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Harris

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(54) **THREE COLOR DIGITAL GOBO SYSTEM**

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G02B 26/00 (2006.01)

G09F 13/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **385/31**; 385/100; 385/115; 385/116; 385/88; 385/147; 385/901; 359/291; 362/231; 362/232; 362/551; 362/556; 362/293; 362/296.05

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 385/88, 385/89, 92, 49, 115, 116, 14, 147, 901, 37, 385/100, 31; 359/291, 223, 224; 382/217, 382/220, 190; 348/241, 239, 246; 362/232, 362/556, 293, 296, 231, 551, 296.05

See application file for complete search history.

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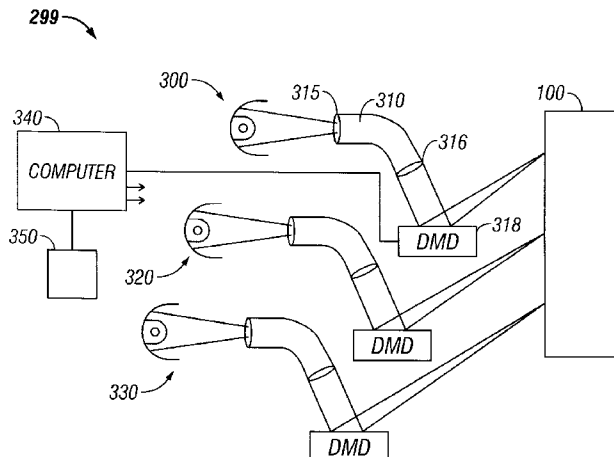
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system of digitally controlling light output by producing separate control signals for different colors of light. The light is contained in an optical waveguide, either prior to shaping or after shaping. Each of the control signals is coupled to a digitally controlled device which controls the shape of the light output. The digital controlling device can be digital mirror devices, for example.

