

Efficient Light Bending with Isotropic Metamaterial Huygens' Surfaces

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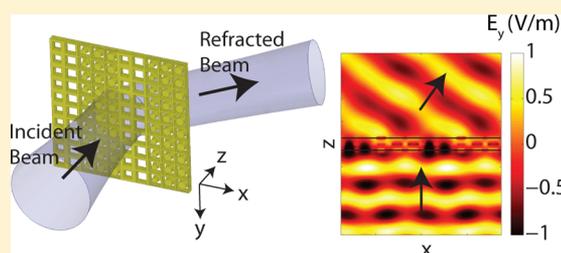
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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Metamaterial Huygens' surfaces manipulate electromagnetic wavefronts without reflection. A broadband Huygens' surface that efficiently refracts normally incident light at the telecommunication wavelength of $1.5 \mu\text{m}$ is reported. The electric and magnetic responses of the surface are independently controlled by cascading three patterned, metallic sheets with a subwavelength overall thickness of 430 nm. The peak efficiency of the device is significantly enhanced by reducing the polarization and reflection losses that are inherent to earlier single-layer designs.

KEYWORDS: Metamaterial, metasurface, Huygens, lens, plasmonics



Metamaterials have received much attention due to their ability to provide extreme control of electromagnetic fields. However, at near-infrared and visible wavelengths, metamaterials have been hampered by fabrication challenges and high loss, significantly limiting their impact.¹ This has led to the development of metasurfaces: the two-dimensional equivalent of metamaterials.^{2,3} Metasurfaces can impart discontinuities on electromagnetic wavefronts, giving them the ability to generate novel lenses for a myriad of nanophotonic applications including optical tweezing, image sensors, and displays.^{4,5} In contrast, more conventional optics such as dielectric lenses and spatial light modulators are bulky, which limits their integration into nanophotonic systems.^{6–9} Optical metasurfaces reported to date only manipulate electric polarization currents, which fundamentally limits their maximum efficiency due to polarization and reflection loss.^{10–12} Efficiencies on the order of 5% are typical in these previous designs. In addition, many of these metasurfaces suffer from low phase coverage or only work for a single polarization.^{4,13} This limits their ability to tailor an incident wavefront. In fact, the surface equivalence principle dictates that a magnetic response must be present for complete control of an electromagnetic wavefront by a surface.¹⁴ This has led to the development of metamaterial Huygens' surfaces, which use collocated electric and magnetic polarizabilities to realize reflectionless low profile lenses.¹⁵

At microwave frequencies, generating a magnetic response is straightforward using split-ring-resonators.¹⁶ However, this approach has its challenges at optical frequencies.¹⁷ Alternatively, cascading metallic layers upon one another can also generate a magnetic response due to circulating electric

currents.^{18–20} This has led to the well-known fishnet structure, which provides both an electric and magnetic response to realize a negative index of refraction.²⁰ However, bulk metamaterials such as the fishnet structure generally exhibit relatively low phase shifts per unit cell as light propagates through them. In contrast, the inhomogeneous metasurfaces developed here exhibit large phase shifts across a subwavelength thickness. To date, optical metasurface designs that incorporate a magnetic response have been proposed, but no experiments have been performed.^{21–23}

In this paper, the first experimental metamaterial Huygens' surface at optical frequencies is demonstrated. An isotropic unit cell consisting of cascaded sheet admittances (patterned metallic sheets) is proposed, and a straightforward design procedure is detailed. The magnetic response is generated by circulating, longitudinal electric currents supported by the cascaded metallic sheets. Simulations demonstrate that the proposed structure achieves large phase coverage while maintaining high transmission. A proof-of-concept metamaterial Huygens' surface is designed to refract normally incident light to an angle of 35° from normal at the design wavelength of $1.5 \mu\text{m}$ (see Figure 1). Simulations show that the surface exhibits a high efficiency of 30%, and an order of magnitude improvement in the extinction ratio over previously reported metasurfaces. The metamaterial Huygens' surface is then fabricated by sequentially patterning three gold (Au) sheets

