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BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

3D Systems Corporation et al.,

Petitioner

v.

Intrepid Automation, Inc.,
Patent Owner.

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Exhibit Title: U.S. Patent 7,443,364 B2 (“Projection of Overlapping Sub-Frames onto a Surface”)

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(54) **PROJECTION OF OVERLAPPING
SUB-FRAMES ONTO A SURFACE**

(75) Inventors: **Niranjan Damera-Venkata**, Mountain View, CA (US); **Nelson Liang An Chang**, San Jose, CA (US); **William J. Allen**, Corvallis, OR (US)

(73) Assignee: **Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P.**, Houston, TX (US)

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See application file for complete search history.

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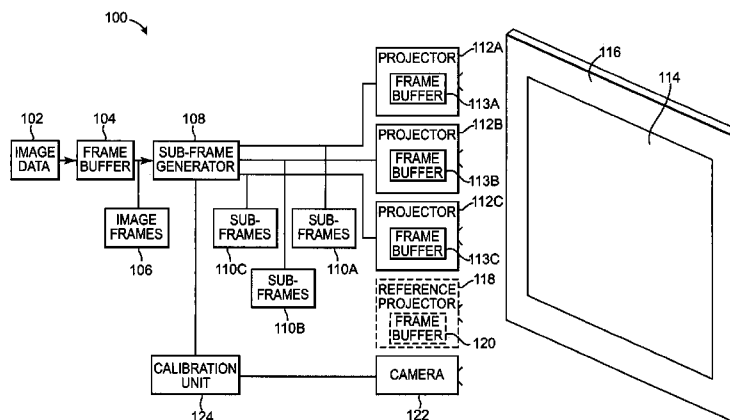
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Primary Examiner—Nitin Patel

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of displaying an image with a display system includes receiving image data for the image. The method includes generating a first sub-frame and a second sub-frame corresponding to the image data based on a geometric relationship between a hypothetical reference projector and each of a first and a second projector. The method includes projecting the first sub-frame with the first projector onto a target surface. The method includes projecting the second sub-frame with the second projector onto the target surface, wherein the first and the second sub-frames at least partially overlap on the target surface.

34 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



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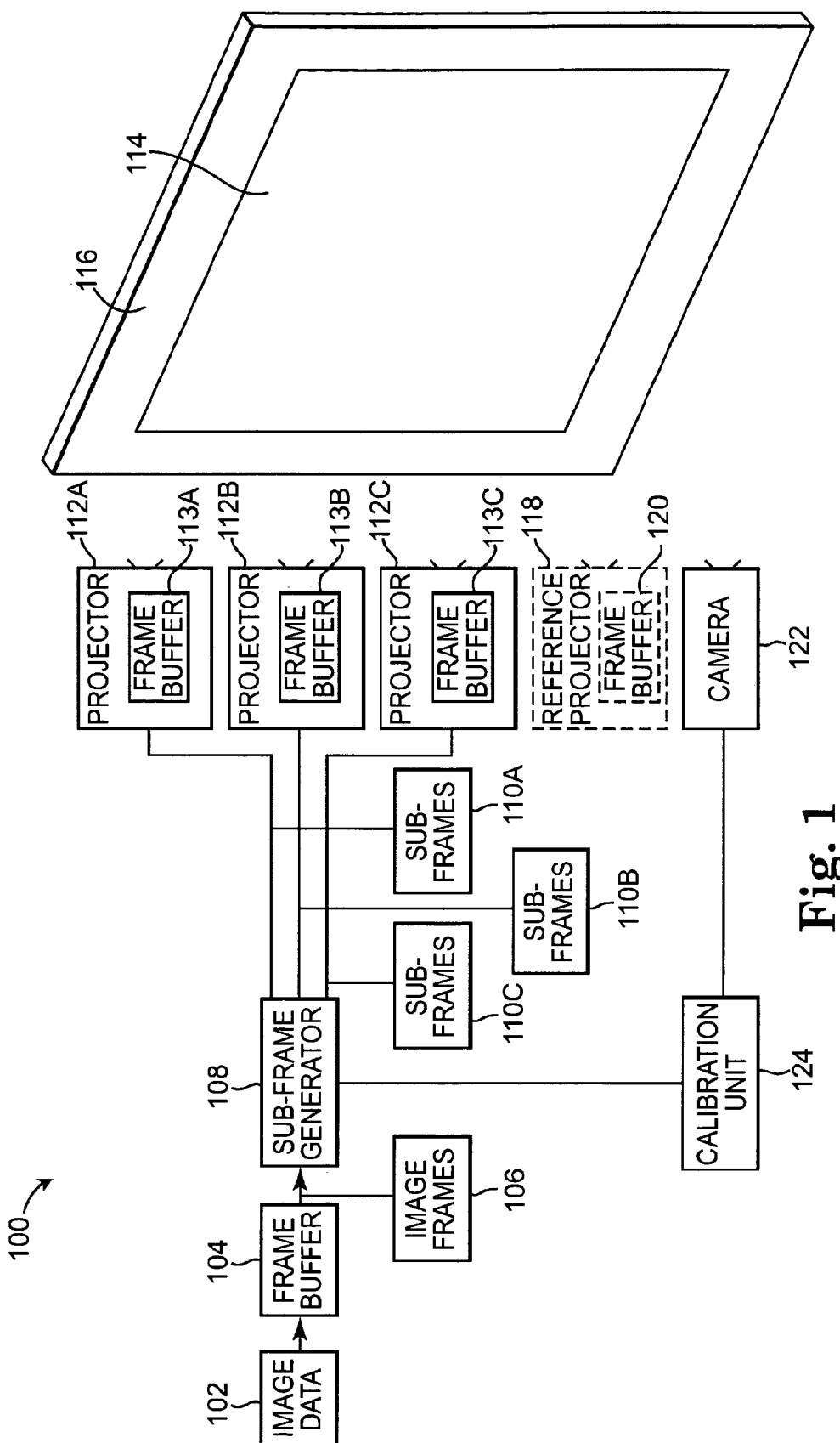


