



US 20050264453A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Baliarda et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0264453 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 1, 2005**

(54) **SPACE-FILLING MINIATURE ANTENNAS**

No. 10/182,635, filed on Nov. 1, 2002, filed as 371 of international application No. PCT/EP00/00411, filed on Jan. 19, 2000.

(76) Inventors: **Carles Puente Baliarda**, Tiana (ES);
Edouard Jean Louis Rozan, Barcelona
(ES); **Jaime Anguera Pros**, Vinaros
(ES)

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **H01Q 1/38**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **343/700 MS**

Correspondence Address:
HOWISON & ARNOTT, L.L.P
P.O. BOX 741715
DALLAS, TX 75374-1715 (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

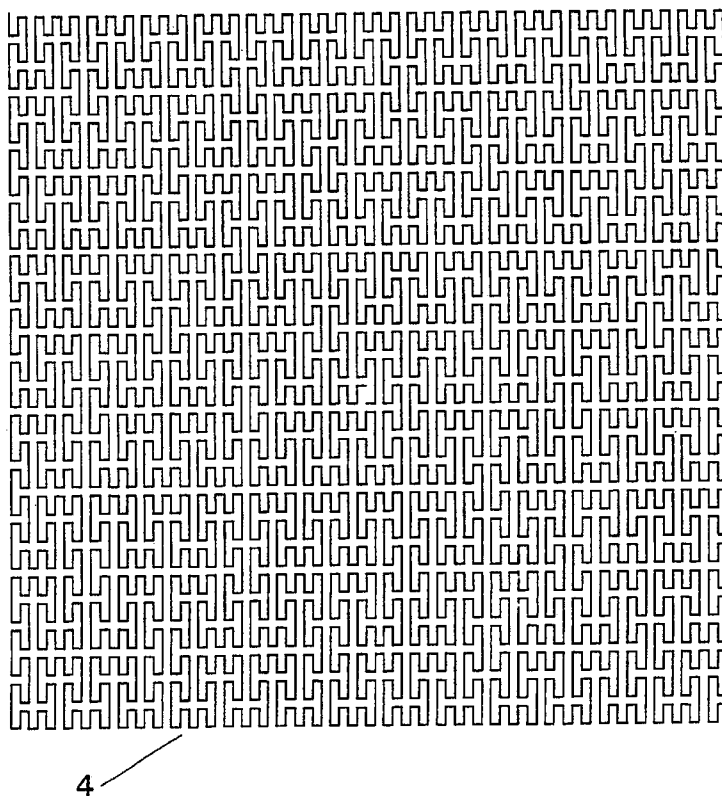
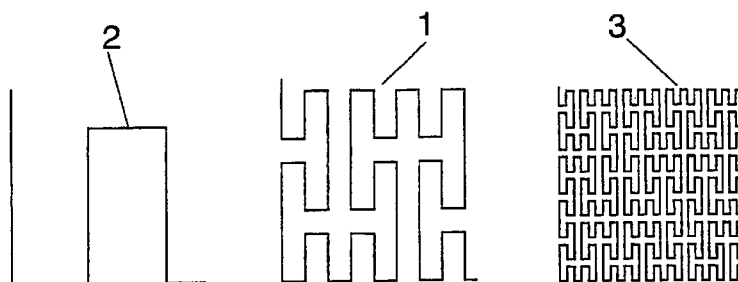
(21) Appl. No.: **11/179,250**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 12, 2005**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 11/110,052, filed on Apr. 20, 2005, which is a continuation of application

A novel geometry, the geometry of Space-Filling Curves (SFC) is defined in the present invention and it is used to shape a part of an antenna. By means of this novel technique, the size of the antenna can be reduced with respect to prior art, or alternatively, given a fixed size the antenna can operate at a lower frequency with respect to a conventional antenna of the same size.



