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Contents

Conference Committee

vii

ix	Introduction
SESSION 1	POLARIZATION METROLOGY AND INSTRUMENTATION
3E33ION 1	FOLARIZATION METROLOGY AND INSTRUMENTATION
8873 02	Infrared wire grid polarizers: metrology and modeling [8873-1] M. C. George, J. Bergquist, R. Petrova, B. Wang, E. Gardner, MOXTEK, Inc. (United States)
8873 03	Assessing consistency of a Mueller matrix measurement by rotation of the sample under test [8873-2]
	T. A. Germer, National Institute of Standards and Technology (United States)
8873 04	Single-angle-of-incidence single-element rotating-polarizer (Single SERP) ellipsometer for film-substrate systems [8873-3] A. R. M. Zaghloul, Cairo Univ. (Egypt)
8873 05	Real-time combined reflection and transmission ellipsometry for film-substrate systems [8873-4] M. Elshazly-Zaghloul, Cairo Univ. (Egypt)
8873 06	Evaluation of calibration methods for visible-spectrum division-of-focal-plane polarimeters [8873-5] S. B. Powell, V. Gruev, Washington Univ. in St. Louis (United States)
SESSION 2	MATHEMATICS OF COHERENCE, POLARIZATION, AND SCATTERING POLARIZATION
8873 07	Mathematical tools for the analysis and exploitation of polarimetric measurements (Invited Paper) [8873-6] J. J. Gil, Univ. de Zaragoza (Spain)
8873 09	3D radiative transfer effects in multi-angle/multispectral radio-polarimetric signals from a mixture of clouds and aerosols viewed by a non-imaging sensor [8873-8] A. B. Davis, M. J. Garay, F. Xu, Jet Propulsion Lab. (United States); Z. Qu, Jet Propulsion Lab. (United States) and Raytheon Co. (United States); C. Emde, Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany)

SESSION 3	POLARIZATION IN REMOTE SENSING
8873 OB	Airborne multiangle spectropolarimetric imager (AirMSPI) observations over California during NASA's polarimeter definition experiment (PODEX) (Invited Paper) [8873-9] D. J. Diner, M. J. Garay, O. V. Kalashnikova, B. E. Rheingans, S. Geier, M. A. Bull, V. M. Jovanovic, F. Xu, C. J. Bruegge, Jet Propulsion Lab. (United States); A. Davis, The Univ. of Texas at Austin Ctr. for Space Research (United States); K. Crabtree, R. A. Chipman, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States)
8873 OC	Influence of polarization phenomenology on material discriminability using multi-view polarimetric imagery [8873-10] C. Devaraj, South Dakota State Univ. (United States); M. Gartley, J. Schott, Rochester Institute of Technology (United States)
8873 0D	How clear-sky polarization varies with wavelength in the visible-NIR [8873-11] N. J. Pust, J. A. Shaw, Montana State Univ. (United States)
SESSION 4	POLARIZATION APPLICATIONS I
8873 OE	Mueller matrix microscopy (Invited Paper) [8873-12] M. Mujat, R. D. Ferguson, N. Iftimia, Physical Sciences Inc. (United States)
8873 OF	Extracting the inclination angle of nerve fibers within the human brain with 3D-PLI independent of system properties [8873-13] J. Reckfort, H. Wiese, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany) and Bergische Univ. Wuppertal (Germany); M. Dohmen, D. Grässel, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany) and Bergische Univ. Wuppertal (Germany); K. Zilles, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany), RWTH Aachen Univ. (Germany), and JARA Translational Brain Medicine (Germany); K. Amunts, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany) and Heinrich-Heine-Univ. Düsseldorf (Germany); M. Axer, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (Germany)
8873 OH	LWIR polarization sensing: investigation of liquids and solids with MoDDIFS [8873-15] G. Fortin, AEREX Avionics Inc. (Canada); JM. Thériault, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada); P. Lacasse, AEREX Avionics Inc. (Canada)
8873 OI	Using linear polarization for LWIR hyperspectral sensing of liquid contaminants [8873-16] JM. Thériault, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada); G. Fortin, P. Lacasse, AEREX Avionics Inc. (Canada); F. Bouffard, H. Lavoie, Defence Research and Development Canada, Valcartier (Canada)
SESSION 5	POLARIZATION IMAGING SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS
8873 OJ	Thermally stable imaging channeled spectropolarimetry [8873-17] J. Craven-Jones, B. M. Way, J. Hunt, Sandia National Labs. (United States); M. W. Kudenov, North Carolina State Univ. (United States); J. A. Mercier, Sandia National Labs. (United States)

