NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Course: EE3013 Semiconductor Devices and Processing

School: School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Lithography – Advanced Lithography

Disclaimer

The preceding/ following videos contain slides with materials that were originally used for delivery in lecture halls and/ or classrooms in Nanyang Technological University. They might contain adapted materials. While every effort has been made to undertake due diligence to identify the original source, this was not always possible for all materials. The videos are used solely for educational purposes to support the Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) aspects of the course. TEL is hosted and deployed in NTULearn and i-NTULearn, a learning management system accessed by students at NTU assigned with a user ID and password. This disclaimer states that no copyright infringement was intended. Should any disagreement or dispute arise, including any claims to rightful ownership, kindly contact CITS, NTU, at +65 6790 5231.

Advanced Lithography – Lesson Overview

Advanced lithography:

- Optical enhancement techniques
- Immersion lithography
- X-ray lithography
- E-beam and SCALPEL lithography

Optical Enhanced Techniques

Three Ways to Improve Resolution

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Higher resolution:
- Can achieve a smaller feature size
- Smaller linewidth W_{min} is needed

Reduce λ:
- Shorter wavelength (436 nm, 365 nm, 248 nm, 193 nm, and 13.5 nm)

$$W_{min} = k_1 \frac{\lambda}{(NA)}$$

Reduce k_1:
- Improved masks (CD control and phase shift masks)
- Resolution Enhancement Techniques (RET)

Increase NA:
- Historically 0.1 - 0.4, approaching 0.8
- Hyper-NA for immersion lithography $NA > 1$

→ $k_1 < 0.3$ achievable

CD: Critical Dimension

$$\downarrow DOF = k_2 \frac{\lambda}{(NA)^2}$$

DOF decreases as

$$\boldsymbol{\lambda} \downarrow$$

DOF decreases as

$$\boldsymbol{k_2} \downarrow$$

DOF decreases as

$$\boldsymbol{NA} \uparrow$$

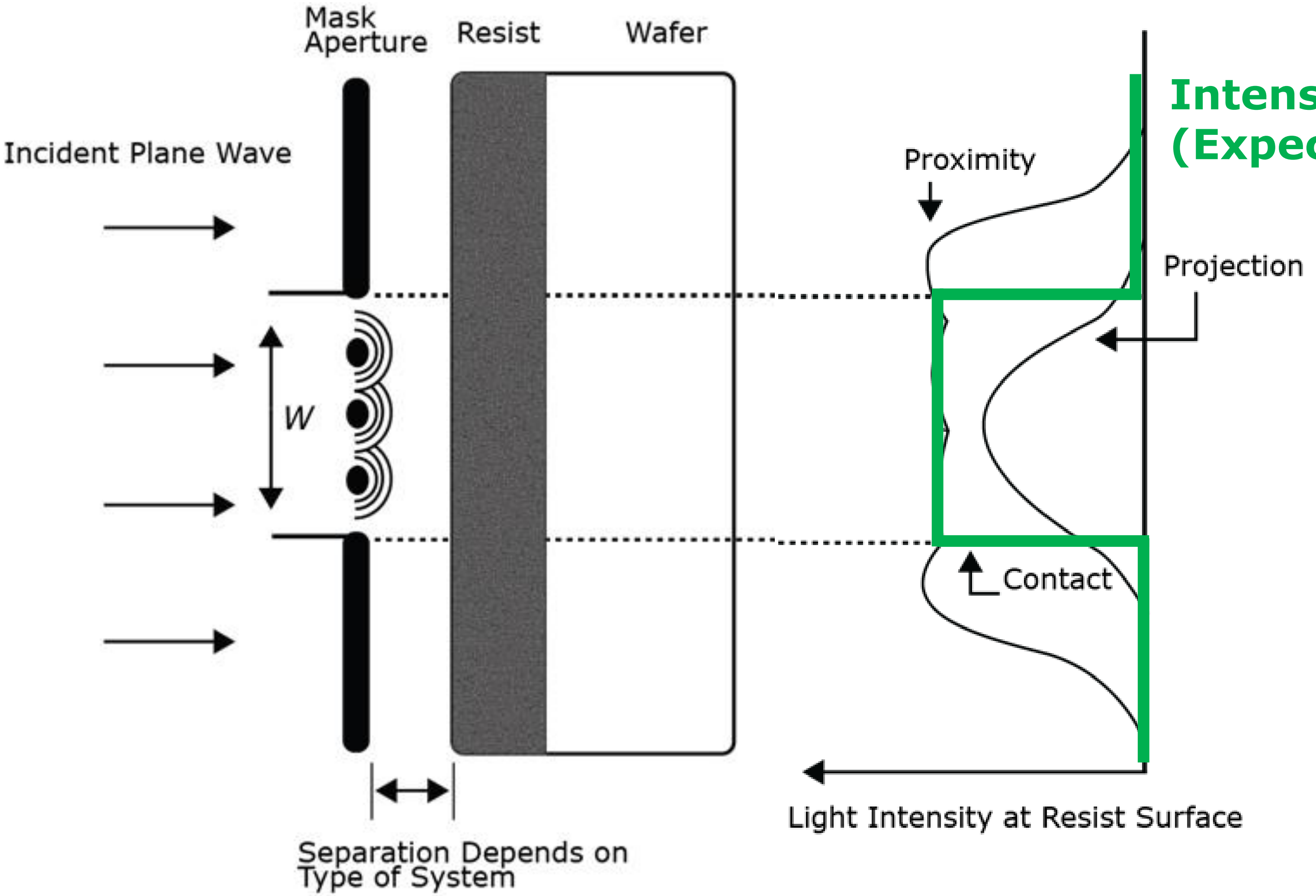
Nevertheless, wafers are made of PLANAR (very flat surface) with Chemical Mechanical Polishing (CMP) which allow the lithography systems to work with smaller DOF, resolving DOF issue.

Diffraction in Lithography

What is diffraction? Why is it a concern in lithography?

- Diffraction occurs when light passes through a narrow opening or a sharp edge.
- Interference patterns occur along the edge of the opening, causing a fuzzy image rather than the expected sharp edge that occurs between light and shadow.
- Light diffraction is a concern in photolithography because of the extremely small patterns of sharp edges and narrow spaces on reticles. Diffraction patterns rob exposure energy and scatter it, leading to exposure of unwanted areas of the resist.
- We can adopt optical enhancement techniques such as Optical Proximity Correction (OPC), Phase-Shift Masks (PSM) and Off-Axis Illumination (OAI).

