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(54) LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE

(75) Inventors: **Koichi Koga**, Tokyo (JP); **Tohru Kume**, Tokyo (JP)

Correspondence Address:
Norman P. Soloway
HAYES SOLOWAY P.C.
130 W Cushing Street
Tucson, AZ 85701 (US)

(73) Assignee: **NEC Corporation**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **345/89**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A liquid crystal display device which divides a pixel into a plurality of sub-pixels. In the liquid crystal display device, a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels have a non-linear relation to each other, and a desired brightness for the pixel is selected by selecting a gradation in each of the sub-pixels.

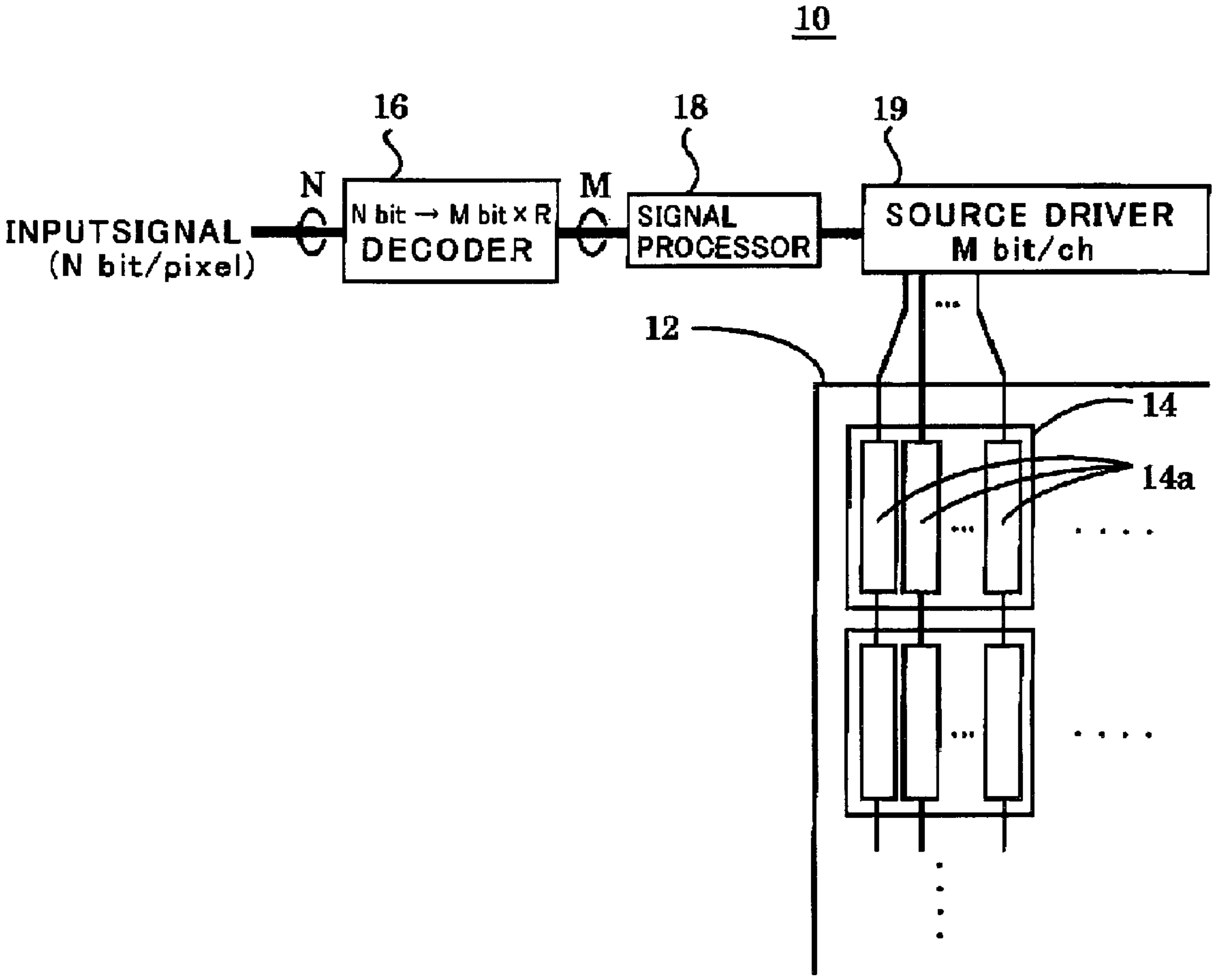


FIG.1
PRIOR ART

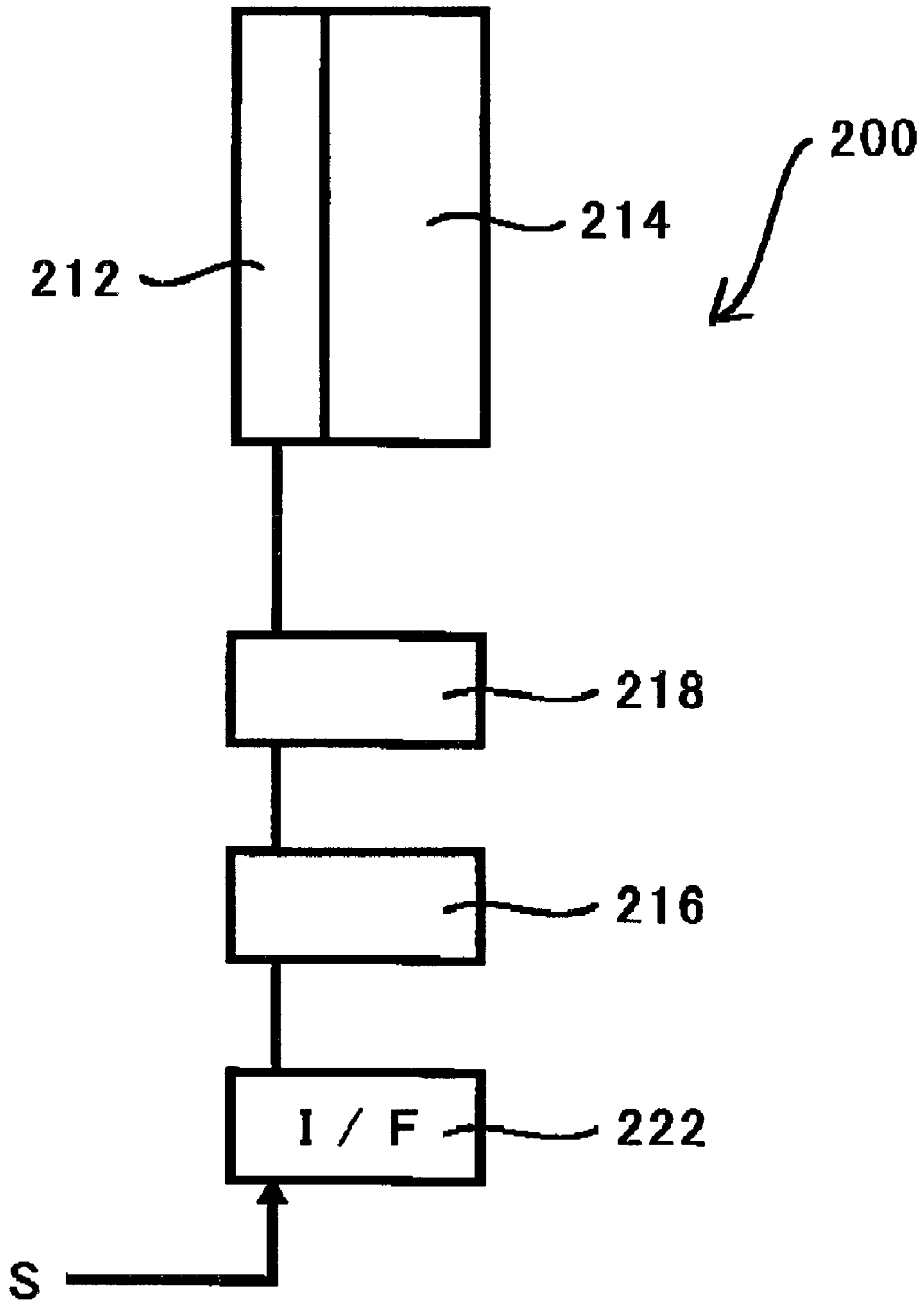


FIG.2A
PRIOR ART

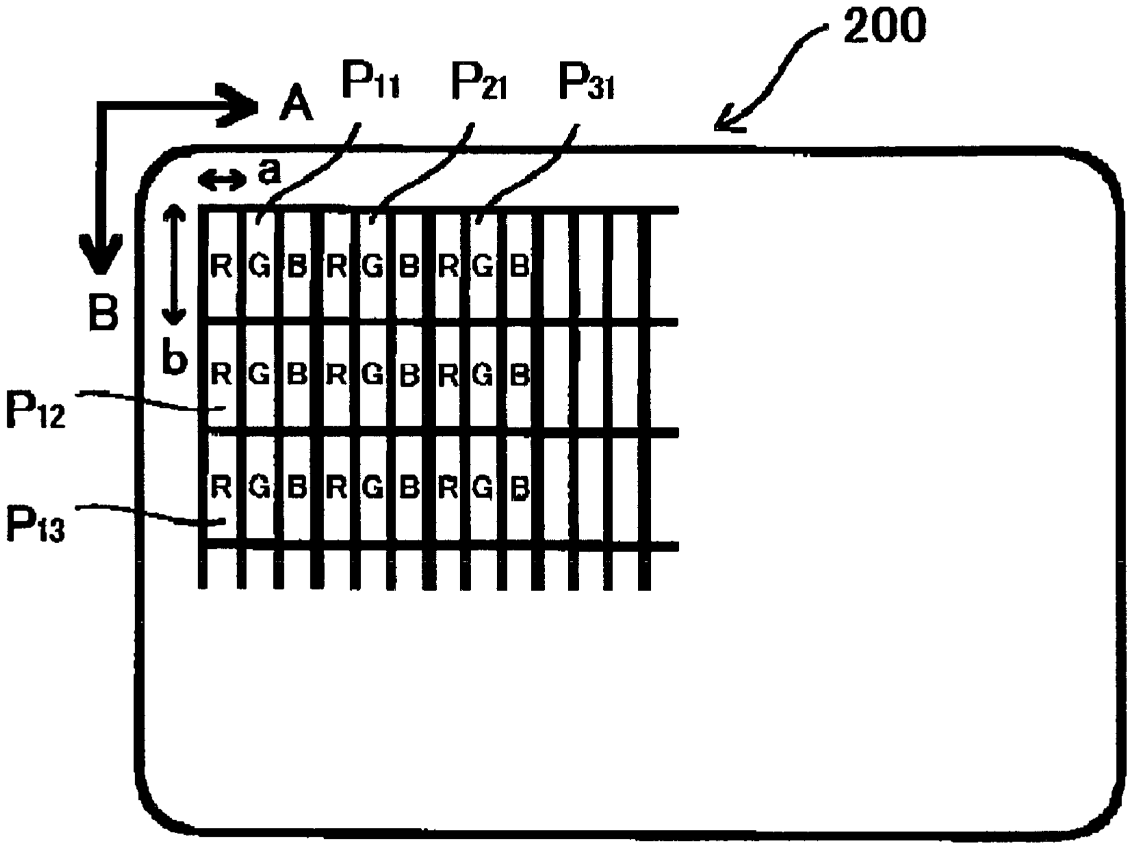


FIG.2B
PRIOR ART

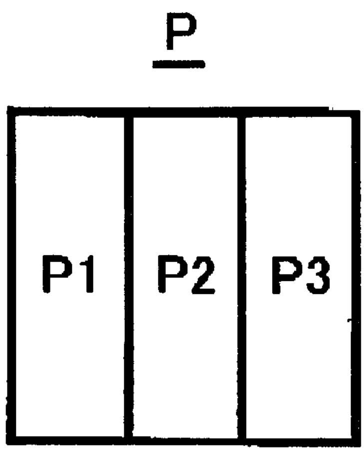


FIG.3
PRIOR ART

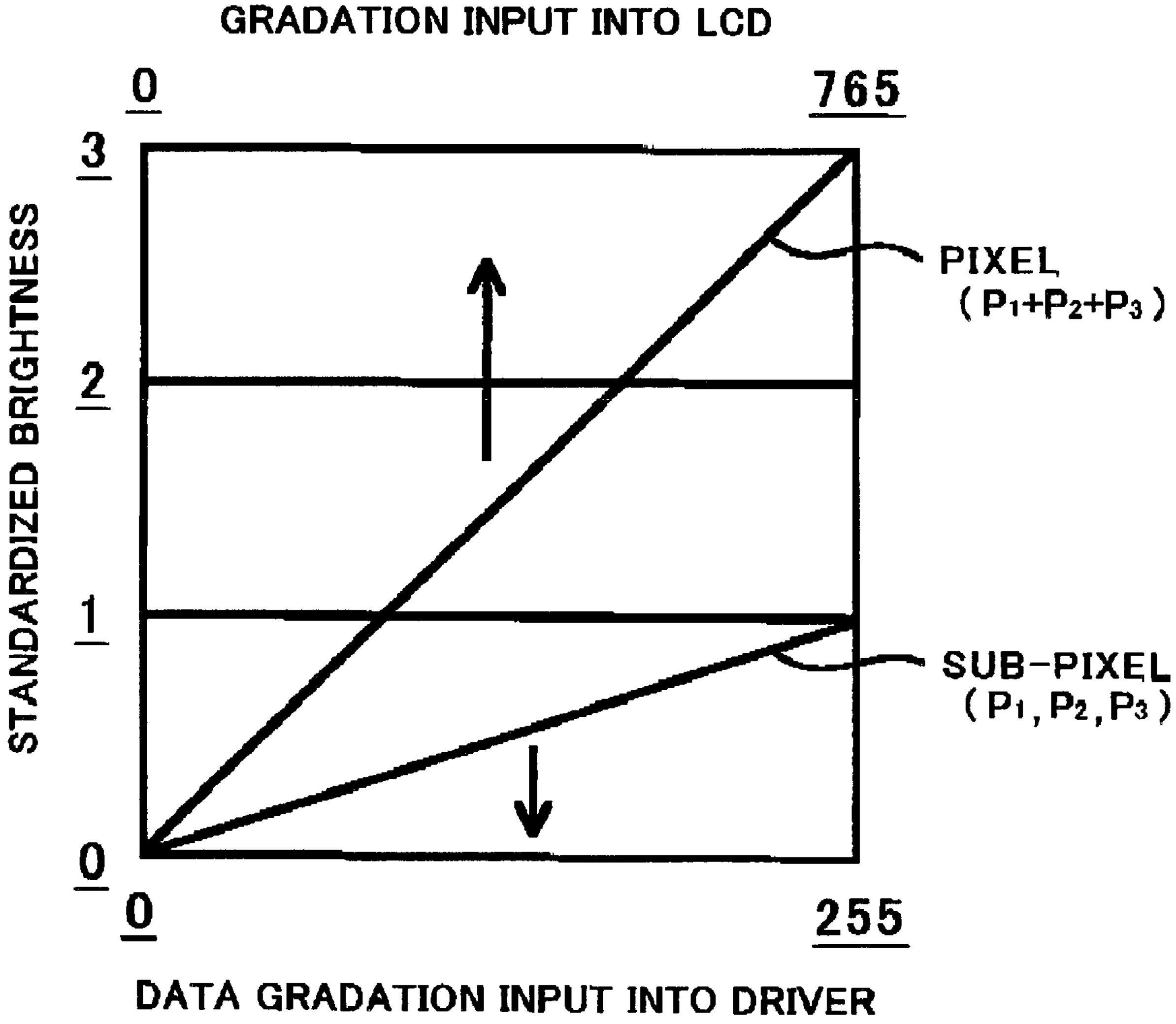


FIG.4

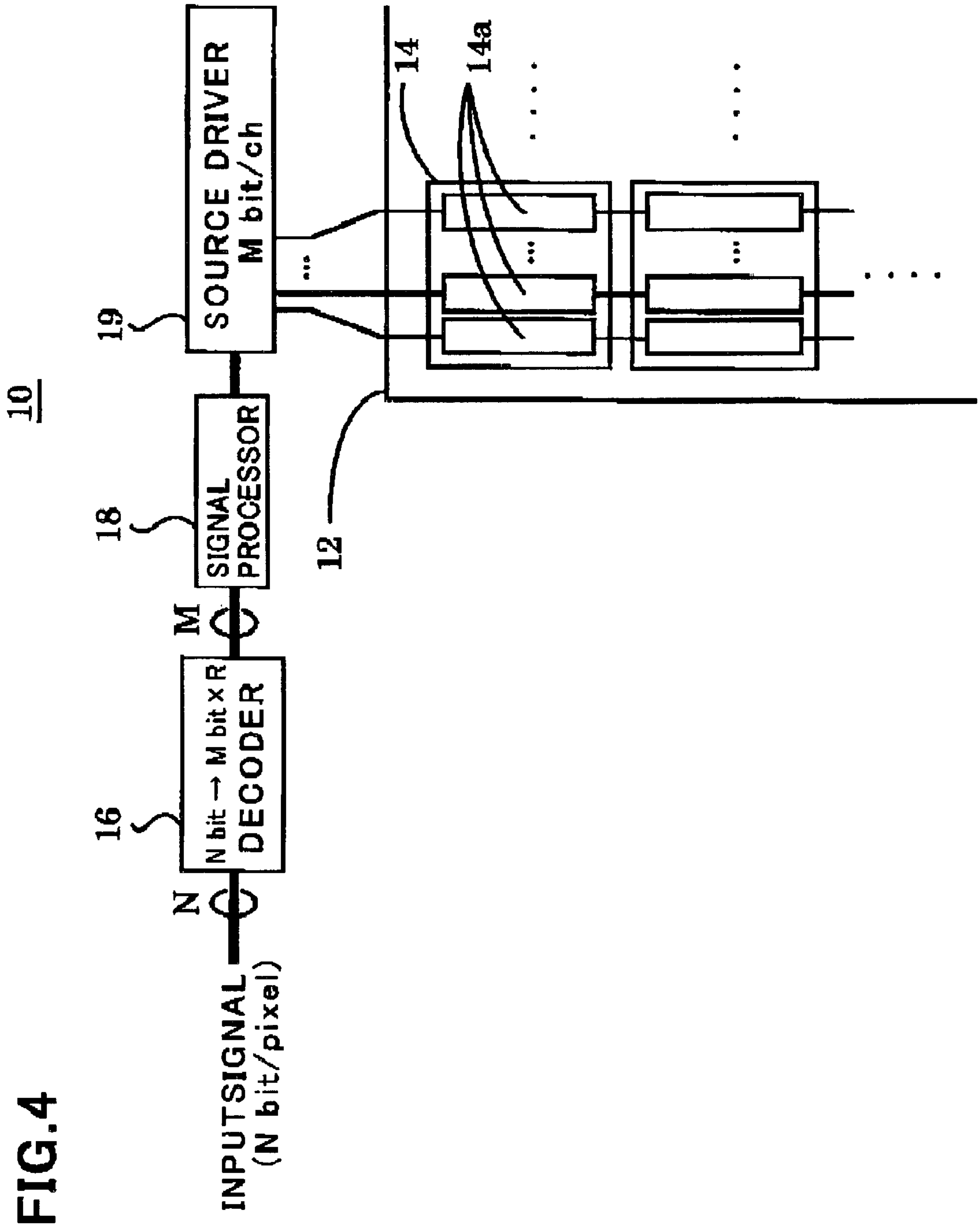

10
INPUTSIGNAL
(N bit/pixel)
N
16
N bit → M bit × R
DECODER
M
18
SIGNAL
PROCESSOR
19
SOURCE DRIVER
M bit/ch
12
14
14a

FIG.5

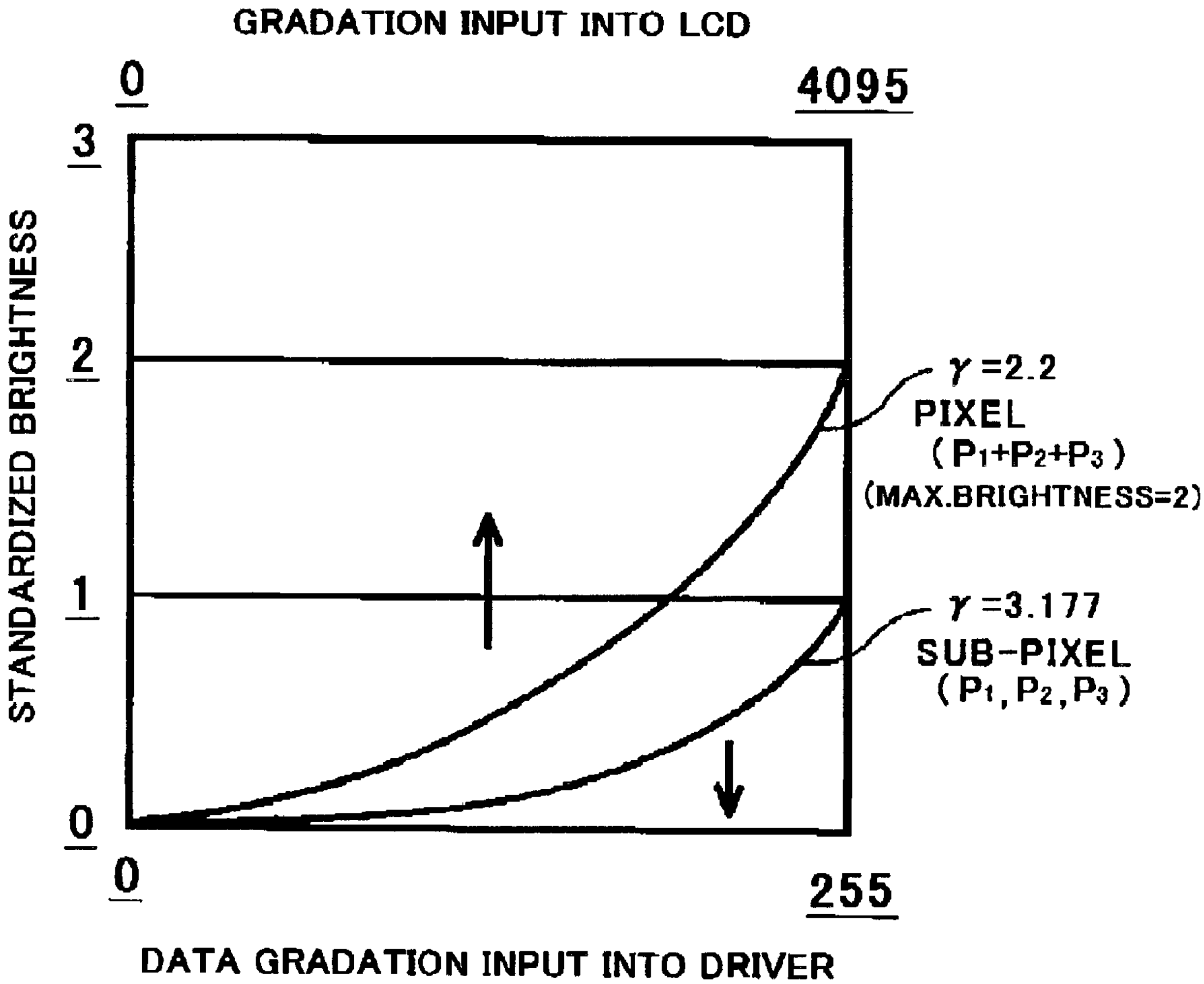

GRADATION INPUT INTO LCD
0
4095
3
2
1
0
STANDARDIZED BRIGHTNESS
γ=2.2
PIXEL
(P1+P2+P3)
(MAX.BRIGHTNESS=2)