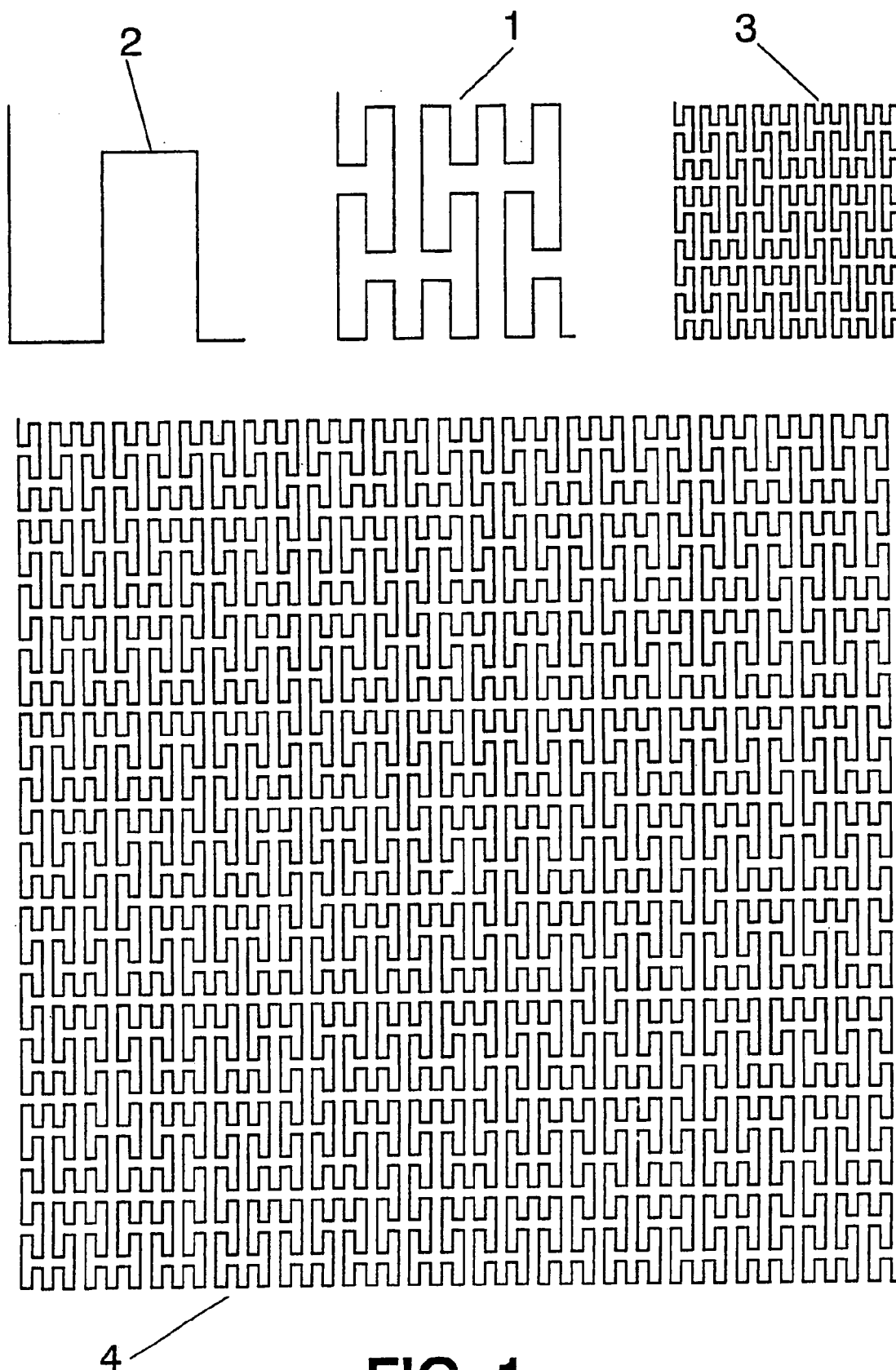


FIG. 1

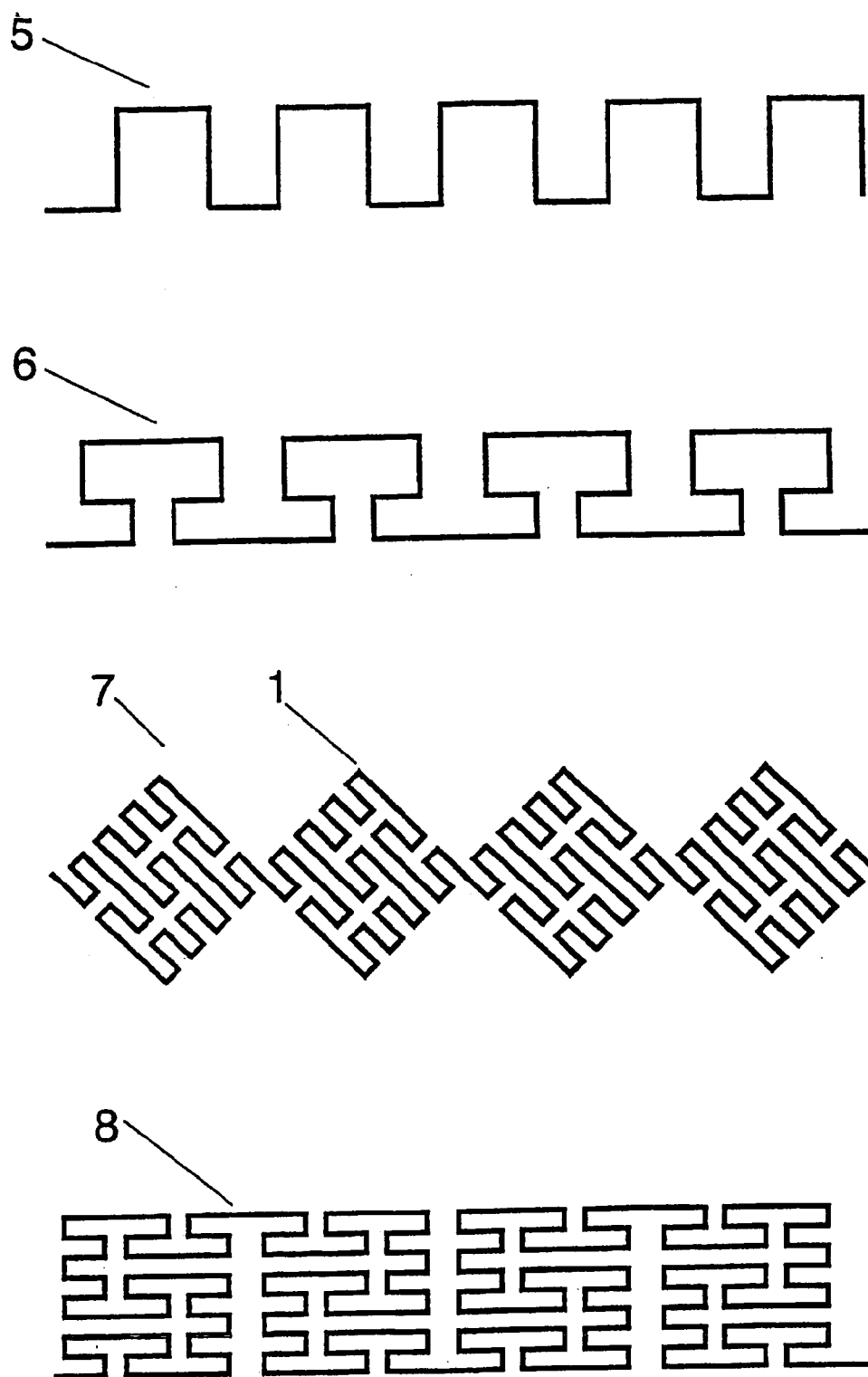


FIG. 2

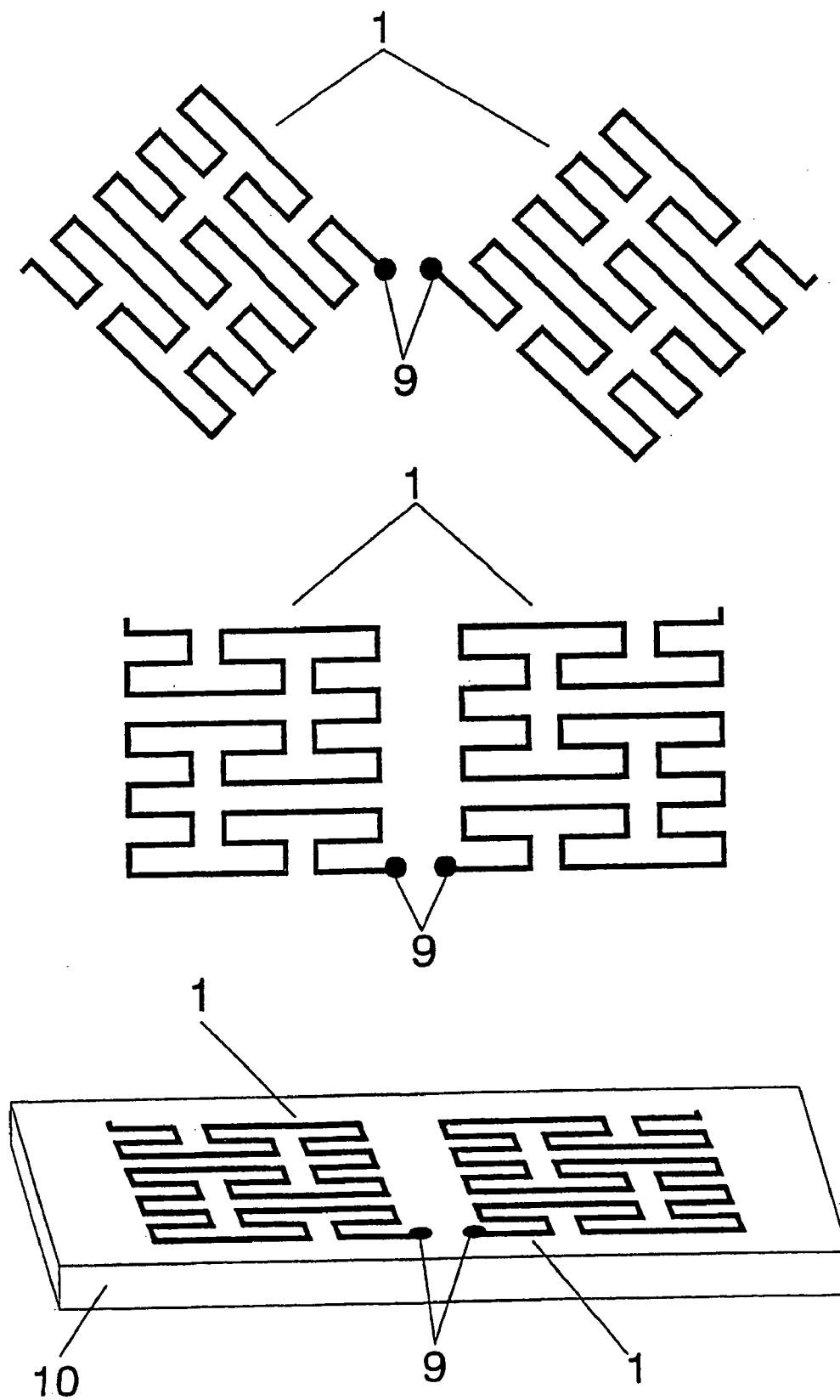


FIG. 3

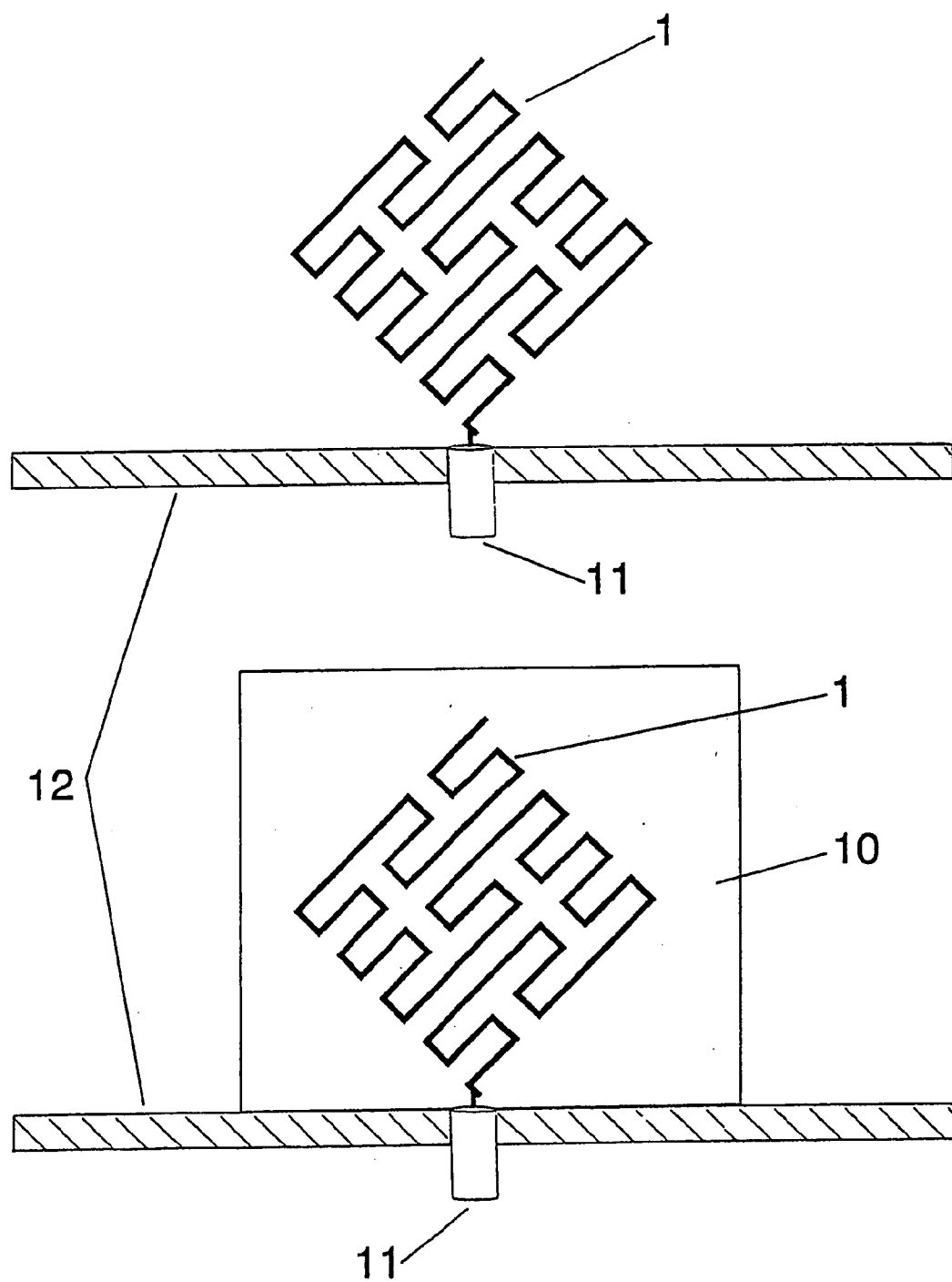


FIG. 4

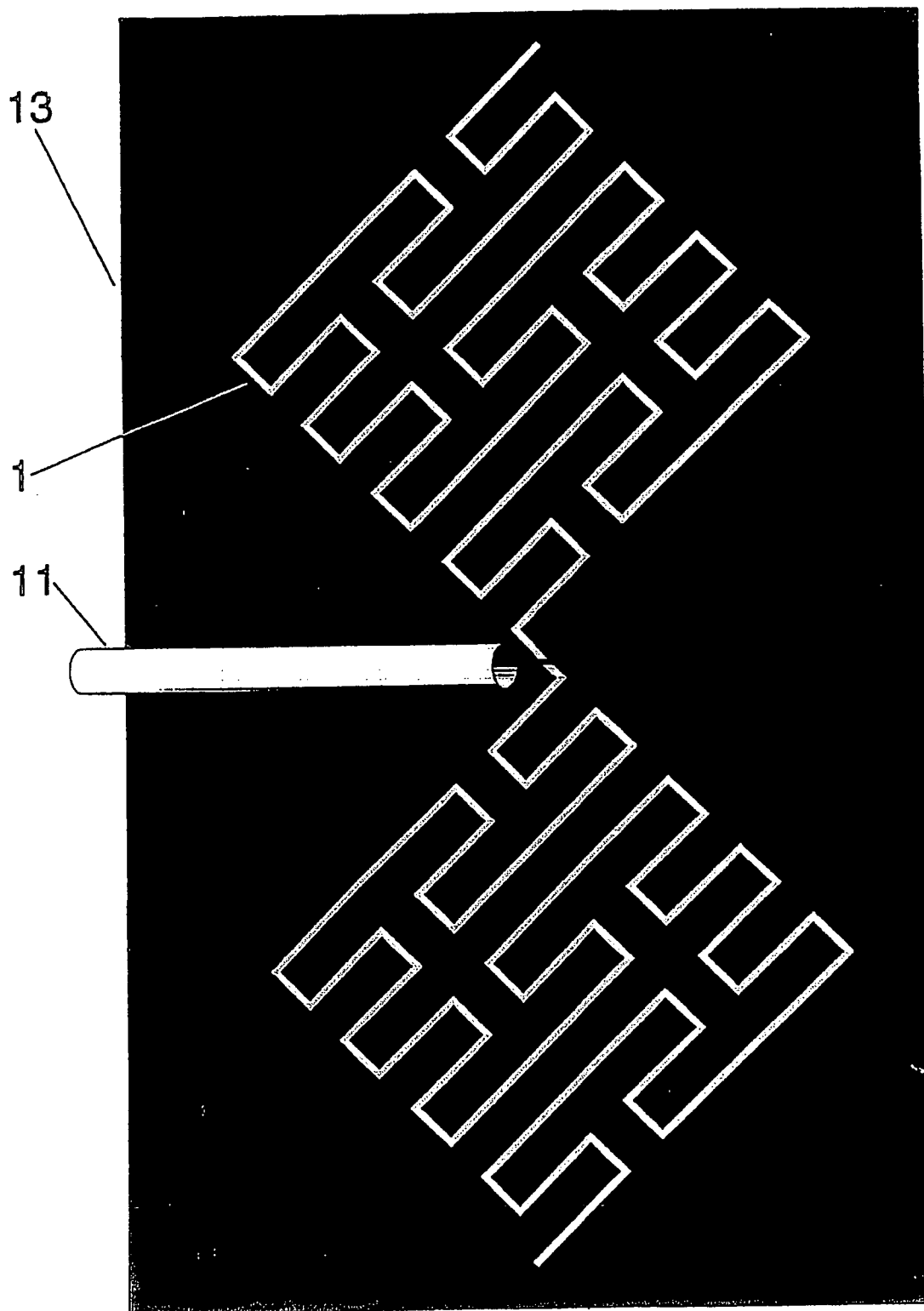
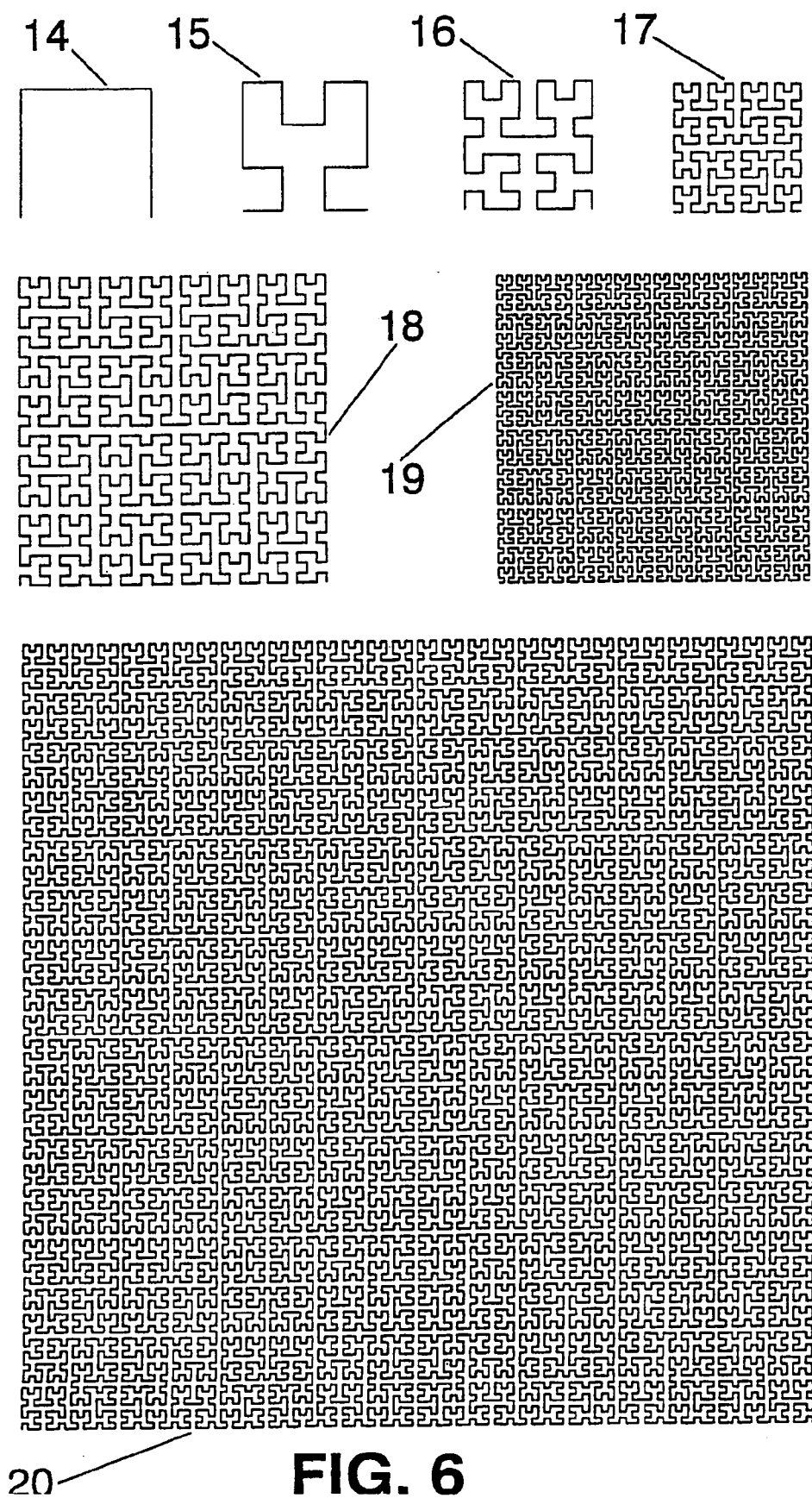


