Book of Abstracts

6th South East Asian Technical University Consortium (SEATUC) Symposium

March 6-7, 2012, KMUTT, Thailand

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This book contains the abstract of the papers presented at
6th South East Asian Technical University Consortium (SEATUC) Symposium

Held at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand
March 6-7, 2012

PREFACE

On behalf of King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), it is my great pleasure to be the host of the 6th SEATUC Symposium, held during 6th -7th March 2012 at KMUTT.

South East Asian Technical University Consortium (SEATUC) is academic collaboration on Science and Technology established in 2006. At present, there are 8 member universities in 5 countries.

SEATUC Symposium or an academic meeting on Science and Technology is organized every year in order to continually exchange academic researches. It is the integral part which provides an opportunity for prominent researchers, engineers and practitioners who serves as faculty members and students of SEATUC member universities to present the latest research on Science and Technology.

We acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of papers for this symposium. We are grateful to the members of the Steering Committee and the Organizing Committee for the time they spent in making this symposium a successful event. In this regard, particular mention should be made for the exceptional support of all representatives from member universities to make this symposium a success.

Assoc.Prof.Dr.Sakarindr Bhumiratana
President of SEATUC
President of King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi

TABLE OF CONTENT

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Ms. Sasima Juwasophi

Presentation Session I (March 6, 2012 at 13.00-15.20)

Time	Room 1	Room 2
13.00	***(01)*** Effects of Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC) and Alum on Membrane Fouling in Submerged Membrane Bioreactor *T.X. Bui (HCMUT)*	***(05)*** Heat Transfer From a Rotating Disk *K.O. Lee (UTM)*
13.20	***(01)*** Application of Wetland Roof for Domestic Wastewater Treatment: Treatment Performance of Plants *T.X. Bui (UTM)*	***(05)*** Modelling the Topography of Surfaces in HSM with Spherical Cutters *H. Nguyen (HUST)*
13.40	***(01)*** Water and Wastewater Minimisation Study of Paper Mill In Binh Duong Province, Vietnam *L.T. Le (HCMUT)*	***(05)*** A Study of Clamping Effects in Swaging Process for Head Stack Assembly *J. Kanaramkul (KMUTT)*
14.00	***(01)*** Towards Sustainable Solid Waste Management in Iskandar Malaysia: Using The Japanese Eco-Town Concept *H. Siong & T.Tsong (UTM)*	***(05)*** Simulation Studies of the Estimated Si Engine Load Torque Using Adaptive Observer-Compensator *J. Nunthasukon (SUT)*
14.20	***(01)*** Performance Study of Vegetable Oils as Environmental Friendly Drilling Fluid *A.R.Ismail (UTM)*	***(05)*** A Monte Carlo-Based Meshless Method for 2d Linear Elasticity *P. Juangjerm (KMUTT)*
14.40	***(01)*** Life Cycle Cost Analysis of Indonesian Cassava Ethanol *N.L. Nasution (KMUTT)*	***(02)*** Intelligent Space Design for The Elderly *S. Tivatansakul (SIT)*
15.00	***(01)*** Life Cycle Cost Analysis of Biodiesel Production from Jatropha Curcas Oil in Indonesia *L. Febrina (KMUTT)*	***(02)*** Evaluation of Learning Resources Genereted from Drug Information Database *K. Nabeta (SIT)*

Presentation Session I (cont.)

Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
(03) Understanding Cultural Landscapes in Thai Urban Context: Bangkok as a Neglecting Water-Based City (Invited paper) *W. Shinawatra (KMUTT)*	***(04)*** Characterization of Transcriptional Regulators in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* ..... *C.Tangsombatvichit (KMUTT)*	***(06)*** Rigid Polyurethane /Clay Nanocomposite Foams using Polyols with Different Hydroxyl Values *S. Sontikaew (KMUTT)*
(03) Influence of Familiarity on Designers nnd Non-Designers In Rating of Urban Sculptures *M.Malekinezhad (UTM)*	***(04)*** Regulatory Control of Ergosterol Biosynthetic Gene Expression in the Yeast ..... *S. Baramee (KMUTT)*	***(06)*** Influence of Water Adsorption on Mechanical Properties of Recycled Materials From Waste Melamine *K. Wonglane (SUT)*
(03) The Trends and Emergence of Science Cities *O. Kayode (UTM)*	***(04)*** Recycling of Selenium from K-Powder Using ..... *S. Ochiai (SIT)*	***(06)*** Study on Properties of Recycled Materials from Waste Melamine *M. Mahai (SUT)*
(03) Social Interaction and Sense of Community in Malaysian Low Cost Flats *A.A Aziz (UTM)*	***(04)*** Analysis of the Initial Monooxygenase Genes and Degradation Properties of Gaseous Hydrocarbons..... *T. Suzuki (SIT)*	***(06)*** Corrosion Resistance of Low Carbon Steel Treated by Gas Surface Hardening Method *K.K. Tachee (SUT)*
(03) Benchmarking Sustainability and Ecological Footprint of African Cities. *A.R. Nelson (UTM)*	***(04)*** Isolation and Analysis of Genes Involved in Carbazole Degradation..... *K. Iwata (SIT)*	***(06)*** Banana Fibers as Novel Natural Resources for Plastics Reinforcement *S. Mimoto (SIT)*
(03) Familiarity Index for Landmarks in an Urban Environment *H. Najafpour (UTM)*	***(04)*** Simulation of Vascular Volume Change ..... *P. Uangpairoj (SIT)*	***(06)*** High Density Plasma Nitriding of Tool and Die Steels *T. Aizawa (SIT)*
(03) Attribute of Pocket Parks and its Influence on Behavior *D. Javadian (UTM)*	***(04)*** Development of An Observation Device for a Capillary Behavior ..... *T.Yamadera (SIT)*	***(06)*** Precise Characterisation of Nano-Columnar DLC Film by Raman Spectroscopy and AFM *J.H. Foo (SIT)*

Presentation Session II (March 6, 2012 at 15.40-18.00)

Time	Room 1	Room 2
15.40	***(01)*** Characterization of Vietnam Biomass Fuel Properties and Investigation into their Thermal Behaviour *V.D. S. Tho (HUST)*	***(02)*** A Proposal of a Data Structure as the Specific Patient Database of Contraindication Based on Package Inserts *R. Okuya (SIT)*
16.00	***(01)*** The Effects of Diesel Fuel Exposure to High Pressure Common Rail System on its Deposit Forming Tendency *M.A. Abdullah (UTM)*	***(02)*** Proposal of Appearance Similarity Index for Medicinal Ampoule Labels Based on Wavelet Analysis *M. Kimura (SIT)*
16.20	***(01)*** Microwave Induced Processing of Waste Edible Oil to Biodiesel *F.N. Ani (UTM)*	***(02)*** Encoding PN-DFG in NuSMV for Verifying Asynchronous Circuits *T.H. Bui (HCMUT)*
16.40	***(01)*** Preparation Of Fatty Acid Methyl Ester From Spent Bleaching Clay *P. Phakahan (KMUTT)*	***(02)*** Mobile SCTP Handover in Long Term Evolution-Advanced for Service Continuity *M.N.F. Ghazali (UTM)*
17.00	***(01)*** Sustainability Analysis of Renewable Energy Technologies and Policies Potential Impact on Rural Area's Energy Mix and... *AA.Setiawan (UGM)*	***(07)*** Effect of Isooctane and Temperature on the Separation of Lipids on Phenogel Column *S. Chumsantea (KMUTT)*
17.20	***(01)*** Measurement of Streaming Potential Coupling Coefficient on Carbonate Rocks for Downhole Monitoring in Smart Wells *M.Z. Jaafar (UTM)*	***(07)*** Extraction of Free Phenolic Acids from Defatted Rice Bran Using Different Solvents *A. Cheewaphan (KMUTT)*
17.40	***(01)*** Comparison in Power Consumption and Coefficient of Performance of Air-Conditioners in Vietnam *H.L. Pham (HUST)*	***(07)*** Qualitative Determination of Nonylphenol Polyethoxylate and their Degradation Products from Fenton and Photo-Fenton .... *N. Thongkon (KMUTT)*

Presentation Session II (cont.)

Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
(03) Urban Studio Project: Urban Regeneration Approach of Heritage Buffer ….. *L.Y. Lai (UTM)*	***(10)*** A Study on the Design of an Automated Fabric Defect Marking System *P.N. Hai (HUST)*	***(06)*** Plasma Diagnosis in Etching and Ashing of Diamond Carbon Coating *E.E. Yunata (SIT)*
(03) Review on Methodology of Modeling Green Space Network in Urban Landscape Planning *H.B.A. Aziz (UTM)*	***(10)*** Real Power Dispatch with Transmission Constraint by Augmented Lagrange ….. *K.P. Nguyen (HCMUT)*	***(06)*** Plasma Micro-Patterning onto Diamond Like Carbon Coating *N. T. Redationo (SIT)*
(03) The Evaluation of Social Fairness and Residents' Desirability Perception … *G. Mortezaei (UTM)*	***(10)*** Self-Organizing Hierarchical Particle Swarm Optimization for Two-Area ….. *K.P. Nguyen(HCMUT+SIT)*	***(06)*** Nano-Laminated Diamond-like Carbon Coating to Control Hydrogen Penetration *H. Morita (SIT)*
(03) Does the User Participate in Nigerian Public Mass Housing Delivery? *A.A. Isa (UTM)*	***(10)*** Discussion on Unbalance Condition of Protective Relay Malfunction *T. Mineo (SIT)*	***(06)*** Extraction of Catechin From Areca Catechu Linn using Accelerated Solvent … *M. Hasan (UTM)*
(12) Among Neighbors: Developing an Academic Art and Design Community ….. *K. Hiroki (KMUTT)*	***(10)*** Short-Term Load Forecasting via Artificial Neural Network *M.N. Bin (SIT)*	***(06)*** Transmittance Characteristic of Various Mineral and Synthetic Oils … *R. Ogura (SIT)*
(12) Description Of HFO-1234ze with Backone Equation of State *N.A. Lai (HUST)*	***(10)*** Load Characteristics Influence on Current Controller of Dispersed Generation … *T.N. Duc (SIT)*	***(06)*** Evaluation of the Proportion of Iron Cations and their Influence … *L.T.L. Anh (HUST)*
	(10) Electrochemical Properties of New Carbon Materials for Supercapacitor …. *S. Matsumoto (SIT)*	***(06)*** Photochemistry Properties of Tio2 Nanoparticles Synthesized by … *L.T.L. Anh (HUST)*

Presentation Session III (March 7, 2012 at 9.00-10.20)

Time	Room 1 (402)	Room 2 (403)
9.00	***(01)*** A Study on Droop Control and Virtual Resistor in Grid-Connected Inverter for Microgrid Power System *A. Rizqiawan (SIT)*	***(03)*** The Potential Input of Architects in Self-Built Housing Provision: A Case Study in Urban Dhaka *T.H. Khan (UTM*
9.20	***(01)*** Linking Power System Engineering and Daily Life *G. Fujita (SIT)*	***(03)*** Identifying"Third Places" in Relation to Businesses Premises in Meldrum Walk *M. Torabi (UTM)*
9.40	***(01)*** Design and Development of A 10 kW Permanent Magnet Synchronous Generator Prototype for a Grid Connected Low Wind Speed Wind Turbine *A. Pliensakul (KMUTT)*	***(03)*** Children's Preferences for School Ground Elements: A Pilot Study *N.F. Aziz (UTM)*
10.00	***(01)*** Microstructural Changes in Ni-Based Single Crystal Superalloy Coatings -Effects of Surface Treatment and Surface Crystal Orientation- *K. Kasai (SIT)*	***(03)*** What is an Experiment? A Note on Methodology and Practice-Based Research *N. Power (KMUTT)*

Presentation Session III (cont.)

Room 3 (404)	Room 4 (410)	Room 5 (411)
(03) Affordances of Housing Interior Walls Finishes *Z.Z. Bako (UTM)*	***(06)*** Non-Aqueous Electroless Nickel Plating Catalyzed By $AlCl_3$ in Ambient Condition *N.A. Binti (SIT)*	***(09)*** Hybrid Steepest Descent Method for Solving Hierarchical Fixed Point Approach to Variational Inequalities Constrained Optimization Problem *N. Wairojjana (KMUTT)*
(03) The Need for Behaviourial Change Towards Sustainable Solid Waste Management in Malaysia *A.M. Akil (UTM)*	***(06)*** Ab Initio Study Of H Dissociation Properties in MgH2 Catalyzed with 3D Transition Metals *T. Kobayashi (SIT)*	***(09)*** Convergence of Iterative Algorithms for Solving Mixed Variational Inequalities and Complementarity Problems *P. Phuangphoo(KMUTT)*
(03) The Potential of Applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles in Malaysian Residential Neighbourhood *P.M.B. Zulkarnain(UTM)*	***(05)*** Development of a Grip Aid Device *D. Yamabe (SIT)*	***(09)*** An Application of Perturbation Theory to The Harmonic Oscillator *S. Kittishayarak (KMUTT)*
(03) School-Group Learning at Environmental Site: Evaluation of The Environmental Education Program at Tanjung Pial National Park, Malaysia *S.B. Labintah (SIT)*	***(05)*** Obstacle Avoidance for Multi-Link Inverted Pendulum Robot Using Virtual Impedance *D. Phaoharuhansa (SIT)*	***(09)*** Strong Convergence of a New Iterative Method for Pseudo-Contraction and Monotone Mappings with Applications to Minimization Problem *T. Chamnarnpan(KMUTT)*