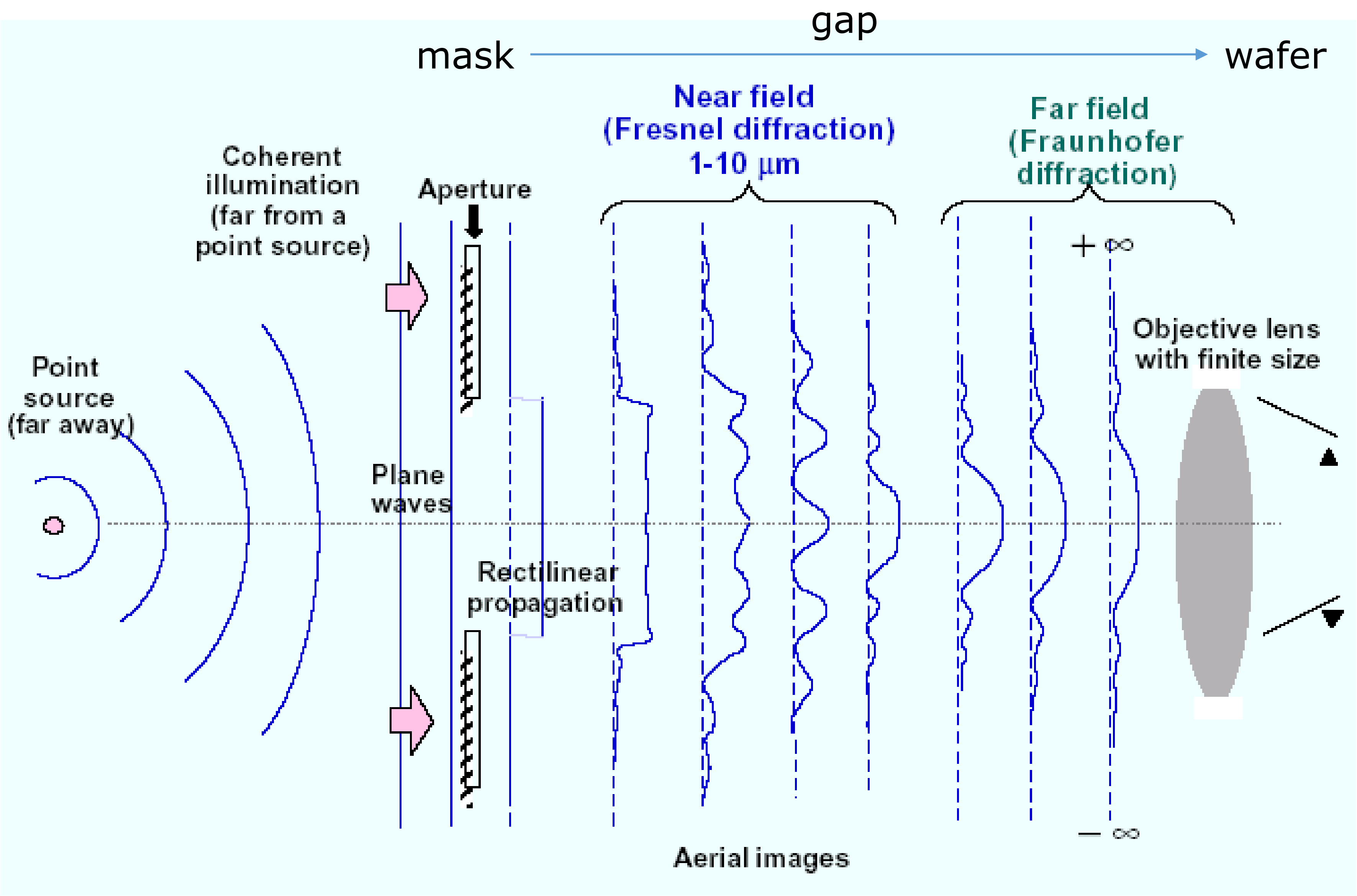
Diffraction in Lithography (Cont'd.)



Intensity on Contact Aligner (Expected Intensity)

- Aperture will create a diffraction pattern that will divert some of the light from its desired path, thereby decreasing the quality of the image.
- In lithography, there are two limiting cases (depending on the gap between the mask and the wafer): **Near field** image and **far field** image

Light Diffraction through an Aperture on Mask



- Aperture will create a diffraction pattern that will divert some of the light from its desired path, thereby decreasing the quality of the image
- In lithography, there are two limiting cases (depending on the gap between the mask and the wafer): **Near field** image and **far field** image

