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**Kelber**

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(54) **METHODS OF FORMING GRAPHENE/(MULTILAYER) BORON NITRIDE FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICE APPLICATIONS**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **427/255.38; 427/255.394; 427/255.7; 427/249.1**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** ..... **427/255.38, 427/255.394, 255.7, 249.1; 117/84, 104**  
See application file for complete search history.

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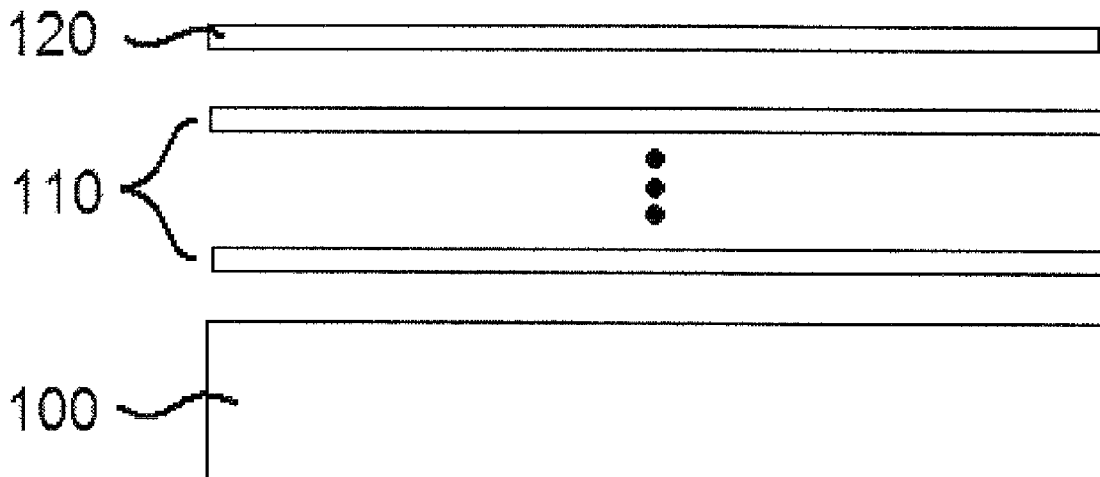
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a substrate-mediated assembly for graphene structures. According to an embodiment, long-range ordered, multilayer BN(111) films can be formed by repeated atomic layer deposition (ALD) of a boron-halide or organoborane precursor and NH<sub>3</sub> onto a substrate followed by a high temperature anneal. Graphene can then be formed on an ordered BN(111) film by depositing carbon on the ordered surface of the BN(111) film.

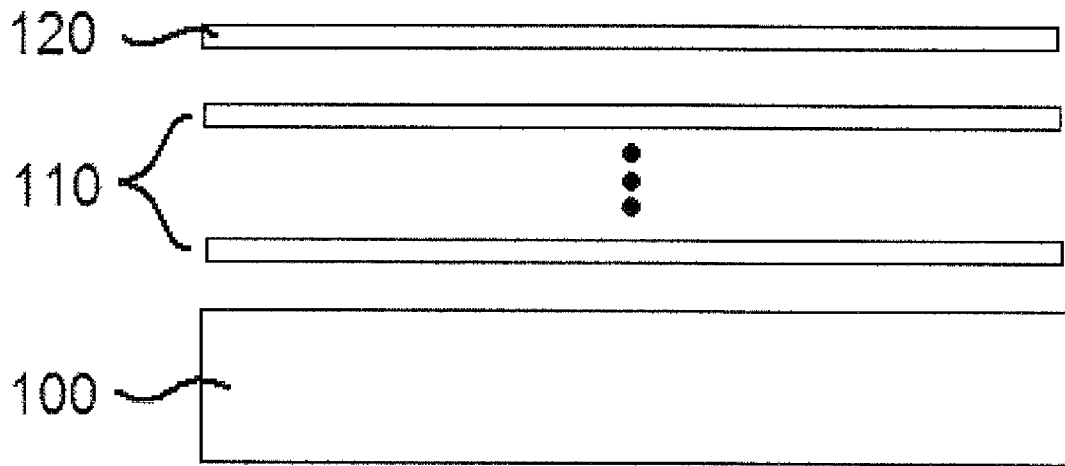
**20 Claims, 1 Drawing Sheet**



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**METHODS OF FORMING  
GRAPHENE/(MULTILAYER) BORON  
NITRIDE FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICE  
APPLICATIONS**

