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Daniel J. C. Herr
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Contents

ix	Conference Committee
xiii	Introduction

SESSION 1 KEYNOTE SESSION

7637 03	Maskless lithography and nanopatterning with electron and ion multibeam projection (Keynote Paper) [7637-02] E. Platzgummer, IMS Nanofabrication AG (Austria)
---------	---

SESSION 2 NANOIMPRINT LITHOGRAPHY I: UV-NIL

7637 06	Step and flash imprint lithography for semiconductor high volume manufacturing? [7637-05] M. Malloy, L. C. Litt, SEMATECH (United States)
7637 08	Planarizing material for reverse-tone step and flash imprint lithography [7637-07] T. Ogawa, The Univ. of Texas at Austin (United States); S. Takei, Nissan Chemical Industries, Ltd. (Japan); B. M. Jacobsson, R. Deschner, W. Bell, M. W. Lin, Y. Hagiwara, The Univ. of Texas at Austin (United States); M. Hanabata, Nissan Chemical Industries, Ltd. (Japan); C. G. Willson, The Univ. of Texas at Austin (United States)

SESSION 3 MASKLESS LITHOGRAPHY I

7637 0A	E-beam maskless lithography: prospects and challenges (Invited Paper) [7637-09] K. Ronse, IMEC (Belgium)
7637 0B	50 keV electron-beam projection maskless lithography (PML2): results obtained with 2,500 programmable 12.5-nm sized beams [7637-10] C. Klein, J. Klikovits, L. Szikszai, E. Platzgummer, H. Loeschner, IMS Nanofabrication AG (Austria)
7637 0C	Evaluation of throughput improvement by MCC and CP in multicolumn e-beam exposure system [7637-11] A. Yamada, Y. Oae, T. Okawa, M. Takizawa, M. Yamabe, Association of Super-Advanced Electronics Technologies (Japan)
7637 0D	Evaluation of maskless electron beam direct writing with double character projection apertures [7637-12] Y. Midoh, T. Terasaka, K. Nakamae, Osaka Univ. (Japan)
7637 0E	Multiple pass exposure in e-beam lithography: application to the sub-22nm nodes [7637-13] L. Martin, CEA-LETI (France); S. Manakli, ASELTA Nanographics (France); B. Icard, J. Pradelles, CEA-LETI (France); R. Orobtcchouk, A. Poncet, Institut National des Sciences Appliquées de Lyon (France); L. Pain, CEA-LETI (France)

- 7637 OF **MAPPER: high-throughput maskless lithography** [7637-14]
M. J. Wieland, G. de Boer, G. F. ten Berge, M. van Kervinck, R. Jager, J. J. M. Peijster, E. Slot, S. W. H. K. Steenbrink, T. F. Teepe, B. J. Kampherbeek, MAPPER Lithography B.V. (Netherlands)

SESSION 4 DIRECTED SELF-ASSEMBLY I: SELECTED SEMICONDUCTOR APPLICATIONS: JOINT SESSION WITH CONFERENCE 7639

- 7637 OG **Self-assembling materials for lithographic patterning: overview, status, and moving forward (Invited Paper)** [7637-15]
W. Hinsberg, J. Cheng, H.-C. Kim, D. P. Sanders, IBM Almaden Research Ctr. (United States)
- 7637 OH **Templated self-assembly of Si-containing block copolymers for nanoscale device fabrication** [7637-16]
C. A. Ross, Y. S. Jung, V. P. Chuang, J. G. Son, K. W. Gotrik, R. A. Mickiewicz, J. K. W. Yang, J. B. Chang, K. K. Berggren, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (United States); J. Gwyther, I. Manners, Univ. of Bristol (United Kingdom)
- 7637 OI **CMOS process compatible directed block copolymer self-assembly for 20nm contact holes and beyond** [7637-17]
L.-W. Chang, X.-Y. Bao, H.-S. P. Wong, Stanford Univ. (United States)

