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(54) **Micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) array**

Mikrobearbeitete Ultraschallwandleranordnung

Réseau de transducteurs ultrasonores (MUT) micro-usinés

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US-A- 6 013 032 US-B1- 6 262 946

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(73) Proprietor: **Koninklijke Philips Electronics N.V.
5621 BA Eindhoven (NL)**

(72) Inventor: **MILLER, David, G.
NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL)**

(74) Representative: **van Oudheusden-Perset, Laure E.
et al
Société Civile SPID
156, Boulevard Haussmann
75008 Paris (FR)**

- **PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN** vol. 1996, no. 11, 29 November 1996 (1996-11-29) -& JP 08 182095 A (TOSHIBA CORP), 12 July 1996 (1996-07-12)
- **YEN J.T. ET AL: 'Sparse 2-D array Design for Real Time Rectilinear Volumetric Imaging' IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ULTRASONICS** vol. 47, no. 1, pages 93 - 110
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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates generally to ultrasonic transducers, and, more particularly, to an efficient micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) array.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Ultrasonic transducers have been available for quite some time and are particularly useful for non-invasive medical diagnostic imaging. Ultrasonic transducers are typically formed of either piezoelectric elements or of micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) elements. The piezoelectric elements typically are made of a piezoelectric ceramic such as lead-zirconate-titanate (PZT), with a plurality of elements being arranged to form a transducer. A MUT is formed using known semiconductor manufacturing techniques resulting in a capacitive ultrasonic transducer cell that comprises, in essence, a flexible membrane supported around its edges over a silicon substrate. By applying contact material, in the form of electrodes, to the membrane, or a portion of the membrane, and to the base of the cavity in the silicon substrate, and then applying appropriate voltage signals to the electrodes, the MUT may be energized such that an appropriate ultrasonic wave is produced. Similarly, when electrically biased, the membrane of the MUT may be used to receive ultrasonic signals by capturing reflected ultrasonic energy and transforming that energy into movement of the electrically biased membrane, which then generates a receive signal.

[0003] The ultrasonic transducer elements may be combined with control circuitry forming a transducer assembly, which is then further assembled into a housing possibly including additional control electronics, in the form of electronic circuit boards, the combination of which forms an ultrasonic probe. This ultrasonic probe, which may include various acoustic matching layers, backing layers, and de-matching layers may then be used to send and receive ultrasonic signals through body tissue.

[0004] US 5,938,612 describes an ultrasonic transducer array having a plurality of transducer elements, at least some of which have multiple piezoelectric and electrode layers. A single array may have transducer elements of different resonant frequencies, and the array may be sparsely populated. Highest frequencies are typically obtained when the piezoelectric layers are made from vapor deposited PZT in accordance with a disclosed deposition process. The array may have a 1-D configuration, 1.5-D or 2-D, configuration. The array may be positioned in a probe.

[0005] In the past, MUT arrays as known from US 6,262,946 were typically designed where each MUT element was a transceiver. In such an arrangement, each MUT element both produces a transmit pulse and receives acoustic energy. Further, US 6,013,032 describes

two-dimensional array of ultrasound transducer elements. The array comprises a plurality of subarrays, each subarray comprising a plurality of transmit transducer elements and receive transducer elements for eliminating the need for transmit/receive switch.

[0006] Unfortunately, the characteristics of a MUT element that make it a good transmitter of acoustic energy are not the same characteristics that make it a good receiver of acoustic energy. For example, during a transmit pulse, it is desirable for the MUT to provide a large power output. To accomplish this, a large membrane deflection, a large gap, high membrane stiffness, and high bias voltage are desired to produce the high pressure wave desired on transmit. In such a MUT, the cavity depth should be at least three times deeper than the static deflection of the membrane. Membrane deflection larger than approximately 1/3 of the cavity depth result in the collapse of the membrane against the cavity floor. The gap is defined as the distance between the membrane and the bottom of the cavity. A large gap results in a small capacitance and large imaginary impedance. Ideally a bias voltage is applied to deflect the membrane and reduce the gap to the minimum uncollapsed size.

[0007] Conversely, for a MUT to be a sensitive acoustic receiver, a small membrane deflection, a small gap, low membrane stiffness, and high bias voltage produce a sensitive acoustic receiver element. The small gap reduces the imaginary impedance and the soft membrane deflects easily when exposed to acoustic energy reflected from a target resulting in a high signal-to-noise ratio (SNR).

[0008] Therefore, it would be desirable to have a MUT array in which the individual MUT elements can be independently optimized for transmit and receive functionality.

SUMMARY

[0009] An ultrasonic transducer array comprising individual transmit MUT elements and receive MUT elements where the transmit MUT elements and the receive MUT elements are distributed in two dimensions over the transducer array is disclosed. By using different MUT elements for transmit and receive, each MUT element can be independently optimized for either transmit operation or receive operation. Furthermore, by independently optimizing the MUT elements for either transmit or receive operation, the same bias voltage can be applied to the MUT elements, thereby simplifying the bias circuitry associated with the MUT transducer array. Alternatively, because the MUT elements are independently optimized for transmit and receive, different bias voltages can be applied to the transmit and receive elements, thus providing further optimization of the elements.

