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(54) **THREE-DIMENSIONAL SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICES**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A three-dimensional semiconductor device includes an electrode structure on a substrate that includes a first region and a second region, the electrode structure including a ground selection electrode, cell electrodes, and a string selection electrode which are sequentially stacked on the substrate wherein the ground selection electrode, the cell electrodes, and the string selection electrode respectively include a ground selection pad, cell pads, and a string selection pad which define a stepped structure in the second region of the substrate, a plurality of dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads and a portion of the electrode structure under each of the cell pads, and a cell contact plug electrically connected to each of the cell pads, wherein each of the dummy pillars penetrates a boundary between adjacent cell pads, and wherein the adjacent cell pads share the dummy pillars.

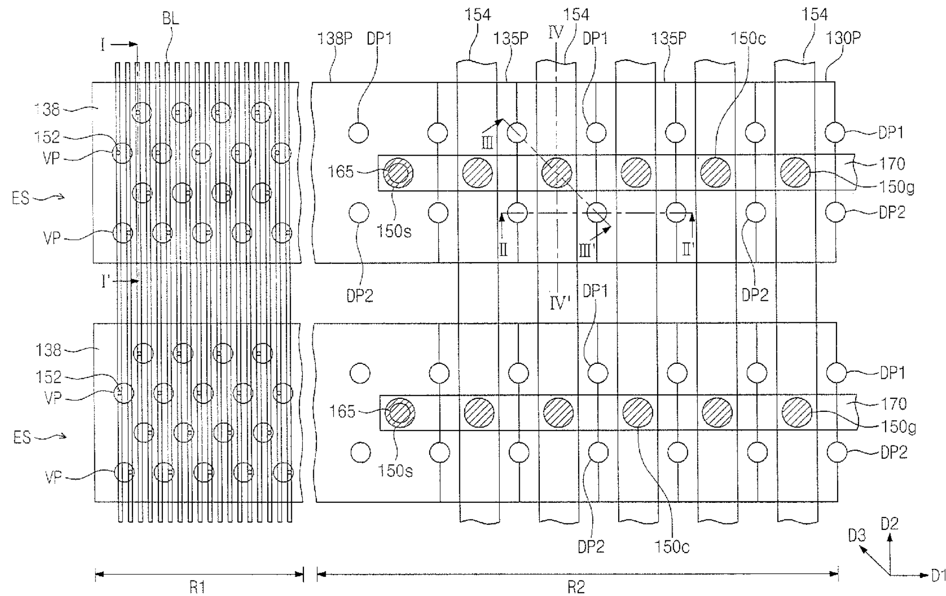
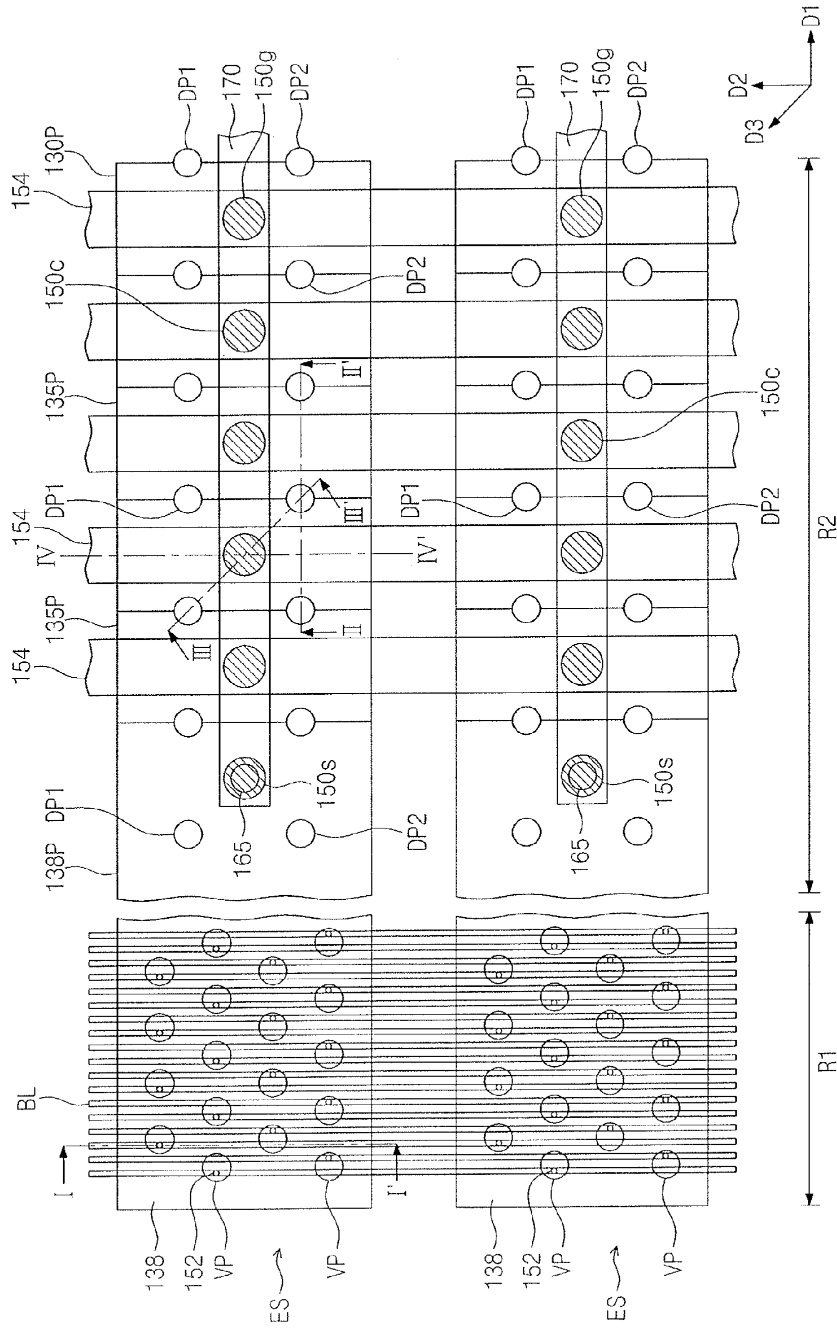