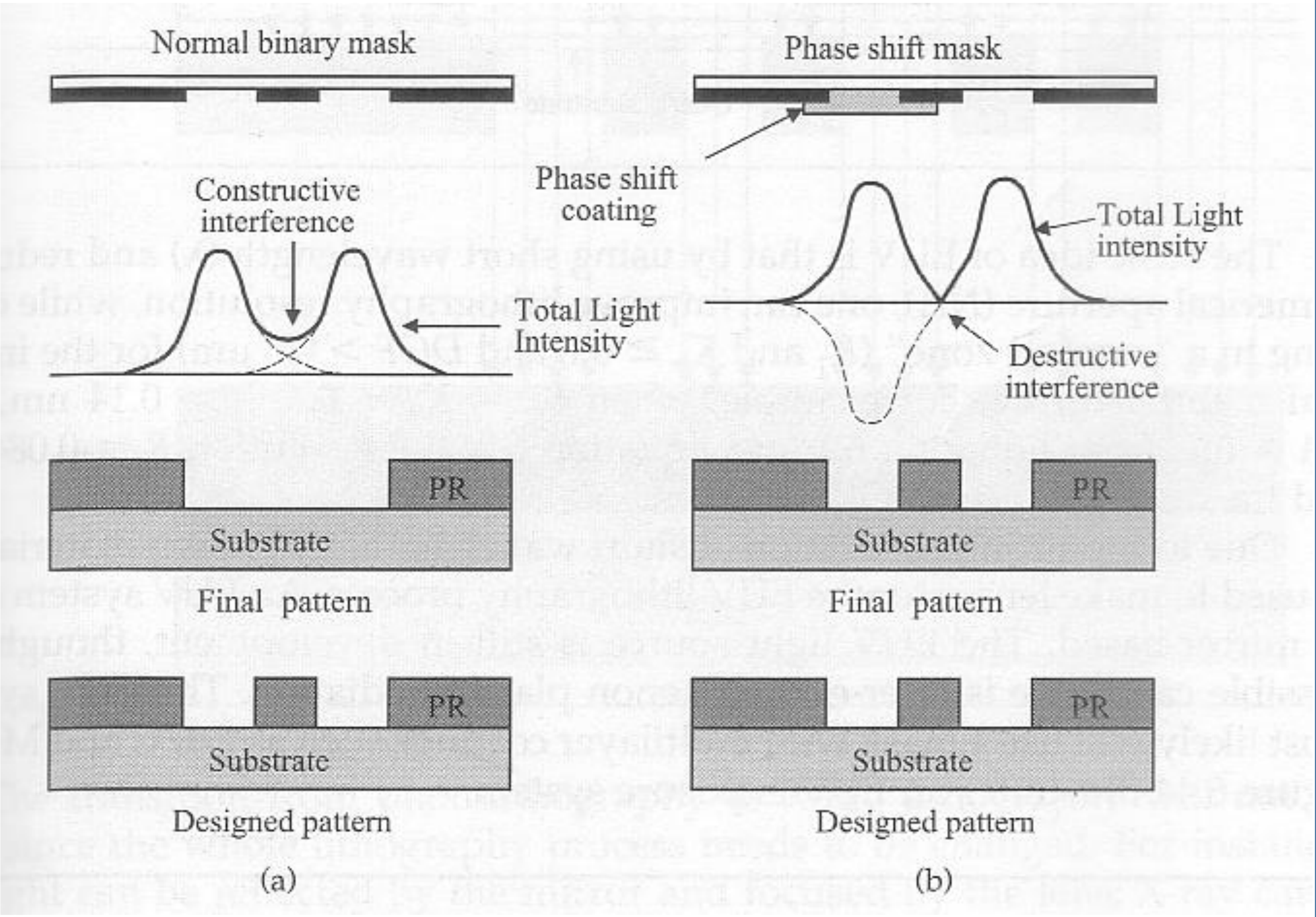
Optical Enhancement Technique

- **Phase-Shift Mask (PSM)**
- Optical Proximity Correction (OPC)
- Off-Axis Illumination (OAI)

Phase Shift Mask (PSM)

Phase-Shift Mask (PSM) is a method used to overcome problems associated with light diffraction through small openings patterned on the reticle.

With PSM, the reticle is modified with an additional transparent layer so that alternating clear regions cause the light to be phase-shifted 180°. This causes destructive interference, where light diffracted into the nominally dark area on the left will encounter destructive interference with light diffracted from the right clear area.



Optical Enhancement Technique

- Phase-Shift Mask (PSM)
- **Optical Proximity Correction (OPC)**
- Off-Axis Illumination (OAI)

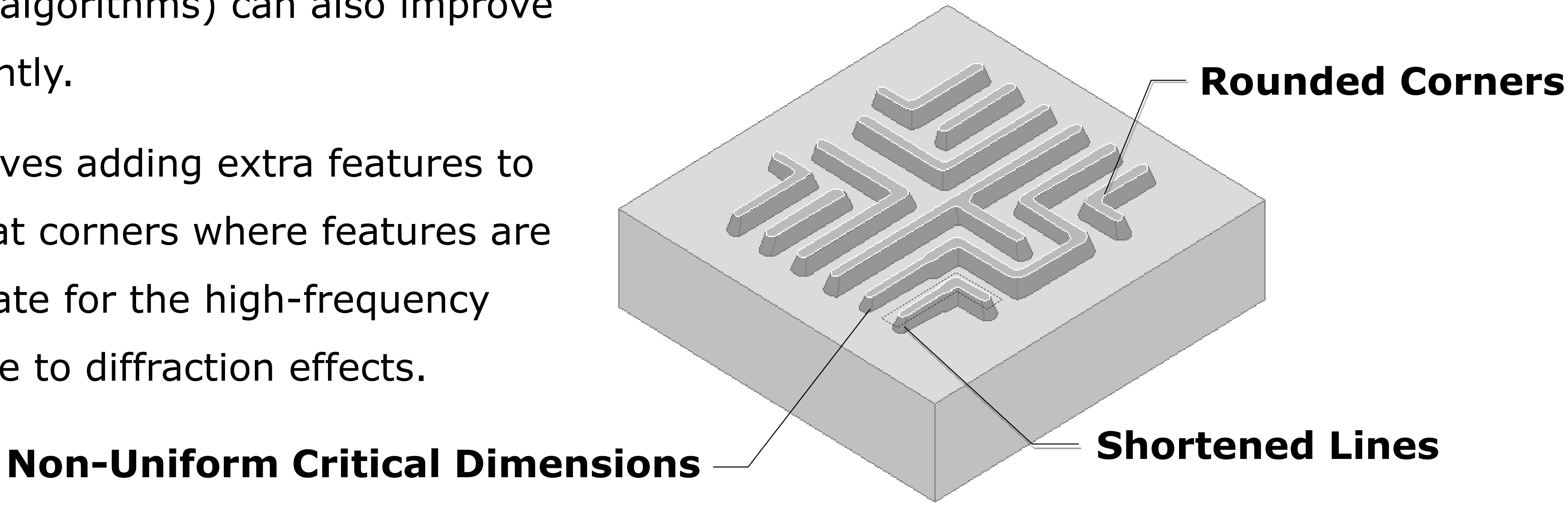
Optical Proximity Effect

High-frequency components of the diffracted light are lost for finite NA of lenses.

→ Ends and bows of narrow lines are not ideal

Use of optical proximity correction in the mask design. This is another approach to design a better mask (e.g. clever mask engineering based on software algorithms) can also improve resolution significantly.