[0010] Other systems, methods, features, and advantages of the invention will be or will become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following drawings and detailed description. It is intended that all

such additional systems, methods, features, and advantages be included within this description, be within the scope of the present invention, and be protected by the accompanying claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The present invention, as defined in the claims, can be better understood with reference to the following drawings. The components within the drawings are not necessarily to scale relative to each other, emphasis instead being placed upon clearly illustrating the principles of the present invention.

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional schematic view of a micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) cell assembly under no electrical bias.

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional schematic view of the MUT cell assembly of FIG. 1 under electrical bias.

FIG. 3A is a plan view illustrating a MUT array constructed in accordance with an aspect of the invention and incorporating the MUT cells of FIGS. 1 and 2.

FIG. 3B is a plan view illustrating a portion of an alternative embodiment of the MUT array of FIG. 3A.

FIG. 4 is another alternative embodiment of the MUT array of FIG. 3A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The invention to be described hereafter is applicable to micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) elements connected to a substrate on which an integrated circuit (IC) can be formed.

[0013] FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional schematic view of an exemplar micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) cell assembly 100 under no electrical bias. It should be mentioned that many techniques can be used to build MUT cells in many configurations, and the configuration shown in FIG. 1 (and below in FIG. 2) is merely illustrative. The MUT cell assembly 100 generally includes a MUT cell 110 formed over a MUT substrate 118. The MUT cell assembly 100 may also include an integrated circuit (IC) assembly 132. The IC assembly 132 includes an IC substrate 114 over which is formed an integrated circuit 116. The IC substrate 114 can be any semiconductor substrate material, and in this embodiment is illustratively silicon (Si). In accordance with techniques known to those having ordinary skill in the art, an integrated circuit 116 is formed on the IC substrate 114. The integrated circuit 116 is shown exaggerated for illustrative purposes only.

[0014] The MUT substrate 118 can also be formed using, for example, silicon, and includes an electrical contact 124 grown or deposited over one surface of the MUT substrate 118. A membrane 122, preferably constructed using silicon nitride, is applied over one of the exposed surfaces of the MUT substrate 118 and over the electrical contact 124 forming a cavity 126, sometimes referred to

as a vacuum gap. The portion 142 of the membrane 122 that forms the cavity 126 is flexible. The cavity 126 defines a gap 138, which is the distance between the base of the cavity, referred to as the cavity floor 134 and the lower surface 136 of the flexible membrane portion 142.

[0015] An electrical contact 128 is applied over the flexible membrane portion 142 as shown in order to provide electrical connectivity to the cavity 126, which acts as a variable capacitor. The flexible membrane portion 142 is sufficiently flexible so that it can deflect in response to electrical signals applied through the electrical contacts 124 and 128, and in response to acoustic energy impinging on the flexible membrane portion 142. The circuitry that supplies electrical signals to the electrical contacts 124 and 128 to bias the MUT cell assembly 100 is omitted from the drawings for simplicity. However, those having ordinary skill in the art are familiar with such biasing circuitry.

[0016] The MUT substrate 118 can be joined to the integrated circuit 116 using, for example but not limited to, conductive vias (not shown) that extend from the electrical contact 124 through the MUT substrate 118 to the circuitry (not shown) on the integrated circuit 116.

[0017] FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional schematic view of the MUT cell assembly 100 of FIG. 1 under an electrical bias. When an electrical potential is applied to the electrical contacts 224 and 228 of the MUT cell assembly 200, the flexible membrane portion 242 suspended over the cavity 226 deflects as shown. The deflection of the flexible membrane portion 242 reduces the size of the gap 238 between the surface 236 of the flexible membrane portion 242 and the floor 234 of the cavity 226. The acoustic properties of the MUT cell 210 can be altered by applying an electrical bias to the flexible membrane portion 242, thereby improving certain performance parameters. Furthermore, the physical properties of the MUT cell can be designed to define the acoustic performance of the MUT cell. Properties such as the depth and width of the cavity and the stiffness of the membrane can be changed to obtain the desired acoustic performance of the MUT cell. For example, for transmit MUT cells a large power output is desirable. To achieve a large power output, large membrane deflections are desired. Large deflections require a deep cavity 226. Cavity depths should be at least three times the static deflection of the flexible membrane portion 242. Deflections larger than one-third of the cavity depth result in the collapse of the flexible membrane portion 242 against the floor 234 of the cavity 226. A large cavity depth results in a large gap 238. A large gap 238 results in a small capacitance and large imaginary impedance, such that a large voltage only provides a small current flow. (As shown in FIG. 2, the bias voltage applied deflects the flexible membrane portion 242 and reduces the gap 238 to a minimum uncollapsed size.

[0018] If the MUT cell assembly 200 in FIG. 2 is used as a receive element, a small gap 238 and a low stiffness membrane 222 are desired. A small gap 238 reduces the

imaginary impedance and a low stiffness membrane 222 follows the deflection of the acoustic load experiencing the acoustic wave for a high signal-to-noise ratio. This combination improves the sensitivity of the MUT cell 210.