SESSION 5 DIRECTED SELF-ASSEMBLY II: PROCESSING AND FUNCTIONAL DIVERSIFICATION

- 7637 OL **Directed assembly of block copolymers on lithographically defined surfaces (Invited Paper)** [7637-20]
G. S. W. Craig, P. F. Nealey, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison (United States)
- 7637 OM **Adhesion of DNA nanostructures and DNA origami to lithographically patterned self-assembled monolayers on Si[100]** [7637-21]
K. Sarveswaran, B. Gao, K. N. Kim, G. H. Bernstein, M. Lieberman, Univ. of Notre Dame (United States)
- 7637 ON **Electron-beam directed materials assembly** [7637-22]
R. P. Kingsborough, R. B. Goodman, D. Astolfi, T. H. Fedynyshyn, MIT Lincoln Lab. (United States)
- 7637 OO **Self-assembling nanosphere lithography process for gated carbon nanotube field emission arrays** [7637-23]
B. L. Crossley, R. A. Coutu, Jr., L. A. Starman, P. J. Collins, Air Force Institute of Technology (United States)
- 7637 OP **Field-based simulations of directed self-assembly in a mixed brush system** [7637-24]
S.-M. Hur, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara (United States); A. L. Frischknecht, D. Huber, Sandia National Labs. (United States); G. H. Fredrickson, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara (United States)

SESSION 6 NANOIMPRINT LITHOGRAPHY II: IMPRINT MASK INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7637 0R **Inspection of imprint lithography patterns for semiconductor and patterned media** [7637-26]
D. J. Resnick, G. Haase, L. Singh, D. Curran, G. M. Schmid, K. Luo, C. Brooks, K. Selinidis,
J. Fretwell, S. V. Sreenivasan, Molecular Imprints, Inc. (United States)
- 7637 0S **Fully automated hot embossing processes utilizing high resolution working stamps** [7637-27]
T. Glinsner, EV Group (Austria); T. Veres, National Research Council Canada (Canada);
G. Kreindl, EV Group (Austria); E. Roy, K. Morton, National Research Council Canada
(Canada); T. Wieser, C. Thanner, D. Treiblmayr, EV Group (Austria); R. Miller, EV Group, Inc.
(United States); P. Lindner, EV Group (Austria)
- 7637 0U **Automating molecular transfer lithography at 25 nm on 200mm wafers including site-remote
coating of resist on dissolvable templates** [7637-29]
C. D. Schaper, Transfer Devices, Inc. (United States)

SESSION 7 MASKLESS LITHOGRAPHY II

- 7637 0V **Nanoprobe maskless lithography (Invited Paper)** [7637-30]
I. W. Rangelow, T. Ivanov, Y. Sarov, A. Schuh, A. Frank, H. Hartmann, J.-P. Zöllner, Technische
Univ. Ilmenau (Germany); D. L. Olynick, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. (United States);
V. Kalchenko, Institute of Organic Chemistry (Ukraine)
- 7637 0W **Conventional and reversed image printing in electron beam direct write lithography with
proximity effect corrections based on dose and shape modification** [7637-31]
K.-H. Choi, M. Gutsch, M. Freitag, K. Keil, P. Jaschinsky, C. Hohle, Fraunhofer-Ctr.
Nanoelektronische Technologien (Germany)
- 7637 0X **Full-chip high resolution electron-beam lithography proximity effect correction modeling**
[7637-32]
A. Isoyan, L. S. Melvin III, Synopsys, Inc. (United States)

SESSION 8 NOVEL METHODS AND APPLICATIONS I

- 7637 10 **Biomolecular architectures and systems for nanoscience engineering (Invited Paper)**
[7637-35]
J. N. Cha, A. M. Hung, H. Noh, Univ. of California, San Diego (United States)
- 7637 11 **Performance evaluation of MOSFETs with discrete dopant distribution by one-by-one doping
method** [7637-36]
T. Shinada, M. Hori, Waseda Univ. (Japan); Y. Ono, NTT Basic Research Labs. (Japan);
K. Taira, A. Komatsubara, T. Tani, Waseda Univ. (Japan); T. Endoh, Tohoku Univ. (Japan);
I. Ohdomari, Waseda Univ. (Japan)
- 7637 12 **Surface electron emission lithography system based on a planar type Si nanowire array
ballistic electron source** [7637-37]
A. Kojima, Crestec Corp. (Japan) and Tokyo Univ. of Agriculture and Technology (Japan);
T. Ohta, Tokyo Univ. of Agriculture and Technology (Japan); H. Ohya, Crestec Corp. (Japan);
N. Koshida, Tokyo Univ. of Agriculture and Technology (Japan)