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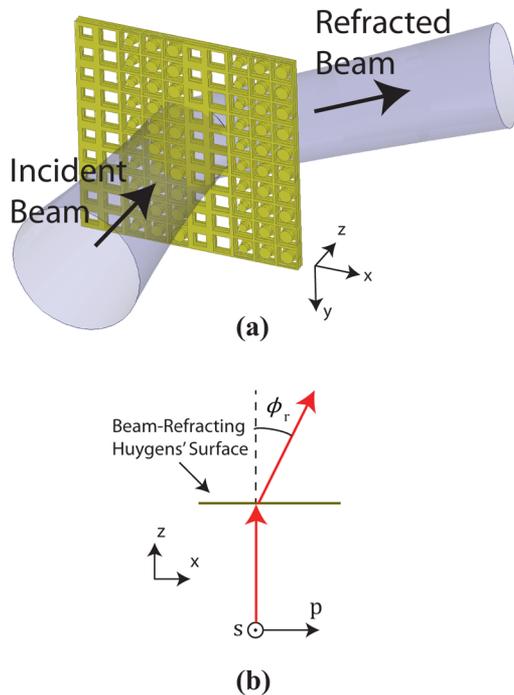


Figure 1. (a) Perspective view of an optically thin, isotropic metamaterial Huygens' surface that efficiently refracts a normally incident beam at telecommunication wavelengths. In contrast to previous designs, isotropic Huygens' surfaces are impedance matched to free space (exhibit low reflection) and can achieve complete phase coverage for the copolarized field with zero polarization loss. (b) Top view of the beam-refracting metamaterial Huygens' surface.

using standard electron beam lithography and liftoff processes, while employing SU-8 dielectric spacers between them. Measurements are performed using a spectroscopic ellipsometer, and the performance significantly exceeds previously reported metasurfaces. In addition, this work presents the first experimental demonstration of an isotropic metasurface that is capable of providing wavefront control for arbitrarily polarized light.

To begin, a unit cell is developed that exhibits high transmittance and large phase coverage. Consider a single, patterned metallic sheet. Provided its periodicity is subwavelength, any pattern can be represented as a well-defined, sheet admittance boundary condition with $Y_s \vec{E}_t = \vec{J}_s$, where \vec{J}_s is the surface current on the metallic sheet, and \vec{E}_t is the electric field tangential to the sheet. The sheet admittance (Y_s) is a scalar quantity since the patterns considered here are isotropic. The imaginary part of the sheet admittance can be controlled by changing the pattern on the metallic sheet. The real part of the sheet admittance represents metallic losses. Previous metasurfaces that only used a single sheet admittance to tailor light suffered from significant reflection loss, since electric currents are bidirectional radiators.²² However, cascading multiple sheet admittances upon one another generates an additional magnetic response because the cascaded sheets can support longitudinal circulating electric currents.²⁴ With collocated electric and magnetic currents, each unit cell of the metasurface generates a unidirectional radiated field to realize a reflectionless Huygens' source.²⁵ Metasurfaces composed of reflectionless unit cells have come to be known as metamaterial Huygens' surfaces

since they manipulate electromagnetic wavefronts in the same manner Christiaan Huygens analyzed wavefront propagation.²⁶

It has been shown that at least three sheet admittances (see Figure 2a) are required to obtain complete phase control while

