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电调超构表面研究进展(特邀)

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摘要: 可调谐超构表面为纳米光子器件赋予了更多的自由度与灵活度, 在过去十几年中得到了快速发展。在众多调谐机制中, 电调超构表面更容易与半导体集成电路结合, 是光电器件小型化发展的重要研究方向。本文综述了过去十几年来主要的电调超构表面设计路线。根据调谐机制将电调超构表面分为电控载流子激发调控、液晶调控、电光晶体调控以及微机电系统调控四种设计方案。总结了不同方案的物理机制、调谐方法、研究现状以及优缺点。最后, 讨论了不同调谐方案的应用前景并展望了电调超构表面未来的发展趋势。

关键词: 超构表面; 电调谐; 活性材料; 微纳结构; 共振

中图分类号: O436.2; O431.1

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0 引言

过去十几年, 以微纳结构为基础的超构表面在光场调控方面表现出显著的优越性, 已经被证明是调制电磁波基本特性的有力平台。这些平面光学元件可以将电磁能量局域在亚波长尺度, 增强光与物质相互作用, 从而对光场的振幅、相位、偏振等信息进行全方位调控, 为先进光子器件的集成化与小型化发展提供新思路^[1, 2]。然而, 大多数超构表面器件都是静态的, 一经加工其光学响应就无法改变。因此, 如何实现动态光场调控将成为推动超构表面实际应用的关键。

目前, 动态超构表面的设计路线大致包含三种: 1) 通过外部激励改变结构的光学响应, 如电激励、磁激励^[3, 4]、光激励^[5, 6]、化学反应^[7, 8]和热激励^[9, 10]等; 2) 使用特殊的活性材料, 如液晶^[11, 12]、相变材料^[13, 14]和功能晶体^[15, 16]等; 3) 施加外力使结构发生形变, 如微机电系统(Micro-electro-mechanical System, MEMS)^[17]、柔性拉伸材料^[18, 19]等。这些调控方案可以使超构表面结构对入射光场表现出灵活的动态响应。其中, 电调谐的方法更容易与成熟的光电器件集成, 在众多的调谐机制中脱颖而出。基于一些特殊材料对电场具有不同的响应机制, 电调谐动态超构表面的设计发展出了许多技术路线, 例如使用液晶材料、透明导电氧化物(Transparent Conducting Oxide, TCO)、石墨烯、III-V 族半导体材料、过渡金属二硫化物(Transition Metal Dichalcogenide, TMD)材料、电光晶体(Electric Optical Crystal, EO-crystal)等。

本文对近年来电调谐动态超构表面进行分类汇总, 将目前主要的调谐机制分为电控载流子激发、液晶调控、MEMS 驱动以及电光晶体四个设计方案, 总结了不同方案的物理机制、调谐方法、研究现状以及发展趋势。旨在对这个迅速发展的领域进行系统性归纳总结, 促进基于超构表面的纳米光子器件的研究发展与应用。

1 电调超构表面的设计方案

近年来, 动态超构表面的光场调控研究热度逐年增加(如图 1)。超构表面的动态调控原理总的来说可以分为两类: 改变材料的折射率或改变超构表面的几何结构。前者的调控需要依托于一些活性材料, 如液

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晶、TCO、相变材料等；后者的调控需要设计特殊的力学系统。在这两种调控机理中电调谐都发挥了非常重要的作用。

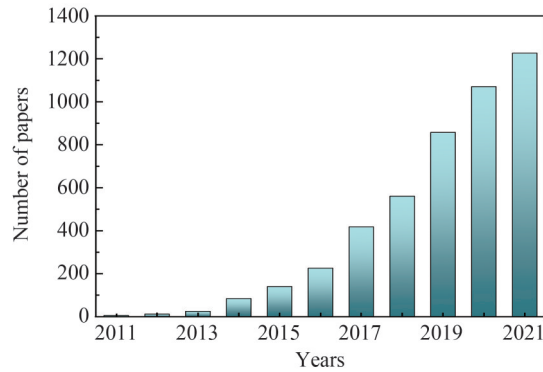


图1 Web of Science 近十年收录的动态超构表面文章数量。检索关键词:可调/动态/可重构/有源超构表面
Fig.1 The number of published papers on “tunable metasurfaces” from Web of Science in the past decade. Search keywords: tunable/dynamic/reconfigurable/active metasurfaces

1.1 电控载流子调控方案

1.1.1 基于TCO材料的电调谐超构表面

通过外加电场改变导电材料中自由载流子的浓度是电调光中最常见的方法之一。一些TCO不仅具有良好的导电性,而且其自由载流子浓度低于金属材料,具有比金属更低的材料损耗,有望替代贵金属而用于等离激元超构表面。TCO材料通常是 n 型重掺杂,其典型的自由载流子浓度 N 大约在 $10^{19} \sim 10^{21} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ 之间,在可见光和近红外波段下具有高透射率。TCO材料的复介电常数与其内部自由载流子浓度 N 密切相关,可用Drude模型描述^[20]:

$$\epsilon(\omega) = \epsilon_{\infty} - \frac{q^2 N}{\epsilon_0 m_e^*} \left(\frac{1}{\omega^2 + i\omega\gamma} \right) \quad (1)$$