Fig. 1

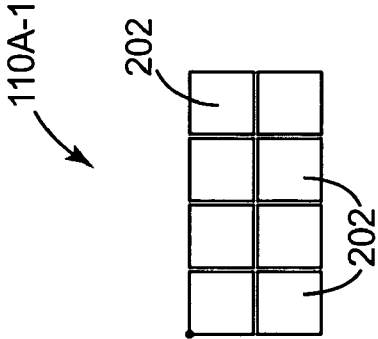


Fig. 2A

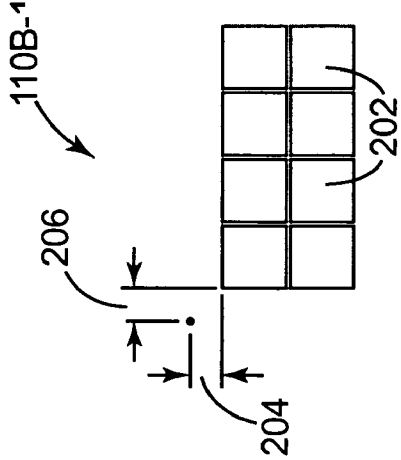


Fig. 2B

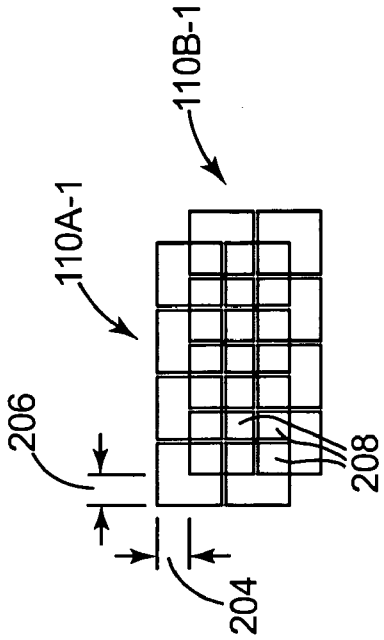


Fig. 2C

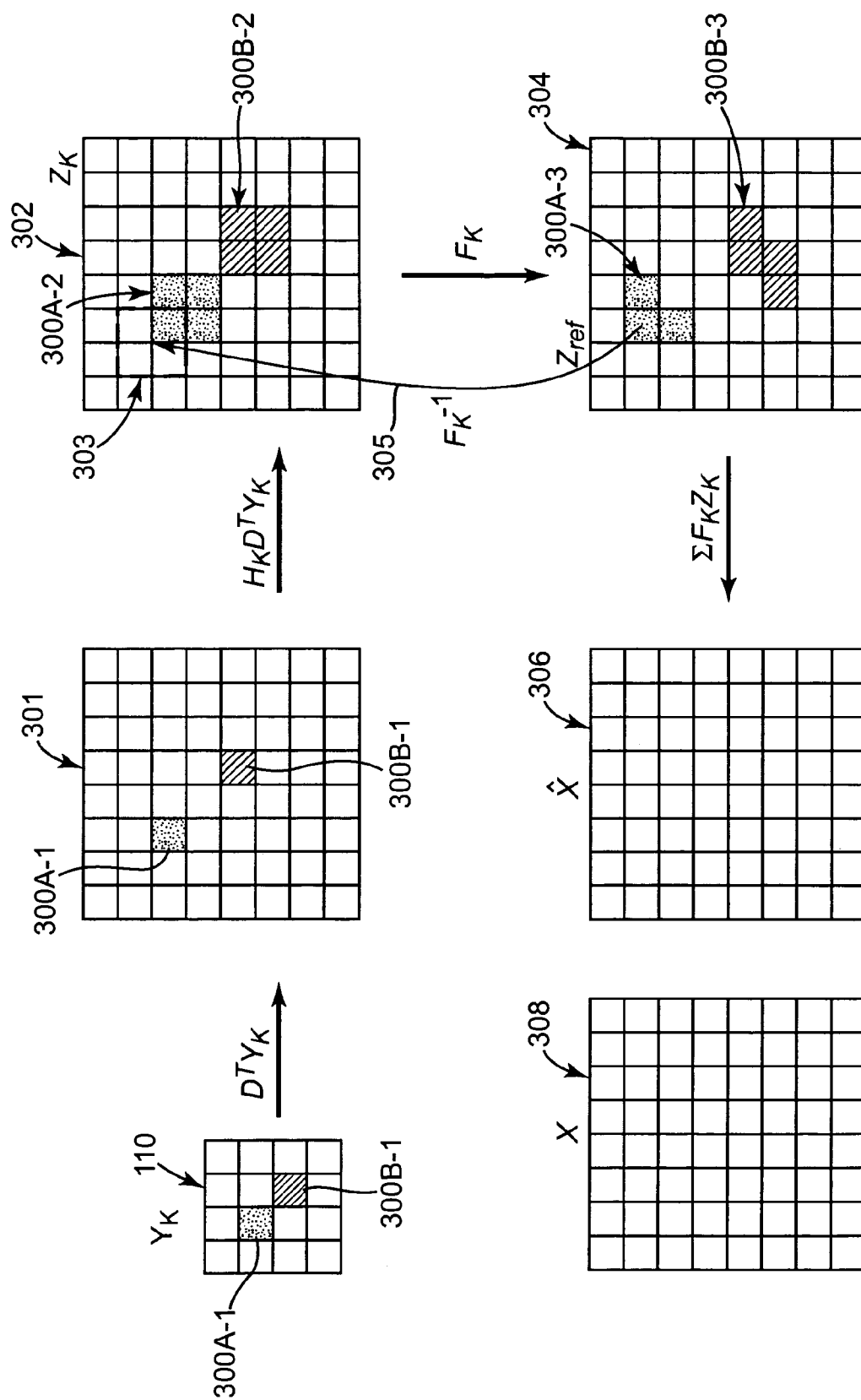


Fig. 3

1

**PROJECTION OF OVERLAPPING
SUB-FRAMES ONTO A SURFACE****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATION**

This application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No., 11/080,223, filed on the same date as this disclosure, and entitled PROJECTION OF OVERLAPPING SINGLE-COLOR SUB-FRAMES ONTO A SURFACE.