Presentation Session IV (March 7, 2012 at 10.40-12.00)

Time	Room 1 (402)	Room 2 (403)
10.40	***(01)*** A Study of Vertical Shading Devices for Daylighting Through Window in The Tropics *M.F. Budiman (KMUTT)*	***(03)*** Questions of Introductory Drawing in Programs in Architecture and Design *M. Croft (KMUTT)*
11.00	***(01)*** Daylighting with Horizontal Shading Devices on South Façade in Tropical Area *D. Lidya (KMUTT)*	***(03)*** The Cognitive Difference of Usability on Gender: A Case Study of Respiratory Protective Device *P. Kitirojpan (KMUTT)*
11.20	***(01)*** Effects of Reference Environment Temperature on Exergetic Performance of Two Coal-Fired Power Plants: Selected Case Studies in Thailand and Indonesia *M.P. Helios (KMUTT)*	***(03)*** Self Selection and Personalization in Architectural Design Process (ADP) *M. Torabi (UTM)*
11.40	***(02)*** User-Oriented Curriculum Creation Method Using Learning Support Information *E. Morita (SIT)*	***(04)*** Afferent Feedback Related to the Leg Stepping Surpress the Exitability of The Monosynaptic Reflex Pathway of Wrist Flexor *T. Kitamura (SIT)*

Presentation Session IV (cont.)

Room 3 (404)	Room 4 (410)	Room 5 (411)
(03) Stormwater Runoff Mitigation on Extensive Green Roof: A Review on Trends and Factors *R. Krishnan (UTM)*	***(05)*** Development of aGrasping Method Sing Tactile Semsors *T. Matsui (SIT)*	***(09)*** New Algorithm for Equilibrium Problems, Set of Fixed Point Problem and Zero Points of Maximal Monotone Operators in Banach Spaces *N. Onjai-uea (KMUTT)*
(03) Townhouses in Bangkok: Assessment and Recommendations for Natural Ventilation *D. Mrugala (KMUTT)*	***(05)*** Development of Simulation Model for Charging Stratified TES Tank Using Temperature Distribution Analysis *J. Waluyo (UGM)*	***(09)*** An Iterative Algorithm for Solving Common Solution of Generalized Mixed Equilibrium Problems, Variational Inclusion Problem and Fixed Point Problems *T Jitpeera & P.Kumam (KMUTT)*
(03) Investigations and Recommendations for Townhouses in Bangkok Through Simulations of Thermal Performance *D. Mrugala (KMUTT)*	***(05)*** Emotion Recognition from ECG Based on Mirror Neuron System *K. Rattanyu (SIT)*	***(09)*** Mathematical Analysis of Malaria Transmission Model with Nonlinear Incidences *P. Roop-o (KMUTT)*
(03) Review the Performance of Anidolic Daylight System *M. Roshan (UTM)*	***(05)*** Object Management Service In intelligent Space *W. Skulkittiyut (SIT)*	***(09)*** Convergence Theorem for a Common Solution of System of Equilibrium Problems, System of Variational Inclusion Problems and Fixed Point Problems *U. Witthayarat(KMUTT)*

Presentation Session V (March 7, 2012 at 13.00-15.20)

Time	Room 1 (402)	Room 2 (403)
13.00	***(02)*** Questionnaire Survey on Kawaii Ribbons with Different Colors and Patterns *M. Ohkura (SIT)*	***(04)*** Wheelchair Driving Analysis System Incorporating Assessment of Sitting Posture ... *A. Hanafusa (SIT)*
13.20	***(02)*** Semantic Role Labeling for Plagiarism Detection *A.H. Osman (UTM)*	***(04)*** Changes of The Gait Characteristics due to Robotic Gait Training in Patients With incomplete Spinal Cord Injury *T. Takahashi (SIT)*
13.40	***(02)*** Yet Another Variable Dependency Analysis for Abstraction Guided Model Checking *T.H. Bui (HCMUT)*	***(04)*** Energetics in Arterioles During Nitric Oxide Dependent and Independent Vasodilation *M. Shibata (SIT)*
14.00	***(02)*** A New Scan Conversion of Bézier Curve *C. Thanutong (KMUTT)*	***(04)*** Postural Strategy During Passive Postural Movement the Influence of Translation Frequency on Postural Strategy *H. Tabei (SIT)*
14.20	***(11)*** Estimation of Coupling Parameters for Auto-Motorized Fabrication of Directional Fiber Coupler *D. Irawan (UTM)*	***(04)*** Development of Suction Forceps for Endoscopic Submucosal Dissection *E. Shikishi (SIT)*
14.40	***(11)*** High Resolution Algorithm for Frequency Difference of Arrival Estimation *V.V. Yem (HUST)*	***(04)*** Research on Mechanism Analysis for Pressure Ulcers *Y. Mizutani (SIT)*
15.00	***(11)*** Joint Signal Parameters Estimation for Advanced Wireless Positioning Systems *V.V. Yem (HUST)*	***(04)*** Development of a Skin Viscoelasticity Measurement System *T. Yamashita (SIT)*