The subject invention was made, in part, with government support from the Office of Naval Research contract No. N00014-08-1-1107 through a subcontract from the Texas State University at San Marcos. The government has certain rights in the invention.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Graphene is a single atomic layer of graphite, and currently holds interest for many electronic and spintronic device applications due to graphene's electronic properties, including high mobility, high saturation velocity, stable crystal structure, and ultrathin layer thickness. To be utilized in electronic and spintronic device applications, graphene must rest on an electronically semiconducting or insulating substrate.

Current methods of producing graphene involve either growing graphene on a transition metal substrate and then transferring a single graphene sheet onto an insulating substrate, or growing graphene by thermal evaporation of silicon from bulk SiC(0001) substrates.

In the first method, the graphene growth on the transition metal substrate is typically performed by thermal decomposition of a hydrocarbon precursor, or by formation of highly oriented pyrolytic graphite (a commercial substance), followed by chemical or manual exfoliation of a single graphene sheet and manual placement on an insulating substrate, such as SiO<sub>2</sub>. These methods tend to be impractical for large-scale production of electronic devices with consistent electronic properties, including graphene-substrate contact characteristics.

In the second method, the graphene remains on the semiconducting SiC substrate after the thermal evaporation of the silicon from the SiC substrate. The transfer of graphene sheets grown by this second method is not practical. In addition, the growth process occurs at temperatures greater than 1500 K and does not allow for growth or integration with any device materials other than SiC—a material with numerous processing problems for device manufacture.

Recently, boron nitride (BN) has become of interest for its insulating characteristics and potential for use in nanotechnology. Hexagonal phase BN films may be grown by atomic layer deposition using layer-by-layer deposition of precursors to give a film thickness controllable to atomic dimensions. Ordered hexagonal BN(111) films 1 atomic layer thick have been grown on Ni(111), Cu(111) and Rh(111) or Ru(0001) surfaces by thermal decomposition of borazine. However, growth of multilayer films by current methods is inhibited because the first BN monolayer renders the surface chemically inert. Moreover, the chemical structure of monolayer films grown by borazine decomposition on certain substrates such as Ru(0001) and Rh(111) is highly puckered—a “nanomesh”—and may be unsuitable for subsequent growth of ordered films. In addition, although certain monolayer BN(111) and graphene/monolayer BN(111) films have been grown, the electronic properties of these graphene films are greatly affected by electronic interaction through the single atomic layer of the graphene to the substrate. Thus, research continues to be conducted to provide useful graphene structures for device applications.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention provide methods for fabricating graphene structures that can be utilized for elec-

tronic device applications. Carbon atoms can be ordered into a graphene sheet during a carbon deposition process onto a substrate having multilayer BN films fabricated in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention. The multilayer BN films can provide an electrically insulating structure between the graphene and the substrate. In addition, the multilayer BN films can serve as a topographic template to order carbon atoms into a graphene sheet during a deposition process. By using the BN films for ordering the carbon atoms into the graphene sheet, a substrate-mediated assembly is provided.

The growth of graphene sheets on BN films in accordance with embodiments of the present invention can further enable growth and patterning of graphene films on many different conductive substrates where the BN thickness can be precisely controlled to govern electron transport between the conductive substrate underneath the BN and the graphene layer.

According to one embodiment, a method of fabricating electronic devices includes graphene heteroepitaxy by substrate mediated assembly on multilayer BN(111) films with long range order.