[0019] As mentioned above, the physical dimensions and characteristics of the MUT cell 210 can be changed depending upon the desired acoustic performance. In addition, the bias voltage applied to the MUT cell 210 can be used to alter the acoustic performance of the MUT cell 210. In one aspect of the invention, the MUT cells are optimized to use the same bias voltage for transmit and receive operation. In such an arrangement, the bias circuitry is simplified because only one bias voltage is supplied to each MUT cell, thereby simplifying the circuit traces for each MUT cell. Furthermore, the electrical bias circuitry can be tuned to optimize the performance of the MUT cells at different frequencies for different imaging situations. For example it may be desirable to transmit at a low frequency and receive at a high frequency.

[0020] FIG. 3A is a plan view illustrating a MUT array 300 constructed in accordance with an aspect of the invention and incorporating the MUT cells of FIGS. 1 and 2. The MUT array 300 includes a plurality of transmit MUT elements and receive MUT elements, exemplar ones of which are illustrated using reference numerals 320 and 330, respectively. Each transmit MUT element 320 and receive MUT element 330 includes a plurality of MUT cells, an exemplar one of which is illustrated using reference numeral 305 for the transmit MUT element 320 and reference numeral 310 for the receive MUT element 330. The MUT cells 305 and 310 correspond to the MUT cells 110 and 210 of FIGS. 1 and 2, respectively. Although illustrated using four octagonal MUT cells per element, other configurations and quantities of MUT cells per element are possible.

[0021] As illustrated in FIG. 3A, the transmit MUT elements 320 and the receive MUT elements 330 are arranged in an alternating pattern over the two dimensions of the MUT array 300. The transmit MUT elements 320 and the receive MUT elements 330 are arranged in columns and rows, exemplar columns being illustrated using reference numerals 301 and 303, and exemplar rows being illustrated using reference numerals 302 and 304. In the pattern illustrated in FIG. 3A, the transmit MUT elements 320 are non-adjacent the receive MUT elements 330. This arrangement results in a $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength (a wavelength is represented using the symbol λ), or less, pitch between transmit MUT elements 320 and receive MUT elements 330. The pitch is the centerline to centerline distance from one element to another. This $\frac{1}{2}\lambda$ pitch arrangement allows adequate sampling of the acoustic aperture, and also allows the ability to steer the ultrasonic beam along the principal axis in any direction. Those skilled in the art of phased array imaging systems will recognize the benefit of spacing the array elements on a $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength pitch to avoid the deleterious effects of grating lobes in the acoustic beam when steering the beam. By alternating the transmit MUT elements 320 and

the receive MUT elements 330 in each column and row, each element in each column and row produces an ultrasonic beam contribution with an effective $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength pitch. This "checkerboard" pattern achieves the desired element pitch and also allows the ultrasonic beam to be steered in any direction.

[0022] Furthermore, to meet the grating lobe requirement in the diagonal direction, the pitch in both directions can be reduced by the geometric relationship of 0.7 between the hypotenuse and the sides of each element. Thus, any row or column of elements has a pitch of $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength or less for both transmitting elements and receiving elements. Such a configuration will be explained in greater detail below with respect to FIG. 3B. In this manner, the acoustic parameters of the transmit MUT element 320 and the receive MUT element 330 can be independently optimized, while maintaining a desirable narrow beamwidth. Although illustrated using a "checkerboard" pattern in FIG. 3A in which the MUT elements are distributed over the array in two dimensions, other configurations of transmit MUT elements 320 and receive MUT elements 330 are possible.

[0023] Furthermore, by having separate MUT elements for transmit and receive, independent biasing of the transmit and the receive MUT elements can easily be accomplished. In this manner, the MUT cells 305 in the transmit MUT elements 320 can be designed to provide the required large membrane deflection for maximum power, while the MUT cells 310 in the receive MUT elements 330 can be designed to have the smallest possible gap and the lowest possible membrane stiffness (and thus maximum sensitivity). Such receive MUT elements 330 can survive the reflected acoustic waves and can survive the medical imaging environment with the highest sensitivity and bandwidth.

[0024] FIG. 3B is a plan view illustrating a portion 350 of an alternative embodiment of the MUT array of FIG. 3A. The array portion 350 includes a pair of transmit MUT elements 320 and a pair of receive MUT elements 330 having a pitch arranged so that the diagonal measurement of each element corresponds to a wavelength of $\frac{1}{2}\lambda$. As mentioned above, to avoid the deleterious effects of grating lobes in the acoustic beam when steering the beam not only in the principal axes, but in any direction, such as diagonally, the $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength pitch between the elements is reduced to approximately $0.7 \times \frac{1}{2}\lambda$. With the checkerboard combination described above, the element pitch of $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength is reduced to approximately $0.7 \times \frac{1}{2}\lambda$ as illustrated in FIG. 3B. When a $0.7 \times \frac{1}{2}\lambda$ element pitch is employed, the diagonal dimension of each of the elements shown in FIG. 3B corresponds to $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength. Furthermore, element pitches between $0.7 \times \frac{1}{2}\lambda$ and $\frac{1}{2}\lambda$ are possible.