BACKGROUND

Two types of projection display systems are digital light processor (DLP) systems, and liquid crystal display (LCD) systems. It is desirable in some projection applications to provide a high lumen level output, but it is very costly to provide such output levels in existing DLP and LCD projection systems. Three choices exist for applications where high lumen levels are desired: (1) high-output projectors; (2) tiled, low-output projectors; and (3) superimposed, low-output projectors.

When information requirements are modest, a single high-output projector is typically employed. This approach dominates digital cinema today, and the images typically have a nice appearance. High-output projectors have the lowest lumen value (i.e., lumens per dollar). The lumen value of high output projectors is less than half of that found in low-end projectors. If the high output projector fails, the screen goes black. Also, parts and service are available for high output projectors only via a specialized niche market.

Tiled projection can deliver very high resolution, but it is difficult to hide the seams separating tiles, and output is often reduced to produce uniform tiles. Tiled projection can deliver the most pixels of information. For applications where large pixel counts are desired, such as command and control, tiled projection is a common choice. Registration, color, and brightness must be carefully controlled in tiled projection. Matching color and brightness is accomplished by attenuating output, which costs lumens. If a single projector fails in a tiled projection system, the composite image is ruined.

Superimposed projection provides excellent fault tolerance and full brightness utilization, but resolution is typically compromised. Algorithms that seek to enhance resolution by offsetting multiple projection elements have been previously proposed. These methods assume simple shift offsets between projectors, use frequency domain analyses, and rely on heuristic methods to compute component sub-frames. The proposed systems do not generate optimal sub-frames in real-time, and do not take into account arbitrary relative geometric distortion between the component projectors.

Existing projection systems do not provide a cost effective solution for high lumen level (e.g., greater than about 10,000 lumens) applications.

SUMMARY

One form of the present invention provides a method of displaying an image with a display system. The method includes receiving image data for the image. The method includes generating a first sub-frame and a second sub-frame corresponding to the image data based on a geometric relationship between a hypothetical reference projector and each of a first and a second projector. The method includes projecting the first sub-frame with the first projector onto a target surface. The method includes projecting the second sub-

2

frame with the second projector onto the target surface, wherein the first and the second sub-frames at least partially overlap on the target surface.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an image display system according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 2A-2C are schematic diagrams illustrating the projection of two sub-frames according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating a model of an image formation process according to one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following Detailed Description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. In this regard, directional terminology, such as "top," "bottom," "front," "back," etc., may be used with reference to the orientation of the Figure(s) being described. Because components of embodiments of the present invention can be positioned in a number of different orientations, the directional terminology is used for purposes of illustration and is in no way limiting. It is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and structural or logical changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. The following Detailed Description, therefore, is not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined by the appended claims.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an image display system 100 according to one embodiment of the present invention. Image display system 100 processes image data 102 and generates a corresponding displayed image 114. Displayed image 114 is defined to include any pictorial, graphical, or textural characters, symbols, illustrations, or other representations of information.

In one embodiment, image display system 100 includes image frame buffer 104, sub-frame generator 108, projectors 112A-112C (collectively referred to as projectors 112), camera 122, and calibration unit 124. Image frame buffer 104 receives and buffers image data 102 to create image frames 106. Sub-frame generator 108 processes image frames 106 to define corresponding image sub-frames 10A-110C (collectively referred to as sub-frames 110). In one embodiment, for each image frame 106, sub-frame generator 108 generates one sub-frame 110A for projector 112A, one sub-frame 110B for projector 112B, and one sub-frame 110C for projector 112C. The sub-frames 110A-110C are received by projectors 112A-112C, respectively, and stored in image frame buffers 113A-113C (collectively referred to as image frame buffers 113), respectively. Projectors 112A-112C project the sub-frames 110A-110C, respectively, onto target surface 116 to produce displayed image 114 for viewing by a user.

Image frame buffer 104 includes memory for storing image data 102 for one or more image frames 106. Thus, image frame buffer 104 constitutes a database of one or more image frames 106. Image frame buffers 113 also include memory for storing sub-frames 110. Examples of image frame buffers 104 and 113 include non-volatile memory (e.g., a hard disk drive or other persistent storage device) and may include volatile memory (e.g., random access memory (RAM)).

Sub-frame generator **108** receives and processes image frames **106** to define a plurality of image sub-frames **110**. Sub-frame generator **108** generates sub-frames **110** based on image data in image frames **106**. In one embodiment, sub-frame generator **108** generates image sub-frames **110** with a resolution that matches the resolution of projectors **112**, which is less than the resolution of image frames **106** in one embodiment. Sub-frames **110** each include a plurality of columns and a plurality of rows of individual pixels representing a subset of an image frame **106**.

Projectors **112** receive image sub-frames **110** from sub-frame generator **108** and, in one embodiment, simultaneously project the image sub-frames **110** onto target **116** at overlapping and spatially offset positions to produce displayed image **114**. In one embodiment, display system **100** is configured to give the appearance to the human eye of high-resolution displayed images **114** by displaying overlapping and spatially shifted lower-resolution sub-frames **110** from multiple projectors **112**. In one form of the invention, the projection of overlapping and spatially shifted sub-frames **110** gives the appearance of enhanced resolution (i.e., higher resolution than the sub-frames **110** themselves). A problem of sub-frame generation, which is addressed by embodiments of the present invention, is to determine appropriate values for the sub-frames **110** so that the displayed image **114** produced by the projected sub-frames **110** is close in appearance to how the high-resolution image (e.g., image frame **106**) from which the sub-frames **110** were derived would appear if displayed directly.