In one aspect, BN(111) films are formed on substrates in multiple layers at controllable thicknesses greater than 1 atomic layer.

In another aspect, the subject multilayer BN(111) films are used for substrate-mediated assembly of a graphene overlayer.

In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, large scale production of BN films and graphene structures can be achieved.

In a further embodiment, the subject methods can enable integration of graphene/BN devices with other devices.

The details of one or more embodiments are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features will be apparent from the description, drawings, and claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a representation of a graphene/(multilayer) BN structure in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention provide a substrate-mediated assembly for graphene structures. According to an embodiment, long-range ordered, multilayer BN(111) films can be formed by atomic layer deposition (ALD) onto a substrate. Because BN(111) films are isostructural and iso-electronic with graphene, thereby providing a chemically inert template, the BN(111) films are useful for subsequently ordering carbon atoms into a graphene sheet. In particular, the (111) in-plane lattice constant of BN is 2.50 Å, which is a close lattice match to graphene (2.46 Å). Accordingly, in a further embodiment of the present invention, the subject BN(111) films can then be used to order carbon atoms into a graphene sheet during a carbon deposition process.

Current CMOS devices are approaching certain physical limits due to continual reduction in the sizes of device features, such as the gate oxide thickness and interconnect line width, the wave nature of electrons manifested on atomic dimensions, and the fundamental behavior of electrons in Si. Since graphene is a semi-metal, faster devices can be fabricated in place of or as a complement to CMOS devices. In

addition, graphene devices can be implemented for charge-based, spin-based, and even qubits-based device applications.

BN is an insulating material with a direct band gap of 5.97 eV. Therefore, BN can be a useful insulator between the graphene and a substrate in electronic, optoelectronic and spintronic device applications. In order to produce useful graphene structures for device applications, BN(111) films with controllable thicknesses greater than one atomic layer (monolayer) are provided.

BN is an electronic insulator and when provided at thicknesses greater than one atomic layer, BN can be used to limit electron tunneling transport between a metal substrate and graphene. Such graphene/BN/metal structures can then be patterned by various methods, such as any suitable method known in the art, for multiple device applications.

According to various embodiments of the present invention, the subject multilayer BN(111) films can be grown on a substrate by atomic layer deposition (ALD) using a boron-halide or organoborane precursor,  $BX_3$  (where X=chlorine Cl, bromine Br, iodine I, an alkyl group such as  $CH_3$  or any combination of these) and  $NH_3$ . In the ALD process, the substrate is exposed alternately to each precursor, with a reaction occurring between precursors to form the desired film in a layer-by-layer manner. In this case, the relevant reaction is:

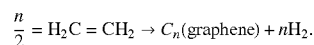


Multilayer films may be grown on many different substrates by alternate  $BX_3/NH_3$  exposures to the substrate. According to certain embodiments the exposures can be performed at temperatures of about 550 K to about 750 K and pressure of 0.01-1000 Torr. In a specific embodiment, the pressure conditions are between 0.01 to 10 Torr. After depositing the multilayer BN film, the substrate can be annealed in vacuum or inert atmosphere to a high temperature, such as 1000 K. Typical film thickness growth rates under the above condition are  $\sim 1.3 \text{ \AA}$  per  $BX_3/NH_3$  cycle.

The substrate can be selected to provide a suitable lattice structure to enable the formation of a highly crystalline film (i.e. with long range order) upon performing the annealing process. The substrate can be the (111) surfaces of transition metals. The substrate can be a bulk single crystal substrate or an ordered thin film on another substrate, where the in-plane lattice constant is between about 3.0  $\text{\AA}$  and about 2.2  $\text{\AA}$ . According to certain embodiments, suitable substrates include, but are not limited to Ru(0001), Pt(111), Pd(111), Ni(111), Nb(111) and Cu(111) single crystals, epitaxial films grown on  $Al_2O_3(0001)$ , ordered  $Al_2O_3(111)$  films grown on suitable NiAl or  $Ni_3Al$  single crystal substrates, and suitable (111) grains of Ru, Pt, Ni, Nb or Cu films grown as interconnect lines at the interconnect or packaging levels of CMOS devices. A silicon substrate may be used where a metal film having (111) surfaces is provided for forming the BN layer.