[0025] FIG. 4 is an alternative embodiment 400 of the transducer array 300 of FIG. 3A. The transducer array 400 includes separate transmit and receive MUT elements 420 and 430, respectively, but in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 4, the receive MUT element 430 in-

cludes MUT cells 410 that are smaller in diameter than the MUT cells 405 in each transmit MUT element 420. Furthermore, the dimension of the MUT cell cavity (not shown in FIG. 4) in the MUT cells 410 can be different than the MUT cell cavity in the MUT cells 405. By altering the physical dimensions of the MUT cells 410, the receive performance of the transducer array 400 can be further improved.

[0026] In accordance with an aspect of the invention, the same bias voltage can be applied to the transmit MUT elements 420 and to the receive MUT elements 430. By altering the physical properties of the MUT cells 410 in the receive MUT element 430 with respect to the MUT cells 405 in the transmit MUT element 420, the acoustic performance of the respective receive and transmit MUT elements can be independently optimized. In this manner, and because the physical characteristics of the MUT cells 405 in the transmit MUT element 420 and the MUT cells 410 in the receive MUT element 430 are altered to independently optimize the respective acoustic performance of the transmit MUT element 420 and the receive MUT element 430, the same bias voltage can be applied to the transmit MUT element 420 and the receive MUT element 430. In this manner, the electrical biasing circuitry (not shown) can be simplified because the same bias voltage is applied to both transmit and receive MUT elements.

[0027] Alternatively, a different bias voltage can be applied to the transmit MUT elements and receive MUT elements shown above in FIGS. 3A, 3B and 4 in order to further independently optimize the acoustic performance of the respective transmit and receive elements.

Claims

1. A micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) array (300, 400), comprising:

a plurality of transmit MUT elements (320, 420), each transmit MUT element comprising a plurality of transmit MUT cells (110, 305, 405) dedicated to the sole transmission of an ultrasonic wave;

a plurality of receive MUT elements (330, 430), each receive MUT element comprising a plurality of receive MUT cells (210, 310, 410) dedicated to the sole reception of an ultrasonic wave; and

the plurality of transmit MUT elements and the plurality of receive MUT elements are arranged in a plurality of columns and a plurality of rows over the MUT array in two dimensions; each transmit MUT element (320, 420) is adjacent to at least one receive MUT element (330, 430) along each column and each transmit MUT element (320, 420) is adjacent to at least one receive MUT element (330, 430) along each

row;

characterized in that each transmit and receive MUT cell is a capacitive MUT cell comprising a membrane (242) suspended over a cavity (226), a gap (238) being formed between the membrane and a base (234) of the cavity, **in that** a cavity depth of the transmit MUT cell is at least three times a static deflection of the membrane; and **in that** a cavity depth of the receive MUT cell is smaller than the cavity depth of the transmit MUT cell.

2. The transducer of claim 1, wherein the plurality of transmit and receive MUT elements are coupled to a circuitry that supplies electrical signals for biasing the transmit and receive MUT cells, a bias voltage being applied to the membrane for deflecting the membrane, a first bias voltage being applied to the transmit MUT elements and a second bias voltage being applied to the receive MUT elements, and wherein the first and second bias voltages are the same.
3. The transducer of claim 1, wherein the plurality of transmit and receive MUT elements are coupled to a circuitry that supplies electrical signals for biasing the transmit and receive MUT cells, a bias voltage being applied to the membrane for deflecting the membrane, a first bias voltage being applied to the transmit MUT elements and a second bias voltage being applied to the receive MUT elements, and wherein the first and second bias voltages are different.
4. The transducer of claim 2, wherein the membrane of each transmit MUT cell is stiffer than the membrane of each receive MUT cell.
5. The transducer of claim 1, wherein the pitch between a transmit MUT element (320, 420) and an adjacent receive MUT element (330, 430) is equal to $1/2$ or 0.7 times $1/2$ wavelength of a transmit pulse associated with the transducer.
6. An ultrasonic probe including at least one micro-machined ultrasonic transducer array (300, 400) as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 5.

Patentansprüche

1. Mikrobearbeitete Ultraschallwandler (MUW)-Anordnung (300, 400), umfassend:

eine Vielzahl von MUW-Sendeelementen (320, 420), wobei jedes MUW-Sendeelement eine Vielzahl von MUW-Sendezellen (110, 305, 405)

umfasst, die zum ausschließlichen Senden einer Ultraschallwelle dediziert sind;
eine Vielzahl von MUW-Empfangselementen (330, 430), wobei jedes MUW-Empfangselement eine Vielzahl von MUW-Empfangszellen (210, 310, 410) umfasst, die zum ausschließlichen Empfangen einer Ultraschallwelle dediziert sind; und

wobei die Vielzahl von MUW-Sendeelementen und die Vielzahl von MUW-Empfangselementen innerhalb der MUW-Anordnung in zwei Dimensionen in einer Vielzahl von Spalten und einer Vielzahl von Zeilen angeordnet sind; jedes MUW-Sendeelement (320, 420) benachbart zu mindestens einem MUW-Empfangselement (330, 430) entlang jeder Spalte ist und jedes MUW-Sendeelement (320, 420) benachbart zu mindestens einem MUW-Empfangselement (330, 430) entlang jeder Zeile ist;

gekennzeichnet dadurch, dass jede MUW-Sende- und Empfangszelle eine kapazitive MUW-Zelle ist, umfassend eine Membran (242), die über einem Hohlraum (226) aufgehängt ist, wobei zwischen der Membran und einem Boden (234) des Hohlraums ein Spalt (238) geformt wird,

dadurch, dass eine Hohlraumtiefe der MUW-Sendezelle mindestens drei mal so groß wie eine statische Durchbiegung der Membran ist; und

dadurch, dass eine Hohlraumtiefe der MUW-Empfangszelle kleiner ist als die Hohlraumtiefe der MUW-Sendezelle.