γ=3.177
SUB-PIXEL
(P1, P2, P3)
0
255
DATA GRADATION INPUT INTO DRIVER

FIG.6

0-100 GRADATION

	P1	P2	P3
0	0	0	0
1	0	0	1
2	1	1	1
3	2	1	1
4	2	2	1
5	3	1	1
6	3	2	2
7	3	3	2
8	4	3	3
9	4	3	3
10	4	3	3
11	5	3	3
12	5	3	3
13	5	4	3
14	6	3	4
15	6	4	5
16	6	4	4
17	7	2	5
18	7	4	2
19	7	4	4
20	7	3	4
21	8	3	3
22	8	4	4
23	8	5	4
24	8	2	1
25	9	4	3
26	9	5	3
27	9	5	2
28	10	2	2
29	10	4	4
30	10	3	4
31	10	4	4
32	11	3	1
33	11	4	4
34	11	5	2
35	11	6	5
36	11	7	5
37	12	4	3
38	12	5	5
39	12	5	6
40	12	7	5
41	13	3	1
42	13	5	4
43	13	6	6
44	13	7	5
45	13	8	8
46	14	3	1
47	14	6	4
48	14	7	5
49	14	6	4
50	15	3	1
51	15	6	4
52	15	7	2
53	15	6	3
54	15	5	6
55	16	3	2
56	16	6	3
57	16	7	4
58	16	6	0
59	16	6	4
60	17	3	2
61	17	4	3
62	17	7	5
63	17	6	5
64	17	6	5
65	18	1	0
66	18	6	3
67	18	7	6
68	18	8	6
69	18	8	5
70	18	10	5
71	19	8	4
72	19	7	6
73	19	8	6
74	19	8	6
75	19	10	6
76	20	4	3
77	20	7	3
78	20	8	0
79	20	8	6
80	20	10	6
81	20	11	6
82	21	6	3
83	21	8	3
84	21	9	5
85	21	10	6
86	21	11	4
87	22	3	3
88	22	7	4
89	22	8	5
90	22	10	6
91	22	10	7
92	22	11	7
93	23	6	3
94	23	7	6
95	23	8	5
96	23	10	6
97	23	11	6
98	23	12	6
99	24	6	4
100	24	8	4

3995-4095 GRADATION

	P1	P2	P3
3995	255	246	38
3996	255	246	41
3997	255	246	45
3998	255	246	48
3999	255	246	51
4000	255	246	54
4001	255	246	56
4002	255	246	59
4003	255	246	61
4004	255	246	62
4005	255	247	34
4006	255	247	38
4007	255	247	41
4008	255	247	45
4009	255	247	48
