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Multifunctional light sword metasurface lens

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Abstract

The depth of focus of an imaging system determines the range of change for both the position of focal plane and image plane. Although a typical light sword optical element with angular modulation of phase transmittance can extend its focus of depth due to its angular variation of the optical power, it lacks rotational symmetry and exhibits a junction, rendering its fabrication extremely difficult. Optical metasurfaces provide an unusual approach to develop such a device due to their unprecedented capability in the manipulation of light propagation in a desirable manner. We propose and experimentally demonstrate a light sword metasurface lens with multiple functionalities. The position of focal segments can be controlled by changing the polarization state of the incident light. The developed ultrathin, ultraflat device can facilitate device miniaturization and system integration and may find applications in various fields such as optical coupling, imaging, and interconnections.

Key words: Metasurface, light sword lens, multiple functionalities, long focus of depth.

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Depth of focus is one of important parameters for an imaging system, which determines the range of change for the position of focal plane and image plane. Extending depth of focus of lens has attracted much attention due to its practical applications. Various methods have been proposed to produce an optical element with long depth of focus, including Yang-Gu algorithm[1], inverse quartic axicon[2] and light sword optical element (LSOE)[3,4]. In contrast to other solutions, LSOEs have demonstrated their superiority especially for multifocal imaging with extended depth of focus[5]. LSOEs are distinguished by angular variation of the optical power since every infinitesimal angular sector has its own focal length, leading to the independence of their optical power range with respect to the pupil's diameter. These devices are typically made by fabricating a transparent substrate at different depths to yield a desired phase profile in the transmitted light. However, LSOEs lack rotational symmetry and exhibit a junction, rendering their fabrication extremely difficult. For example, the surface curvature of such an element continuously and smoothly varies across the entire surface, which results in the discontinuity observed as a radially placed edge. There are technical challenges for manufacturing to accurately produce such a smooth, continuous surface with a sharp edge. Furthermore, the sharp edge may hinder its applications in system integration since it must be handled with extreme care, which increases the difficulty level for system assembly. Although diffractive optical elements have the advantage of being relatively flat, their fabrication process is not suitable for the light sword devices since they are highly susceptible to fabrication errors, especially at a point where a big phase change jump is required.

Optical metasurfaces, which are two-dimensional counterparts of metamaterials with subwavelength thickness, have aroused considerable interest since they can control light propagation in a desirable manner, providing a viable route to develop ultrathin, ultraflat optical devices[6-15]. Metasurfaces consist of a single layer or few-layer stacks of artificial planar structures and can engineer the amplitude, phase and polarization of a light beam at subwavelength resolution, making them possible to solve the

fabrication challenge in optical devices based on phase accumulation due to the propagation effect[16-18]. A plethora of applications on metasurfaces have been proposed and demonstrated, such as beam shaper[19], orbital angular momentum manipulation[20, 21], ultrathin metalenses[17, 22], spin Hall effect of light[23], and optical holography[8, 11, 13, 24]. To tackle the technical fabrication challenge in LSOEs, we propose and experimentally demonstrate a facile metasurface approach to develop multifunctional light sword metasurface lens (MLSMLs). In comparison with traditional bulky LSOEs with wavelength-dependent phase profile based on optical path difference, the developed MLSMLs are ultrathin, ultraflat and ideal for device miniaturization and system integration. Although using optical metasurfaces to design polarization-controlled lens with needle-shaped focal points has been theoretically proposed[25], it hasn't been experimentally demonstrated. Furthermore, unlike previously demonstrated LSOEs, the functionality of the fabricated device here can be changed by controlling the polarization state of the incident light. Our demonstrated results might enable new types of ultracompact optical elements for generating LSOEs with long focus of depth, and also advance metasurface based multifunctional devices.

