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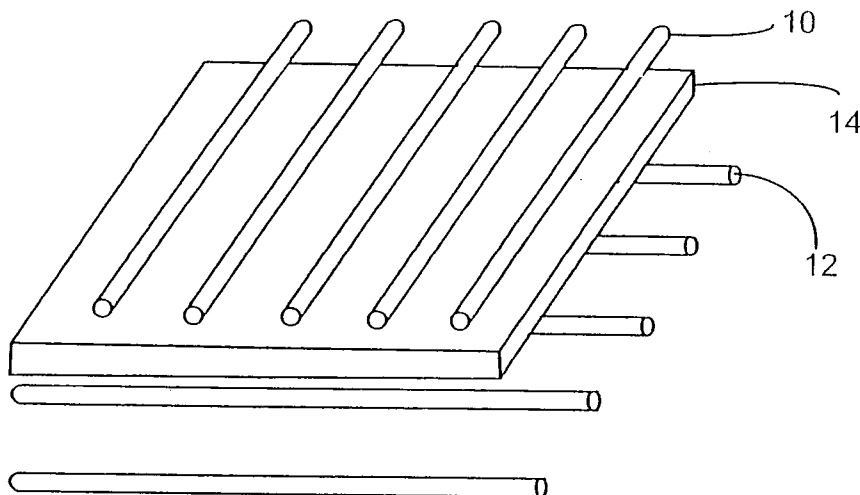
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(54) Title: DELETABLE NANOTUBE CIRCUIT



(57) Abstract: Carbon nanotube template arrays may be edited to form connections between proximate nanotubes and/or to delete undesired nano tubes or nanotube junctions.

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Deletable Nanotube Circuit

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Whitmer, Lowell L. Wood, Jr.**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[1] The present application is related to and claims the benefit of the earliest available effective filing date(s) from the following listed application(s) (the "Related Applications") (e.g., claims earliest available priority dates for other than provisional patent applications or claims benefits under 35 USC § 119(e) for provisional patent applications, for any and all parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc. applications of the Related Application(s)).

Related Applications:

[2] For purposes of the USPTO extra-statutory requirements, the present application constitutes a continuation-in-part of United States Patent Application No. _____, entitled **CONNECTIBLE NANOTUBE CIRCUIT**, attorney docket no. **0505-026-001B-000000**, naming **Roderick A. Hyde, Muriel Y. Ishikawa, Nathan P. Myhrvold, Clarence T. Tegreene, Charles Whitmer, and Lowell L. Wood, Jr.** as inventors, filed contemporaneously herewith, which is currently co-pending, or is an application of which a currently co-pending application is entitled to the benefit of the filing date.

[3] For purposes of the USPTO extra-statutory requirements, the present application constitutes a continuation-in-part of United States Patent Application No. _____, entitled **NANOTUBE CIRCUIT ANALYSIS SYSTEM AND METHOD**, attorney docket no. **0505-026-001C-000000**, naming **Roderick A. Hyde, Muriel Y. Ishikawa, Nathan P. Myhrvold, Clarence T. Tegreene, Charles Whitmer, and Lowell L. Wood, Jr.** as inventors, filed contemporaneously herewith, which is currently co-pending, or is an application

of which a currently co-pending application is entitled to the benefit of the filing date.

[4] The United States Patent Office (USPTO) has published a notice to the effect that the USPTO's computer programs require that patent applicants reference both a serial number and indicate whether an application is a continuation or continuation-in-part. Stephen G. Kunin, *Benefit of Prior-Filed Application*, USPTO Official Gazette March 18, 2003, available at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/sol/og/2003/week11/patbene.htm>. The present applicant entity has provided above a specific reference to the application(s) *from which priority is being claimed* as recited by statute. Applicant entity understands that the statute is unambiguous in its specific reference language and does not require either a serial number or any characterization, such as "continuation" or "continuation-in-part," for claiming priority to U.S. patent applications. Notwithstanding the foregoing, applicant entity understands that the USPTO's computer programs have certain data entry requirements, and hence applicant entity is designating the present application as a continuation-in-part of its parent applications as set forth above, but expressly points out that such designations are not to be construed in any way as any type of commentary and/or admission as to whether or not the present application contains any new matter in addition to the matter of its parent application(s).