- 7637 13 **Flying plasmonic lens at near field for high speed nanolithography** [7637-38]
L. Pan, Y.-S. Park, Y. Xiong, E. Ulin-Avila, L. Zeng, Univ. of California, Berkeley (United States);
C. Sun, Univ. of California, Berkeley (United States) and Northwestern Univ. (United States); D.
B. Bogy, X. Zhang, Univ. of California, Berkeley (United States)

SESSION 9 MASKLESS LITHOGRAPHY III: OPTICAL MASKLESS LITHOGRAPHY

- 7637 15 **Multi-shaped beam proof of lithography** [7637-41]
M. Slodowski, H.-J. Doering, W. Dorl, I. A. Stolberg, Vistec Electron Beam GmbH (Germany)
- 7637 16 **Hardware implementation of Block GC3 lossless compression algorithm for direct-write lithography systems** [7637-42]
H.-I. Liu, B. Richards, A. Zakhor, B. Nikolic, Univ. of California, Berkeley (United States)
- 7637 17 **Characteristics performance of production-worthy multiple e-beam maskless lithography** [7637-43]
S. J. Lin, W. C. Wang, P. S. Chen, C. Y. Liu, T. N. Lo, J. J. H. Chen, F. Krecinic, B. J. Lin, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (Taiwan)
- 7637 18 **Advances in DMD-based UV application reliability below 320 nm** [7637-44]
J. T. Fong, T. W. Winter, S. J. Jacobs, Texas Instruments Inc. (United States)

SESSION 10 NANOIMPRINT LITHOGRAPHY III: SELECTED IMPRINT APPLICATIONS

- 7637 19 **Advances in roll-to-roll imprint lithography for display applications (Invited Paper)** [7637-45]
A. Jeans, Hewlett-Packard Co. (United States); M. Almanza-Workman, Phicor, Inc. (United States); R. Cobene, R. Elder, Hewlett-Packard Co. (United States); R. Garcia, Phicor, Inc. (United States); F. Gomez-Pancorbo, W. Jackson, M. Jam, Hewlett-Packard Co. (United States); H.-J. Kim, O. Kwon, Phicor, Inc. (United States); H. Luo, J. Maltabes, P. Mei, C. Perlov, M. Smith, C. Taussig, Hewlett-Packard Co. (United States); F. Jeffrey, S. Braymen, J. Hauschildt, K. Junge, D. Larson, D. Stieler, PowerFilm, Inc. (United States)
- 7637 1A **High volume jet and flash imprint lithography for discrete track patterned media** [7637-46]
Z. Ye, R. Ramos, C. Brooks, P. Hellebrekers, S. Carden, D. LaBrake, Molecular Imprints, Inc. (United States)

SESSION 11 NOVEL METHODS AND APPLICATIONS II

- 7637 1D **Tip-based nanofabrication: an approach to true nanotechnology (Invited Paper)** [7637-50]
A. R. Schofield, K. P. Blooschok, System Planning Corp. (United States); T. W. Kenny, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (United States)
- 7637 1E **Direct write 3-dimensional nanopatterning using probes** [7637-51]
D. Pires, A. Knoll, U. Duerig, U. Drechsler, M. Despont, H. Wolf, IBM Zurich Research Lab. (Switzerland); J. Hedrick, IBM Almaden Research Ctr. (United States); E. de Silva, IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Ctr. (United States)

- 7637 1F **High throughput plasmonic lithography for sub 50nm patterning with a contact probe** [7637-52]
Y. Kim, S. Kim, H. Jung, J. W. Hahn, Yonsei Univ. (Korea, Republic of)
- 7637 1G **Maskless plasmonic lithography for patterning of one- and two-dimensional periodic features** [7637-53]
V. M. Murukeshan, K. V. Sreekanth, Nanyang Technological Univ. (Singapore)