Presentation Session V (cont.)

Room 3 (404)	Room 4 (410)	Room 5 (411)
(03) Green Roofs as Urban Antidote: A Review on Aesthetic, Environmental, ... *S. Rahman (UTM)*	***(05)*** Model Based Design of Robot Systems Using SYSML *M.A. Bin (SIT)*	***(09)*** Fixed Point Theorems for Generalized Asymptotic Pointwise ... *C. Mongkolkeha(KMUTT)*
(03) Aesthetic Fitness Design in Urban Historic Context *H. Sotoudeh (UTM)*	***(05)*** Filtering Robot Technoloty Ontology Based on Conceptnet Reliability Score *T. Ngo (SIT)*	***(09)*** Generalized Nonlinear Mixed Composite-Type Equilibria *P. Sunthrayuth (KMUTT)*
(03) Johor River Corridor Cultural Landscape: Landscape Assessment and Conservation *H. Ahmad (UTM)*	***(05)*** 2011 Advance Report of Ubiquitous Robot Technology System Research Center ..... *M. Mizukukawa (SIT)*	***(09)*** Numerical Modeling of The Transmission Dynamics of Bird-Flu Epidemic Model *S. Chinviriyasit (KMUTT)*
(03) Historical Research on Shron Hikawa Nyotai Shron *H. Miwa (SIT)*	***(05)*** Two-Hand Gestures Tracking and Recognition for Human-Robot Interaction System *L. Dung (HUST)*	***(09)*** Common Fixed Point Theorems for Generalized Jh-Operators in Cone Metric Spaces *P. Chaipunya (KMUTT)*
(03) A Study on The Tokuma Katayama Archives-Design Charateristics ..... *H. Miwa (SIT)*	***(08)*** Experimental Methods to Determine Noise in Compartment and Acceleration ... *M.. Rejab (UTM)*	***(09)*** Fixed Points and Common Fixed Points for Cyclical Type Contractions ..... *P. Chaipunya (KMUTT)*
(03) The Impact of Visual Aesthetic Assessment (VAA) in Malaysia Future Planning *M. Rosley (UTM)*	***(08)*** Problems in The Introducing a Premium Channel and Environmental Response ..... *Y. Ohta (SIT)*	***(09)*** Analysis of The 1918 Flu Pandemic Model *A. Sirijampa (KMUTT)*

PLASMAMICRO-PATTERNING ONTO DIAMOND LIKE CARBON COATING

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ABSTRACT

Plasma etching using pure oxygen gas without hazardous chemical etchants, is proposed to make fine micro-patterning onto the DLC coating with masking chromium. Through experimental studies, the optimum processing condition is determined; the carrier gas pressure of 40 Pa, the RF-voltage of 250 V and the DC bias of -450 V. Owing to the undercoat by chromium and amorphous SiC, this etching process is terminated after perfect dipping the DLC coating under the non-masked regions. No damages and no deterioration was observed on the substrate and the chromium masking. In addition, the etching rate becomes around 5 μm/H, ten times faster than the conventional beam enhanced plasma ashing process.

PLASMA MICRO-PATTERNING ONTO DIAMOND LIKE CARBON COATING

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ABSTRACT

Plasma etching using pure oxygen gas without hazardous chemical etchants, is proposed to make fine micro-patterning onto the DLC coating with masking chromium. Through experimental studies, the optimum processing condition is determined; the carrier gas pressure of 40 Pa, the RF-voltage of 250 V and the DC bias of -450 V. Owing to the undercoat by chromium and amorphous SiC, this etching process is terminated after perfect dipping the DLC coating under the non-masked regions. No damages and no deterioration was observed on the substrate and the chromium masking. In addition, the etching rate becomes around 5 μm/H, ten times faster than the conventional beam enhanced plasma ashing process.