[5] All subject matter of the Related Applications and of any and all parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc. applications of the Related Applications is incorporated herein by reference to the extent such subject matter is not inconsistent herewith.

BACKGROUND

[6] According to the International Technology Roadmap for Semiconductors (ITRS), device sizes will continue to shrink, roughly in accordance with Moore's Law (which predicts a doubling of the number of transistors per unit area every 1.5-2 years). As device size requirements grow ever more stringent, traditional silicon lithography techniques may become inadequate, requiring a shift in materials and/or in circuit design techniques to keep pace with demands for improved performance.

SUMMARY

[7] In one aspect, a method of constructing a circuit comprises providing an array of carbon nanotubes including a plurality of segments. At least a subset of the segments intersect to form electrically responsive junctions. The method further includes selectively inactivating at least one segment or junction. Inactivating may including application of electromagnetic energy (*e.g.*, by directing a laser towards the segment or junction), application of an electron beam, chemical attack (*e.g.*, by an activatable composition such as a photochemical, an enzyme, or a targetable composition such as a nucleotide-containing composition), and/or application of a voltage. Application of a voltage may include applying the voltage to segments and/or to junctions, and may include application of timed pulses, which may be timed to temporally overlap at a common center (such as the segment or junction to be inactivated). The carbon nanotubes may be arranged, for example, in a rectilinear array, a hexagonal pattern, or a three dimensional pattern, and may include junctions connecting at least or exactly three segments. Providing the array of carbon nanotubes may include growing the carbon nanotubes along selected paths. The carbon nanotubes may include semiconducting nanotubes and/or metallic nanotubes. The method may further include measuring an electrical property of at least one segment or junction, and may in addition selecting a segment or junction to inactivate in response to the measured electrical property.

[8] In another aspect, a carbon nanotube circuit template includes a plurality of carbon nanotube segments that interconnect to form junctions. At least one of the segments or at least one of the junctions exhibits a nonlinear current-voltage response, and at least one of the segments or at least one of the junctions is deletable. The carbon nanotubes may be arranged, for example, in a rectilinear array, a hexagonal pattern, or a three dimensional pattern, and may include junctions connecting at least or exactly three segments. The carbon nanotubes may include at least one semiconducting segment and/or at least one metallic segment. At least one of the carbon nanotubes may be deletable by application of electromagnetic energy (*e.g.*, by directing a laser towards the segment or junction), application of an electron beam, chemical attack (*e.g.*, by an activatable composition such as a photochemical, an enzyme, or a targetable composition such as a nucleotide-containing composition), and/or application of a voltage.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

- [9] FIG. 1 is a schematic of a template device.
- [10] FIG. 2 is a schematic of the template device of FIG. 1 after selective editing.
- [11] FIG. 3 is a schematic of an interconnected set of carbon nanotubes (CNTs).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[12] Carbon nanotubes represent an attractive candidate material for dramatically reducing device sizes. They have been shown to exhibit diode-like properties when “kinks” (pentagon-heptagon defect pairs) are introduced (see, *e.g.*, Yao *et al.*, “Carbon nanotube intramolecular junctions,” *Nature* **402**:273-276 (Nov. 1999), incorporated by reference herein), and crossed nanotubes may act as nanoscale p-type Schottky diodes (see, *e.g.*, Fuhrer, *et al.*, “Transport through crossed nanotubes,” *Physica E* **6**:868-871 (2000), hereinafter referred to as “Fuhrer I,” Fuhrer, *et al.*, “Crossed Nanotube Junctions,” *Science* **288**:494-497 (Apr. 2000), hereinafter referred to as “Fuhrer II,” and Patwardhan, *et al.*, “Circuit and System Architecture for DNA-Guided Self-Assembly of Nanoelectronics,” *Proc. 1st Conf. Foundations of Nanosci.* 344-358 (Apr. 2004), all of which are incorporated herein by reference).