FIG. 1



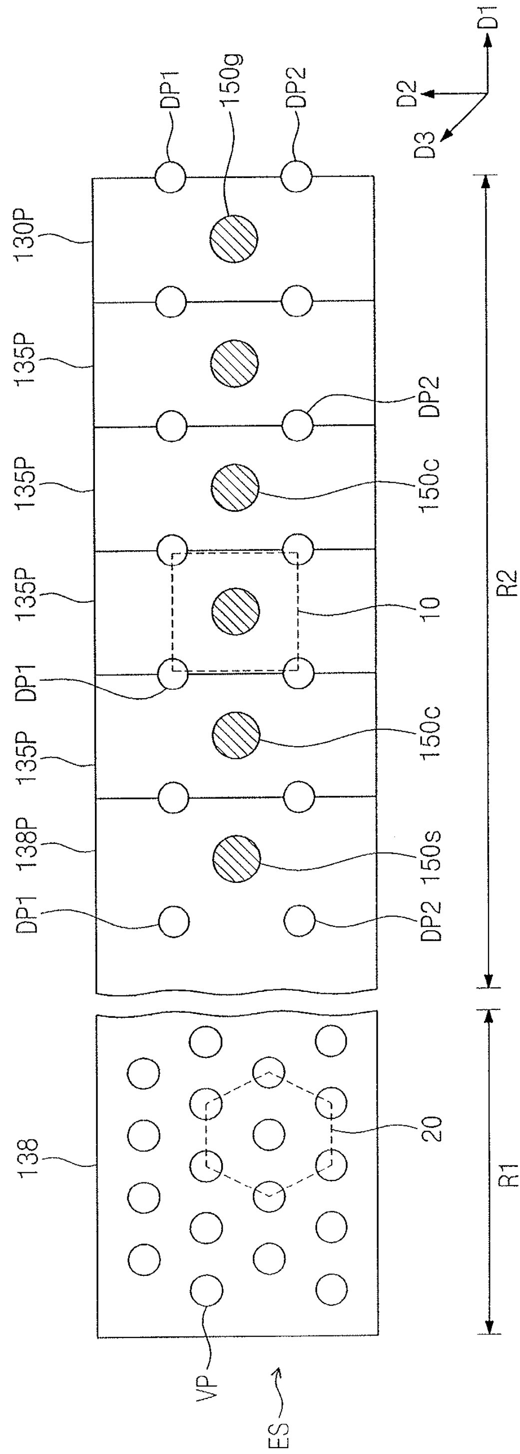


FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4A

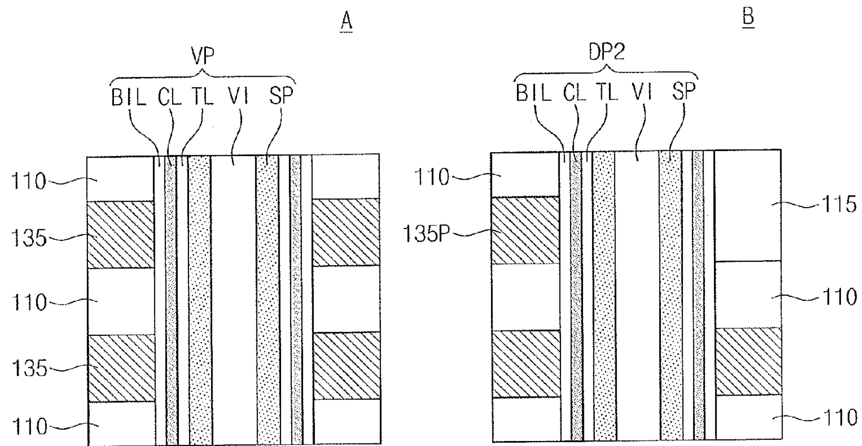


FIG. 4B

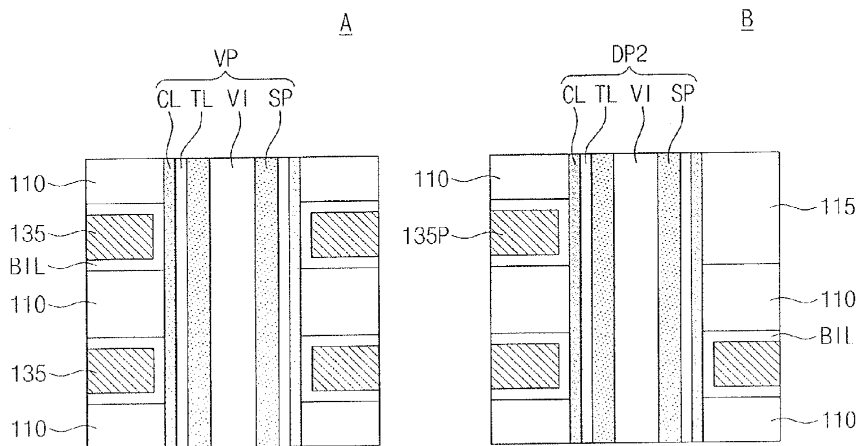


FIG. 4C

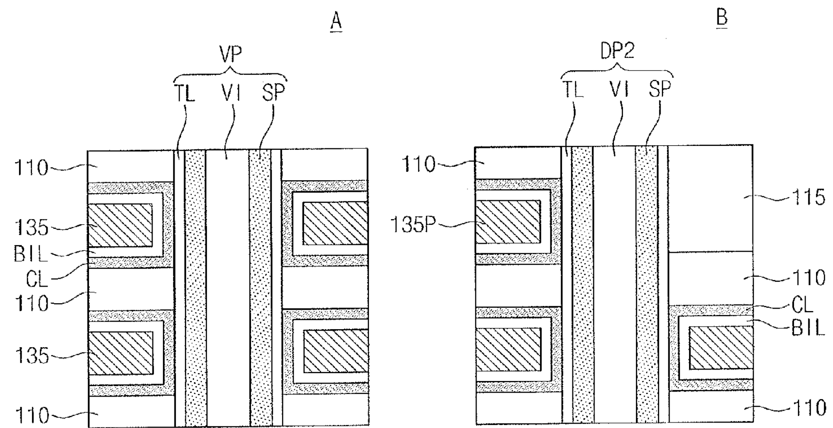


FIG. 4D

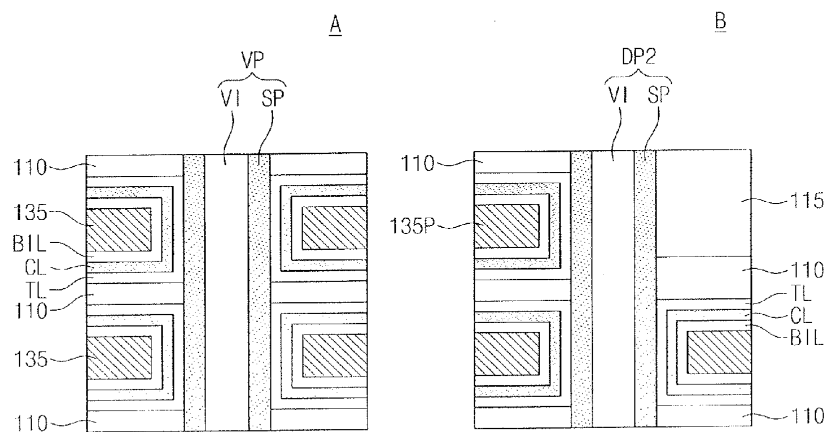


FIG. 5

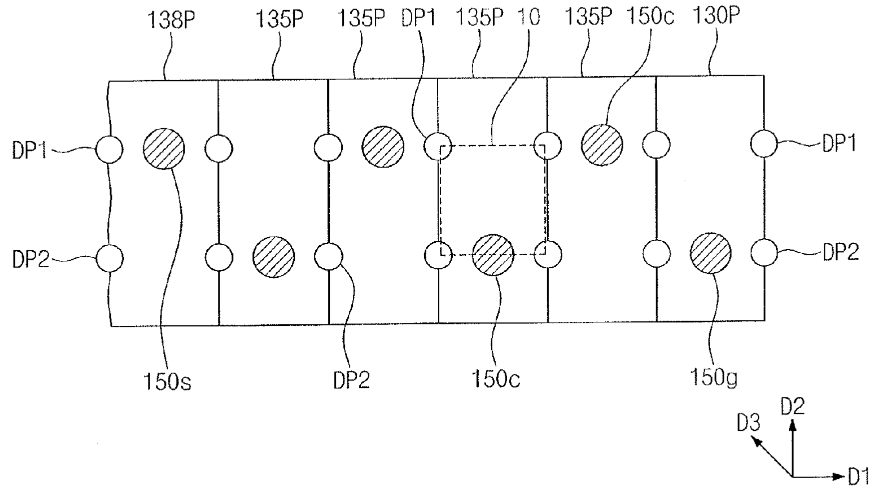


FIG. 6

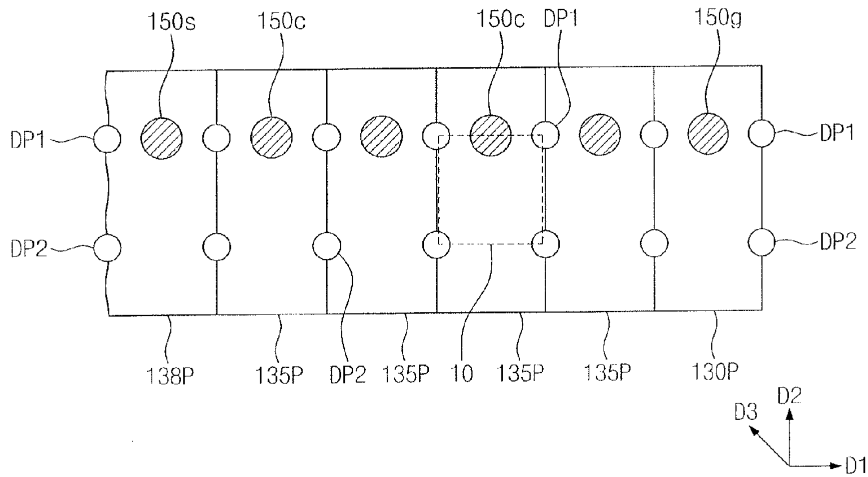
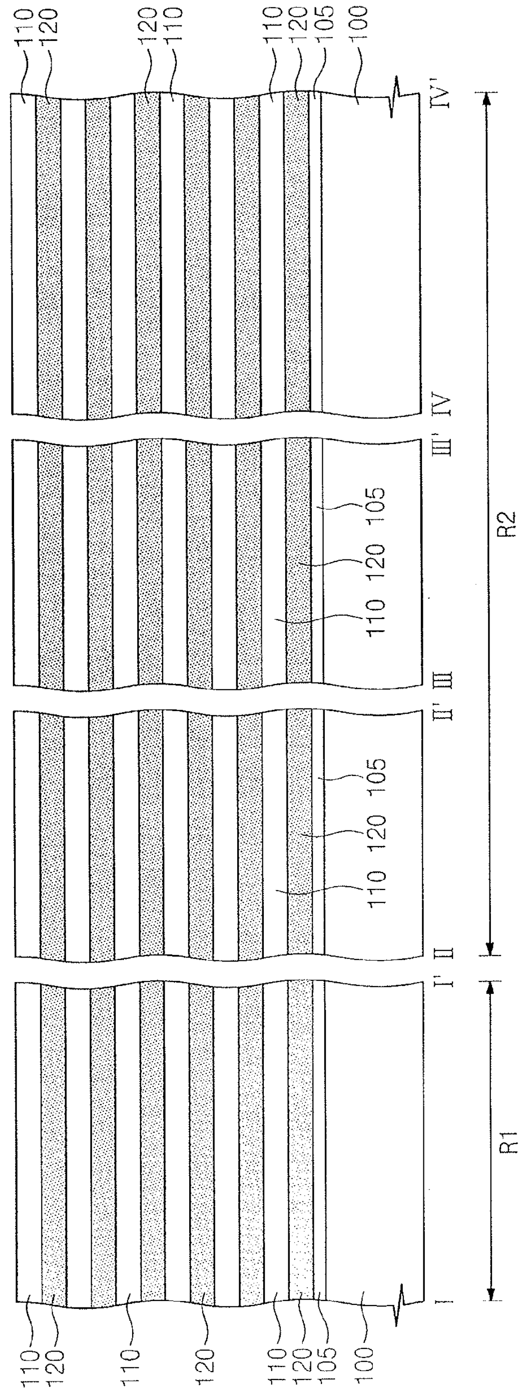


FIG. 7



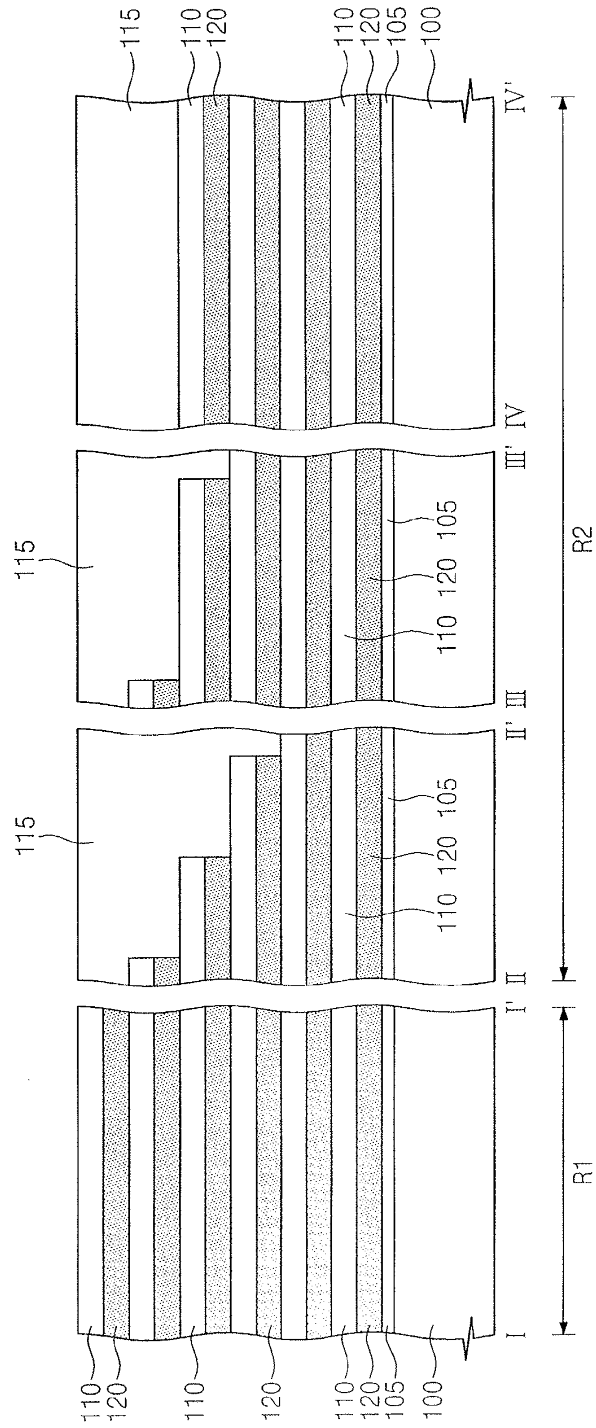


FIG. 8
115
110
120
105
100
R1
R2
I
I'
II
II'
III
III'
IV
IV'