SESSION 12 CROSS-CUTTING TECHNOLOGIES

- 7637 1J **SLICE image analysis for diblock copolymer characterization and process optimization** [7637-56]
Y. Hong, L.-W. Chang, A. Lin, H.-S. P. Wong, Stanford Univ. (United States)
- 7637 1K **Monitor and self-diagnostic technology for mask e-beam writing system** [7637-57]
N. Samoto, H. Manabe, O. Wakimoto, S. Iida, H. Hoshi, M. Yamabe, Association of Super-Advanced Electronics Technologies (Japan)
- 7637 1L **Lossless compression algorithm for REBL direct-write e-beam lithography system** [7637-58]
G. Cramer, H.-I Liu, A. Zakhor, Univ. of California, Berkeley (United States)

POSTER SESSION

- 7637 1N **Full area pattern decomposition of self-aligned double patterning for 30nm node NAND FLASH process** [7637-60]
Y.-S. Chang, Powerchip Semiconductor Corp. (Taiwan); J. Sweis, Cadence Design Systems, Inc. (United States); J.-C. Lai, C.-C. Lin, Powerchip Semiconductor Corp. (Taiwan); J. Yu, Cadence Design Systems III B.V. (Taiwan)
- 7637 1O **A novel lithography process for 3D (three-dimensional) interconnect using an optical direct-writing exposure system** [7637-61]
T. Azuma, M. Sekiguchi, M. Matsuo, A. Kawasaki, K. Hagiwara, Toshiba Corp. (Japan); H. Matsui, N. Kawamura, K. Kishimoto, Dainippon Screen Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (Japan); A. Nakamura, Y. Washio, Tokyo Ohka Kogyo Co., Ltd. (Japan)
- 7637 1Q **Architecture for next-generation massively parallel maskless lithography system (MPML2)** [7637-64]
M.-S. Su, K.-T. Tsai, Y.-C. Lu, Y.-H. Kuo, T.-H. Pei, J.-Y. Yen, National Taiwan Univ. (Taiwan)
- 7637 1R **Nanoimprint template fabrication using wafer pattern for sub-30 nm** [7637-65]
C. M. Park, SAMSUNG Electronics Co., Ltd. (Korea, Republic of) and Korea Univ. (Korea, Republic of); K. J. Kim, Y. J. Lee, K. Y. Cho, Y. M. Lee, J. O. Park, I. S. Kim, J. H. Yeo, S. W. Choi, C. H. Park, SAMSUNG Electronics Co., Ltd. (Korea, Republic of); D. H. Lee, B. K. Lee, SAMSUNG Advanced Institute of Technology (Korea, Republic of); S. W. Hwang, Korea Univ. (Korea, Republic of)
- 7637 1S **CP based EBDW throughput enhancement for 22nm high volume manufacturing** [7637-66]
T. Maruyama, Y. Machida, S. Sugatani, e-Shuttle, Inc. (Japan)

- 7637 1T **Monte Carlo modeling of BSE reflection in e-beam writers** [7637-67]
H. Alves, Vistec Electron Beam GmbH (Germany); K.-P. Johnsen, Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (Germany); P. Hahmann, Vistec Electron Beam GmbH (Germany); D. Gnieser, C. G. Frase, H. Bosse, Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (Germany)
- 7637 1U **Investigation of lithographic feature characteristics using UV cure as a pitch doubling stabilization technology for the 32nm node and beyond** [7637-69]
K. Petrillo, M. Colburn, IBM Corp. (United States); S. Dunn, D. Hetzer, TEL Technology Ctr., America, LLC (United States); T. Winter, Tokyo Electron America, Inc. (United States); S. Shimura, Tokyo Electron Kyushu Ltd. (Japan)
- 7637 1V **Model-based proximity effect correction for electron beam direct-write lithography** [7637-70]
C.-H. Liu, P.-L. Tien, P. C. W. Ng, Y.-T. Shen, K.-Y. Tsai, National Taiwan Univ. (Taiwan)
- 7637 1X **High volume manufacturing of nanoimprint lithography produced devices: addressing the stamp supply challenge** [7637-72]
Y. Zhou, M. Asbahi, G. Luo, T. Eriksson, S. Yamada, P. V. Krishnan, B. Heidari, OBDUCAT AB (Sweden)
- 7637 1Y **Operation and performance of the CNSE Vistec VB300 electron beam lithography system** [7637-73]
J. G. Hartley, T. R. Groves, R. Bonam, A. Raghunathan, J. Ruan, Univ. at Albany (United States); A. McClelland, N. Crosland, J. Cunanan, K. Han, Vistec Lithography, Inc. (United States)
- 7637 1Z **Throughput enhancement technique for MAPPER maskless lithography** [7637-74]
M. J. Wieland, H. Derks, H. Gupta, T. van de Peut, F. M. Postma, A. H. V. van Veen, Y. Zhang, MAPPER Lithography B.V. (Netherlands)
- 7637 20 **Design and fabrication of Si-based photonic crystal stamps with electron beam lithography (EBL)** [7637-76]
R. Jannesary, I. Bergmair, S. Zamiri, K. Hingerl, Univ. Linz (Austria)
- 7637 21 **A first order analysis of scatterometry sensitivity for NIL process** [7637-77]
T. Miyakawa, K. Sentoku, K. Sato, H. Ina, Canon Inc. (Japan)

