Layered 3D: Tomographic Image Synthesis for Attenuation-based Light Field and High Dynamic Range Displays

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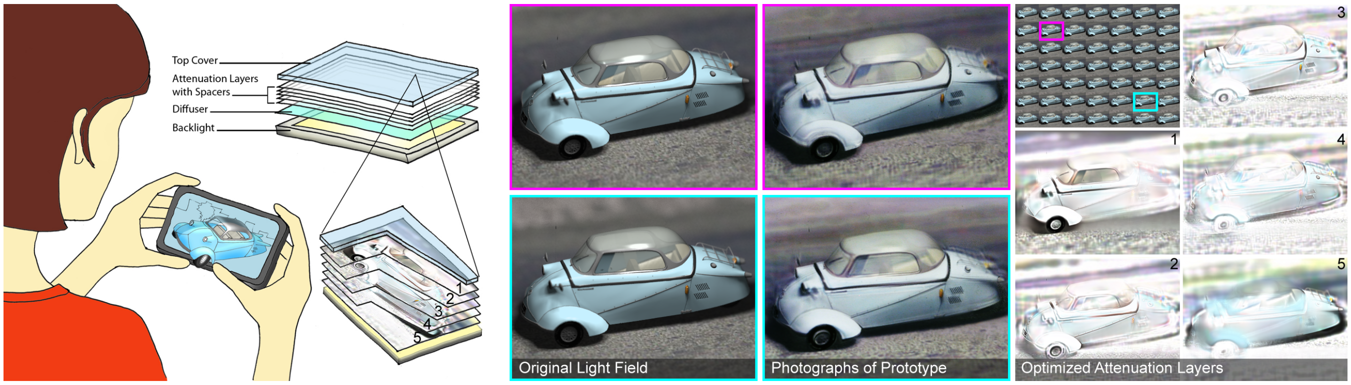

Figure 1: *Inexpensive, glasses-free light field display using volumetric attenuators. (Left) A stack of spatial light modulators (e.g., printed masks) recreates a target light field (here for a car) when illuminated by a backlight. (Right) The target light field is shown in the upper left, together with the optimal five-layer decomposition, obtained with iterative tomographic reconstruction. (Middle) Oblique projections for a viewer standing to the top left (magenta) and bottom right (cyan). Corresponding views of the target light field and five-layer prototype are shown on the left and right, respectively. Such attenuation-based 3D displays allow accurate, high-resolution depiction of motion parallax, occlusion, translucency, and specularity, being exhibited by the trunk, the fender, the window, and the roof of the car, respectively.*

Abstract

We develop tomographic techniques for image synthesis on displays composed of compact volumes of light-attenuating material. Such volumetric attenuators recreate a 4D light field or high-contrast 2D image when illuminated by a uniform backlight. Since arbitrary oblique views may be inconsistent with any single attenuator, iterative tomographic reconstruction minimizes the difference between the emitted and target light fields, subject to physical constraints on attenuation. As multi-layer generalizations of conventional parallax barriers, such displays are shown, both by theory and experiment, to exceed the performance of existing dual-layer architectures. For 3D display, spatial resolution, depth of field, and brightness are increased, compared to parallax barriers. For a plane at a fixed depth, our optimization also allows optimal construction of high dynamic range displays, confirming existing heuristics and providing the first extension to multiple, disjoint layers. We conclude by demonstrating the benefits and limitations of attenuation-based light field displays using an inexpensive fabrication method: separating multiple printed transparencies with acrylic sheets.

Keywords: computational displays, light fields, autostereoscopic 3D displays, high dynamic range displays, tomography

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1 Introduction

3D displays are designed to replicate as many perceptual depth cues as possible. As surveyed by Lipton [1982], these cues can be classified by those that require one eye (monocular) or both eyes (binocular). Artists have long exploited monocular cues, including perspective, shading, and occlusion, to obtain the illusion of depth with 2D media. Excluding motion parallax and accommodation, existing 2D displays provide the full set of monocular cues. As a result, 3D displays are designed to provide the lacking binocular cues of disparity and convergence, along with these missing monocular cues.

Current 3D displays preserve disparity, but require special eyewear (e.g., LCD shutters, polarizers, or color filters). In contrast, automultiscopic displays replicate disparity and motion parallax without encumbering the viewer. As categorized by Favalora [2005], such glasses-free displays include parallax barriers [Ives 1903; Kanolt 1918] and integral imaging [Lippmann 1908], volumetric displays [Blundell and Schwartz 1999], and holograms [Slinger et al. 2005]. Holograms present all depth cues, but are expensive and primarily restricted to static scenes viewed under controlled illumination [Klug et al. 2001]. Research is addressing these issues [Blanche et al. 2010], yet parallax barriers and volumetric displays remain practical alternatives, utilizing well-established, low-cost fabrication. Furthermore, volumetric displays can replicate similar depth cues with flicker-free refresh rates [Favalora 2005].

This paper considers automultiscopic displays comprised of compact volumes of light-attenuating material, which we dub “Layered 3D” displays. Differing from volumetric displays with light-emitting layers, overlaid attenuation patterns allow objects to appear beyond the display enclosure and for the depiction of motion parallax, occlusion, and specularity. While our theoretical contributions apply equally well to dynamic displays, such as stacks of liquid crystal display (LCD) panels, our prototype uses static printing to demonstrate the principles of tomographic image synthesis. Specifically, we produce multi-layer attenuators using 2D printed transparencies, separated by acrylic sheets (see Figures 1 and 2).