Computational ghost imaging

Computational Ghost Imaging

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Abstract: A computational ghost-imaging arrangement that uses only a single-pixel detector is described. It affords a new 3D sectioning capability and matches the resolution of pseudothermal ghost imaging.

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Ghost imaging is the acquisition of object information by means of photocurrent correlation measurements. It has been demonstrated with biphoton light [1] and pseudothermal light [2]. Recently [3], we established a Gaussian-state analysis of ghost imaging that unified prior work on biphoton and pseudothermal sources. Our analysis indicated that ghost-image formation is intrinsically due to classical coherence propagation. Other recent work [4], however, has ascribed pseudothermal-light ghost imaging to nonlocal two-photon quantum interference. We will show [5] that ghost imaging can be accomplished with only *one* detector, viz., the bucket detector that collects a single pixel of light which has interacted with the object. As only one light beam and one photodetector are required, this imaging configuration cannot depend on nonlocal two-photon interference. Moreover, it affords a new 3D sectioning capability.

Consider the pseudothermal-light lensless ghost imaging setup shown in the left panel of Fig. 1, in which $E_S(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)e^{-i\omega_0 t}$ and $E_R(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)e^{-i\omega_0 t}$ are scalar, positive frequency, classical signal and reference fields with $\sqrt{\text{photon/s}}$ units and center frequency ω_0. They are the outputs from 50-50 beam splitting of $E(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)e^{-j\omega_0 t}$, a continuous-wave (cw) laser beam that has been transmitted through a rotating ground-glass diffuser. The signal and reference undergo paraxial diffraction over L-m-long free-space paths, yielding measurement-plane fields with baseband envelopes $E_1(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ and $E_2(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$. The field $E_1(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ illuminates a shot-noise limited pinhole photodetector centered at $\boldsymbol{\rho}_1$ with sensitive region $\boldsymbol{\rho} \in \mathcal{A}_1$. The field $E_2(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ illuminates an amplitude-transmission mask $T(\boldsymbol{\rho})$, located immediately in front of a shot-noise limited bucket photodetector with sensitive region $\boldsymbol{\rho} \in \mathcal{A}_2$. The photocurrents from these detectors are AC-coupled into a correlator that time averages their product to estimate their ensemble-average cross correlation, $C(\boldsymbol{\rho}_1)$, as the pinhole detector is scanned over the plane. Pseudothermal light is well modeled as a narrowband classical Gaussian random process with a coherence-separable, Gaussian-Schell model correlation structure. It follows that the ghost image cross-correlation function in the far field of that spatially incoherent source is given by [3]:

$$C(\boldsymbol{\rho}_1) = q^2\eta^2 A_1 \left(\frac{2P}{\pi a_L^2}\right)^2 \int_{\mathcal{A}_2} d\boldsymbol{\rho}\, e^{-|\boldsymbol{\rho}_1-\boldsymbol{\rho}|^2/{\rho_L}^2} |T(\boldsymbol{\rho})|^2, \tag{1}$$

for a transparency that lies within the a_L-radius illuminated region. In this expression: q is the electron charge; η is the photodetector quantum efficiency; A_1 is the pinhole area; P is the photon flux of the source; and $a_L = \lambda_0 L/\pi\rho_0$ and $\rho_L = \lambda_0 L/\pi a_0$ give the image-plane intensity radius and coherence radius, respectively, in terms of their source-plane counterparts, a_0 and $\rho_0 \ll a_0$, and the laser wavelength λ_0. Equation (1) shows that the pseudothermal ghost image is erect, with spatial resolution set by ρ_L.

It is now possible to identify two new configurations for lensless ghost imaging. The first is shown in the right panel of Fig. 1. We transmit a cw laser beam through an idealized spatial light modulator (SLM) consisting of $d \times d$ pixels arranged in a $(2M+1) \times (2M+1)$ array with 100% fill factor within a $D \times D$ opaque pupil, where $D = (2M+1)d$ and $M \gg 1$. This SLM imposes a phase $\phi_{nm}(t)$ on the light transmitted through pixel (n,m), with $\{e^{i\phi_{nm}(t)} : -M \le n,m \le M\}$ being independent identically-distributed random processes obeying $\langle e^{i\phi_{nm}(t)}\rangle = 0$ and $\langle e^{i[\phi_{nm}(t_2)-\phi_{jk}(t_1)]}\rangle = \delta_{jn}\delta_{km}e^{-|t_2-t_1|/T_0}$, where the coherence time T_0 is long compared to the response times of the AC-coupled photodetectors. In this source's far field, $E_1(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ and $E_2(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ will have intensity widths $\sim\lambda_0 L/d$ and coherence lengths $\sim\lambda_0 L/D$. Furthermore, Central Limit Theorem considerations imply that $E_1(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ and $E_2(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ may be taken to be jointly Gaussian. Hence our SLM configuration will produce a ghost image of spatial resolution $\lambda_0 L/D$ within a spatial region of width $\lambda_0 L/d$. This ghost imager could use noise generators to drive the SLM, but it is more interesting to employ strong sinusoidal modulation, $\phi_{nm}(t) = \Phi\cos[(\Omega_0 + \Delta\Omega_{nm})t]$, with different $\Delta\Omega_{nm}$ for each pixel.

