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(54) **TRANSFLECTIVE LIQUID CRYSTAL
DISPLAY WITH GAMMA HARMONIZATION**

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2010, which is a division of application No. 11/432,
157, filed on May 10, 2006, now Pat. No. 7,683,988.

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G02F 1/1335 (2006.01)
G02F 1/1343 (2006.01)
G09G 3/36 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **345/95**; 345/204; 349/38; 349/114

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 345/87,
345/89, 204, 95; 349/114
See application file for complete search history.

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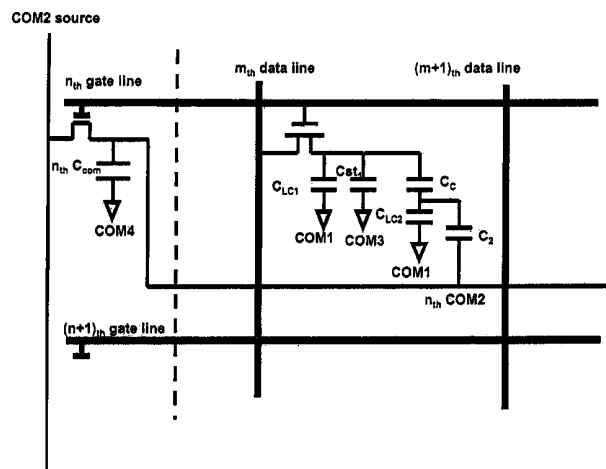
Primary Examiner — Quan-Zhen Wang

Assistant Examiner — Michael J Eurice

(57) **ABSTRACT**

In a transfective liquid crystal display having a transmission area and the reflection area, the transmissive electrode is connected to a switching element to control the liquid crystal layer in the transmission area, and the reflective electrode is connected to the switching element via a separate capacitor to control the liquid crystal layer in the reflection area. The separate capacitor is used to shift the reflectance in the reflection area toward a higher voltage end in order to avoid the reflectance inversion problem. In addition, an adjustment capacitor is connected between the reflective electrode and a different common line. The adjustment capacitor is used to reduce or eliminate the discrepancy between the gamma curve associated with the transmittance and the gamma curve associated with the reflectance.

10 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets



US 8,427,414 B2

Page 2

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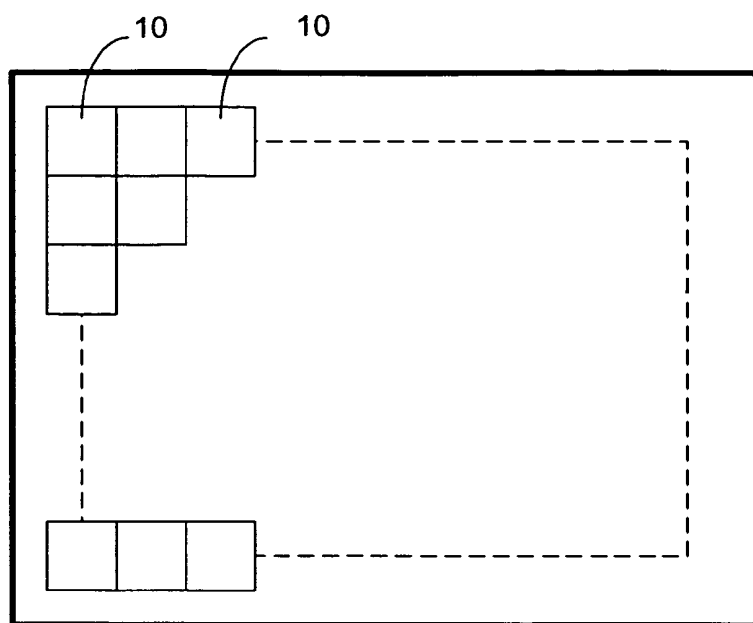


FIG. 1
(prior art)

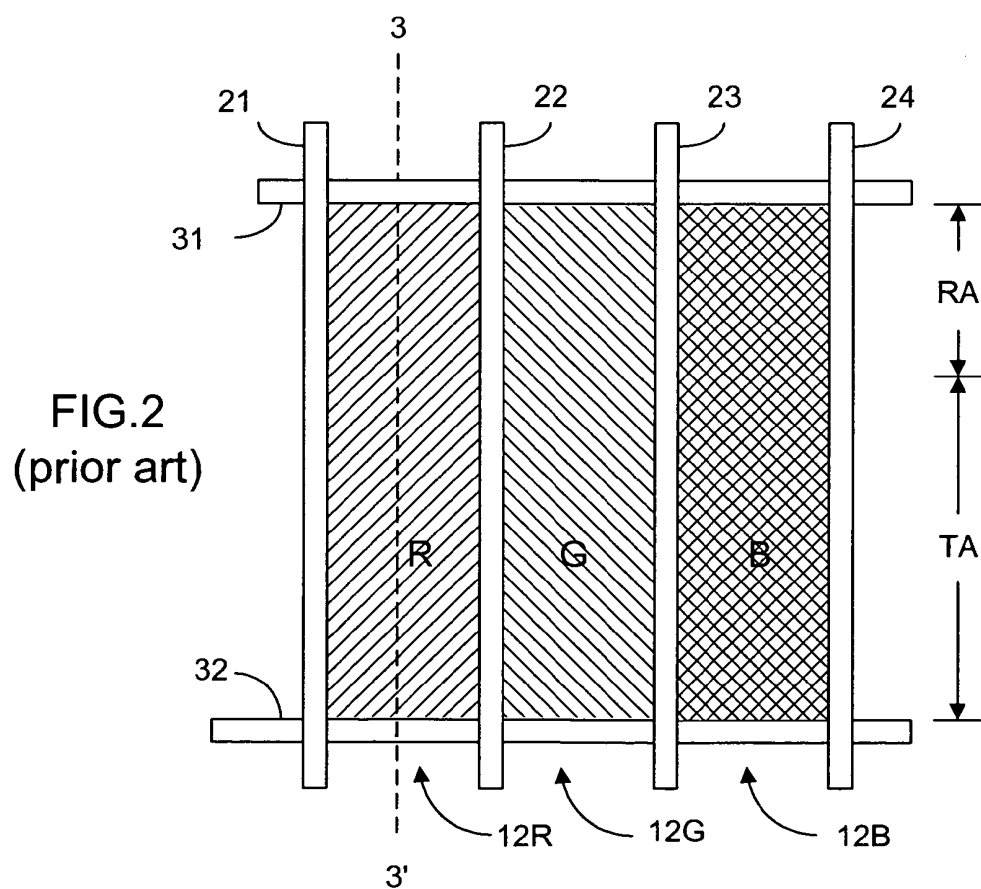


FIG. 2
(prior art)

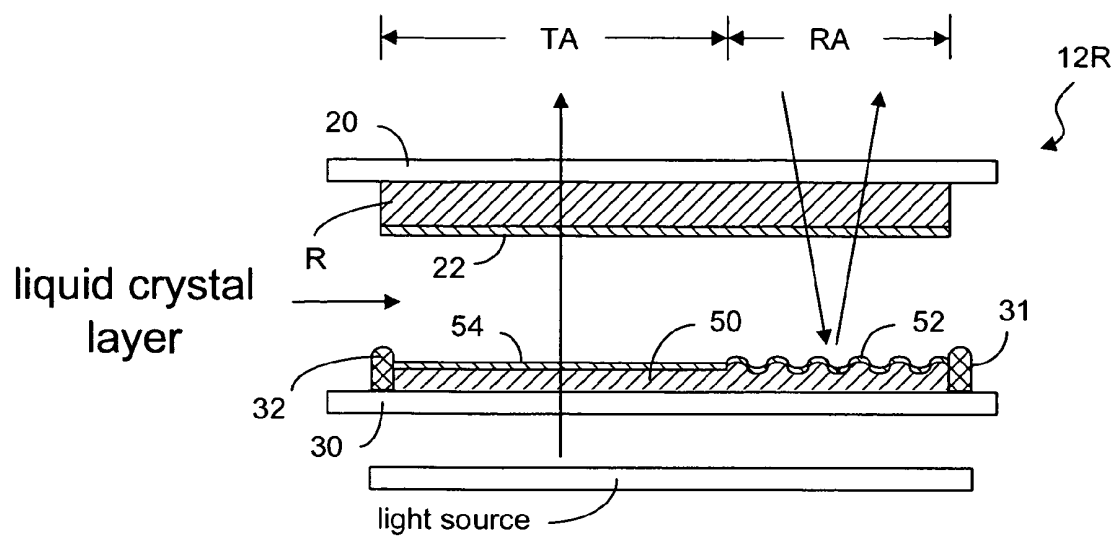


FIG.3a
(prior art)