式中, ω 为入射光的角频率, m_e^* 为电子的有效质量, N 为自由载流子浓度, γ 为载流子的碰撞速率。通过电诱导^[21]、光诱导^[22]等方式改变材料内部的自由载流子浓度,可以调制材料的介电常数,进而改变其光学响应,实现电调谐的纳米光子器件。

氧化铟锡(Indium Tin Oxide,ITO)是目前使用最广泛的TCO材料之一,它在近红外波段具有近零介电常数(Epsilon Near Zero, ENZ)点。在小于ENZ波长处,介电常数大于零,表现为电介质;在大于ENZ波长处,介电常数小于零,表现为导体。在ITO的自由电子积累层附近,电场会被大大增强^[23]。2010年,FEIGENBAUM E等通过电门控的方式改变ITO内部载流子分布,将ITO的载流子浓度提升一个数量级,实现了接近1的介电常数变化^[24]。随后,结合ITO与金属表面等离激元超构表面的电调谐纳米光子器件成为研究的热点^[21, 25-28]。

2013年,YIF等实验展示了电调谐的中红外波段等离激元吸收超构表面,通过在金光栅上覆盖ITO层,实现了10 V电压下20%的载流子浓度变化和8 nm的光谱移动,但是由于光场模式与结构之间耦合效率低,导致调控效果有限^[25]。2015年,PARK J等将ITO层埋在金属-绝缘体-金属(Metal-insulator-metal, MIM)型等离激元腔中,构建了电调谐的超构表面吸收器。在ENZ波段下,通过正/负偏压动态控制电荷积累层的厚度变化,实现了约15%的反射率调控以及高达125 kHz的调制速率^[27]。2016年,HUANG Y W等设计了相似的金光栅-ITO层-绝缘层-金衬底结构,使用4 V的偏压,在ENZ波段将ITO电荷积累层的载流子浓度提高3倍以上;并利用2.5 V的偏压产生了180°的相位偏移,实现反射光在±1级衍射之间切换,调制速率可达10 MHz^[21](如图2(a))。2020年,SHIRMANESH G K等利用ITO和金纳米天线设计了一款可编程的超构表面多功能微控制器。在波长1522 nm附近实现了>270°的相位调制,并实现了23.5°的光束偏转和1.5~3 μm的焦距调控^[29]。2021年,PARK J等在金光栅和铝衬底之间引入ITO层,设计了550个可单独寻址的谐振器构成超构表面,实现了0~360°的相位调控,调制速率理论可达到5.4 MHz,并在4.7 m的距离内实现了