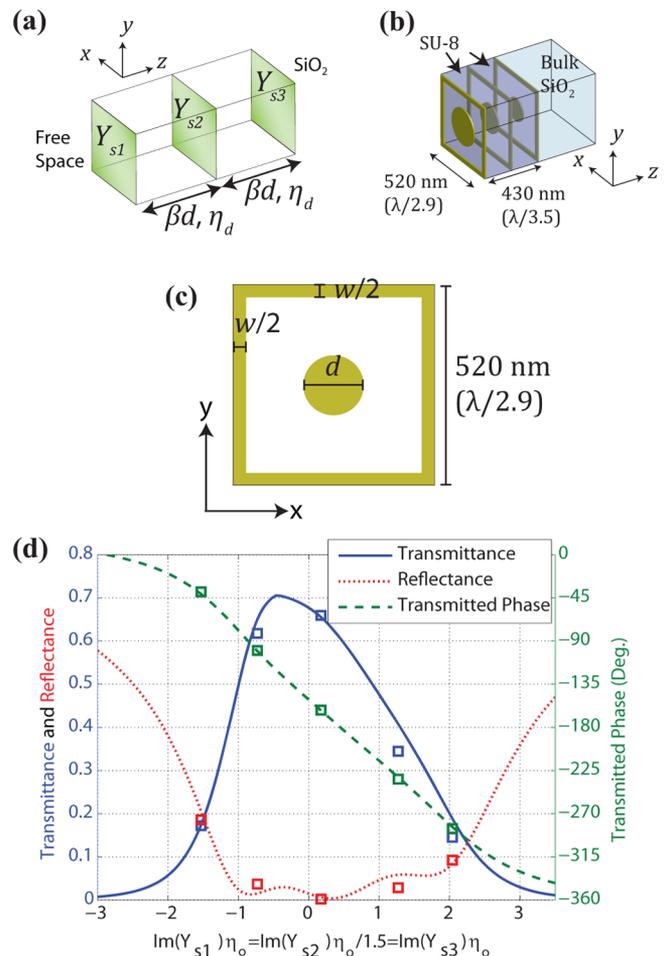


Figure 2. Unit cell design. (a) Analytic model of a unit cell comprising the metamaterial Huygens' surface. (b) Perspective view of a typical unit cell. (c) Top view of each of the three sheet admittances. The imaginary part of the sheet admittance increases with increasing "d", whereas the imaginary part of the sheet admittance decreases with increasing "w". It can be seen that the cell is isotropic. Therefore, there is no scattered power in the cross-polarized field component. (d) Transmittance, transmitted phase, and reflectance as a function of the imaginary part of the outer sheet admittances ($Y_{s1} = Y_{s3}$) at a wavelength of $1.5 \mu\text{m}$. Light is incident from the SiO_2 substrate side. The squares indicate the simulated reflection and transmission coefficients of the five unit cells shown in Figure 3a. It is assumed the middle sheet admittance is 1.5 times the outer sheet admittances ($Y_{s1} = Y_{s3} = Y_{s2}/1.5$), which limits reflection loss. The loss of the sheet admittance is estimated from simulations of the unit cell shown in part (b) (see Supporting Information Figure S4).

maintaining high transmittance.^{22,24} To realize the sheet admittances, the geometry shown in Figure 2b is chosen.²³ The unit cell is isotropic and consists of three 30 nm thick Au sheets patterned on a SiO_2 substrate. The Au sheets are separated by 200 nm thick SU-8 dielectric spacers to realize an overall thickness of 430 nm ($\lambda_o/3.5$). It should be emphasized that it is more appropriate to model this structure as a two-dimensional metasurface rather than a bulk metamaterial because it exhibits large phase shifts across a subwavelength