4010	255	247	51
4011	255	247	54
4012	255	247	56
4013	255	247	58
4014	255	247	60
4015	255	247	62
4016	255	248	35
4017	255	248	38
4018	255	248	40
4019	255	248	45
4020	255	248	48
4021	255	248	51
4022	255	248	54
4023	255	248	56
4024	255	248	58
4025	255	248	60
4026	255	248	62
4027	255	249	34
4028	255	249	35
4029	255	249	38
4030	255	249	44
4031	255	249	47
4032	255	249	50
4033	255	249	53
4034	255	249	55
4035	255	249	58
4036	255	249	60
4037	255	249	62
4038	255	250	18
4039	255	250	31
4040	255	250	38
4041	255	250	43
4042	255	250	46
4043	255	250	50
4044	255	250	52
4045	255	250	55
4046	255	250	57
4047	255	250	59
4048	255	250	61
4049	255	250	63
4050	255	251	28
4051	255	251	36
4052	255	251	41
4053	255	251	45
4054	255	251	49
4055	255	251	52
4056	255	251	54
4057	255	251	57
4058	255	251	59
4059	255	251	61
4060	255	251	63
4061	255	252	23
4062	255	252	34
4063	255	252	40
4064	255	252	44
4065	255	252	48
4066	255	252	51
4067	255	252	53
4068	255	252	56
4069	255	252	58
4070	255	252	60
4071	255	252	62
4072	255	253	13
4073	255	253	30
4074	255	253	37
4075	255	253	42
4076	255	253	46
4077	255	253	49
4078	255	253	52
4079	255	253	55
4080	255	253	57
4081	255	253	59
4082	255	253	61
4083	255	253	63
4084	255	254	18
4085	255	254	34
4086	255	254	40
4087	255	254	44
4088	255	254	48
4089	255	254	51
4090	255	254	54
4091	255	254	56
4092	255	254	58
4093	255	254	60
4094	255	254	62
4095	255	255	0