三维深度扫描^[30](如图2(b))。

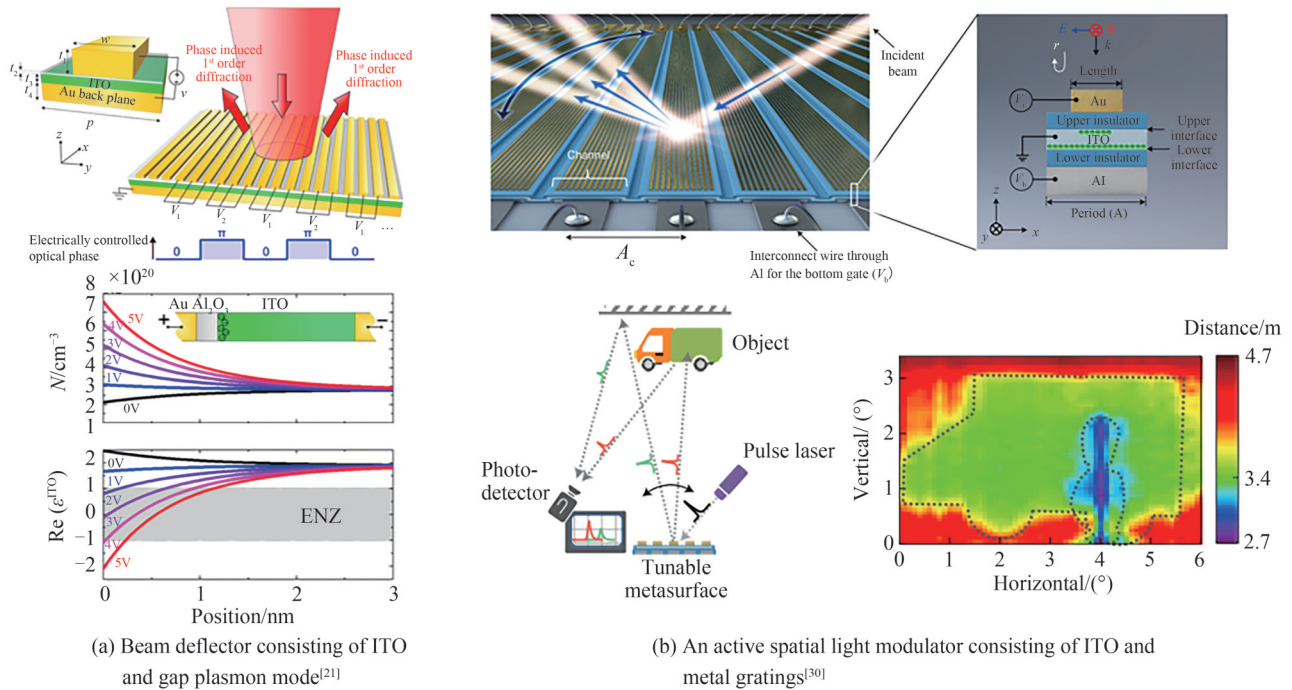


图2 ITO材料与金属结构结合的电调谐超构表面

Fig.2 Electrically tunable metasurface of ITO combined with plasmonic effect

基于TCO材料的光电调控主要限制是光学性能的变化仅仅发生在电荷积累层附近,该厚度通常仅有1~2 nm,称为德拜长度。因此,拓展德拜长度可以进一步提高ITO的光学响应灵敏度。2018年,SHIRMANESH G K等应用双门控电路设计了铝纳米天线-绝缘层-ITO层-绝缘层-金属衬底结构,两个独立的电压控制通道串联连接。施加6.5 V偏压,该结构可在波长1 550 nm附近实现 $>300^\circ$ 的反射相位调制以及89%的相对反射率调制^[31](如图3(a))。

金属固有的寄生损耗和较弱的光与物质相互作用是限制这种调控方式的另一个因素。与金属表面等

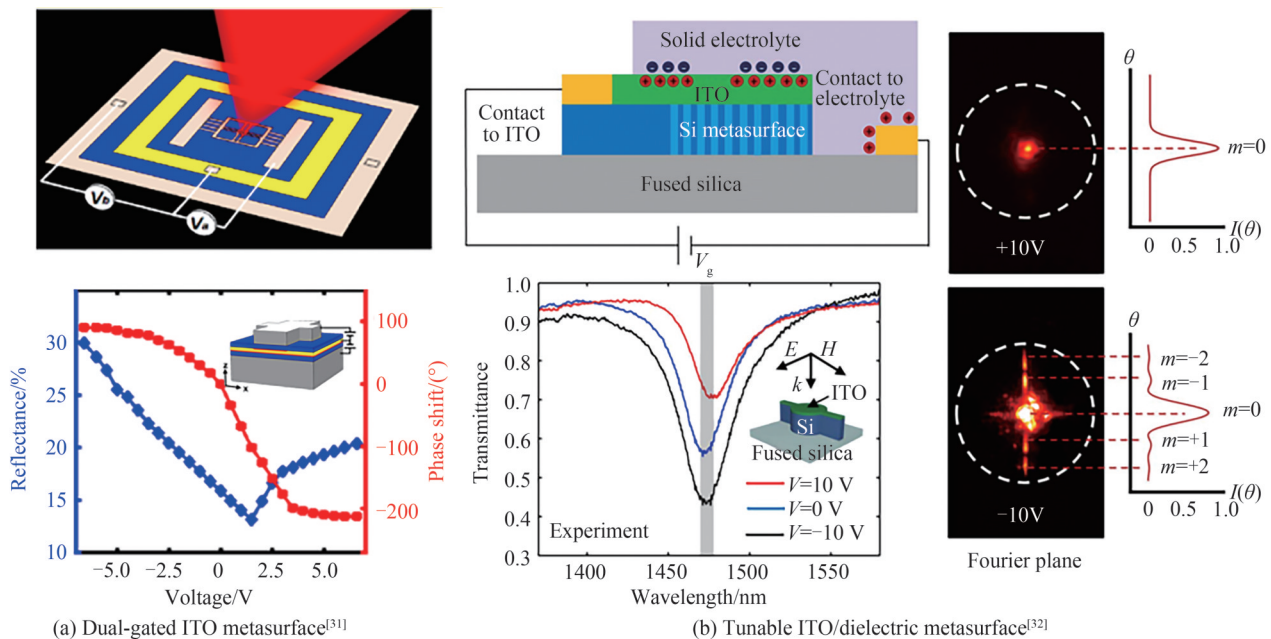


图3 双门控ITO超构表面以及ITO材料与介电材料结合的电调谐超构表面

Fig.3 Dual-gated ITO metasurface and tunable ITO/dielectric metasurface

离激元模式相比,高折射率介质材料可以支持更强的局域电磁模式,具有更多的调控自由度和更低的吸收损耗。因此,将ITO与全介质超构表面结合是另一条重要路线^[32-34]。2018年,HOWES A等报道了一种电调谐全介质惠更斯超构表面,该结构由顶部涂敷ITO薄膜的硅纳米天线和熔融石英基底组成。硅纳米天线的电磁模式发生在ITO的ENZ波段,通过电调谐改变ITO层内的局部电场,实现了31%的透射率调控,并演示了26°左右的光束偏转^[32](如图3(b))。