Design and Methods

Figure 1 shows the schematic of the MLSML when illuminated by a linearly polarized light beam at normal incidence. The unique metasurface device here functions as a combination of two separate LSOEs since it has two different focal lengths with same focal range (Δf) for circularly polarized light with opposite helicity (left-handed and right-handed circular polarizations, LCP and RCP). Each infinitesimal angular sector on the individual device is equivalent to a Fresnel lens with a focal length $f + \Delta f\theta/2\pi$, where θ is the azimuthal angle. A circularly polarized light beam can be focused into one of focal segments stretched from f up to $f+\Delta f$ by such an optical element. The two separate focal segments correspond to the incident light with different circular polarizations. Upon the illumination of a linearly polarized light beam, two focal

segments are obtained since it can be decomposed into LCP light and RCP light with same components. Thus, the focal segments of the designed device can be changed by controlling the polarization state of the incident light. To achieve the desired phase profile while maintaining uniform amplitude, a metasurface consisting of gold nanorods with spatially variant orientations is used. When an incident circularly polarized beam normally passes through the anisotropic nanorods, the transmitted beam contains both the original spin part without phase shift and the converted spin part with the induced phase shift (known as Pancharatnam-Berry phase). The additional phase delay is ±2φ (φ is the orientation angle of nanorod) for the cross-polarization (RCP/LCP) transmitted waves, where the plus/minus sign is decided by the helicity of the incident light[17].

The phase transmittance of the MLSML is defined by the following relation[26, 27]:

$$\varphi(r,\theta)=\pm\frac{kr^2}{2\left[f+\left(\Delta f\theta/2\pi\right)\right]} \quad (1)$$

where r, θ are the radial and azimuthal coordinate, respectively. The angle θ ranges from 0 to 2π. $k=2\pi/\lambda$ is the free-space wave vector, and λ is the wavelength of the incident light. The parameters f and Δf represent the focal length and the focal range of the element, respectively. From the equation (1), we can see that each infinitesimal angular sector is equivalent to a Fresnel lens with a focal length $f+\Delta f\theta/2\pi$. Therefore the LSOE-based metasurface lens can focus approximately a plane wave into a focal segment stretched from f up to $f+\Delta f$. Note that the '+' and '-' signs in Eq. (1) correspond to a positive (convex) and negative (concave) polarity, respectively, for the incident LCP and RCP light. To design such a multifunctional device, two metasurfaces (each one for a specific focal segment) are designed to operate with opposite incident helicities and merged together with a displacement. Suppose d_1 is the distance between neighboring nanorods with a value of 424 nm along both x and y directions, the displacement vector is (d_1/2, d_1/2), as detailed in Fig. 2. Each gold nanorod is 200 nm long, 70 nm wide, and 40nm thick. There are two

separate metasurfaces that can generate two different types of required phase profiles, but the size of the sample before and after metasurface merging is the same and the equivalent pixel size in the merged metasurface is 300 nm×300 nm. Indium-tin-oxide (ITO) coated glass substrates are used to fabricate the designed nanorod structures. Nanostructures are defined in a positive PMMA resist film on glass substrates using standard electron-beam lithography. Then a 40 nm gold film is deposited on the sample via electron beam evaporation. Finally, the metasurface consisting of gold nanorods is achieved by a subsequent lift-off procedure. Fig. 2(f) shows the scanning electron microscopy (SEM) image of part of our fabricated multifunctional device. Fig. 2(c), (d) and (g) are the magnified figures for the regions A, B and C, respectively. Fig. 2(c) and (d) clearly shows the phase-edge of our light sword metasurface lens (similar to traditional light sword lenses).

Results and Discussions

Under the illumination of LCP light and RCP light at normal incidence, the simulation and experimental results for light focusing with long focus of depth at the wavelength of 650 nm are shown in Fig. 3. The converted part with phase change is characterized by filtering out the non-converted part in our experiment. The focal lengths for LCP and RCP light are chosen to be 1400 μm and 1500 μm, respectively. However, their focal range Δf is the same (50 μm). To generate two LSOEs with different polarity for the same circular polarization (e.g., LCP), the signs of the phase profile for the two optical elements are chosen to be "+" and "-", respectively (as shown in Eq.(1)). Therefore, only one real focal segment is expected when an incident light beam with pure circular polarization (LCP or RCP) shines on the sample. To further analyze the characteristic of long focus depth, the light intensity distributions along the longitudinal direction at the positions of 1375 μm, 1400 μm, and 1425 μm (marked by regions I, II, III) are also given in Fig. 3a. The three focal spots in the transverse plane unambiguously show that the designed device has a long focus of depth. Similarly, another real focal segment is predicted if the polarization state of the incident light is