overall thickness.²⁷ However, this is somewhat of an approximation due to the notable thickness. The SiO₂ substrate is modeled as a lossless, infinite half space with an index of refraction of $n_{\text{SiO}_2} = 1.45$. The index of refraction of the SU-8 is $n_{\text{SU-8}} = 1.57$. The relative permittivity of Au is described by the Drude model $\epsilon_{\text{Au}} = \epsilon_{\infty} - \omega_p^2/(\omega^2 + j\omega\omega_c)$, with $\epsilon_{\infty} = 9.0$, plasma frequency $\omega_p = 1.363 \times 10^{16}$ rad/s (8.97 eV), and collision frequency $\omega_c = 3.60 \times 10^{14}$ rad/s (0.24 eV). This collision frequency assumes a loss that is over three times that of bulk Au,²⁸ which takes into account thin film surface scattering and grain boundary effects.²⁹ Each of the three sheet admittances can be modeled as a parallel LC circuit (see Figure 2c). The inductance arises from both electron inertia and the wire grid outlining each unit cell. The capacitance is created by the central disk. This structure is similar to the well-known fishnet structure with the primary difference being that the capacitive patches do not touch the wire grid.^{20,30} This difference increases inductance and reduces capacitance, which in turn enhances the bandwidth near the resonance (see Supporting Information Figure S5). A useful feature of cascaded sheet admittances is that their reflection and transmission properties can be solved in closed form by employing the transfer matrix (ABCD) approach (see Supporting Information). In Figure 2d, the transmittance, transmitted phase, and reflectance are plotted as a function of the outer sheet admittances ($Y_{s1} = Y_{s3}$). From the analytic model that includes losses (see Supporting Information Figure S4), it was found that enforcing the condition $Y_{s1} = Y_{s3} = Y_{s2}/1.5$, provides a good trade-off between maximizing transmission bandwidth and phase coverage, while minimizing loss and reflection. It should be noted that transmittance and phase coverage increase with reduced metallic loss.

A beam-refracting metamaterial Huygens' surface is then realized by stipulating a linear phase progression across the surface.¹¹ This example was chosen because its performance is straightforward to characterize in experiment.¹⁰ In future work, elaborate phase profiles can be stipulated to achieve more exotic wavefronts. Figure 3a shows a section of the designed Huygens' surface that refracts normally incident light to an angle of 35.2° at a wavelength of 1.5 μm. Further design details and exact dimensions are supplied in Table S1 of the Supporting Information. Each supercell contains five unit cells whose simulated performance is shown in Figure 2d. Simulations were performed using the full-wave solver, CST Microwave Studio. It can be seen that there is a good agreement between the simulated data points and the analytic model. Figure 3b,c shows the wavelength dependence of the transmittance and transmitted phase shift of the five unit cells. It should be noted that the achievable phase coverage was reduced due to Au loss. If the minimum transmittance of each unit cell is stipulated to be 0.15, the achievable phase coverage is limited to 260° rather than the ideal 360°. In addition, the transmittances of each unit cell are not identical. Both the reduced phase coverage and nonidentical transmittance creates aberration in the transmitted field. For periodic structures such as beam-refracting surfaces, these aberrations can be easily quantified using well-known Floquet theory.³¹ In short, the transmitted field can be decomposed into propagating Floquet harmonics. For example, transmission into the $n = 0$ harmonic corresponds to light that is transmitted in the normal direction ($\phi_r = 0^\circ$), whereas the $n = 1$ harmonic corresponds to the refracted direction ($\phi_r = 35.2^\circ$). The goal here is to maximize