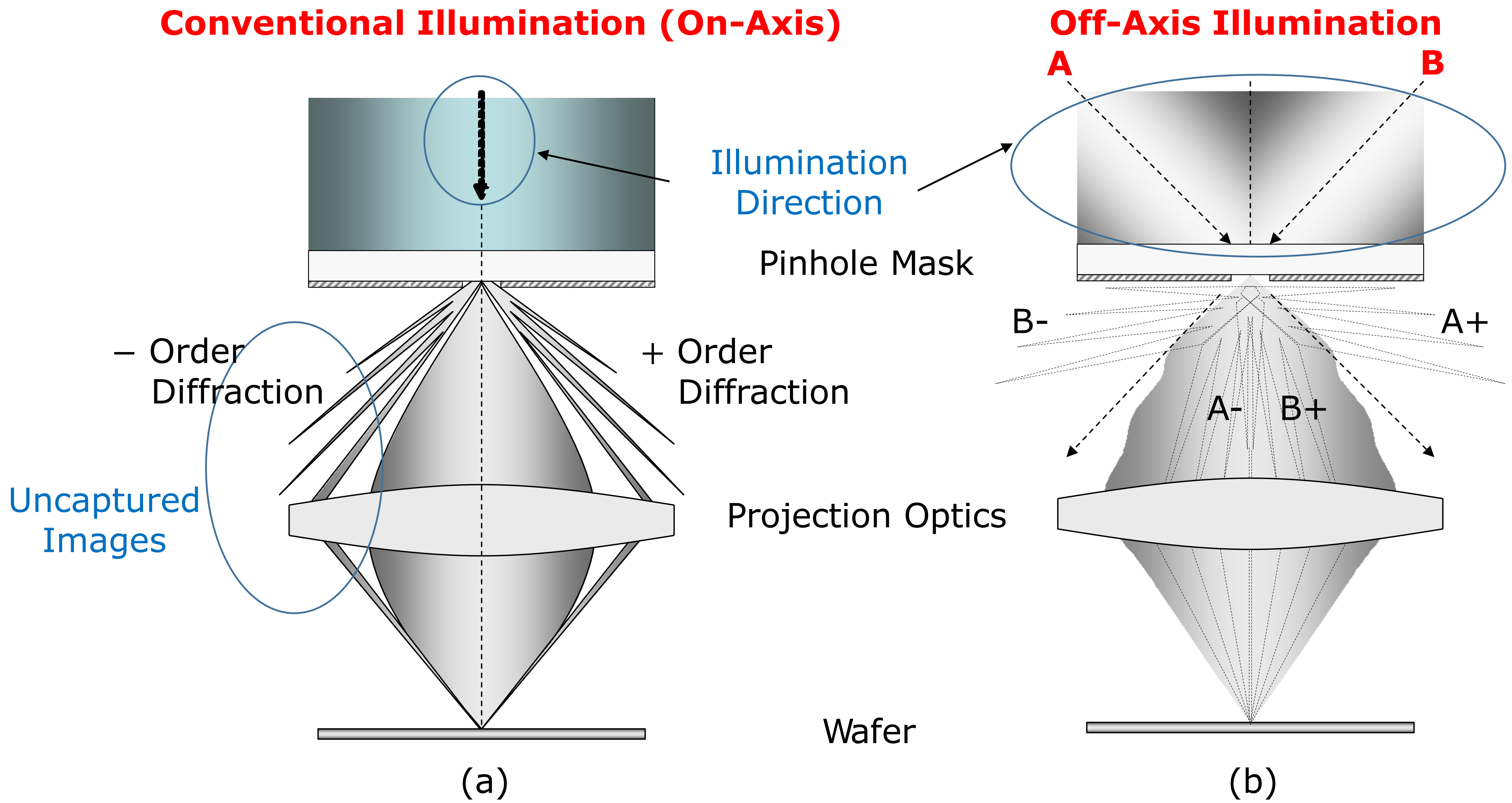
The approach involves adding extra features to the mask, usually at corners where features are sharp, to compensate for the high-frequency information lost due to diffraction effects.



Optical Enhancement Technique

- Phase-Shift Mask (PSM)
- Optical Proximity Correction (OPC)
- **Off-Axis Illumination (OAI):**
  1. This allows the optical system to capture some of the higher order diffracted light, and hence can improve resolution.
  2. OAI has the incident exposure light that strikes the mask at an angle in order to align diffraction fringes with the lens.

Off-Axis Illumination



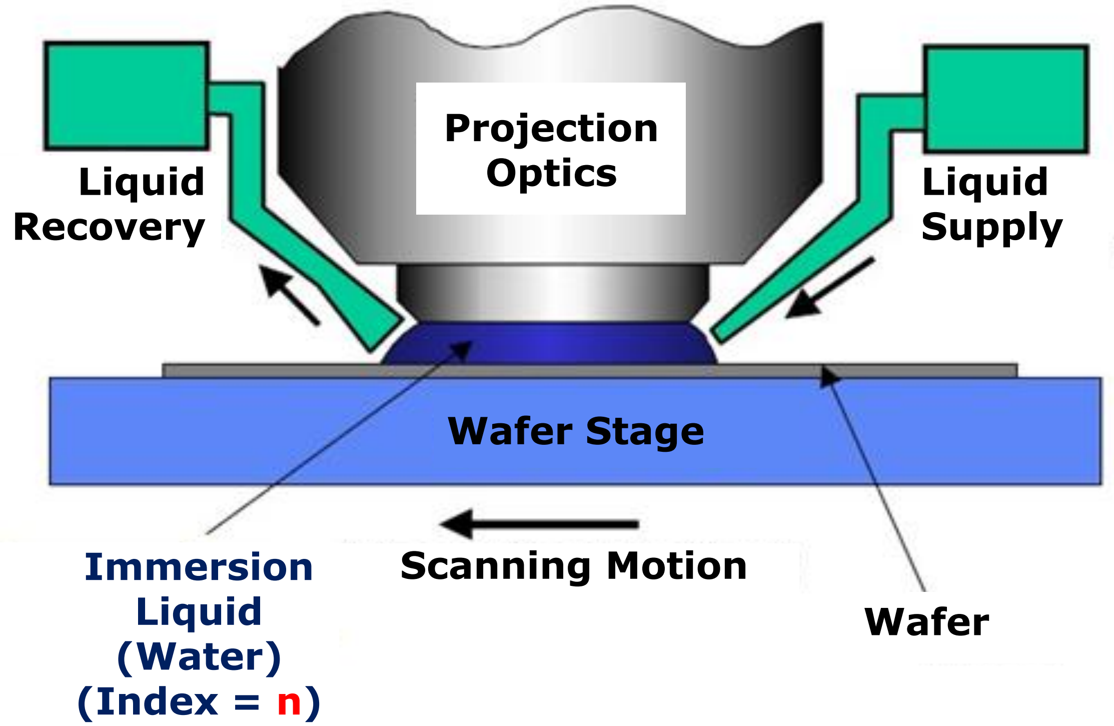
If the incident light source is illuminated at an angle with respect to the lens system (off-axis), higher order diffracted rays can be collected using the lens of the same size.

Immersion Lithography

Immersion Lithography– 2 Approaches

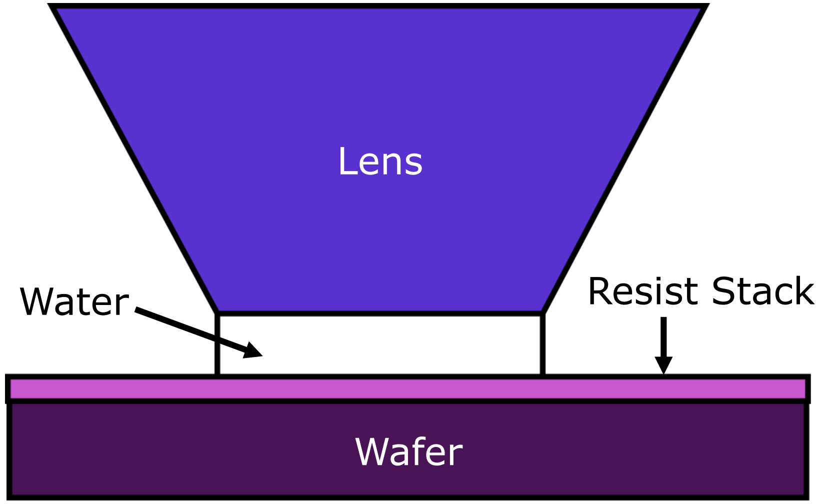
What is Immersion Lithography (IML)?

