction and that are in parallel with each other in the x-direction.

[0043] A region that is surrounded by each gate signal line GL and each drain signal line DL constitutes a pixel region, and a set of such pixel regions in the form of a matrix constitutes a liquid crystal display area AR.

[0044] In each of pixel regions that are in parallel with each other in the x-direction, a common counter voltage signal line CL is formed such that it is routed through the pixel regions. The counter voltage signal lines CL serve as signal lines for supplying a voltage to be used as a reference for a video signal to a counter electrode CT described later of each pixel region.

[0045] Each pixel region is formed with a thin film transistor TFT that is operated by a scan signal from a gate signal line GL located on one side thereof and a pixel electrode PX to which a video signal is supplied from a drain signal line DL located on one side thereof via the thin film transistor TFT.

[0046] The pixel electrode PX generates an electric field between itself and the counter electrode CT that is connected to the counter voltage signal line CL, and the light transmittance of the liquid crystal is controlled by the electric field.

[0047] Each end of the gate signal lines GL is extended beyond the seal material SL, and the extended end constitutes a terminal to which an output terminal of a scan signal driving circuit V is connected. A signal from a printed circuit board (not shown) provided outside the liquid crystal display panel is input to an input terminal of the scan signal driving circuit V.

[0048] The scan signal driving circuit V is constituted by a plurality of semiconductor devices, and a plurality of gate signal lines GL adjacent to each other are grouped together, one of the semiconductor devices being allocated to each of such groups.

[0049] Similarly, each end of the drain signal lines DL is extended beyond the seal material SL, and the extended end constitutes a terminal to which an output terminal of a video signal driving circuit He is connected. A signal from a printed circuit board (not shown) provided outside the liquid

crystal display panel is input to an input terminal of the video signal driving circuit He.

[0050] The video signal driving circuit He is also constituted by a plurality of semiconductor devices, and a plurality of drain signal lines DL adjacent to each other are grouped together, one of the semiconductor devices being allocated to each of such groups.

[0051] The counter voltage signal lines CL are connected together at the right end in the figure, and the connecting line is extended beyond the seal material SL to form a terminal CLT at the extended end thereof. The voltage to serve as a reference for a video signal is supplied through the terminal.

[0052] The gate signal lines GL are sequentially selected one at a time by a scan signal from the scan signal driving circuit V.

[0053] A video signal is supplied from the video signal driving circuit He to each of the drain signal lines DL in accordance with the timing at which the gate signal lines GL are selected.

[0054] While the scan signal driving circuit V and the video signal driving circuit He in the above-described embodiment are illustrated as semiconductor devices mounted on the transparent substrate SUB1, they may be so-called tape carrier type semiconductor devices that are connected between the transparent substrate SUB1 and the printed circuit boards. Further, when semiconductor layers of the thin film transistors TFT are constituted by polycrystalline silicon (p-Si), the semiconductor devices made of polycrystalline silicon may be formed on a surface of the transparent substrate SUB1 along with a wiring layer.

[0055] While the pixel electrode PX and the counter electrode CT of a pixel are provided in parallel with the liquid crystal layer in the above-described embodiment, they may be formed in the vertical direction with the liquid crystal interposed therebetween, i.e., the counter electrode may be formed on the transparent substrate SUB2. In this case, both of the pixel electrode PX and the counter electrode CT are constituted by a translucent conductive film such as an ITO (indium tin oxide) to allow light to pass through the electrodes.

[0056] (Configuration of the Seal Material and the Neighborhood)

[0057] FIG. 1 is a configuration diagram showing an embodiment of the seal material SL and the neighborhood of the same. FIG. 1A is a plan view, and FIG. 1B is a sectional view taken along the line b-b in FIG. 1A.

[0058] In FIG. 1, the seal material SL is formed on either of the transparent substrate SUB1 and the transparent substrate SUB2 using a dispenser, for example; the liquid crystal is dispensed to a region inside the seal material SL; the other substrate is placed on the seal material SL opposite to the first substrate after the liquid crystal is filled to cover the liquid crystal display area AR sufficiently; and the second substrate is secured to the seal material SL.

[0059] As a result, the liquid crystal is sandwiched between the transparent substrate SUB1 and the transparent substrate SUB2 and enclosed with the seal material SL.