FIG. 5



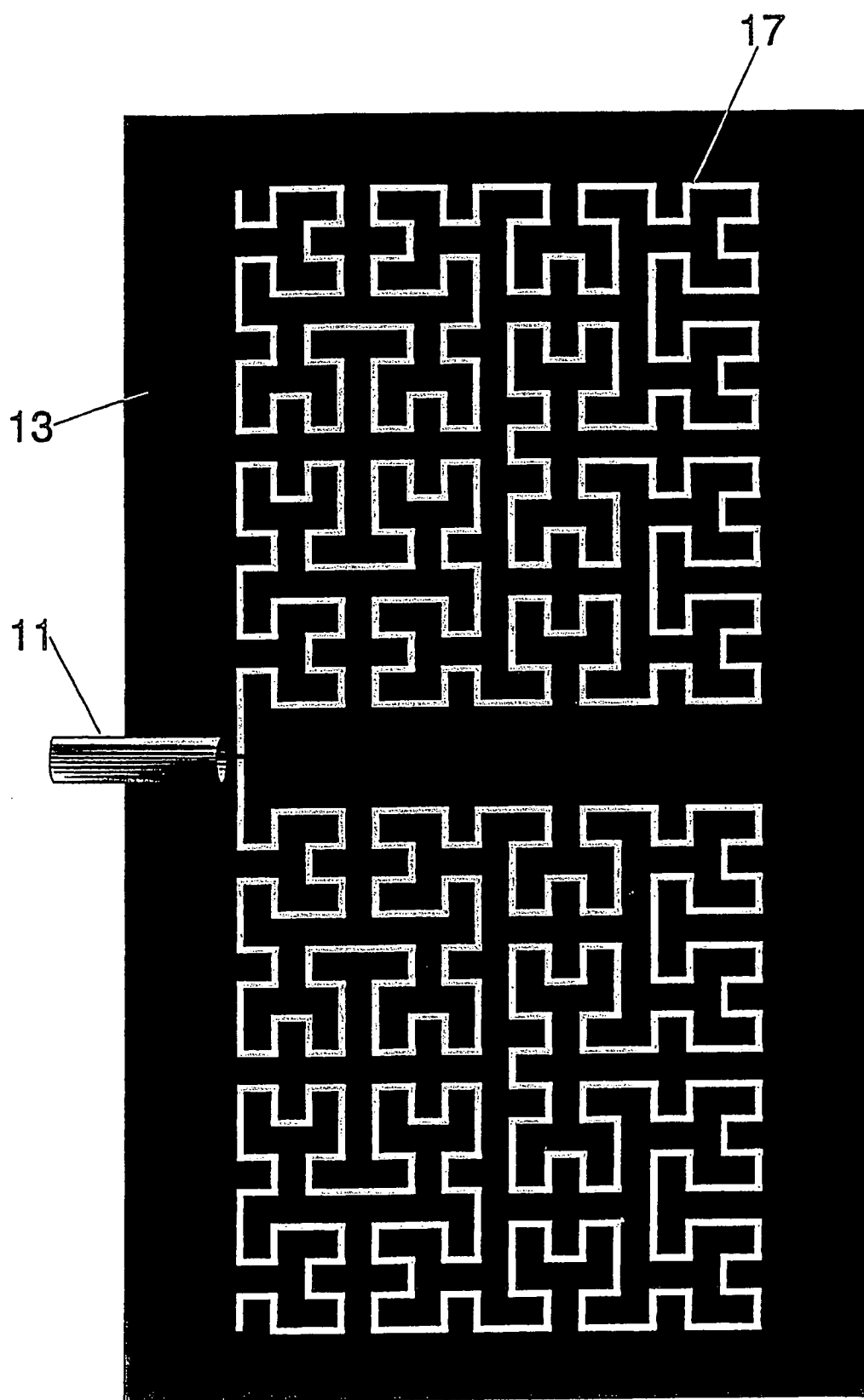


FIG. 7

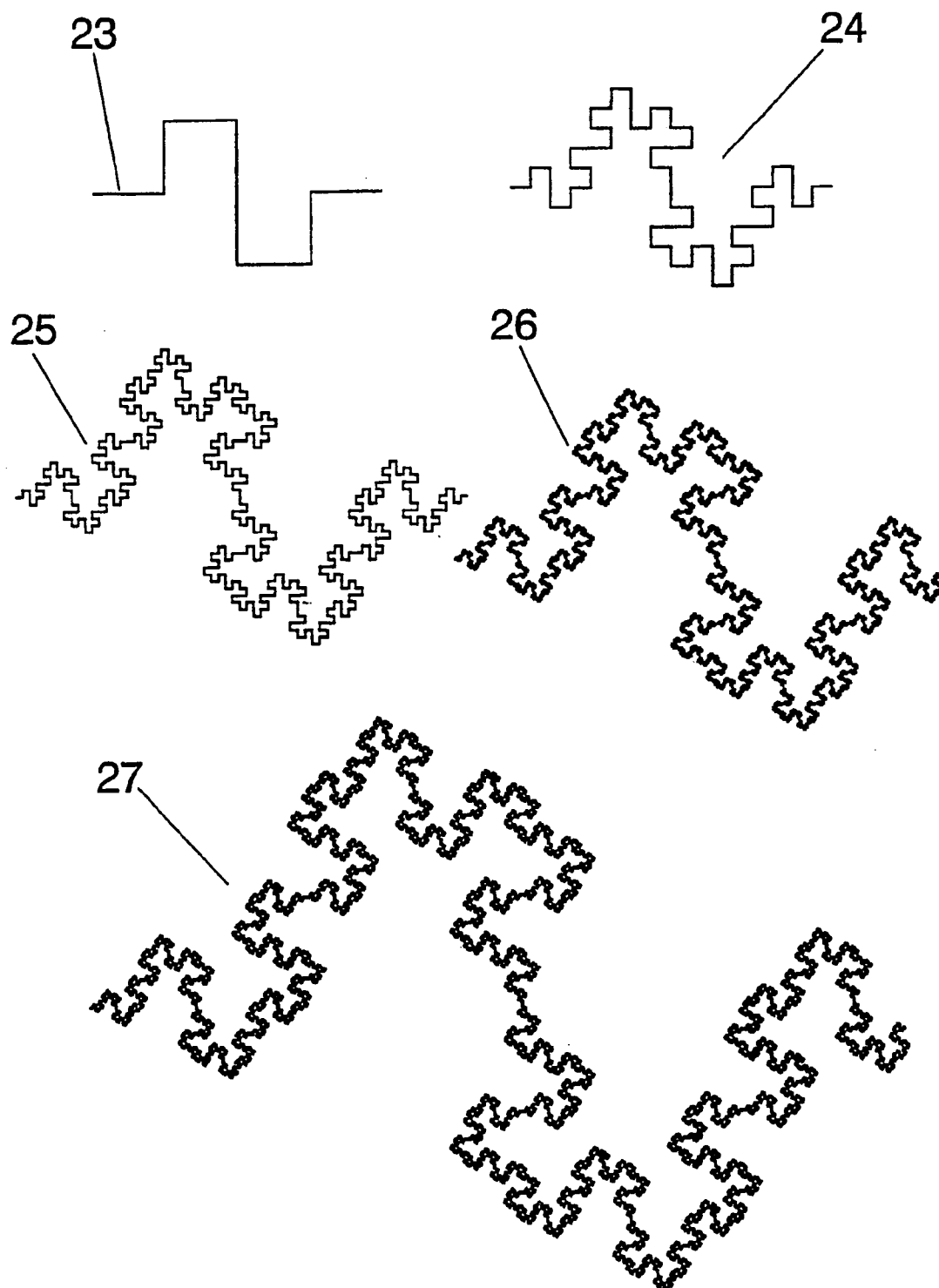


FIG. 8

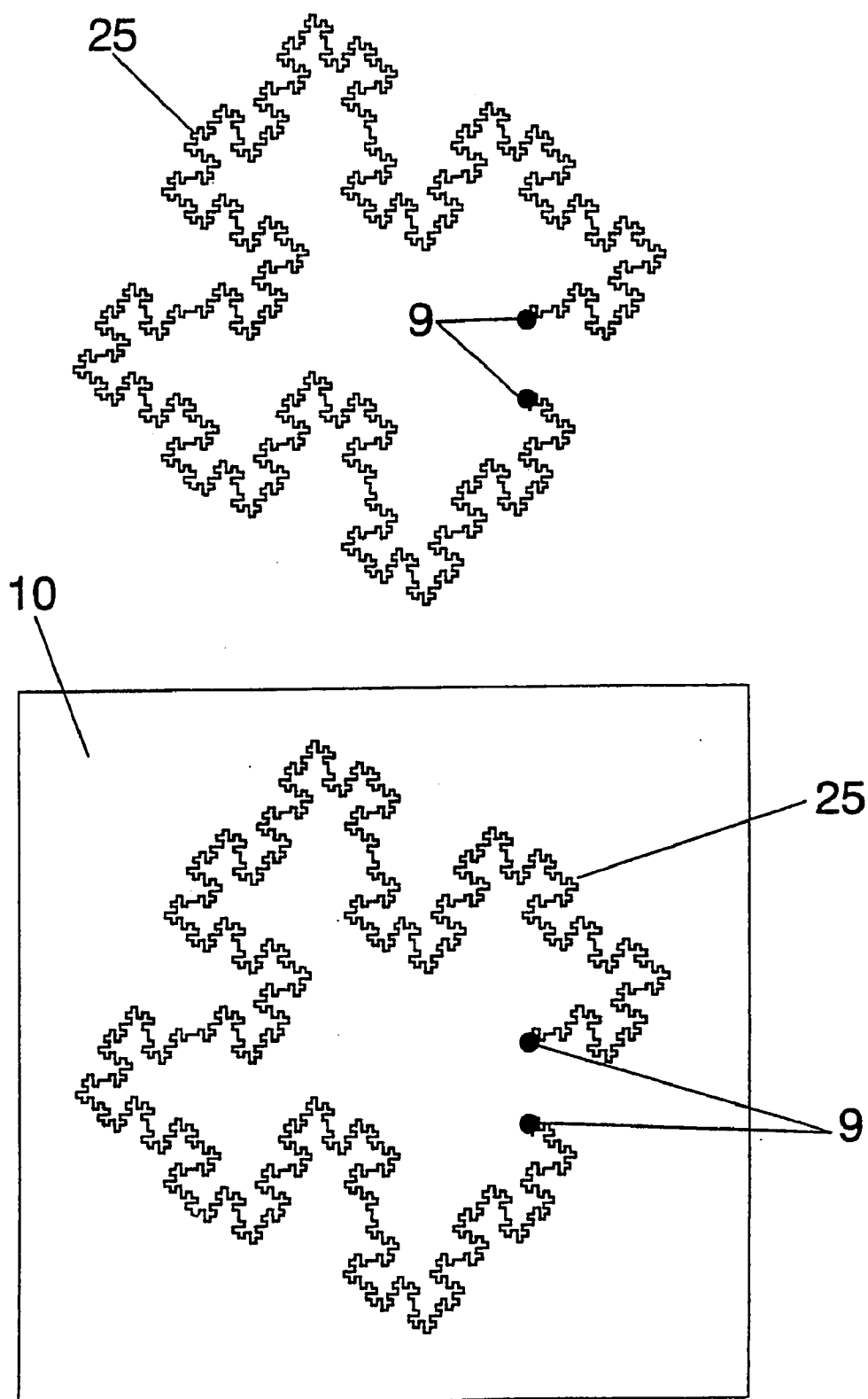


FIG. 9

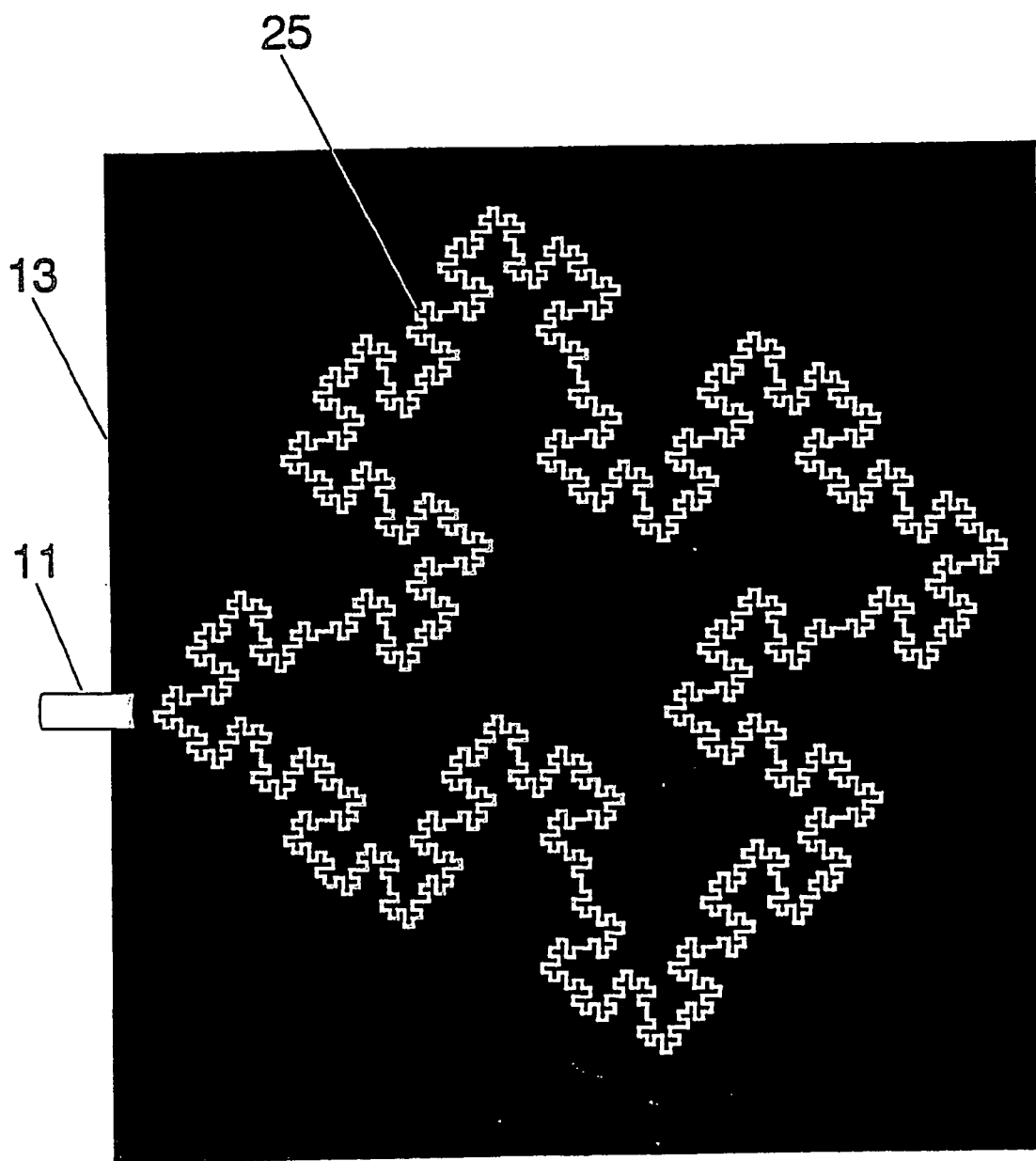


FIG. 10

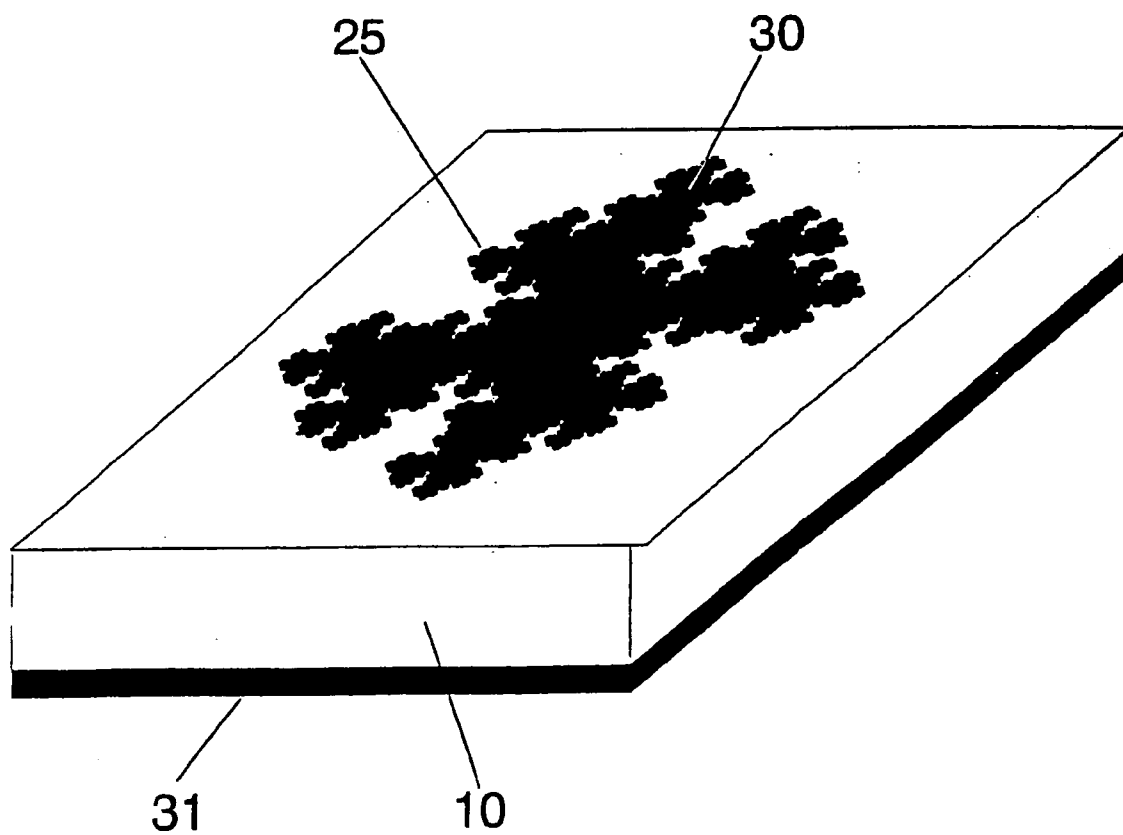


FIG. 11