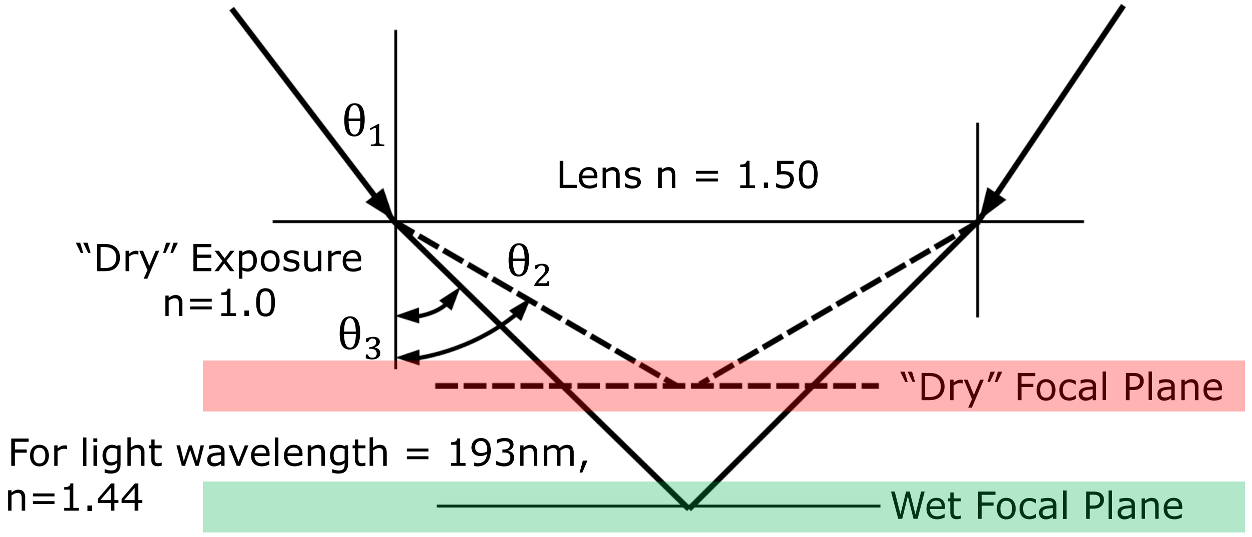
- **Approach 1:**
  - Same lens column design
  - Maintain resolution
  - Improve Depth of Focus (DOF)
- **Approach 2:**
  - Modified lens column: Hyper-NA (> 1.0)
  - Improve resolution
  - Lower DOF



NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Approach 1: Lens of same NA as in air





$$W_{min} = k_1 \frac{\lambda}{(NA)}$$ (Maintained)

$$NA = n \sin \theta$$

Improvement in DOF

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Approach 2: Modified NA

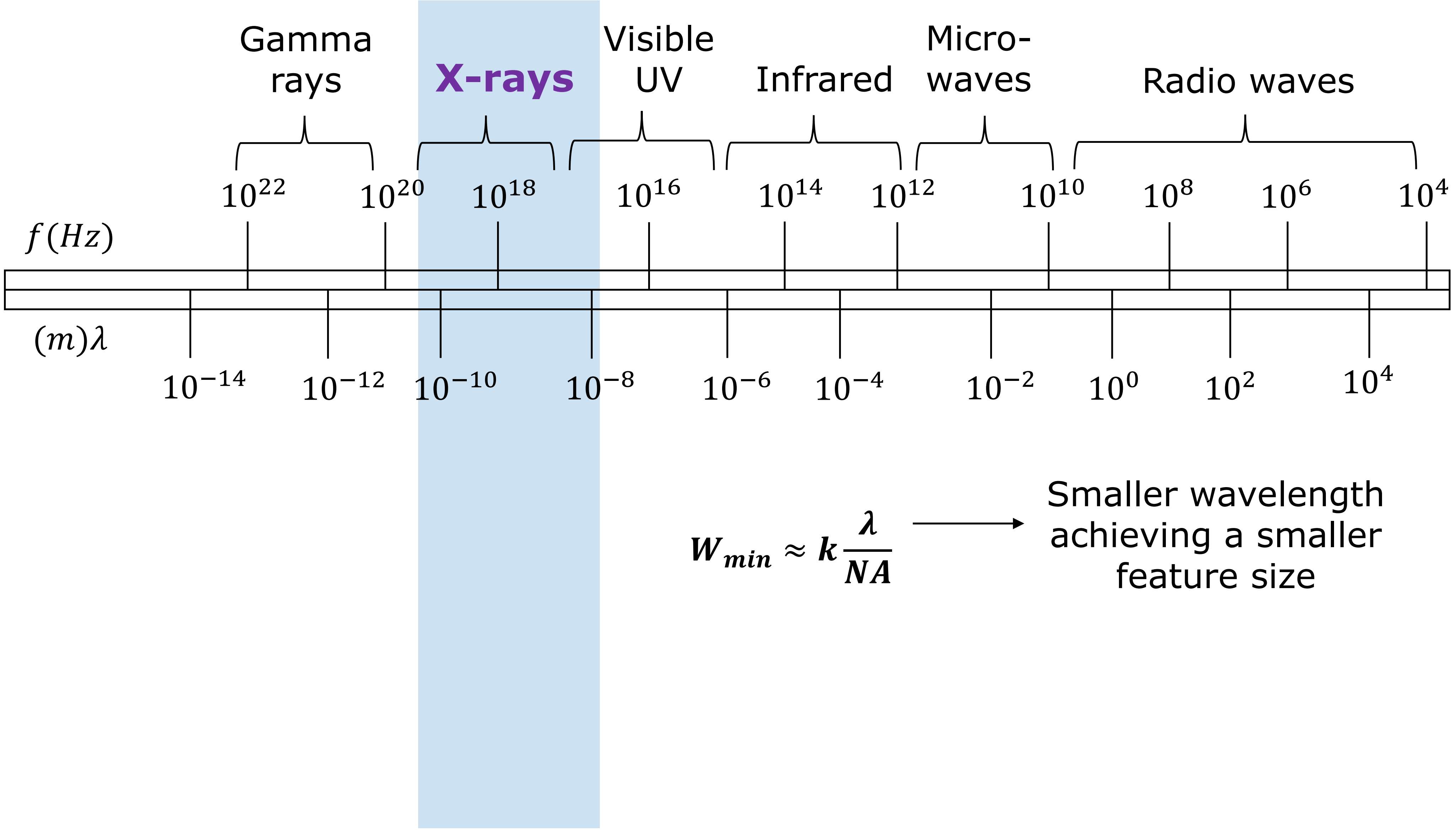
$\uparrow NA = \uparrow n \sin\theta$ (Exit angle θ of the lens for exposure does not change)