Author Index

Conference Committee

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Technologies (Japan)

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Opening Remarks

Daniel J. C. Herr, Semiconductor Research Corporation (United States)

- 1 Keynote Session
Daniel J. C. Herr, Semiconductor Research Corporation (United States)
William M. Tong, SES Consultants (United States)
- 2 Nanoimprint Lithography I: UV-NIL
William M. Tong, SES Consultants (United States)
Tatsuhiko Higashiki, Toshiba Corporation (Japan)
- 3 Maskless Lithography I
Hans Loeschner, IMS Nanofabrication AG (Austria)
Timothy R. Groves, University at Albany (United States)
- 4 Directed Self-Assembly I: Selected Semiconductor Applications: Joint
Session with Conference 7639
Gregory M. Wallraff, IBM Almaden Research Center (United States)
Elizabeth A. Dobisz, Hitachi Global Storage Technologies, Inc. (United
States)
- 5 Directed Self-Assembly II: Processing and Functional Diversification
James A. Liddle, National Institute of Standards and Technology
(United States)
Joy Y. Cheng, IBM Almaden Research Center (United States)
- 6 Nanoimprint Lithography II: Imprint Mask Infrastructure
Elizabeth A. Dobisz, Hitachi Global Storage Technologies, Inc. (United
States)
Douglas J. Resnick, Molecular Imprints, Inc. (United States)
- 7 Maskless Lithography II
Timothy R. Groves, University at Albany (United States)
Lloyd C. Litt, GLOBALFOUNDRIES Inc. (United States) and SEMATECH,
Inc. (United States)
- 8 Novel Methods and Applications I
Ryan J. Kershner, University of Wisconsin-Madison (United States)
James A. Liddle, National Institute of Standards and Technology
(United States)

- 9 Maskless Lithography III: Optical Maskless Lithography
Lloyd C. Litt, GLOBALFOUNDRIES Inc. (United States) and SEMATECH, Inc. (United States)
Hans Loeschner, IMS Nanofabrication AG (Austria)
- 10 Nanoimprint Lithography III: Selected Imprint Applications
Tatsuhiko Higashiki, Toshiba Corporation (Japan)
Douglas J. Resnick, Molecular Imprints, Inc. (United States)
- 11 Novel Methods and Applications II
Cynthia Hanson, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Pacific (United States)
Ryan J. Kershner, University of Wisconsin-Madison (United States)
- 12 Cross-Cutting Technologies
Daniel J. C. Herr, Semiconductor Research Corporation (United States)
Cynthia Hanson, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Pacific (United States)

Introduction

In 2010, the organizing committee redefined and re-scoped the Alternative Lithographic Technologies Conference [ALTC] to focus on evolutionary, revolutionary, and potentially breakthrough patterning technologies. The ALTC also serves as a forum for introducing participants to new and emerging application opportunities. This year's conference placed significant emphasis on novel and emerging techniques that represent potentially extensible patterning solutions beyond the 22-nm technology ITRS technology node. These technology options include, but are not limited to, the ITRS identified non-optical potential solutions, as well as other novel and emerging patterning approaches.