changed from LCP to RCP. The light intensity distributions along the longitudinal direction at the positions of at the location of 1475 μm, 1500 μm, and 1525 μm (marked by IV, V, VI) are also given (see Fig. 3(b)). The experimental setup to characterize the fabricated metasurface device is shown in Figure S1 (Supplementary Section). The sample is mounted on a 3D translation stage, allowing for fine adjustment. The incident light at the wavelength of 650 nm is from a tunable supercontinuum laser source (NKT-SuperK EXTREME). The required polarization state is generated by a polarizer and a quarter-wave plate. Since the sign of the phase profile can be flipped by controlling the helicity of the incident light, the focal segments will be swapped along the longitudinal direction when the helicity of the incident light is changed from LCP to RCP (shown in Fig. 3b). The full width at half maximum (FWHM) is an important parameter commonly used to describe the spot size of a focal point. The simulated FWHMs for the three real focal points in regions I, II, and III in Fig.3(a) are 3.6 μm, 4.2 μm, and 4.2 μm, respectively. In contrast, the experimental measured FWHMs are 5.7 μm, 6.03 μm, and 6.03 μm, respectively. The measured FWHMs for IV, V and VI are that 5.03 μm, 4.2 μm, and 6.7 μm, respectively, while the corresponding simulated values are 4 μm, 4.2 μm, and 4.4 μm, respectively. The deviation is mainly due to the fabrication error and measurement accuracy. Nevertheless, good agreement between simulation and experiment is found.

We further characterize the performance of the developed device for the incident light with linear polarization. Figure 4(b) shows the experimentally measured intensity distributions at six longitudinal positions marked by I-VI, corresponding to 1375 μm, 1400 μm, 1425 μm, 1475 μm, 1500 μm, and 1525 μm, respectively. The regions I-III belong to the first focal segment and the regions IV-VI belong to the second one, as shown in Fig. 4(a). Their light intensity distributions have similar tendency as shown in Fig. 3(a) and (b) except for the regions III and IV. The light intensities in region III and IV shown in Fig. 4(b) are stronger than those in Fig.3(a) and (b), which is due to the fact that the distance between the two focal segments is relatively close and results in intensity overlap in these regions.

The conversion efficiency between the two circular polarization states is an important parameter in the performance of the metasurface device. This value is defined as the ratio of the power of the helicity-changed light (e.g., from LCP to RCP or RCP to LCP) to that of the input light. It is worth mentioning that the efficiency of the device is halved since a linearly polarized light beam can be decomposed into two circularly polarized lights beams with opposite helicity. As a proof-of-concept, the conversion efficiency between the polarization states based on the plasmonic metasurface is measured to be 2% at 650 nm, which is at the lower edge of what is required for practical applications. As an alternative to metallic nanorods, however, a dielectric metasurface can be used to dramatically increase this value since it can decrease the ohmic losses and improve the scattering cross sections of the metal nanorods[28, 29].

An interesting question is whether there is a limit in the depth of focus in this design. Each infinitesimal angular sector on the metasurface device is equivalent to a Fresnel lens with a specific focal length. With the increase of the depth of focus, the phase difference between unit cells will be insufficient, leading to the decrease of energy in each focal plane along the longitudinal direction within the depth of focus. Furthermore, the background noise will increase and the contrast will become worse. Our design is based on transmission mode, while Veysi's work is based on reflective operation[25], which is not compatible with most optical systems that operate in the transmission mode. In addition, the multiple functionality in our work is realized by controlling circular polarization of the incident light, instead of linear polarization in Veysi's work. Furthermore, in comparison with Y-shaped structures proposed by Veysi, nanorod structures are much simpler, which can facilitate nanofabrication.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have theoretically and experimentally demonstrated a facile metasurface approach to realize a light sword lens with multiple functionalities based on the geometric design and arrangement of light-scattering nano-antennas. The desired phase profile is realized by a metasurface consisting of nanorods with

spatially variant orientation. The functionality of the fabricated ultrathin, flat light sword metasurface device can be controlled by changing the polarization state of the incident light, which enables the realization of novel optical components with functionalities tailored to specific applications. The fabrication procedure is compatible with standard semiconductor fabrication process and the compact device can facilitate device miniaturization and system integration, which may find applications in optical coupling, imaging, and interconnections.