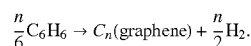
Graphene can then be formed on the BN(111) film by any suitable method to achieve a graphene/(multilayer)BN(111)/substrate structure. A uniform graphene film can be obtained by exposure of the ordered BN(111) films to carbon. The graphene can be formed by performing a carbon deposition process. For example, the carbon deposition process can include, but is not limited to chemical vapor deposition (CVD) at suitable temperatures ( $\sim 1000 \text{ K}$ ) with, e.g., ethylene, benzene, methane or other volatile hydrocarbon precursors, evaporation of carbon from a graphite source, or sputter deposition of carbon from a graphite sputter target at suitable temperatures ( $\sim 1000 \text{ K}$ ).

For CVD using ethylene, the relevant reaction is:



According to one embodiment, the uniform graphene films can be obtained by exposure of the ordered BN(111) films to  $C_2H_4$  at pressures of about 0.01 Torr to about 1 Torr at 1000 K.

For CVD using benzene, the relevant reaction is:



It is also contemplated within the scope of the present invention other methods for making graphene, including growth of graphene monolayers followed by manual liftoff/transfer to the substrate having the ordered multilayer BN films.

FIG. 1 shows a representation of a graphene/(multilayer) BN structure in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 1, a substrate 100 can be provided with multiple layers of an ordered BN film 110, and a graphene film 120 can be formed on the top layer of the BN film 110.

By fabricating the BN films using ALD in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention, long-range ordered, multilayer BN(111) films can be provided on a substrate. Furthermore, the subject long-range ordered BN(111) films are provided in thicknesses greater than one monolayer (or atomic layer).

Embodiments of the present invention can be used for a variety of electronic device applications, including electronic, optoelectronic and spintronic devices. Graphene/BN (111) structures fabricated in accordance with embodiments of the present invention can exhibit high electron mobilities and other properties indicative of a 2-dimensional electron gas. In addition, the use of BN(111) films on various metal (111) surfaces allows the growth of graphene films on insulating substrates on metal(111) films grown on sapphire. In further embodiments, the use of the subject ordered BN(111) films allows growth of graphene films on highly oriented metal films on CMOS devices.

Ordered BN and  $BC_xN$  layered films fabricated in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention can exhibit direct band gaps tunable between  $\sim 2 \text{ eV}$ - $6 \text{ eV}$ . Furthermore, the combination of ordered graphene films on ordered BN (or carbon-doped BN) films of variable thickness affords multiple potential device applications.

Any reference in this specification to "one embodiment," "an embodiment," "example embodiment," etc., means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the invention. The appearances of such phrases in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Further, when a particular feature, structure, or characteristic is described in connection with any embodiment, it is submitted that it is within the purview of one skilled in the art to utilize or combine such feature, structure, or characteristic in connection with other ones of the embodiments.

Although embodiments have been described with reference to a number of illustrative embodiments thereof, it should be understood that numerous other modifications and embodiments can be devised by those skilled in the art that will fall within the spirit and scope of the principles of this disclosure. More particularly, various variations and modifi-

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cations are possible in the component parts and/or arrangements of the subject combination arrangement within the scope of the disclosure, the drawings and the appended claims. In addition to variations and modifications in the component parts and/or arrangements, alternative uses will also be apparent to those skilled in the art.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of fabricating an electronic device, the method comprising:

performing an atomic layer deposition (ALD) process repeatedly using a boron-halide or organoborane precursor and  $\text{NH}_3$  to form a multilayer boron nitride (BN) film on a substrate; and

performing an annealing process to order the multilayer BN film on the substrate,

wherein the substrate is a metal interconnection or packaging level metal line on a CMOS substrate,

wherein the metal interconnection or packaging level metal line comprises (111) grains of Ru, Pt, Ni, Nb, or Cu.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the boron-halide precursor is  $\text{BCl}_3$ .