[13] Single-walled carbon nanotubes (SWCNTs) may be metallic or semiconducting depending on their chirality. Individual SWCNTs have a chirality defined by circumferential vector (n,m) in terms of graphite lattice units. When (n-m)/3 is an integer, the SWCNTs generally behave as metals, while other SWCNTs generally behave as semiconductors. Fuhrer II found three types of behavior for crossed SWCNTs, depending on whether the constituent CNTs were metallic-metallic (MM), semiconducting-semiconducting (SS), or metallic-semiconducting (MS). MM junctions and SS junctions exhibited roughly linear I-V behavior, with MM conductivities in the range of $0.086\text{--}0.26\ e^2/h$ and SS conductivities in the range of at least $0.011\text{--}0.06\ e^2/h$. MS junctions exhibited nonlinear I-V behavior, with much lower conductivities in the linear range and with a Schottky barrier of 190-290 meV. Theoretical calculations (see, *e.g.*, Buldum, *et al.*, “Contact resistance between carbon nanotubes,” *Phys. Rev. B*

63:161403(R) (Apr. 2001), incorporated herein by reference) suggest that the conductivity of such junctions may be a sensitive function of atomic structure in the contact region (*e.g.*, registration of hexagon structures in adjacent nanotubes).

[14] CNTs may also be fabricated in a Y-shape, in which three nanotubes converge at a junction (see, *e.g.*, Papadopoulos "Electronic Transport in Y-Junction Carbon Nanotubes," *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **85**(16):3476-3479, incorporated herein by reference). Such systems (and the special subset of T-shaped junctions) have been computationally modeled and found to exhibit current rectification (see, *e.g.*, Srivastava, *et al.*, "Computational Nanotechnology with Carbon Nanotubes and Fullerenes," *Comp. Sci. Eng.* **3**(4):42-55 (Jul/Aug 2001), incorporated herein by reference). Experimental results (Papadopoulos, *supra*) confirm rectifying behavior.

[15] The rectifying structures described above may be combined to form more complex circuit elements (*e.g.*, logic gates, such as those described in Derycke, *et al.*, "Carbon Nanotube Inter- and Intramolecular Logic Gates," *Nano Lett.*, **1**(9):453-456 (Aug. 2001), incorporated herein by reference) and circuits (*e.g.*, a scalable one-bit adder, described in Patwardhan, *supra*), using conventional circuit design principles.

[16] As shown in **FIG. 1**, a template device comprises two arrays of CNTs **10**, **12** set at an angle to one another (90 degrees as shown, but other angles may also be used). An intermediate layer **14** is interposed between the two arrays of CNTs. (**FIG. 1** is shown in exploded view for clarity; in most embodiments, the CNTs **10**, **12** will be in contact or at least in close proximity to intermediate layer **14**.) As shown, the intermediate layer **14** is a flat layer, but in other embodiments, it may be a coating on the CNTs or have any other physical configuration that interposes it between CNTs of the two arrays. The CNTs of each array may be metallic, semiconducting, or a mixture of both types. In the configuration shown in **FIG. 1**, the CNTs of the first array **10** are insulated from the CNTs of the second array **12** by the intermediate layer.

[17] **FIG. 2** shows a plan view of the template device of **FIG. 1** after selective editing of the intermediate layer **14**. As seen at junction **16**, the intermediate layer is removed, allowing a CNT of the first array **10** and a CNT of the second array **12** to contact one another to form a junction. In addition, segment of CNT **18** has been removed between two additional junctions **20**. In some embodiments, segments or

junctions may be removed by an electron beam, ion beam, and/or a laser beam, either by direct etching or by illumination followed by a chemical development process. In other embodiments, segments or junctions may be removed by application of a voltage, for example by application of one or more timed pulses along the CNTs that are selected to temporally overlap at a common center, or by application of a voltage directly to a junction or segment. By selecting junctions at which the CNTs may be connected and segments or junctions in which they may be removed, complex circuits of CNTs can be built up in the template. In other embodiments, additional intermediate layers and CNT arrays may be added to increase the available complexity.