FIG.7

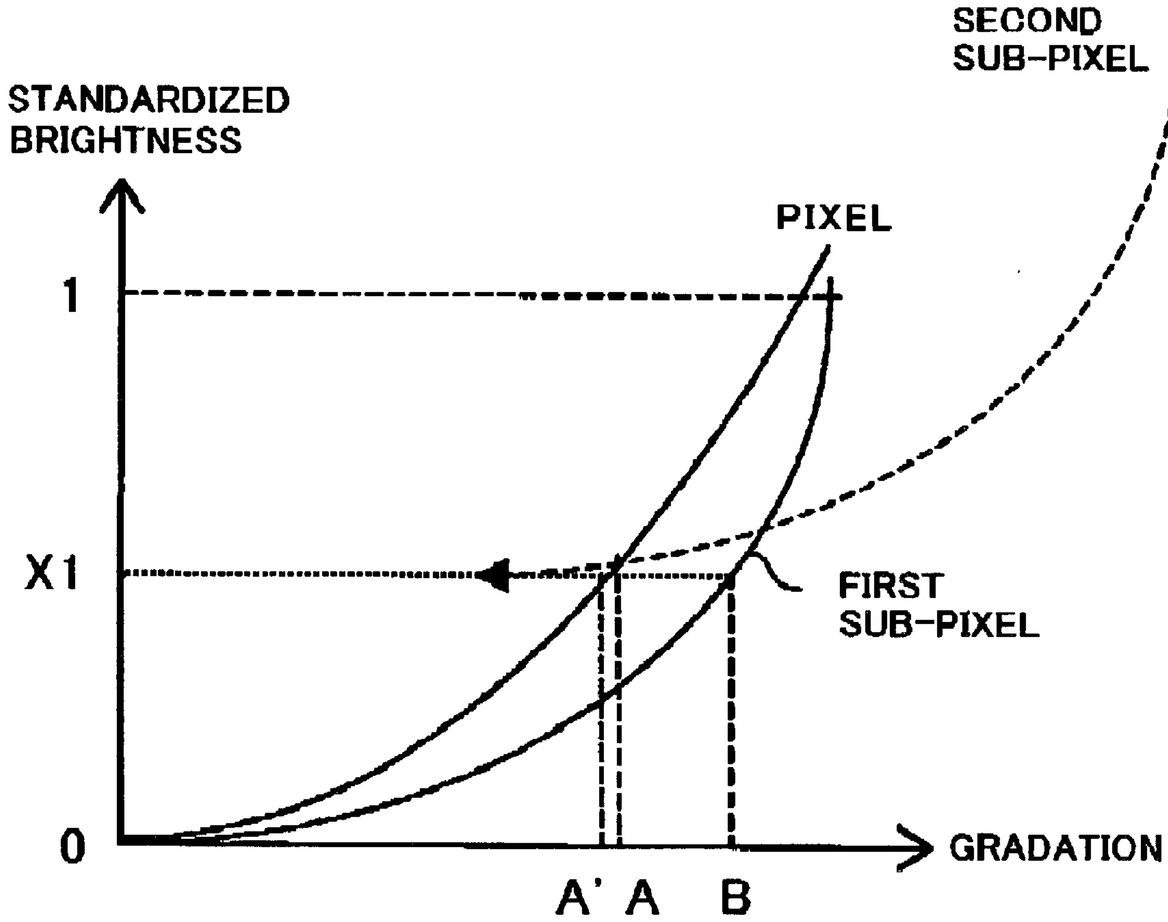

SECOND
SUB-PIXEL
STANDARDIZED
BRIGHTNESS
PIXEL
1
X1
FIRST
SUB-PIXEL
0
GRADATION
A'
A
B

FIG8

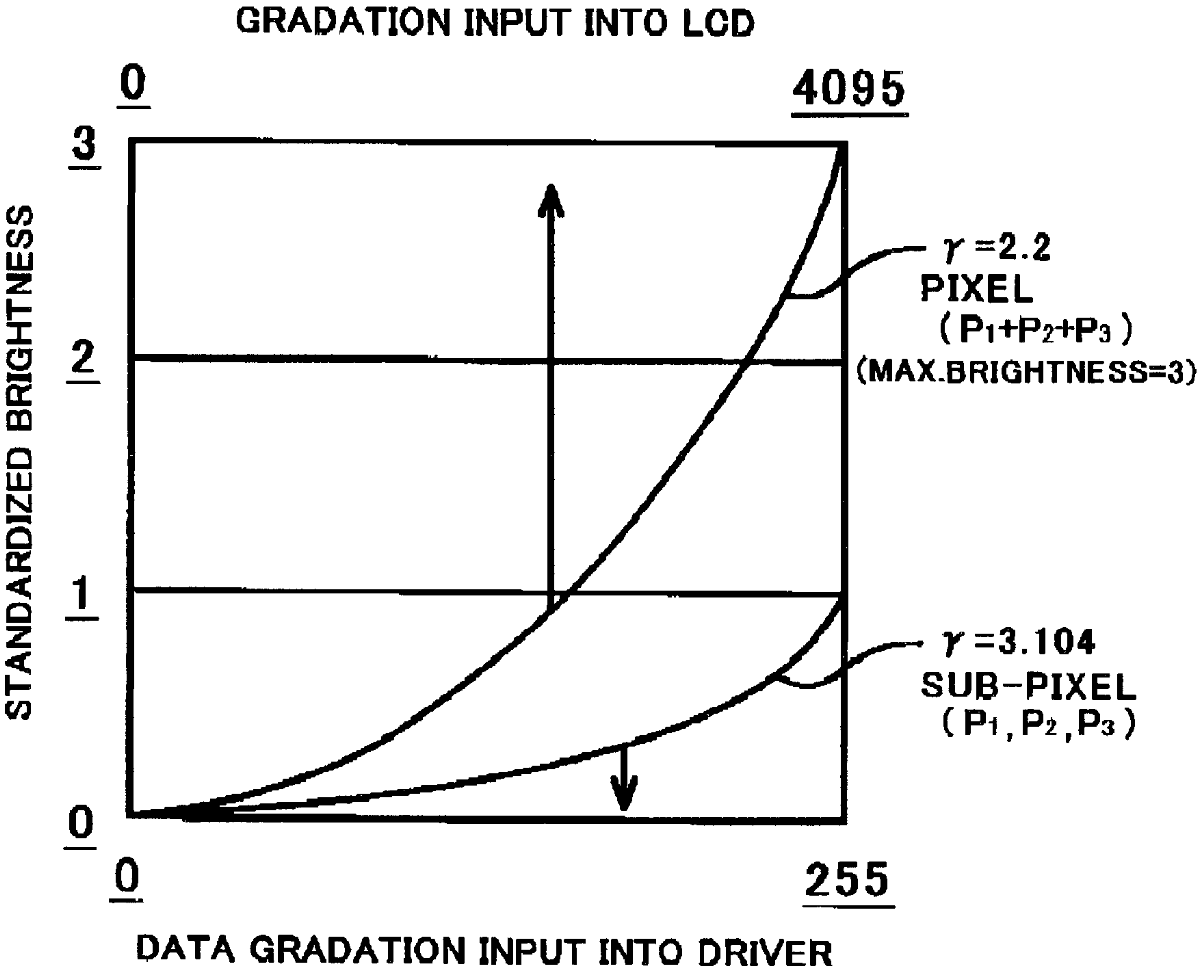

GRADATION INPUT INTO LCD
0
4095
3
2
1
0
STANDARDIZED BRIGHTNESS
γ =2.2
PIXEL
(P1+P2+P3)
(MAX.BRIGHTNESS=3)
γ =3.104
SUB-PIXEL
(P1 , P2 , P3)
0
255
DATA GRADATION INPUT INTO DRIVER

FIG.9

0-100 GRADATION

	P1	P2	P3
0	0	0	0
1	0	0	1
2	1	1	1
3	2	1	1
4	3	2	1
5	3	1	1
6	3	2	2
7	3	3	2
8	4	2	2
9	4	3	2
10	5	1	2
11	5	3	2
12	5	4	2
13	6	2	2
14	6	3	3
15	6	4	3
16	7	2	2
17	7	4	3
18	7	6	1
19	8	1	2
20	8	4	2
21	8	6	3
22	8	5	4
23	9	3	3
24	9	5	2
25	9	6	4
26	10	2	1
27	10	4	3
28	10	9	4
29	10	6	4
30	11	3	2
31	11	6	3
32	11	6	4
33	11	7	2
34	12	4	0
35	12	5	4
36	12	9	8
37	12	7	8
38	13	4	2
39	13	8	4
40	13	7	2
41	13	7	6
42	14	5	3
43	14	8	2
44	14	7	3
45	15	8	3
46	15	5	2
47	15	6	4
48	16	7	3
49	16	8	4
50	16	9	2
51	16	8	3
52	16	7	2
53	16	8	3
54	16	9	3
55	17	3	3
56	17	6	4
57	17	7	5
58	17	8	9
59	17	9	6
60	18	6	4
61	18	7	4
62	18	8	8
63	18	9	5
64	18	10	8
65	18	6	4
66	19	8	2
67	19	6	4
68	19	10	4
69	20	3	3
70	20	7	0
71	20	8	6
72	20	6	8
73	20	10	8
74	21	4	3
75	21	7	4
76	21	9	4
77	21	10	2
78	21	10	7
79	22	4	3
80	22	7	4
81	22	8	3
82	22	10	8
83	22	11	8
84	23	4	3
85	23	7	8
86	23	8	4
87	23	10	8
88	23	11	8
89	24	7	8
90	24	7	4
91	24	9	4
92	24	10	8
93	24	11	8
94	24	12	8
95	25	9	8
96	25	9	4
97	25	10	8
98	25	11	8
99	25	12	8
100	26	8	4

3995-4095 GRADATION

	P1	P2	P3
3995	255	255	241
3996	255	255	241
3997	255	255	241
3998	255	255	242
3999	255	255	242
4000	255	255	242
4001	255	255	242
4002	255	255	242
4003	255	255	242
4004	255	255	242
4005	255	255	243
4006	255	255	243
4007	255	255	243
4008	255	255	243
4009	255	255	243
4010	255	255	243
4011	255	255	243
4012	255	255	244
4013	255	255	244
4014	255	255	244
4015	255	255	244
4016	255	255	244
4017	255	255	244
4018	255	255	244
4019	255	255	245
4020	255	255	245
4021	255	255	245
4022	255	255	245
4023	255	255	245
4024	255	255	245
4025	255	255	246
4026	255	255	246
4027	255	255	246
4028	255	255	246
4029	255	255	246
4030	255	255	246
4031	255	255	246
4032	255	255	246
4033	255	255	247
4034	255	255	247
4035	255	255	247
4036	255	255	247
4037	255	255	247
4038	255	255	247
4039	255	255	247
4040	255	255	248
4041	255	255	248
4042	255	255	248
4043	255	255	248
4044	255	255	248
4045	255	255	248
4046	255	255	248
4047	255	255	248
4048	255	255	248
4049	255	255	248
4050	255	255	248
4051	255	255	249
4052	255	255	249
4053	255	255	249
4054	255	255	250
4055	255	255	250
4056	255	255	250
4057	255	255	250
4058	255	255	250
4059	255	255	250
4060	255	255	250
4061	255	255	250
4062	255	255	251
4063	255	255	251
4064	255	255	251
4065	255	255	251
4066	255	255	251
4067	255	255	251
4068	255	255	251
4069	255	255	252
4070	255	255	252
4071	255	255	252
4072	255	255	252
4073	255	255	252
4074	255	255	252
4075	255	255	252
4076	255	255	252
4077	255	255	253
4078	255	255	253
4079	255	255	253
4080	255	255	253
4081	255	255	253
4082	255	255	253
4083	255	255	253
4084	255	255	254
4085	255	255	254
4086	255	255	254
4087	255	255	254
4088	255	255	254
4089	255	255	254
4090	255	255	254
4091	255	255	254
4092	255	255	255
4093	255	255	255
4094	255	255	255
4095	255	255	255

FIG.10

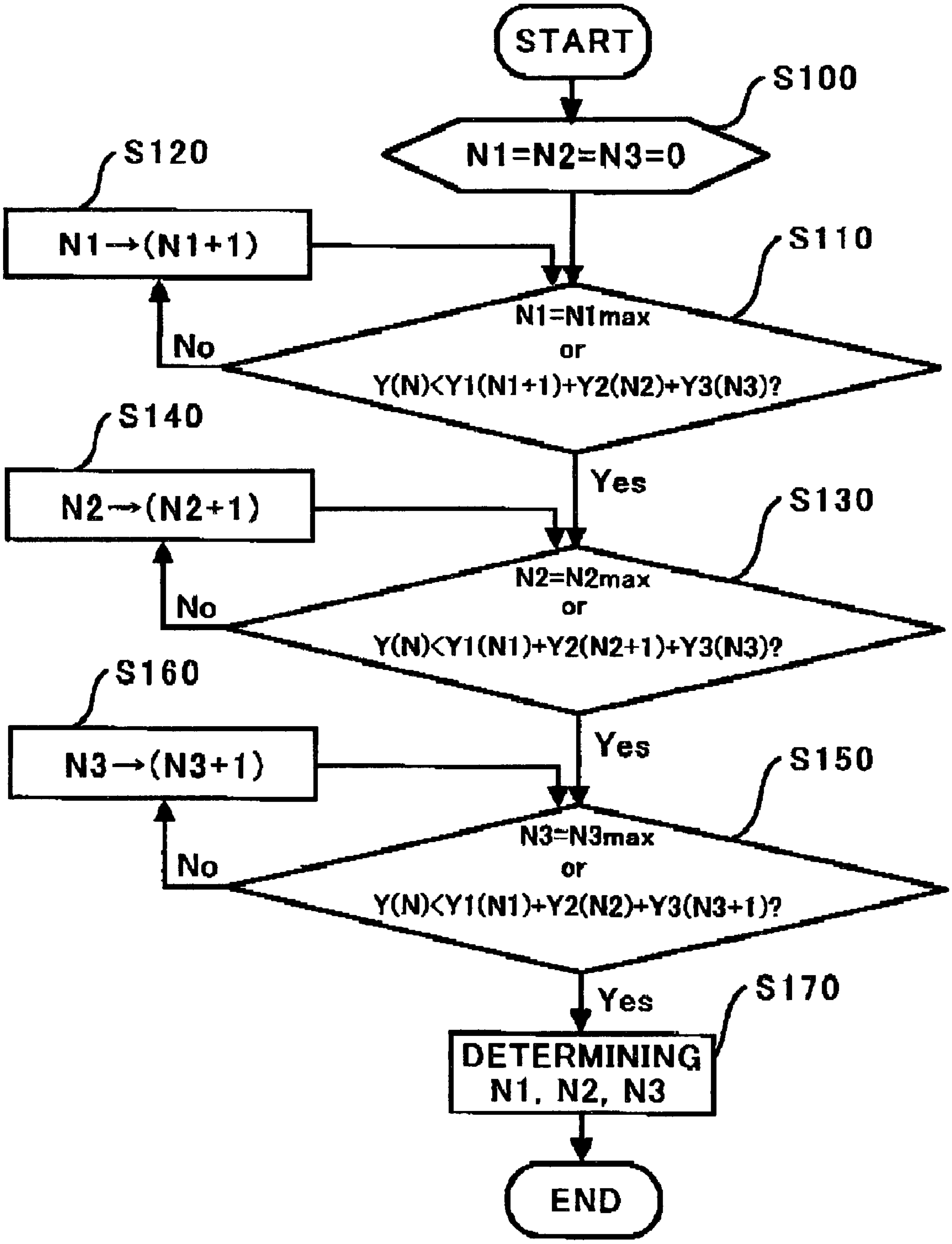

START
S100
N1=N2=N3=0
S120
N1→(N1+1)
S110
N1=N1max
or
Y(N)<Y1(N1+1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3)?
No
Yes
S140
N2→(N2+1)
S130
N2=N2max
or
Y(N)<Y1(N1)+Y2(N2+1)+Y3(N3)?
No
Yes
S160
N3→(N3+1)
S150
N3=N3max
or
Y(N)<Y1(N1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3+1)?
No
Yes
S170
DETERMINING
N1, N2, N3
END