Acknowledgments

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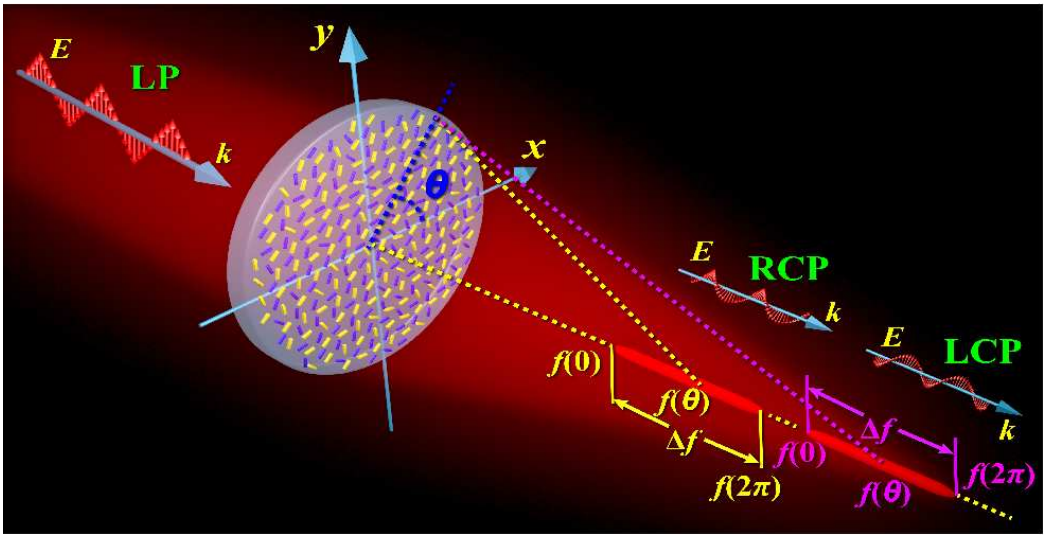

Fig.1. Schematic of multifunctional light sword metasurface lens. Each infinitesimal angular sector is equivalent to a Fresnel lens with a focal length f+$\Delta f\theta/2\pi$, where f, Δf and θ represent focal length, focal range and azimuthal coordinate, respectively. Upon the illumination of an incident light with linear polarization (LP), the device has two real focal segments corresponding to the transmitted light with right circular polarization (RCP) and left circular polarization (LCP). The metasurface consists of gold nanorods with spatially-varying orientation.