It will be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art that functions performed by sub-frame generator **108** may be implemented in hardware, software, firmware, or any combination thereof. The implementation may be via a microprocessor, programmable logic device, or state machine. Components of the present invention may reside in software on one or more computer-readable mediums. The term computer-readable medium as used herein is defined to include any kind of memory, volatile or non-volatile, such as floppy disks, hard disks, CD-ROMs, flash memory, read-only memory, and random access memory.

Also shown in FIG. **1** is reference projector **118** with an image frame buffer **120**. Reference projector **118** is shown with hidden lines in FIG. **1** because, in one embodiment, projector **118** is not an actual projector, but rather is a hypothetical high-resolution reference projector that is used in an image formation model for generating optimal sub-frames **110**, as described in further detail below with reference to FIGS. **2A-2C** and **3**. In one embodiment, the location of one of the actual projectors **112** is defined to be the location of the reference projector **118**.

In one embodiment, display system **100** includes a camera **122** and a calibration unit **124**, which are used in one form of the invention to automatically determine a geometric mapping between each projector **112** and the reference projector **118**, as described in further detail below with reference to FIGS. **2A-2C** and **3**.

In one form of the invention, image display system **100** includes hardware, software, firmware, or a combination of these. In one embodiment, one or more components of image display system **100** are included in a computer, computer server, or other microprocessor-based system capable of performing a sequence of logic operations. In addition, processing can be distributed throughout the system with individual portions being implemented in separate system components, such as in a networked or multiple computing unit environment.

In one embodiment, display system **100** uses two projectors **112**. FIGS. **2A-2C** are schematic diagrams illustrating the projection of two sub-frames **110** according to one embodiment of the present invention. As illustrated in FIGS. **2A** and **2B**, sub-frame generator **108** defines two image sub-frames **110** for each of the image frames **106**. More specifically, sub-frame generator **108** defines a first sub-frame **110A-1** and a second sub-frame **110B-1** for an image frame **106**. As such, first sub-frame **110A-1** and second sub-frame **110B-1** each include a plurality of columns and a plurality of rows of individual pixels **202** of image data.

In one embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. **2B**, when projected onto target **116**, second sub-frame **110B-1** is offset from first sub-frame **110A-1** by a vertical distance **204** and a horizontal distance **206**. As such, second sub-frame **110B-1** is spatially offset from first sub-frame **110A-1** by a predetermined distance. In one illustrative embodiment, vertical distance **204** and horizontal distance **206** are each approximately one-half of one pixel.

As illustrated in FIG. **2C**, a first one of the projectors **112A** projects first sub-frame **110A-1** in a first position and a second one of the projectors **112B** simultaneously projects second sub-frame **110B-1** in a second position, spatially offset from the first position. More specifically, the display of second sub-frame **110B-1** is spatially shifted relative to the display of first sub-frame **110A-1** by vertical distance **204** and horizontal distance **206**. As such, pixels of first sub-frame **110A-1** overlap pixels of second sub-frame **110B-1**, thereby producing the appearance of higher resolution pixels **208**. The overlapped sub-frames **11A-1** and **110B-1** also produce a brighter overall image **114** than either of the sub-frames **110** alone. In other embodiments, more than two projectors **112** are used in system **100**, and more than two sub-frames **110** are defined for each image frame **106**, which results in a further increase in the resolution and brightness of the displayed image **114**.

In one form of the invention, sub-frames **110** have a lower resolution than image frames **106**. Thus, sub-frames **110** are also referred to herein as low-resolution images or sub-frames **110**, and image frames **106** are also referred to herein as high-resolution images or frames **106**. It will be understood by persons of ordinary skill in the art that the terms low resolution and high resolution are used herein in a comparative fashion, and are not limited to any particular minimum or maximum number of pixels.

In one form of the invention, display system **100** produces a superimposed projected output that takes advantage of natural pixel mis-registration to provide a displayed image **114** with a higher resolution than the individual sub-frames **110**. In one embodiment, image formation due to multiple overlapped projectors **112** is modeled using a signal processing model. Optimal sub-frames **110** for each of the component projectors **112** are estimated by sub-frame generator **108** based on the model, such that the resulting image predicted by the signal processing model is as close as possible to the desired high-resolution image to be projected.

In one embodiment, sub-frame generator **108** is configured to generate sub-frames **110** based on the maximization of a probability that, given a desired high resolution image, a simulated high-resolution image that is a function of the sub-frame values, is the same as the given, desired high-resolution image. If the generated sub-frames **110** are optimal, the simulated high-resolution image will be as close as possible to the desired high-resolution image. The generation of optimal sub-frames **110** based on a simulated high-resolution image and a desired high-resolution image is described in further detail below with reference to FIG. **3**.

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating a model of an image formation process according to one embodiment of the present invention. The sub-frames 110 are represented in the model by Y_k , where “k” is an index for identifying the individual projectors 112. Thus, Y_1 , for example, corresponds to a sub-frame 110A for a first projector 112A, Y_2 corresponds to a sub-frame 110B for a second projector 112B, etc. Two of the sixteen pixels of the sub-frame 110 shown in FIG. 3 are highlighted, and identified by reference numbers 300A-1 and 300B-1. The sub-frames 110 (Y_k) are represented on a hypothetical high-resolution grid by up-sampling (represented by D^T) to create up-sampled image 301. The up-sampled image 301 is filtered with an interpolating filter (represented by H_k) to create a high-resolution image 302 (Z_k) with “chunky pixels”. This relationship is expressed in the following Equation I:

$$Z_k = H_k D^T Y_k \quad \text{Equation I}$$

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors 112;

Z_k =low-resolution sub-frame 110 of the kth projector 112 on a hypothetical high-resolution grid;

H_k =Interpolating filter for low-resolution sub-frame 110 from kth projector 112;

D^T =up-sampling matrix; and

Y_k =low-resolution sub-frame 110 of the kth projector 112.