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the ALD process is performed under conditions of a pressure of 0.1 to 10 Torr and surface temperature of 550 K to 750 K.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the annealing is performed in a vacuum or inert atmosphere at a temperature of about 1000 K.

5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising: forming graphene on the ordered multilayer BN film.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the forming of the graphene film comprises depositing carbon on the ordered multilayer BN film.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the forming of the graphene film comprises performing a chemical vapor deposition process using a volatile hydrocarbon precursor.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the volatile hydrocarbon precursor comprises ethylene, benzene, or methane.

9. The method according to claim 6, wherein the forming of the graphene film comprises performing evaporation of carbon from a graphite source onto the ordered multilayer BN film.

10. The method according to claim 6, wherein the forming of the graphene film comprises performing a sputter deposition process of carbon from a graphite sputter target onto the ordered multilayer BN film.

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11. The method according to claim 5, further comprising patterning the graphene/ordered multilayer BN film structure.

12. A method of fabricating an electronic device, the method comprising:

performing an atomic layer deposition (ALD) process repeatedly using a boron-halide or organoborane precursor and  $\text{NH}_3$  to form a multilayer boron nitride (BN) film, layer-by-layer, on a substrate;

performing an annealing process to form an ordered the multilayer BN film on the substrate after performing the ALD process repeatedly; and

forming graphene on the ordered multilayer BN film to form a graphene/(multilayer) BN structure on the substrate, electronic characteristics of the ordered multilayer BN film being tuned according to the layer-by-layer formation of the multilayer BN film.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the electronic characteristics include the bandgap of the ordered multilayer BN film of the graphene/(multilayer)BN structure on the substrate, the bandgap being selectively tuned between ~2 eV to 6 eV.

14. The method according to claim 12, wherein the boron-halide precursor is  $\text{BCl}_3$ .

15. The method according to claim 12, wherein the ALD process is performed under conditions of a pressure of 0.1 to 10 Torr and surface temperature of 550 K to 750 K.

16. The method according to claim 12, wherein the annealing is performed in a vacuum or inert atmosphere at a temperature of about 1000 K.

17. The method according to claim 12, wherein the substrate is a (111) surface transition metal.

18. The method according to claim 12, wherein the substrate is a bulk single crystal substrate or an ordered thin film on a secondary substrate, the bulk single crystal substrate or ordered thin film having in-plane lattice constant between about 3.0 Å and 2.2 Å.

19. The method according to claim 12, wherein the substrate is a metal interconnection or packaging level metal line on a CMOS substrate.

20. The method according to claim 12, wherein the substrate is an epitaxial film grown on  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3(0001)$  or ordered  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3(111)$  films grown on NiAl or  $\text{Ni}_3\text{Al}$  single crystal substrates.

\* \* \* \* \*

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
**CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION**

PATENT NO. : 8,158,200 B2  
APPLICATION NO. : 12/543053  
DATED : April 17, 2012  
INVENTOR(S) : Jeffry Kelber

Page 1 of 1

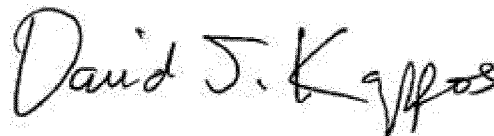
It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 4,

Line 3, " $\frac{n}{2} = \text{H}_2\text{C} = \text{CH}_2 \rightarrow$ " should read --  $\frac{n}{2} \text{H}_2\text{C} = \text{CH}_2 \rightarrow$  --.

Line 7, "about 1 Ton" should read --about 1 Torr--.

Signed and Sealed this  
Twenty-sixth Day of June, 2012



David J. Kappos  
*Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office*