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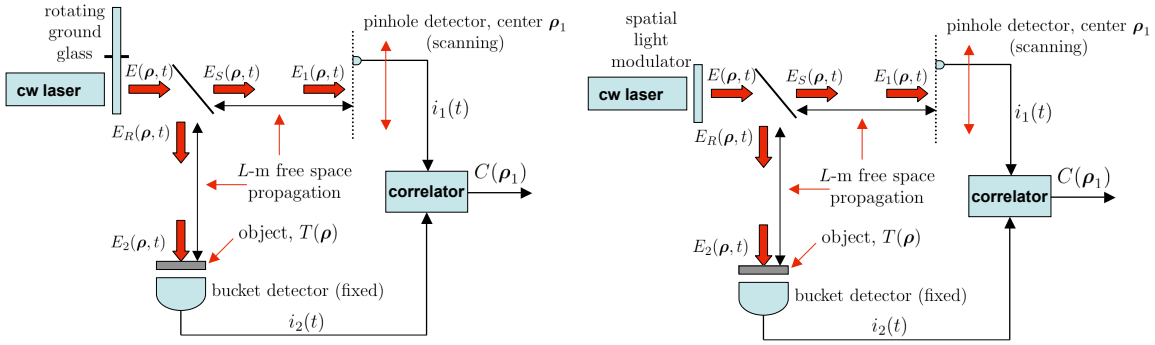

Fig. 1. Left panel: configuration for pseudothermal lensless ghost imaging. Right panel: configuration for spatial light modulator lensless ghost imaging

The configuration for computational ghost imaging, shown in Fig. 2, uses deterministic modulation of a cw laser beam to create the field $E_2(\boldsymbol{\rho},t)$ that illuminates the object transparency, after which it is collected by a bucket (single-pixel) detector. Knowing the deterministic modulation allows us to use diffraction theory to *compute* the intensity pattern that would have illuminated the pinhole detector in the usual lensless ghost imaging configuration. The time-average correlation function, between the AC-coupled photodetector output and the mean-value subtracted computed intensity pattern, $\Delta\tilde{I}(\boldsymbol{\rho}_1,t)$, will then be a background-free ghost image with spatial resolution $\lambda_0 L/D$ over a spatial extent of width $\lambda_0 L/d$. Because only one photodetector has been employed, this computational ghost image cannot be due to nonlocal two-photon interference.

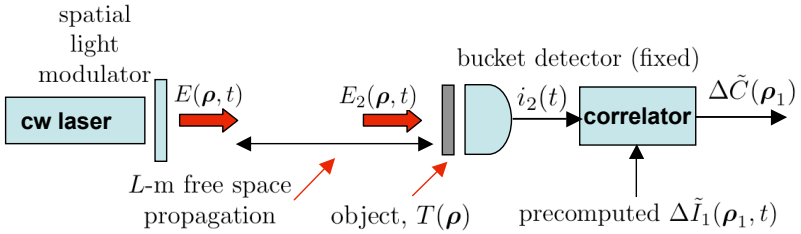

Fig. 2. Configuration for computational lensless ghost imaging.

Computational ghost imaging obviates the need for a high spatial-resolution detector. In addition, it permits 3D sectioning to be performed. To see that this is so, consider the depth of focus for the pseudothermal case , i.e., how badly its ghost image is blurred if the object is at $z = L$ but the pinhole detector is at $z = L + \Delta L$. In the near-field of the pre-diffuser laser beam, it turns out that this focal region is a very small fraction of the source-to-object path [5]. Consequently, the pseudothermal ghost imager can only image one focal region at a time for a range-spread object viewed in reflectance. However, because the computational ghost imager can precompute $\Delta\tilde{I}_1(\boldsymbol{\rho}_1,t)$ for a wide range of propagation distances, the same bucket-detector photocurrent can be correlated with many such $\Delta\tilde{I}_1(\boldsymbol{\rho}_1,t)$ to perform 3D sectioning of the object's reflectance.

In conclusion, we have introduced two new ghost imaging configurations: spatial light modulator and computational ghost imaging. The latter only needs a single-pixel detector and enables 3D sectioning to be performed.

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