Higher resolution: $W_{min} = \frac{k_1 \lambda}{NA} = \frac{k_1 \lambda}{n \sin\theta}$

Lower DOF: $DOF = k_2 \frac{\lambda}{(NA)^2}$

X-Ray Lithography

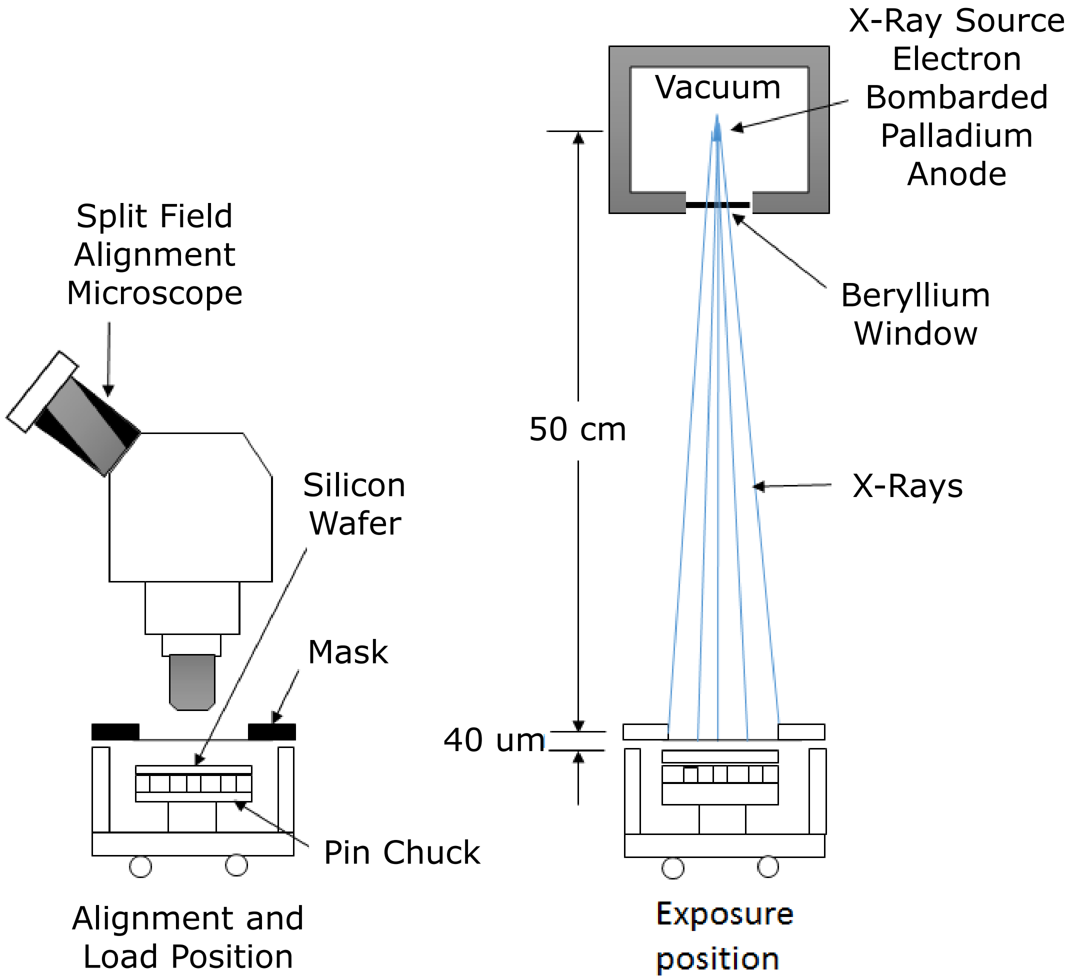
X-Ray Lithography



$$\boldsymbol{W_{min} \approx k\frac{\lambda}{NA}}$$ → Smaller wavelength achieving a smaller feature size

Schematic of an X-Ray Lithography System

- λ ~ 1 nm (extremely short wavelength for high resolution)
- X-rays are produced by synchrotron radiation in a high energy electron storage ring.
- Contamination becomes less of a concern because X-rays will penetrate most dust particles (low atomic number).
- No need for vacuum (little absorption of X-ray by air)
- No lens (transmission or reflection), because for X-ray, refractive index n=1; thus only proximity printing
- Proximity printing can still achieve high resolution (< 30nm) due to small λ.