[0060] Thus, the seal material SL is formed as a portion that encloses the liquid crystal in a part thereof or a pattern having no trace of the same, i.e., a continuous annular pattern.

[0061] A first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 is formed inside the seal material SL and between the seal material SL and the liquid crystal display area AR such that it substantially surrounds the liquid crystal display area AR. That is, the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 is provided with an opening OP in a part thereof and is formed such that it surrounds the liquid crystal display area AR except at the opening OP.

[0062] A second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 is formed on the seal material SL side of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and in the vicinity of the opening OP. The second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 is not only formed in a region opposite to the opening OP of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 but also formed with a length to cover the opening OP sufficiently.

[0063] Therefore, the planar pattern defined by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 is formed such that an exit (opening OP) is provided in a part of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 surrounding the liquid crystal display area AR and such that the exit leads to a passage that extends on the left and right of the same and that is surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2.

[0064] The first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 may be formed at the same time when strut-like spacers are formed to maintain a gap between the transparent substrate SUB1 and the transparent substrate SUB2 in the liquid crystal display area AR. As a result, increase in the number of manufacturing steps is reduced.

[0065] In such a case, for example, a layer made of resin is formed throughout either of the substrates (SUB1 or SUB2), and the strut-like spacers, the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1, and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are simultaneously formed through selective etching utilizing the so-called photolithographic technique.

[0066] In such a configuration, the liquid crystal LQ is dispensed to the region surrounded by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 as shown in FIG. 2 to fill the region with the liquid crystal such that the liquid crystal display area AR is sufficiently covered. That is, the liquid crystal can be positioned without any direct contact between the liquid crystal and the seal material SL.

[0067] In this case, the liquid crystal may be dispensed in excess, and such a redundant portion of the liquid crystal flows from the exit (opening OP) formed in the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 into the passage that extends on the left and right of the exit and that is surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2, the liquid crystal being maintainable in the passage. It is therefore possible to avoid direct contact between the liquid crystal and the seal material SL also in this case.

[0068] Since the liquid crystal will not directly contact contaminants included on the seal material SL, the liquid crystal can be always kept free from any contaminant. This makes it possible to prevent the occurrence of irregularities of luminance attributable to the contaminants.

[0069] In a sense, the region where the liquid crystal resides is automatically optimized by the amount of the liquid crystal itself. This makes it possible to maintain the gap with stability.

[0070] Even when the liquid crystal panel is pressed from the outside to result in a change in the gap, the redundant portion of the liquid crystal automatically adjusts the amount of the liquid crystal in each region to an optimum value in accordance with changes in regions where the liquid crystal exists.

[0071] Thus, the seal material SL still functions as a seal material in that it isolates the liquid crystal from the outside, although the function of directly enclosing the liquid crystal according to the related art is lost.

[0072] A liquid crystal display device having such a configuration can be always kept free from any contaminant because the liquid crystal therein does not contact contaminants included on the seal material SL. This makes it possible to prevent the occurrence of irregularities in luminance attributable to the contaminants.

[0073] Such a configuration is advantageous also in that it is possible to suppress variations of the gap at the liquid crystal layer attributable to temperature changes. Specifically, it is known that a gap change of  $0.1 \mu\text{m}$  can be caused by a cubical expansion of the liquid crystal material attributable to a temperature change from the room temperature to an elevated temperature (in the range from  $20^\circ \text{C.}$  to  $60^\circ \text{C.}$ ). In this case, since the liquid crystal flows in the passage from the exit (opening OP) in the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 in an amount corresponding to the expansion, it is possible to prevent the occurrence of the gap change.

[0074] As shown in FIG. 3, the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 may be provided such that it is close to the seal material SL on the side where the video signal driving circuit He is provided and further from the seal material SL on the opposite side where the video signal driving circuit He is not provided.