2. Wandler nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Vielzahl von MUW-Sende- und Empfangselementen mit einer Schaltung gekoppelt sind, die elektrische Signale zum Vorspannen der MUW-Sende- und Empfangszellen zuführt, wobei eine Vorspannung an die Membran angelegt wird, um die Membran durchzubiegen, eine erste Vorspannung an die MUW-Sendeelemente angelegt wird, eine zweite Vorspannung an die MUW-Empfangselemente angelegt wird, und wobei die erste und die zweite Vorspannung gleich sind.

3. Wandler nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Vielzahl von MUW-Sende- und Empfangselementen mit einer Schaltung gekoppelt sind, die elektrische Signale zum Vorspannen der MUW-Sende- und Empfangszellen zuführt, wobei eine Vorspannung an die Membran angelegt wird, um die Membran durchzubiegen, eine erste Vorspannung an die MUW-Sendeelemente angelegt wird, eine zweite Vorspannung an die MUW-Empfangselemente angelegt wird, und wobei die erste und die zweite Vorspannung verschieden sind.

4. Wandler nach Anspruch 2, wobei die Membran jeder MUW-Sendezelle steifer ist als die Membran jeder MUW-Empfangszelle.

5. Wandler nach Anspruch 1, wobei der Abstand zwischen einem MUW-Sendeelement (320, 420) und einem benachbarten MUW-Empfangselement (330, 430) der halben oder 0,7 mal der halben Wellenlänge eines Sendepulses des Wandlers entspricht.

6. Ultraschallsonde, umfassend mindestens eine mikrobearbeitete Ultraschallwandler-Anordnung (300, 400) nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5.

Revendications

1. Réseau (300, 400) de transducteurs ultrasonores micro-usinés (MUT) comprenant :

une pluralité d'éléments MUT d'émission (320, 420), chaque élément MUT d'émission comprenant une pluralité de cellules MUT d'émission (110, 305, 405) dédiées à l'unique transmission d'une onde ultrasonore;

une pluralité d'éléments MUT de réception (330, 430), chaque élément MUT de réception comprenant une pluralité de cellules MUT de réception (210, 310, 410) dédiées à l'unique réception d'une onde ultrasonore; et

la pluralité d'éléments MUT d'émission et la pluralité d'éléments MUT de réception sont disposées dans une pluralité de colonnes en une pluralité de rangées sur le réseau MUT dans deux dimensions;

chaque élément MUT d'émission (320, 420) est adjacent à au moins un élément MUT de réception (330, 430) le long de chaque colonne et chaque élément MUT d'émission (320, 420) est adjacent à au moins un élément MUT de réception (330, 430) le long de chaque rangée;

caractérisé en ce que chaque cellule MUT d'émission et de réception est une cellule MUT capacitive comprenant une membrane (242) suspendue sur une cavité (226), un espace (238) étant formé entre la membrane et un fond (234) de la cavité,

en ce qu'une profondeur de la cavité de la cellule MUT d'émission est égale à au moins trois fois une flexion statique de la membrane; et

en ce qu'une profondeur de cavité de la cellule MUT de réception est plus petite que la profondeur de cavité de la cellule MUT d'émission.

2. Transducteur suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel la pluralité d'éléments MUT d'émission et de réception est couplée à un circuit qui fournit des signaux électriques pour polariser les cellules MUT d'émission.

sion et de réception, une tension de polarisation étant appliquée à la membrane pour faire fléchir la membrane, une première tension de polarisation étant appliquée aux éléments MUT d'émission et une seconde tension de polarisation étant appliquée aux éléments MUT de réception, et dans lequel les première et seconde tensions de polarisation sont les mêmes. 5

3. Transducteur suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel la pluralité d'éléments MUT d'émission et de réception est couplée à un circuit qui fournit des signaux électriques pour polariser les cellules MUT d'émission et de réception, une tension de polarisation étant appliquée à la membrane pour faire fléchir la membrane, une première tension de polarisation étant appliquée aux éléments MUT d'émission et une seconde tension de polarisation étant appliquée aux éléments MUT de réception, et dans lequel la première et la seconde tensions de polarisation sont différentes. 10 15 20
4. Transducteur suivant la revendication 2, dans lequel la membrane de chaque cellule MUT d'émission est plus raide que la membrane de chaque cellule MUT de réception. 25
5. Transducteur suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel le pas entre un élément MUT d'émission (320, 420) et un élément MUT de réception adjacent (330, 430) est égal à $\frac{1}{2}$ ou 0,7 fois $\frac{1}{2}$ longueur d'onde d'une impulsion d'émission associée au transducteur. 30
6. Sonde ultrasonore comprenant au moins un réseau de transducteurs ultrasonores micro-usinés (300, 400) suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5. 35