除了ITO之外,其他TCO材料也同样具有电调谐的潜力,如掺铝氧化锌(Aluminum-doped Zinc Oxide, AZO)^[35]、氧化铟(In₂O₃)^[36]、氧化铟硅(Indium Silicon Oxide, ISO)^[37]等。它们被报道出具有比ITO更低的自由载流子浓度,从而具有更低的损耗和更高的掺杂能力。有望实现更大的折射率调控范围,目前也是TCO材料的重要研究方向。总的来说,基于TCO的电调谐机制是最具有潜力的调谐机制之一,因为它具有以下优点:1)具有成熟的制备和加工工艺;2)在ENZ波段具有较大可调谐范围的介电常数;3)理论上有可能实现>10 GHz的调制速率。但目前也存在一定的问题需要克服:比如,较短的德拜长度导致未能完全开发TCO的调控潜力;同时为了避免绝缘层被击穿导致大量电流泄露,只能尽量采用较小的有源区域(大约几十微米)。尽管如此,基于TCO的电调谐机制仍然在新型可调谐超构表面器件方面具有巨大潜力。

1.1.2 基于石墨烯的电调谐超构表面

石墨烯由呈蜂窝状晶格排列的单层碳原子组成。与TCO材料相比,石墨烯具有更高的载流子迁移率和光学透明度,并且具有更灵活的可调性、更好的鲁棒性和环境稳定性,这使其成为光子学和光电子学的绝佳材料。石墨烯的光学性能与其表面电导率密切相关:

$$\epsilon_{\text{eff, in}} = 1 + \frac{i\sigma_s(\omega)}{\epsilon_0\omega t_g} \quad (2)$$

式中, $\sigma_s(\omega)$ 是石墨烯的表面电导率, ϵ_0 是真空介电常数, t_g 是石墨烯层的厚度。石墨烯的表面电导率源于带间跃迁与带内跃迁的贡献,与其化学势或费米能级 E_F 的高低密切相关,这进而决定了石墨烯的光学特性。本质上,石墨烯的光学特性由其内部载流子的浓度决定。在近红外到可见光波段,石墨烯内部主要以带间跃迁为主($\hbar\omega > 2|E_F|$),表现为强烈的吸收损耗行为 $|\text{Im}(\sigma)/\text{Re}(\sigma)| < 1$;在太赫兹到中红外波段,石墨烯内部主要以带内跃迁为主($\hbar\omega \ll 2|E_F|$),表现为金属的特性,可支持表面等离激元模式,具有更强的场束缚和更低的损耗 $\text{Im}(\sigma)/\text{Re}(\sigma) > 1$ ^[38]。因此,在太赫兹到中红外波段,基于石墨烯的高性能表面等离激元纳米器件具有非常广阔的应用前景^[39-49]。

2011年,JU L等通过施加电压控制石墨烯的等离激元模式,在远红外波段,演示了石墨烯的等离激元共振频率蓝移大约1 THz,相对透射率从7%增加到13%^[39]。2018年,ZENG B等将石墨烯与金纳米天线结合,实现了一种混合超构表面空间光调制器。在8 μm 波长处,通过施加大约7 V的栅极偏压调节石墨烯层的电导率,实现了对反射光强度90%的调制深度和高达1 GHz的调制速率^[46](如图4(a))。此外,石墨烯在中红外到太赫兹波段吸收较低,增强吸收可实现对光场强度的有效调控^[47, 50, 51]。2018年,KIM S等通过石墨烯的等离激元模式和金纳米天线之间的临界耦合实现了电调谐完美吸收。实验上,实现了7.2 μm 波长处高达96.9%的高吸收,对反射率的调制效果可达到95.9%^[47]。除了对强度的动态调控,利用石墨烯实现对光场的相位调控也同样具有潜力。2020年,HAN S等将金属光栅与石墨烯结合设计了一款可重构反射型超构表面。通过模拟改变费米能级实现了360°的全相位调控^[48]。2021年,SUN Z等设计了银开口环谐振器(Split-ring Resonator, SRR)与石墨烯构成的超构表面,施加60 V的电压,可以在中红外波段内产生超过330°的连续相位变化,实现了60°的光束偏转和22%的平均效率(如图4(b))。另外,他们还成功演示了焦距分别为10 mm、15 mm和20 mm的反射式聚焦透镜^[49]。

除了金属表面等离激元模式之外,有些研究还探索了将石墨烯与其他电磁模式结合的效果。YAO Y等通过将石墨烯与介电层中的法布里-帕罗(Fabry-Pérot, FP)模式结合,通过施加80 V的电压在5~7 μm 波段实现了反射率几乎100%的调制深度,调制速率高达20 GHz^[52](如图4(c))。

石墨烯与等离激元超构表面结合已被证实是电调光的有力方案,能够实现对光场振幅、相位的灵活调控。与其他电调谐机制相比,由于石墨烯具有相当高的载流子迁移率,其调制速率相对较高(目前理论值可