The low-resolution sub-frame pixel data (Y_k) is expanded with the up-sampling matrix (D^T) so that the sub-frames 110 (Y_k) can be represented on a high-resolution grid. The interpolating filter (H_k) fills in the missing pixel data produced by up-sampling. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, pixel 300A-1 from the original sub-frame 110 (Y_k) corresponds to four pixels 300A-2 in the high-resolution image 302 (Z_k), and pixel 300B-1 from the original sub-frame 110 (Y_k) corresponds to four pixels 300B-2 in the high-resolution image 302 (Z_k). The resulting image 302 (Z_k) in Equation I models the output of the kth projector 112 if there was no relative distortion or noise in the projection process. Relative geometric distortion between the projected component sub-frames 110 results due to the different optical paths and locations of the component projectors 112. A geometric transformation is modeled with the operator, F_k , which maps coordinates in the frame buffer 113 of the kth projector 112 to the frame buffer 120 of the reference projector 118 (FIG. 1) with sub-pixel accuracy, to generate a warped image 304 (Z_{ref}). In one embodiment, F_k is linear with respect to pixel intensities, but is non-linear with respect to the coordinate transformations. As shown in FIG. 3, the four pixels 300A-2 in image 302 are mapped to the three pixels 300A-3 in image 304, and the four pixels 300B-2 in image 302 are mapped to the four pixels 300B-3 in image 304.

In one embodiment, the geometric mapping (F_k) is a floating-point mapping, but the destinations in the mapping are on an integer grid in image 304. Thus, it is possible for multiple pixels in image 302 to be mapped to the same pixel location in image 304, resulting in missing pixels in image 304. To avoid this situation, in one form of the present invention, during the forward mapping (F_k), the inverse mapping (F_k^{-1}) is also utilized as indicated at 305 in FIG. 3. Each destination pixel in image 304 is back projected (i.e., F_k^{-1}) to find the corresponding location in image 302. For the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, the location in image 302 corresponding to the upper-left pixel of the pixels 300A-3 in image 304 is the location at the upper-left corner of the group of pixels 300A-2. In one form of the invention, the values for the pixels neighboring the identified location in image 302 are combined (e.g., averaged) to form the value for the corresponding pixel in image

304. Thus, for the example shown in FIG. 3, the value for the upper-left pixel in the group of pixels 300A-3 in image 304 is determined by averaging the values for the four pixels within the frame 303 in image 302.

In another embodiment of the invention, the forward geometric mapping or warp (F_k) is implemented directly, and the inverse mapping (F_k^{-1}) is not used. In one form of this embodiment, a scatter operation is performed to eliminate missing pixels. That is, when a pixel in image 302 is mapped to a floating point location in image 304, some of the image data for the pixel is essentially scattered to multiple pixels neighboring the floating point location in image 304. Thus, each pixel in image 304 may receive contributions from multiple pixels in image 302, and each pixel in image 304 is normalized based on the number of contributions it receives.

A superposition/summation of such warped images 304 from all of the component projectors 112 forms a hypothetical or simulated high-resolution image 306 ($\hat{X}$) in the reference projector frame buffer 120, as represented in the following Equation II:

$$\hat{X} = \sum_k F_k Z_k \quad \text{Equation II}$$

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors 112;

$\hat{X}$ =hypothetical or simulated high-resolution image 306 in the reference projector frame buffer 120;

F_k =operator that maps a low-resolution sub-frame 110 of the kth projector 112 on a hypothetical high-resolution grid to the reference projector frame buffer 120; and

Z_k =low-resolution sub-frame 110 of kth projector 112 on a hypothetical high-resolution grid, as defined in Equation I.

If the simulated high-resolution image 306 ($\hat{X}$) in the reference projector frame buffer 120 is identical to a given (desired) high-resolution image 308 (X), the system of component low-resolution projectors 112 would be equivalent to a hypothetical high-resolution projector placed at the same location as the reference projector 118 and sharing its optical path. In one embodiment, the desired high-resolution images 308 are the high-resolution image frames 106 (FIG. 1) received by sub-frame generator 108.

In one embodiment, the deviation of the simulated high-resolution image 306 ($\hat{X}$) from the desired high-resolution image 308 (X) is modeled as shown in the following Equation III:

$$X = \hat{X} + \eta \quad \text{Equation III}$$

where:

X =desired high-resolution frame 308;

$\hat{X}$ =hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame 306 in the reference projector frame buffer 120; and

η =error or noise term.

As shown in Equation III, the desired high-resolution image 308 (X) is defined as the simulated high-resolution image 306 ($\hat{X}$) plus η , which in one embodiment represents zero mean white Gaussian noise.

The solution for the optimal sub-frame data (Y_k^*) for the sub-frames 110 is formulated as the optimization given in the following Equation IV:

$$Y_k^* = \underset{Y_k}{\operatorname{argmax}} P(\hat{X} | X)$$

Equation IV

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors **112**;

Y_k^* =optimum low-resolution sub-frame **110** of the kth projector **112**;

Y_k =low-resolution sub-frame **110** of the kth projector **112**;

X-hat=hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II;

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**; and

P(X-hat|X)=probability of X-hat given X.

Thus, as indicated by Equation IV, the goal of the optimization is to determine the sub-frame values (Y_k) that maximize the probability of X-hat given X. Given a desired high-resolution image **308** (X) to be projected, sub-frame generator **108** (FIG. 1) determines the component sub-frames **110** that maximize the probability that the simulated high-resolution image **306** (X-hat) is the same as or matches the “true” high-resolution image **308** (X).

Using Bayes rule, the probability P(X-hat|X) in Equation IV can be written as shown in the following Equation V:

$$P(\hat{X} | X) = \frac{P(X | \hat{X})P(\hat{X})}{P(X)}$$

Equation V

where:

X-hat=hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II;

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**;

P(X-hat|X)=probability of X-hat given X;

P(X|X-hat)=probability of X given X-hat;

P(X-hat)=prior probability of X-hat; and

P(X)=prior probability of X.