8873 OK	A novel design for a spectropolarimeter: SPEX [8873-18] A. L. Verlaan, H. van Brug, H. Visser, TNO (Netherlands)
8873 OL	Fabrication and performance evaluation of pixelated nano-wire grid polarizer [8873-19] S. Gao, R. Njuguna, V. Gruev, Washington Univ. in St. Louis (United States)
8873 OM	Wide field snapshot imaging polarimeter using modified Savart plates [8873-20] N. Saito, S. Odate, K. Otaki, Nikon Corp. (Japan); M. Kubota, R. Kitahara, K. Oka, Hokkaido Univ. (Japan)
8873 00	SWIR active polarization imaging for material identification [8873-22] D. A. LeMaster, Air Force Research Lab. (United States); A. H. Mahamat, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States); B. M. Ratliff, Space Computer Corp. (United States); A. S. Alenin, J. S. Tyo, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States); B. M. Koch, Air Force Research Lab. (United States)
SESSION 6	POLARIZATION-BASED OPTICAL SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS
8873 OP	Evaluation of Mueller matrix of achromatic axially symmetric wave plate [8873-23] T. Wakayama, Saitama Medical Univ. (Japan); K. Komaki, Saitama Medical Univ. (Japan) and Utsunomiya Univ. (Japan); I. J. Vaughn, J. S. Tyo, College of Optical Sciences, The Univ. of Arizona (United States); Y. Otani, Utsunomiya Univ. (Japan); T. Yoshizawa, NPO 3D Associates (Japan)
8873 0Q	Compact spatial heterodyne interferometer using polarization gratings [8873-24] M. W. Kudenov, M. N. Miskiewicz, M. J. Escuti, North Carolina State Univ. (United States); J. Coward, SA Photonics (United States)
8873 OR	Spectroscopic full polarimeters using spatial carriers [8873-25] K. Oka, Y. Haga, Y. Komaki, Hokkaido Univ. (Japan)
8873 OS	Design of a polarimeter with two ferroelectric liquid crystal panels [8873-26] A. Peinado, A. Lizana, J. Campos, Univ. Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)
SESSION 7	POLARIZATION APPLICATIONS II
8873 OU	The retrieval of scattering coefficient of marine particles from polarimetric observations [8873-29] A. Ibrahim, A. Gilerson, J. Stepinski, A. El-Habashi, S. Ahmed, The City College of New York (United States)
SESSION 8	POLARIZATION IN MM-WAVE IMAGING
8873 OV	Fully polarimetric passive W-band millimeter wave imager for wide area search [8873-30] J. Tedeschi, B. Bernacki, D. Sheen, J. Kelly, D. McMakin, Pacific Northwest National Lab. (United States)

8873 OW	Simulations of polarization dependent contrast during the diurnal heating cycle for passive millimeter-wave imagery (Invited Paper) [8873-31] J. P. Wilson, M. Murakowski, Univ. of Delaware (United States); C. A. Schuetz, Phase Sensitive Innovations, Inc. (United States); D. W. Prather, Univ. of Delaware (United States)
SESSION 9	PROCESSING AND DISPLAYING POLARIMETRIC IMAGERY
8873 OY	Material characterization using passive multispectral polarimetric imagery [8873-35] M. A. Sawyer, M. W. Hyde IV, Air Force Institute of Technology (United States) POSTER SESSION
8873 OZ	Photoelastic modulator non-idealities in magneto-optical polarization measurements [8873-37] S. Vandendriessche, T. Verbiest, Katholieke Univ. Leuven (Belgium)
8873 11	Optical characterization of amber from Chiapas, Mexico [8873-39] G. López-Morales, R. Espinosa-Luna, C. Frausto-Reyes, Ctr. de Investigaciones en Óptica, A.C. (Mexico)
8873 12	A compact and robust method for spectropolarimetry [8873-40] W. B. Sparks, Space Telescope Science Institute (United States)
8873 13	Orientational tomography of optical axes directions distributions of multilayer biological tissues birefringent polycrystalline networks [8873-41] N. I. Zabolotna, R. Y. Dovhaliuk, Vinnytsia National Technical Univ. (Ukraine)
8873 16	CALIOP receiver transient response study [8873-45] X. Lu, Y. Hu, NASA Langley Research Ctr. (United States); Z. Liu, NASA Langley Research Ctr. (United States) and Science Systems and Applications, Inc. (United States); S. Zeng, C. Trepte, NASA Langley Research Ctr. (United States)
	Author Index

vi

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 Jean-Marc Thériault, Defence Research and Development Canada,

 Valcartier (Canada)
- 4 Polarization Applications I
 Joseph A. Shaw, Montana State University (United States)

- 5 Polarization Imaging Systems and Components
 - **J. Scott Tyo**, College of Optical Sciences, The University of Arizona (United States)
- 6 Polarization-based Optical Systems and Components **Michael W. Kudenov**, North Carolina State University (United States)
- 7 Polarization Applications II
 Michael W. Kudenov, College of Optical Sciences, The University of Arizona (United States)
- 8 Polarization in mm-wave Imaging Bruce E. Bernacki, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (United States)
- 9 Processing and Displaying Polarimetric Imagery Bradley M. Ratliff, Space Computer Corporation (United States)

Introduction

The broad appeal of polarization science was highlighted once again in the sixth meeting of our conference, *Polarization Science and Remote Sensing VI*. This year, authors hailed from ten countries and the presentations included a mix of contributions from academia, industry, and government laboratories. These enthusiastic researchers presented on applications of polarimetry that included the characterization of materials, the atmosphere, the ocean, and biological systems; the calibration, optimization, and metrology of polarimeters and related components; and the diverse considerations that go into the collection, processing, and display of polarimetric imagery. Contributing technologies spanned the ultraviolet, optical, and infrared wavelengths and, for the first time this year, extended to the millimeter-wave regime. The organizers of this conference and our sister conference, *Polarization: Measurement, Analysis, and Remote Sensing*, which will be meeting for the eleventh time in the spring of 2014 in Baltimore, are delighted to be the venue of choice for so many talented and prolific research professionals.

We are especially pleased to present in this volume, an invited paper by the 2013 recipient of the SPIE G.G. Stokes Award, José Jorge Gil from the University of Zaragoza, Spain. His presentation entitled, "Mathematical tools for the analysis and exploitation of polarimetric measurements," reviews how Mueller matrices may be decomposed into physically significant invariant quantities. We are grateful to Professor Gil for both his contributions to our conference and to the study of optical polarization. With the intent of establishing a new tradition, a similar invitation will be extended to future Stokes award winners when this conference convenes again in 2015.

Joseph A. Shaw Daniel A. LeMaster

Proc. of SPIE Vol. 8873 887301-10