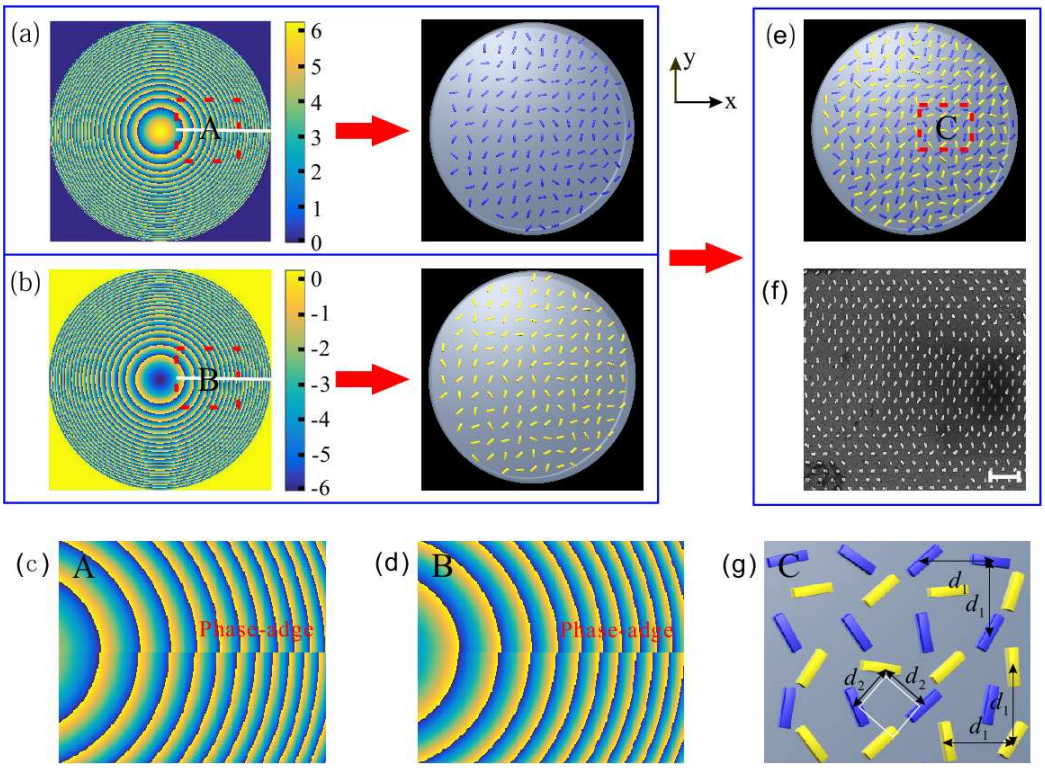

Fig.2. Generation of the multifunctional light sword metasurface lens and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) image of the sample. Suppose d_1 is the distance between neighboring antennas with a value of 424 nm along x and y directions. Two sets of light sword metasurface lenses are designed to operate with opposite incident helicities and merged together with a displacement vector of (d_1/2, d_1/2). d_2 is the equivalent distance between neighbouring nanorods in the merged metasurface, which is 300 nm. Upon the illumination of LCP light at normal incidence, the signs of generated phase profiles for the transmitted lights beams are (a) positive and (b) negative, respectively. (e) Schematic of the merged metasurface. (f) SEM image of part of the multifunctional metasurface lens. The scale bar is 1 μm. (c) and (d) show the phase distributions in the regions of A and B marked by the dotted rectangles, respectively. (g) The nanorod distribution in the region C.