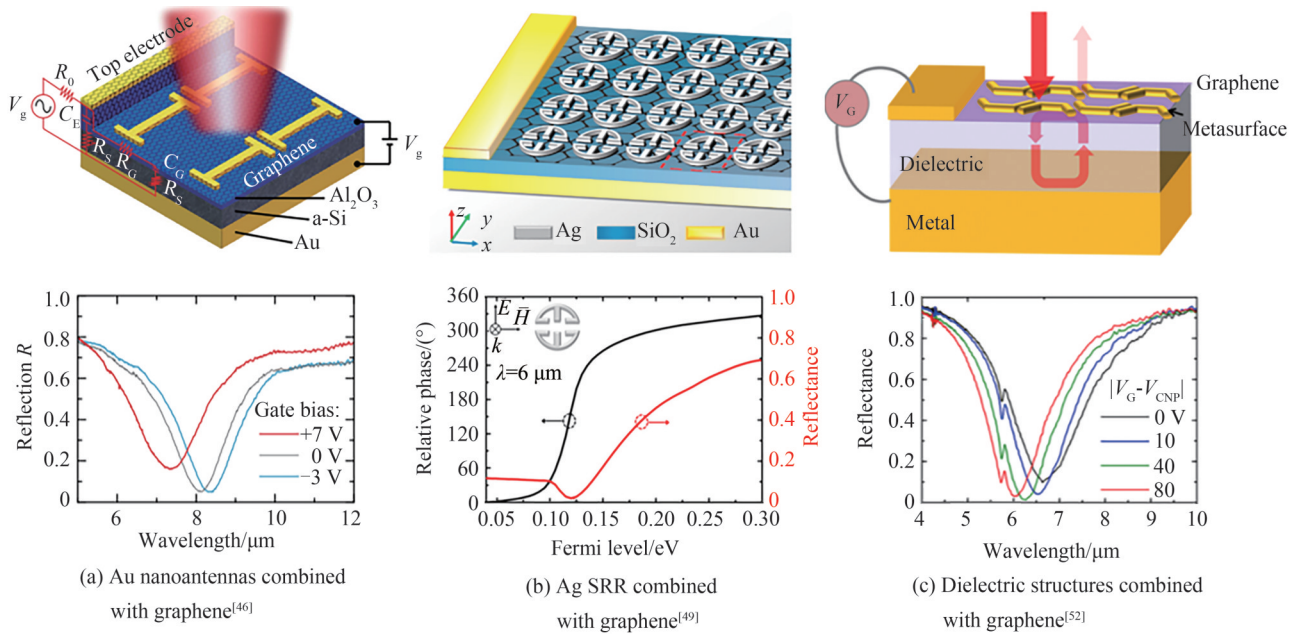


图4 基于石墨烯的电调谐超构表面
Fig.4 Graphene-based electrically tunable metasurface

达~50 GHz)。但是,石墨烯在短波长下具有较强的吸收损耗,以石墨烯为核心的结构仅在中红外到太赫兹波段具有良好的调谐性能。此外,由于石墨烯为单原子层,对结构加工和表征也提出了相当高的挑战。尽管如此,随着工业水平的不断进步,基于石墨烯的电调谐方案依然具有非常可观的前景。

1.1.3 基于过渡金属二硫化物的电调谐超构表面

TMDs是另一种广受关注的二维材料,其化学式为 MX_2 ,M代表过渡金属元素(如:Mo, W, Nb, Ti),X代表硫族元素(如:S, Se, Te)。当向TMDs中注入过量电子时,中性激子会在库仑力的作用下与另一个电子结合产生带负电的三激子(trions),进而影响材料对光场的共振响应。这种电子的掺杂方式可以通过光化学注入或电注入的方式实现。2018年,ZHANG X等使用二硫化钼(MoS_2)对光子晶体的Fano共振分别进行了光化学调制和电调制。其中,光调制的方法是通过光子的注入来激发 MoS_2 表面的 O_2 和 H_2O 发生电离释放电子并掺杂到 MoS_2 层,从而使中性激子与自由电子相结合产生三激子,使光学性质发生变化;而电调制则是通过施加栅极偏压注入电子来实现激子之间的转换。这两种调制方法都可以将单层 MoS_2 的复折射率的实部和虚部调节 ± 0.2 ^[53](如图5)。

为了实现电调光的效果,许多研究将金属纳米颗粒的局域表面等离子共振和TMDs的激子共振耦合,利用栅极偏压注入载流子,展示了优异的动态光场调控能力^[54-57]。LEE B等和LIU W等分别利用 MoS_2 和 WS_2 与金属纳米天线结合,通过调节栅极偏压导致激子与表面等离子共振之间共振耦合的转变^[54, 55]。2019年,NIP等将 MoS_2 与基于金光栅的间隙等离激元超构表面结合,报道了一款栅极可调的发光超构表面。当施加正向偏压时,界面处产生一定厚度的电子积累层,诱导激子转变成带负电的三激子;而在负偏压时,电子的流失导致带负电的三激子又转变成中性激子。这个过程可以灵活改变超构表面的光致发光特性^[56](如图6(a))。基于相似的原理,GROEP J等利用电门控来改变激子状态,在可见光波段演示了原子级厚度 WS_2 图案化波带片透镜,聚焦效率调制了33%。由于在电压偏置时受离子液体的影响,调制速率被限制在~40 ms左右^[57](如图6(b))。