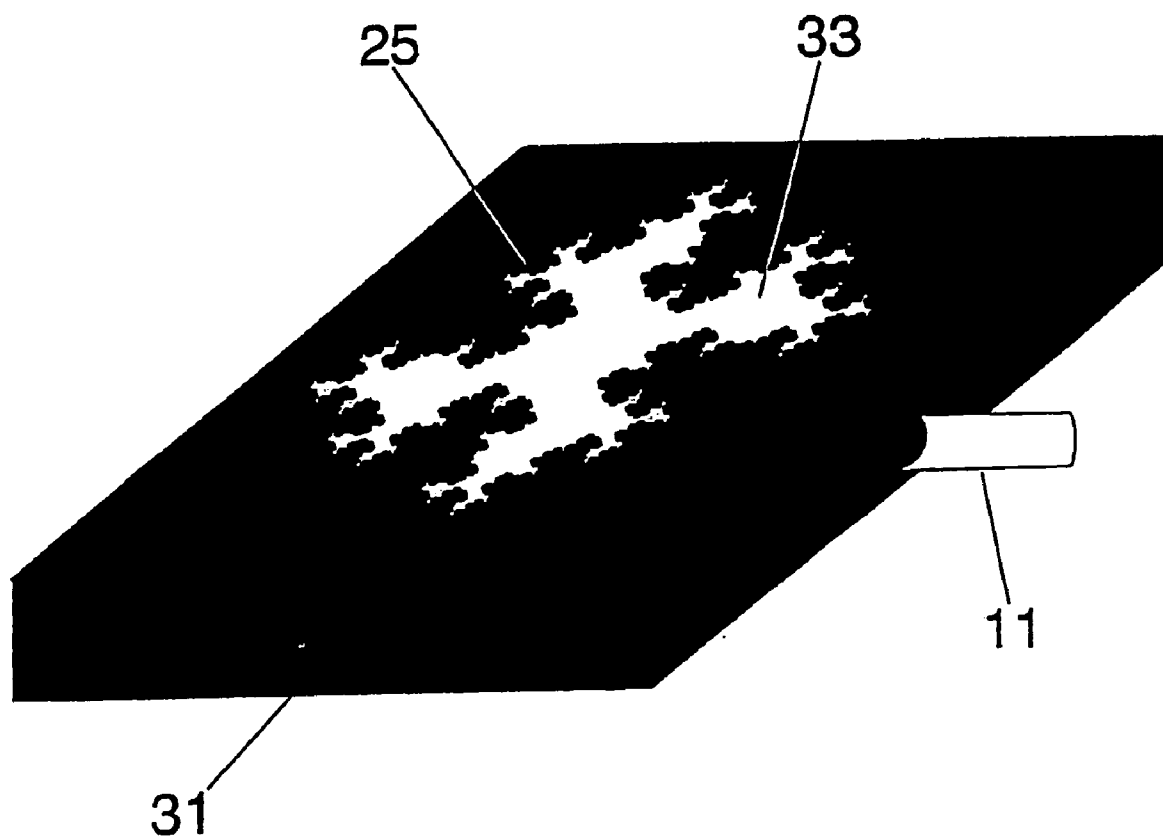


FIG. 12

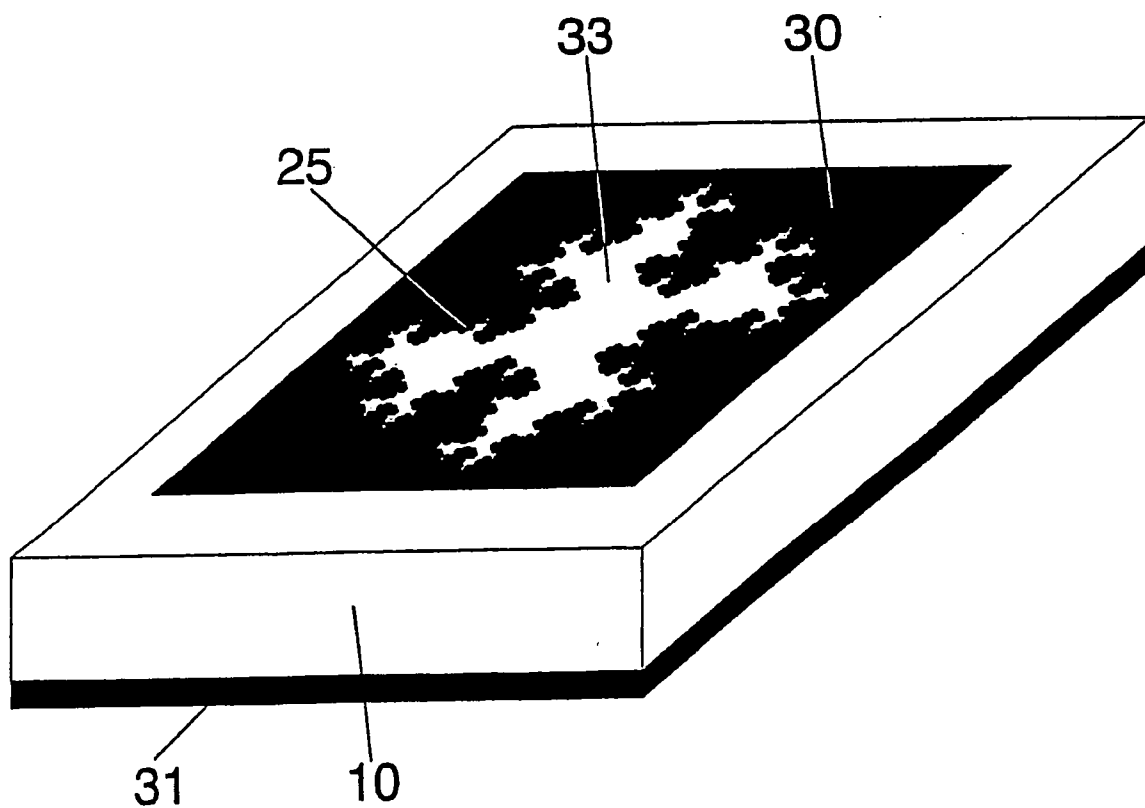


FIG. 13

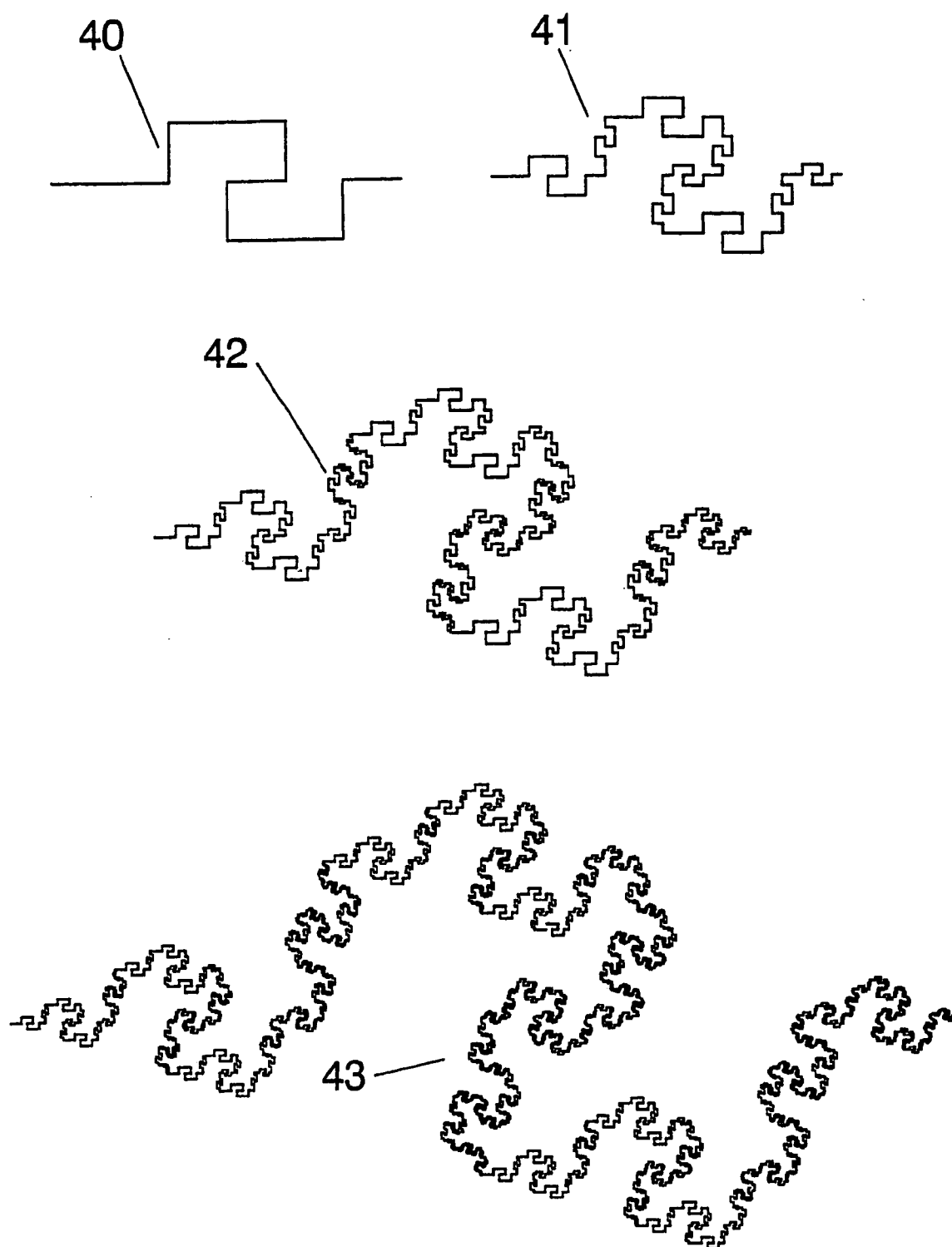


FIG. 14

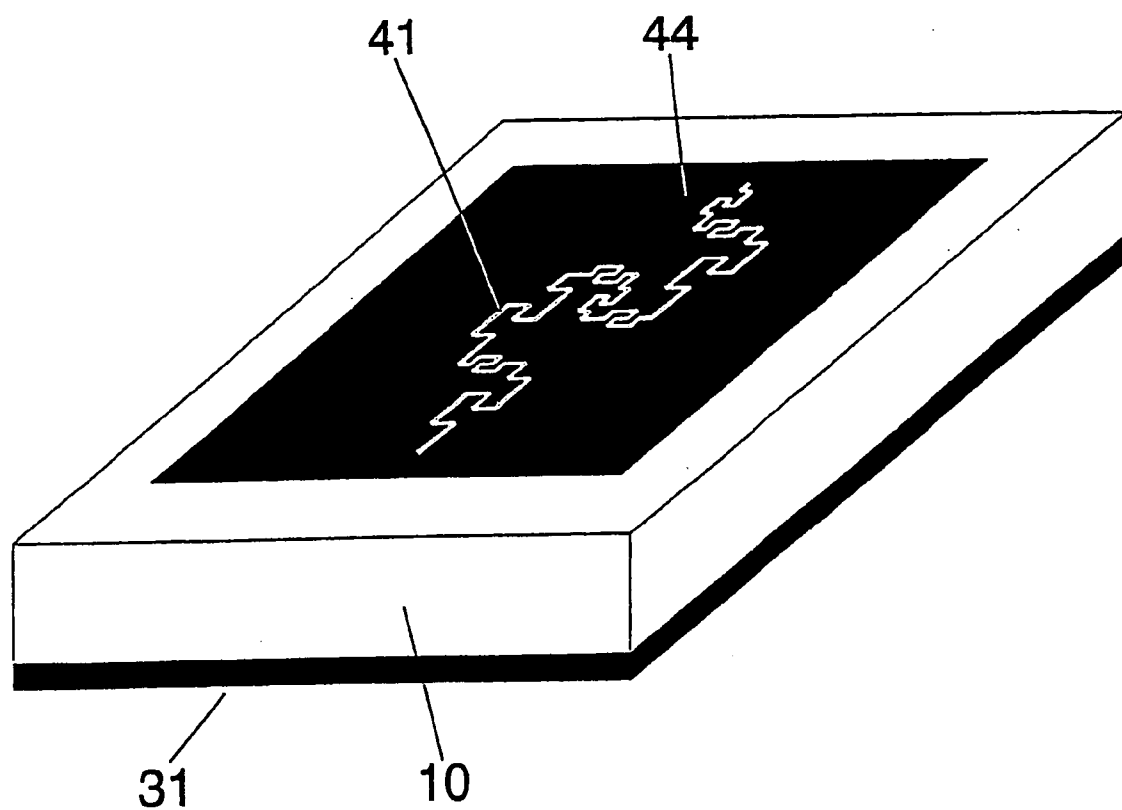


FIG. 15

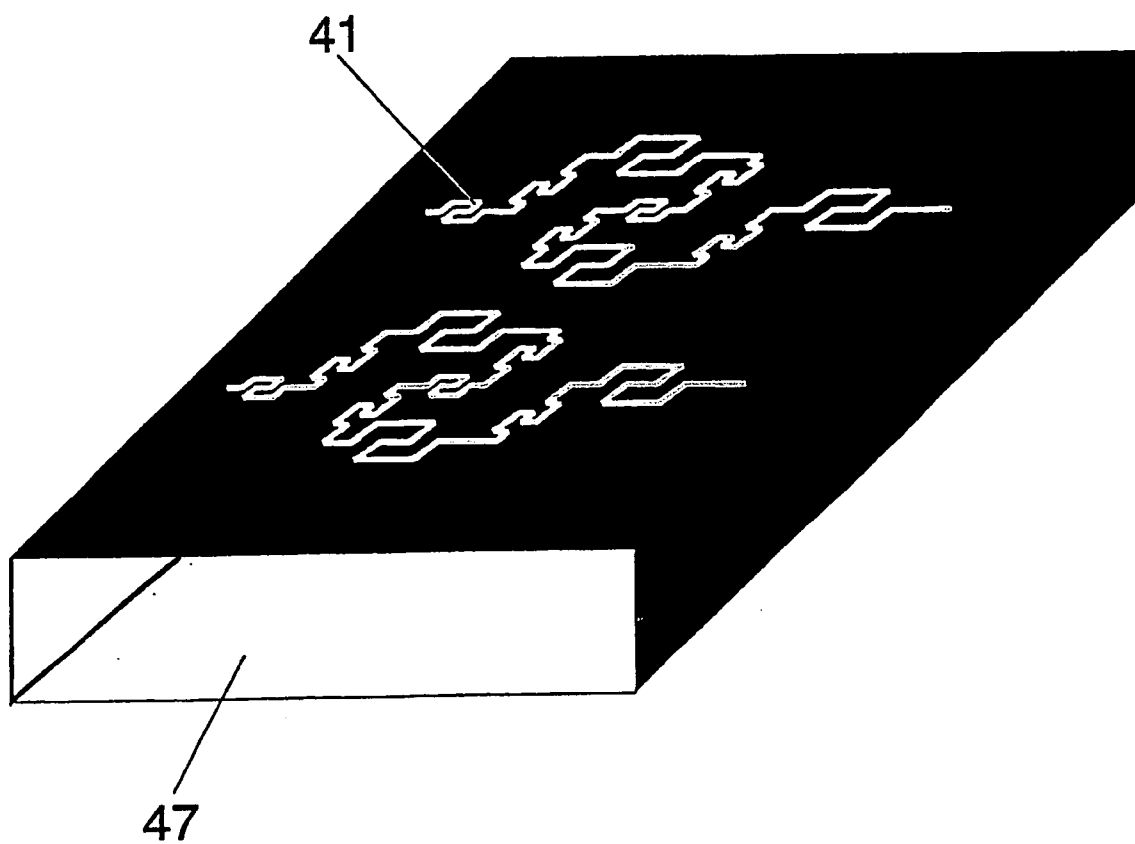


FIG. 16