[18] The intermediate layer 14 may comprise any material that serves to separate the CNTs and that can be selectively removed or deactivated. In some embodiments, the intermediate layer may comprise a resist composition, which may be removed by conventional lithographic techniques (including but not limited to photoresist, e-beam resist, or X-ray resist). In other embodiments, the resist may comprise a material that can be locally removed or deactivated by application of a voltage between the first selected CNT and the second CNT, potentially obviating the need for lithographic systems.

[19] The arrays of CNTs 10 and 12 may be formed by a variety of methods, including but not limited to pick-and-place, self-assembly of already-formed CNTs (*e.g.*, by the methods of Dwyer, *et al.*, "The Design of DNA Self-Assembled Computing Circuitry," *IEEE Trans. VLSI Sys.*, 12(11):1214-1220 (Nov. 2004), incorporated herein by reference), or *in situ* growth of CNTs (*e.g.*, by the methods of Jung, *et al.*, "Mechanism of Selective Growth of Carbon Nanotubes on SiO₂/Si Patterns," *Nano Lett.* 3(4):561-564 (Mar. 2003), incorporated herein by reference). Some of these methods may lend themselves to production of CNTs having particular chiralities and/or conductivities, while others may produce arrays of CNTs having a distribution of chiralities and/or conductivities.

[20] In embodiments where the chiralities and/or conductivities are not known *a priori*, it may be desirable to interrogate the material properties of individual CNTs in order to determine appropriate connections and/or deletions (*e.g.*, by electrical testing, plasmon interactions, optical testing, atomic force microscopy, and/or other types of

microscopy). In still other embodiments, it may be desirable to interrogate properties of individual CNTs or of groups of CNTs to locate regions having desired properties after some or all of the connections and/or deletions have been made. In yet other embodiments, it may be desirable to examine physical properties, as well as or instead of electrical properties, of CNTs and junction during any point in the process to determine additional connections and/or deletions or other configurational aspects. Physical properties may include, but are not limited to, location, size, defect location, and/or chemical environment.

[21] **FIG. 3** shows an interconnected set of CNTs including Y junctions **30**. Such an interconnected set may be produced, for example, by welding of long nanotubes (see, *e.g.*, Terrones, *et al.*, "Molecular Junctions by Joining Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes," *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **89**(7):075505 (Aug. 2002), and Krashennnikov, *et al.*, "Ion-irradiation induced welding of carbon nanotubes," *Phys. Rev. B*, **66**:245403 (2002), both of which are incorporated herein by reference). Arrays of Y-branched CNTs have also been produced by Papadopoulos, *supra*; these can be interconnected by similar techniques, or by the selective interconnection technique illustrated in **FIGS. 1** and **2**. In some embodiments, production of such interconnected sets of CNTs may be effectively random, while in other embodiments, CNTs may be interconnected in a predictable pattern.

[22] In either case, sections **32** of the interconnected set **30** may be determined to act as logic gates or other desired circuit elements or circuits. In some embodiments, such sections may be located by determination of the chirality and/or conductivity of individual segments within the interconnected set by empirically determining the electrical properties of a interconnected set through application of voltages to selected "input" CNTs **34** and measurement of selected "output" CNTs **36**, or by a combination of these methods (*e.g.*, by determining chirality of selected "input" and "output" CNTs, identifying interconnecting junctions between them, and applying signals to the CNTs to determine behavior of the set of input CNTs, output CNTs, and interconnecting junctions). In some embodiments, segments or junctions of the interconnected set **30** may be deleted as discussed above. Such deletion may occur before, during, or after any measurement of properties of the interconnected set.