The term P(X) in Equation V is a known constant. If X-hat is given, then, referring to Equation III, X depends only on the noise term, η , which is Gaussian. Thus, the term P(X|X-hat) in Equation V will have a Gaussian form as shown in the following Equation VI:

$$P(X | \hat{X}) = \frac{1}{C} e^{-\frac{\|X - \hat{X}\|^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

Equation VI

where:

X-hat=hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II;

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**;

P(X|X-hat)=probability of X given X-hat;

C=normalization constant; and

σ =variance of the noise term, η .

To provide a solution that is robust to minor calibration errors and noise, a “smoothness” requirement is imposed on X-hat. In other words, it is assumed that good simulated images **306** have certain properties. The smoothness requirement according to one embodiment is expressed in terms of a desired Gaussian prior probability distribution for X-hat given by the following Equation VII:

$$P(\hat{X}) = \frac{1}{Z(\beta)} e^{-\{\beta^2 (\|\nabla \hat{X}\|^2)\}}$$

Equation VII

where:

P(X-hat)=prior probability of X-hat;

β =smoothing constant;

Z(β)=normalization function;

∇ =gradient operator; and

X-hat=hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II.

In another embodiment of the invention, the smoothness requirement is based on a prior Laplacian model, and is expressed in terms of a probability distribution for X-hat given by the following Equation VIII:

$$P(\hat{X}) = \frac{1}{Z(\beta)} e^{-\{\beta^2 (\|\nabla \hat{X}\|)\}}$$

Equation VIII

where:

P(X-hat)=prior probability of X-hat;

β =smoothing constant;

Z(β)=normalization function;

σ =gradient operator; and

X-hat=hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II.

The following discussion assumes that the probability distribution given in Equation VII, rather than Equation VIII, is being used. As will be understood by persons of ordinary skill in the art, a similar procedure would be followed if Equation VIII were used. Inserting the probability distributions from Equations VI and VII into Equation V, and inserting the result into Equation IV, results in a maximization problem involving the product of two probability distributions (note that the probability P(X) is a known constant and goes away in the calculation). By taking the negative logarithm, the exponents go away, the product of the two probability distributions becomes a sum of two probability distributions, and the maximization problem given in Equation IV is transformed into a function minimization problem, as shown in the following Equation IX:

$$Y_k^* = \underset{Y_k}{\operatorname{argmax}} \|X | \hat{X}\|^2 + \beta^2 \|\nabla \hat{X}\|^2$$

Equation IX

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors **112**;

Y_k^* =optimum low-resolution sub-frame **110** of the kth projector **112**;

Y_k =low-resolution sub-frame **110** of the kth projector **112**;

X-hat=hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II;

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**;

β =smoothing constant; and

σ =gradient operator.

The function minimization problem given in Equation IX is solved by substituting the definition of X-hat from Equation

II into Equation IX and taking the derivative with respect to Y_k , which results in an iterative algorithm given by the following Equation X:

$$Y_k^{(n+1)} = Y_k^{(n)} - \Theta \{ D H_k^T F_k^T [(\hat{X}^{(n)} - X) + \beta^2 \sigma^2 \hat{X}^{(n)}] \} \quad \text{Equation X}$$

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors **112**;

n=index for identifying iterations;

$Y_k^{(n+1)}$ =low-resolution sub-frame **110** for the kth projector **112** for iteration number n+1;

$Y_k^{(n)}$ =low-resolution sub-frame **110** for the kth projector **112** for iteration number n;

Θ =momentum parameter indicating the fraction of error to be incorporated at each iteration;

D=down-sampling matrix;

H_k^T =Transpose of interpolating filter, H_k , from Equation I (in the image domain, H_k^T is a flipped version of H_k);

F_k^T =Transpose of operator, F_k , from Equation II (in the image domain, F_k^T is the inverse of the warp denoted by F_k);

$\hat{X}^{(n)}$ =hypothetical or simulated high-resolution frame **306** in the reference projector frame buffer **120**, as defined in Equation II, for iteration number n;

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**;

β =smoothing constant; and

σ^2 =Laplacian operator.

Equation X may be intuitively understood as an iterative process of computing an error in the reference projector **118** coordinate system and projecting it back onto the sub-frame data. In one embodiment, sub-frame generator **108** (FIG. 1) is configured to generate sub-frames **110** in real-time using Equation X. The generated sub-frames **110** are optimal in one embodiment because they maximize the probability that the simulated high-resolution image **306** ($\hat{X}$) is the same as the desired high-resolution image **308** (X), and they minimize the error between the simulated high-resolution image **306** and the desired high-resolution image **308**. Equation X can be implemented very efficiently with conventional image processing operations (e.g., transformations, down-sampling, and filtering). The iterative algorithm given by Equation X converges rapidly in a few iterations and is very efficient in terms of memory and computation (e.g., a single iteration uses two rows in memory; and multiple iterations may also be rolled into a single step). The iterative algorithm given by Equation X is suitable for real-time implementation, and may be used to generate optimal sub-frames **110** at video rates, for example.

To begin the iterative algorithm defined in Equation X, an initial guess, $Y_k^{(0)}$, for the sub-frames **110** is determined. In one embodiment, the initial guess for the sub-frames **110** is determined by texture mapping the desired high-resolution frame **308** onto the sub-frames **110**. In one form of the invention, the initial guess is determined from the following Equation XI:

$$Y_k^{(0)} = D B_k F_k^T X \quad \text{Equation XI}$$

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors **112**;

$Y_k^{(0)}$ =initial guess at the sub-frame data for the sub-frame **110** for the kth projector **112**;

D=down-sampling matrix;

B_k =interpolation filter;

F_k^T =Transpose of operator, F_k , from Equation II (in the image domain, F_k^T is the inverse of the warp denoted by F_k); and

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**.

Thus, as indicated by Equation XI, the initial guess ($Y_k^{(0)}$) is determined by performing a geometric transformation (F_k^T) on the desired high-resolution frame **308** (X), and filtering (B_k) and down-sampling (D) the result. The particular combination of neighboring pixels from the desired high-resolution frame **308** that are used in generating the initial guess ($Y_k^{(0)}$) will depend on the selected filter kernel for the interpolation filter (B_k).