与石墨烯材料不同,由于不存在类似金属的强吸收损耗,TMDs的可调谐范围能够扩展到可见光波段。但是,同样受限于原子级单层二维材料的加工难度,并且TMDs的光学性质随层数改变会发生很大变化,因此对材料的表征仍然具有很大的挑战。尽管如此,这种新颖的调控方法仍然具有巨大的应用前景和研究价值。

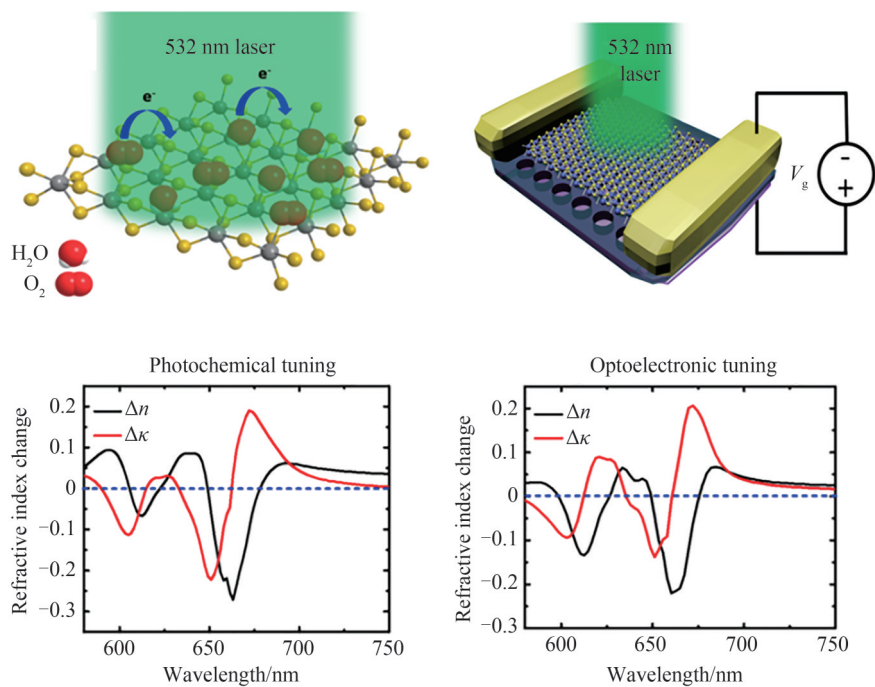


图5 通过光调制与电调制控制 MoS₂集成的光子晶体,可实现对复折射率的实部和虚部±0.2的调节^[53]
 Fig.5 Schematic of the photonic crystal integrated with MoS₂ controlled by photochemical modulation and optoelectronic modulation, which can adjust the real and imaginary parts of the complex refractive index ±0.2^[53]

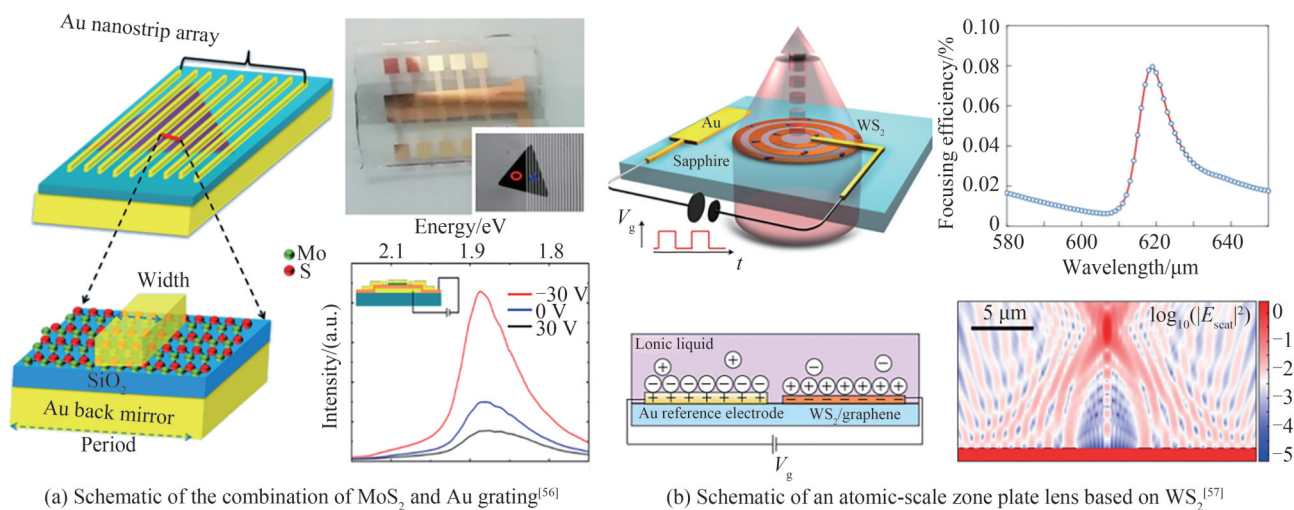


图6 TMDs与金属结构结合的电调谐超构表面
 Fig. 6 Electrically tunable metasurfaces of TMDs/metallic structures