FIG.11

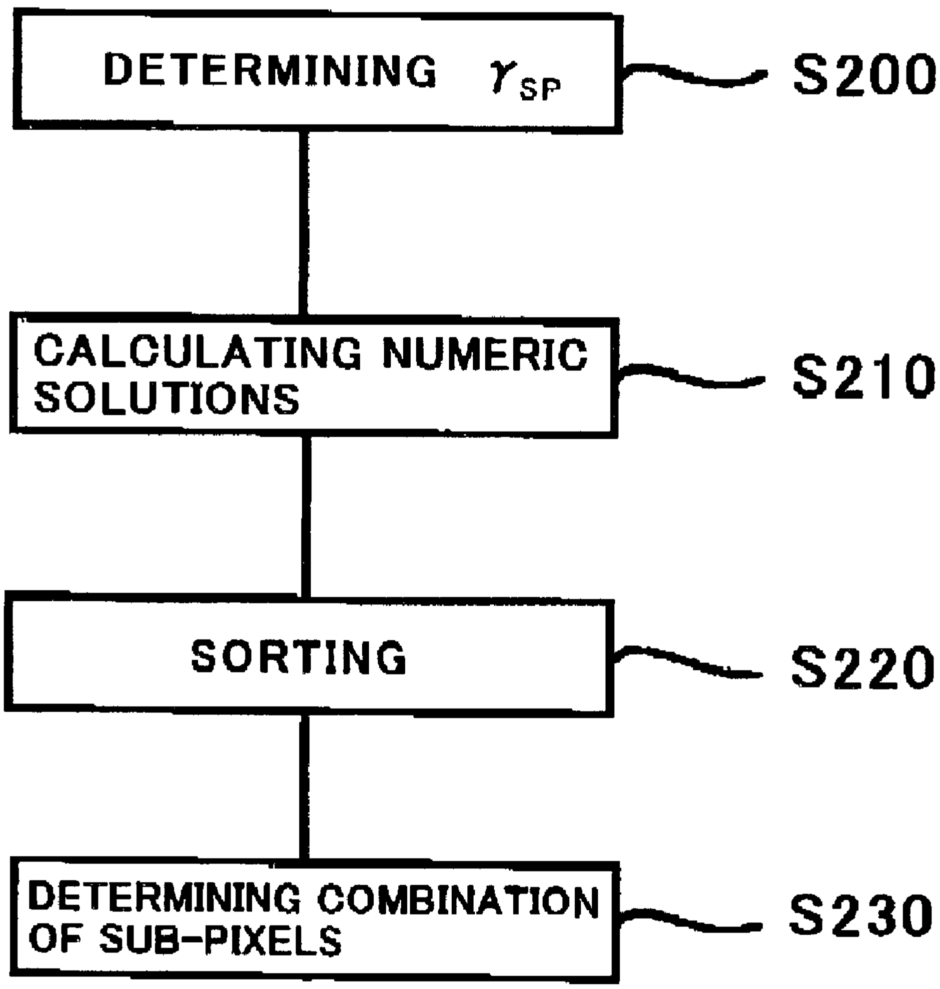

DETERMINING γ_{SP}
S200
CALCULATING NUMERIC SOLUTIONS
S210
SORTING
S220
DETERMINING COMBINATION OF SUB-PIXELS
S230

FIG.12A

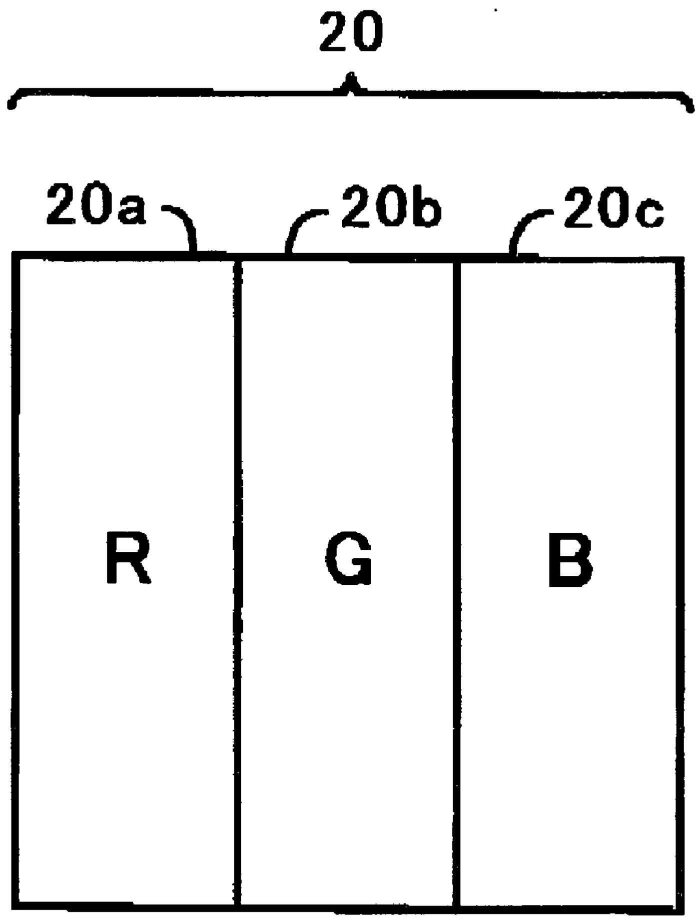


FIG.12B

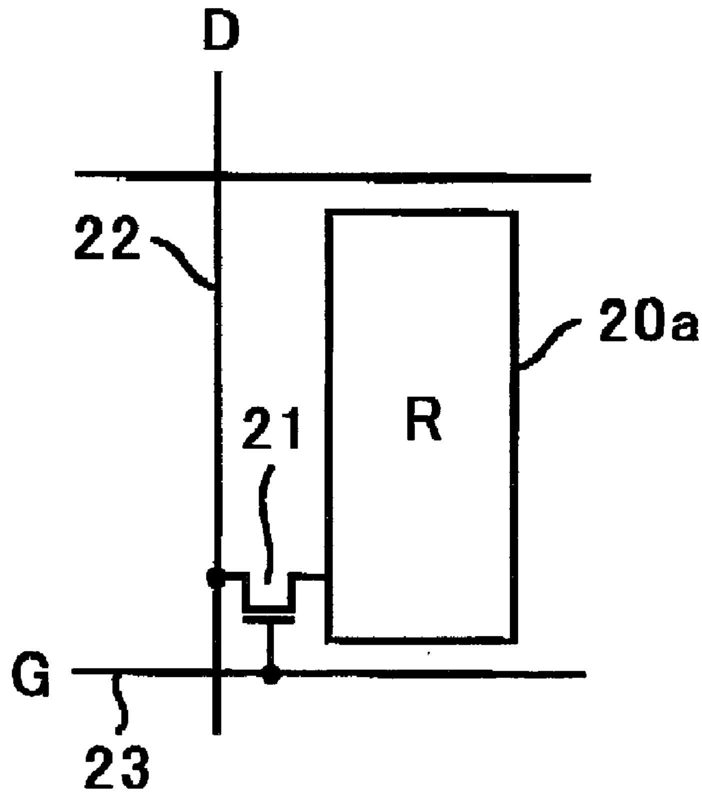


FIG.13A

RP_1	GP_1	BP_1
RP_2	GP_2	BP_2
RP_3	GP_3	BP_3

FIG.13B

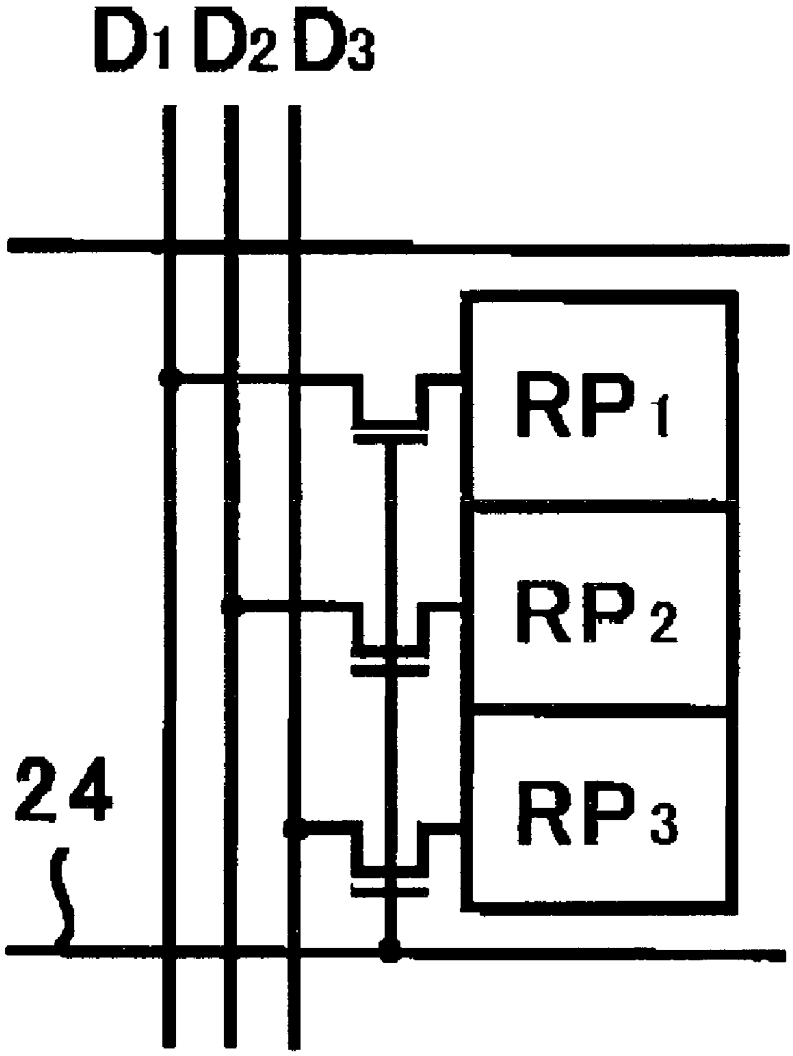
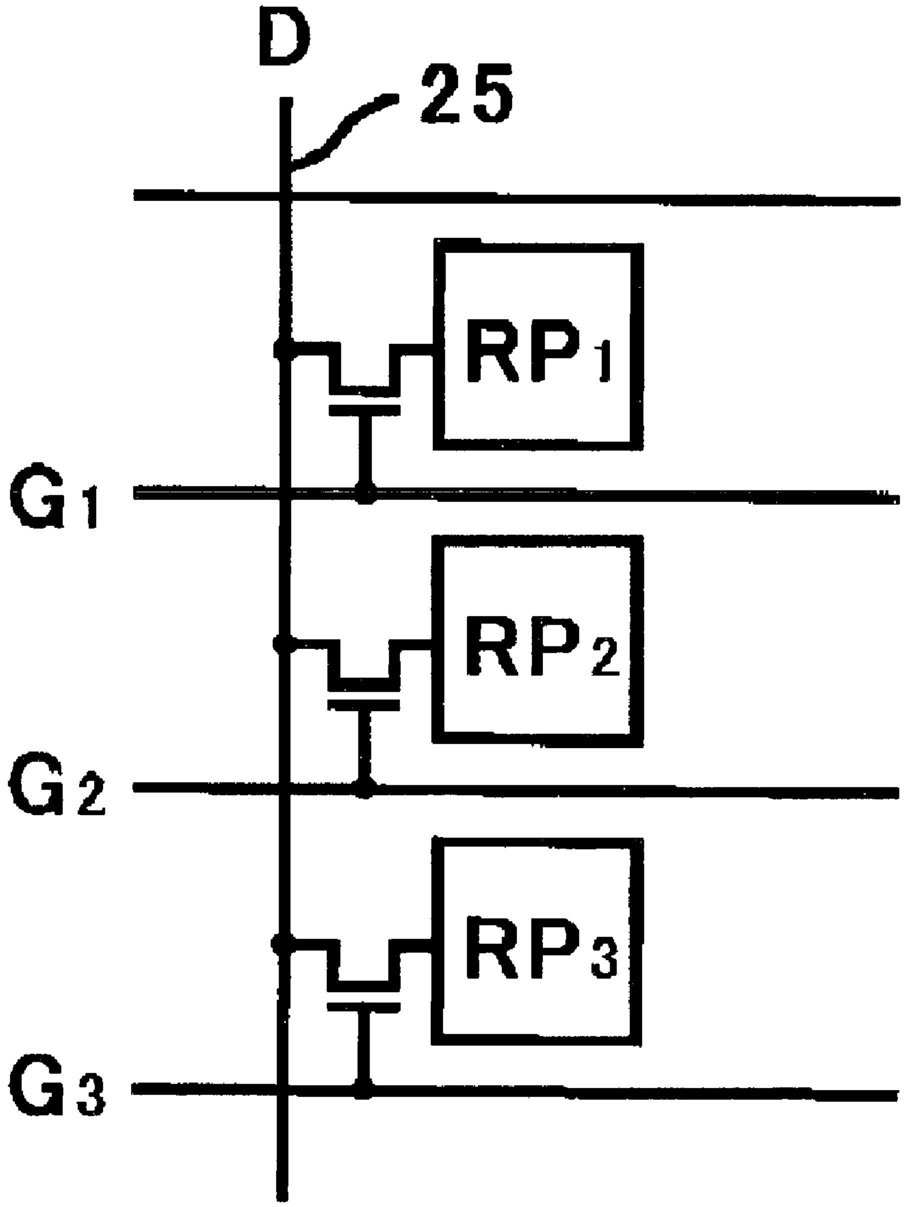


FIG.13C



LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention relates to a liquid crystal display device, and more particularly to a liquid crystal display device which divides a pixel into a plurality of sub-pixels for displaying images in multi-gradation.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] As a method of displaying images in multi-gradation in a liquid crystal display device, there is known a method of dividing a pixel into a plurality of sub-pixels.

[0005] An example of such a method is suggested in Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication No. 2001-34232 (A).

[0006] **FIG. 1** is a block diagram of a liquid crystal display device **200** suggested in the Publication.

[0007] The liquid crystal display device **200** is comprised of a color liquid crystal panel **212**, a backlight unit **214**, a data processor **216**, a driver **218** for driving the color liquid crystal panel **212**, and an interface (IF) **222**.

[0008] **FIG. 2A** is a partially enlarged view of a display screen of the color liquid crystal panel **212**.

[0009] As illustrated in **FIG. 2A, R**, G and B pixels are horizontally arranged in this order in a display screen of the color liquid crystal panel **212** in accordance with a color filter. Colored images are displayed by R, G and B image data through those R, G and B pixels. Black-and-white image is displayed in the liquid crystal display device **200** as follows.

[0010] In the liquid crystal display device **200**, black-and-white image is displayed with R, G and B pixels being used as a single unit pixel. Since a unit pixel is comprised of R, G and B pixels, the number of brightness displayable in a unit pixel is three times greater than the number of brightness displayable in each of R, G and B pixels.

[0011] In other words, a gradation in a displayed image can be made smaller by setting a range between the above-mentioned brightnesses into one-third.

[0012] For instance, it is assumed that a unit pixel P is divided into three sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3, as illustrated in **FIG. 2B**. If each of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 displays images in eight bits, a displayable brightness in each of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 is in the range of 0 to 255 both inclusive, and a displayable brightness in the unit pixel P is in the range of 0 to 765 (255×3) both inclusive. Among the displayable brightness, the minimum brightness 0 is associated with a minimum among image data, and the maximum brightness 765 is associated with a maximum among image data. This ensures that images are displayed with high gradation.

[0013] When the data processor **216** supplies a brightness converted from image data, to the unit pixel P, the data processor **216** distributes the brightness almost equally to the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3.

[0014] Specifically, assuming that 8-bit image data is input into a color display unit which displays images in 8-bit, the image data consists of 0 to 255, and a minimum 0 among the image data is associated with a minimum brightness 0 of the color display unit, and a maximum 255 among the image data is associated with a maximum brightness 765 of the color display unit.

[0015] Then, the data processor **216** distributes a brightness obtained based on the image data, to the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 in accordance with Table 1 shown below. For instance, when a brightness is equal to 0, (0, 0, 0) is assigned to the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3, when a brightness is equal to 1, (0, 0, 1) is assigned to the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3, and when a brightness is equal to 2, (0, 1, 1) is assigned to the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3. The assignment of a brightness to the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 is carried out in the same way for a brightness 0 to 765.

TABLE 1

Brightness	Sub-pixel p1	Sub-pixel p2	Sub-pixel p3
0	0	0	0
1	0	0	1
2	0	1	1
3	1	1	1
4	1	1	2
5	1	2	2
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
762	254	254	254
763	254	254	255
764	254	255	255
765	255	255	255

[0016] In Table 1, a brightness indicates a gradation to be input into the liquid crystal display device **200**.