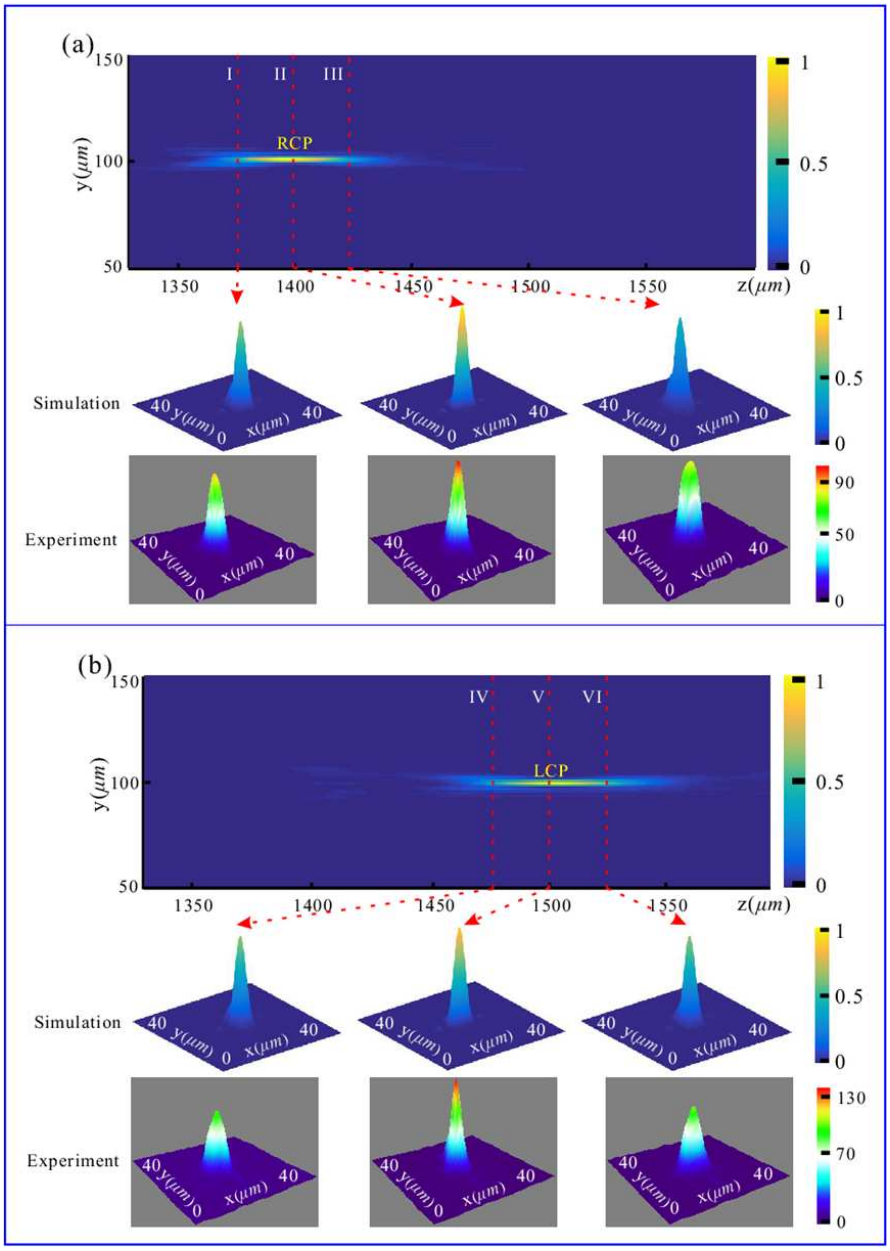

Fig.3. Simulation and experimental results of the multifunctional metasurface device at 650 nm. (a) The focusing performance of the metasurface lens when illuminated by an incident light with left circular polarization (LCP) at normal incidence. Theoretical and measured intensity distributions in the three focal planes located at longitudinal positions of 1375 μm, 1400 μm, and 1425 μm (marked by region I, II, III) are also given. (b) Simulation and experimental results for the incident light with right circular polarization (RCP).