1.1.4 基于III-V族半导体与多量子阱的电调谐超构表面

III-V族半导体材料的电调谐机理与TCO材料类似。通过在III-V族半导体衬底上施加栅极偏压,可以在半导体层的界面附近产生厚度可调的电荷积累区,其介电常数可随局部载流子浓度的改变而发生变化,相关调控多与金属表面等离激元结合^[58-61]。CHEN H T等将金SRR集成在GaAs半导体衬底上,通过改变偏置电压可以调节开口间隙附近GaAs衬底的载流子密度,改变其介电常数,实验上演示了16 V反向栅极偏压下,在太赫兹波段50%的相对透射率调制^[58](如图7(a))。随后,他们的团队又利用相似的结构制备了4×4的像素矩阵。在0~14 V的偏置电压下,在0.36 THz波段实现35%到50%范围的幅度调制^[60](如图7(b))。此外,PARK J等将铝光栅制作在外延生长的InAs衬底上,通过电门控偏压控制InAs层内载流子的变化,进而导致辐射峰值的光谱偏移,可改变超构表面的吸收和发热特性,在中红外波段实现了3.6%的辐射效率变化^[61]。

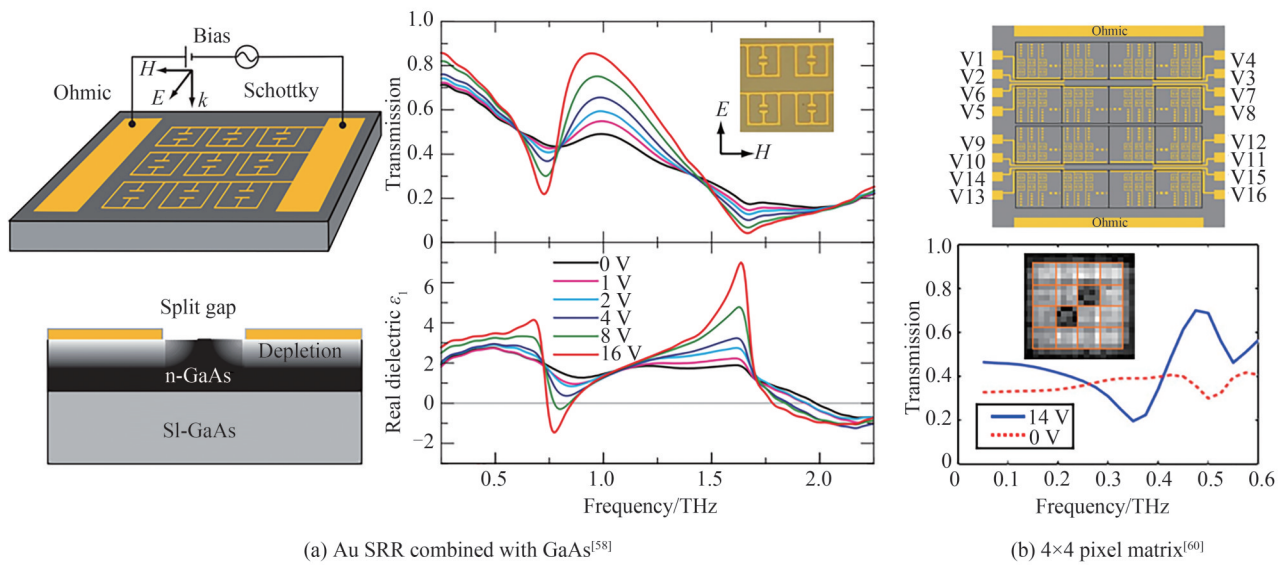


图7 III-V族半导体/表面等离激元电调谐超构表面
Fig.7 Electrically tunable plasmonic metasurface based on III-V semiconductors

基于半导体异质结组成的多量子阱(Multiple Quantum Wells, MQWs),如InGaN/GaN、AlGaAs/GaAs等结构,在可见光到太赫兹波段的电调光应用中有广泛研究^[62-64]。WU P C等基于MQWs开发了一种具有分布式布拉格反射器的有源介质超构表面,在915~920 nm近红外波段,系统折射率实部的调制范围大约可达到0.01~0.05,并且在7 V的偏压下可以获得高达270%的反射率调制以及0~70°的相位变化^[62](如图8(a))。LEE J等将MQWs与等离激元共振结合,通过施加5 V偏压,在波长7 μm实现了超过30%的吸收变化,实验观察到了<10 ns的超快响应速度^[63]。BENZ A等将量子阱的子带间跃迁同光与物质强耦合机制相结合,通过施加5 V偏压,在2.5 THz实现了中心频率移动>8%线宽的调控^[64](如图8(b))。