[0017] As illustrated in **FIG. 2**B, in the liquid crystal display device **200**, a pixel is divided into the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 which are equal to one another, and the number of gradation is made about three times greater by summing gradation (data to be input into a driver) of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3.

[0018] Specifically, as illustrated in **FIG. 3**, input gradation in the liquid crystal display device **200** (that is, data to be input into a driver of each of the sub-pixels) and a brightness which is shown as a standardized brightness in **FIG. 3** have a linear relation to each other. Accordingly, a sum of brightness of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 is equal to a brightness of the pixel P.

[0019] However, since gradation to be input into the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 and brightness of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 are designed to have a linear relation to each other, the number of gradation which the pixel P can accomplish is equal at maximum to 3M wherein M indicates the number of gradation which each of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 can accomplish.

[0020] For instance, if each of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 can accomplish 256 gradation, the pixel P consisting of the sub-pixels p1, p2 and p3 could accomplish 766 gradation.

[0021] Accordingly, it is not always possible for the conventional liquid crystal display device **200** to display images in desired multi-gradation.

[0022] Frame rate control (FRC) makes it possible to display images in desired multi-gradation.

[0023] Herein, in accordance with frame rate control, for instance, 10-bit image data is divided into four 8-bit image data, and the thus divided 8-bit image data is successively displayed at an increased frequency. This results in that image data is displayed in 10-bit.

[0024] Though multi-gradation can be readily accomplished by frame rate control, frame rate control is accompanied with a problem that flicker much occurs in images displayed in accordance with frame rate control.

[0025] Frame rate control is accompanied further with a problem that when frame rate control is carried out at a longer period than a displayed-frame rate, it would not be possible to display moving images in subtle colors or to properly display images in additional gradation.

[0026] In order to eliminate flicker, or in order to properly display moving images in designed colors, it would be necessary to raise a frame frequency to switch displaying images at a high rate. However, it is difficult to switch image-displaying at a high rate, because a driver IC of a monitor or a monitor itself has a limited response rate.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0027] In view of the above-mentioned problems in the conventional liquid crystal display device, it is an object of the present invention to provide a liquid crystal display device which is capable of displaying images at desired multi-gradation without carrying out frame rate control.

[0028] In one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a liquid crystal display device which divides a pixel into a plurality of sub-pixels, wherein a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels have a non-linear relation to each other, and a desired brightness for the pixel is selected by selecting a gradation in each of the sub-pixels.

[0029] In the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the present invention, a pixel is divided into a plurality of sub-pixels, and a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels are designed to have a non-linear relation to each other. In the conventional liquid crystal display device, as illustrated in **FIG. 3, a** gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels were designed to have a linear relation to each other. Accordingly, when input gradation increases by one unit, a brightness increases by a uniform degree in association with an increase in input gradation. In contrast. in the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the present invention, as illustrated in **FIG. 5** later, a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels are designed to have a non-linear relation to each other. Accordingly, when input gradation increases by one unit, various non-uniform increases in a brightness can be accomplished. Hence, it would be possible to accomplish a desired brightness in a pixel by selecting necessary increases in a brightness in each of the sub-pixels, and summing them. Thus, the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the present invention makes it possible to display images at a desired multi-gradation.

[0030] The liquid crystal display device may further include a memory storing therein a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels.