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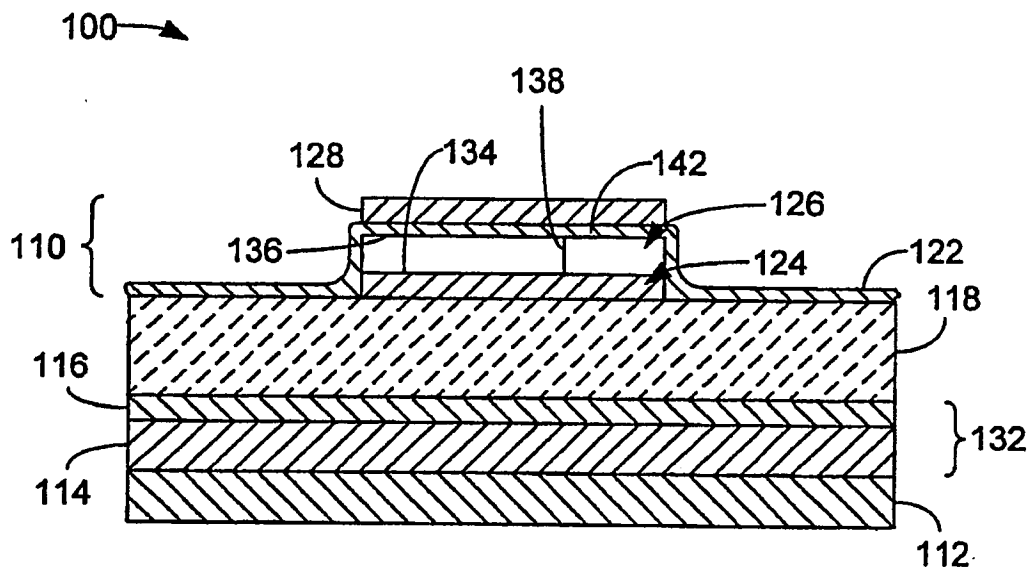