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro-patterning onto structural parts has been high-lighted in the tribological aspect. Since those patterned micro-pockets store lubricating oils on the contact surface of materials, friction and wear is significantly reduces in practice. As stimulated by this early success, many R & D works take place to make use of micro-patterning on various fields: electronic devices, sensors, optics and mold/die (Bohm, 2001). Since mold-stamping process takes place above the glass transition temperature, both the substrate material and coating must have sufficient strength and toughness even at high temperature in inert gas atmosphere. Diamond-like carbon (DLC) coatings and glassy carbon materials are suitable for substrate of this micro patterning. Authors (Aizawa-2010) have been concerning with micro-patterning onto diamond like carbon (DLC) coating.

This DLC is usually coated onto tools and dies by physical vapor deposition (PVD) and chemical vapor deposition (CVD) methods. These methods create a unique layer of carbon whose characteristics are just like diamond (Kadilaya,2006); e.g. high hardness (50-80 GPa), high thermal conductivity, nanoscale of atomic structure (<5nm), low friction coefficient (<0.01 to 0.7), high abrasion resistance, chemical stability, and transparency to infrared. Metallic interlayer like chromium together with its graded nano-structure layers is also utilized to improve the toughness against delimitation (Bouzakis-2010, Lukaszkowicz, 2011).

In the present paper, DLC coating with interlayer is employed as a mold-die to be micro-patterned. First, the designed micro-pattern is chemically etched onto the chromium-based top-coat in wet. This sample is subjected to oxygen plasma etching. Precise observation and measurement on the patterned micro-grooves provides us the effect of micro-groove size on the etching behavior of DLC coating. With decreasing the pitch of micro-grooves, isotropic etching turns to be anisotropic. This change in etching behavior is caused by chemical reaction

2. EXPERIMENT

Our developing high dense RF-DC plasma etching system is first introduced. Different from the conventional plasma etching, no chemical agents are utilized in this process. Two types of DLC-coated samples are employed as a test-piece. DLC-coated with chromium interlayer is used to measure the removal rate of coatings. DLC-coated SKD-11 sample with initial micro-pattern is also used to describe the oxygen plasma etching behavior.

2.1 Plasma Etching System

Plasma etching system used in this experiment is shown in Fig. 1. In this etching process, only pure oxygen gas is used to remove the DLC layer together with metallic interlayer. This system has three main processing parameters: i.e. RF-voltage, DC-bias and oxygen gas pressure. In parallel with these parameters, experimental set-up has influence on the etching process; e.g. spatial position of dipole electrode to generate RF-plasmas, distance between this electrode and cathode, and, the distance among the electrode, the cathode and the magnetic lens. Typical experimental set-up is depicted in Fig. 2.

In the following plasma etching experiments, the above parameters are varied to find the optimal feasible range in those parameters for efficient removal of DLC coating. Under optimum selection of parameters, micro-patterning is performed to describe the etching behavior. Spectroscopic analysis of generated plasmas is also made for in-situ plasma diagnosis.

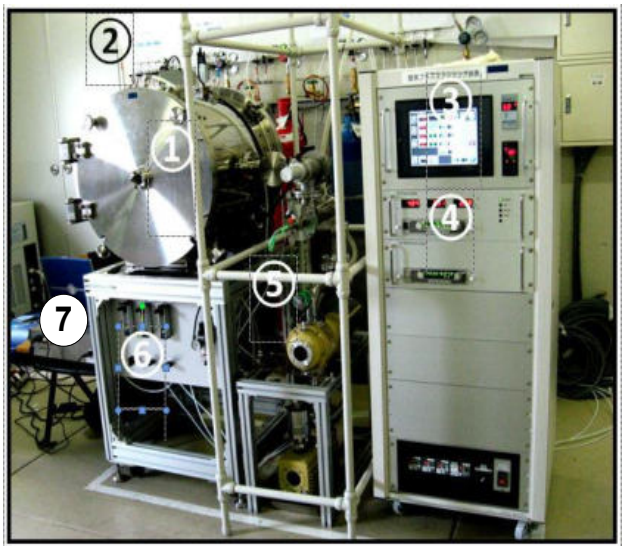


Figure 1. High dense plasma etching system. 1: Chamber, 2: RF-plasma generator, 3: Control-panel, 4: Electric sources, 5: Evacuation system, 6: Gas supply, 7: Plasma Diagnosis (PMA-11)

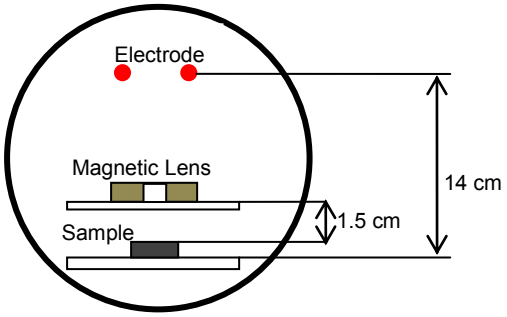


Figure 2. A typical experimental set-up for plasma etching.