[23] In a large interconnected set **30**, many sections **32** having desired circuit properties may be present (either by design and controlled self-assembly, or by chance). Once identified as discussed above, these sections may be isolated from the interconnected set, either physically (by cutting junctions outside the desired section and moving it to a desired location), or effectively, by disconnecting segments of junctions not in the desired section to leave only continuous CNTs (which may function as leads) connected to the desired section inputs and outputs.

[24] In some embodiments, template structures such as those shown in **FIGS. 1** and **3** may be constructed in bulk, and then individually edited to form custom circuits. In such embodiments (and in particular in embodiments in which the chiralities and/or conductivities of individual CNTs are not known *a priori*), the determination of which CNT sections to connect and/or delete may be made using customized software.

[25] In some embodiments, the customized software accesses a model of a CNT template structure (using measurements of properties of CNTs in the particular template if appropriate) and identifies the effect of editing the CNT template structure, either by deleting segments or junctions, or by forming connections between segments in physical proximity. The model includes the electrical behavior of the CNT segments and junctions of the template (*e.g.*, the rectifying properties or lack thereof of individual junctions, and/or the conductivities of the CNT segments).

[26] In some embodiments, the customized software may determine circuit behavior from first principles. In other embodiments, the software may store schematics for building block structures (including by way of nonlimiting example the logic gates and adders discussed above), and allow circuit designers to specify circuit designs using conventional methods. The software then locates regions within the model of the template structure that could be modified as discussed above to implement the particular designs. In some embodiments, a computer-based system may then control the application of voltages, dynamic masks, serial e-beam etchers, or whatever other editing tools were appropriate to produce the desired circuit on a particular template structure.

[27] Those having skill in the art will recognize that the state of the art of circuit design has progressed to the point where there is typically little distinction left between hardware and software implementations of aspects of systems. The use of

hardware or software is generally a design choice representing tradeoffs between cost, efficiency, flexibility, and other implementation considerations. Those having skill in the art will appreciate that there are various vehicles by which processes, systems and/or other technologies involving the use of logic and/or circuits can be effected (*e.g.*, hardware, software, and/or firmware, potentially including CNT-based circuits in whole or in part), and that the preferred vehicle will vary with the context in which the processes, systems and/or other technologies are deployed. For example, if an implementer determines that speed is paramount, the implementer may opt for a mainly hardware and/or firmware vehicle. Alternatively, if flexibility is paramount, the implementer may opt for a mainly software implementation. In these or other situations, the implementer may also opt for some combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware, potentially including CNT-based circuits in whole or in part. Hence, there are several possible vehicles by which the processes, devices and/or other technologies involving logic and/or circuits described herein may be effected, none of which is inherently superior to the other. Those skilled in the art will recognize that optical aspects of implementations may require optically-oriented hardware, software, and or firmware.

[28] Other embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from a consideration of the specification or practice of the invention disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification be considered as exemplary only, with the true scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the following claims.

[29] What is claimed is:

CLAIMS

1. A method of constructing a circuit, comprising:
providing an array of carbon nanotubes (CNTs) comprising a plurality of segments, at least a subset of the segments intersecting to form electrically responsive junctions; and
selectively inactivating at least one segment or junction.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein inactivating at least one segment or junction includes applying electromagnetic energy.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein applying electromagnetic energy includes directing laser energy toward the at least one segment or junction.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein applying electromagnetic energy includes directing an electron beam toward the at least one segment or junction.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein inactivating at least one segment or junction includes chemically attacking the at least one segment or junction.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein chemically attacking the at least one segment or junction includes applying an activatable composition to the at least one segment or junction, and selectively activating the activatable composition.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the activatable composition is photosensitive, and wherein selectively activating the activatable composition includes applying electromagnetic energy to the activatable composition.
8. The method of claim 6, wherein the activatable composition is an enzyme.
9. The method of claim 6, wherein the activatable composition includes a nucleotide.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein inactivating at least one segment or junction includes applying a voltage to one or more of the segments.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the application of voltage to one or more segments includes applying voltage between a plurality of segments.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein the applying a voltage between a plurality of segments comprises applying timed pulses to one or more of selected segments in the subset of segments intersecting to form junctions.
13. The method of claim 12, wherein applying timed pulses to one or more of selected segments in the subset of segments intersecting includes timing the pulses to temporally overlap at a selected common center.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the selected common center is the at least one segment or junction to be inactivated.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein inactivating at least one segment or junction includes applying a voltage to one or more of the junctions.
16. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs are arranged in a rectilinear array.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs are arranged in a hexagonal pattern.
18. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs are arranged in a three-dimensional pattern.
19. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs include at least one junction connecting at least three segments.
20. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs include at least one junction connecting exactly three segments.
21. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the array of CNTs comprises growing the CNTs along selected paths.
22. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs comprise at least one semiconducting CNT.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the CNTs comprise at least one metallic CNT.
24. The method of claim 1, further comprising measuring an electrical property of at least segment or one junction.
25. The method of claim 24, wherein inactivating at least one segment or junction comprises selecting the at least one segment or junction in response to the measured electrical property.
26. A carbon nanotube (CNT) circuit template, comprising:
 - a plurality of CNT segments, the CNT segments interconnecting to form junctions,
 - wherein at least one of the CNT segments or at least one of the junctions exhibits a nonlinear current-voltage response, and wherein at least one of the CNT segments or at least one of the junctions is deletable.
27. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the CNT segments are arranged in a rectilinear array.
28. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the CNTs are arranged in a hexagonal pattern.
29. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the CNTs are arranged in a three-dimensional pattern.
30. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the template includes at least one junction connecting at least three segments.
31. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the template includes at least one junction connecting exactly three segments.
32. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the CNT segments include at least one semiconducting CNT segment.

33. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the CNT segments include at least one metallic CNT segment.
34. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT segments is deletable by means of application of electromagnetic energy.
35. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT segments is deletable by means of application of an electron beam.
36. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT segments is deletable by means of chemically attacking the at least one segment or junction.
37. The CNT circuit template of claim 36, wherein chemically attacking the at least one segment or junction includes applying an activatable composition to the at least one segment or junction, and selectively activating the activatable composition.
38. The CNT circuit template of claim 37, wherein the activatable composition is photosensitive, and wherein selectively activating the activatable composition includes applying electromagnetic energy to the activatable composition.
39. The CNT circuit template of claim 37, wherein the activatable composition is an enzyme.
40. The CNT circuit template of claim 37, wherein the activatable composition includes a nucleotide.
41. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT segments is deletable by means of application of a voltage to one or more of the plurality of CNT segments.
42. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT segments is deletable by means of application of a voltage to one or more of the plurality of CNT junctions.

43. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT junctions is deletable by means of application of electromagnetic energy.
44. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT junctions is deletable by means of application of an electron beam.
45. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT junctions is deletable by means of chemically attacking the at least one segment or junction.
46. The CNT circuit template of claim 45, wherein chemically attacking the at least one segment or junction includes applying an activatable composition to the at least one segment or junction, and selectively activating the activatable composition.
47. The CNT circuit template of claim 46, wherein the activatable composition is photosensitive, and wherein selectively activating the activatable composition includes applying electromagnetic energy to the activatable composition.
48. The CNT circuit template of claim 46, wherein the activatable composition is an enzyme.
49. The CNT circuit template of claim 46, wherein the activatable composition includes a nucleotide.
50. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT junctions is deletable by means of application of a voltage to one or more of the plurality of CNT segments.
51. The CNT circuit template of claim 26, wherein the at least one of the CNT junctions is deletable by means of application of a voltage to one or more of the plurality of CNT junctions.