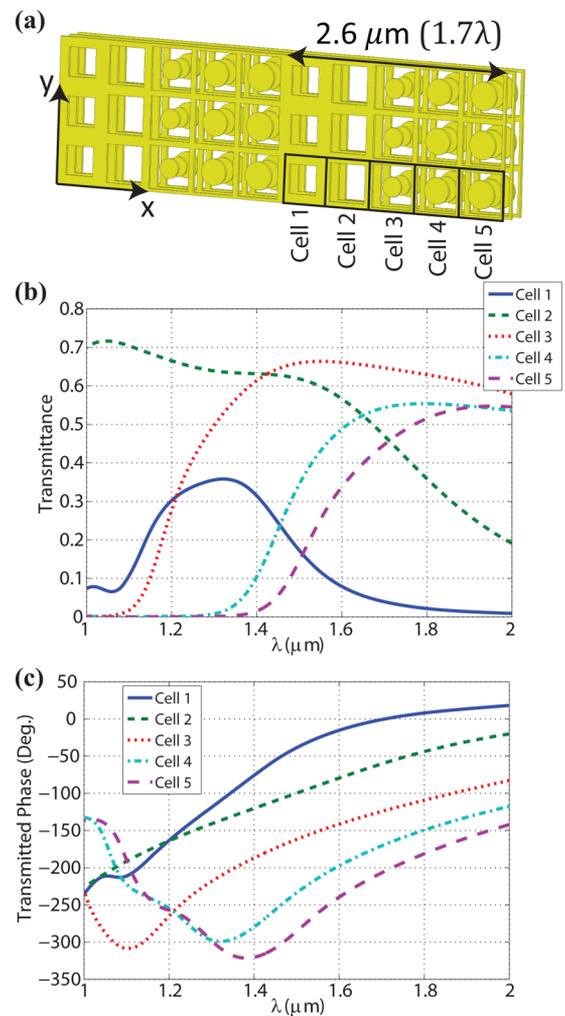


Figure 3. Designed beam-refracting Huygens' surface. (a) Perspective view of the metamaterial Huygens' surface when viewed from the bulk SiO₂ side. All dimensions are to scale. The five unit cells comprising the surface are outlined. (b,c) Simulated wavelength dependence of the transmittance and transmitted phase shift of each unit cell comprising the designed metamaterial Huygens' surface.

the power in the $n = 1$ harmonic, while minimizing the power in other harmonics.

The simulated performance of the designed metamaterial Huygens' surface is shown in Figure 4. Figure 4a shows a time snapshot of the steady-state electric field when a plane wave is normally incident from the SiO₂ substrate at a wavelength of 1.5 μm. It can be seen that the Huygens' surface efficiently refracts the incident light to $\phi_r = 35.2^\circ$. The ripple in the field is from power that is scattered into undesired Floquet harmonics. In Figure 4b, the transmittance is plotted as a function of the refracted angle and wavelength. This shows the angular dependence of the various Floquet harmonics. It can be seen that the majority of the transmitted power is in the $n = 1$ harmonic. As the operating wavelength varies from 1.2 to 2 μm, the refracted angle of this harmonic scans from $\phi_r = 27.5^\circ$ to $\phi_r = 50.3^\circ$. The power that is refracted is better quantified in Figure 4c, which plots the transmittance and reflectance versus wavelength. In this plot, the s- and p-refracted curves correspond to the transmittance of the two polarizations into the $n = 1$ Floquet harmonic. Also shown are two of the loss mechanisms of the Huygens' surface, which include reflection