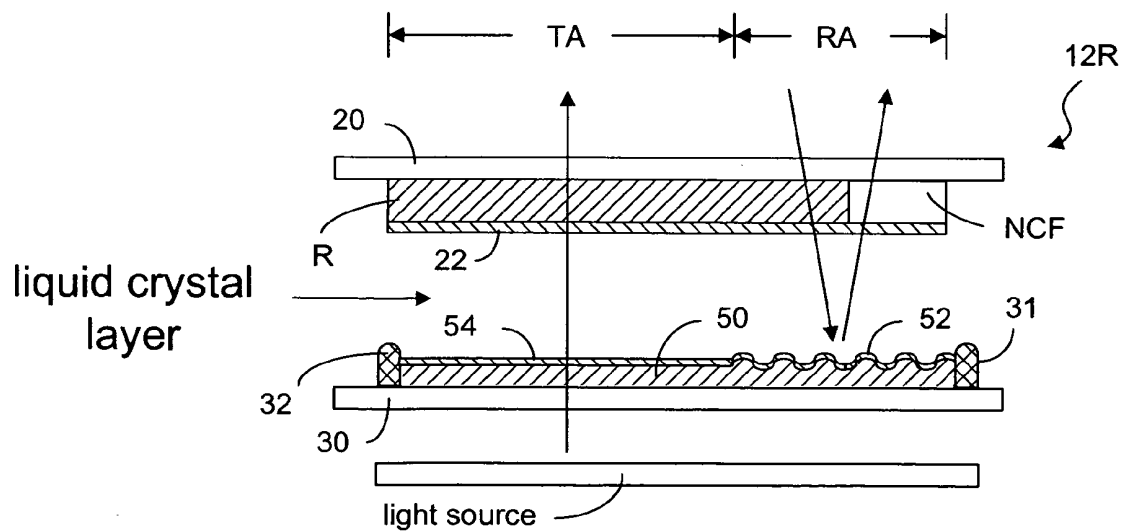


FIG.3b
(prior art)

FIG. 4
(Prior Art)

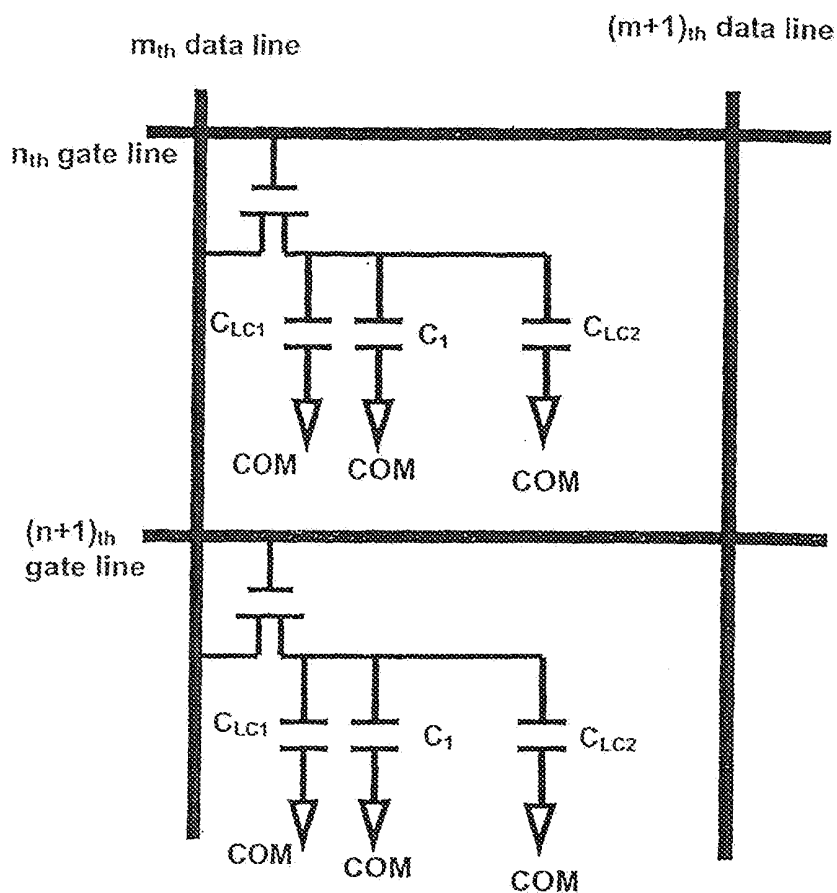
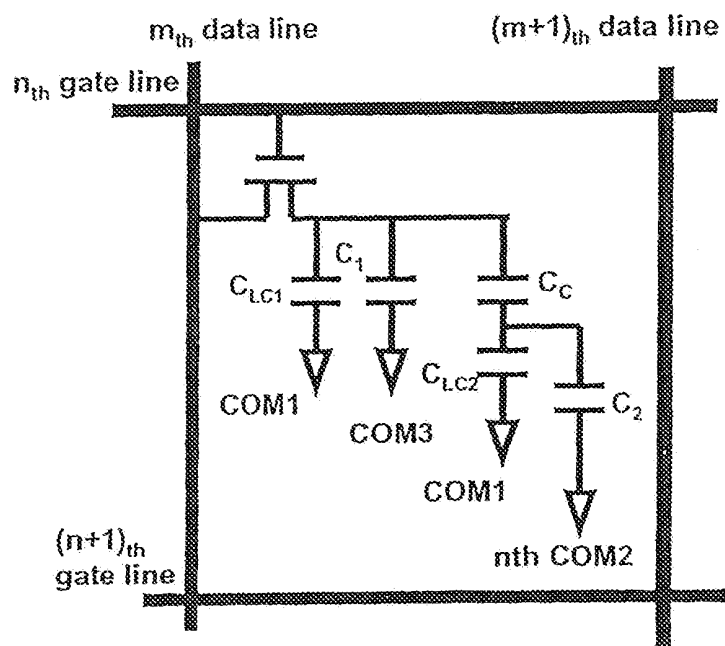


FIG. 8



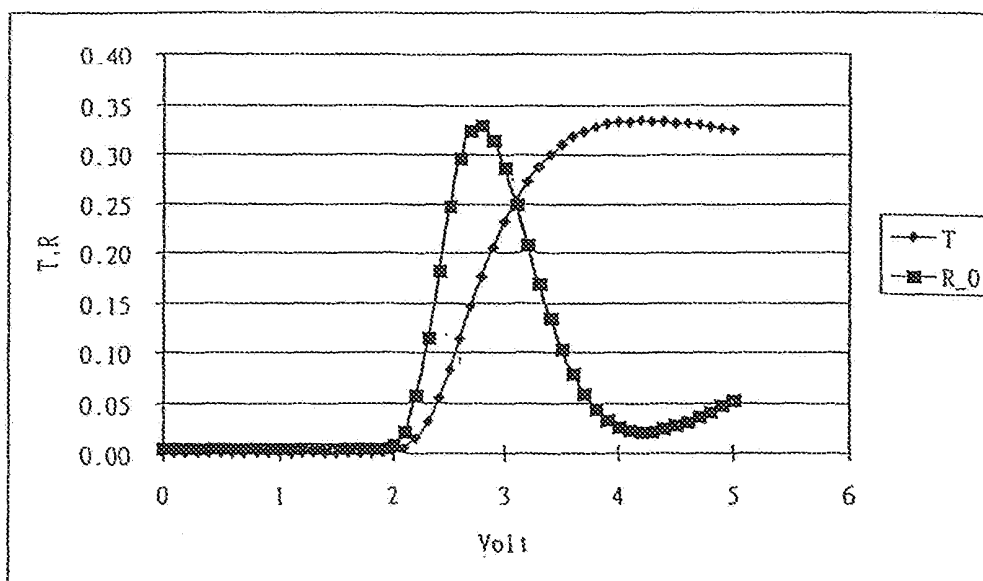
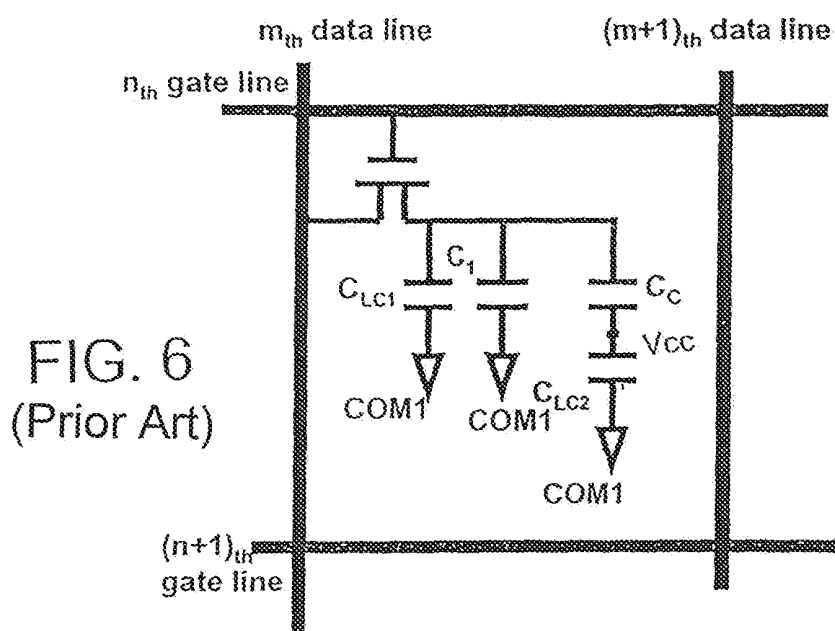


FIG. 5
(Prior Art)