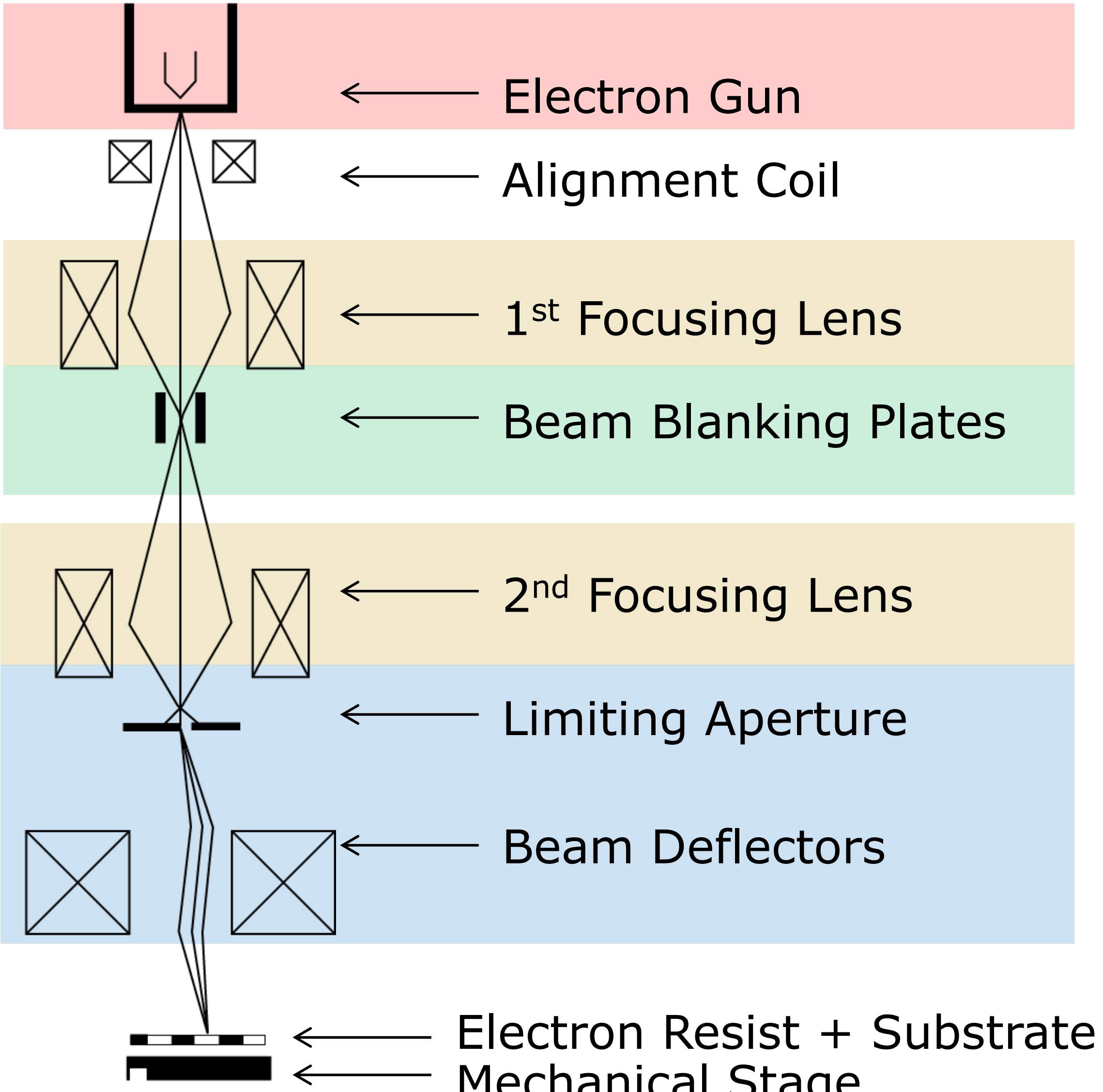


E-Beam and SCALPEL Lithography

Schematic of an Electron Beam Lithography System

System:

- Electron gun (or e-source)
- Focusing lens
- Beam blanking plates
- Beam deflectors (scan coils that direct beam horizontally and vertically)



Electron Beam Lithography

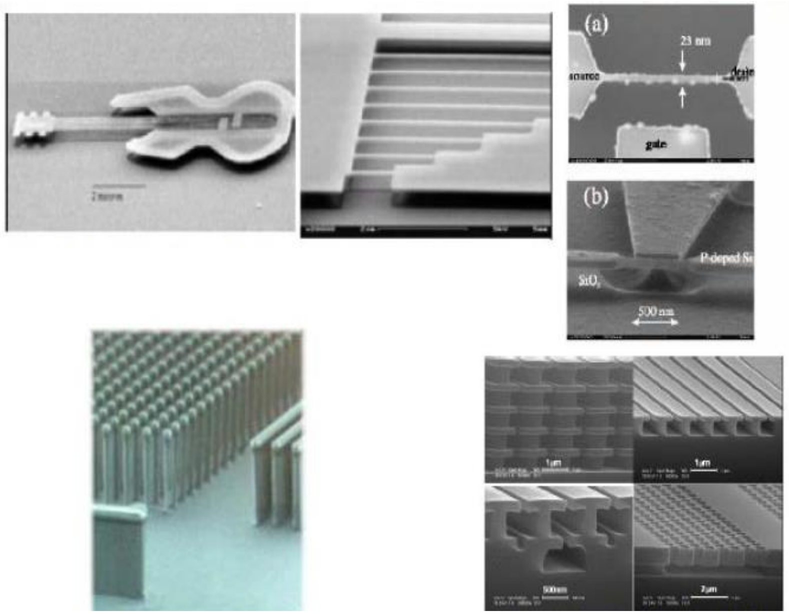
- The electron beam has a wavelength so small that diffraction is insignificant.
- The tool is just like an SEM with on-off capability controlled by a “beam blanker”.
- Accurate positioning (alignment): “see” the substrate first, then expose
- Beam spot diameter of 2 nm can be achieved, at a typical acceleration voltage of >20 keV.
- However, typical resolution ~15 nm (>> beam diameter), limited by proximity effect and lateral diffusion of secondary electrons.

De Broglie wavelength of electrons

$$\lambda = \frac{h}{\sqrt{2meV}}$$

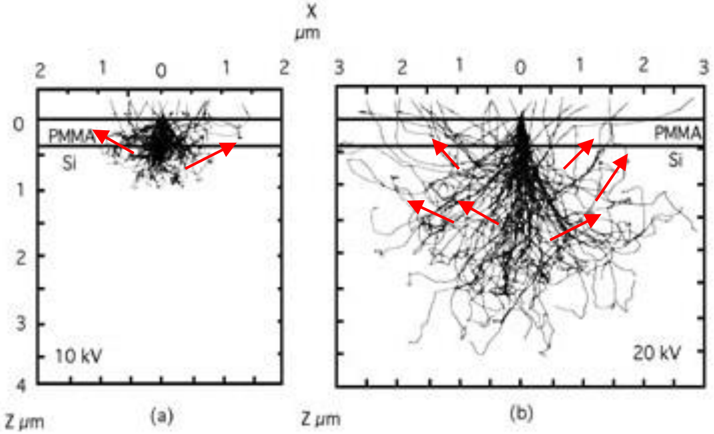
Where m is the mass of electron, e is electronic charge, h is Plank's constant.