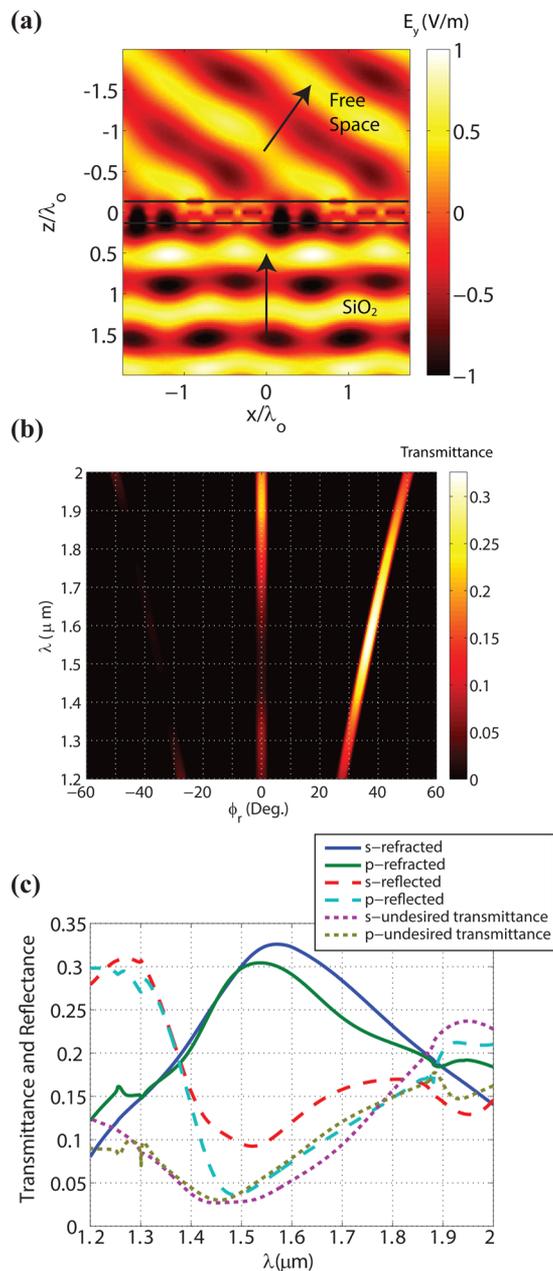


Figure 4. Simulated beam-refracting metamaterial Huygens' surface. (a) Time snapshot of the steady-state, y -polarized electric field when a plane wave is normally incident from the bottom at a wavelength of $1.5 \mu\text{m}$. The incident electric field has an amplitude of 1 V/m . (b) Transmittance as a function of wavelength and transmitted angle for s -polarized light. At the design wavelength of $1.5 \mu\text{m}$, the transmittance of the $n = 1$ Floquet harmonic ($\phi_r = 35.2^\circ$) is much larger than the $n = -1$ ($\phi_r = -35.2^\circ$) and $n = 0$ ($\phi_r = 0^\circ$) harmonics. (c) Transmittance and reflectance versus wavelength for both polarizations. s - and p -refracted denotes the transmittance of light that is refracted into the $n = 1$ harmonic for the s - and p -polarizations, respectively. s - and p -reflected denotes the total reflectance. s - and p -undesired transmittance denotes the total transmittance that is not in the $n = 1$ harmonic. Virtually no power (-60 dB) is scattered into cross-polarized light.

and transmission into undesired Floquet harmonics (for example, $n = -2$, $n = -1$, $n = 0$, $n = 2$ harmonics). Virtually no power (-60 dB) is scattered into cross-polarized light. The power that is lost due to Au absorption is $1 - (\text{refracted}) -$

(reflected) $-$ (transmitted undesired), which is approximately 60% at the wavelength of $1.5 \mu\text{m}$. The metamaterial Huygens' surface is isotropic since the s - and p -polarized curves coincide over much of the operating wavelengths. The difference between the two polarizations is most likely due to the coupling between spatially varying unit cells since this is not accounted for in the analytic model. It should also be noted that the response is broadband. The refracted field maintains a transmittance that is greater than half its peak value over a bandwidth of 1.33 to $1.95 \mu\text{m}$ (38%) for both polarizations. Two important performance metrics are the peak efficiency (transmittance in the refracted direction) and extinction ratio (ratio of the refracted transmittance to normal transmittance).¹² Simulations demonstrate a peak efficiency and extinction ratio of 32.6% and 11.6 dB , respectively, for s -polarized light and 30.4% and 10.3 dB , respectively, for p -polarized light.

The fabrication process is shown in Figure 5a.³² The design is fabricated on a $500 \mu\text{m}$ thick SiO_2 substrate. First, the bottom sheet admittance (Y_{s3}) is fabricated by patterning a 2 nm Ti adhesion layer and 28 nm Au layer using standard electron beam lithography and liftoff. Next, a 200 nm thick, SU-8 dielectric layer is spin coated onto the wafer, which naturally planarizes the surface for the following layer (measured roughness $< 5 \text{ nm}$). This process is repeated until three Au layers are patterned to achieve the unit cell shown in Figure 2b. The patterned area is $500 \mu\text{m} \times 500 \mu\text{m}$. Scanning electron microscope (SEM) pictures of the fabricated metamaterial Huygens' surface are shown in Figure 5 b,c.