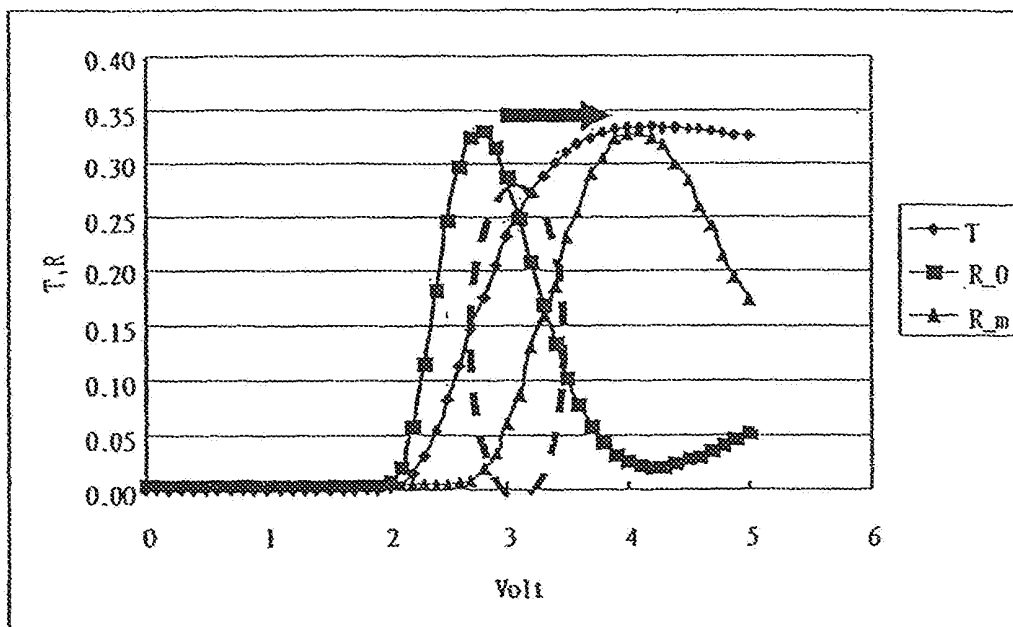


FIG. 7a (Prior Art)

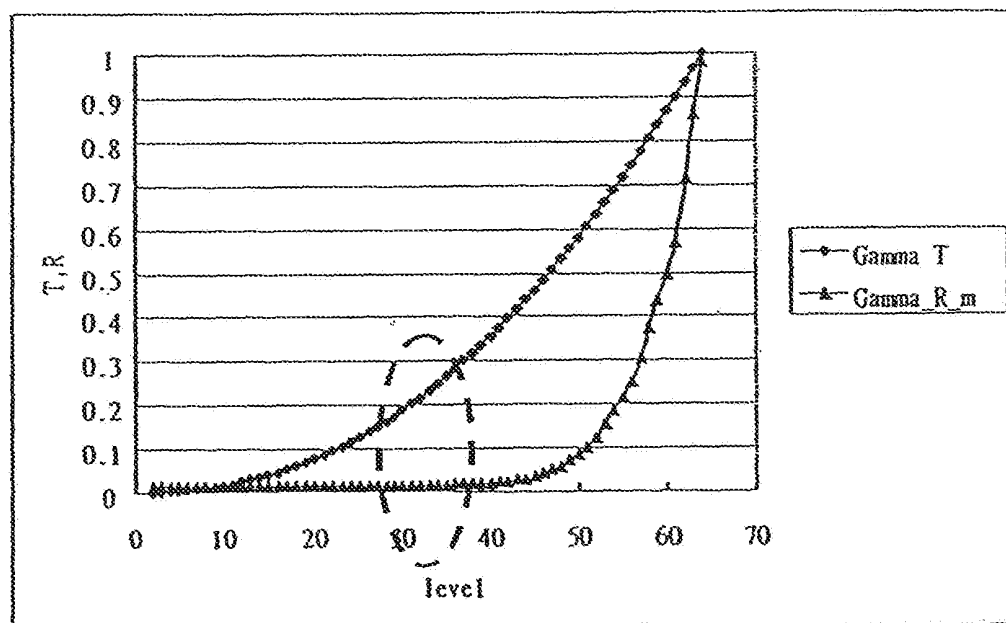


FIG. 7b (Prior Art)