15 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets

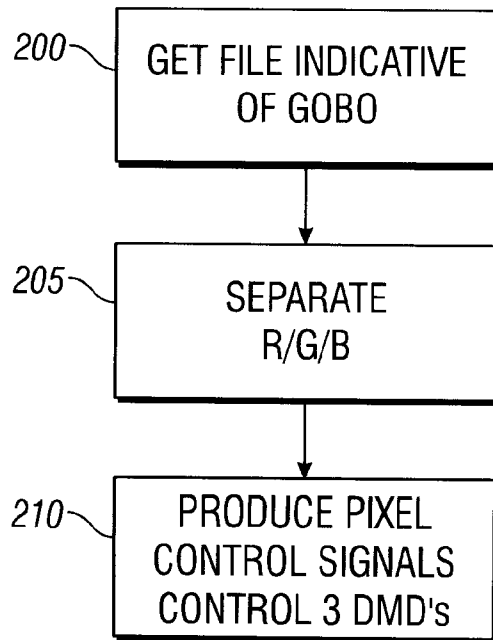
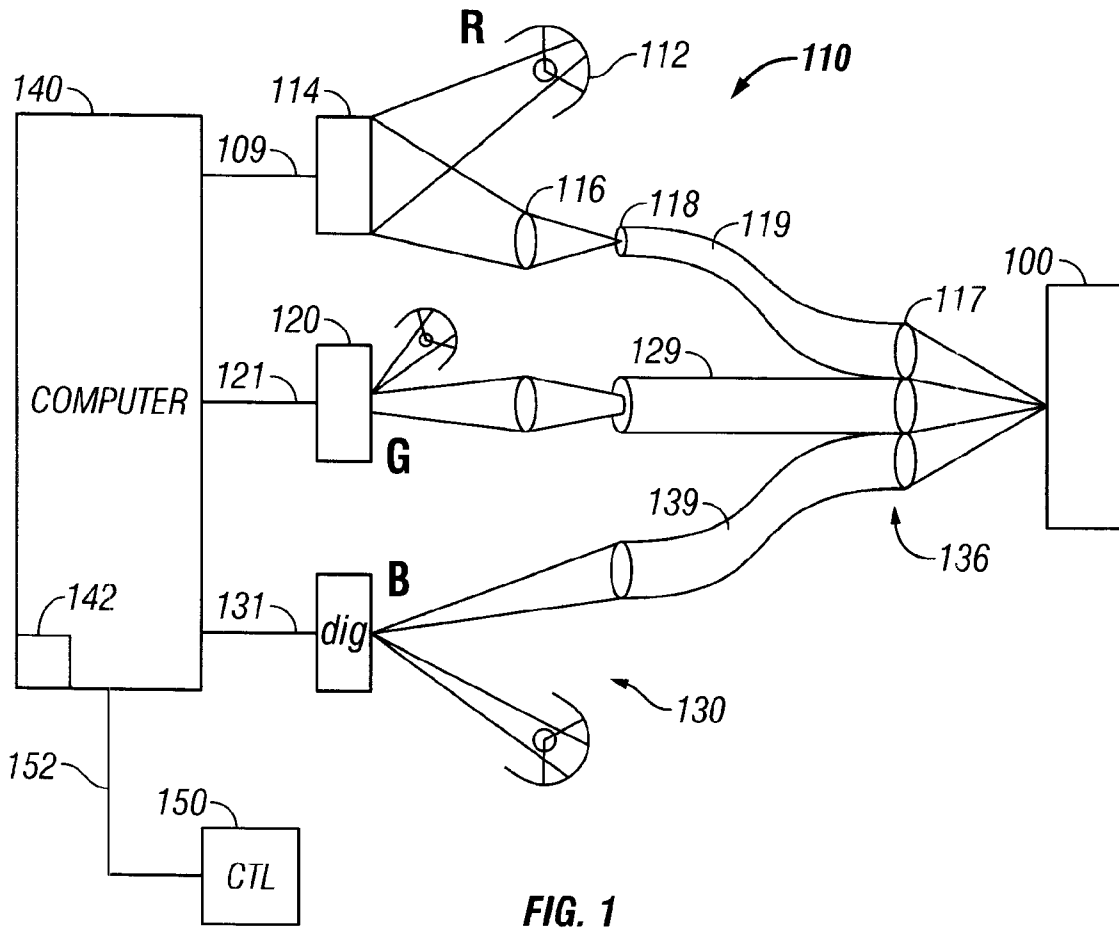


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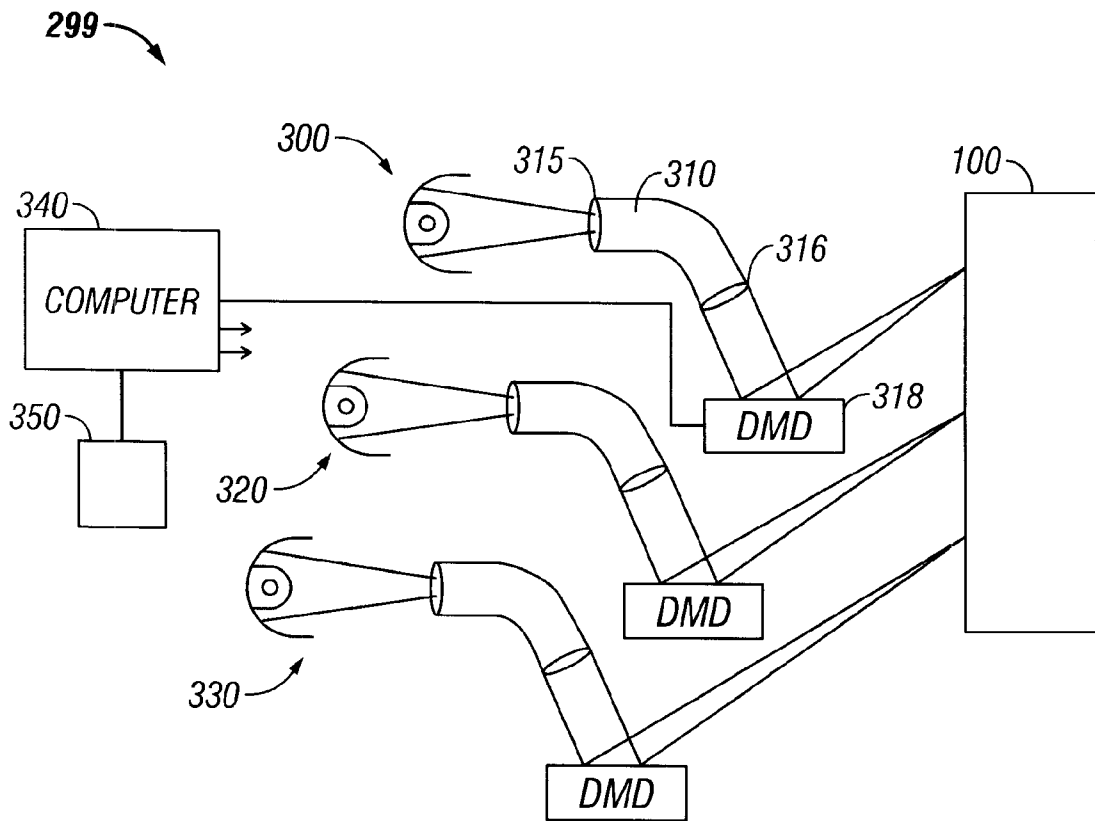