FIG. 1

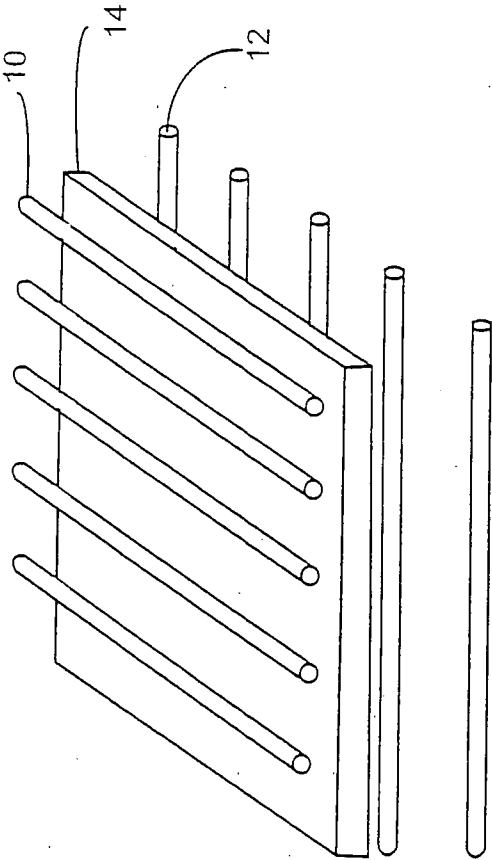


FIG. 2

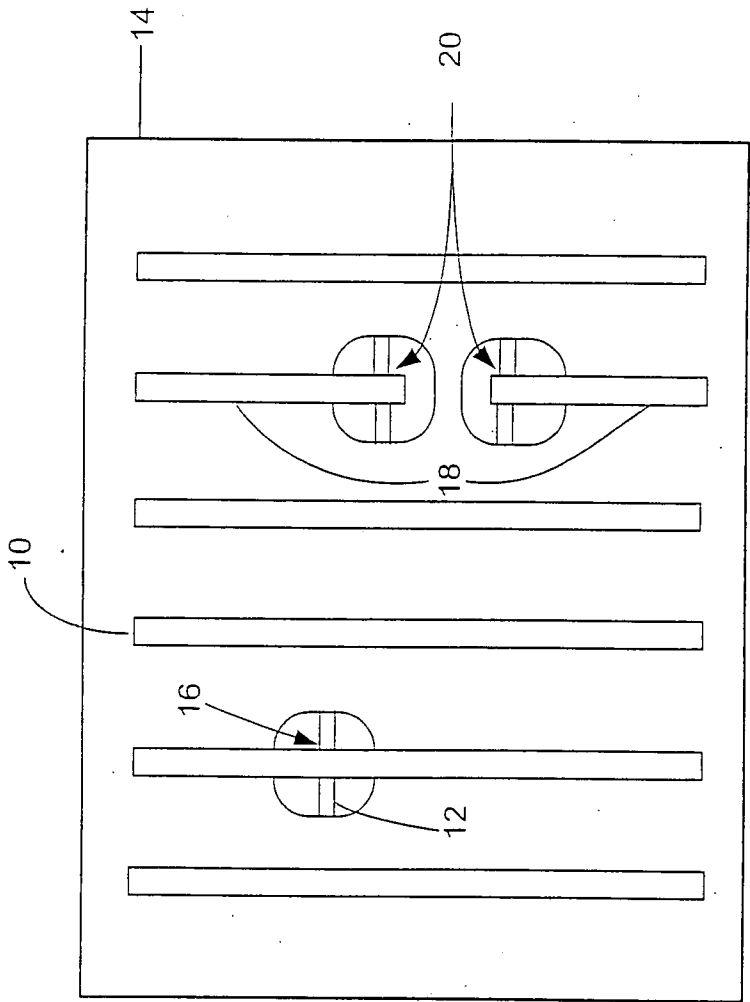


FIG. 3
3/3