The opening keynote session set the conference's tone, with timely technology updates and overviews on: The application of nano-imprint lithography to the fabrication of storage media (NIL/Albrecht), maskless or direct-write lithography [ML²/Platzgummer], and directed self-assembly (DSA/Nealey). Papers on ITRS identified post optical potential patterning solutions and were organized into three sessions each on NIL and ML² and two sessions on DSA. Each session highlighted the state-of-the-art and key research and insertion challenges/opportunities specific to the corresponding technology. For the nanoimprint patterning sessions, these included: throughput, template fabrication and lifetime, alignment and overlay, nano-metrology and defects, materials and processes, and emerging application opportunities. The maskless and direct-write patterning sessions explored this technology's status and potential, with respect to the following challenges: throughput, data management, hardware-real estate-software trade-offs, CD and LER control, and material resolution-sensitivity-LER trade-offs. Papers in the two sessions on directed self-assembly provided updates on several ITRS emerging research materials identified performance metrics, i.e. essential shapes, nano-metrology and defects, registration, throughput, CD and LER control, and novel 2D and 3D directed self-assembly concepts. They also described the potential of material and compact models for DSA, design and integration strategies, and novel material families, i.e. other phase segregating materials and molecular scaffolds. Several papers positioned directed self-assembly, not in competition with, but as a tool to augment the performance of existing exposure tool technologies. Participants expressed a significant interest in a directed self-assembly demonstration project to test this technology's potential for IC applications. It also was noted that the first insertion opportunity for these self-assembling materials may be evolutionary, through the development of smart photoresists.

The two Novel Methods and Applications sessions introduced participants to emerging patterning concepts and application opportunities, not comprehended in the ITRS, such as deterministic and bio-mimetic approaches. These sessions also highlighted alternative applications, such as patterned data

storage media, LEDs, sensors, and photonic crystals—since they represent emerging potential entry points for one or more of the conference's alternative patterning technologies. These alternative applications also may provide an incubation environment for these alternative patterning technologies to mature and enable critical infrastructure development, which is necessary for the introduction of a new patterning platform. If successful, each of the considered lithographic and patterning domains could benefit from an improvement in technological capability and reduced manufacturing costs. The last session on cross-cutting technologies provided visibility into the needs and status of strategic patterning topics, such as metrology for nano-scale materials and structures and infrastructure developments for these emerging methods. These last two session themes represent growth venues for this conference.

Finally, I would like to note that several themes from this year's Alternative Lithographic Technologies Conference appeared to have traction with the media. Such initial independent coverage provides useful feedback on participant perceptions of the conference's key messages. The press specifically highlighted directed self-assembly, nanoimprint lithography, and maskless patterning. The following represents a sample article from Dylan McGrath, EE Times, 02/24/2010:

If there is a darling of this year's SPIE Advanced Lithography conference, it just might be directed self-assembly, a technology that emerged in recent years to land on the International Technology Roadmap for Semiconductors (ITRS) and is considered a potential candidate to extend optical lithography. More than 10 papers on the conference schedule are focused on directed self-assembly, a technology that combines lithographically defined substrates and self-assembled polymers. Research has focused on using lithography to alter the surface of a silicon wafer, then adding block co-polymers that assemble themselves into regular arrays along the defined pattern. "This is a long-range lithography technology," said G. Dan Hutcheson, CEO of market research firm VLSI Technology Inc. Researchers see it as a potential path to the sub-10-nm range, Hutcheson said. Directed self-assembly first landed on the ITRS in 2007 as a potential solution for leading-edge, critical layer lithography. The technology is still part of the ITRS as of the 2009 edition.

This article also recognized that while significant progress has been made in directed self-assembly, more development work is needed before this technology warranted insertion consideration for IC manufacturing.

These comments capture some of the dynamics, timeliness, relevance, challenges, and traction from this year's conference topics, presentations, and participants. They suggest that over the next few years, this conference will be the go to event for early awareness of key performance updates, emerging

technology breakthroughs, and new application opportunities. I want to acknowledge my co-chair, Will Tong, and the members of this year's organizing committee for making the 2010 Alternative Lithographic Technologies II conference a success.

I look forward to your participation in and contributions to next year's conference.

Daniel J. C. Herr