FIG. 3

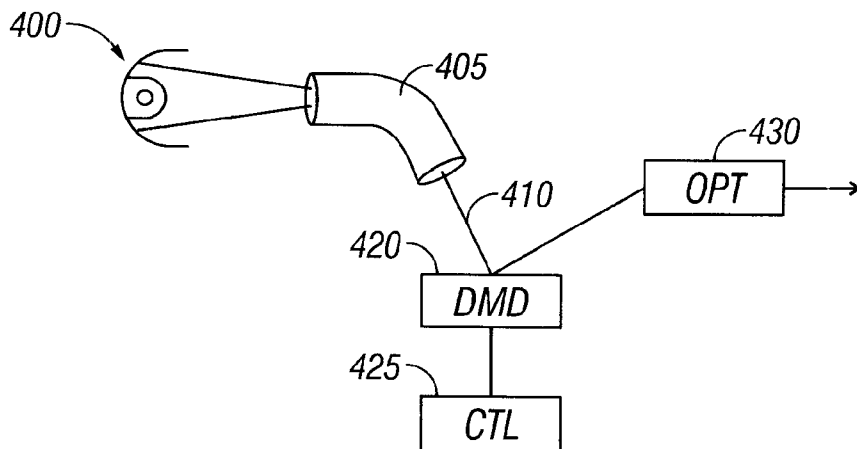


FIG. 4

THREE COLOR DIGITAL GOBO SYSTEMCROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation application of and claims priority to U.S. application Ser. No. 11/386,194, filed Mar. 21, 2006 now U.S. Pat. No. 7,181,122; which is a continuation application of U.S. application Ser. No. 10/995,612, filed Nov. 22, 2004, new U.S. Pat. No. 7,020,370; which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 10/616,481, filed Jul. 8, 2003, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,823,119; which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 09/771,953, filed Jan. 29, 2001, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,588,944.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Pat. No. 5,940,204 has suggested using a digital device to shape the contour and outlines of light that is projected through a high-intensity projector. Such a system may be used, for example, for stage lighting in theatrical and concert events. The Icon M™, available from Light and Sound Design, Ltd; Birmingham, England, uses this technique.

Different patents owned by Light and Sound Design, Ltd. suggest that the digital gobo should be formed from either a digital mirror, or from any other pixel level controllable digital device.

Cogent Light of Los Angeles, Calif. has technology that allows packaging a high intensity light beam into a form that allows it to be placed into a light waveguide, e.g., a fiber optic cable.

SUMMARY

The present application teaches a system of packaging light into a light waveguide such as a fiber optic cable, and adjusting the shape of the light using a digitally controllable, pixel level controllable light shaping element, such as a digital mirror device (DMD), available from Texas Instruments.

In one embodiment, the system controls and produces high-intensity light output using three separate digital gobo devices. The digital gobo devices can be separately controlled such that each digital gobo device receives information indicative of shaping a separate primary color. The primary colors are handled separately, and/or combined at the object of the high-intensity light output.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other aspects will now be described in detail with reference to the accounts, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a three color version of the system.