FIG. 9

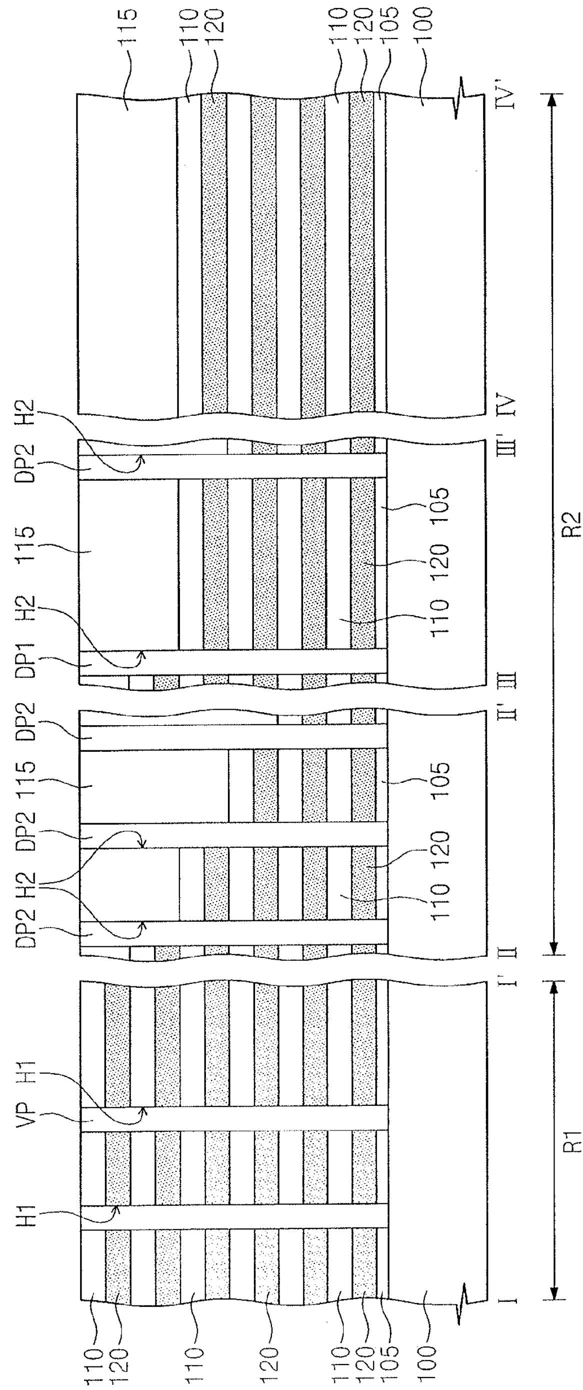


FIG. 10

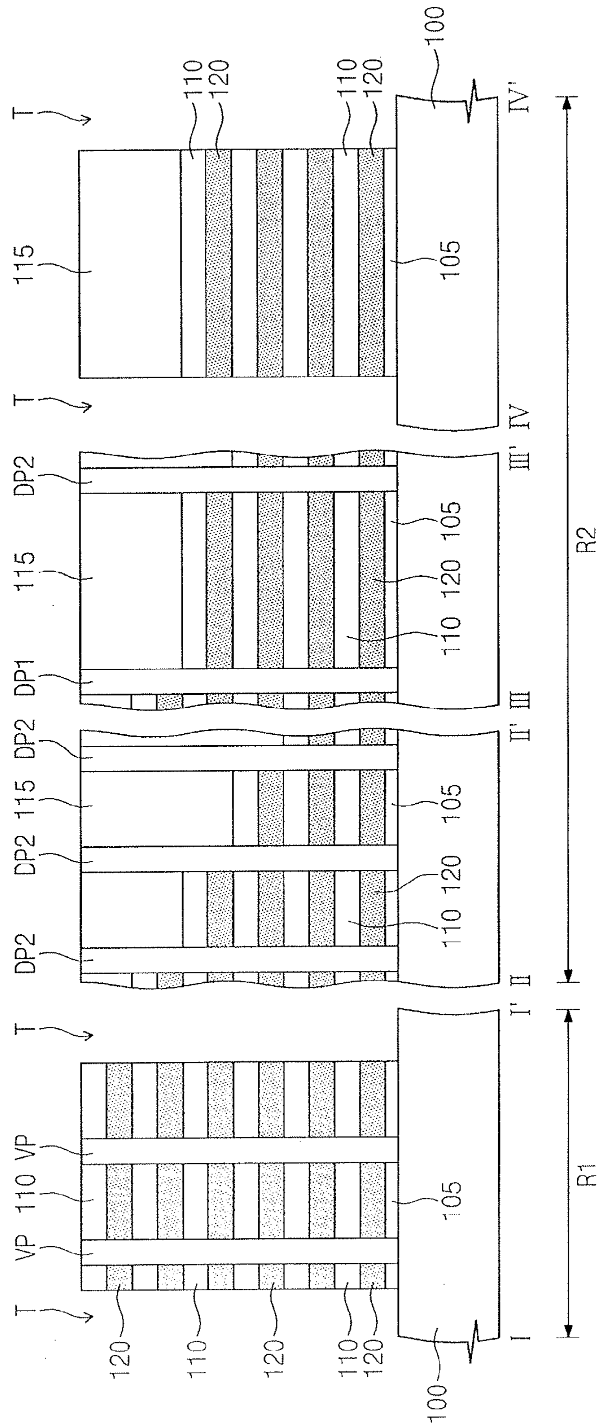


FIG. 11

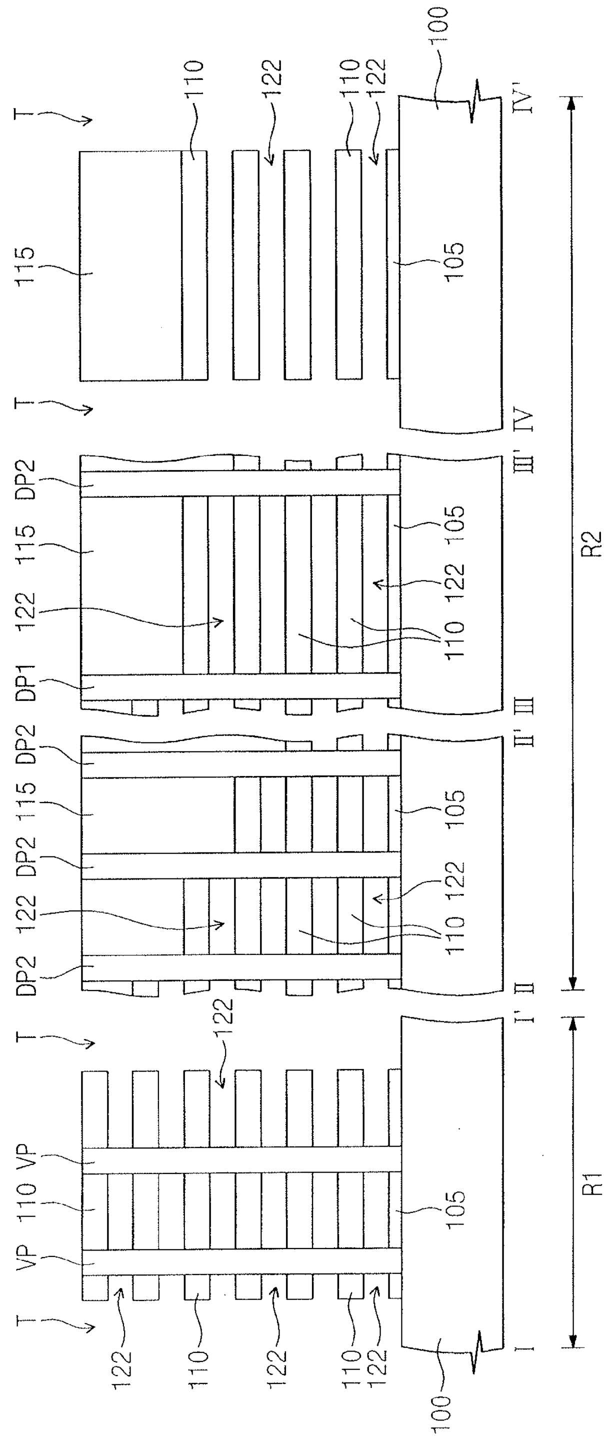


FIG. 12

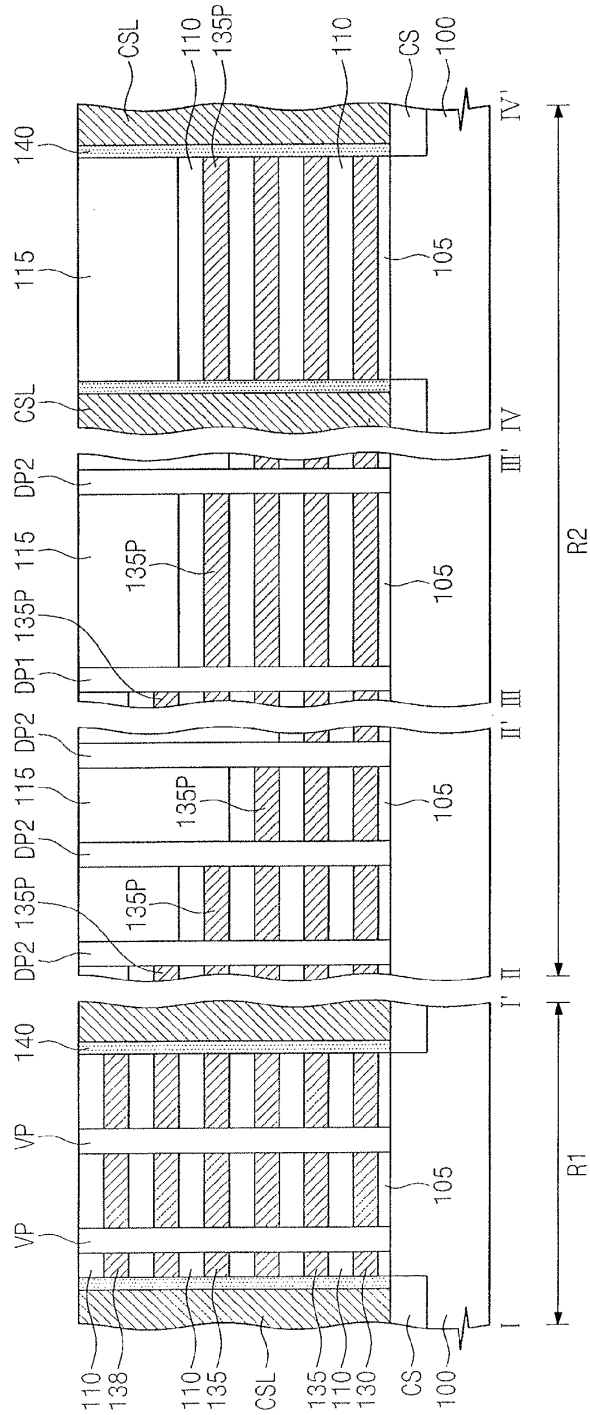
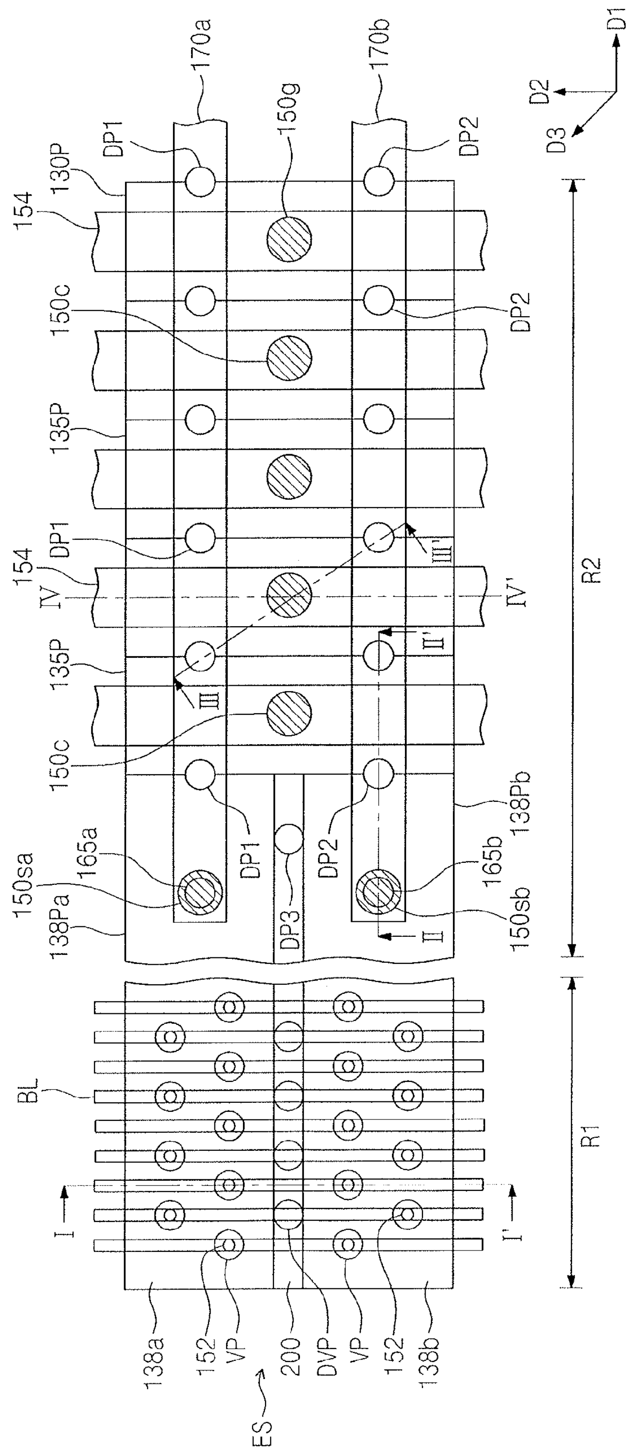