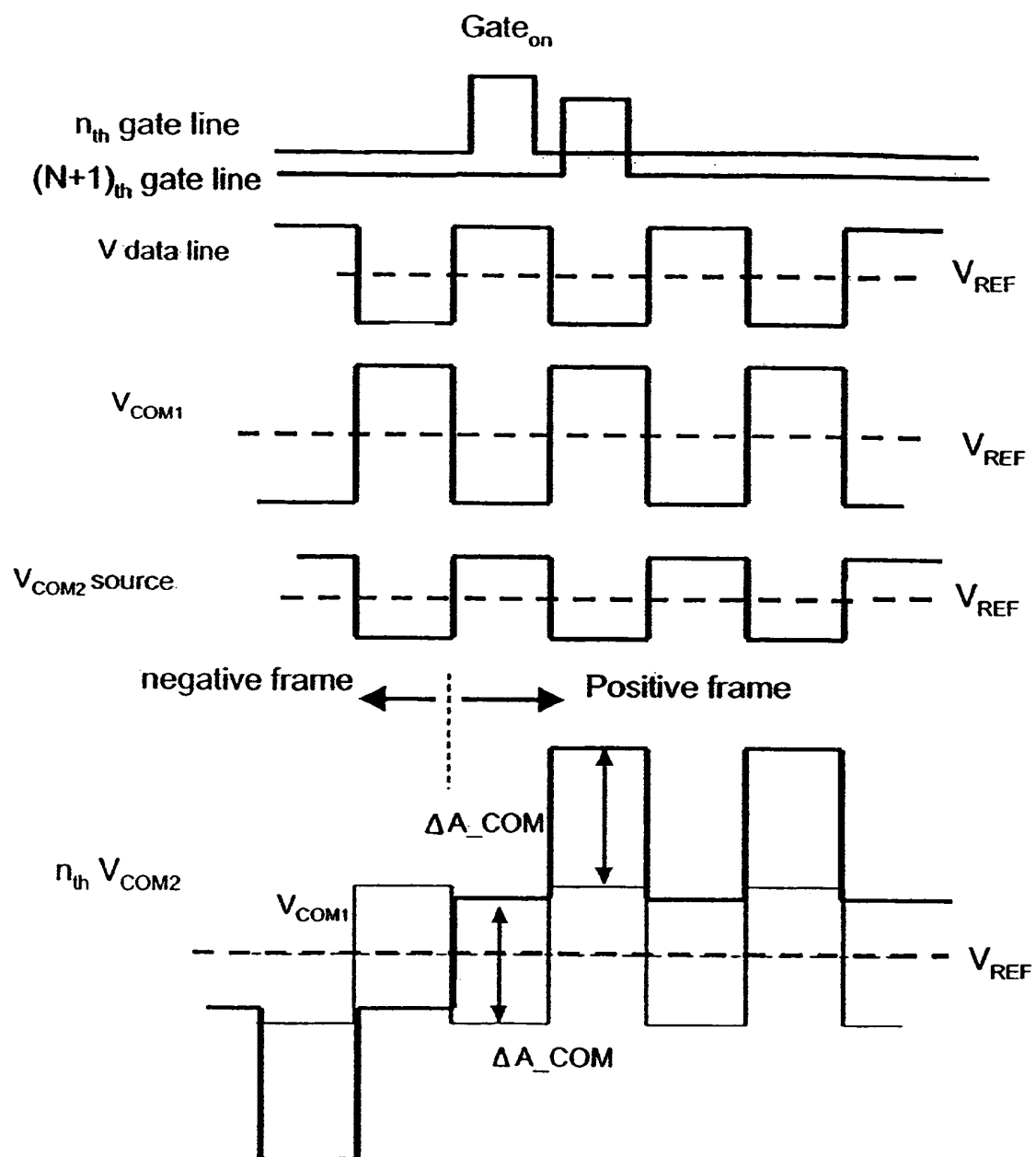


FIG. 9

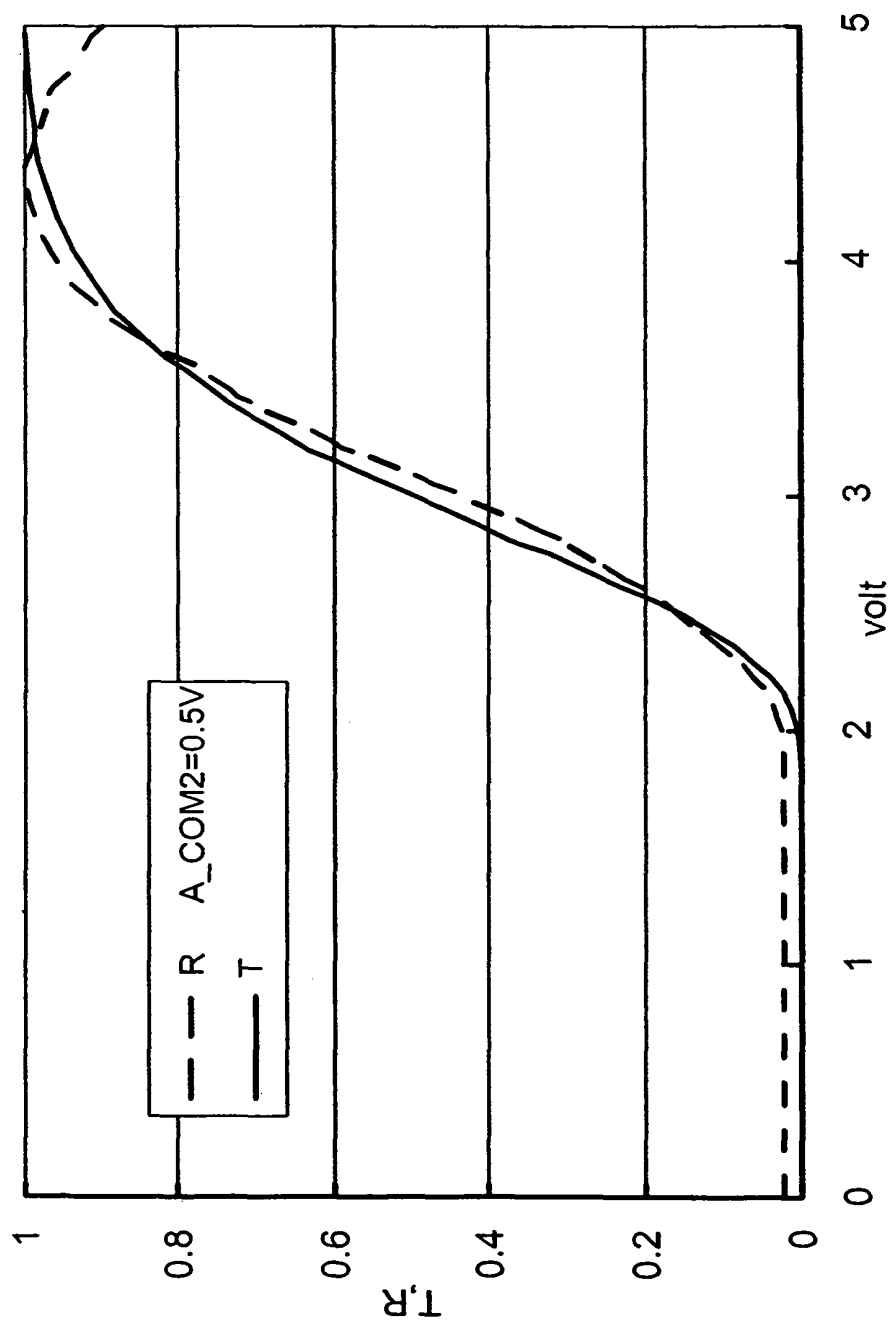


FIG. 10a

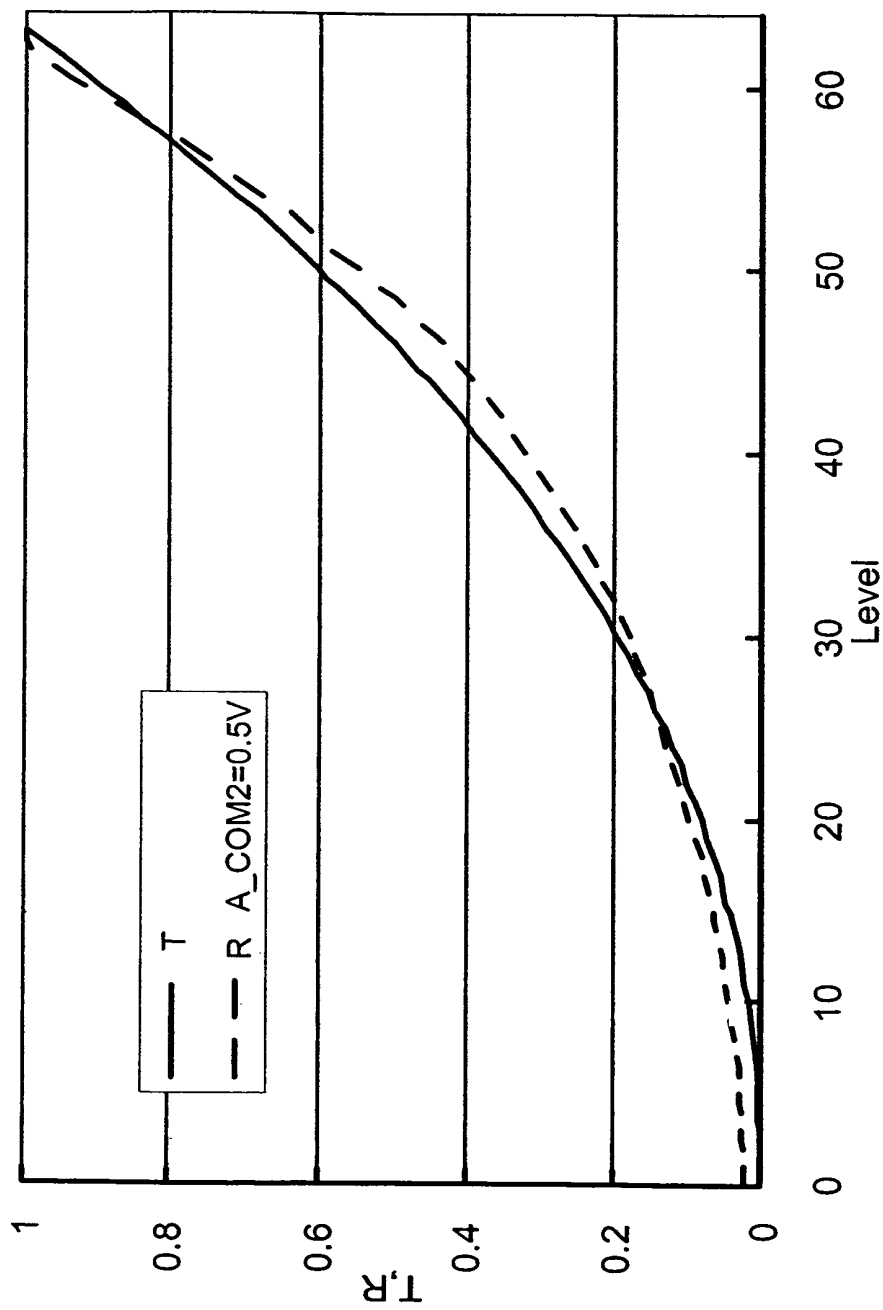
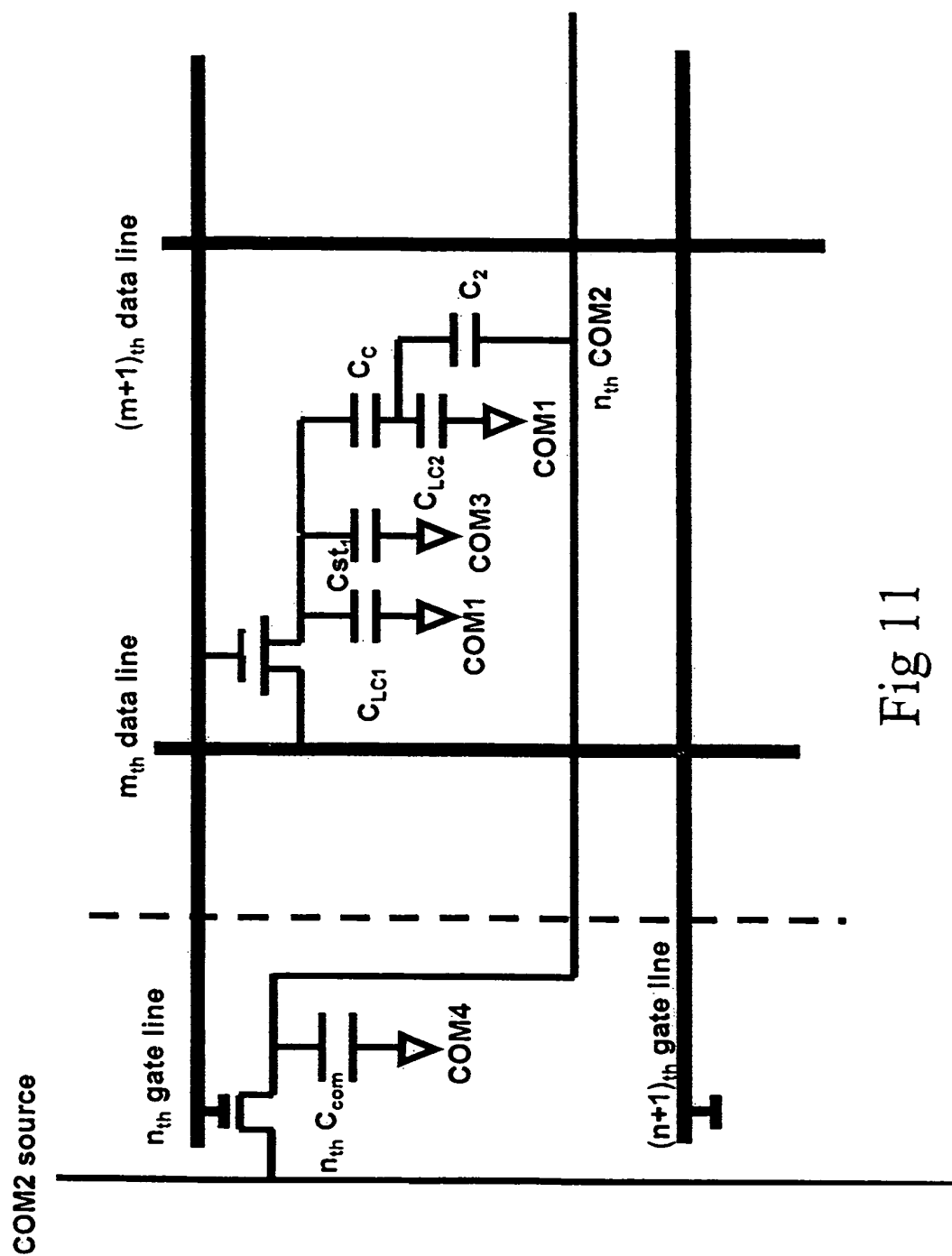