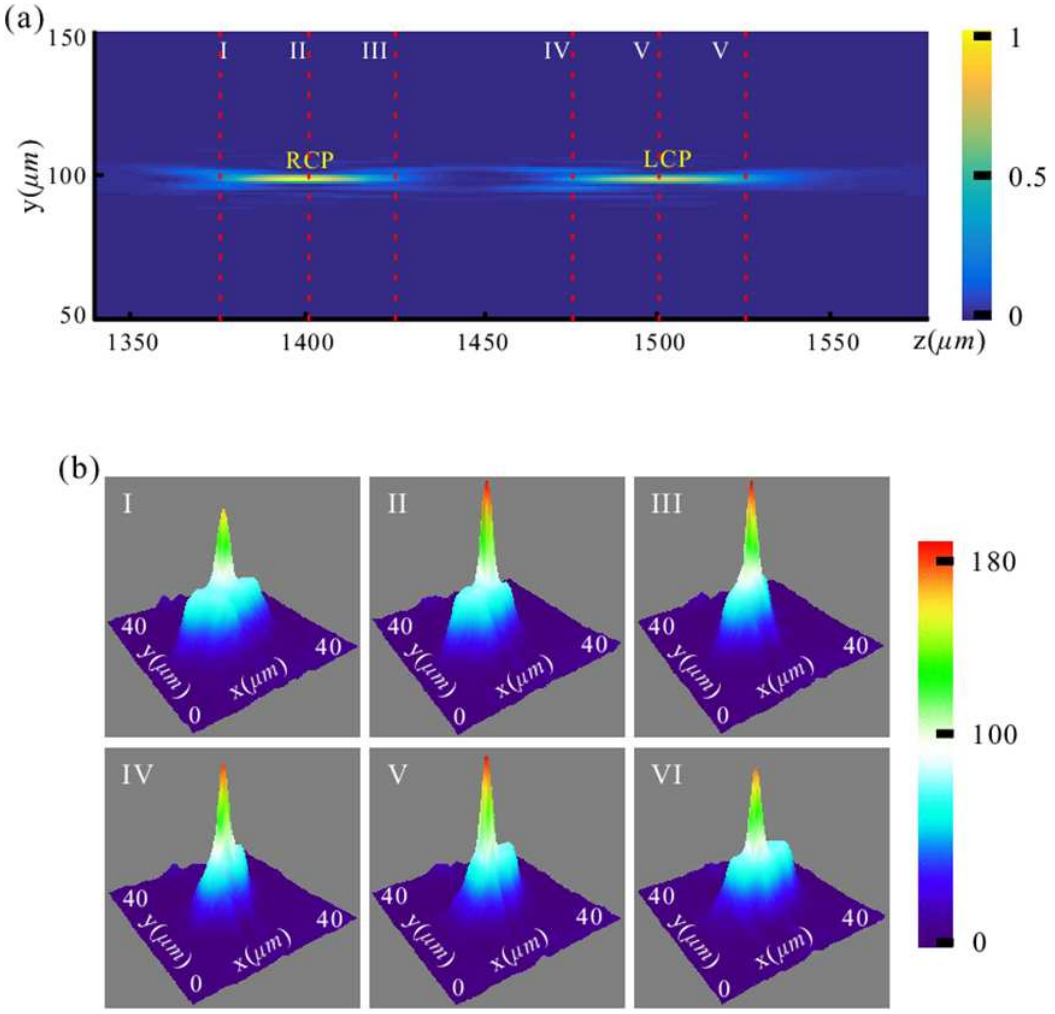

Fig.4. Simulation and experimentally measured results for the incident light with linear polarization. (a) Two focal segments for light with different helicities are observed in the simulation since a linearly polarized light can be decomposed into a LCP light beam and a RCP light beam with same components. (b) Experimentally measured intensity distributions in the focal planes located at 6 longitudinal positions.

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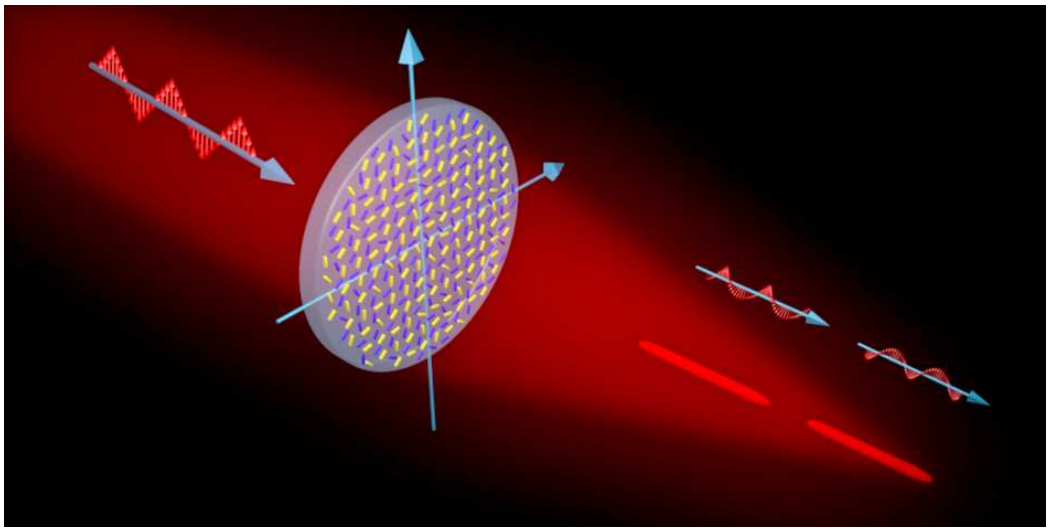

Description:

This schematic shows the multifunctional light sword metasurface lens when illuminated by a linearly polarized light beam at normal incidence. The metasurface device here functions as a combination of two separate light sword lenses since it has two different focal lengths with same focal range for circularly polarized light with opposite helicity. Each infinitesimal angular sector on the individual device is equivalent to a Fresnel lens with a specific focal length. A circularly polarized light beam can be focused into one of focal segments by such an optical element. The two separate focal segments correspond to the incident light with different circular polarizations. Upon the illumination of a linearly polarized light beam, two focal segments are obtained. Thus, the focal segments of the designed device can be changed by controlling the polarization state of the incident light.