FIG. 13

FIG. 14



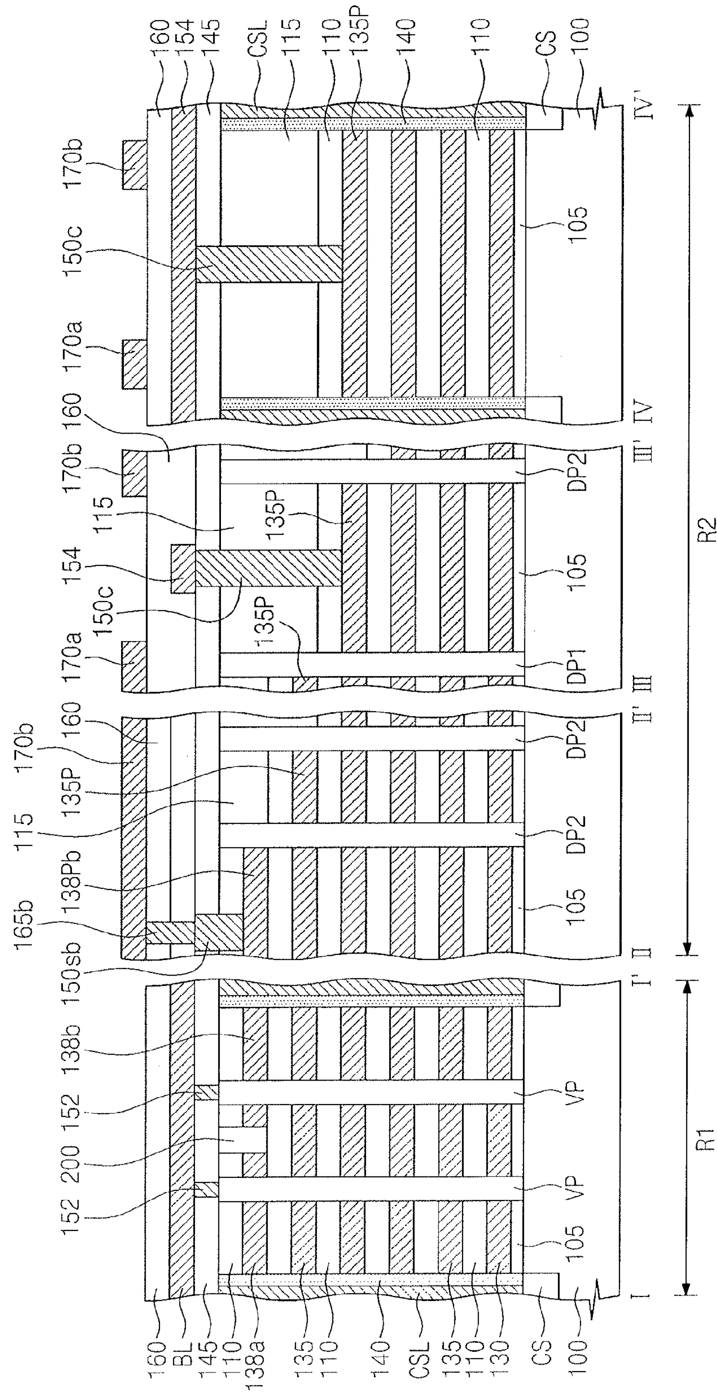


FIG. 15

FIG. 16

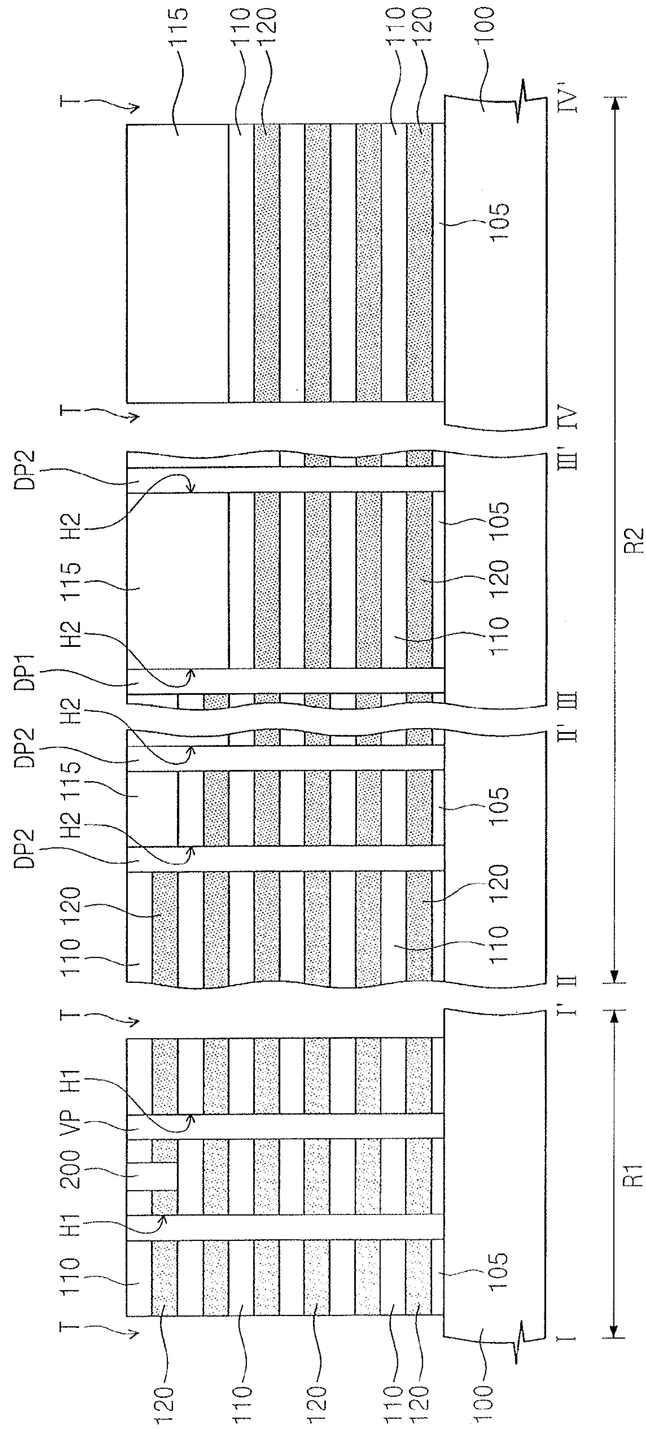


FIG. 17
T
110
H1
200
VP
H1
T
120
110
120
110
120
100
105
R1
I
I'
110 120
DP2
H2
115
DP2
H2
110
120
105
II
II'
DP1
H2
115
H2
DP2
110
120
105
III
III'
R2
T
115
110
120
110
120
100
105
IV
IV'

FIG. 18

FIG. 19

THREE-DIMENSIONAL SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This is a continuation application based on pending application Ser. No. 15/054,428, filed Feb. 26, 2016, the entire contents of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0002] Korean Patent Application No. 10-2015-0046040, filed on Apr. 1, 2015, in the Korean Intellectual Property Office, and entitled: "Three-Dimensional Semiconductor Devices," is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

[0003] Embodiments relate to a semiconductor device and, more particularly, to three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor devices.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Semiconductor devices have been highly integrated to provide high performance and low costs demanded by users. The integration density of semiconductor devices may directly affect the costs of the semiconductor devices, so highly integrated semiconductor devices are demanded. The integration density of a conventional two-dimensional (2D) or planar memory device may be mainly determined by an area where a unit memory cell occupies, and thus, the integration density of the conventional 2D memory device may be greatly affected by a technique of forming fine patterns. However, since extremely high-priced apparatuses are needed to form fine patterns, the integration density of 2D memory devices continues to increase but is still limited.

[0005] Semiconductor devices (e.g., three-dimensional (3D) memory devices) including three-dimensionally arranged memory cells have been developed to overcome the above limitations. However, reliability of the 3D memory devices may be deteriorated by structural characteristics thereof.

SUMMARY

[0006] Embodiments may provide three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor devices with excellent reliability.

[0007] Embodiments may also provide 3D semiconductor devices capable of minimizing or preventing deterioration of an electrode structure.

[0008] In one aspect, a three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device may include an electrode structure provided on a substrate including a first region and a second region. The electrode structure may include a ground selection electrode, cell electrodes and a string selection electrode which are sequentially stacked on the substrate. The ground selection electrode, the cell electrodes and the string selection electrode may respectively include a ground selection pad, cell pads and a string selection pad which constitute a stepped structure in the second region. The 3D semiconductor device may also include a plurality of dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads and the electrode structure disposed under each of the cell pads, and a cell contact plug electrically connected to each of the cell pads. Each of the dummy pillars may penetrate a boundary between each of the cell pads and a pad adjacent to each of the cell pads. Each of the cell pads and pads adjacent to both sides of each of the cell pads may share the dummy pillars.

[0009] In an embodiment, the electrode structure may extend in a first direction parallel to a top surface of the substrate. The dummy pillars may include a pair of first dummy pillars arranged in the first direction, and a pair of second dummy pillars arranged in the first direction and spaced apart from the pair of first dummy pillars in a second direction intersecting the first direction.

[0010] In an embodiment, one of the pair of first dummy pillars may penetrate a first boundary between each of the cell pads and an upper pad adjacent to each of the cell pads, and the other of the pair of first dummy pillars may penetrate a second boundary between each of the cell pads and a lower pad adjacent to each of the cell pads. One of the pair of second dummy pillars may penetrate the first boundary, and the other of the pair of second dummy pillars may penetrate the second boundary.

[0011] In an embodiment, the dummy pillars may be disposed to surround the cell contact plug when viewed from a plan view.

[0012] In an embodiment, one of the first dummy pillars may be aligned with one of the second dummy pillars in a third direction intersecting the first and second directions. The one of the first dummy pillars, the cell contact plug, and the one of the second dummy pillars may be aligned with each other in the third direction.

[0013] In an embodiment, the dummy pillars may be disposed at vertexes of an imaginary polygon, respectively, when viewed from a plan view. The cell contact plug may be disposed at a central point of the imaginary polygon when viewed from a plan view.

[0014] In an embodiment, the imaginary polygon may be a quadrangle.

[0015] In an embodiment, the cell contact plug may be disposed between the first dummy pillars so as to be aligned with the first dummy pillars in the first direction.

[0016] In an embodiment, the cell contact plug may be aligned with another cell contact plug, which is electrically connected to another cell pad immediately adjacent to each of the cell pads, in the first direction.

[0017] In an embodiment, the cell contact plugs connected to the cell pads may be arranged in a zigzag form along the first direction.

[0018] In an embodiment, the number of the dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads may be four. Each of the cell pads and the pads adjacent to both sides of each of the cell pads may share the four dummy pillars.

[0019] In an embodiment, the 3D semiconductor device may further include a plurality of vertical patterns penetrating the electrode structure in the first region. The dummy pillars may include the same material as the vertical patterns.

[0020] In an embodiment, top surfaces of the dummy pillars may be disposed at the substantially same level as top surfaces of the vertical patterns, and bottom surfaces of the dummy pillars may be disposed at the substantially same level as bottom surfaces of the vertical patterns.

[0021] In an embodiment, each of the vertical patterns may include a vertical semiconductor pattern extending in a direction perpendicular to a top surface of the substrate, and a tunnel insulating layer, a charge storage layer and a blocking insulating layer which are disposed between the vertical semiconductor pattern and each of the cell electrodes.

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[0022] In another aspect, a three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device may include an electrode structure provided on a substrate including a first region and a second region. The electrode structure may include a ground selection electrode, cell electrodes and a string selection electrode which are sequentially stacked on the substrate. The ground selection electrode, the cell electrodes and the string selection electrode may respectively include a ground selection pad, cell pads and a string selection pad which constitute a stepped structure in the second region. The 3D semiconductor device may also include a plurality of vertical patterns penetrating the electrode structure in the first region, a plurality of dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads and the electrode structure disposed under each of the cell pads, and a cell contact plug electrically connected to each of the cell pads. The vertical patterns may include a first vertical pattern and second vertical patterns surrounding the first vertical pattern. The first vertical pattern may be disposed at a central point of a first imaginary polygon in a plan view, and the second vertical patterns may be respectively disposed at vertexes of the first imaginary polygon in a plan view. The dummy pillars may be respectively disposed at vertexes of a second imaginary polygon in a plan view. The number of the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon may be different from the number of the vertexes of the second imaginary polygon.

[0023] In an embodiment, the cell contact plug may be disposed at a central point of the second imaginary polygon.

[0024] In an embodiment, the first imaginary polygon may be a hexagon, and the second imaginary polygon may be a quadrangle.

[0025] In an embodiment, each of the dummy pillars may penetrate a boundary between each of the cell pads and a pad adjacent to each of the cell pads.

[0026] In an embodiment, the number of the dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads may be four. Each of the cell pads and the pads adjacent to both sides of each of the cell pads may share the four dummy pillars.

[0027] In an embodiment, the dummy pillars may include the same material as the vertical patterns. Top surfaces of the dummy pillars may be disposed at the substantially same level as top surfaces of the vertical patterns, and bottom surfaces of the dummy pillars may be disposed at the substantially same level as bottom surfaces of the vertical patterns.

[0028] In another aspect, a three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device includes an electrode structure on a substrate that includes a first region and a second region, the electrode structure including a plurality of cell electrodes, a plurality of cell pads in the second region of the substrate, the cell pads with corresponding cell electrodes defining a stepped structure, a plurality of dummy pillars through the cell pads and the electrode structure under, the dummy pillars being only at a boundary between adjacent cell pads, and a cell contact plug electrically connected to each of the cell pads.

[0029] In an embodiment, the dummy pillars may be at vertexes of an imaginary polygon surrounding the cell contact plug.

[0030] In an embodiment, the cell contact plug may be in a center of the imaginary polygon, the polygon being a quadrangle.

[0031] In an embodiment, the semiconductor device may further includes a common source region outside the electrode structure, the dummy pillars and the cell contact plug penetrating a central portion of the electrode structure.

[0032] In an embodiment, the first region of the substrate may be a memory region including a plurality of vertical patterns through the electrode structure, the dummy pillars having a same height and including a same material as the vertical patterns.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0033] Features will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art by describing in detail exemplary embodiments with reference to the attached drawings, in which:

[0034] FIG. **1** illustrates a plan view of a three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device according to an embodiment.

[0035] FIG. **2** illustrates a plan view of one electrode structure of FIG. **1** to explain dummy pillars according to an embodiment.

[0036] FIG. **3** illustrates a cross-sectional view taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **1**.

[0037] FIG. **4**A illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0038] FIG. **4**B illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0039] FIG. **4**C illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0040] FIG. **4**D illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0041] FIG. **5** illustrates a plan view of one electrode structure of FIG. **1** to explain dummy pillars according to an embodiment.

[0042] FIG. **6** illustrates a plan view of one electrode structure of FIG. **1** to explain dummy pillars according to an embodiment.

[0043] FIGS. **7** to **13** illustrate cross-sectional views taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **1** to illustrate stages in a method of manufacturing a 3D semiconductor device according to an embodiment.

[0044] FIG. **14** illustrates a plan view illustrating a 3D semiconductor device according to an embodiment.

[0045] FIG. **15** illustrates a cross-sectional view taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **14**.

[0046] FIGS. **16** to **19** illustrate cross-sectional views taken along lines I-I' , II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **14** to illustrate a method of manufacturing a 3D semiconductor device according to an embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0047] Example embodiments will now be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings; however, they may be embodied in different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. Rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey exemplary implementations to those skilled in the art.

[0048] As used herein, the term "and/or" includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items. Additionally, in the drawing figures, the dimensions

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of layers and regions may be exaggerated for clarity of illustration. It will be understood that when an element, e.g., a layer, region or substrate, is referred to as being "on" another element, it can be directly on the other element or intervening elements may be present. In contrast, the term "directly" means that there are no intervening elements, e.g., same interpretation may be applied to the term "between." The same reference numerals or the same reference designators denote the same elements throughout the specification.

[0049] Moreover, exemplary embodiments are described herein with reference to cross-sectional views and/or plane views that are idealized exemplary illustrations. Accordingly, variations from the shapes of the illustrations as a result, for example, of manufacturing techniques and/or tolerances, are to be expected. Thus, exemplary embodiments should not be construed as limited to the shapes of regions illustrated herein but are to include deviations in shapes that result, for example, from manufacturing. For example, an etching region illustrated as a rectangle will, typically, have rounded or curved features. Thus, the regions illustrated in the figures are schematic in nature and their shapes are not intended to limit. It will be also understood that although the terms first, second, third etc. may be used herein to describe various elements, these elements should not be limited by these terms. These terms are only used to distinguish one element from another element. Thus, a first element in some embodiments could be termed a second element in other embodiments. Exemplary embodiments explained and illustrated herein include their complementary counterparts.