FIG. 10b



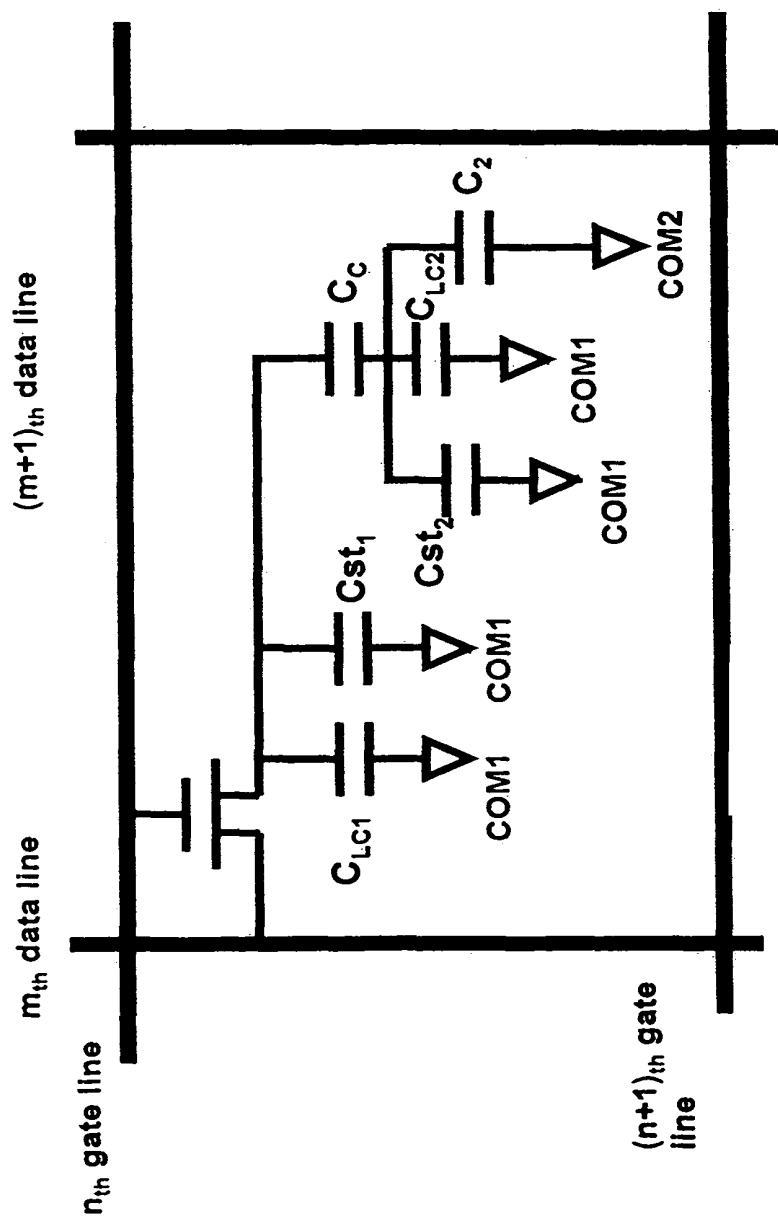


FIG. 12

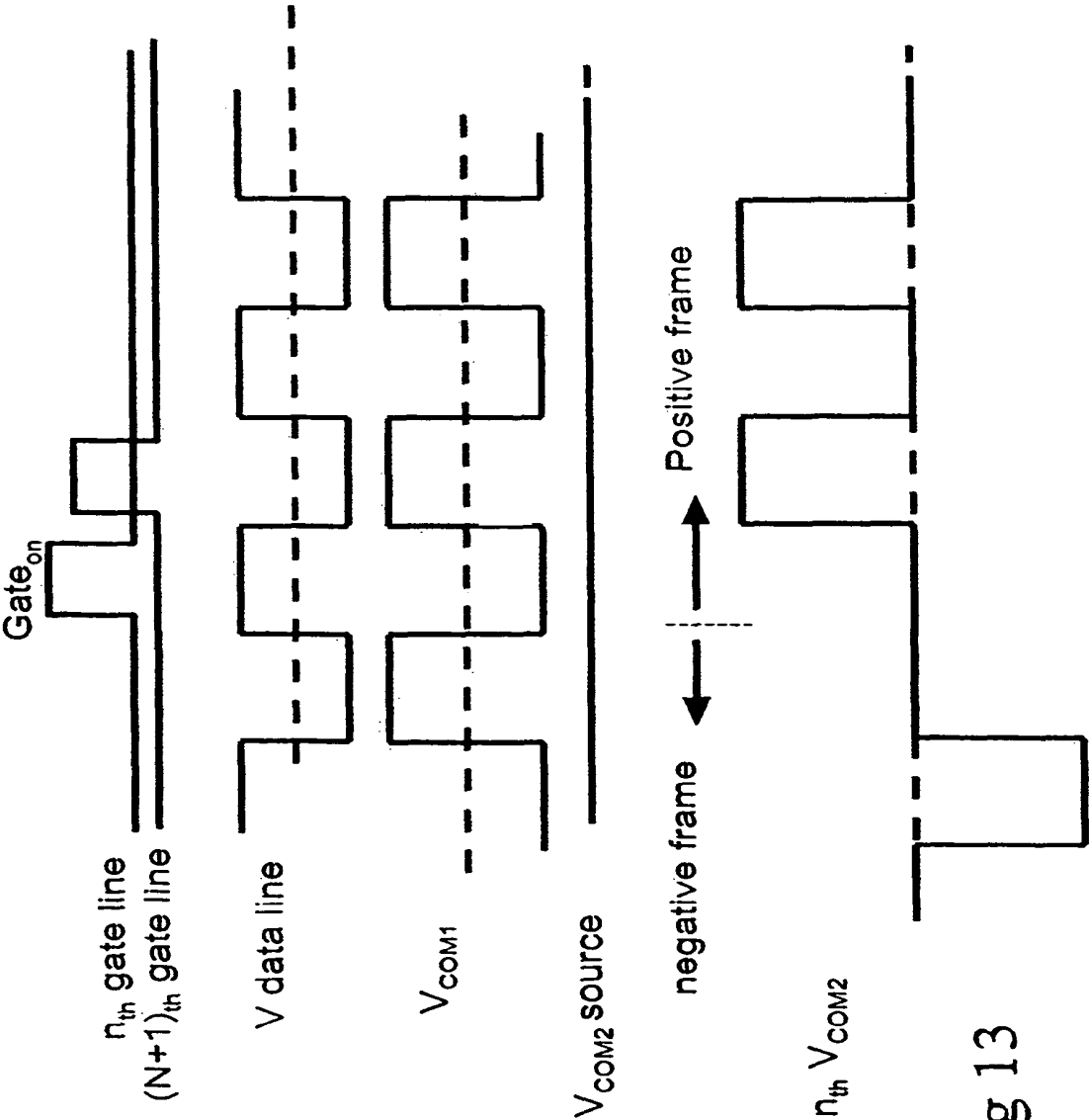
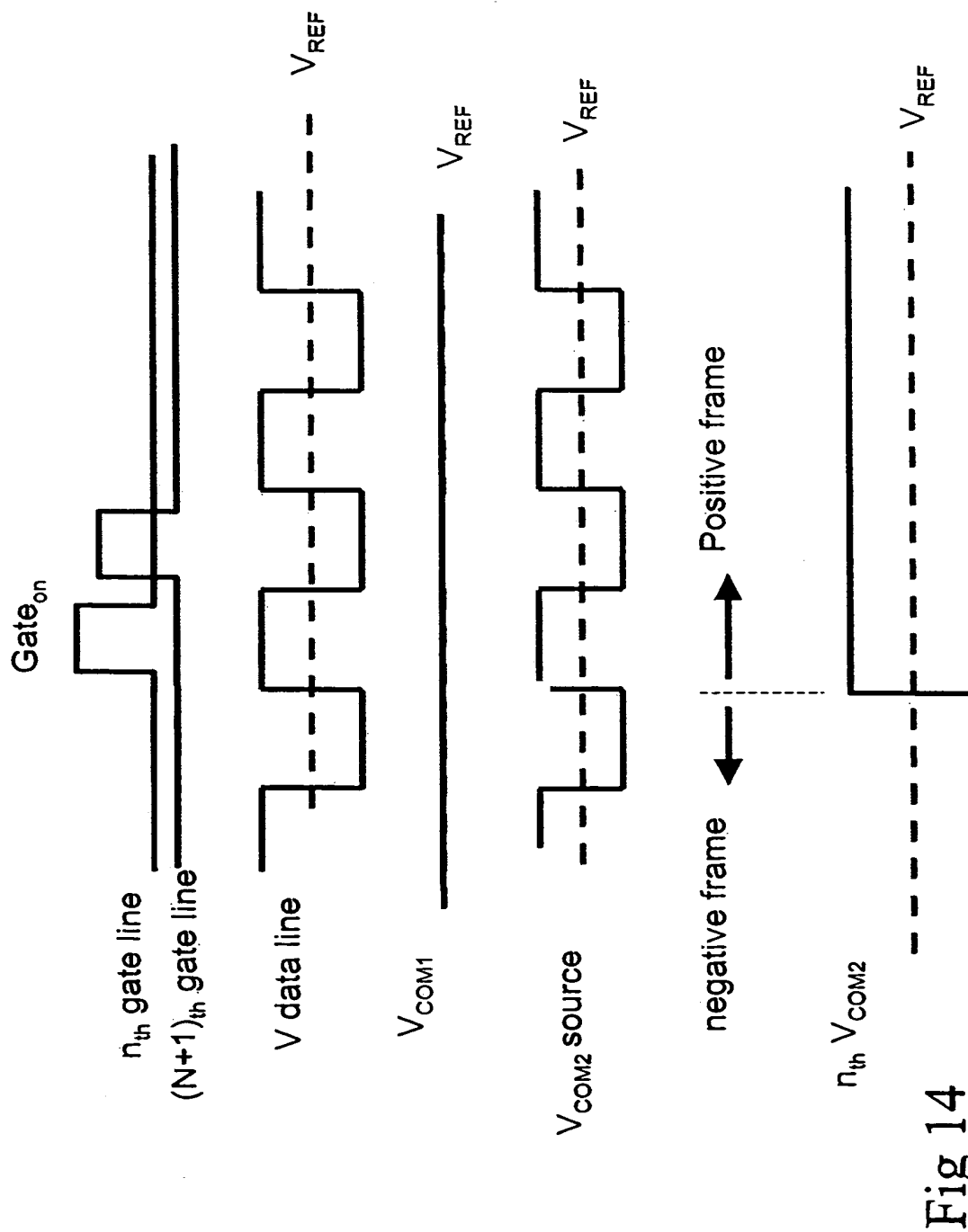