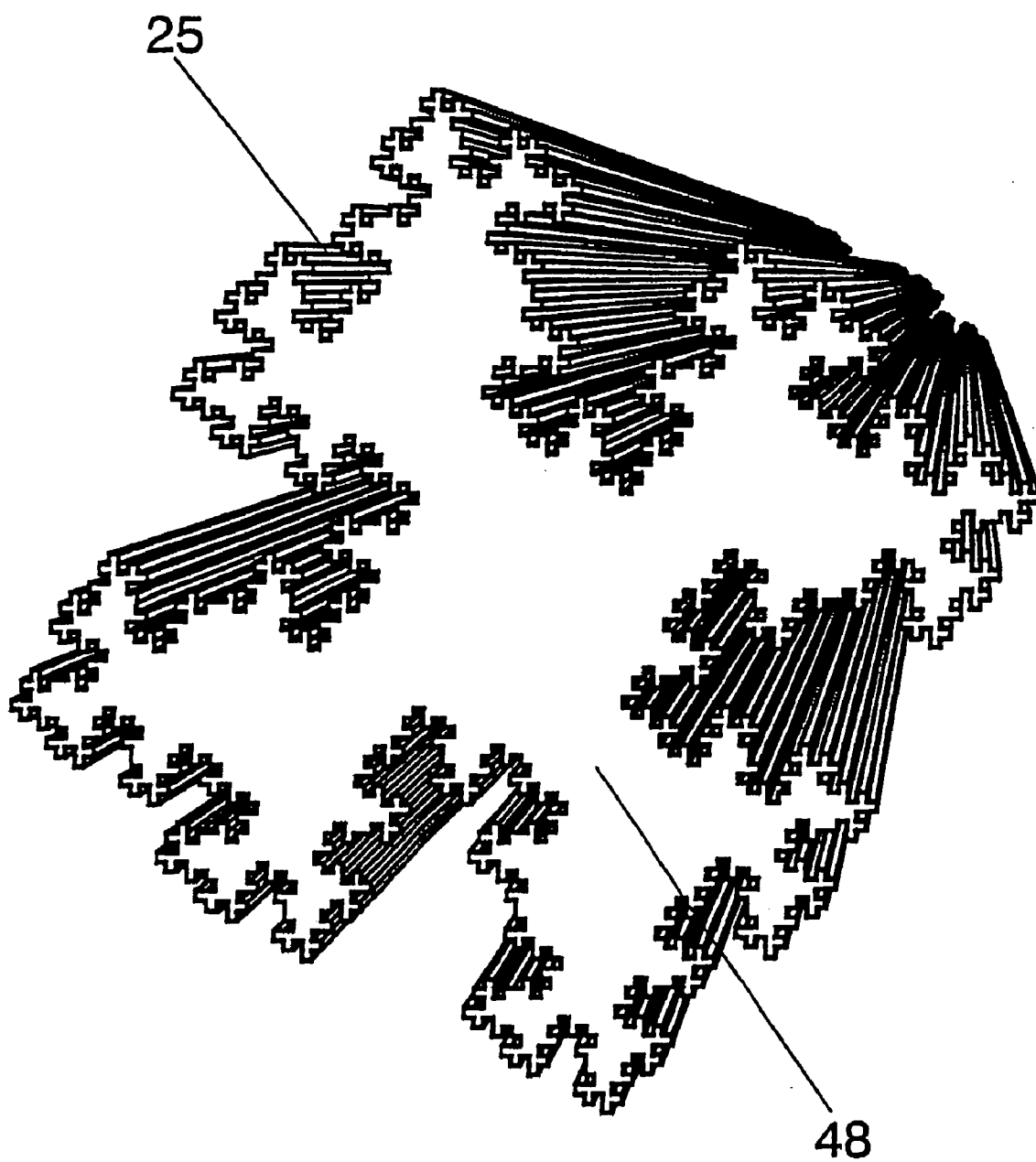


FIG. 17

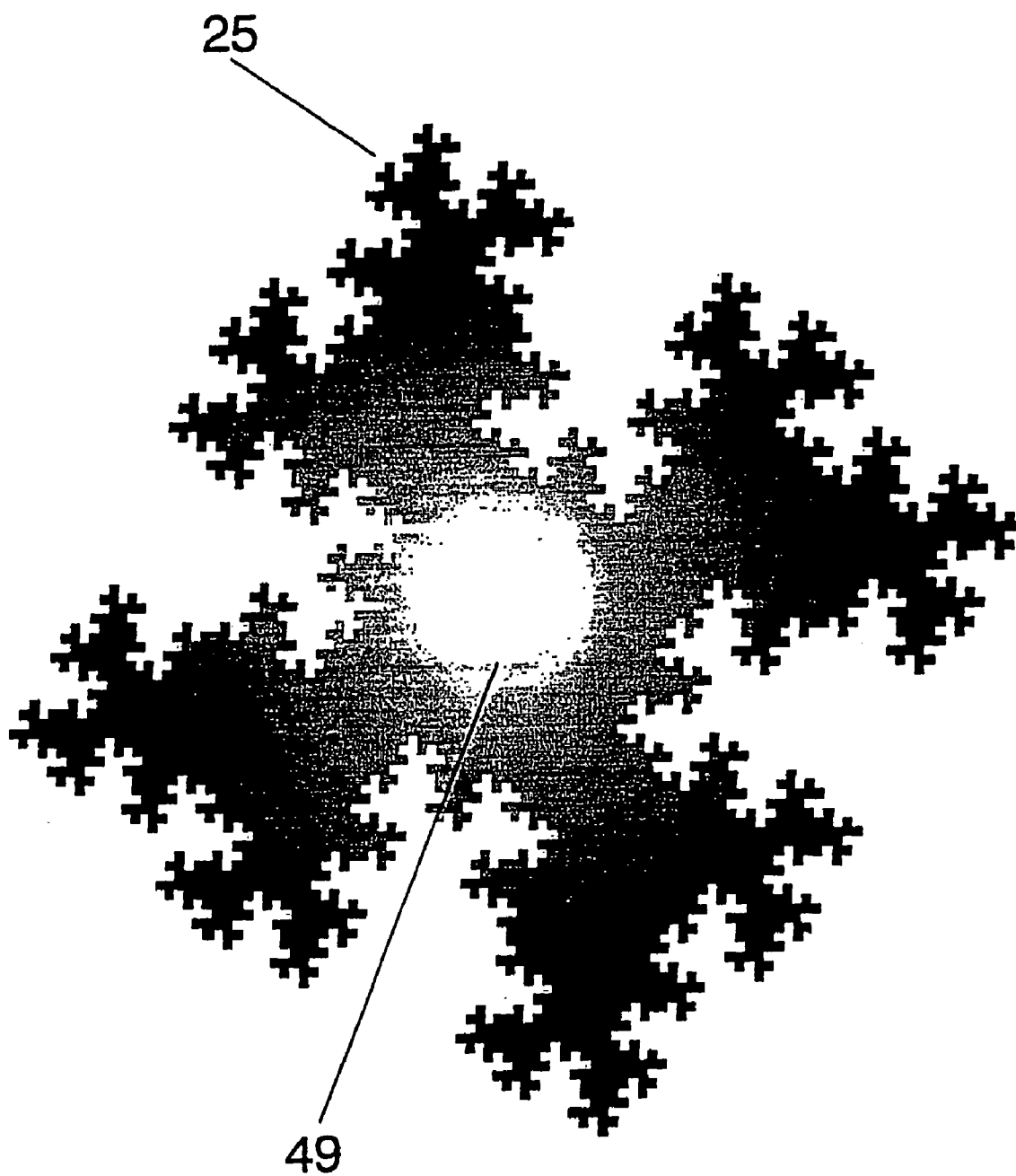


FIG. 18

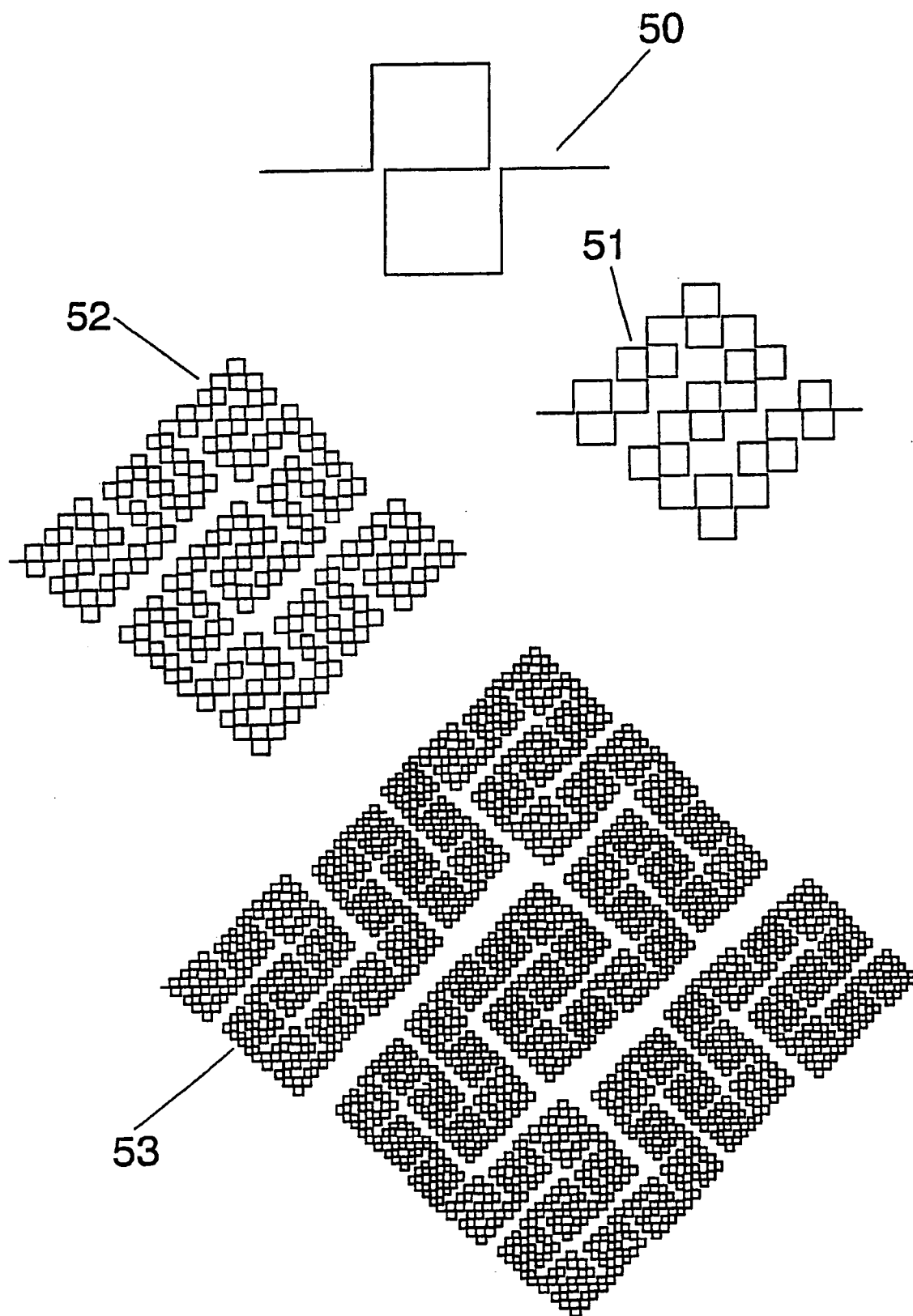


FIG. 19

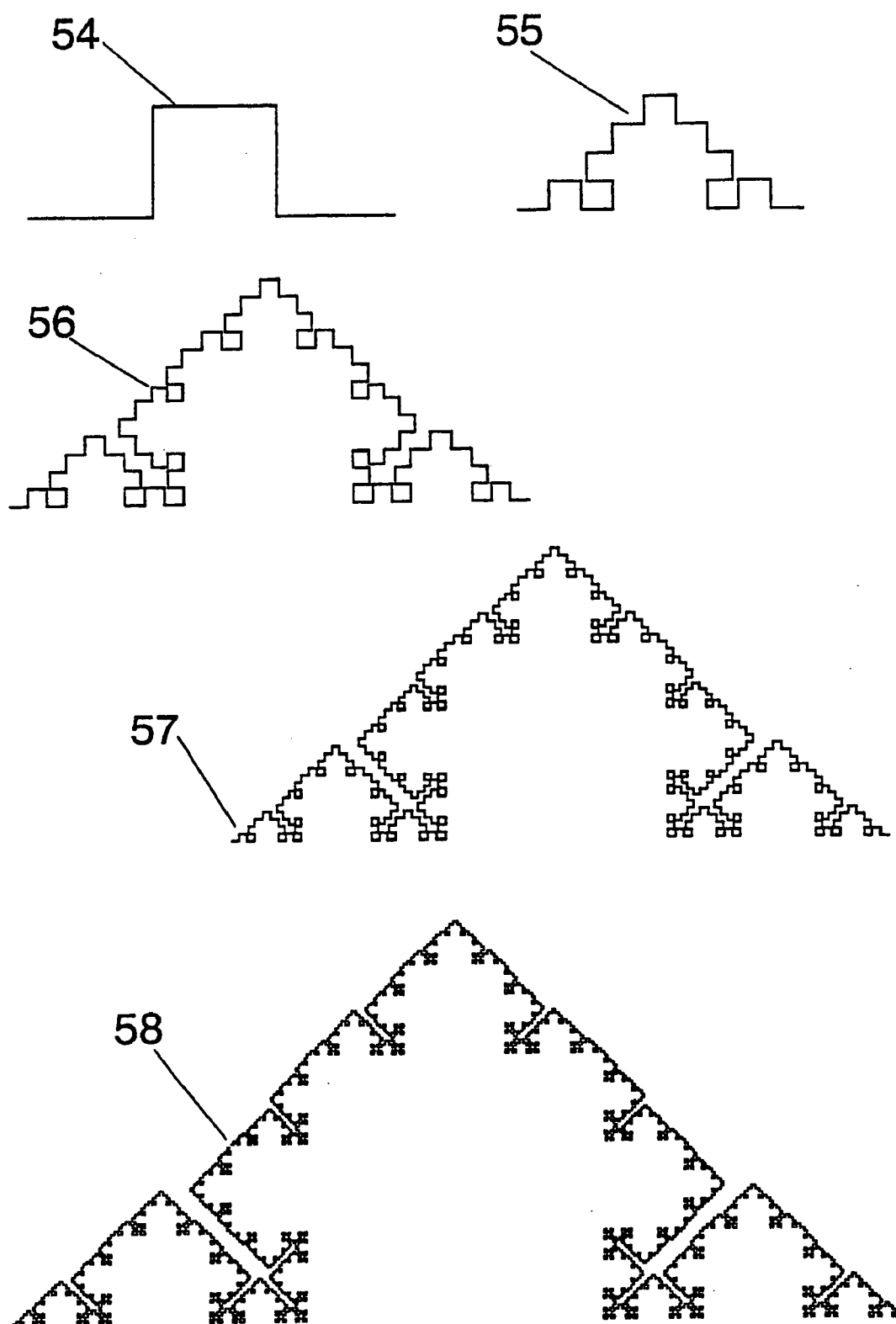


FIG. 20

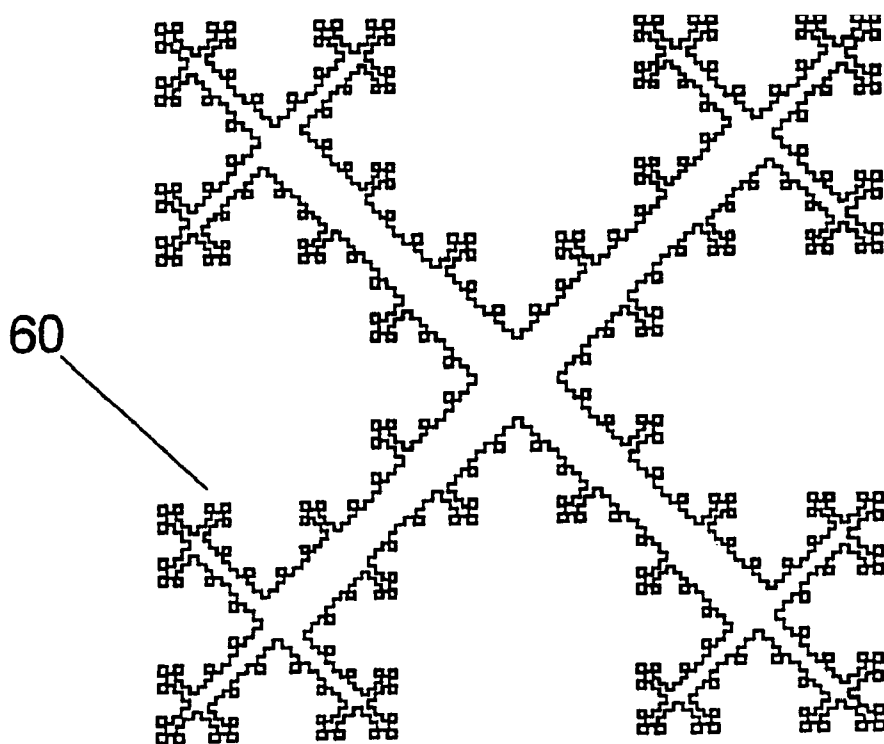
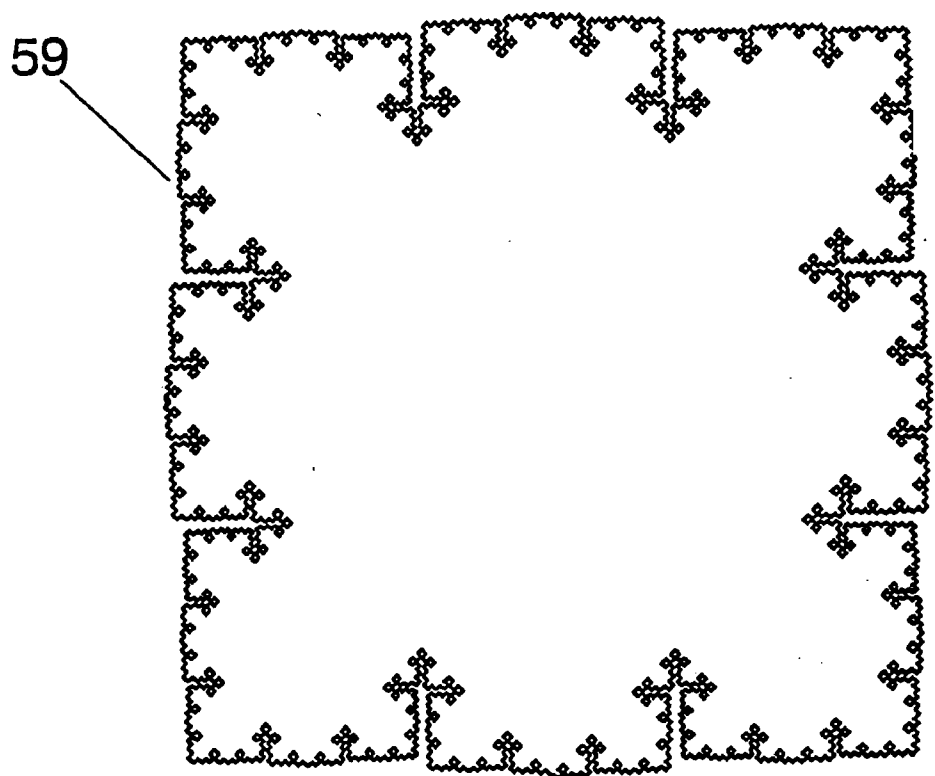