FIG. 2 shows a flowchart of operation of the controlling process for the digital gobo's in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 shows a 3 DMD solution using three optical pipes.

FIG. 4 for shows a single DMD solution.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Details of a lighting instrument using a digital gobo are described in many patents owned by Light and Sound Design Ltd and the basic features are also present in Light and Sound Design's Icon M™ lighting fixture. The system described herein may use any of these basic features including details of computer-controlled cooling, and optics.

A block diagram of the basic system is shown in FIG. 1. An object of lighting **100** is shown. This object may be a stage, or may be any other object which is conventionally by a high-intensity lighting device. The high-intensity lighting device may be, for example, a lighting device which produces more than 100 watts of lighting output, preferably more than 500 watts of lighting output. Devices of this type conventionally use a spotlight with a special high intensity bulb for producing the desired illumination effect.

In FIG. 1, three separate lighting units are formed. Each lighting unit is responsible for producing light of a separate primary color. The primary colors can be red, green and blue for additive colors, and cyan, magenta and yellow for subtractive coloration.

Each of the lighting units **110**, **120** and **130** are formed of similar structure. The lighting unit **110** includes a light source **112** which produces light of a specified primary color, here red. The lighting unit **110** may produce red coloration, or may include a white light with a red filter, or may even produce pure white light which is later filtered. The light from source **112** is applied to digital gobo device **114**. The digital gobo device **114** may be a digital mirror device available from Texas Instruments. Alternatively, the digital mirror device can be some other digitally controllable, pixel level controllable optical device such as, but not limited to, a grating light valve. The digital gobo device **114** is a controlling computer **140** which runs a specified program **142**. A controller **150** may be remote from the computer **140**, and connected to the computer by a line **152**. For example, the computer **140** may be within a separate lighting fixture along with the lighting elements **110**, **120** and **130**, and a remote central controller **150** may be a lighting control console.

The light output from the digital mirror device **114** is focused by an optics assembly **116**, and focused to the input end **118** of an optical waveguide **119**. The optical waveguide **119** may be, for example, a fiber-optic device including single or multiple fibers. The light input at end **119** is output at end **117**, and coupled towards the object **100**. Analogously, the other lighting unit **120** focuses its light onto a fiber-optic device **129**, and the lighting device **130** focuses its light onto a fiber-optic device **139**. Each of the lights may have different characteristics, i.e. they may have different coloration. The output of the three fiber-optic devices **119**, **129** and **139** are bundled together at area **136**, and are pointed towards the object of lighting **100**.

In this way, a number of advantages may be obtained. First, brighter light and different kinds of control may be obtained since the system disclosed herein uses three separate light sources. Moreover, better control over the digital gobo may be obtained since red; green and blue are separately controlled. Less flickering may be obtained, and more brightness, as compared with a system that uses only one DMD. Still a system that uses only one DMD is contemplated as described herein.

Different modifications on this system are possible. Other optical waveguides besides a fiber-optic pipe may be used in this system. Moreover, the optical filter which changes each of these separate light components to a separate light characteristic may be located after the digital mirror, e.g. as part of the optics assembly **116**, or on the input end of the fiber-optic device **118**.

The system is controlled according to the flowchart of FIG. 2. At **200**, a file indicative of a shaping of the light, e.g. a gobo to be used, is obtained. This file may be, for example, of the format described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,057,958. Of course, any file format can be used to define the gobo. The definition can be monochrome, gray scale, or full color (three different

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colors). At **205**, the file is changed to an image, and separated into its primary color components. In the example given herein, the primary color components may include red, green and blue. Hence the file is separated into red, green and blue components. Such separation is conventional in video processing, and produces three separate signals. These three separate signals will eventually be used as the three separate controlling signals **109**, **121** and **131** respectively driving the red green and blue subassemblies. The control of the three separate digital mirror devices is carried out at **210**.