[0075] One reason is that the liquid crystal display area AR surrounded by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 can be located in the middle of the transparent substrate SUB1 relative to the outer frame of the liquid crystal panel or the periphery of the transparent substrate SUB1 in the present embodiment. In other words, in FIG. 3, the distance d1 from the peripheral edge of the transparent substrate SUB1 where the video signal driving circuit He is provided to the seal material SL can be set substantially equal to the distance d2 from the other peripheral edge opposite to the peripheral edge of the transparent substrate SUB1 where the video signal driving circuit He is provided to the seal material SL. Another reason is that the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 can be formed in a relatively large space on the opposite side where the video signal driving circuit He is not provided.

[0076] Preferably, the passage that extends on the left and right of the exit (opening OP) formed in the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and that is surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 has a sufficiently great length. In order to suppress the spread of contamination of the liquid crystal, it must be formed with a length greater than the width between the first rib-like supporting strut

SPS1 and the seal material SL on the side where the scan signal driving circuit V is provided. Therefore, such a configuration may be employed.

[0077] (Method of Enclosing Liquid Crystal)

[0078] FIGS. 4A to 4D are flow charts showing an embodiment of a method of enclosing a liquid crystal between either of substrates (e.g., the transparent substrate SUB2) formed with a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 and another substrate (e.g., the transparent substrate SUB1) provided opposite to that substrate as described above.

[0079] Step 1 (FIG. 4A)

[0080] The transparent substrate SUB2 is prepared, the substrate having already been formed with the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2, and the seal material SL.

[0081] Step 2 (FIG. 4B)

[0082] A liquid crystal LQ is dispensed to an area surrounded by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1, i.e., a liquid crystal display area AR.

[0083] Step 3 (FIG. 4C)

[0084] The transparent substrate SUB2 is combined with the transparent substrate SUB1 in a face-to-face relationship in a low pressure or vacuum state.

[0085] Step 4 (FIG. 4D)

[0086] The transparent SUB1 and the seal material SL are secured together.

[0087] [Second Embodiment]

[0088] FIG. 5 is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 5 corresponding to FIG. 3.

[0089] The configuration is different from FIG. 3 in that an exit (opening OP) formed in a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a passage extending on the left and right of the exit and surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are formed also on a side where a video signal driving circuit He is provided.

[0090] As a result, when a liquid crystal is dispensed, a redundant portion of the liquid crystal can be sufficiently accommodated.

[0091] [Third Embodiment]

[0092] FIG. 6 is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 6 corresponding to FIG. 3.

[0093] The configuration is different from FIG. 3 in that a plurality of (two in the figure) exits (openings OP) formed in a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a plurality of (two in the figure) passages extending on the left and right of the exits and surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and second rib-like supporting struts SPS2 are formed side by side on a side opposite to a side where a video signal driving circuit He is provided, for example.

[0094] It is obvious that such a configuration also makes it possible to accommodate a redundant portion of a liquid crystal sufficiently when the liquid crystal is dispensed.

[0095] [Fourth Embodiment]

[0096] FIG. 7 is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 7 corresponding to FIG. 6.

[0097] FIG. 7 is similar to FIG. 6 in that a plurality of (two in the figure) exits (openings OP) formed in a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a plurality of (two in the figure) passages extending on the left and right of the exits and surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and second rib-like supporting struts SPS2 are formed side by side on a side opposite to a side where a video signal driving circuit He is provided, for example, the difference being the fact that the second rib-like supporting struts SPS2 are combined and formed continuously.

[0098] In such a configuration, the adjusting effect can be enhanced because a depressurized (vacuum) region is formed in the passages between portions of a liquid crystal that flow out from the respective exits.

[0099] [Fifth Embodiment]

[0100] FIG. 8 is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 8 corresponding to FIG. 3.

[0101] The configuration is different from FIG. 3 in that an exit (opening OP) formed in a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a passage extending on the left and right of the exit and surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are formed on a side opposite to a side where a scan signal driving circuit V is provided.

[0102] In this case, either of the first rib-like supporting struts SPS1 may be formed close to the seal material SL and the other strut may be formed further from the seal material SL in order to position a liquid crystal display area AR (an area surrounded by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1) substantially in the middle of an outer frame of the liquid crystal panel or a transparent substrate SUB1 in a direction across the scan signal driving circuit V (x-direction).

[0103] [Sixth Embodiment]

[0104] FIG. 9 is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 9 corresponding to FIG. 3.