Fig 13



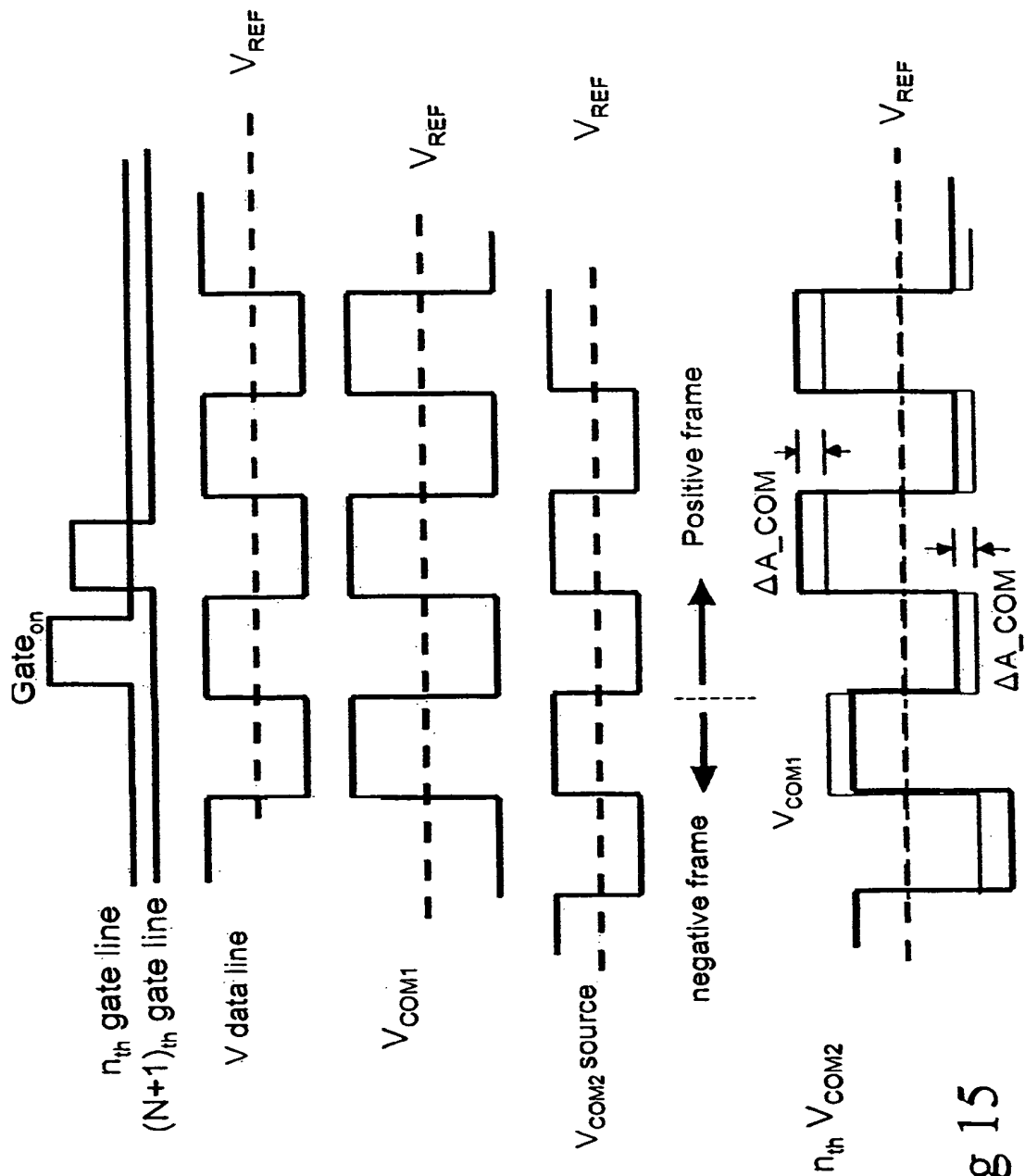


Fig 15

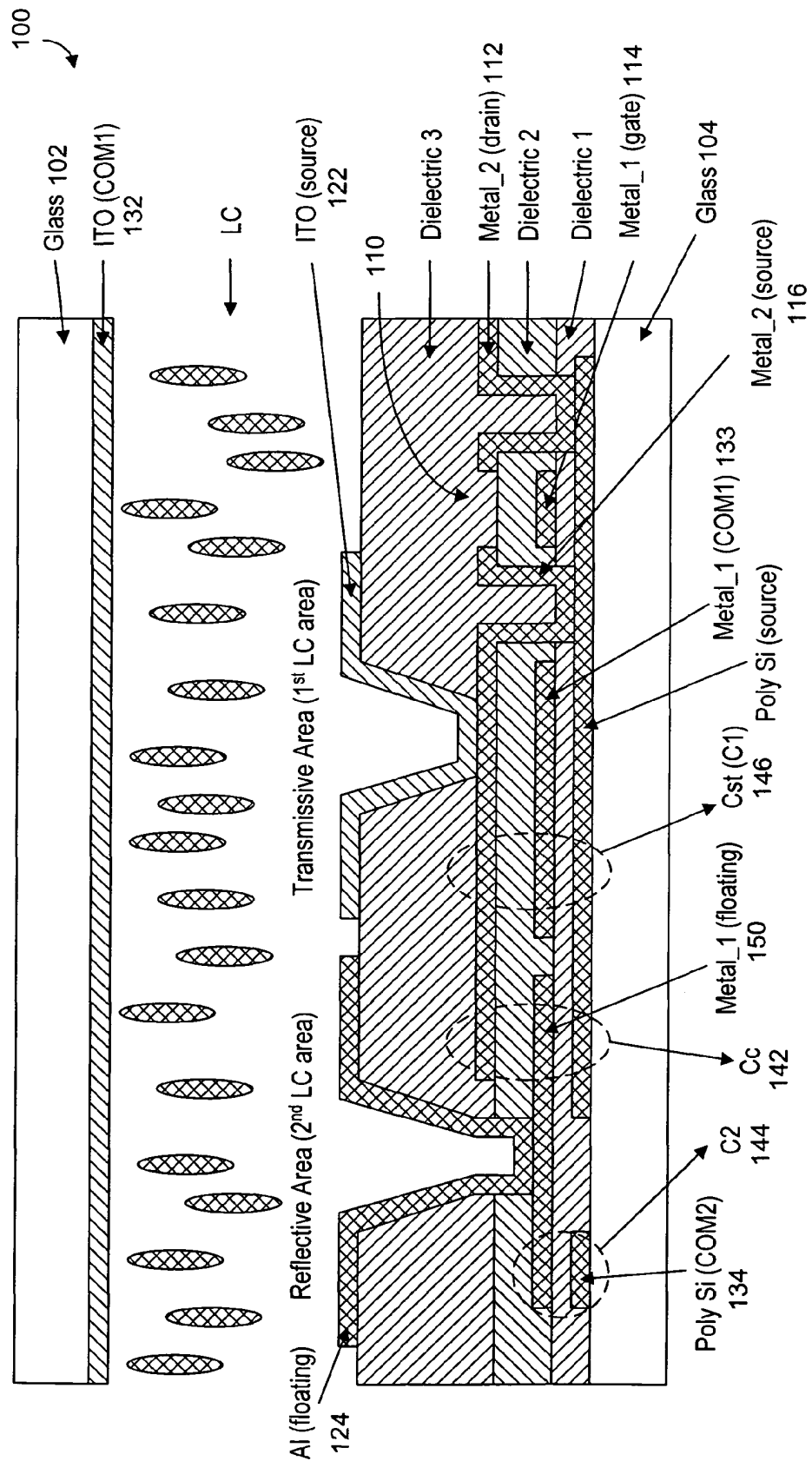


FIG. 16

TRANSFLECTIVE LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY WITH GAMMA HARMONIZATION

This application is a divisional application claiming benefit of co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/655,780, filed Jan. 7, 2010, which is a divisional application of and claims benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/432,157, filed May 10, 2006 now U.S. Pat. No. 7,683,988.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a liquid crystal display panel and, more particularly, to a transmissive-type liquid crystal display panel.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Due to the characteristics of thin profile and low power consumption, liquid crystal displays (LCDs) are widely used in electronic products, such as portable personal computers, digital cameras, projectors, and the like. Generally, LCD panels are classified into transmissive, reflective, and transmissive types. A transmissive LCD panel uses a back-light module as its light source. A reflective LCD panel uses ambient light as its light source. A transmissive LCD panel makes use of both the back-light source and ambient light.