[0050] The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to limit. As used herein, the singular terms "a," "an" and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises", "comprising,", "includes" and/or "including", when used herein, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof.

[0051] Hereinafter, embodiments will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0052] FIG. **1** is a plan view illustrating a three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device according to an embodiment. FIG. **2** is a plan view illustrating one electrode structure of FIG. **1** to explain dummy pillars according to an embodiment. In FIG. **2**, interconnections of FIG. **1** are omitted to clearly illustrate arrangement of the dummy pillars. FIG. **3** is a cross-sectional view taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **1**.

[0053] Referring to FIGS. **1**, **2**, and **3**, a substrate **100** may include a first region R**1** and a second region R**2**. The substrate **100** may be a semiconductor substrate (e.g., a silicon substrate, a germanium substrate, or a silicon-germanium substrate). The first region R**1** may be a cell region, in which memory cells are three-dimensionally arranged, and the second region R**2** may be a connection region, in which pads are provided. Contact plugs used to apply voltages to the memory cells may be disposed on top surfaces of the pads.

[0054] Electrode structures ES may be disposed on the substrate **100**. The electrode structures ES may extend from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2**. The electrode structures ES may extend in a first direction D**1** and may be spaced apart from each other in a second direction D**2** intersecting the first direction D**1**.

[0055] Each of the electrode structures ES may include electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138** sequentially stacked on the substrate **100** of the first region RE and insulating layers **110** disposed between the electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138**. The electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138** and the insulating layers **110** may be alternately stacked on the substrate **100**. The electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138** may be electrically insulated from each other by the insulating layers **110**. The electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138** may respectively include pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P that constitute a stepped structure in the second region R**2**. The pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P may extend from the electrodes **130**, **135** and **138** of the first region R**1** in the first direction DE respectively, to constitute the stepped structure in the second region R**2** (referring to of FIG. **3**). The insulating layers **110** may also extend from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2** to cover the pads **130**P, **135**P and **138**P, respectively.

[0056] The electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138** of each of the electrode structures ES may include a ground selection electrode **130**, a string selection electrode **138**, and cell electrodes **135** disposed between the ground selection electrode **130** and the string selection electrode **138**. The cell electrodes **135** may be stacked in a direction perpendicular to a top surface of the substrate **100** between the ground selection electrode **130** and the string selection electrode **138**. The pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P may include a ground selection pad **130**P extending from the ground selection electrode **130**, a string selection pad **138**P extending from the string selection electrode **138**, and cell pads **135**P extending from the cell electrodes **135**, respectively.

[0057] Each of the electrode structures ES may further include a capping insulating layer **115** that covers at least the cell pads **135**P and the ground selection pad **130**P in the second region R**2**. The capping insulating layer **115** may include an insulating material (e.g., silicon oxide). In addition, each of the electrode structures ES may further include a buffer insulating layer **105** which is provided under the ground selection electrode **130** and the ground selection pad **130**P. The buffer insulating layer **105** may include an insulating material (e.g., silicon oxide).

[0058] A plurality of vertical patterns VP may be provided on the substrate **100** of the first region R**1** and may penetrate each of the electrode structures ES. The vertical patterns VP may penetrate each of the electrode structures ES so as to be in contact with the substrate **100**. Each of the vertical patterns VP may include a semiconductor layer. The vertical patterns VP will be described later in more detail with reference to FIGS. **4**A to **4**D.

[0059] As illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **2**, the vertical patterns VP may be two-dimensionally arranged on the substrate **100** when viewed from a plan view. In an embodiment, the vertical patterns VP may constitute a plurality of rows parallel to the first direction D**1**. The vertical patterns VP constituting adjacent two of the plurality of rows may be arranged in a zigzag form along the first direction D**1**, e.g., each row of the vertical patterns VP may be offset along the first direction D**1** with respect to an adjacent row to have the vertical patterns VP arranged in a zigzag pattern along the second direction D**2**.

[0060] A plurality of dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may be provided on the substrate **100** of the second region R**2** and may penetrate each of the electrode structures ES. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may penetrate each of the electrode structures ES so as to be in contact with the substrate **100**. As illustrated in FIG. **3**, top surfaces of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may be disposed at a substantially same level (or height) as top surfaces of the vertical patterns VP, and bottom surfaces of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may be disposed at a substantially same level (or height) as bottom surfaces of the vertical patterns VP. Each of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may include the same material as the vertical patterns VP. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** will be described later in more detail with reference to FIGS. **4**A to **4**D.

[0061] The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may penetrate each of the pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P and the electrode structure ES under each of the pads **130**P, **135**P and **138**P. In addition, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may also penetrate the capping layer **115** covering at least the cell pads **135**P and the ground selection pad **130**P. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may include first dummy pillars DP**1** arranged in the first direction D**1**, and second dummy pillars DP**2** arranged in the first direction D**1** and spaced apart from the first dummy pillars DP**1** in the second direction D**2**. In an embodiment, the second dummy pillars DP**2** may be aligned with the first dummy pillars DP**1** in the second direction D**2**, respectively.

[0062] The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may include a pair of the first dummy pillars DP**1** immediately adjacent to each other along the first direction D**1**, and a pair of the second dummy pillars DP**2** immediately adjacent to each other along the first direction D**1**. A first one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** may penetrate a first boundary between each of the cell pads **135**P and an adjacent pad (an upper pad **135**P or **138**P) along the first direction D**1**, e.g., a boundary on a left side of each of the cell pads **135**P in FIG. **1**, and a second one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** may penetrate a second boundary between each of the cell pads **135**P and an adjacent pad (a lower pad **135**P or **130**P)along the first direction DE e.g., a boundary on a right side of each of the cell pads **135**P in FIG. **1**. A first of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may penetrate the first boundary, e.g., left boundary, and a second of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may penetrate the second boundary, e.g., right boundary. The first of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be aligned with the first of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** on the first boundary along the second direction D**2**, and the second of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be aligned with the second of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** on the second boundary along the second direction D**2**. In an embodiment, the number of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be four, and each of the cell pads **135**P and the pads disposed at both sides thereof may share the four dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2**.

[0063] In an embodiment, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may also include a pair of the first dummy pillars DP**1** immediately adjacent to each other, e.g., along the first direction D**1**, and a pair of the second dummy pillars DP**2** immediately adjacent to each other, e.g., along the first direction D**1**. A first one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may penetrate a boundary between the string selection pad **138**P and the cell pad **135**P adjacent thereto along the first direction D**1**, and a second one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** may be spaced apart from the boundary. A first one of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may penetrate the boundary, and a second one of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be spaced apart from the boundary. The string selection pad **138**P may be disposed at the uppermost layer of the electrode structure ES, so the string selection pad **138**P may have one boundary. The first one of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may be aligned, e.g., along the second direction D**2**, with the first one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P on the boundary, and the second of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be aligned with the second of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** in the second direction D**2**. In an embodiment, the number of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may be four, and the string selection pad **138**P and the cell pad **135**P adjacent thereto may share two of the four dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** along their boundary.

[0064] The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may also include a pair of the first dummy pillars DP**1** immediately adjacent to each other and a pair of the second dummy pillars DP**2** immediately adjacent to each other. A first one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may penetrate a boundary between the ground selection pad **130**P and the cell pad **135**P adjacent thereto, and a second one of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** may be spaced apart from the boundary. A first one of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may penetrate the boundary, and a second one of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be spaced apart from the boundary. The first of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may be aligned with the first of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P on the boundary, and the second of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be aligned with the second of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** in the second direction D**2**. In an embodiment, the number of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may be four, and the ground selection pad **130**P and the cell pad **135**P adjacent thereto may share two of the four dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2**.

[0065] Common source regions CS may be provided in the substrate **100** at both sides of each of the electrode structures ES, e.g., cross section along line IV-IV' in FIG. **3**. The substrate **100** may be doped with dopants of a first conductivity type, and the common source regions CS may be doped with dopants of a second conductivity type different from the first conductivity type. Common source lines CSL may be provided at both sides of each of the electrode structures ES so as to be connected to the common source regions CS. The common source lines CSL may include a conductive material (e.g., a metal material such as tungsten). Insulating spacers **140** may be provided between each of the electrode structures ES and the common source lines CSL, respectively. The insulating spacers **140** may include, for example, silicon oxide. A first insulating layer **145** may be provided on top surfaces of the electrode structures ES. The first insulating layer **145** may cover the top surfaces of the

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electrode structures ES and may extend onto top surfaces of the insulating spacers **140** and top surfaces of the common source lines CSL. The first insulating layer **145** may include at least one of, e.g., a silicon oxide layer, a silicon nitride layer, or a silicon oxynitride layer.

[0066] Cell contact plugs **150***c* may be provided on the substrate **100** of the second region R**2** so as to be connected to the cell pads **135**P of each of the electrode structures ES, respectively. The cell contact plugs **150***c* may penetrate the first insulating layer **145**, the capping insulating layer **115**, and the insulating layers **110** in the second region R**2**. A string selection contact plug **150***s* may be provided on the substrate **100** in the second region R**2** so as to be connected to the string selection pad **138**P of each of the electrode structures ES. A ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be provided on the substrate **100** of the second region R**2** so as to be connected to the ground selection pad **130**P of each of the electrode structures ES. The string selection contact plug **150***s* may penetrate the first insulating layer **145** and the insulating layer **110** disposed on the string selection pad **138**P, and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may penetrate the first insulating layer **145**, the capping insulating layer **115**, and the insulating layer **110** disposed on the ground selection pad **130**P. According to an embodiment, the string selection contact plug **150***s,* the cell contact plugs **150***c,* and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be arranged, e.g., aligned, along the first direction D**1**.

[0067] According to an embodiment, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be arranged to surround the cell contact plug **150***c* connected to each of the cell pads **135**P when viewed from a plan view, as illustrated in FIG. **2**. That is, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be respectively disposed at vertexes of a first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. Central points of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may overlap with the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10**, respectively. The first imaginary polygon **10** may be a quadrangle. In other words, four dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may surround the cell contact plug **150***c,* e.g., the four dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may define four vertexes of a polygon surrounding the cell contact plug **150***c.* The cell contact plug **150***c* may be disposed at a central point of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. In this case, a first of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be aligned with a second of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P in a third direction D**3** intersecting the first and second directions D**1** and D**2**. In this case, the first of the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1**, the cell contact plug **150***c,* and the second of the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** may be aligned with each other in the third direction D**3**.

[0068] The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may be arranged to surround the string selection contact plug **150***s* connected to the string selection pad **138**P when viewed from a plan view. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may be respectively disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** defined on the string selection pad **138**P when viewed from a plan view, and the string selection contact plug **150***s* may be disposed at the central point of the first imaginary polygon **10**. Likewise, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may be arranged to surround the ground selection contact plug **150***g* connected to the ground selection pad **130**P when viewed from a plan view. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may be respectively disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** defined on the ground selection pad **130**P when viewed from a plan view, and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be disposed at the central point of the first imaginary polygon **10**.

[0069] The vertical patterns VP may include outer vertical patterns VP constituting the outermost rows of the plurality of rows, and inner vertical patterns VP constituting inner rows of the plurality of rows. As illustrated in FIG. **2**, neighboring vertical patterns VP surrounding each of the inner vertical patterns VP may be respectively disposed at vertexes of a second imaginary polygon **20** in a plan view, and each of the inner vertical patterns VP may be disposed at a central point of the second imaginary polygon **20** in a plan view. The number of the vertexes of the second imaginary polygon **20** may be different from the number of the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10**. In an embodiment, the second imaginary polygon **20** may be a hexagon.

[0070] Bit lines BL may be disposed on the first insulating layer **145** of the first region R**1**. The bit lines BL may extend in the second direction D**2** and may be spaced apart from each other in the first direction D**1**. The vertical patterns VP penetrating each of the electrode structures ES may be electrically connected to the bit lines BL, respectively. Each of the vertical patterns VP may be electrically connected to a corresponding one of the bit lines BL through a bit line contact plug **152** penetrating the first insulating layer **145**. The cell electrodes **135** may correspond to word lines, the ground selection electrode **130** may correspond to a ground selection line, and the string selection electrode **138** may correspond to a string selection line.

[0071] First interconnections **154** may be provided on the first insulating layer **145** of the second region R**2**. The first interconnections **154** may extend in the second direction D**2** and may be spaced apart from each other in the first direction D**1**. The first interconnections **154** may be electrically connected to the cell contact plugs **150***c* and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* of the electrode structure ES, respectively. In an embodiment, the first interconnections **154** may be disposed at a substantially same level (or height) as the bit lines BL. However, embodiments are not limited thereto.

[0072] A second insulating layer **160** may be provided on the first insulating layer **145**, the bit lines BL, and the first interconnections **154**. The second insulating layer **160** may include at least one of, e.g., a silicon oxide layer, a silicon nitride layer, or a silicon oxynitride layer.