Nanofabrication by E-Beam Lithography



Advantages

- Precise control of energy and dose
- Critical Dimension ~10 nm
- Beam focusing achieved using large electrostatic and magnetic field lenses
- Ability to register accurately over small areas
- Low defect densities

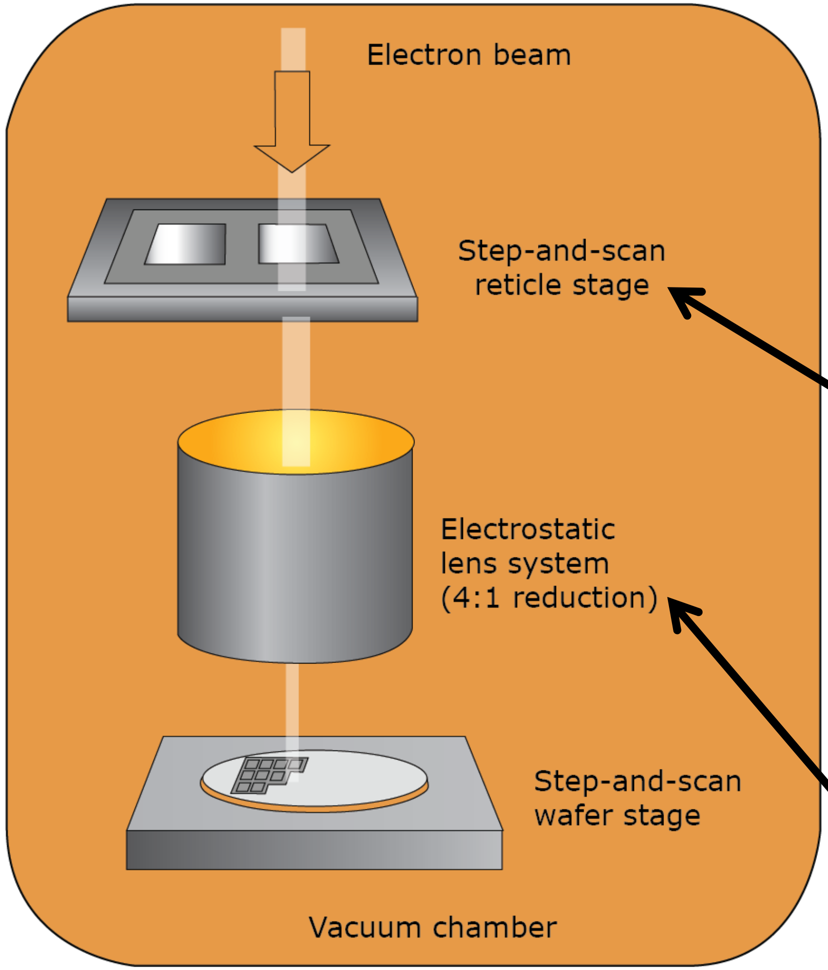


Disadvantages

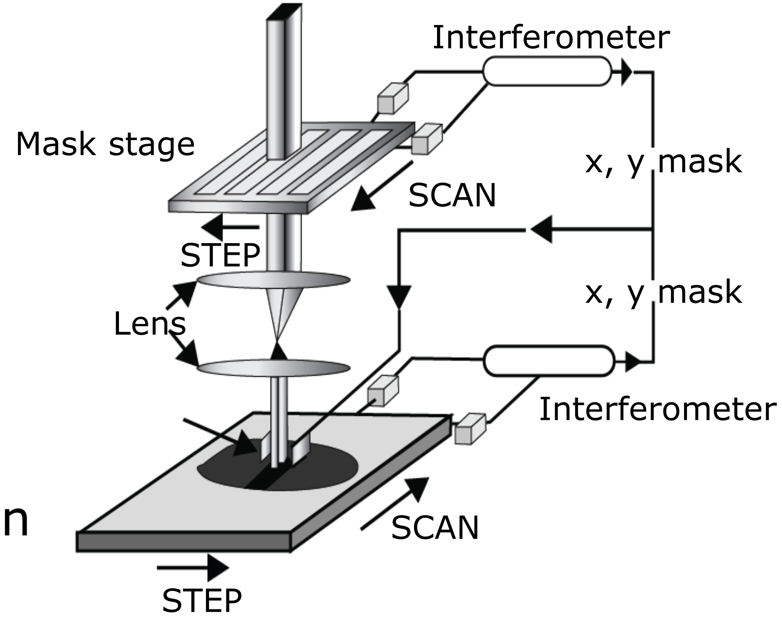
- Requires ultra-high vacuum system to drive electrons effectively
- Very sensitive to electronic and mechanical noise
- → Proximity effect - resolution degrades due to backscattering of electrons within the resist surface

SCALPEL: Basic Concept

- SCattering with Angular Limitation Projection Electron beam Lithography - *Developed at Bell's lab*



- Combine all the benefits of step-and-repeat imaging, size reduction, and the narrow beam resolution of e-beam lithography.
- Mask: Silicon nitride membrane (100 nm) patterned with 25 nm of W
- Thickness coupled with the atomic mass of W provides sufficient scattering contrast
- Step-and-scan with 4X reduction
- Decrease exposure time



Advanced Lithography – Summary

Advanced lithography:

- Optical enhancement techniques in UV lithography include phase shift mask, optical proximity correction, and off-axis illumination.
- Immersion lithography improves the resolution and depth of focus by performing UV light exposure in an immersion liquid.
- X-ray lithography uses X-ray as its exposure source, whereas e-beam lithography uses electron beam as its exposure source.
- SCALPEL combines all the benefits of step-and-repeat imaging, size reduction, and the narrow beam resolution of e-beam lithography to improve resolution and decrease exposure time.

Practice Question 1

Which of the following is not considered a viable lithography method for the next generation lithography?

a) Optical lithography
b) Extreme UV (EUV)
c) SCALPEL
d) X-ray lithography

Pause and try out this question

Practice Question 2

A lithography exposure system deploys an Hg arc lamp with three available wavelengths – 436nm (g-line), 405nm (h-line) and 365nm (i-line) respectively. Assume the process dependent factor, k = 1.

a) Determine the smallest feature size that is possible with this system for an allowable proximity gap of 0.6um.

b) If the g- line of the lamp us being deployed, determine the maximum allowable proximity gap for the system to print a feature size of 1.5um.

Pause and try out this question

Answers:

a) For smallest feature size, use 365nm (i-line), $W_{min} = \sqrt{k\lambda g} = \sqrt{365x10^{-9} \text{ x } 0.6x10^{-6}} = 4.68x10^{-7}m$

b) If 436nm (g-line) is used, $g = \frac{(W_{\min})^2}{k\lambda} = \frac{(1.5x10^{-6})^2}{436x10^{-9}} = 5.16x10^{-6}m$

Practice Question 3

Discuss the implication to the maximum allowable proximity gap of the exposure system mentioned in previous question (Q1) if

a) The optical source is changed to X-ray as opposed to Hg arc lamp used in the earlier case.

b) Phase shift masks are used in the exposure.

Pause and try out this question

Answers:

a) If the optical source is changed to X-ray as opposed to Hg arc lamp used in the earlier case, λ is smaller, larger g (max allowable proximity)

b) If the phase shift masks are used in the exposure, k is smaller, larger g (max allowable proximity)

Practice Question 4

What are the advantages and disadvantages for X-ray?

Advantages of X-ray lithography

- High resolution
- Reduced diffraction effect

Disadvantages of X-ray lithography

- Expensive X-ray source
- Absorption problem (mask)
- Shadowing errors
- Non-monochromatic X-ray source
- Low throughput

Pause and try out this question