I think you're talking about the *four step algorithm*. What we want is the phase ϕ associated to each point (x, y). If we consider four measurements and a shift of 90^o, the amplitude for a given point in each measurement is:

$$\begin{aligned} A_1(x,y) &= A_0 \cos[\phi(x,y)] \\ A_2(x,y) &= A_0 \cos[\phi(x,y) + \pi 2] \\ A_3(x,y) &= A_0 \cos[\phi(x,y) + \pi] \\ A_4(x,y) &= A_0 \cos[\phi(x,y) + 3\pi/2] \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

which can be solved for the phase as:

$$\phi(x,y) = \arctan\left[\frac{A_4 - A_2}{A_1 - A_3}\right] \tag{2}$$