[0073] Second interconnections **170** may be provided on the second insulating layer **160**. In an embodiment, the second interconnections **170** may extend in the first direction D**1** and may be spaced apart from each other in the second direction D**2**. However, embodiments are not limited thereto. Each of the second interconnections **170** may be electrically connected to the string selection contact plug **150***s* of each of the electrode structures ES. The string selection contact plug **150***s* may be electrically connected to a corresponding one of the second interconnections **170** through an interconnection plug **165** penetrating the second insulating layer **160**.

[0074] According to the present embodiment, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may penetrate the pads **130**P, **135**P, and

138P constituting the stepped structure in the second region R**2** so as to be in contact with the substrate **100**. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may penetrate, e.g., only, the first and second boundaries between each of the cell pads **135**P and the pads adjacent to both sides of each of the cell pads **135**P. In other words, each of the cell pads **135**P and the pads adjacent to both sides thereof share the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P, thereby minimizing a number of dummy pillars in the second region R**2**. Since the electrode structure ES is supported using a minimum of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2**, shape variation of the electrode structure ES may be minimized. In addition, the minimum of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may support a mold stack structure used during a replacement process of forming the electrode structure ES, and thus, shape variation of the pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P may be minimized using the minimum of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2**. As a result, it is possible to minimize or prevent deterioration of the electrode structure ES.

[0075] Furthermore, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed to surround the cell contact plug **150***c* connected to each of the cell pads **135**P when viewed from a plan view. Thus, a distance between the cell contact plug **150***c* and the common source line CSL adjacent thereto may be increased to easily insulate the cell contact plug **150***c* from the common source line CSL.

[0076] As a result, a 3D semiconductor device with excellent reliability may be provided.

[0077] FIG. **4**A illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0078] Referring to FIG. **4**A, the vertical pattern VP may include a vertical semiconductor pattern SP extending upward from the substrate **100**. The vertical pattern VP may further include a blocking insulating layer BIL, a charge storage layer CL, and a tunnel insulating layer TL which are disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the vertical semiconductor pattern SP. The blocking insulating layer BIL may be adjacent to the cell electrode **135**, and the tunnel insulating layer TL may be adjacent to the vertical semiconductor pattern SP. The charge storage layer CL may be disposed between the blocking insulating layer BIL and the tunnel insulating layer TL. For example, the tunnel insulating layer TL may include at least one of a silicon oxide layer and a silicon oxynitride layer. The charge storage layer CL may include at least one of a silicon nitride layer including trap sites and an insulating layer including conductive nano dots. The blocking insulating layer BIL may include a high-k dielectric layer of which a dielectric constant is higher than that of the tunnel insulating layer TL. In addition, the blocking insulating layer BIL may further include a barrier insulating layer (e.g., a silicon oxide layer) of which an energy band gap is greater than that of the high-k dielectric layer.

[0079] In the present embodiment, the blocking insulating layer BIL, the charge storage layer CL, and the tunnel insulating layer TL may extend in a direction substantially perpendicular to the top surface of the substrate **100** so as to be disposed between the vertical semiconductor pattern SP and the insulating layers **110**. The vertical semiconductor pattern SP may have a macaroni or pipe shape, and the vertical pattern VP may further include a vertical insulating pattern VI filling an inner space of the vertical semiconductor pattern SP. For example, the vertical insulating pattern VI may include silicon oxide.

[0080] The dummy pillar DP**2** may include the same material as the vertical pattern VP. According to the present embodiment, like the vertical pattern VP, the dummy pillar DP**2** may include the blocking insulating layer BIL, the charge storage layer CL, the tunnel insulating layer TL, the vertical semiconductor pattern SP, and the vertical insulating pattern VI. The first dummy pillar DP**1** may have the same structure as the second dummy pillar DP**2**.

[0081] FIG. **4**B illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0082] Referring to FIG. **4**B, the vertical pattern VP may include the vertical semiconductor pattern SP extending upward from the substrate **100**. The vertical pattern VP may further include the charge storage layer CL and the tunnel insulating layer TL which are disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the vertical semiconductor pattern SP. According to the present embodiment, the blocking insulating layer BIL may be disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the vertical pattern VP and may extend in a direction parallel to the top surface of the substrate **100** so as to be disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the insulating layers **110**. The charge storage layer CL may be disposed between the blocking insulating layer BIL and the tunnel insulating layer TL. The vertical semiconductor pattern SP may have the macaroni or pipe shape, and the vertical pattern VP may further include the vertical insulating pattern VI filling the inner space of the vertical semiconductor pattern SP.

[0083] The dummy pillar DP**2** may include the same material as the vertical pattern VP. According to the present embodiment, like the vertical pattern VP, the dummy pillar DP**2** may include the charge storage layer CL, the tunnel insulating layer TL, the vertical semiconductor pattern SP, and the vertical insulating pattern VI. The first dummy pillar DP**1** may have the same structure as the second dummy pillar DP**2**.

[0084] FIG. **4**C illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0085] Referring to FIG. **4**C, the vertical pattern VP may include the vertical semiconductor pattern SP extending upward from the substrate **100**. The vertical pattern VP may further include the tunnel insulating layer TL disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the vertical semiconductor pattern SP. According to the present embodiment, the blocking insulating layer BIL and the charge storage layer CL may be disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the vertical pattern VP and may extend in the direction parallel to the top surface of the substrate **100** so as to be disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the insulating layers **110**. The charge storage layer CL may be disposed between the blocking insulating layer BIL and the tunnel insulating layer TL. The vertical semiconductor pattern SP may have the macaroni or pipe shape, and the vertical pattern VP may further include the vertical insulating pattern VI filling the inner space of the vertical semiconductor pattern SP.

[0086] The dummy pillar DP**2** may include the same material as the vertical pattern VP. According to the present embodiment, like the vertical pattern VP, the dummy pillar DP**2** may include the tunnel insulating layer TL, the vertical

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semiconductor pattern SP, and the vertical insulating pattern VI. The first dummy pillar DP**1** may have the same structure as the second dummy pillar DP**2**.

[0087] FIG. **4**D illustrates enlarged views of portions 'A' and 'B' of FIG. **3** to explain a vertical pattern and a dummy pillar according to an embodiment.

[0088] Referring to FIG. **4**D, the vertical pattern VP may include the vertical semiconductor pattern SP extending upward from the substrate **100**. According to the present embodiment, the blocking insulating layer BIL, the charge storage layer CL, and the tunnel insulating layer TL may be disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the vertical pattern VP and may extend in the direction parallel to the top surface of the substrate **100** so as to be disposed between the cell electrode **135** and the insulating layers **110**. The charge storage layer CL may be disposed between the blocking insulating layer BIL and the tunnel insulating layer TL. The vertical semiconductor pattern SP may have the macaroni or pipe shape, and the vertical pattern VP may further include the vertical insulating pattern VI filling the inner space of the vertical semiconductor pattern SP.

[0089] The dummy pillar DP**2** may include the same material as the vertical pattern VP. According to the present embodiment, like the vertical pattern VP, the dummy pillar DP**2** may include the vertical semiconductor pattern SP and the vertical insulating pattern VI. The first dummy pillar DP**1** may have the same structure as the second dummy pillar DP**2**.

[0090] FIG. **5** is a plan view illustrating one electrode structure of FIG. **1** to explain dummy pillars according to an embodiment. Hereinafter, differences between the present embodiment and the embodiment of FIGS. **1**, **2** and **3** will be mainly described for the purpose of ease and convenience in explanation.

[0091] Referring to FIG. **5**, according to the present embodiment, the string selection contact plug **150***s*, the cell contact plugs **150***c*, and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be arranged in a zigzag form along the first direction D**1**.

[0092] In detail, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10**, respectively, when viewed from a plan view. The central points of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may overlap with the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10**, respectively. The first imaginary polygon **10** may be a quadrangle. The cell contact plug **150***c* connected to each of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed on one side of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. For example, as illustrated in FIG. **5**, a cell contact plug **150***c* connected to each of odd-numbered ones of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed between a pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating each of the odd-numbered cell pads **135**P (bottom of the cell pads **135**P in FIG. **5**) and may be aligned with a pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** in an adjacent odd-numbered cell pads **135**P in the first direction D**1**. Similarly, a cell contact plug **150***c* connected to each of even-numbered ones of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed between a pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating each of the even-numbered cell pads **135**P (top of the cell pads **135**P in FIG. **5**) and may be aligned with a pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** in an adjacent even-numbered cell pads **135**P in the first direction D**1**.

[0093] The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may be respectively disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view, and the string selection contact plug **150***s* may be disposed on one side of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. The string selection contact plug **150***s* may be disposed between, e.g., and aligned with, the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P or between the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P. The string selection contact plug **150***s* may be aligned with the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** or the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** in the first direction D**1**. Likewise, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may be respectively disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view, and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be disposed on one side of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. The ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be disposed between the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P or between the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P. The ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be aligned with the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** or the pair of second dummy pillars DP**2** in the first direction D**1**.

[0094] FIG. **6** is a plan view illustrating one electrode structure of FIG. **1** to explain dummy pillars according to an embodiment. Hereinafter, differences between the present embodiment and the embodiment of FIGS. **1**, **2** and **3** will be mainly described for the purpose of ease and convenience in explanation.

[0095] Referring to FIG. **6**, the string selection contact plug **150***s*, the cell contact plugs **150***c*, and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be arranged in a line in the first direction D**1**. According to the present embodiment, the first dummy pillars DP**1** may be disposed between the string selection contact plug **150***s* and the cell contact plug **150***c* adjacent to the string selection contact plug **150***s*, between the cell contact plugs **150***c* adjacent to each other, and between the ground selection contact plug **150***g* and the cell contact plug **150***c* adjacent to the ground selection contact plug **150***g*, respectively.

[0096] In detail, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10**, respectively, when viewed from a plan view. The central points of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may overlap with the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10**, respectively. The first imaginary polygon **10** may be the quadrangle. The cell contact plug **150***c* connected to each of the cell pads **135**P may be disposed on one side of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. The cell contact plug **150***c* may be disposed between the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P and may be aligned with the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** in the first direction D**1**.

[0097] The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the string selection pad **138**P may be respectively disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** in a plan view, and the string selection contact plug **150***s* may be disposed on one side of the first imaginary polygon **10** in a plan view. The string selection contact plug **150***s* may be disposed between the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the

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string selection pad **138**P and may be aligned with the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** in the first direction D**1**. Likewise, dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P may be respectively disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** in a plan view, and the ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be disposed on one side of the first imaginary polygon **10** in a plan view. The ground selection contact plug **150***g* may be disposed between the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** penetrating the ground selection pad **130**P and may be aligned with the pair of first dummy pillars DP**1** in the first direction D**1**.

[0098] According to the present embodiment, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may penetrate the pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P constituting the stepped structure in the second region R**2** so as to be in contact with the substrate **100**. The dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P may penetrate the boundaries between each of the cell pads **135**P and the pads adjacent to both sides of each of the cell pads **135**P. In other words, each of the cell pads **135**P and the pads adjacent to both sides thereof may share the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating each of the cell pads **135**P. Since the electrode structure ES is supported using a minimum number of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2**, shape variation of the electrode structure ES may be minimized. In addition, the minimum of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may support a mold stack structure used during a replacement process of forming the electrode structure ES, and thus, shape variation of the pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P may be minimized using the minimum of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2**. As a result, it is possible to realize the 3D semiconductor device with excellent reliability.

[0099] FIGS. **7** to **13** are cross-sectional views taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **1** to illustrate stages in a method of manufacturing a 3D semiconductor device according to an embodiment.

[0100] Referring to FIG. **7**, the buffer insulating layer **105** may be formed on an entire top surface of the substrate **100** including the first region R**1** and the second region R**2**. Sacrificial layers **120** and insulating layers **110** may be alternately formed on the substrate **100** having the buffer insulating layer **105**. The sacrificial layers **120** may be formed of a material having an etch selectivity with respect to the buffer insulating layer **105** and the insulating layers **110**. For example, the buffer insulating layer **105** and the insulating layers **110** may be formed of silicon oxide layers, and the sacrificial layers **120** may be formed of silicon nitride layers.

[0101] Referring to FIG. **8**, the insulating layers **110** and the sacrificial layers **120** in the second region R**2** may be patterned to form a stepped structure. In an embodiment, a mask pattern (not shown) may be formed on the uppermost insulating layer **110**, and the uppermost insulating layer **110** and the uppermost sacrificial layer **120** may be etched using the mask pattern as an etch mask to expose the next-uppermost insulating layer **110** in the second region **60**. Subsequently, the mask pattern may be etched to reduce a width of the mask pattern. The next-uppermost insulating layer **110** and the next-uppermost sacrificial layer **120** may be etched using the etched mask pattern as an etch mask. The etching process of the insulating layers **110** and the sacrificial layer **120** and the etching process of the mask pattern may be repeatedly performed to form the stepped structure in the second region R**2**.