The fabricated sample is measured using the transmission module of an ellipsometer (V-VASE, J. A. Woollam Co.) A monochromator scans the wavelength of a normally incident light source, and the transmitted power is measured at each refracted angle. Unlike in the simulations of Figure 4, the incident light in measurements propagates in the $+z$ direction, which simplifies the alignment procedure. This has minimal effect on the transmittance but does increase the reflectance. Simulations suggest that when the incident light propagates in the $+z$ direction, the refracted transmittance is at most 3% different from when the incident light propagates in the $-z$ direction. The measured transmittance in the refracted direction and normal direction are shown in Figure 6a,b for s -polarized and p -polarized light, respectively. From SEM pictures, the dimensions of the fabricated surface are off by $\sim 30 \text{ nm}$, which causes the discrepancy between the measured performance and the simulations presented in Figure 4. To demonstrate that the difference between the fabricated and designed dimensions is the cause of error between measurement and simulation, the fabricated dimensions are also simulated, which is shown in Figure 6. It can be seen that the resimulated and measured performance agree for the refracted power. However, the power that is transmitted into the normal direction is still $\sim 5\%$ larger in measurement than simulation, but the trends are the same. The difference between simulation and measurement can be attributed to additional fabrication and measurement errors. If the fabricated sample is not centered on the incident beam for the ellipsometry measurements, a small percentage of the power is not captured by the metamaterial Huygens' surface. In addition, there is some uncertainty when modeling the surface roughness and loss of the Au, which introduces error into the simulations. Despite the various sources of error, these measurements achieve a peak efficiency and extinction ratio of 19.9% and 2.93

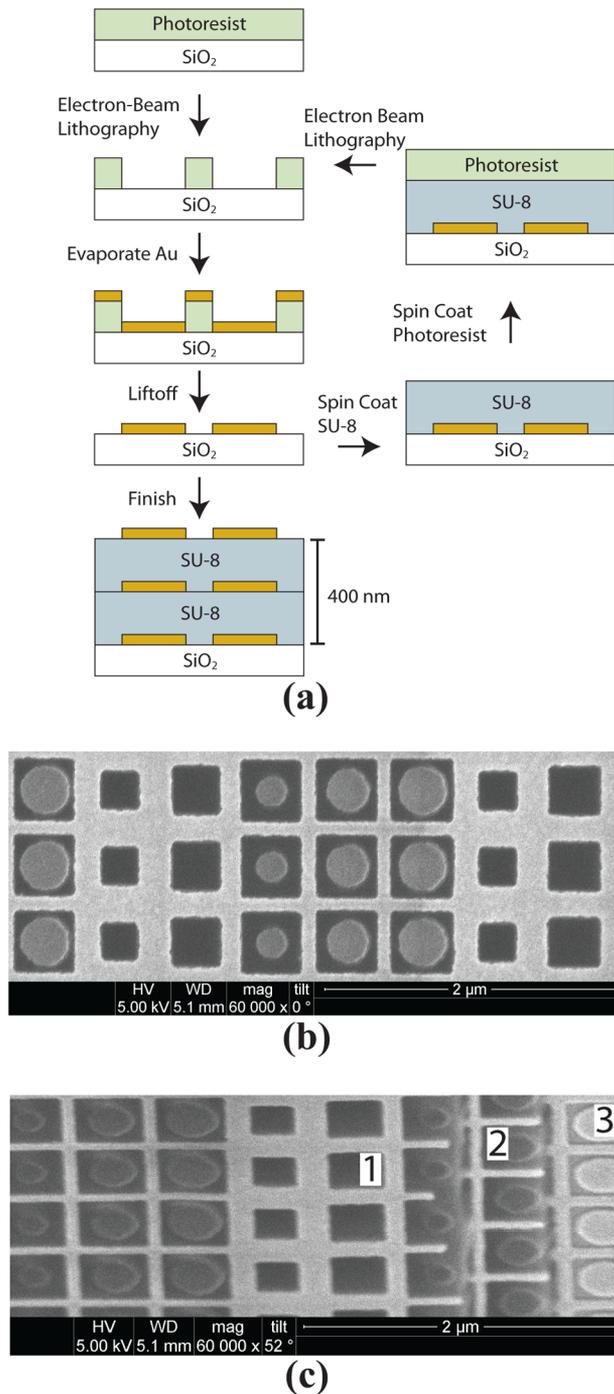


Figure 5. Fabrication of the metamaterial Huygens' surface. (a) Fabrication process involves sequential patterning of each 2 nm/28 nm thick Ti/Au layer using standard electron-beam lithography and liftoff, followed by spin coating of a 200 nm thick SU-8 dielectric layer. Three metallic layers are patterned using the process resulting in an overall thickness of 430 nm. (b) Scanning electron microscope (SEM) picture of a section of the metamaterial Huygens' surface. (c) Perspective view of the edge of the Huygens' surface, such that all three layers can be seen.