In another form of the invention, the initial guess, $Y_k^{(0)}$, for the sub-frames **110** is determined from the following Equation XII

$$Y_k^{(0)} = D F_k^T X \quad \text{Equation XII}$$

where:

k=index for identifying the projectors **112**;

$Y_k^{(0)}$ =initial guess at the sub-frame data for the sub-frame **110** for the kth projector **112**;

D=down-sampling matrix;

F_k^T =Transpose of operator, F_k , from Equation II (in the image domain, F_k^T is the inverse of the warp denoted by F_k); and

X=desired high-resolution frame **308**.

Equation XII is the same as Equation XI, except that the interpolation filter (B_k) is not used.

Several techniques are available to determine the geometric mapping (F_k) between each projector **112** and the reference projector **118**, including manually establishing the mappings, or using camera **122** and calibration unit **124** (FIG. 1) to automatically determine the mappings. In one embodiment, if camera **122** and calibration unit **124** are used, the geometric mappings between each projector **112** and the camera **122** are determined by calibration unit **124**. These projector-to-camera mappings may be denoted by T_k , where k is an index for identifying projectors **112**. Based on the projector-to-camera mappings (T_k), the geometric mappings (F_k) between each projector **112** and the reference projector **118** are determined by calibration unit **124**, and provided to sub-frame generator **108**. For example, in a display system **100** with two projectors **112A** and **112B**, assuming the first projector **112A** is the reference projector **118**, the geometric mapping of the second projector **112B** to the first (reference) projector **112A** can be determined as shown in the following Equation XIII:

$$F_2 = T_2 T_1^{-1} \quad \text{Equation XIII}$$

where:

F_2 =operator that maps a low-resolution sub-frame **110** of the second projector **112B** to the first (reference) projector **112A**;

T_1 =geometric mapping between the first projector **112A** and the camera **122**; and

T_2 =geometric mapping between the second projector **112B** and the camera **122**.

In one embodiment, the geometric mappings (F_k) are determined once by calibration unit **124**, and provided to sub-frame generator **108**. In another embodiment, calibration unit **124** continually determines (e.g., once per frame **106**) the geometric mappings (F_k), and continually provides updated values for the mappings to sub-frame generator **108**.

One form of the present invention provides an image display system **100** with multiple overlapped low-resolution projectors **112** coupled with an efficient real-time (e.g., video rates) image processing algorithm for generating sub-frames **110**. In one embodiment, multiple low-resolution, low-cost projectors **112** are used to produce high resolution images **114** at high lumen levels, but at lower cost than existing high-resolution projection systems, such as a single, high-

11

resolution, high-output projector. One form of the present invention provides a scalable image display system **100** that can provide virtually any desired resolution and brightness by adding any desired number of component projectors **112** to the system **100**.

In some existing display systems, multiple low-resolution images are displayed with temporal and sub-pixel spatial offsets to enhance resolution. There are some important differences between these existing systems and embodiments of the present invention. For example, in one embodiment of the present invention, there is no need for circuitry to offset the projected sub-frames **110** temporally. In one form of the invention, the sub-frames **110** from the component projectors **112** are projected “in-sync”. As another example, unlike some existing systems where all of the sub-frames go through the same optics and the shifts between sub-frames are all simple translational shifts, in one form of the present invention, the sub-frames **110** are projected through the different optics of the multiple individual projectors **112**. In one form of the invention, the signal processing model that is used to generate optimal sub-frames **110** takes into account relative geometric distortion among the component sub-frames **110**, and is robust to minor calibration errors and noise.

It can be difficult to accurately align projectors into a desired configuration. In one embodiment of the invention, regardless of what the particular projector configuration is, even if it is not an optimal alignment, sub-frame generator **108** determines and generates optimal sub-frames **110** for that particular configuration.

Algorithms that seek to enhance resolution by offsetting multiple projection elements have been previously proposed. These methods assume simple shift offsets between projectors, use frequency domain analyses, and rely on heuristic methods to compute component sub-frames. In contrast, one form of the present invention utilizes an optimal real-time sub-frame generation algorithm that explicitly accounts for arbitrary relative geometric distortion (not limited to homographies) between the component projectors **112**, including distortions that occur due to a target surface **116** that is non-planar or has surface non-uniformities. One form of the present invention generates sub-frames **110** based on a geometric relationship between a hypothetical high-resolution reference projector **118** at any arbitrary location and each of the actual low-resolution projectors **112**, which may also be positioned at any arbitrary location.

In one embodiment, image display system **100** is configured to project images **114** that have a three-dimensional (3D) appearance. In 3D image display systems, two images, each with a different polarization, are simultaneously projected by two different projectors. One image corresponds to the left eye, and the other image corresponds to the right eye. Conventional 3D image display systems typically suffer from a lack of brightness. In contrast, with one embodiment of the present invention, a first plurality of the projectors **112** may be used to produce any desired brightness for the first image (e.g., left eye image), and a second plurality of the projectors **112** may be used to produce any desired brightness for the second image (e.g., right eye image). In another embodiment, image display system **100** may be combined or used with other display systems or display techniques, such as tiled displays.

Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that a variety of alternate and/or equivalent implementations may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown and described without departing from the scope of the present invention. This application is intended to cover

12

any adaptations or variations of the specific embodiments discussed herein. Therefore, it is intended that this invention be limited only by the claims and the equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of displaying an image with a display system, the method comprising:

receiving image data for the image;

generating a first sub-frame and a second sub-frame corresponding to the image data based on a geometric relationship between a hypothetical reference projector and each of a first and a second projector, wherein the hypothetical reference projector is used in an image formation model to represent a projector positioned at any arbitrary location with respect to the first and second projectors;

projecting the first sub-frame with the first projector onto a target surface; and

projecting the second sub-frame with the second projector onto the target surface, wherein the first and the second sub-frames at least partially overlap on the target surface.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are generated by geometrically transforming and down-sampling the image data.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are generated by geometrically transforming, filtering, and down-sampling the image data.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are generated based on maximization of a probability that a simulated image is the same as the image data.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the simulated image is defined as a summation of up-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed sub-frames.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the geometric transformation of the sub-frames is represented by an operator that geometrically transforms the sub-frames based on relative positions of the projectors with respect to the hypothetical reference projector.