2.2 Sample

Two types of samples were prepared to measure the removal rate of DLC coating and to describe the plasma etching behavior.

2.2.1 DLC coated SKD-11 sample

This sample was employed in the preliminary experiments to search for the optimum parameters in plasma etching. SKD-11 is used as a substrate for DLC coating by using PVD RF sputtering. The thickness of DLC film is 1.1 μm.

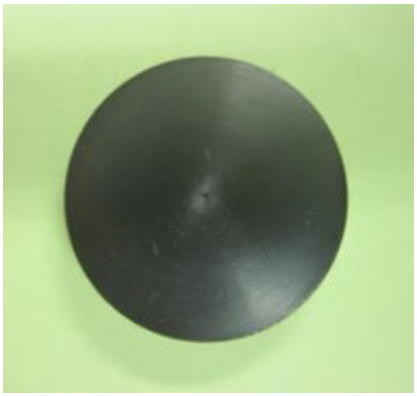


Figure 3. DLC-coated SKD-11 sample.

2.2.2 DLC Chromium Masking

SKD-11 was also used as a substrate for multi-layered coating. Besides the main layer of DLC film, under-coat is made by a pair of amorphous SIC (a-SiC) and chromium to terminate the etching process without loss of anti-delimitation toughness, and, the top-coat, by a pair of chromium layer for chemical etching to make an initial micro-pattern and a-SiC for terminate this chemical etching.

Un-balanced magnetron sputtering was used to form these under-coat, DLC main-film and top-coat, as depicted in Fig. 4.

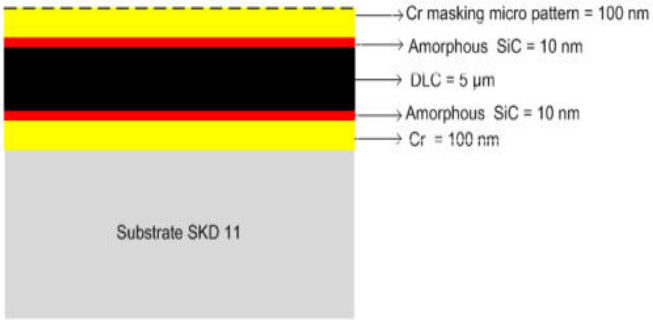


Figure 4. Configuration of multi-layered coating.

Figure 5 shows a chemically etched chromium mask to be utilized as the initial micro-pattern. Using this masking technology, various micro-patterns are formed on this multi-layered coating.

The etching advances first by removal of a-SiC top-coat and then removes the main DLC film. At the presence of under-coat, this etching process is significantly retarded so that the substrate material is free from plasma etching. Micro-groove patterns are varied to have different groove-width from 2 μm to 100 μm with the controlled pitch between micro-grooves.

Figure 5. Chromium-masked DLC-coated SKD 11 before etching

3. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Etching rate plasma ashing DLC coated SKD 11

The DLC-coated SKD-11 sample, was masked in the left half by polyimide taping. Since only unmasked right-half of sample is ashed by this plasma processing, a step, corresponding to the DLC film thickness (Δx), is formed after etching during the duration time (t). Then, the etching rate is defined by

$$Etching\ rate = \frac{\Delta x}{t}\ nm/s \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots (1)$$

Figure 6 shows the sample after plasma ashing for to measure the etching rate by Eq. (1).

Figure 6 DLC-coated SKD 11 sample after plasma ashing

This etching rate is significantly dependent on the plasma processing parameters and set-up configuration. In the case of 40Pa for pressure, -450 V for DC bias, 250 V for RF, and 15 mm for distance between magnetic lens and sample, DLC coating with the thickness of 1.1 μm, was ashed away for 290 seconds; the etching rate is 3.8 nm/s or 13.7 ㎛/H. This high rate only for removal of DLC films is characteristic to the present high dense oxygen plasma etching.