As known in the art, a color LCD panel 1 has a two-dimensional array of pixels 10, as shown in FIG. 1. Each of the pixels comprises a plurality of sub-pixels, usually in three primary colors of red (R), green (G) and blue (B). These RGB color components can be achieved by using respective color filters. FIG. 2 illustrates a plan view of the pixel structure in a conventional transmissive liquid crystal panel, and FIGS. 3a and 3b are cross sectional views of the pixel structure. As shown in FIG. 2, a pixel can be divided into three sub-pixels 12R, 12G and 12B, and each sub-pixel can be divided into a transmission area (TA) and a reflection area (RA). In the transmission area as shown in FIG. 3a, light from a back-light source enters the pixel area through a lower substrate 30 and goes through a liquid crystal layer, a color filter R and the upper substrate 20. In the reflection area, light from above an upper substrate 20 encountering the reflection area goes through the upper substrate 20, the color filter R and the liquid crystal layer before it is reflected by a reflective layer or electrode 52. Alternatively, a non-color filter (NCF) is formed on the upper substrate 20, corresponding to part of the reflection area, as shown in FIG. 3b.

As known in the art, there are many more layers in each pixel for controlling the optical behavior of the liquid crystal layer. These layers may include a device layer 50 and one or two electrode layers. For example, a transmissive electrode 54 on the device layer 50, together with a common electrode 22 on the color filter, is used to control the optical behavior of the liquid crystal layer in the transmission area. Likewise, the optical behavior of the liquid crystal layer in the reflection area is controlled by the reflective electrode 52 and the common electrode 22. The common electrode 22 is connected to a common line. The device layer is typically disposed on the lower substrate and comprises gate lines 31, 32, data lines 21-24 (FIG. 2), transistors, and passivation layers (not shown). Furthermore, a storage capacitor is commonly disposed in the device layer 50 to retain the electrical charge in the sub-pixel after a signal pulse in the gate line has passed. An equivalent circuit of a typical sub-pixel (m, n) having a transmission area and a reflection area is shown in FIG. 4. In FIG. 4, C_{LC1} is the capacitance mainly attributable to the liquid crystal layer between the transmissive electrode 54 and

the common electrode 22, and C_{LC2} is the capacitance mainly attributable to the liquid crystal layer between the reflective electrode 52 and the common electrode 22. C_1 is the storage capacitor and COM denotes the common line.

As it is known in the art, an LCD panel also has quarter-wave plates and polarizers.

In a single-gap transmissive LCD, one of the major disadvantages is that the transmissivity of the transmission area (transmittance, the V-T curve) and the reflectivity in the reflection area (reflectance, the V-R curve) do not reach their peak values in the same voltage range. As shown in FIG. 5, the V-R curve is peaked at about 2.8V, while the "flat" section of the V-T curve is between 3.7V and 5V. The reflectance experiences an inversion while the transmittance is approaching its higher values.

In prior art, this reflectivity inversion problem has been corrected by using a double-gap design wherein the gap at the reflection area is about half of the gap at the transmission area. While the double-gap design is effective in principle, it is difficult to achieve in practice mainly due to the complexity in the fabrication process. Other attempts, such as manipulating the voltage levels in the transmission and the reflection areas and coating the reflective electrode by a dielectric layer, have been proposed. For example, the voltage level in the reflection area relative to that in the transmission area is reduced by using capacitors. As shown in FIG. 6, a separate capacitor C_c is connected in series to C_{LC2} . As such, the voltage level on the reflective electrode in reference to the common line voltage level V_{COM1} is given by:

$$V_{CLC2} = V_{cc} - V_{com1} \\ = \frac{C_c}{(C_{LC2} + C_c)} * (V_{data} - V_{com1})$$

where V_{data} is the voltage level on the data line.

By adjusting the ratio $C_c/(C_{LC2}+C_c)$, it is possible to shift the peak of the reflectance curve toward the higher voltage end so as to match the flatter region of the transmittance curve, as shown in FIG. 7a. As such, the inversion in the reflectance relative to the transmittance can be avoided.

However, while the transmittance starts to increase rapidly at about 2.2V, the reflectance remains low until about 2.8V. In this low brightness region, the discrepancy in the transmittance and reflectance also causes the discrepancy between the gamma curve associated with the transmittance and the gamma curve associated with the reflectance, as shown in FIG. 7b. FIG. 7b shows the transmittance and reflectance as a function of gamma level. Such discrepancy in the gamma curves degrades the view quality of a transmissive LCD panel.

It is thus advantageous and desirable to provide a method to reduce the discrepancy between the gamma curve associated with the transmittance and the gamma curve associated with the reflectance.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method and a pixel structure to improve the viewing quality of a transmissive-type liquid crystal display. The pixel structure of a pixel in the liquid crystal display comprises a plurality of sub-pixel segments, each of which comprises a transmission area and a reflection area. In the sub-pixel segment, a data line, a gate line, a common line connected to a common electrode, and a switching element operatively connected to the data line and the gate line are used to control the operational voltage on the

liquid crystal layer areas associated with the sub-segment. The transmission area has a transmissive electrode and the reflection area has a reflective electrode. The transmissive electrode is connected to the switching element to control the liquid crystal layer in the transmission area. The reflective electrode is connected to the switching element via a separate capacitor to control the liquid crystal layer in the reflection area. The separate capacitor is used to shift the reflectance in the reflection area toward a higher voltage end in order to avoid the reflectance inversion problem. In addition, an adjustment capacitor is connected between the reflective electrode and a different common line. The adjustment capacitor is used to reduce or eliminate the discrepancy between the gamma curve associated with the transmittance and the gamma curve associated with the reflectance.

The present invention will become apparent upon reading the description taken in conjunction of FIGS. 8 to 16.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic representation showing a typical LCD display.

FIG. 2 is a plan view showing the pixel structure of a conventional transfective color LCD display.

FIG. 3a is a cross sectional view showing the reflection and transmission of light beams in the pixel as shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 3b is a cross sectional view showing the reflection and transmission of light beams in another prior art transfective display.

FIG. 4 is an equivalent circuit of a sub-pixel segment in a transfective LCD panel.

FIG. 5 is a plot of transmittance (T) and reflectance (R) against applied voltage (V) in a prior art single-gap transfective LCD.

FIG. 6 is an equivalent circuit of a sub-segment segment in a transfective LCD wherein a separate capacitor is connected to the reflective electrode to reduce the voltage level thereon.

FIG. 7a is a plot of transmittance (T) and reflectance (R) against applied voltage (V) showing the shifting of the R-V curve as a result of the separate capacitor in the reflection area.

FIG. 7b is a plot of transmittance and reflectance as a function of gamma level.

FIG. 8 is an equivalent circuit of a sub-pixel segment, according to the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a timing chart showing the signals at two common lines in relationship to the gateline signal and the data line signal.

FIG. 10a is a plot of transmittance and reflectance against applied voltage in a sub-pixel segment, according to the present invention.

FIG. 10b is a plot of transmittance and reflectance as a function of gamma level, according to the present invention.

FIG. 11 is an equivalent circuit of the transfective LCD display showing the driving scheme of COM2, according to the present invention.

FIG. 12 is an equivalent circuit of the sub-pixel segment, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a timing chart showing the signal at COM2, according to a different embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 14 is a timing chart showing the signals at COM1 and COM2, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 15 is a timing chart showing the signals at COM1 and COM2, according to yet another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 16 is a cross sectional view showing the layer structure in the lower substrate in a transfective LCD sub-pixel segment, according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A sub-pixel segment, according to one embodiment of the present invention, is illustrated in the equivalent circuit of FIG. 8. As with a sub-pixel segment in a prior art transfective LCD display, the sub-pixel segment (m, n), according to the present invention, has a transmission area and a reflection area jointly controlled by the nth gate line and the mth data line via a switching element. The sub-pixel segment has a common electrode connected to a common line COM1. The optical behavior of the liquid crystal layer in the reflection area is controlled by the reflective electrode and the common electrode. A storage capacitor C₁ is used to retain the electrical charge in the sub-pixel segment after a signal pulse in the gate line has passed.