[0102] Thereafter, the capping insulating layer **115** may be formed on the substrate **100** and may be then planarized. According to an embodiment, the capping insulating layer **115** may be planarized until the uppermost insulating layer **110** of the first region R**1** is exposed. According to an embodiment, the planarized capping insulating layer **115** may remain on the uppermost insulating layer **110** of the first region R**1**.

[0103] Referring to FIG. **9**, the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, and the buffer insulating layer **105** of the first region R**1** may be successively patterned to form vertical holes H**1** exposing the substrate **100**. In addition, the capping insulating layer **115**, the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, and the buffer insulating layer **105** of the second region R**2** may be successively patterned to from dummy holes H**2** exposing the substrate **100**. The vertical holes H**1** and the dummy holes H**2** may be formed at the same time.

[0104] The vertical holes H**1** may be arranged as the vertical patterns VP described with reference to FIG. **2**. Likewise, the dummy holes H**2** may be arranged as the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** described with reference to FIG. **2**. In other words, the dummy holes H**2** may be disposed at the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** of FIG. **2**, respectively, and the vertical holes H**1** may be disposed at the vertexes of the second imaginary polygon **20** of FIG. **2**, respectively.

[0105] The vertical patterns VP may be formed in the vertical holes H**1**, respectively, and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may be formed in the dummy holes H**2**, respectively. The vertical patterns VP and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may be formed at the same time. The vertical patterns VP and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may be formed as described in one of the embodiments of the FIG. **4**A to **4**D.

[0106] Referring to FIG. **10**, the capping insulating layer **115**, the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, and the buffer insulating layer **105** may be successively patterned to form trenches T exposing the substrate **100**. The trenches T may extend from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2**, so a mold stack structure extending from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2** may be defined between the trenches T. The mold stack structure may include the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, the buffer insulating layer **105**, and the capping insulating layer **115**. The insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, the buffer insulating layer **105**, and the capping insulating layer **115** may have sidewalls exposed by the trenches T. The sacrificial layers **120** may have sacrificial pads that constitute a stepped structure in the second region R**2**. The insulating layers **110** may cover the sacrificial pads of the sacrificial layers **110**, respectively. The capping insulating layer **115** may cover the sacrificial pads constituting the stepped structure in the second region R**2**. The vertical patterns VP and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** may penetrate the mold stack structure so as to be in contact with the substrate **100**.

[0107] A replacement process may be performed to the mold stack structure to form the electrode structure ES of FIG. **3**. Hereinafter, the replacement process will be described in detail with reference to FIGS. **11** and **12**.

[0108] Referring to FIG. **11**, the sacrificial layers **120** exposed by the trenches T may be removed to form empty regions **122** between the insulating layers **110**. The empty

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regions **122** may extend from the trenches T into between the insulating layers **110** in a direction parallel to the top surface of the substrate **100**. The sacrificial layers **120** may be removed by an isotropic etching process (e.g., a wet etching process).

[0109] When the sacrificial layers **120** are removed, the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** support the insulating layers **110** and the capping layer **115** in the second region R**2**, and the vertical patterns VP may support the insulating layers **110** in the first region R**1**. Thus, it is possible to minimize or prevent problems which may be caused by the removal of the sacrificial layers **120**.

[0110] For example, if the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** did not exist, the insulating layers **110** vertically adjacent to each other in the second region R**2** could be close to or come in contact with each other. Thus, shapes of pads to be formed in the empty regions **122** in a subsequent process could vary, e.g., at least a portion of the pads could not be formed. However, according to embodiments, formation of the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** through the insulating layers **110** in the second region R**2** supports the insulating layers **110** during removal of the sacrificial layers **120**, thereby minimizing or preventing the above problems, e.g., misalignment and/or breaking of the insulating layers **110**.

[0111] Referring to FIGS. **1** and **12**, a first conductive layer may be formed on the substrate **100** to fill the trenches T and the empty regions **122**. The first conductive layer may include a barrier layer conformally covering inner surfaces of the trenches T and the empty regions **122**, and an electrode layer filling the rest regions of the trenches T and the empty regions **122**. Thereafter, the first conductive layer disposed in the trenches T may be removed to farm the electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138**, and the pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P in the empty regions **122**. Thus, the electrode structure ES described with reference to FIGS. **1** to **3** may be formed.

[0112] When the vertical patterns VP and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** are formed as illustrated in FIG. **4**B, the blocking insulating layer BIL may be conformally formed in the empty regions **122** before the formation of the first conductive layer. When the vertical patterns VP and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** are formed as illustrated in FIG. **4**C, the charge storage layer CL and the blocking insulating layer BIL may be sequentially formed in the empty regions **122** before the formation of the first conductive layer. When the vertical patterns VP and the dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** are formed as illustrated in FIG. **4**D, the tunnel insulating layer TL, the charge storage layer CL, and the blocking insulating layer BIL may be sequentially formed in the empty regions **122** before the formation of the first conductive layer.

[0113] Dopant ions may be implanted into the substrate **100** disposed under the trenches T to form the common source regions CS. The common source regions CS may be formed after the formation of the electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138**. Alternatively, the common source regions may be formed after the formation of the trenches T and before the removal of the sacrificial layers **120**.

[0114] The Common source lines CSL and insulating spacers **140** may be formed in the trenches T. The common source lines CSL may be electrically connected to the common source regions CS, and the insulating spacers **140** may electrically insulate the common source lines CSL from the electrodes **130**, **135**, and **138**. Forming the insulating spacers **140** may include forming an insulating spacer layer (not shown) conformally covering top surfaces of the common source regions CS and inner sidewalls of the trenches T, and anisotropically etching the insulating spacer layer. The common source regions CS may be exposed by the anisotropic etching process of the insulating spacer layer. Subsequently, a second conductive layer may be formed to fill the rest regions of the trenches T. The second conductive layer may be planarized to confinedly form the common source lines CSL in the trenches T, respectively.

[0115] Referring to FIGS. **1** and **13**, the first insulating layer **145** may be formed on an entire top surface of the substrate **100**. The first insulating layer **145** may include the electrode structure and may extend in the direction parallel to the top surface of the substrate **100** to cover top surfaces of the insulating spacers **140** and top surfaces of the common source lines CSL.

[0116] Contact plugs **150***s*, **150***c*, and **150***g* may be formed in the second region R**2** so as to be connected to the pads **130**P, **135**P, and **138**P, respectively. The contact plugs **150***a*, **150***c*, and **150***g* may penetrate the first insulating layer **145**, the capping insulating layer **115**, and the insulating layers **110**. Bit line contact plugs **152** may be formed to penetrate the first insulating layer **145** in the first region R**1**. The bit line contact plugs **152** may be connected to the vertical patterns VP, respectively. The contact plugs **150***a*, **150***c*, and **150***g* and the bit line contact plugs **152** may be formed of a conductive material and may be formed at the same time.

[0117] Bit lines BL may be formed on the first insulating layer **145** in the first region R**1**, and the first interconnections **154** may be formed on the first insulating layer **145** in the second region R**2**. The bit lines BL may be connected to the bit line contact plugs **152**, and the first interconnections **154** may be connected to the ground selection contact plug **150***g* and the cell contact plugs **150***c*, respectively. The bit lines BL and the first interconnections **154** may be formed of a conductive material and may be formed at the same time.

[0118] Referring again to FIGS. **1** and **3**, the second insulating layer **160** may be formed on the first insulating layer **145**, the bit lines BL, and the first interconnections **154**. The second interconnections **170** may be formed on the second insulating layer **160**. The second interconnections **170** may be electrically connected to the string selection contact plugs **150***s*, respectively. The string selection contact plug **150***s* may be electrically connected to a corresponding one of the second interconnections **170** through an interconnection plug **165** penetrating the second insulating layer **160**.

[0119] FIG. **14** is a plan view illustrating a 3D semiconductor device according to an embodiment. FIG. **15** is a cross-sectional view taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III', and IV-IV' of FIG. **14**. Hereinafter, the same elements as described in the embodiment of FIGS. **1** to **3** will be indicated by the same reference numerals or the same reference designators, and differences between the present embodiment and the embodiment of FIGS. **1** to **3** will be mainly described for the purpose of ease and convenience in explanation.

[0120] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, in the present embodiment, the electrode structure ES may include a plurality of string selection electrodes **138***a* and **138***b*. A cutting insulation pattern **200** may be disposed between the string selection electrodes **138***a* and **138***b*. In other words, a first string selection electrode **138***a* and a second string selection electrode **138***b* may be separated from each other

by the cutting insulation pattern **200**. A bottom surface of the cutting insulation pattern **200** may be higher than a top surface of the uppermost cell electrode **135**. In other words, the plurality of string selection electrodes **138***a* and **138***b* may be disposed on one uppermost cell electrode **135**. The cutting insulation pattern **200** may include, for example, silicon oxide.

[0121] The cutting insulation pattern **200** may extend from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2**, so a first string selection pad **138**Pa of the first string selection electrode **138***a* may be separated from a second string selection pad **138**Pb of the second string selection electrode **138***b* by the cutting insulation pattern **200**.

[0122] Vertical patterns VP and DVP may penetrate the electrode structure ES of the first region R**1**. The vertical patterns VP and DVP may constitute a plurality of rows parallel to the first direction D**1**. The vertical patterns VP and DVP constituting adjacent two of the plurality of rows may be arranged in a zigzag form along the first direction D**1**. The vertical patterns VP and DVP may include dummy vertical patterns DVP overlapping with the cutting insulation pattern **200**, and cell vertical patterns VP spaced apart from the cutting insulation pattern **200**. The dummy vertical patterns DVP may be arranged in the first direction D**1** to constitute one of the plurality of rows. The cell vertical patterns VP may constitute the others of the plurality of rows.

[0123] The vertical patterns VP constituting the outermost rows of the plurality of rows may be defined as outer vertical patterns, and the vertical patterns VP and DVP constituting inner rows of the plurality of rows may be defined as inner vertical patterns. Each of the inner vertical patterns VP and DVP may be disposed at the central point of the second imaginary polygon **20** described with reference to FIG. **2**, and neighboring vertical patterns VP and DVP surrounding each of the inner vertical patterns VP and DVP may be disposed at the vertexes of the second imaginary polygon **20**, respectively. The second imaginary polygon **20** may be a hexagon.

[0124] A first string selection contact plug **150***sa* and a second string selection contact plug **150***sb* may be connected to the first string selection pad **138**Pa and the second string selection pad **138**Pb, respectively. According to the present embodiment, the first and second string selection contact plugs **150***sa* and **150***sb* may be respectively disposed at two of the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** described with reference to FIG. **2** when viewed from a plan view. Dummy pillars DP**1** and DP**2** penetrating the first and second string selection pads **138**Pa and **138**Pb may be respectively disposed at the others of the vertexes of the first imaginary polygon **10** when viewed from a plan view. The first string selection contact plug **150***sa* may be aligned with a first dummy pillar DP**1** penetrating the first string selection pad **138**Pa in the first direction D**1**. The second string selection contact plug **150***sb* may be aligned with a second dummy pillar DP**2** penetrating the second string selection pad **138**Pb in the first direction D**1**. An additional dummy pillar DP**3** may be further provided at the central point of the first imaginary polygon **10**. However, embodiments are not limited thereto. In an embodiment, the additional dummy pillar DP**3** may be omitted.

[0125] A first upper interconnection **170***a* and a second upper interconnection **170***b* may be electrically connected to the first string selection pad **138**Pa and the second string selection pad **138**Pb, respectively. The first string selection pad **138**Pa may be electrically connected to the first upper interconnection **170***a* through the first string selection contact plug **150***sa* and a first interconnection plug **165***a* penetrating the second insulating layer **160** of the second region R**2**. The second string selection pad **138**Pb may be electrically connected to the second upper interconnection **170***b* through the second string selection contact plug **150***sb* and a second interconnection plug **165***b* penetrating the second insulating layer **160** of the second region R**2**.

[0126] In the first region R**1**, each of the bit lines BL may be electrically connected to the cell vertical patterns VP arranged in the second direction D**2**. In this case, the cell vertical patterns VP arranged in the second direction D**2** may penetrate the plurality of string selection electrodes **138***a* and **138***b*, respectively.

[0127] FIGS. **16** to **19** are cross-sectional views taken along lines I-I', II-II', III-III_**40** , and IV-IV' of FIG. **14** to illustrate a method of manufacturing a 3D semiconductor device according to an embodiment. Hereinafter, the same elements as described in the embodiment of FIGS. **7** to **13** will be indicated by the same reference numerals or the same reference designators, and differences between the present embodiment and the embodiment of FIGS. **7** to **13** will be mainly described for the purpose of ease and convenience in explanation.

[0128] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **16**, the buffer insulating layer **105** may be formed on an entire top surface of the substrate **100** including the first region R**1** and the second region R**2**. The sacrificial layers **120** and insulating layers **110** may be alternately formed on the substrate **100** having the buffer insulating layer **105**. The insulating layers **110** and the sacrificial layers **120** in the second region R**2** may be patterned to form a stepped structure. The capping insulating layer **115** may be formed to cover the stepped structure.