FIG.1

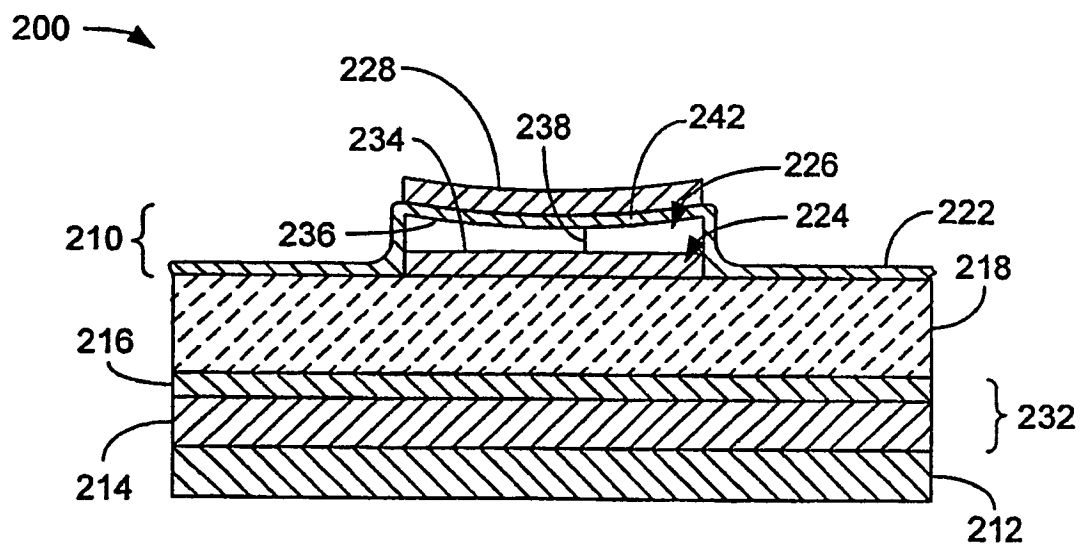


FIG.2

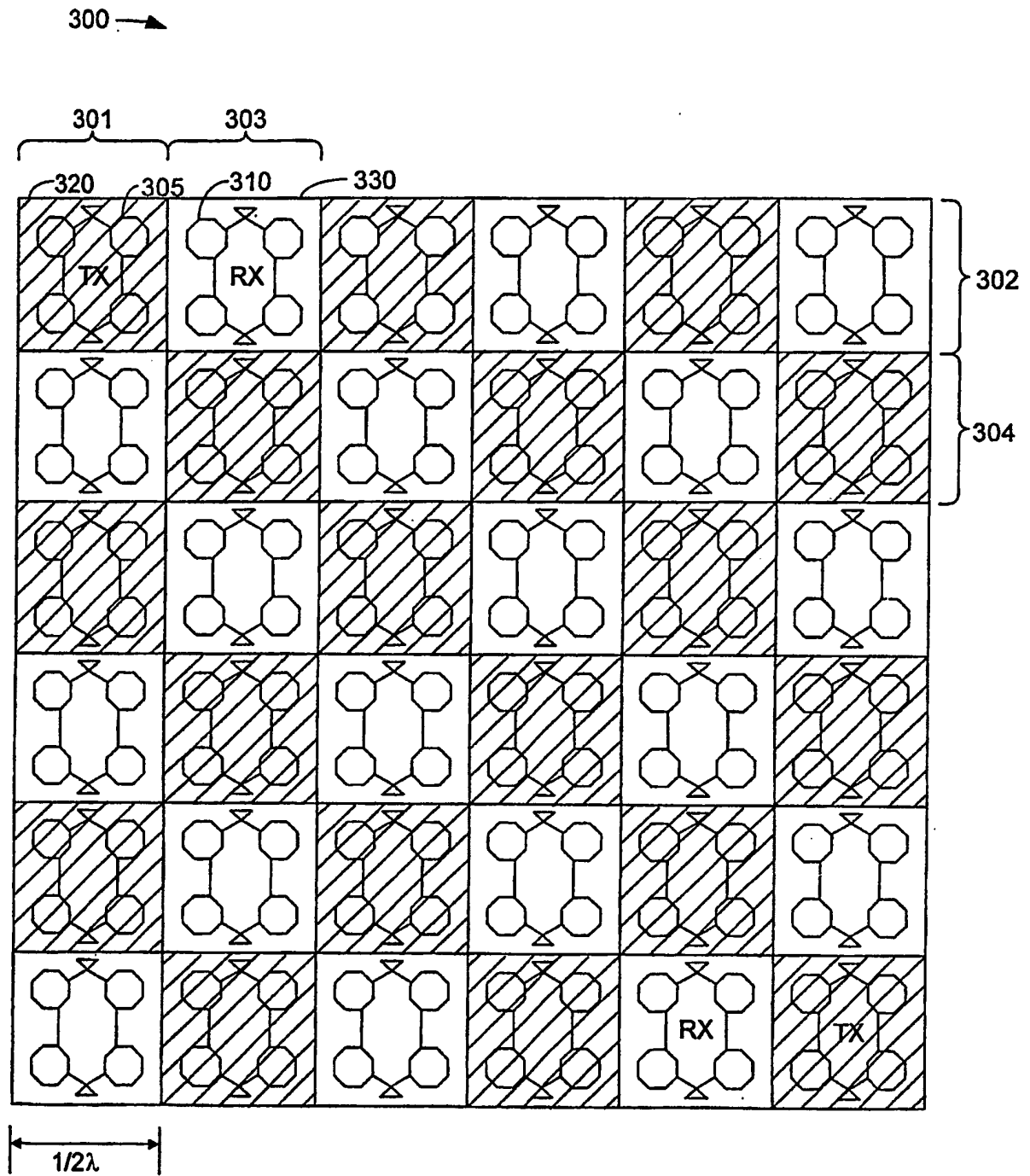


FIG.3A

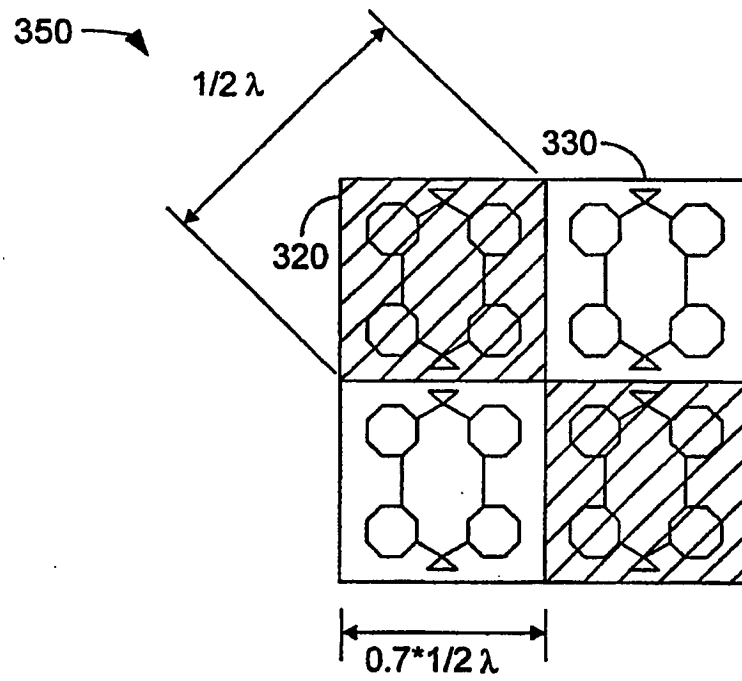


FIG.3B

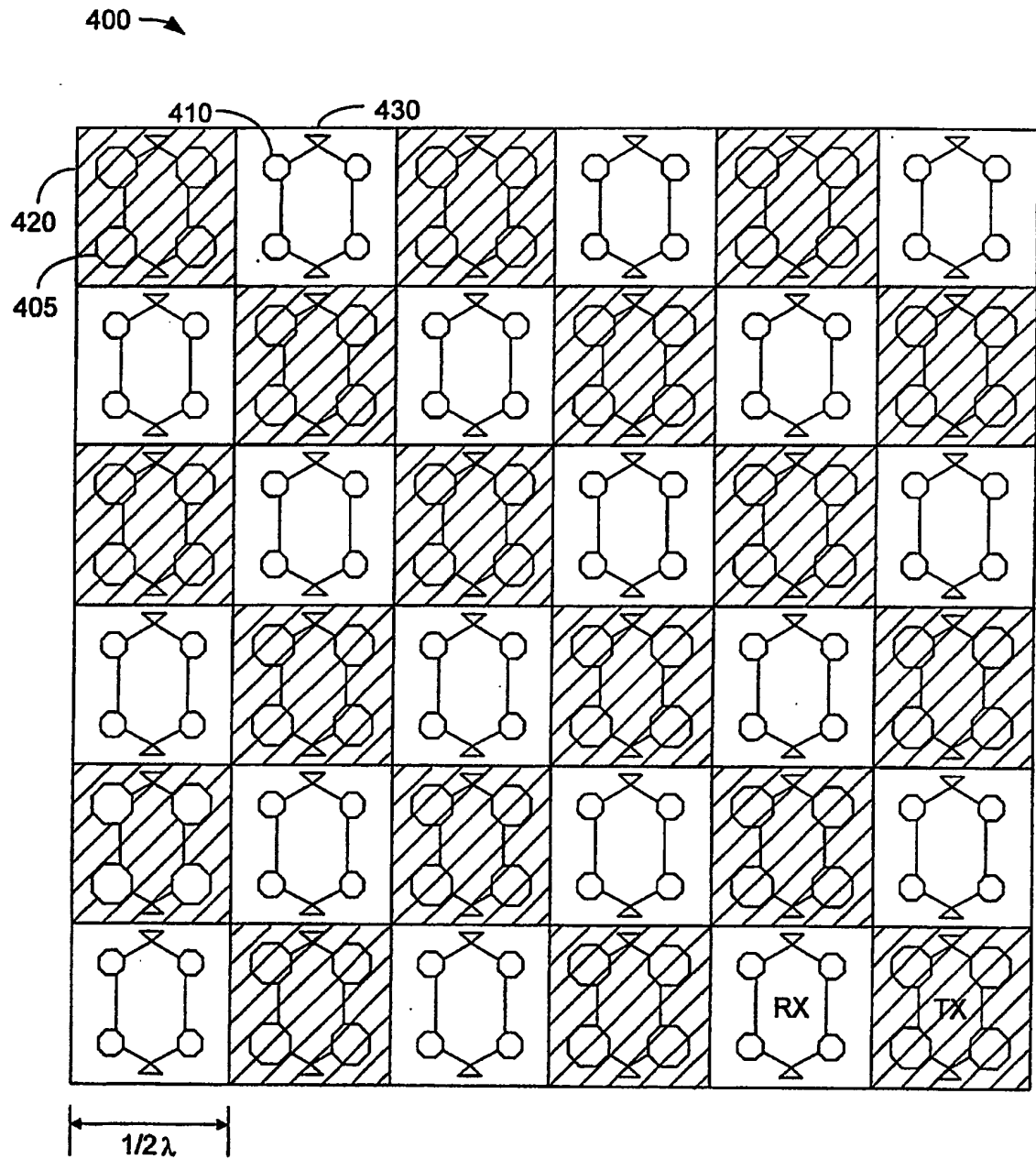


FIG.4

专利名称(译)	微机械超声换能器 (MUT) 阵列		
公开(公告)号	EP1414739B1	公开(公告)日	2006-10-18
申请号	EP2002755450	申请日	2002-07-26
[标]申请(专利权)人(译)	皇家飞利浦电子股份有限公司		
申请(专利权)人(译)	皇家飞利浦电子N.V.		
当前申请(专利权)人(译)	皇家飞利浦电子N.V.		
[标]发明人	MILLER DAVID G		