FIG. **3** shows an alternative embodiment which uses a similar concept. In the FIG. **3** embodiment, light is first launched from a light source **300** directly into a fiber-optic cable **310**. In this embodiment, the optics are shown as **315**, and are formed directly on the input end of the fiber-optic cable **310**. Light is launched into the fiber-optic cable, and hence may be focused and or colored by the optics **315**. Of course, this system may also use the separate optics shown as **116** in the FIG. **1** embodiment. Light is output on the output in **316** of the fiber-optic cable **310**, and coupled to a digital mirror device **318** which shapes the light and reflects it towards the object **100**.

The above has described a first channel shown as **299**. A separate second channel **320** produces a similar light alteration for the second aspect of light, while a third channel **330** produces a separate output for the third aspect of light; where the aspects can be colors. Each of the digital mirror devices may be controlled by the computer shown as **340** which may be controlled from a remote console **350**.

While the above has described control using three separate colors, it should be understood that two separate colors could also alternatively be used. Moreover, while the above describes the different aspects of light which are separately controlled being colors, it should be understood that any different aspect of shaping the beam of light could be separately controlled. For example, one alternative might use different intensity lights, each of which are separately controlled to produce some other kind of effect.

Another embodiment is shown in FIG. **4**. In this embodiment, a single DMD solution is shown. Light from the light **400** is immediately launched into an optical waveguide, e.g. fiber **405**. The fiber can be located in any configuration. It produces its light output **410** at the area of DMD **420**. As conventional, the DMD is controlled by a controller **425**. An optical assembly **430** receives the light from the DMD, and transmits it towards the object of illumination. The optical element **430** may include a color changing element therein, or multiple color changing elements, in order to produce full-color output. For example, the optical element **430** may include a spinning Red/Green/Blue filter which spins in synchronism with the changing of patterns on the DMD.

Although only a few embodiments have been disclosed in detail above, other modifications are possible. All such modifications are intended to be encompassed within the following claims, in which:

What is claimed is:

1. A lighting assembly comprising:

a first lamp which produces a first light output, and directs said first light output towards an optical target;

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a second light lamp which produces a second light output, said second light lamp which produces a second light output, said second light output being different than said first light output, and said second lamp directing said second light output towards said optical target;

a digital controllable light altering device, receiving said first light output, and digitally controlling a characteristic of said first light output, said digitally controllable system being located in an area of an output of said first light output, and in an area where an output of said digital controllable light altering, representing a digitally controlled light, is added with said second light output of said second lamp, wherein said optical area includes an optical waveguide therein, which directs said light output towards an object of lighting.

2. A lighting assembly as in claim 1, further comprising a third lamp, which produces a third light output, wherein said third light output is different than said first light output, and said third light output towards said optical area.

3. A lighting assembly as in claim 1, wherein said optical waveguide is an optical fiber.

4. A lighting assembly as in claim 1, wherein said optical waveguide receives light from both said first light output and from said second light output.

5. A lighting assembly as in claim 1, wherein said digitally controllable system includes a digital gobo.

6. A lighting system as in assembly as in claim 5, wherein said digital gobo includes a digital mirror device which is digitally controllable.

7. A light assembly as in claim 1, wherein said first light output and said second light output have different intensities.

8. A light assembly as in claim 1, wherein said first lamp is controlled over a first channel, and said second lamp is controlled over a second channel.

9. A light assembly as in claim 8, wherein said first and second lamps have different colors.

10. A lighting device, comprising:

a first light source which produces a light output;

a digital gobo, in a path of said light output, which digitally controls said light output; and

a second light source, which produces a second light output, said second light source producing a light output which combines with said first light output,

wherein said second light source has a different intensity than said first light source;

an optical waveguide which combines output from said first and second light sources.

11. A lighting device as in claim 10, wherein said second light source has a different color than said first light source.

12. A lighting device as in claim 11, further comprising a third light source which produces a different color light than either said first or second light source.

13. A lighting device as in claim 12, wherein said first, second and third light sources are each primary colors.

14. A lighting device as in claim 10, wherein said optical wave guide is an optical fiber.

15. A lighting device as in claim 12, wherein each of said colors are controlled over different channels.

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