FIG. 21

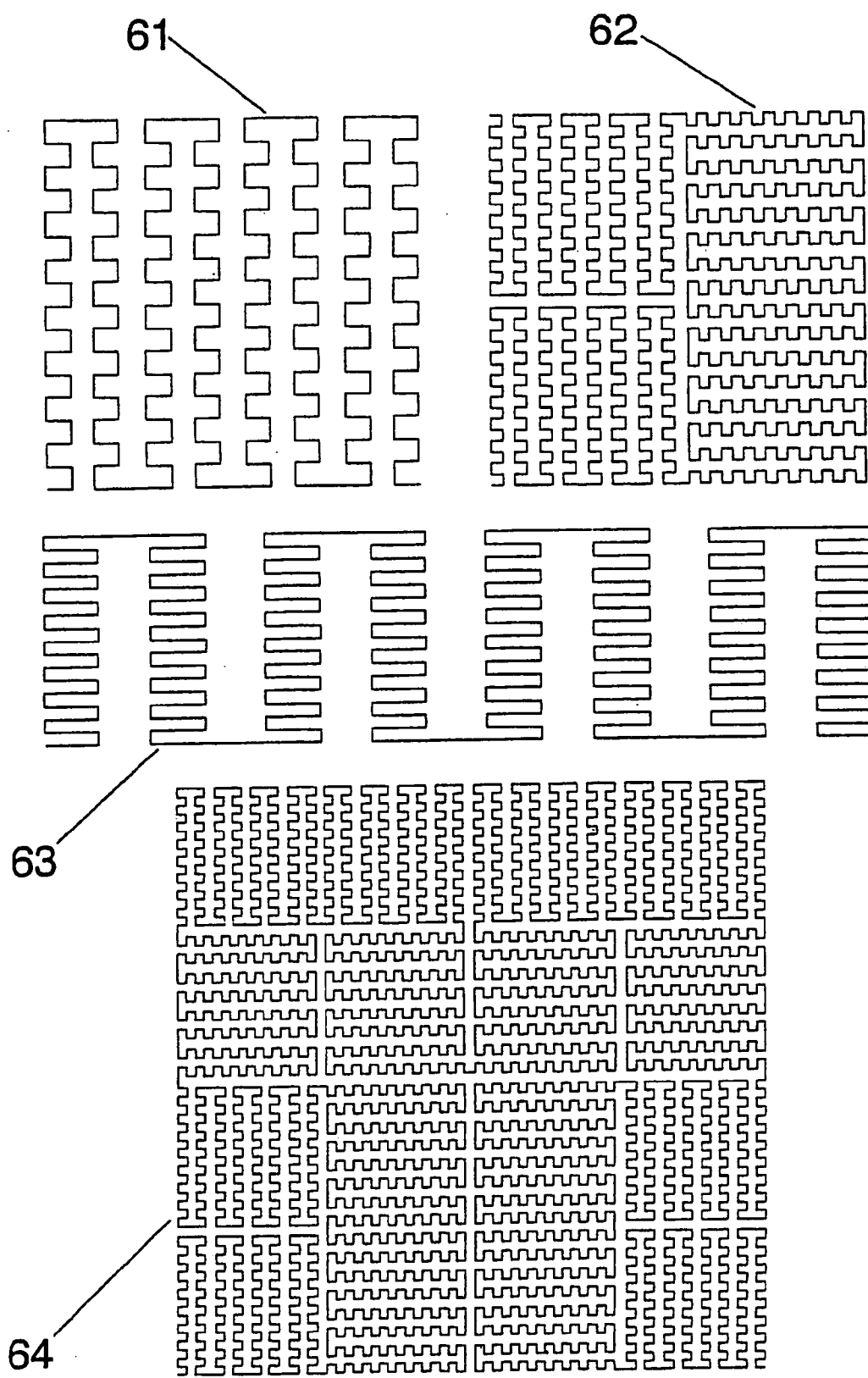


FIG. 22

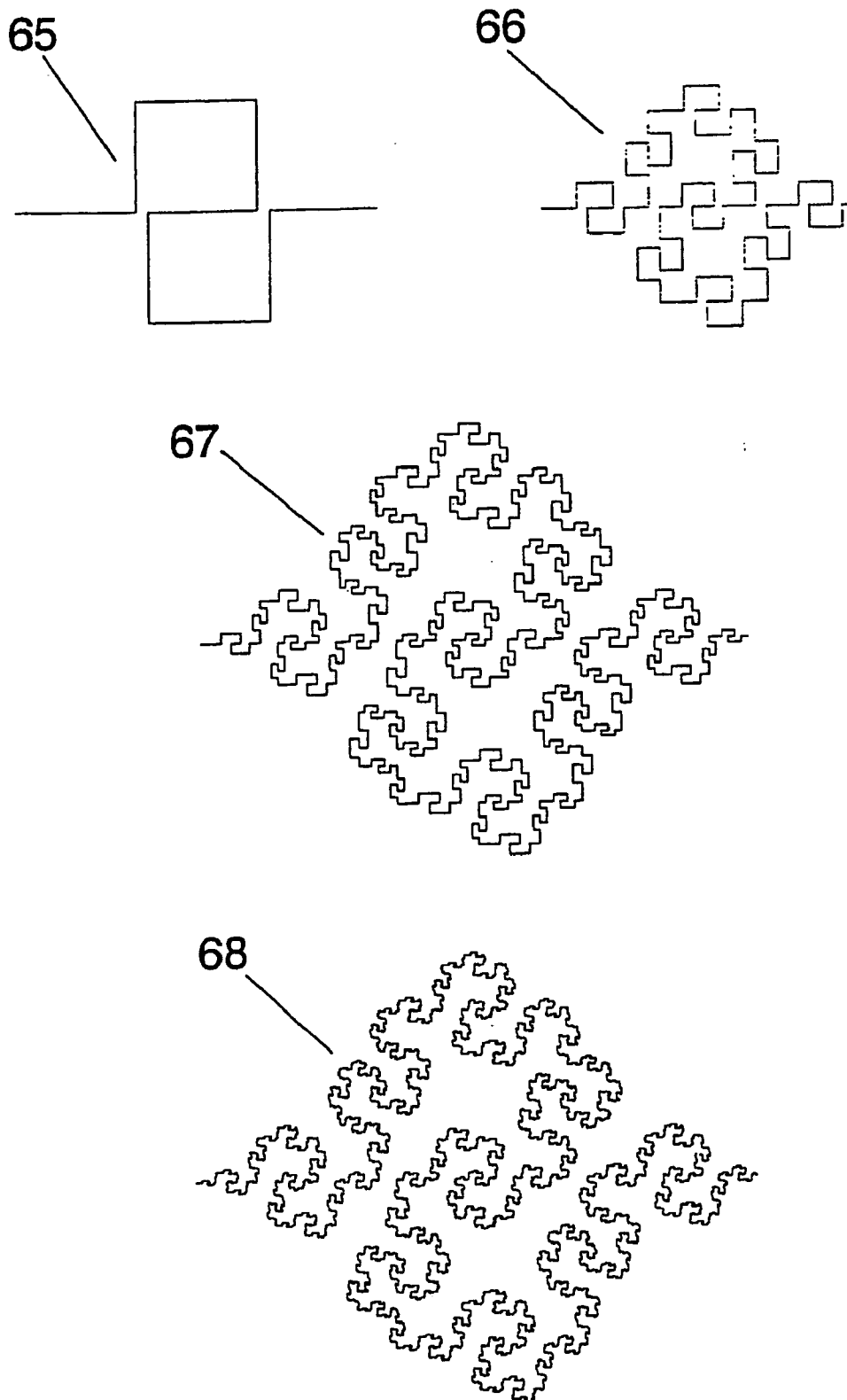


FIG. 23

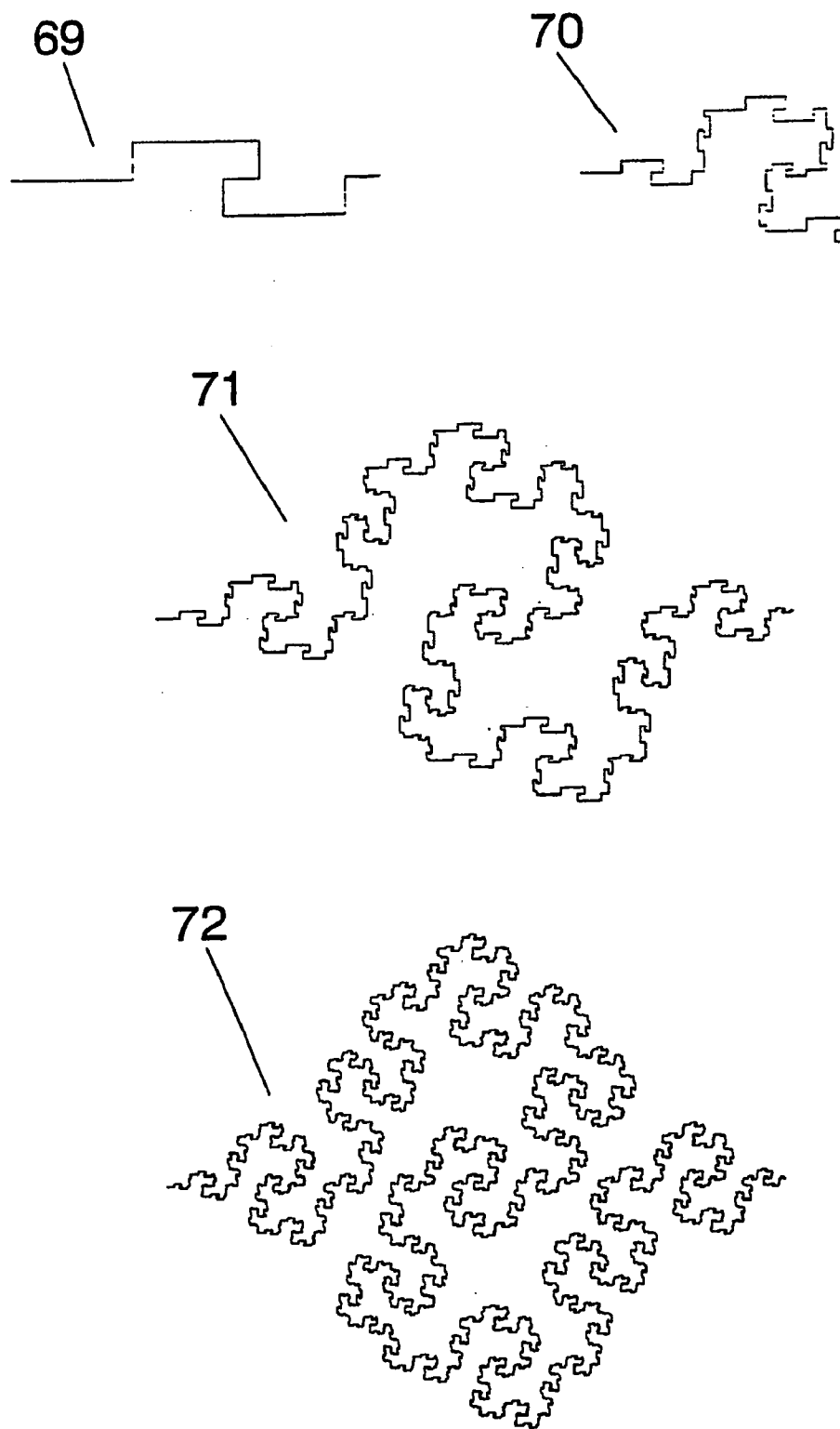


FIG. 24

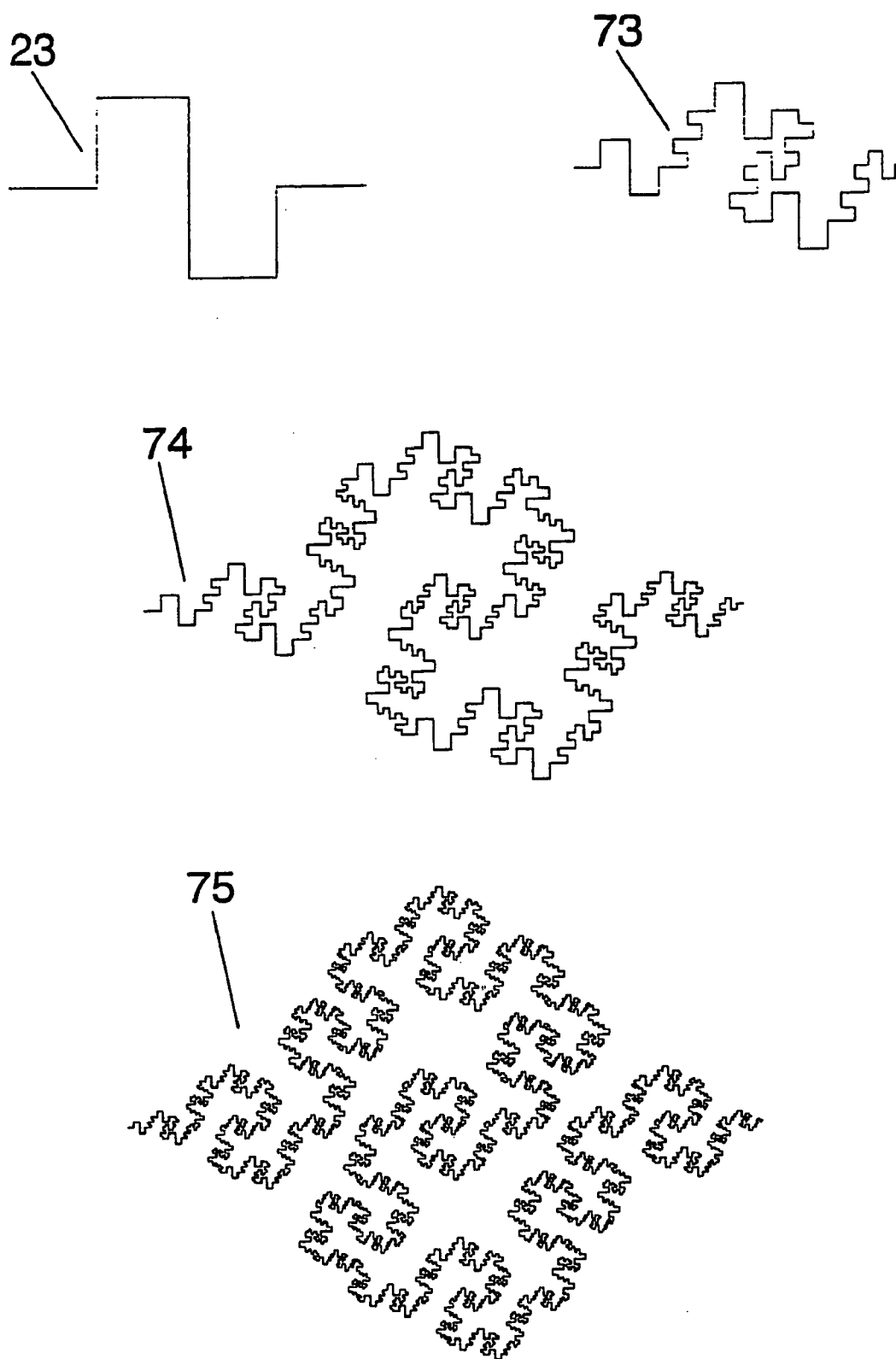


FIG. 25

SPACE-FILLING MINIATURE ANTENNAS

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention generally refers to a new family of antennas of reduced size based on an innovative geometry, the geometry of the curves named as Space-Filling Curves (SFC). An antenna is said to be a small antenna (a miniature antenna) when it can be fitted in a small space compared to the operating wavelength. More precisely, the radiansphere is taken as the reference for classifying an antenna as being small. The radiansphere is an imaginary sphere of radius equal to the operating wavelength divided by two times π ; an antenna is said to be small in terms of the wavelength when it can be fitted inside said radiansphere.

[0002] A novel geometry, the geometry of Space-Filling Curves (SFC) is defined in the present invention and it is used to shape a part of an antenna. By means of this novel technique, the size of the antenna can be reduced with respect to prior art, or alternatively, given a fixed size the antenna can operate at a lower frequency with respect to a conventional antenna of the same size.

[0003] The invention is applicable to the field of the telecommunications and more concretely to the design of antennas with reduced size.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The fundamental limits on small antennas where theoretically established by H. Wheeler and L. J. Chu in the middle 1940's. They basically stated that a small antenna has a high quality factor (Q) because of the large reactive energy stored in the antenna vicinity compared to the radiated power. Such a high quality factor yields a narrow bandwidth; in fact, the fundamental derived in such theory imposes a maximum bandwidth given a specific size of an small antenna.

[0005] Related to this phenomenon, it is also known that a small antenna features a large input reactance (either capacitive or inductive) that usually has to be compensated with an external matching/loading circuit or structure. It also means that is difficult to pack a resonant antenna into a space which is small in terms of the wavelength at resonance. Other characteristics of a small antenna are its small radiating resistance and its low efficiency.

[0006] Searching for structures that can efficiently radiate from a small space has an enormous commercial interest, especially in the environment of mobile communication devices (cellular telephony, cellular pagers, portable computers and data handlers, to name a few examples), where the size and weight of the portable equipments need to be small. According to R. C. Hansen (R. C. Hansen, "Fundamental Limitations on Antennas," Proc. IEEE, vol. 69, no. 2, February 1981), the performance of a small antenna depends on its ability to efficiently use the small available space inside the imaginary radiansphere surrounding the antenna.

[0007] In the present invention, a novel set of geometries named Space-Filling Curves (hereafter SFC) are introduced for the design and construction of small antennas that improve the performance of other classical antennas

described in the prior art (such as linear monopoles, dipoles and circular or rectangular loops).

[0008] Some of the geometries described in the present invention are inspired in the geometries studied already in the XIX century by several mathematicians such as Giuseppe Peano and David Hilbert. In all said cases the curves were studied from the mathematical point of view but were never used for any practical-engineering application.

[0009] The dimension (D) is often used to characterize highly complex geometrical curves and structures such those described in the present invention. There exists many different mathematical definitions of dimension but in the present document the box-counting dimension (which is well-known to those skilled in mathematics theory) is used to characterize a family of designs. Those skilled in mathematics theory will notice that optionally, an Iterated Function System (IFS), a Multireduction Copy Machine (MRCM) or a Networked Multireduction Copy Machine (MRCM) algorithm can be used to construct some space-filling curves as those described in the present invention.