发明人	MILLER, DAVID, G.		
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摘要(译)

包括各个发射MUT元件和接收MUT元件的超声换能器阵列包括在阵列上以二维分布的发射MUT元件和接收MUT元件。通过使用不同的MUT元件进行发送和接收操作，可以针对发送操作或接收操作独立地优化每个MUT元件。此外，通过独立地优化MUT元件用于发送或接收操作，可以将相同的偏置电压施加到MUT元件，从而简化与MUT换能器阵列相关联的偏置电路。或者，因为MUT元件被独立地优化用于发送和接收，所以可以将不同的偏置电压施加到发送和接收元件，从而提供元件的进一步优化。

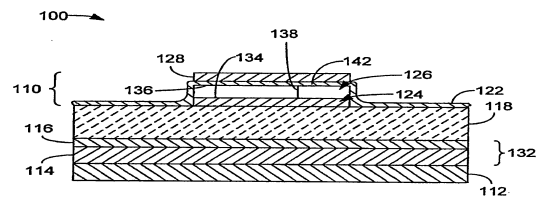


FIG. 1

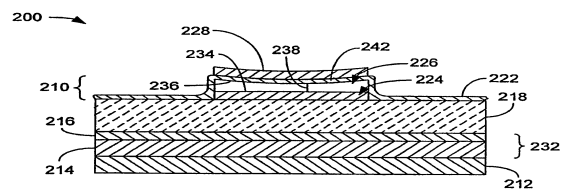


FIG. 2