dB, respectively, for s-polarized light and 18.0% and 3.05 dB, respectively, for p-polarized light. This is an improvement of a factor of 3 in efficiency and a factor of 4 in extinction ratio over the state of the art.³³ In addition, the response is isotropic, which enables control of an arbitrary incident polarization.

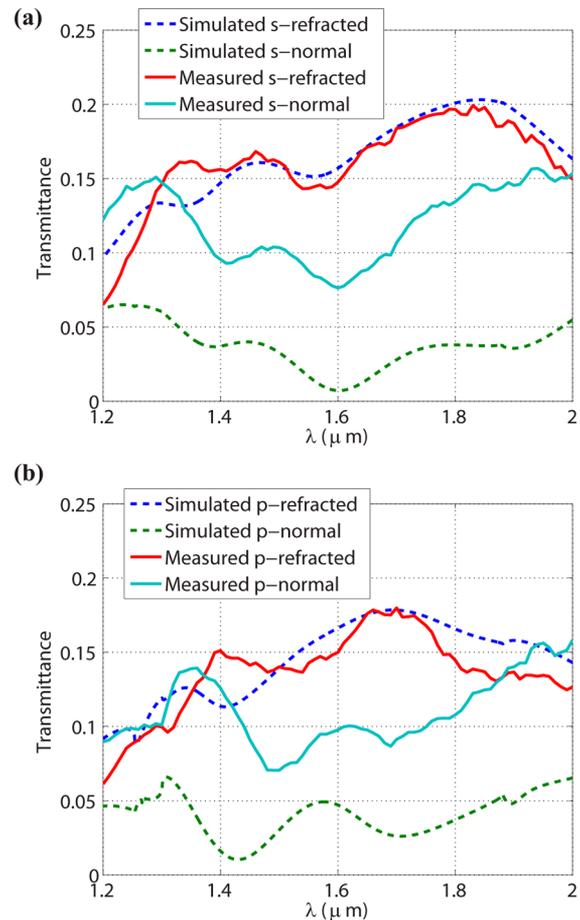


Figure 6. Transmittance measurement results. (a) Transmittance of s-polarized light into the refracted and normal directions versus wavelength. (b) Transmittance of p-polarized light into the refracted and normal directions versus wavelength. For both (a,b), the simulation values account for the fabricated dimensions of the Au patterns, which are off by ~30 nm from the design values based on SEM pictures.

However, it should be noted that this increased performance does come at the expense of an increased thickness and a multilayer fabrication process.

A large profile metamaterial Huygens' surface is experimentally demonstrated for the first time at optical wavelengths. The efficiency is improved over previous metasurfaces by adding a magnetic response, which reduces reflection and polarization loss. In addition, the surface exhibits an isotropic response and large extinction ratio. In future work, the fabrication process can be further optimized so that the fabricated dimensions are closer to the design. In addition, large area soft lithography processes, such as nanoimprint lithography, can be used to dramatically reduce the cost of metasurfaces. This work can find numerous applications such as low profile lenses,⁹ computer-generated-holography,³⁴ nondestructive evaluation,³⁵ and stealth technologies.³⁶ In addition, novel types of beams such as Airy beams,³⁷ Bessel beams,³⁸ and vortex beams¹¹ can be generated with high efficiency. By using anisotropic sheet admittances, polarization control such as linear-to-circular polarization conversion could also be achieved.^{23,24,39}

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

Additional information and figures. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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