[0129] The uppermost insulating layer **110** and the uppermost sacrificial layer **120** may be patterned to form a cutting region **200**H. The cutting region **200**H may extend from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2**. The cutting insulation pattern **200** may be formed to fill the cutting region **200**H. In an embodiment, the cutting region **200**H and the cutting insulation pattern **200** may be formed after the formation of the stepped structure of the sacrificial layers **120** and the capping insulating layer **115**. Alternatively, the stepped structure of the sacrificial layers **120** and the capping insulating layer **115** may be formed after the formation of the cutting region **200**H and the cutting insulation pattern **200**.

[0130] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **17**, the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120** and the buffer insulating layer **105** of the first region R**1** may be successively patterned to form the vertical holes H**1** exposing the substrate **100**. In addition, the capping insulating layer **115**, the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, and the buffer insulating layer **105** of the second region R**2** may be successively patterned to from the dummy holes H**2** exposing the substrate **100**. The vertical holes H**1** and the dummy holes H**2** may be formed at the same time. The vertical holes H**1** may be arranged as the vertical patterns VP and DVP of FIG. **14**, and the dummy holes H**2** may be arranged as the dummy pillars DP**1**, DP**2** and DP**3** of FIG. **14**.

[0131] Vertical patterns VP and DVP may be formed in the vertical holes H**1**, respectively, and dummy pillars DP**1**, DP**2** and DP**3** may be formed in the dummy holes H**2**, respectively. The vertical patterns VP and DVP and the dummy

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pillars DP**1**, DP**2** and DP**3** may be formed at the same time. The vertical patterns VP and DVP and the dummy pillars DP**1**, DP**2** and DP**3** may be formed as described in one of the embodiments of the FIG. **4**A to **4**D.

[0132] The capping insulating layer **115**, the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, and the buffer insulating layer **105** may be successively patterned to form trenches T exposing the substrate **100**. The trenches T may extend from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2**, so a mold stack structure extending from the first region R**1** into the second region R**2** may be defined between the trenches T. The mold stack structure may include the insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, the buffer insulating layer **105**, and the capping insulating layer **115**. At this time, the uppermost sacrificial layer **120** of the mold stack structure may include the uppermost sacrificial patterns laterally separated from each other by the cutting insulation pattern **200**. The insulating layers **110**, the sacrificial layers **120**, the buffer insulating layer **105**, and the capping insulating layer **115** may have sidewalls exposed by the trenches T.

[0133] Referring to FIG. **18**, the sacrificial layers **120** exposed by the trenches T may be removed to form empty regions **122** between the insulating layers **110**. When the sacrificial layers **120** are removed, the vertical patterns VP and DVP and the dummy pillars DP**1**, DP**2** and DP**3** may support the insulating layers **110**. Since the sacrificial layers **120** are removed, the uppermost empty regions **122** respectively corresponding to the uppermost sacrificial patterns may be formed in the mold stack structure.

[0134] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **19**, a first conductive layer may be formed on the substrate **100** to fill the trenches T and the empty regions **122**. Thereafter, the first conductive layer disposed in the trenches T may be removed to form electrodes **130**, **135**, **138***a* and **138***b* and pads **130**P, **135**P, **138**Pa and **138**Pb in the empty regions **122**. Thus, the electrode structure ES described with reference to FIGS. **14** and **15** may be formed.

[0135] A first string selection electrode **138***a* and a second string selection electrode **138***b* may be formed in the uppermost empty regions **122**, respectively. The first and second string selection electrodes **138***a* and **138***b* may be laterally spaced apart from each other by the cutting insulation pattern **200**. In addition, a first string selection pad **138**Pa of the first string selection electrode **138***a* may also be laterally spaced apart from a second string selection pad **138**Pb of the second string selection electrode **138***b* by the cutting insulation pattern **200**.

[0136] Dopant ions may be implanted into the substrate **100** disposed under the trenches T to form common source regions CS. Common source lines CSL and insulating spacers **140** may be formed in the trenches T. The common source lines CSL may be electrically connected to the common source regions CS, and the insulating spacers **140** may electrically insulate the common source lines CSL from the electrodes **130**, **135**, **138***a* and **138***b*.

[0137] The first insulating layer **145** may be formed on an entire top surface of the substrate **100**. The first insulating layer **145** may include the electrode structure and may extend in the direction parallel to the top surface of the substrate **100** to cover top surfaces of the insulating spacers **140** and top surfaces of the common source lines CSL.

[0138] The bit line contact plugs **152** may be formed to penetrate the first insulating layer **145** of the first region R**1**. The bit line contact plugs **152** may be connected to the cell vertical patterns VP of the vertical patterns VP and DVP, respectively. In other words, the bit line contact plugs **152** may not be formed on the dummy vertical patterns DVP.

[0139] Contact plugs **150***sa*, **150***sb*, **150***c* and **150***g* may be formed to penetrate the first insulating layer **145**, the capping insulating layer **115**, and the insulating layers in the second region R**2**. The contact plugs **150***sa*, **150***sb*, **150***c* and **150***g* may be connected to the pads **138**Pa, **138**Pb, **135**P and **130**P, respectively.

[0140] The bit lines BL may be formed on the first insulating layer **145** in the first region R**1**, and first interconnections **154** may be formed on the first insulating layer **145** in the second region R**2**. The bit lines BL may be connected to the bit line contact plugs **152**, and the first interconnections **154** may be connected to the ground selection contact plug **150***g* and the cell contact plugs **150***c*, respectively.

[0141] Referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, a second insulating layer **160** may be formed on the first insulating layer **145**, the bit lines BL, and the first interconnections **154**. A first upper interconnection **170***a* and a second upper interconnection **170***b* may be formed on the second insulating layer **160**. The first upper interconnection **170***a* may be electrically connected to the first string selection pad **138**Pa through a first interconnection plug **165***a* and the first string selection contact plug **150***sa*. The second upper interconnection **170***b* may be electrically connected to the second string selection pad **138**Pb through a second interconnection plug **165***b* and the second string selection contact plug **150***sb*. The first and second interconnection plugs **165***a* and **165***b* may penetrate the second insulating layer **160** of the second region R**2**.

[0142] According to embodiments, a 3D semiconductor device with excellent reliability is provided. That is, dummy pillars may penetrate pads constituting a stepped structure in a second region of a substrate, so as to be in contact with the substrate. The dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads may penetrate boundaries between adjacent cell pads, so each of the cell pads and the pads adjacent to both sides thereof may share the dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads. Since adjacent cell pads in the electrode structure share dummy pillars, a number of dummy pillars supporting the electrode structure is minimized. Further, the minimal number of dummy pillars supporting the electrode structure minimizes shape variation of the electrode structure. In addition, since a minimal number of dummy pillars supporting the mold stack structure is used during the replacement process of forming the electrode structure, shape variation of the cell pads may be minimized, thereby minimizing or preventing deterioration of the electrode structure.

[0143] Furthermore, the dummy pillars penetrating each of the cell pads may be disposed to surround the cell contact plug connected to each of the cell pads when viewed from a plan view. Thus, a distance between the cell contact plug and the common source line adjacent thereto may be increased to easily insulate the cell contact plug from the common source line.

[0144] Example embodiments have been disclosed herein, and although specific terms are employed, they are used and are to be interpreted in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purpose of limitation. In some instances, as would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art as of the filing of the present application, features, characteristics, and/or elements described in connection with a particular embodiment may be used singly or in combination with

features, characteristics, and/or elements described in connection with other embodiments unless otherwise specifically indicated. Accordingly, it will be understood by those of skill in the art that various changes in form and details may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as set forth in the following claims.

1.-**20**. (canceled)

21. A three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device, comprising:

an electrode structure on a substrate that includes a first region and a second region, the electrode structure including a plurality of electrodes which are stacked in a direction perpendicular to a top surface of the substrate,

wherein the plurality of the electrodes respectively include pads which define a stepped structure in the second region of the substrate;

a plurality of dummy pillars penetrating the pads and a portion of the electrode structure under the pads; and

contact plugs electrically connected to the pads, respectively,

wherein each of the contact plugs is surrounded with adjacent dummy pillars of the dummy pillars when viewed from a plan view, and

wherein at least two of the dummy pillars penetrate a boundary between adjacent pads.

22. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **21**, wherein the dummy pillars include four dummy pillars surrounding each of the contact plugs when viewed from a plan view.

23. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **22**, wherein the four dummy pillars are at vertexes of an imaginary polygon, respectively, and each of the contact plugs is at a central point of the imaginary polygon, when viewed from a plan view.

24. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **23**, wherein the imaginary polygon is a quadrangle.

25. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **21**, wherein a size of each of the dummy pillars is smaller than that of each of the contact plugs, when viewed from a plan view.

26. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **21**, further comprising a plurality of vertical patterns penetrating the electrode structure in the first region, the dummy pillars including a same material as the vertical patterns.

27. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **26**, wherein the vertical patterns include a first vertical pattern and second vertical patterns surrounding the first vertical pattern,

wherein the first vertical pattern is at a central point of a first imaginary polygon in a plan view, and the second vertical patterns are respectively at vertexes of the first imaginary polygon in a plan view, and

wherein the first imaginary polygon is a hexagon.

28. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **27**, wherein the dummy pillars include four dummy pillars surrounding each of the contact plugs when viewed from a plan view,

wherein the four dummy pillars are respectively at vertexes of a second imaginary polygon in a plan view, and

wherein the second imaginary polygon is a quadrangle.

29. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **28**, wherein each of the contact plugs is at a central point of the second imaginary polygon, when viewed from a plan view.

30. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **21**, wherein two of the dummy pillars are within a corresponding pad of the pads.

31. A three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device, comprising:

an electrode structure on a substrate that includes a first region and a second region, the electrode structure including a plurality of electrodes which are stacked in a direction perpendicular to a top surface of the substrate,

wherein the plurality of the electrodes respectively include pads which define a stepped structure in the second region of the substrate;

a plurality of dummy pillars through the pads and the electrode structure under the pads; and

a contact plug electrically connected to a corresponding pad of the pads,

wherein the dummy pillars include four dummy pillars surrounding the contact plug when viewed from a plan view,

wherein the four dummy pillars are at vertexes of an imaginary polygon, respectively, and the contact plug is at a central point of the imaginary polygon, when viewed from a plan view,

wherein the imaginary polygon is a quadrangle.

32. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **31**, wherein two of the four dummy pillars are at a boundary between the corresponding pad and a pad adjacent thereto.

33. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **32**, wherein two of the four dummy pillars are within the corresponding pad.

34. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **31**, wherein a diameter of each of the dummy pillars is less than that of the contact plug, when viewed from a plan view.

35. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **31**, further comprising a plurality of vertical patterns penetrating the electrode structure in the first region,

wherein the vertical patterns include a first vertical pattern and second vertical patterns surrounding the first vertical pattern,

wherein the first vertical pattern is at a central point of an additional imaginary polygon in a plan view, and the second vertical patterns are respectively at vertexes of the additional imaginary polygon in a plan view, and

wherein the additional imaginary polygon is a hexagon.

36. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **35**, wherein top surfaces of the dummy pillars are at a same level as top surfaces of the vertical patterns, and bottom surfaces of the dummy pillars are at a same level as bottom surfaces of the vertical patterns.

37. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **31**, wherein each of the dummy pillars includes:

a vertical semiconductor pattern extending in the direction perpendicular to the top surface of the substrate; and

a tunnel insulating layer, a charge storage layer, and a blocking insulating layer which are disposed between the vertical semiconductor pattern and the electrode structure.

38. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **31**, wherein the first region of the substrate is a memory region including a plurality of vertical patterns through the electrode structure, the dummy pillars having a same height and including a same material as the vertical patterns.

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39. A three-dimensional (3D) semiconductor device, comprising:

an electrode structure on a substrate, the electrode structure including a plurality of electrodes which are stacked in a direction perpendicular to a top surface of the substrate,

wherein the electrodes respectively include pads which define a stepped structure on the substrate;

a plurality of dummy pillars through the pads and the electrode structure under the pads; and

a contact plug electrically connected to a corresponding pad of the pads,

wherein the dummy pillars include four dummy pillars surrounding the contact plug when viewed from a plan view,

wherein the four dummy pillars are at vertexes of an imaginary polygon, respectively, and the contact plug is at a central point of the imaginary polygon, when viewed from a plan view,

wherein the imaginary polygon is a quadrangle,

wherein two of the four dummy pillars are at a boundary between the corresponding pad and a pad adjacent thereto, and

wherein a size of each of the four dummy pillars is smaller than that of the contact plug, when viewed from a plan view.

40. The 3D semiconductor device as claimed in claim **39**, wherein each of the dummy pillars includes:

a vertical semiconductor pattern extending in the direction perpendicular to the top surface of the substrate; and

a tunnel insulating layer, a charge storage layer, and a blocking insulating layer which are disposed between the vertical semiconductor pattern and the electrode structure.

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