In FIG. 8, C_{LC1} is the capacitance mainly attributable to the liquid crystal layer between the transmissive electrode and the common electrode, and C_{LC2} is the capacitance mainly attributable to the liquid crystal layer between the reflective electrode and the common electrode. In addition, a separate capacitor C_C is connected in series to C_{LC2} in order to shift the reflectance in the reflection area toward a higher voltage end in order to avoid the reflectance inversion problem. Furthermore, an adjustment capacitor C₂ is connected between the reflective electrode and a different common line nth COM2. The adjustment capacitor is used to reduce or eliminate the discrepancy between the gamma curve associated with the transmittance and the gamma curve associated with the reflectance. With such an adjustment capacitor C₂, the voltage level on the reflective electrode in reference to the common line voltage V_{COM1} is given by:

$$V_{CLC2} = V_{cc} - V_{com1} \\ = \frac{C_c * (V_{data} - V_{com1}) + (C_c + C_2) * (nth_V_{com2} - V_{com1})}{(C_{LC2} + C_c + C_2)}$$

In FIG. 8, COM3 can be the same as COM1 or different from COM1.

The nth V_{COM2} signal on the common line COM2 is shown in FIG. 9. In FIG. 9, the dashed line denotes a reference voltage level V_{REF}. As shown, both the V_{COM1} signal on the common line COM1 and the V_{COM2} source signal are AC signals. While the V_{COM1} signal is substantially 180° out of phase with the data signals on Data line n, the V_{COM2} source signal is substantially in phase with the Data line n. It should be noted that the common line COM2 is a floating electrode and, therefore, the shape of nth V_{COM2} signal is dependent upon V_{COM1} and upon the driving mode. For example, when the driving mode is in accordance with a line inversion scheme, the nth V_{COM2} signal has a step-like shape as shown in FIG. 9. In a negative frame, the nth V_{COM2} signal is, in general, is negative but its amplitude fluctuation follows the shape of V_{COM1}. When nth gate line is turned on again and the frame is positive, the nth V_{COM2} is refreshed and changes polarity from negative to positive in a pixel. The shape of the nth V_{COM2} remains the same until the next frame.

As seen in the above equation, it is possible to adjust the values of C_C and C₂ to improve the viewing quality of a transfective LCD panel. For example, it is possible to select C_C and C₂ such that

$$C_C/(C_C+C_{LC2}+C_2)=0.46,$$

and

$$C_2/(C_C+C_{LC2}+C_2)=0.32.$$

With $\Delta A_{COM}=3V$ (ΔA_{COM} being the absolute value of the amplitude difference between n th V_{COM2} and V_{COM1}), the matching between the transmittance and reflectance is shown in FIG. 10a. As can be seen in FIG. 10a, not only the peak of the reflectance curve reasonably matches the flatter segment of the transmittance curve at about 4.0V, the slope of the transmittance curve and the slope of the reflectance curve from 2V to 4V region are reasonably close to each other. Based on a 64-level transmittance gamma curve with an index of 2.2, or $T=(n/64)^{2.2}$, a reflectance gamma curve is obtained as shown in FIG. 10b. As can be seen, the discrepancy between the transmittance gamma curve and the reflectance gamma curve is greatly reduced.

The n th V_{COM2} signal as shown in FIG. 9 is used for a swing type display in order to achieve a pixel inversion effect. Such a swing type n th V_{COM2} can be realized by using the driving scheme as shown in FIG. 11. As shown in FIG. 11, the adjustment capacitor C_2 is electrically connected to a common voltage source COM2 through another switching element for receiving n th V_{COM2} . In FIG. 11, V_{COM1} , V_{COM3} and V_{COM4} can be the same or different. Conveniently, only one switching element outside the display area is used to provide the n th V_{COM2} signal for an entire line n . Furthermore, a common capacitor C_{COM} electrically connected to the switching element for stabilizing the voltage signal at the second common electrode n th COM2. In FIGS. 8 and 11, only a common storage capacitor C_1 is used for both the transmission area and the reflection area in a sub-pixel segment. However, it is possible to have two storage capacitors C_{ST1} and C_{ST2} in a sub-pixel segment, separately storing the electric charge in the transmission area and the reflection area, as shown in FIG. 12. Moreover, it is possible to use a constant V_{COM2} signal, as shown in FIG. 13, rather than the swing type signal of FIG. 9.

In a different embodiment of the present invention, while the swing type n th V_{COM2} is used, V_{COM1} is a constant voltage, as shown in FIG. 14. In yet another embodiment of the present invention, both V_{COM1} and n th V_{COM2} are 180° out of phase with Data line n . Thus, V_{COM1} is in phase with n th V_{COM2} , as shown in FIG. 15.

The use of adjustment capacitors to achieve harmonization between the transmittance gamma and the reflectance gamma can be implemented in an Active Matrix transmissive liquid crystal display (AM TRLCD) panel without significantly increasing the complexity in the fabrication process. As shown in FIG. 16, a polysilicon layer (Poly Si) is formed on the lower substrate 104 of a pixel 100. The pixel 100 also has a first common electrode 132 (COM1) formed on the upper substrate 102. Both the upper and lower substrates are usually made of glass plates. Part of the polysilicon layer is used as a second common electrode 134 (COM2) and part of the polysilicon layer is used in a switching unit 110. A first metal layer (Metal_1), which is electrically isolated from the polysilicon layer by a first dielectric layer (Dielectric_1), is used to form the gate terminal 114 of the switching unit 110; one end of a storage capacitor 146 (C1); one end of the coupling capacitor 142 and one end of the adjustment capacitor 144 (C2). A second metal layer (Metal_2), which is electrically isolated from the first metal layer by a second dielectric layer (Dielectric_2), is used to form the drain terminal 112 and the source terminal 116 of the switching unit 110; an electrical connector to the pixel electrode 122; the other end of the storage

capacitor 146; and the other end of the coupling capacitor 142. As shown in FIG. 16, the pixel electrode 122 and part of the first common electrode 132 forms a first liquid crystal capacitor (C_{LC1} , see FIG. 8), and a floating electrode 124 and another part of the first common electrode 132 forms a second liquid crystal capacitor (C_{LC2} , see FIG. 8). Thus, the adjustment capacitor 144 can be realized by adding a common line COM2 on the lower substrate. By using a floating metal layer Metal_1, both the coupling capacitor C_C and the adjustment capacitor C_2 can be achieved.

Thus, although the invention has been described with respect to one or more embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing and various other changes, omissions and deviations in the form and detail thereof may be made without departing from the scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

adjusting in a liquid crystal display a second voltage relative to a first voltage, the liquid crystal display comprising a liquid crystal layer and a common electrode, the liquid crystal layer having a first side and an opposing second side, the common electrode disposed on the first side of the liquid crystal layer, the common electrode arranged to receive a common voltage, wherein the liquid crystal display comprises a plurality of pixels and at least some of the pixels comprise a first area and a second area, the first area comprising a first electrode disposed on the second side of the liquid crystal layer, the second area comprising a second electrode disposed on the second side of the liquid crystal layer adjacent to the first electrode, wherein the first electrode is arranged to receive the first voltage to achieve a first optical transmissivity through the liquid crystal layer in the first area in response to the first voltage, and the second electrode is arranged to receive the second voltage to achieve a second optical transmissivity through the second area in response to the second voltage, wherein the first optical transmissivity comprises a lower transmissivity curve section and a higher transmissivity curve section and the second optical transmissivity comprises a lower transmissivity curve section and a higher transmissivity curve section, and wherein the second voltage is adjusted for substantially matching the higher transmissivity curve section of the second optical transmissivity to the higher transmissivity curve section of the first optical transmissivity, leaving a discrepancy between the lower transmissivity curve section of the second optical transmissivity and the lower transmissivity curve section of the first optical transmissivity; and

providing a third voltage different from the common voltage to the second electrode via a charge storage device so as to reduce the discrepancy between the lower transmissivity curve section of the second optical transmissivity and the lower transmissivity curve section of the first optical transmissivity.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the second voltage is proportional to the first voltage and the third voltage is independent of the first voltage.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the lower transmissivity curve section of the first optical transmissivity precedes the higher transmissivity curve section of the first optical transmissivity, and the lower transmissivity curve section of the second optical transmissivity precedes the higher transmissivity curve section of the second optical transmissivity.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the discrepancy is reduced such that the lower transmissivity curve section of the first optical transmissivity is substantially equal to the lower transmissivity curve section of the second optical transmissivity.

5

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the charge storage device comprises a charge storage capacitor having a first capacitor end connected to the second electrode and an opposing second capacitor end arranged to receive the third voltage.

10

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the liquid crystal display further comprises an adjustment capacitor connected between the first electrode and the second electrode for adjusting the second voltage.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first electrode comprises a transmissive electrode and the second electrode comprises a reflective electrode.

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8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the first optical transmissivity is equal to the transmittance of the liquid crystal layer through the transmissive electrode in the first area and the second optical transmissivity is equal to the reflectance of the liquid crystal layer reflected from the reflective electrode in the second area.

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9. The method according to claim 7, wherein the first voltage comprises a data signal.

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10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the second area comprises a charge storage capacitor having a first terminal electrically connected to a data line providing the data signal and a second terminal operatively connected to the reflective electrode, and the second voltage is a voltage signal at the second terminal of the charge storage capacitor.

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专利名称(译)	具有伽马协调的半透半反液晶显示器		
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摘要(译)

在具有透射区域和反射区域的半透半反液晶显示器中，透射电极连接到开关元件以控制透射区域中的液晶层，并且反射电极通过单独的电容器连接到开关元件。控制反射区域中的液晶层。单独的电容器用于将反射区域中的反射率朝向较高电压端移动，以避免反射率反转问题。另外，调整电容器连接在反射电极和不同的公共线之间。调节电容器用于减少或消除与透射率相关的伽马曲线与与反射率相关的伽马曲线之间的差异。