[0010] The key point of the present invention is shaping part of the antenna (for example at least a part of the arms of a dipole, at least a part of the arm of a monopole, the perimeter of the patch of a patch antenna, the slot in a slot antenna, the loop perimeter in a loop antenna, the horn cross-section in a horn antenna, or the reflector perimeter in a reflector antenna) as a space-filling curve, that is, a curve that is large in terms of physical length but small in terms of the area in which the curve can be included. More precisely, the following definition is taken in this document for a space-filling curve: a curve composed by at least ten segments which are connected in such a way that each segment forms an angle with their neighbours, that is, no pair of adjacent segments define a larger straight segment, and wherein the curve can be optionally periodic along a fixed straight direction of space if and only if the period is defined by a non-periodic curve composed by at least ten connected segments and no pair of said adjacent and connected segments define a straight longer segment. Also, whatever the design of such SFC is, it can never intersect with itself at any point except the initial and final point (that is, the whole curve can be arranged as a closed curve or loop, but none of the parts of the curve can become a closed loop). A space-filling curve can be fitted over a flat or curved surface, and due to the angles between segments, the physical length of the curve is always larger than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area (surface) as said space-filling curve. Additionally, to properly shape the structure of a miniature antenna according to the present invention, the segments of the SFC curves must be shorter than a tenth of the free-space operating wavelength.

[0011] Depending on the shaping procedure and curve geometry, some infinite length SFC can be theoretically designed to feature a Hausdorff dimension larger than their topological-dimension. That is, in terms of the classical Euclidean geometry, It is usually understood that a curve is always a one-dimension object; however when the curve is highly convoluted and its physical length is very large, the curve tends to fill parts of the surface which supports it; in that case the Hausdorff dimension can be computed over the curve (or at least an approximation of it by means of the box-counting algorithm) resulting in a number larger than

unity. Such theoretical infinite curves can not be physically constructed, but they can be approached with SFC designs. The curves 8 and 17 described in and FIG. 2 and FIG. 5 are some examples of such SFC, that approach an ideal infinite curve featuring a dimension $D=2$.

[0012] The advantage of using SFC curves in the physical shaping of the antenna is two-fold:

[0013] (a) Given a particular operating frequency or wavelength said SFC antenna can be reduced in size with respect to prior art.

[0014] (b) Given the physical size of the SFC antenna, said SFC antenna can be operated at a lower frequency (a longer wavelength) than prior art.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1 shows some particular cases of SFC curves. From an initial curve (2), other curves (1), (3) and (4) with more than 10 connected segments are formed. This particular family of curves are named hereafter SZ curves.

[0016] FIG. 2 shows a comparison between two prior art meandering lines and two SFC periodic curves, constructed from the SZ curve of drawing 1.

[0017] FIG. 3 shows a particular configuration of an SFC antenna. It consists on three different configurations of a dipole wherein each of the two arms is fully shaped as an SFC curve (1).

[0018] FIG. 4 shows other particular cases of SFC antennas. They consist on monopole antennas.

[0019] FIG. 5 shows an example of an SFC slot antenna where the slot is shaped as the SFC in drawing 1.

[0020] FIG. 6 shows another set of SFC curves (15-20) inspired on the Hilbert curve and hereafter named as Hilbert curves. A standard, non-SFC curve is shown in (14) for comparison.

[0021] FIG. 7 shows another example of an SFC slot antenna based on the SFC curve (17) in drawing 6.

[0022] FIG. 8 shows another set of SFC curves (24, 25, 26, 27) hereafter known as ZZ curves. A conventional squared zigzag curve (23) is shown for comparison.

[0023] FIG. 9 shows a loop antenna based on curve (25) in a wire configuration (top). Below, the loop antenna 29 is printed over a dielectric substrate (10).

[0024] FIG. 10 shows a slot loop antenna based on the SFC (25) in drawing 8.

[0025] FIG. 11 shows a patch antenna wherein the patch perimeter is shaped according to SFC (25).

[0026] FIG. 12 shows an aperture antenna wherein the aperture (33) is practiced on a conducting or superconducting structure (31), said aperture being shaped with SFC (25).

[0027] FIG. 13 shows a patch antenna with an aperture on the patch based on SFC (25).

[0028] FIG. 14 shows another particular example of a family of SFC curves (41, 42, 43) based on the Giuseppe Peano curve. A non-SFC curve formed with only 9 segments is shown for comparison.

[0029] FIG. 15 shows a patch antenna with an SFC slot based on SFC (41).

[0030] FIG. 16 shows a wave-guide slot antenna wherein a rectangular waveguide (47) has one of its walls slotted with SFC curve (41).

[0031] FIG. 17 shows a horn antenna, wherein the aperture and cross-section of the horn is shaped after SFC (25).

[0032] FIG. 18 shows a reflector of a reflector antenna wherein the perimeter of said reflector is shaped as SFC (25).

[0033] FIG. 19 shows a family of SFC curves (51, 52, 53) based on the Giuseppe Peano curve. A non-SFC curve formed with only nine segments is shown for comparison (50).

[0034] FIG. 20 shows another family of SFC curves (55, 56, 57, 58). A non-SFC curve (54) constructed with only five segments is shown for comparison.

[0035] FIG. 21 shows two examples of SFC loops (59, 60) constructed with SFC (57).

[0036] FIG. 22 shows a family of SFC curves (61, 62, 63, 64) named here as HilbertZZ curves.

[0037] FIG. 23 shows a family of SFC curves (66, 67, 68) named here as Peanodec curves. A non-SFC curve (65) constructed with only nine segments is shown for comparison.

[0038] FIG. 24 shows a family of SFC curves (70, 71, 72) named here as Peanoic curves. A non-SFC curve (69) constructed with only nine segments is shown for comparison.

[0039] FIG. 25 shows a family of SFC curves (73, 74, 75) named here as PeanoZZ curves. A non-SFC curve (23) constructed with only nine segments is shown for comparison.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0040] FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 show some examples of SFC curves. Drawings (1), (3) and (4) in FIG. 1 show three examples of SFC curves named SZ curves. A curve that is not an SFC since it is only composed of 6 segments is shown in drawing (2) for comparison. The drawings (7) and (8) in FIG. 2 show another two particular examples of SFC curves, formed from the periodic repetition of a motive including the SFC curve (1). It is important noticing the substantial difference between these examples of SFC curves and some examples of periodic, meandering and not SFC curves such as those in drawings (5) and (6) in FIG. 2. Although curves (5) and (6) are composed by more than 10 segments, they can be substantially considered periodic along a straight direction (horizontal direction) and the motive that defines a period or repetition cell is constructed with less than 10 segments (the period in drawing (5) includes only four segments, while the period of the curve (6) comprises nine segments) which contradicts the definition of SFC curve introduced in the present invention. SFC curves are substantially more complex and pack a longer length in a smaller space; this fact in conjunction with the fact that each segment composing an SFC curve is electrically short (shorter than a tenth of the free-space operating wavelength as claimed in this invention) play a key role in

reducing the antenna size. Also, the class of folding mechanisms used to obtain the particular SFC curves described in the present invention are important in the design of miniature antennas.

[0041] FIG. 3 describes a preferred embodiment of an SFC antenna. The three drawings display different configurations of the same basic dipole. A two-arm antenna dipole is constructed comprising two conducting or superconducting parts, each part shaped as an SFC curve. For the sake of clarity but without loss of generality, a particular case of SFC curve (the SZ curve (1) of FIG. 1) has been chosen here; other SFC curves as for instance, those described in FIGS. 1, 2, 6, 8, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 or 25 could be used instead. The two closest tips of the two arms form the input terminals (9) of the dipole. The terminals (9) have been drawn as conducting or superconducting circles, but as it is clear to those skilled in the art, such terminals could be shaped following any other pattern as long as they are kept small in terms of the operating wavelength. Also, the arms of the dipoles can be rotated and folded in different ways to finely modify the input impedance or the radiation properties of the antenna such as, for instance, polarization. Another preferred embodiment of an SFC dipole is also shown in FIG. 3, where the conducting or superconducting SFC arms are printed over a dielectric substrate (10); this method is particularly convenient in terms of cost and mechanical robustness when the SFC curve is long. Any of the well-known printed circuit fabrication techniques can be applied to pattern the SFC curve over the dielectric substrate. Said dielectric substrate can be for instance a glass-fibre board, a teflon based substrate (such as Cuclad®) or other standard radiofrequency and microwave substrates (as for instance Rogers 4003® or Kapton®). The dielectric substrate can even be a portion of a window glass if the antenna is to be mounted in a motor vehicle such as a car, a train or an air-plane, to transmit or receive radio, TV, cellular telephone (GSM 900, GSM 1800, UMTS) or other communication services electromagnetic waves. Of course, a balun network can be connected or integrated at the input terminals of the dipole to balance the current distribution among the two dipole arms.

[0042] Another preferred embodiment of an SFC antenna is a monopole configuration as shown in FIG. 4. In this case one of the dipole arms is substituted by a conducting or superconducting counterpoise or ground plane (12). A handheld telephone case, or even a part of the metallic structure of a car, train or can act as such a ground counterpoise. The ground and the monopole arm (here the arm is represented with SFC curve (1), but any other SFC curve could be taken instead) are excited as usual in prior art monopoles by means of, for instance, a transmission line (11). Said transmission line is formed by two conductors, one of the conductors is connected to the ground counterpoise while the other is connected to a point of the SFC conducting or superconducting structure. In the drawings of FIG. 4, a coaxial cable (11) has been taken as a particular case of transmission line, but it is clear to any skilled in the art that other transmission lines (such as for instance a microstrip arm) could be used to excite the monopole. Optionally, and following the scheme described in FIG. 3, the SFC curve can be printed over a dielectric substrate (10).

[0043] Another preferred embodiment of an SFC antenna is a slot antenna as shown, for instance in FIGS. 5, 7 and 10.

In FIG. 5, two connected SFC curves (following the pattern (1) of FIG. 1) form an slot or gap impressed over a conducting or superconducting sheet (13). Such sheet can be, for instance, a sheet over a dielectric substrate in a printed circuit board configuration, a transparent conductive film such as those deposited over a glass window to protect the interior of a car from heating infrared radiation, or can even be part of the metallic structure of a handheld telephone, a car, train, boat or airplane. The exciting scheme can be any of the well known in conventional slot antennas and it does not become an essential part of the present invention. In all said three figures, a coaxial cable (11) has been used to excite the antenna, with one of the conductors connected to one side of the conducting sheet and the other one connected at the other side of the sheet across the slot. A microstrip transmission line could be used, for instance, instead of the coaxial cable.

[0044] To illustrate that several modifications of the antenna that can be done based on the same principle and spirit of the present invention, a similar example is shown in FIG. 7, where another curve (the curve (17) from the Hilbert family) is taken instead. Notice that neither in FIG. 5, nor in FIG. 7 the slot reaches the borders of the conducting sheet, but in another embodiment the slot can be also designed to reach the boundary of said sheet, breaking said sheet in two separate conducting sheets.

[0045] FIG. 10 describes another possible embodiment of an slot SFC antenna. It is also an slot antenna in a closed loop configuration. The loop is constructed for instance by connecting four SFC gaps following the pattern of SFC (25) in FIG. 8 (it is clear that other SFC curves could be used instead according to the spirit and scope of the present invention). The resulting closed loop determines the boundary of a conducting or superconducting island surrounded by a conducting or superconducting sheet. The slot can be excited by means of any of the well-known conventional techniques; for instance a coaxial cable (11) can be used, connecting one of the outside conductor to the conducting outer sheet and the inner conductor to the inside conducting island surrounded by the SFC gap. Again, such sheet can be, for example, a sheet over a dielectric substrate in a printed circuit board configuration, a transparent conductive film such as those deposited over a glass window to protect the interior of a car from heating infrared radiation, or can even be part of the metallic structure of a handheld telephone, a car, train, boat or air-plane. The slot can be even formed by the gap between two close but not co-planar conducting island and conducting sheet; this can be physically implemented for instance by mounting the inner conducting island over a surface of the optional dielectric substrate, and the surrounding conductor over the opposite surface of said substrate.

[0046] The slot configuration is not, of course, the only way of implementing an SFC loop antenna. A closed SFC curve made of a superconducting or conducting material can be used to implement a wire SFC loop antenna as shown in another preferred embodiment as that of FIG. 9. In this case, a portion of the curve is broken such as the two resulting ends of the curve form the input terminals (9) of the loop. Optionally, the loop can be printed also over a dielectric substrate (10). In case a dielectric substrate is used, a dielectric antenna can be also constructed by etching a

dielectric SFC pattern over said substrate, being the dielectric permittivity of said dielectric pattern higher than that of said substrate.

[0047] Another preferred embodiment is described in FIG. 11. It consists on a patch antenna, with the conducting or superconducting patch (30) featuring an SFC perimeter (the particular case of SFC (25) has been used here but it is clear that other SFC curves could be used instead). The perimeter of the patch is the essential part of the invention here, being the rest of the antenna conformed, for example, as other conventional patch antennas: the patch antenna comprises a conducting or superconducting ground-plane (31) or ground counterpoise, an the conducting or superconducting patch which is parallel to said ground-plane or ground-counterpoise. The spacing between the patch and the ground is typically below (but not restricted to) a quarter wavelength. Optionally, a low-loss dielectric substrate (10) (such as glass-fibre, a teflon substrate such as Cuclad® or other commercial materials such as Rogers® 4003) can be place between said patch and ground counterpoise. The antenna feeding scheme can be taken to be any of the well-known schemes used in prior art patch antennas, for instance: a coaxial cable with the outer conductor connected to the ground-plane and the inner conductor connected to the patch at the desired input resistance point (of course the typical modifications including a capacitive gap on the patch around the coaxial connecting point or a capacitive plate connected to the inner conductor of the coaxial placed at a distance parallel to the patch, and so on can be used as well); a microstrip transmission line sharing the same ground-plane as the antenna with the strip capacitively coupled to the patch and located at a distance below the patch, or in another embodiment with the strip placed below the ground-plane and coupled to the patch through an slot, and even a microstrip transmission line with the strip co-planar to the patch. All these mechanisms are well known from prior art and do not constitute an essential part of the present invention. The essential part of the present invention is the shape of the antenna (in this case the SFC perimeter of the patch) which contributes to reducing the antenna size with respect to prior art configurations.

[0048] Other preferred embodiments of SFC antennas based also on the patch configuration are disclosed in FIG. 13 and FIG. 15. They consist on a conventional patch antenna with a polygonal patch (30) (squared, triangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, rectangular, or even circular, to name just a few examples), with an SFC curve shaping a gap on the patch. Such an SFC line can form an slot or spur-line (44) over the patch (as seen in FIG. 15) contributing this way in reducing the antenna size and introducing new resonant frequencies for a multiband operation, or in another preferred embodiment the SFC curve (such as (25) defines the perimeter of an aperture (33) on the patch (30) (FIG. 13). Such an aperture contributes significantly to reduce the first resonant frequency of the patch with respect to the solid patch case, which significantly contributes to reducing the antenna size. Said two configurations, the SFC slot and the SFC aperture cases can of course be use also with SFC perimeter patch antennas as for instance the one (30) described in FIG. 11.

[0049] At this point it becomes clear to those skilled in the art what is the scope and spirit of the present invention and that the same SFC geometric principle can be applied in an

innovative way to all the well known, prior art configurations. More examples are given in FIGS. 12, 16, 17 and 18.

[0050] FIG. 12 describes another preferred embodiment of an SFC antenna. It consists on an aperture antenna, said aperture being characterized by its SFC perimeter, said aperture being impressed over a conducting ground-plane or ground-counterpoise (34), said ground-plane of ground-counterpoise consisting, for example, on a wall of a waveguide or cavity resonator or a part of the structure of a motor vehicle (such as a car, a lorry, an airplane or a tank). The aperture can be fed by any of the conventional techniques such as a coaxial cable (11), or a planar microstrip or strip-line transmission line, to name a few.

[0051] FIG. 16 shows another preferred embodiment where the SFC curves (41) are slotted over a wall of a waveguide (47) of arbitrary cross-section. This way and slotted waveguide array can be formed, with the advantage of the size compressing properties of the SFC curves.