[0105] The configuration is different from FIG. 3 in that a passage from an exit (opening OP) formed in a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 that is surrounded by walls constituted by the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 extends only in one direction.

[0106] Specifically, the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 have portion connected to each other, and the passage extending in one direction from the exit is defined by unconnected portions of the struts.

[0107] [Seventh Embodiment]

[0108] FIG. 10 is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 10 corresponding to FIG. 9.

[0109] The configuration is different from FIG. 9 in that a passage extending in one direction from an exit (opening OP) formed in a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 is formed also on a side that faces a scan signal driving circuit V by extending a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2. In other words, the passage extending in one direction is formed such that it surrounds a corner of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1.

[0110] Obviously, this makes it possible to provide the passage with a great length and to accommodate a greater amount of redundant liquid crystal sufficiently when the liquid crystal is dispensed.

[0111] [Eighth Embodiment]

[0112] FIG. 11A is a plan view of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, and FIG. 11B is a sectional view taken along the line b-b in FIG. 11A.

[0113] FIGS. 11A and 11B show a case in which the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are formed simultaneously with strut-like spacers SP that are dispersed in a liquid crystal display area AR.

[0114] The strut-like spacers SP are provided to make a gap between a transparent substrate SUB1 and a transparent substrate SUB2 uniform in order to make the thickness of a liquid crystal layer uniform.

[0115] All of the strut-like spacers, the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1, and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 may be made of a material such as resin and may be formed simultaneously by selectively etching a resin layer formed throughout a surface of either substrate on a liquid crystal side thereof using a photolithographic technique.

[0116] [Ninth Embodiment]

[0117] FIG. 12 shows a configuration of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, FIG. 12 corresponding to FIG. 11B.

[0118] The configuration is different from FIG. 11B in that a black matrix BM is formed on a surface of a transparent substrate SUB2 on a liquid crystal side thereof, for example; the black matrix BM is formed such that it extends outward when strut-like spacers as described above are formed above the black matrix BM; and a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are formed in the extended portion.

[0119] The heights of the tops of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1, the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2, and the strut-like spacers from the top surface of the transparent substrate SUB2 are made equal in order to ensure tight contact between the tops and the transparent substrate SUB1.

[0120] [Tenth Embodiment]

[0121] FIG. 13 shows a configuration of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the

invention, **FIG. 13** corresponding to **FIG. 12**. **FIG. 13** shows a state in which a transparent substrate SUB1 has not been overlaid yet.

[0122] The configuration is different from **FIG. 12** in that a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are formed such that the height of the top of each strut from the top surface of a transparent substrate SUB2 is greater than the height of the top of each strut-like spacer SP from the top surface of the transparent substrate SUB2.

[0123] In this case, the above-described configuration may be provided by forming a certain layer (e.g., a color filter FIL) under the regions where the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are formed while forming no such layer under the region where the strut-like spacers are formed.

[0124] As shown in **FIG. 14**, any difference between the height of the tops of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 from the top surface of the transparent substrate SUB2 and the height of the tops of the strut-like spacers from the top surface of the transparent substrate SUB2 is compensated by providing a gap adjusting layer GAL on the surface of the transparent substrate SUB1 facing the strut-like spacers SP.

[0125] In such a configuration, when a liquid crystal is dispensed on the surface of the transparent substrate SUB2, since it tends to spread with the liquid level maintained on the same horizontal plane, the dispensing of the liquid crystal can be completed with the liquid level kept lower than the height of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2. When the transparent substrate SUB1 is overlaid in a face-to-face relationship in this state, a redundant portion of the liquid crystal can be led to an exit (opening OP) of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and introduced into a passage. This makes it possible to avoid direct contact between the redundant liquid crystal and a seal material SL with reliability.

[0126] The effect of height adjustment in the present embodiment is not limited to the case in which the struts SPS1 and SPS2 are continuous supporting struts. It also works in a case in which the struts SPS1 and SPS2 are provided discretely.

[0127] The same effect can be achieved by providing an overcoat layer OC on the filter FIL instead of the filter FIL and shaping the overcoat layer OC similarly to the filter FIL of **FIG. 13**.