3.2 Plasma Diagnosis

In plasma diagnostics, this plasma etching process is characterized by in-situ measurement of time variation of CO peak intensity at the wave-length of 256 nm since removal of DLC coating is driven by chemical reaction between carbon in DLC and activated oxygen atoms in plasmas, With advancement of etching, this peak intensity gradually decreased and became nearly zero. This indicates that the carbon removal process is completed (Aizawa, 2011).

3.3 Optimization of processing parameters

The carrier gas pressure is one of the factors affecting the plasma etching process. Low pressure makes the ionization process faster so that the electron density increases. This leads to much bombardment of activated species onto the coating. Then, lowing pressure is thought to accelerate the etching process (May, 2006). In order to investigate this pressure effect on etching process, the pressure was varied by 40, 55 and 75 Pa with –voltage kept constant by -450 V and 250 V, respectively. The distance between magnetic lens and sample was also fixed by 15 mm. The thickness of DLC of 1.1 μm. Figure 7 depicts the variation of etching rate with pressure.

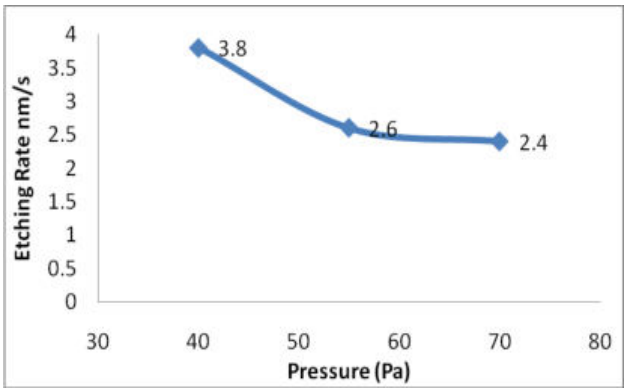
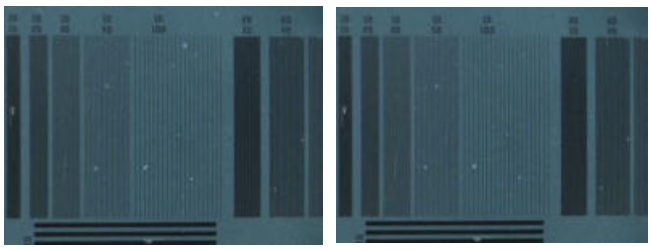


Figure 7. Relationship of pressure and etching rate.

As theoretically predicted, the etching rate is enhanced with lowering pressure. Since the lowest pressure is limited down to be 10 to 20 Pa in the present etching system, the pressure is selected to be 40 Pa in the following experiments.

3.4 Micro-patterning

Multi-layered SKD-11 specimen which was shown in Fig. 5 was employed for micro-patterning. Figure 8 compares the surfaces before and after plasma etching for 3450 s. No change was distinguished between two. This implies that no damage or no deterioration in the original chromium mask tool place during plasma etching.



(a) **(b)**

Figure 8. Chromium-masked DLC-coated SKD 11 before etching (a) and after etching (b).

The laser reflection profilometer (Mitaka-Kohki NH 3SP) was used to precisely measure the surface profile of etched specimen. As shown in Figure 9, un-masked regions were selectively etched away from the original surface of specimens. On the other hand, the DLC film under the chromium mask was left as columns. Although noisy signals were included in the bottom profiles, the average depth of etched groves were nearly the same; the depth of grooves is 5 μm. This means that the whole thickness of DLC film was successfully etched away in the chromium masked regions. In addition, side-surfaces of each groove is found to be smooth and straight against the bottom. This geometric sharpness is preferable to mold-die to imprint this micro-pattern onto optical polymers and oxide glasses (Aizawa, 2011c).

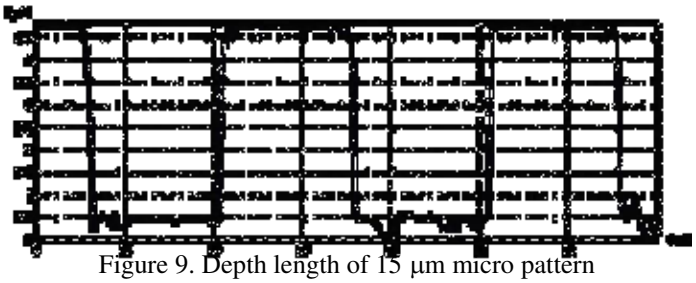


Figure 9. Depth length of 15 μm micro pattern

CONCLUSION

Dry etching process using plasma etching at 40 Pa pressure, DC bias -450V, RF 250 V and between magnetic lens and sample 15 mm is very effective for removing DLC and DLC make Cr micro patterning.

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