[0052] FIG. 17 depicts another preferred embodiment, in this case a horn antenna (48) where the cross-section of the antenna is an SFC curve (25). In this case, the benefit comes not only from the size reduction property of SFC geometries, but also from the broadband behavior that can be achieved by shaping the horn cross-section. Primitive versions of these techniques have been already developed in the form of Ridge horn antennas. In said prior art cases, a single squared tooth introduced in at least two opposite walls of the horn is used to increase the bandwidth of the antenna. The richer scale structure of an SFC curve further contributes to a bandwidth enhancement with respect to prior art.

[0053] FIG. 18 describes another typical configuration of antenna, a reflector antenna (49), with the newly disclosed approach of shaping the reflector perimeter with an SFC curve. The reflector can be either flat or curve, depending on the application or feeding scheme (in for instance a reflectarray configuration the SFC reflectors will preferably be flat, while in focus fed dish reflectors the surface bounded by the SFC curve will preferably be curved approaching a parabolic surface). Also, within the spirit of SFC reflecting surfaces, Frequency Selective Surfaces (FSS) can be also constructed by means of SFC curves; in this case the SFC are used to shape the repetitive pattern over the FSS. In said FSS configuration, the SFC elements are used in an advantageous way with respect to prior art because the reduced size of the SFC patterns allows a closer spacing between said elements. A similar advantage is obtained when the SFC elements are used in an antenna array in an antenna reflectarray.

[0054] Having illustrated and described the principles of our invention in several preferred embodiments thereof, it should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that the invention can be modified in arrangement and detail without departing from such principles. We claim all modifications coming within the spirit and scope of the accompanying claims.

1-16. (canceled)

17. An antenna, comprising:

a radiating element having at least a portion defined by a multi-segment curve located completely within a radian sphere defined around the radiating element, the physical length of the multi-segment curve being larger

than any straight segment that may be placed within the radian sphere and each of the segments within the multi-segment curve being smaller than a tenth of an operating free-space wavelength of the antenna with no adjacent segments of the multi-segment curve forming a straight line.

18. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, in which no part of said multi-segment curve intersects another part.

19. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, in which no part of said multi-segment curve intersects another part other than at its beginning and end.

20. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein said multi-segment curve features a box-counting dimension larger than 17.

21. An antenna as set forth in claim 20, wherein the box-counting dimension is computed as the slope of a substantially straight portion of a line in a log-log graph over at least an octave of scales on the horizontal axes of the log-log graph.

22. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein a portion of the radiating element including said segments is the peripheral edge thereof.

23. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the antenna resonates at least at two different operating wavelengths.

24. An antenna as set forth in claim 23, wherein at least one of the operating wavelengths corresponds to an operating wavelength of a cellular telephone system.

25. An antenna as set forth in claim 24, wherein the cellular telephone system is a member of the group consisting essentially of a GSM 900 system, a GSM 1800 system or a UMTS system.

26. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the multi-segment curve forms a slot in a conductive surface of the radiating element.

27. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the multi-segment curve lies on a flat surface.

28. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the multi-segment curve lies on a curved surface.

29. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the multi-segment curve extends across a surface lying in more than one plane.

30. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the antenna is a monopole antenna comprising:

a radiating arm, a part of said radiating arm including the multi-segment curve; and

a ground counterpoise connected to said radiating arm.

31. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the antenna includes a slot in a conducting surface, wherein said multi-segment curve defines the slot in the conducting surface, and wherein said slot is backed by a dielectric substrate.

32. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the antenna is a loop antenna comprising a conducting wire, and wherein at least a portion of the wire forming the loop is the multi-segment curve.

33. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein the antenna is a slot or gap loop antenna comprising a conducting surface with a slot or gap loop impressed on said conducting surface, and wherein part of the slot or gap loop is the multi-segment curve.

34. An antenna according to claim 17, wherein the multi-segment curve is printed over a dielectric substrate.

35. An antenna according to claim 17, wherein at least a portion of said antenna comprises a printed copper sheet on a printed circuit board.

36. An antenna according to claim 17, wherein said antenna is included in a portable communication device.

37. An antenna according to claim 36, wherein said portable communication device is a cell phone.

38. An antenna according to claim 17, wherein the antenna is a patch antenna.

39. An antenna according to claim 38, wherein the patch antenna comprises:

a ground plane;

a conducting patch substantially parallel to the ground plane; and

wherein a perimeter of the conducting patch is defined by the multi-segment curve.

40. An antenna according to claim 38, wherein the patch antenna comprises:

a ground plane;

a conducting patch substantially parallel to the ground plane; and

wherein the conducting patch includes a slot therein shaped as the multi-segment curve.

41. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, further including a feeding scheme to finely modify the input impedance of the antenna.

42. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein said multi-segment curve tends to fill a surface that supports the multi-segment curve and wherein said multi-segment curve features a box-counting dimension larger than 17.

43. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein a portion of the multi-segment curve includes at least ten bends.

44. A small antenna as said forth in claim 43, wherein the radius of curvature of each of said at least ten bends is smaller of a tenth of the longest operating free-space wavelength of the antenna.

45. An antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein said multi-segment curve is shaped so that the arrangement of a portion of said multi-segment curve including bends is not self-similar with respect to the entire multi-segment curve.

46. The antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein said multi-segment curve has a box-counting dimension larger than 1.2.

47. The antenna as set forth in claim 17, wherein a portion of said multi-segment curve includes at least 25 bends.

48. An antenna, comprising:

a conductive radiative element at least a portion of which is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve formed by a plurality of individual segments connected end-to-end with one another so that each segment forms a bend with respect to each adjacent segment,

said conductive radiative element having a size that can be fitted into a radian sphere having a radius equal to an operating wavelength of the antenna divided by 2 p,

each segment of said curve being shorter than one-tenth of a free-space operating wavelength of the antenna, and

said curve being shaped so that the arrangements of its segments are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

49. An apparatus comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve;

wherein said curve comprises a multiplicity of connected segments in which the segments are spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment;

wherein each segment is shorter than one tenth of at least one operating free-space wavelength of the antenna;

wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangement of the segments of the curve are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve; and

wherein each pair of adjacent segments forms a bend folding the curve and increasing the degree of convolution of the resulting curve, such that said curve has a physical length larger than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area in which the segments of the curve are arranged, and so that the resulting antenna can be fitted inside the radian sphere of at least one operating frequency of the antenna.

50. An antenna comprising:

a conducting radiating element;

wherein at least a portion of said element is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve having a plurality of segments connected end-to-end so that each segment forms a bend with its adjacent segment and the physical length of said curve is longer than any straight line fitting inside the minimum area enclosing said curve, each of said segments being shorter than a tenth of an operating free-space wavelength of the antenna;

wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangement of its segments are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve and said curve fits inside a radian sphere for an operating wavelength of said antenna; and

wherein said radiating element is smaller than a circular radiating element operating at the same resonance frequency as that of said antenna.

51. An apparatus, comprising:

a small antenna having a size that can be fitted into a radiansphere having a radius equal to an operating wavelength of the antenna divided by 2 p, said antenna further comprising:

a conductive radiative element at least a peripheral portion of which is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve formed by a plurality of individual edges connected end-to-end with one another so that each edge forms a bend with respect to each adjacent edge,

each edge of said curve being shorter than one-tenth of a free-space operating wavelength of the antenna,

said curve being shaped so that the arrangements of its edges are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

52. An antenna including a conducting radiating element, wherein at least a portion of said element is shaped as a non-periodic curve, a physical length of which is longer than any straight line fitting inside a minimum area enclosing said curve, wherein said curve fits inside a radian sphere for an

operating wavelength of said antenna, and includes a plurality of identifiable cascaded sections and wherein said radiating element is smaller than a circular radiating element operating at a same resonance frequency as that of said antenna which fits inside the radian sphere.

53. An antenna including a conducting radiating element, at least a portion of which is shaped as a non-periodic curve, and a physical length of which is longer than any straight line fitting inside a minimum area enclosing said curve, wherein said radiating element is smaller than a circular radiating element operating at a same resonance frequency, and fits inside a radian sphere for an operating wavelength of said antenna, wherein said curve includes a plurality of identifiable cascaded sections each of which form a corner with an adjacent section and are smaller than a tenth of a free-space operating wavelength.

54. An antenna, comprising:

a radiating element defined by a multi-segment, irregular curve located completely within a radian sphere for an operating wavelength of said antenna defined around the radiating element, each of the segments within the multi-segment, irregular curve being connected such that adjacent segments form an angle with the angles between the adjacent segments enabling the multi-segment, irregular curve to obtain a greater length within said radian sphere than any straight segment that may be placed within the radian sphere, wherein none of said segments of said multi-segment, irregular curve intersects with another segment other than at the beginning and at the end of said multi-segment, irregular curve to form a closed loop and wherein the multi-segment, irregular curve is non-periodic but contains a repetition of a subset of segments arranged in a particular pattern.

55. An antenna, comprising:

a radiating element defined by a multi-segment curve, each of said segments spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment and none of said segments intersects with another segment other than at the beginning and at the end of said multi-segment, irregular curve to form a closed loop, wherein the multi-segment curve has a box counting dimension larger than one.

56. A miniature antenna having a size that can be fitted into a radian sphere having a radius equal to an operating wavelength of the antenna divided by 2 p, said antenna comprising:

a conductive radiative element at least a portion of which is shaped as a space-filling curve formed by a plurality of individual segments connected end-to-end with one another so that each segment forms an angle with each adjacent segment,

each segment of said curve being shorter than one-tenth of a free-space operating wavelength of the antenna,

said curve only intersecting with itself at a beginning of the curve and an end of the curve and being highly convoluted with a physical extent of the curve being of sufficient length that the curve tends to fill parts of a surface which supports the curve, and

said curve being shaped so that the arrangements of segments of the curve are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

57. An apparatus comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a space-filling curve (SFC),

wherein said SFC comprises a multiplicity of connected segments, wherein the segments are spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment,

such that the SFC has physical length longer than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area in which the segments of the SFC are arranged, and

such that the resulting antenna is electrically small as its dimensions are less than $\frac{1}{2} \lambda$ of a free-space operating wavelength of the antenna.

58. An apparatus comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a space-filling curve (SFC),

wherein said SFC comprises a multiplicity of connected segments,

wherein the segments are spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment,

wherein each pair of adjacent segments forms a bend, folding the curve and increasing the degree of convolution of the resulting SFC, such that the SFC has a physical length longer than that of any straight line that can be fitted in a same area in which the segments of the SFC are arranged, such that the antenna can be fitted inside a radian sphere for an operating wavelength of said antenna, and

wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangements of its segments are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

59. An apparatus comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a space-filling curve (SFC),

wherein said SFC comprises a multiplicity of connected segments, said segments being spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment,

each pair of adjacent segments forming a bend, folding the curve and increasing the degree of convolution of the resulting SFC, so that the resulting SFC is geometrically rich in at least one of edges, angles or discontinuities, when considering the curve at different levels of detail,

said SFC having a physical length larger than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area in which the segments of the SFC are arranged,

wherein the antenna can be fitted inside a radian sphere for an operating wavelength of said antenna, and

wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangements of its segments are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

60. An antenna, comprising:

a radiating element, at least a portion of which is defined by a multi-segment curve located completely within a

radian sphere defined around the radiating element for an operating wavelength of said antenna, the physical length of the multi-segment curve being larger than any straight line that can be placed within the radian sphere with each of the segments within the multi-segment curve being smaller than a tenth of an operating free-space wavelength of the antenna and no adjacent segments of the multi-segment curve form a longer straight segment, and

wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangements of the segments of the curve are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

61. An antenna, comprising:

a radiating element at least a portion of which is defined by a multi-segment, irregular curve located completely within a radian sphere defined around the radiating element for an operating wavelength of said antenna, each of the segments within the multi-segment curve being connected such that adjacent segments form an angle with the angles between the adjacent segments enabling said multi-segment curve to obtain a greater length within the radian sphere than any straight line that may be placed within the radian sphere,

wherein none of said segments intersect with another segment other than at the beginning and at the end of said multi-segment, irregular curve to form a closed loop, and

wherein the multi-segment, irregular curve is non-periodic but contains a repetition of a subset of segments arranged in a particular pattern, and said curve is shaped so that the arrangements of its segments are not self-similar with respect to the entire curve.

62. An antenna, comprising:

a radiating element at least a portion of which is defined by a multi-segment curve, each of said segments being spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment and none of said segments intersects with another segment other than at the beginning and at the end of said multi-segment, irregular curve to form a closed loop; and

wherein the multi-segment curve has a box counting dimension larger than one.

63. A radiating element of an antenna, comprising:

an irregular, multi-segment curve within a defined space; and

a plurality of interconnected segments defining the said curve, to enable said antenna to have a frequency of resonance lower than the frequency of resonance of a conventional antenna substantially similarly in size to that of the defined space, said conventional antenna being a member of the group consisting essentially of a triangular antenna, a rectangular antenna, a circular antenna, a pentagonal antenna or an hexagonal antenna.

64. An apparatus, comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve;

wherein at least a portion of said curve comprises a set of multiple bends, with the distance between each pair of

adjacent bends within said set being shorter than a tenth of a longest operating wavelength of the antenna; and wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangement of said portion of said curve including said set of multiple bends is not self-similar with respect to the entire curve, and said portion of said curve has a physical length larger than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area in which said portion of the curve can be arranged.

65. An apparatus, comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve, said portion comprising at least ten bends, with the length of said portion being shorter than the longest operating wavelength of said antenna; and

wherein said curve is shaped so that the arrangement of said portion of said curve including said at least ten bends is not self-similar with respect to the entire curve, and said portion of said curve has a physical length larger than that of any straight line that can be fit within the same area in which said at least ten bends of the curve are arranged.

66. An apparatus, comprising:

an antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a substantially non-periodic curve with at least a portion of said curve comprising a set of multiple bends, with a distance between a pair of consecutive bends within said set being shorter than a tenth of the longest operating wavelength of the antenna; and

wherein the respective distances between a pair of consecutive bends are different for at least two pair of bends, and said portion of said curve has a physical length larger than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area in which said portion of the curve can be arranged.

67. An apparatus, comprising:

a small antenna in which at least one portion of the antenna is shaped as a substantially irregular, non-periodic curve, with at least a portion of said curve comprising a set of multiple bends and a distance between each pair of adjacent bends within said set being shorter than a tenth of the longest operating wavelength of the antenna;

wherein said curve is shaped so that distances between a pair of consecutive bends are different for at least two pair of bends and the arrangement of said portion of said curve including said bends is not self-similar with respect to the entire curve,

wherein the shape of said portion of said curve is folded to increase the degree of complexity and convolution of said curve, to provide the curve with a physical length larger than that of any straight line that can be fitted in the same area in which said portion of the curve can be arranged, and

wherein the antenna resonates at a lower operating frequency and features a wider bandwidth around said operating frequency than a straight line antenna fitting into the same area as said curve.

68. A business method for the telecommunications field, comprising the steps of commercializing light-weight, small portable devices, said devices including an antenna, wherein at least a portion of said antenna is shaped as a space-filling curve and wherein said portable devices are selected from the group consisting essentially of handheld telephones, cellular telephones, cellular pagers, portable computers, data handlers.

69. A business method according to claim 66, wherein the antenna of said portable device operates at a plurality of frequencies to give coverage to at least three communication services, wherein at least one of said communication services is selected from the group consisting essentially of cellular telephone services: GSM 900, GSM1800, UMTS.

70. A business method according to claim 66, wherein the antenna of said portable device gives coverage to at least one communication service.

71. A business method according to claim 68, wherein the at least one communication service is UMTS.

72. A method for reducing a size of a portable mobile communication device comprising the steps of:

shaping at least a portion of a radiating element of an antenna in said portable mobile communication device as a substantially non-periodic multi-segment curve;

wherein the said multi-segment curve is located completely within a radian sphere defined around the said radiating element for an operating wavelength of said antenna;

wherein a physical length of the said multi-segment curve is larger than any straight segment line that can be placed within the said radian sphere; and

wherein each of the segments within the multi-segment curve is smaller than a tenth of an operating free-space wavelength of the said antenna, and no adjacent segments of the said multi-segment curve form a longer straight segment.

73. A method for reducing a size of a portable mobile communication device, comprising the steps of:

shaping at least a portion of the radiating element of an antenna in said portable mobile communication device as a substantially non-periodic multi-segment curve;

wherein each of the segments of said multi-segment curve is spatially arranged such that no two adjacent and connected segments form another longer straight segment;

wherein none of said segments intersects with another segment other than at a beginning and at an end of the said multi-segment curve to form a closed loop; and

wherein the said multi-segment curve has a box counting dimension larger than one.

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