[0031] By designing the liquid crystal display device to include a memory, it is possible to store a determined relation between a gradation and a brightness, and read a relation between a gradation and a brightness, having been determined previously, out of the memory.

[0032] The relation in each of the sub-pixels may be expressed as a table, in which case, the memory stores the table therein.

[0033] The liquid crystal display device may further include a computing unit which computes the relation in each of the sub-pixels, and transmits the thus computed relation to a source driver.

[0034] For instance, if the computing unit computes the relation at real time, it is not always necessary to store the computed relation in the memory. Since a source driver has a function of storing gradation data serially transmitted thereto, a source driver stores the computed relation transmitted from the computing unit.

[0035] It is preferable that the computing unit computes the relation in each of the sub-pixels through the use of a specific algorithm.

[0036] The liquid crystal display device may further include a computing device which computes a gradation associated with each of the sub-pixels in dependence on a gradation of input data.

[0037] A gamma (γ) for each of the sub-pixels may be designed to be greater than a gamma (γ) for the pixel.

[0038] It is preferable that a drive voltage associated with input data is concurrently applied to the sub-pixels.

[0039] A sum of a maximum brightness in each of the sub-pixels may be designed to be equal to a brightness associated with a maximum gradation of the pixel.

[0040] The advantages obtained by the aforementioned present invention will be described hereinbelow.

[0041] In accordance with the present invention, it is possible to display images in multi-gradation without carrying out frame rate control. For instance, the present invention makes it possible to display images in 12 bits (4096 gradation) through the use of a conventional 8-bit driver.

[0042] For instance, when a pixel is divided into three sub-pixels, the number of drivers necessary for driving the sub-pixels would be three times greater than the number of drivers necessary for driving the pixel. However, an increase in hardware is smaller in the division of a pixel to the sub-pixels than in a case wherein a digital-analog converter in a source driver is designed sixteen times greater in circuit size.

[0043] The above and other objects and advantageous features of the present invention will be made apparent from the following description made with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters designate the same or similar parts throughout the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0044] **FIG. 1** is a block diagram of a conventional liquid crystal display device.

[0045] **FIG. 2A** is a partially enlarged view of a display screen of a color liquid crystal panel in the liquid crystal display device illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

[0046] **FIG. 2B** illustrates three sub-pixels P1, P2 and P3 divided from a pixel P.

[0047] **FIG. 3** is a graph showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in the liquid crystal display device illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

[0048] **FIG. 4** is a block diagram of a liquid crystal display device in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention,

[0049] **FIG. 5** is a graph showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention.

[0050] **FIG. 6** illustrates a part of a map (8 bits) used for converting input gradation (12 bits) to a brightness in each of sub-pixels in the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention.

[0051] **FIG. 7** is a graph showing a relation between a gradation and a standardized brightness in a pixel, a first sub-pixel and a second sub-pixel in an example of the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention.

[0052] **FIG. 8** is a graph showing another relation between a gradation and a brightness in the liquid crystal display device in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention.

[0053] **FIG. 9** illustrates a part of a map (8 bits) used for converting input gradation (12 bits) to a brightness in each of sub-pixels in the liquid crystal display device illustrated in **FIG. 8**.

[0054] **FIG. 10** is a flow chart of a first algorithm used for determining a brightness in each of sub-pixels in order to accomplish a standardized brightness of a pixel.

[0055] **FIG. 11** is a flow chart of a second algorithm used for determining a brightness in each of sub pixels in order to accomplish a standardized brightness of a pixel.

[0056] **FIG. 12A** is a plan view of a color pixel.

[0057] **FIG. 12B** is a circuit diagram showing arrangement of the color pixel illustrated in **FIG. 12A**.

[0058] **FIG. 13A** is a plan view of sub-pixels divided from the color pixel illustrated in **FIG. 12A**.

[0059] **FIG. 13B** is a circuit diagram showing arrangement of the sub-pixels illustrated in **FIG. 13A**.

[0060] **FIG. 13C** is a circuit diagram showing another arrangement of the sub-pixels illustrated in **FIG. 13A**.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0061] Preferred embodiments in accordance with the present invention will be explained hereinbelow with reference to drawings.

[0062] **FIG. 4** is a block diagram of a liquid crystal display device **10** in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention.

[0063] The liquid crystal display device **10** is comprised of a liquid crystal panel **12** having a plurality of pixels **14** arranged in a matrix, a decoder **16** receiving an input signal, a signal processor **18** receiving decoded signals from the decoder **16** and processing them, and a source driver **19** electrically connected to both the signal processor **18** and each of the pixels **14** arranged in the liquid crystal panel **12**.

[0064] As illustrated in **FIG. 4**, each of the pixels **14** is divided into R sub-pixels **14***a* wherein R is an integer equal to or greater than 2.

[0065] The decoder **16** converts an N-bit input signal into R M-bit sub-pixel signals. Herein, N means the number of bits of gradation data per a unit pixel in the input signal. For instance, N is equal to 8, 10, 12 or 16. In the first embodiment, N is designed equal to 12. M means the number of bits per a sub-pixel in the source driver **19**. In the first embodiment, M is designed equal to 8. R means the number of sub-pixels in a pixel.

[0066] In the first embodiment, the decoder **16** is comprised of a logic circuit, such as a read only memory (ROM) or a random access memory (RAM) alone or in combination, which receives an N-bit input gradation signal as an address, and outputs a M×R-bit signal.

[0067] As mentioned later, the logic circuit constituting the decoder **16** includes a table by which a brightness of each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is determined so as to allow the pixel **14** to have a desired brightness.

[0068] A drive voltage associated with the input data is concurrently applied to each of the sub-pixels **14***a*.

[0069] The signal processor **18** transmits a drive signal to the source driver **19** to properly drive the source driver **19**. The signal processor **18** successively transmits drive signals associated with the sub-pixels **14***a*, to the source driver **19** in accordance with a clock signal having a frequency which is R tines greater than a clock frequency of the input signal.

[0070] As the signal processor **18** and the source driver **19**, a signal processor and a source driver both used in a conventional liquid crystal display device may be used.

[0071] FIG **5** is a graph showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in the pixel **14** in the event that the pixel **14** is divided into the three sub-pixels **14***a* (that is, R=3), and a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels **14***a*. In **FIG. 5**. a brightness is expressed as a standardized brightness.

[0072] A standardized brightness L is expressed in accordance with the following equation (A).

$$L=(S/S\mathrm{max})\times\gamma \quad \text{(A)}$$

[0073] In the equation (A), S indicates the number of gradation and is an integer in the range of 0 and Smax both inclusive ($0 \leqq S \leqq Smax$), Smax indicates the maximum number of gradation and is an integer equal to or greater than one (1), and gamma (γ) indicates a parameter or a constant showing the relation between a gradation and a brightness.

[0074] For instance, the maximum number of gradation Smax is equal to 255 (261) in 8-bit gradation. The parameter gamma (γ) is usually designed to be equal to 2.2.

[0075] Each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is driven by a 8-bit driver. The relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is expressed as a non-linear curve wherein the parameter gamma (γ) is designed to be equal to

3.177. Gradations of the sub-pixels **14***a* are combined to one another such that the parameter gamma (γ) in the pixel **14** is equal to 2.2.

[0076] In **FIG. 5**, the pixel **14** is designed to have a maximum brightness of 2. That is, the maximum brightness of the pixel **14** is designed to be equal to a sum of maximum brightness of two sub-pixels **14***a*.

[0077] A relation between a brightness Lp of the pixel **14** and a brightness Lsp of the sub-pixel **14***a* is expressed in accordance with the following equation (B).

$$Lp=\Sigma Lsp \quad \text{(B)}$$

[0078] A range of the brightness Lp of the pixel **14** is expressed as follows.

$$0 \leqq Lp \leqq Lsp \text{ max} \quad \text{(C)}$$

[0079] Herein, "Lsp max" means a maximum brightness of each of the sub-pixels **14***a*.

[0080] As is obvious in view of the equation (B), a brightness of the pixel **14** is equal to a sum of brightness of the sub-pixels **14***a* constituting the pixel **14**.

[0081] In accordance with the first embodiment, it is possible to accomplish multi-gradation without carrying out frame rate control (FRC). Specifically, it is possible to display images at a 12-bit gradation (4096 gradation) through the use of a conventional 8-bit driver.

[0082] When the pixel **14** is divided into the three sub-pixels **14***a*, the number of drivers necessary for driving the sub-pixels **14***a* would be three times greater than the number of drivers necessary for driving the pixel **14**. However, an increase in hardware is smaller in the division of the pixel **14** to the sub-pixels **14***a* than in a case wherein a digital-analog converter in the source driver **19** is designed sixteen times greater in circuit size.

[0083] **FIG. 6** illustrates an example of a 8-bit map used for converting input gradation (12 bits) to a brightness in each of sub-pixels **14***a* in the liquid crystal display device **10**. **FIG. 6** illustrates only input gradation in the range of 0 to 100 and further in the range of 3995 to 4095.

[0084] As mentioned above, the liquid crystal display device **10** in accordance with the first embodiment makes it possible to display images at a gradation beyond a gradation which the source driver **19** can accomplish. The reason is explained hereinbelow.

[0085] It is assumed hereinbelow that the pixel is comprised of the two sub-pixels **14***a*, that is, the number R is equal to two, and the sub-pixels **14** have the same relation between a gradation and a brightness and the same maximum brightness as each other. It is further assumed that the number of input gradation is greater than the number of gradation of the source driver **19** by two bits.

[0086] A gamma (γ) defining a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is designed greater than a gamma (γ) defining a relation between a gradation and a brightness in a target pixel. However, it is not always necessary for a gamma (γ) of each of the sub-pixels **14***a* to be on a gamma (γ) curve.

[0087] A gradation of each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is designed equal to a quarter ($1/4=1/2^2$) of a gradation of the target pixel.

[0088] By designing a gradation of the sub-pixel **14***a* so, it is possible to design one of the sub-pixels **14***a* to have a maximum brightness smaller than a target gradation of the pixel, and the other of the sub-pixels **14***a* to have a brightness closest to a difference between the maximum brightness and the target gradation of the pixel. A pair of the thus determined brightness of the sub-pixels **14***a* is determined as a brightness of the pixel in association with the input gradation. The thus determined brightness of the sub-pixels **14***a* are stored in the decoder **16** as a table.

[0089] A detailed example of the above-mentioned case is explained hereinbelow with reference to **FIG. 7**.

[0090] **FIG. 7** is a graph showing a relation between a gradation and a standardized brightness in the pixel **14**, the first sub-pixel and the second sub-pixel.

[0091] A brightness associated with a gradation A of the pixel **14** is determined as follows.

[0092] First, there is determined a brightness X1 when a gradation B is assigned to the first sub-pixel. It is assumed that a brightness of the pixel **14**, associated with the brightness X1, is given at a gradation A'. The gradation B, A' and A are determined such that a brightness of the pixel **14** associated with the gradation A is smaller than a brightness of the pixel **14** associated with the gradation A.