7. The method of claim 4, wherein a difference between the image data and the simulated image is represented by Gaussian noise.

8. The method of claim 4, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are generated with an iterative algorithm that computes an error during each iteration, the method further comprising:

updating values of the first and the second sub-frames during each iteration based on the computed error.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the error is calculated based on a difference between the image data and the simulated image.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the updated values are calculated based on a Laplacian of the simulated image.

11. The method of claim 10, and further comprising:

down-sampling, filtering, and geometrically transforming the error before using the error to update the values of the first and the second sub-frames.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein projection of the sub-frames onto the target surface produces an image that has a three-dimensional appearance.

13. A system for displaying an image, the system comprising:

a buffer adapted to receive image data for the image;

a sub-frame generator configured to define first and second sub-frames corresponding to the image data;

a first projection device adapted to project the first sub-frame onto a target surface;

13

a second projection device adapted to project the second sub-frame onto the target surface, such that the second sub-frame at least partially overlaps the first sub-frame; and

wherein the first and the second sub-frames are defined by the sub-frame generator based on a geometric relationship between a hypothetical reference projection device and each of the first and the second projection devices.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are defined by geometrically transforming and down-sampling the image data.

15. The system of claim 13, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are defined by geometrically transforming, filtering, and down-sampling the image data.

16. The system of claim 13, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are defined based on maximization of a probability that a hypothetical image matches the image data.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the hypothetical image is defined as a summation of up-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed sub-frames.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the geometric transformation of the sub-frames is represented by an operator that geometrically transforms the sub-frames based on relative positions of the projection devices with respect to the hypothetical reference projection device.

19. The system of claim 16, wherein a difference between the image data and the hypothetical image is defined as Gaussian noise.

20. The system of claim 16, wherein the first and the second sub-frames are generated with an iterative algorithm that computes an error during each iteration, and wherein the error is used to update values of the first and the second sub-frames during each iteration.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the error is calculated based on a difference between the image data and the hypothetical image.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the updated values are calculated based on a Laplacian of the hypothetical image.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the error is down-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed before being used to update the values of the first and the second sub-frames.

24. The system of claim 13, wherein projection of the sub-frames onto the target surface produces an image that has a three-dimensional appearance.

25. A system for generating low-resolution sub-frames for simultaneous projection onto a viewing surface at spatially offset positions to generate the appearance of a high-resolution image, the system comprising:

means for receiving a first high-resolution image;

means for generating a first plurality of low-resolution sub-frames based on the first high-resolution image; and

14

means for iteratively updating the first plurality of sub-frames based on an error calculated at each iteration, the error based on a difference between the first high-resolution image and a simulated high-resolution image, and wherein the error is down-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed before being used to update the first plurality of sub-frames.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the simulated high-resolution image is defined as a summation of up-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed sub-frames.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the geometric transformation of the sub-frames is represented by an operator that geometrically transforms the sub-frames based on relative positions of projector units with respect to a reference projection unit.

28. The system of claim 25, wherein a difference between the first high-resolution image and the simulated high-resolution image is defined to be Gaussian noise.

29. The system of claim 25, wherein the first plurality of sub-frames are updated based on a Laplacian of the simulated high-resolution image.

30. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of generating low-resolution sub-frames for simultaneous projection onto a viewing surface at spatially offset positions to generate the appearance of a high-resolution image, comprising:

receiving a first high-resolution image;

generating a first plurality of low-resolution sub-frames based on the first high-resolution image; and

iteratively updating the first plurality of sub-frames based on an error calculated at each iteration, the error based on a difference between the first high-resolution image and a simulated high-resolution image, and wherein the error is down-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed before being used to update the first plurality of sub-frames.

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 30, wherein the simulated high-resolution image is defined as a summation of up-sampled, filtered, and geometrically transformed sub-frames.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the geometric transformation of the sub-frames is represented by an operator that geometrically transforms the sub-frames based on relative positions of projectors with respect to a reference projector.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 30, wherein a difference between the first high resolution image and the simulated high-resolution image is defined to be zero mean white Gaussian noise.

34. The computer-readable medium of claim 30, wherein the first plurality of sub-frames are updated based on a Laplacian of the simulated high-resolution image.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 7,443,364 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 11/080583
DATED : October 28, 2008
INVENTOR(S) : Niranjan Damera-Venkata et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In column 2, line 49, delete "10A-110C" and insert -- 110A-110C --, therefor.

In column 4, line 31, delete "11A-1" and insert -- 110A-1 --, therefor.

In column 8, line 30, delete " $\sigma=$ " and insert -- $\nabla=$ --, therefor.

In column 8, line 65, delete " $\sigma=$ " and insert -- $\nabla=$ --, therefor.

In column 9, line 5, (Equation X), delete " $\beta^2 \sigma^2 \hat{X}^{(n)} \} \}$ " and

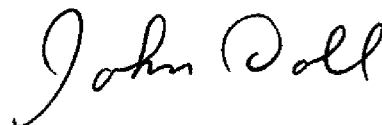
insert -- $\beta^2 \nabla^2 \hat{X}^{(n)} \} \}$ --, therefor.

In column 9, line 27, delete " $\sigma^2=$ " and insert -- $\nabla^2=$ --, therefor.

In column 13, line 8, in Claim 13, after "devices" insert -- and wherein the hypothetical reference projection device is used in an image formation model to represent a projection device positioned at any arbitrary location with respect to the first and second projection devices --.

Signed and Sealed this

Fifth Day of May, 2009



JOHN DOLL
Acting Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office