[0128] **FIG. 15** shows a configuration of another embodiment of a transparent substrate SUB1. In the configuration, a gap adjusting layer GAL is formed on a liquid crystal side of the substrate such that it extends even in a region where a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 is formed, and the layer has openings in locations thereof facing the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and the second rib-like supporting strut SPS2.

[0129] [Eleventh Embodiment]

[0130] **FIG. 16** shows a configuration of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, **FIG. 16** corresponding to **FIG. 3**.

[0131] The configuration is different from **FIG. 3** in that both ends of a second rib-like supporting strut SPS2 are extended to surround a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 completely.

[0132] In such a configuration, a passage from an exit (opening OP) of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 can be made significantly large, which also makes it possible to accommodate a great amount of redundant liquid crystal sufficiently when the liquid crystal is dispensed.

[0133] [Twelfth Embodiment]

[0134] **FIG. 17** shows a configuration of another embodiment of a liquid crystal display device according to the invention, **FIG. 17** corresponding to **FIG. 3**.

[0135] In particular, **FIG. 17** shows a setting of dimensions of a first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 and a second continuous pillar-like supporting strut SPS2.

[0136] It has been experimentally confirmed that a setting expressed by  $d > 10c$  is preferable where the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 has an area of  $a \times b$  and where  $c$  and  $d$  (in the one side of a passage) respectively represent the width and length of a passage that is formed by walls constituted by the second rib-like supporting strut and the first rib-like supporting strut on the left and right of an exit (opening OP) of the first strut.

[0137] Therefore, when the passage is formed on only one side of the exit (opening OP) of the first rib-like supporting strut SPS1 as shown in **FIG. 9**, it is preferable to set a relationship expressed by  $d > 20c$  between the width  $c$  and the length  $d$  of the passage.

[0138] Each of the above-described embodiments may be used alone or in combination with another. The purpose is to allow the advantages of each embodiment to be achieved alone or in combination with others.

[0139] In the above embodiments, it is preferable to use a thermosetting seal material as the seal material SL. One reason is that a thermosetting seal material has a high bonding strength and is therefore suitable for the formation of a large panel. Another reason is that contamination of a liquid crystal attributable to such a sealing material can be solved according to the invention of the present application.

[0140] As apparent from the above description, the invention makes it possible to provide a liquid crystal display device in which the spread of contamination of the liquid crystal is prevented.

What is claimed is:

1. A liquid crystal display comprising:

- a seal material for isolating a liquid crystal from the outside provided between substrates that are opposite to each other with the liquid crystal interposed therebetween, the seal material being formed as a portion that encloses the liquid crystal in a part thereof or an annular pattern having no trace of the same;
- a first rib-like supporting strut provided inside the seal material and between the substrates to prevent the liquid crystal from contacting the seal material; and
- a second rib-like supporting strut that is teamed with the first rib-like supporting strut to form a passage into which the liquid crystal flows out from an opening serving as an exit formed in the first rib-like supporting strut.

2. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein:

the first rib-like supporting strut is formed substantially concentrically with the seal material and has an opening in a part;

the second rib-like supporting strut is formed outside the first rib-like supporting strut and with a length to sufficiently face the opening; and

the liquid crystal fills a space in the first rib-like supporting strut and flows out from the opening into a passage that is formed by walls of the second rib-like supporting strut and the first rib-like supporting strut.

3. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the liquid crystal is in such an amount that a portion of the liquid crystal that has flowed into the passage stays halfway the passage.

4. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of openings are formed in the first rib-like supporting strut.

5. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 4, wherein second rib-like supporting struts formed with lengths to sufficiently face the plurality of openings formed in the first rib-like supporting strut are connected to each other.

6. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein a strut-like spacer is formed in the area between the substrates filled with the liquid crystal and wherein the first rib-like supporting strut and the second rib-like supporting strut are formed of the same material as that of the strut-like spacer.

7. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein:

the strut-like spacer, the first rib-like supporting strut, and the second rib-like supporting strut themselves are formed with substantially the same height;

the height of the tops of the first rib-like supporting strut and the second rib-like supporting strut above the top surface of the substrate to which they are secured is greater than the height of the top of the strut-like spacer; and

a gap adjusting layer is formed on a liquid crystal side of the other substrate provided opposite to said substrate at least in a region opposite to the strut-like spacer.

8. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein the second rib-like supporting strut is formed as an integral body having a rectangular configuration.

9. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device in which a liquid crystal is dispensed into an area surrounded by a seal material on one substrate on which the seal material is formed and in which another substrate is overlaid in a face-to-face relationship, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first rib-like supporting strut inside the seal material formed on the substrate, the first supporting strut being substantially concentric with the seal material and having an opening in a part thereof;

forming a second rib-like supporting strut outside the first rib-like supporting strut, the second supporting strut being formed with a length to sufficiently face the opening; and

dispensing the liquid crystal within an area surrounded by the first rib-like supporting strut.

10. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device according to claim 9, wherein the liquid crystal is dispensed in such an amount that a portion of the liquid crystal that flows out from the opening in the first rib-like supporting strut as an exit into a passage formed by walls of the second rib-like supporting strut and the first rib-like supporting strut stays halfway the passage when the other substrate is overlaid in a face-to-face relationship.

11. A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device according to claim 9, wherein a strut-like spacer is formed inside the first rib-like supporting strut on the substrate and wherein the first rib-like supporting strut and the second rib-like supporting strut are formed at the same step at which the strut-like spacer is formed.

12. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 1, wherein a thermosetting seal material is used.

13. A liquid crystal display device comprising:

a seal material for isolating a liquid crystal from the outside provided between substrates that are opposite to each other with the liquid crystal interposed therebetween;

a rib-like supporting strut provided inside the seal material and between the substrates to prevent the liquid crystal from contacting the seal material; and

strut-like spacers positioned at a multiplicity of pixels formed in an area surrounded by the rib-like supporting strut, wherein the strut-like spacers and the rib-like supporting strut are formed such that the height of the top of the rib-like supporting strut above the top surface of the substrate to which it is secured is greater than the height of the top of the strut-like spacers and wherein a gap adjusting layer is formed on a liquid crystal side of the other substrate provided opposite to the above-mentioned substrate at least in a region that is opposite to the strut-like spacers.

14. A liquid crystal display device according to claim 13, wherein the strut-like spacers the rib-like supporting struts themselves are formed with substantially the same height.

15. A liquid crystal display device comprising:

first and second substrates with liquid crystal layer therebetween;

seal material formed on the first substrate enclosing a space between the first and the second substrate;

means for maintain the liquid crystal within the liquid crystal display and avoid contact with the seal material.

16. A liquid crystal display device comprising:

first and second substrates with liquid crystal layer therebetween;

seal material formed on the first substrate enclosing a space between the first and the second substrate;

means for control gap between the first and the second substrate by adjusting the area fulfilled by the liquid crystal.

**17.** A liquid crystal display device according to claim 16, wherein the adjusting is automatically done by the amount of the liquid crystal itself.

**18.** A liquid crystal display device according to claim 16, wherein the area fulfilled by the liquid crystal is adjustable by pushing the liquid crystal display.

\* \* \* \* \*

专利名称(译)	液晶显示装置及其制造方法		
公开(公告)号	<a href="#">US20040041972A1</a>	公开(公告)日	2004-03-04
申请号	US10/636559	申请日	2003-08-08
[标]申请(专利权)人(译)	柳川和彦		
申请(专利权)人(译)	柳川和彦		
当前申请(专利权)人(译)	柳川和彦		
[标]发明人	YANAGAWA KAZUHIKO		
发明人	YANAGAWA, KAZUHIKO		
IPC分类号	G02F1/1339 G02F1/1341		
CPC分类号	G02F1/13394 G02F1/1339		
优先权	2002257410 2002-09-03 JP		
其他公开文献	US6956636		
外部链接	<a href="#">Espacenet</a> <a href="#">USPTO</a>		

摘要(译)

用于隔离液晶与外部的密封材料设置在彼此相对设置的基板之间，液晶介于其间。密封材料形成为环形图案，在其一部分中没有包围液晶的部分。存在用于防止液晶和密封材料之间接触的第一肋状支撑支柱和与第一肋状支撑支柱配合以形成液晶从其中流出的通道的第二肋状支撑支柱。形成在第一肋状支撑支柱中的开口用作出口，支撑支柱形成在密封材料内部和基板之间。