[0093] Then, there is determined a gradation which gives a brightness of the second sub-pixel which brightness is equivalent to an increase equal to an increase in a brightness of the pixel **14** associated with a difference between the gradation A and A'. Thus, a brightness of the pixel **14** is determined.

[0094] In the above-mentioned example, the above-mentioned gradation can be determined through the use of a curve having a high gamma (γ), that is, a curve having small inclination and indicative of a relation between a gradation and a brightness in the second sub-pixel. Hence, it is possible to compensate for a gradation smaller than a maximum difference in a gradation in the source driver **19**.

[0095] Though a maximum brightness of the pixel **14** is designed twice greater than a maximum brightness of the sub-pixel **14***a* in **FIG. 5, a** multiple of a maximum brightness of the sub-pixel **14***a* to a maximum brightness of the pixel **14** is not to be limited to two (2). There is selected any positive figure T equal to or smaller than the number R of the sub-pixels ($0<T\leqq R$). The figure T is not to be limited to an integer. The figure T may be a decimal.

[0096] **FIG. 8** shows a case wherein a multiple is three. Specifically, **FIG. 8** is a graph showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in the pixel **14** and each of the sub-pixels **14***a* in the event that a maximum brightness of the pixel **14** is designed three times greater than a maximum brightness of the sub-pixel **14***a*.

[0097] Each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is driven by a 8-bit driver. The relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is expressed as a non-linear curve wherein the parameter gamma (γ) is designed to be equal to 3.104. Gradations of the sub-pixels **14***a* are combined to one another such that the parameter gamma (γ) in the pixel **14** is equal to 2.2.

[0098] In accordance with the example illustrated in **FIG. 8**, similarly to the example illustrated in **FIG. 5**, it is possible to accomplish multi-gradation without carrying out frame rate control (FRC). Specifically, it is possible to display images at a 12-bit gradation (4096 gradation) through the use of a conventional 8-bit driver.

[0099] **FIG. 9** illustrates an example of a 8-bit map used for converting input gradation (12 bits) to a brightness in each of sub-pixels **14***a*. **FIG. 9** illustrates only input gradation in the range of 0 to 100 and further in the range of 3995 to 4095.

[0100] In the above-mentioned examples, a brightness of each of the sub-pixels **14***a*, associated with the input gradation, is determined through the use of the data-converting map illustrated in **FIG. 6** or **9**. It should be noted that a brightness of each of the sub-pixels **14***a* can be calculated without using such a data-converting map illustrated in **FIG. 6** or **9**.

[0101] Hereinbelow is explained a process of calculating a brightness of each of the sub-pixels **14***a*.

[0102] It is assumed that the pixel **14** is divided into the three sub-pixels **14***a*, each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is driven by a 8-bit driver (256 gradation), and the pixel **14** displays images in 12 bits (4096 gradation). It is further assumed that a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is defined in accordance with a gamma (γ) curve, and a maximum brightness of each of the sub-pixels **14***a* is equal to two-thirds (⅔) of a maximum brightness of the pixel **14**.

[0103] A standardized brightness of the pixel **14** is expressed as Y(N). Herein, N is in the range of 0 and 4096 ($0 \leqq N < 4096$), and Y(N) is in the range of 0 and 3 both inclusive ($0 \leqq Y(N) \leqq 2$). A brightness of each of the three sub-pixels **14***a* is expressed as Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3).

[0104] Assuming that a gamma (γ) is a parameter showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in the pixel **14**, Y(N) is expressed as follows.

$$Y(N)=2(N/(4096-1))\times\gamma$$

[0105] Assuming that γsp is a parameter showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the pixels **14***a*, the parameter γsp is determined such that Y(1), Y1(1), Y2(1) and Y3(1) are equal to one another (Y(1)=Y1(1)=Y2(1) Y3(1)).

[0106] **FIG. 10** is a flow chart showing a first algorithm used for determining Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3) by all of which Y(N) is determined.

[0107] First, N1, N2 and N3 are initialized. Specifically, N1, N2 and N3 are set equal to zero in step **S100**.

[0108] Then, there is determined any N1. For the thus determined N1, it is judged as to whether N1 is equal to a maximum N1max which is a maximum among N1, or as to whether a sum of Y1(N1+1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1+1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3)) is greater than Y(N), in step **S110**.

[0109] If a sum of Y1(N1+1), Y2(N2) and Y2(N3) (Y1(N1+1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3)) is not greater than Y(N) (NO in step **S110**), N1 is replaced with (N1+1) in step **S120**. For (N1+1), it is judged again as to whether a sum of Y1(N1+1+1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1+1+1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3)) is greater than Y(N), in step **S110**.

[0110] Steps **S110** and **S120** are repeatedly carried out, until a sum of Y1(N1+1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1+1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3)) becomes greater than Y(N) (YES in step **S110**). As a result, there is determined a maximum N1 which is not over the target Y(N).

[0111] Then, there is determined any N2. For the thus determined N2, it is judged as to whether N2 is equal to a maximum N2max which is a maximum among N2, or as to whether a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2+1) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2+1)+Y3(N3)) is greater than Y(N), in step **S130**.

[0112] If a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2+1) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2+1)+Y3(N3)) is not greater than Y(N) (NO in step **S130**), N2 is replaced with (N2+1) in step **S140**. For (N2+1), it is judged again as to whether a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2+1+1) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2+1)+Y3(N3)) is greater than Y(N), in step **S130**.

[0113] Steps **S130** and **S140** are repeatedly carried out, until a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2+1) and Y3(N3) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2+1)+Y3(N3)) becomes greater than Y(N) (YES in step **S130**). As a result, there is determined a maximum N2 which is not over a difference between the target Y(N) and itself.

[0114] Then, there is determined any N3. For the thus determined N3, it is judged as to whether N3 is equal to a maximum N3max which is a maximum among N3, or as to whether a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3+1) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3+1)) is greater than Y(N), in step **S150**.

[0115] If a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3+1) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3+1)) is not greater than Y(N) (NO in step **S150**), N3 is replaced with (N3+1) in step **S160**. For (N3+1), it is judged again as to whether a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3+1+1) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3+1+1)) is greater than Y(N), in step **S150**.

[0116] Steps **S150** and **S160** are repeatedly carried out, until a sum of Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3+1) (Y1(N1)+Y2(N2)+Y3(N3+1)) becomes greater than Y(N) (YES in stop **S150**). As a result, there is determined a maximum N3 which is not over a difference between the target Y(N) and itself.

[0117] Thus, there are determined all of N1, N2 and N3, in step s**170**.

[0118] Hereinbelow is explained a second algorithm used for determining Y1(N1), Y2(N2) and Y3(N3) by all of which Y(N) is determined.

[0119] **FIG. 11** is a flow chart showing the second algorithm.

[0120] Assuming that γsp is a parameter showing a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of the pixels **14***a*, the parameter γsp is determined such that Y(1), Y(1), Y2(1) and Y3(1) are equal to one another (Y(1)=Y1(1)=Y2(1)=Y3(1)), in step **S200**.

[0121] Then, all numeric solutions of the sub-pixels **14***a* are calculated, in step **S210**.

[0122] Then, all combinations of the sub-pixels **14***a* are sorted with a sum of the thus calculated numeric solutions, in step **S220**.

[0123] Then, there is determined a combination of the sub-pixels **14***a* which combination is closet to a target Y(N), in step **S230**.

[0124] Hereinbelow is explained a color pixel to which the above-mentioned embodiment is applied.

[0125] As illustrated in **FIG. 12**A, it is assumed that a color pixel **20** has R, G and B dots.

[0126] For instance, each of the dots R, G and B in the color pixel **20** is electrically connected to a drain line **22** through a drain of a thin film transistor (TFT) **21** and to a gate line **23** through a gate of the thin film transistor **21**, as illustrated in **FIG. 12B**.

[0127] When the above-mentioned embodiment is applied to the color pixel **20**, as illustrated in **FIG. 13**A, the dot R is divided into three sub-dots RP_1, RP_2 and RP_3, the dot G is divided into three sub-dots GP_1, GP_2 and GP_3, and the dot B is divided into three sub-dots BP_1, BP_2 and BP_3.

[0128] **FIGS. 13B and 13C** illustrate examples of arrangement of the sub-dots.

[0129] For instance, as illustrated in **FIG. 13**B, the three sub-dots RP_1, RP_2 and RP_3 divided from the dot R are electrically connected to associated drain lines D_1, D_2 and D_3 through drains of associated thin film transistors, and further to a common gate line **24** through gates of the associated thin film transistors.

[0130] As an alternative, as illustrated in **FIG. 13**C, the three sub-dots RP_1, RP_2 and RP_3 divided from the dot R are electrically connected to a common gate line **25** through drains of associated thin film transistors, and further to associated gate lines G_1, G_2 and G_3 through gates of the associated thin film transistors.

[0131] A drain signal voltage is applied in time division to each of the sub-dots RP_1, RP_2 and RP_3 in a line-scanning period.

[0132] While the present invention has been described in connection with certain preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the subject matter encompassed by way of the present invention is not to be limited to those specific embodiments. On the contrary, it is intended for the subject matter of the invention to include all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as can be included within the spirit and scope of the following claims.

[0133] The entire disclosure of Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-238406 filed on Aug. 6, 2001 including specification, claims, drawings and summary is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

What is claimed is:

1. A liquid crystal display device which divides a pixel into a plurality of sub-pixels, wherein a gradation and a brightness in each of said sub-pixels have a non-linear relation to each other, and a desired brightness for said pixel is selected by selecting a gradation in each of said sub-pixels.

2. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a memory storing therein a relation between a gradation and a brightness in each of said sub-pixels.

3. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 2, wherein said relation in each of said sub-pixels is expressed as a table, and said memory stores said table therein.

4. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a computing unit which computes said relation in each of said sub-pixels, and transmits the thus computed relation to a source driver.

5. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 4, wherein said computing unit computes said relation in each of said sub-pixels through the use of a specific algorithm.

6. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a computing device which computes a gradation associated with each of said sub-pixels in dependence on a gradation of input data.

7. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 1, wherein a gamma (γ) for each of said sub-pixels is greater than a gamma (γ) for said pixel.

8. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 1, wherein a drive voltage associated with input data is concurrently applied to said sub-pixels.

9. The liquid crystal display device as set forth in claim 1, wherein a sum of a maximum brightness in each of said sub-pixels is equal to a brightness associated with a maximum gradation of said pixel.

* * * * *

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外部链接	Espacenet USPTO		

摘要(译)

一种将像素分成多个子像素的液晶显示装置。在液晶显示装置中，每个子像素中的灰度和亮度彼此具有非线性关系，并且通过选择每个子像素中的灰度来选择所需的像素亮度。