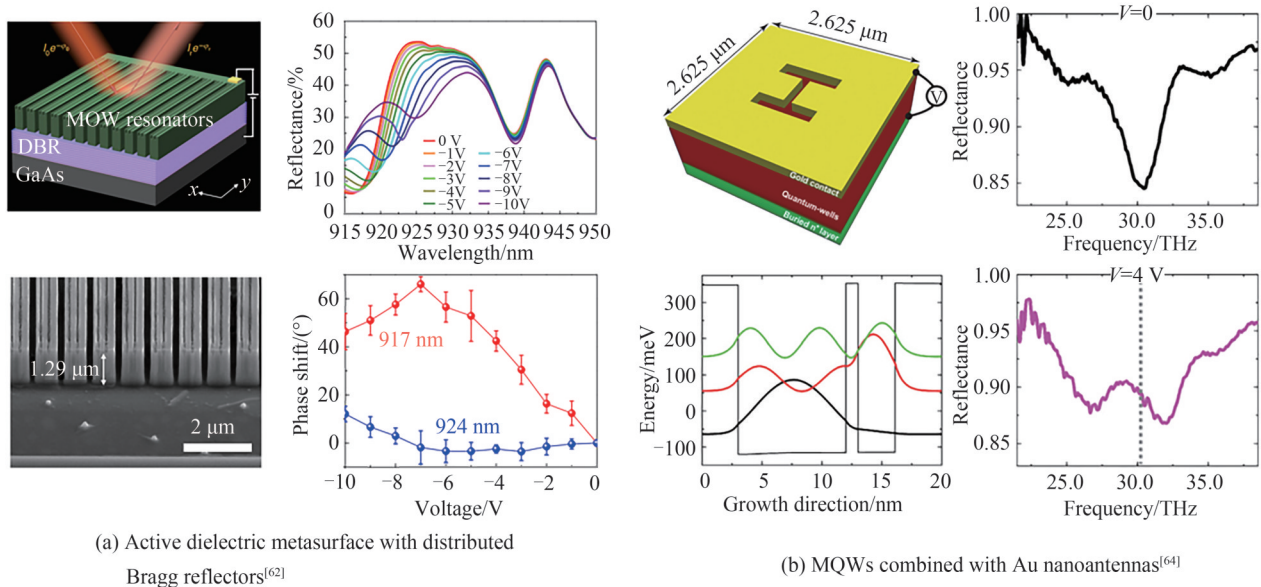


图8 基于MQWs的电调谐超构表面
Fig.8 MQW-based electrically tunable metasurface

1.2 液晶调控方案

液晶作为一种工艺成熟且应用广泛的光学活性材料,具有折射率可调范围大、传输效率高、功耗低、可集成性强等诸多优点,在可调谐光学元器件中占据非常重要的地位^[65]。

早期许多相关研究将向列型液晶与等离激元超构表面结合,实现了对超构表面灵活的动态调控^[66-72]。BUCHNEV O等使用向列型液晶和V型金纳米阵列组成结构简单的超构表面,通过施加7 V的电压在波长1 550 nm附近实现了50%的透射率调制^[70]。由于液晶的表面锚定效应会影响其动态响应效果。随后,他们巧妙地设计了一种向列型液晶和锯齿形金纳米阵列组成超构表面,减小了液晶的表面锚定。实验上,他们利用1.5~2.7 V的低调控电压,使光谱偏移达到110 nm,并可以在2V的电压下产生 $\pi/4$ 的相位变化^[71](如图9(a))。液晶内分子的转向除了会带来折射率的变化,也可以对入射光的偏振方向带来改变。XIE Z W等设计了向列型液晶/铝光栅超构表面,通过0~4 V的电压改变控制横磁(Transverse Magnetic, TM)到横电(Transverse Electric, TE)模式的转换,实现了反射结构色的动态改变^[72](如图9(b))。

为了提高光场调控能力,一些研究将液晶与全介质超构表面结合^[73-76]。KOMAR A等将液晶覆盖在硅纳米柱上,通过施加70 V峰值电压和1 kHz的调控速率控制液晶的“开”和“关”,实现了50 nm的光谱偏移和75%的绝对透射率调制,并产生了180°的相位调制^[73](如图9(c))。在可见光波段,TiO₂具有较大的带隙能量($E_g \approx 3.2\text{eV}$),材料吸收损耗较小。SUN M等利用液晶覆于TiO₂结构上,在660~690 nm波段,通过施加3~5 V的偏置电压实现65%的透射光调制^[75]。LIS Q等将液晶与TiO₂介电超构表面结合,构建了一种透射型空间光调制器,该器件像素单元的尺寸约为1 μm ,可以实现360°的相位调制,能够以36%的效率实现22°的分立光束偏折^[76](如图9(d))。

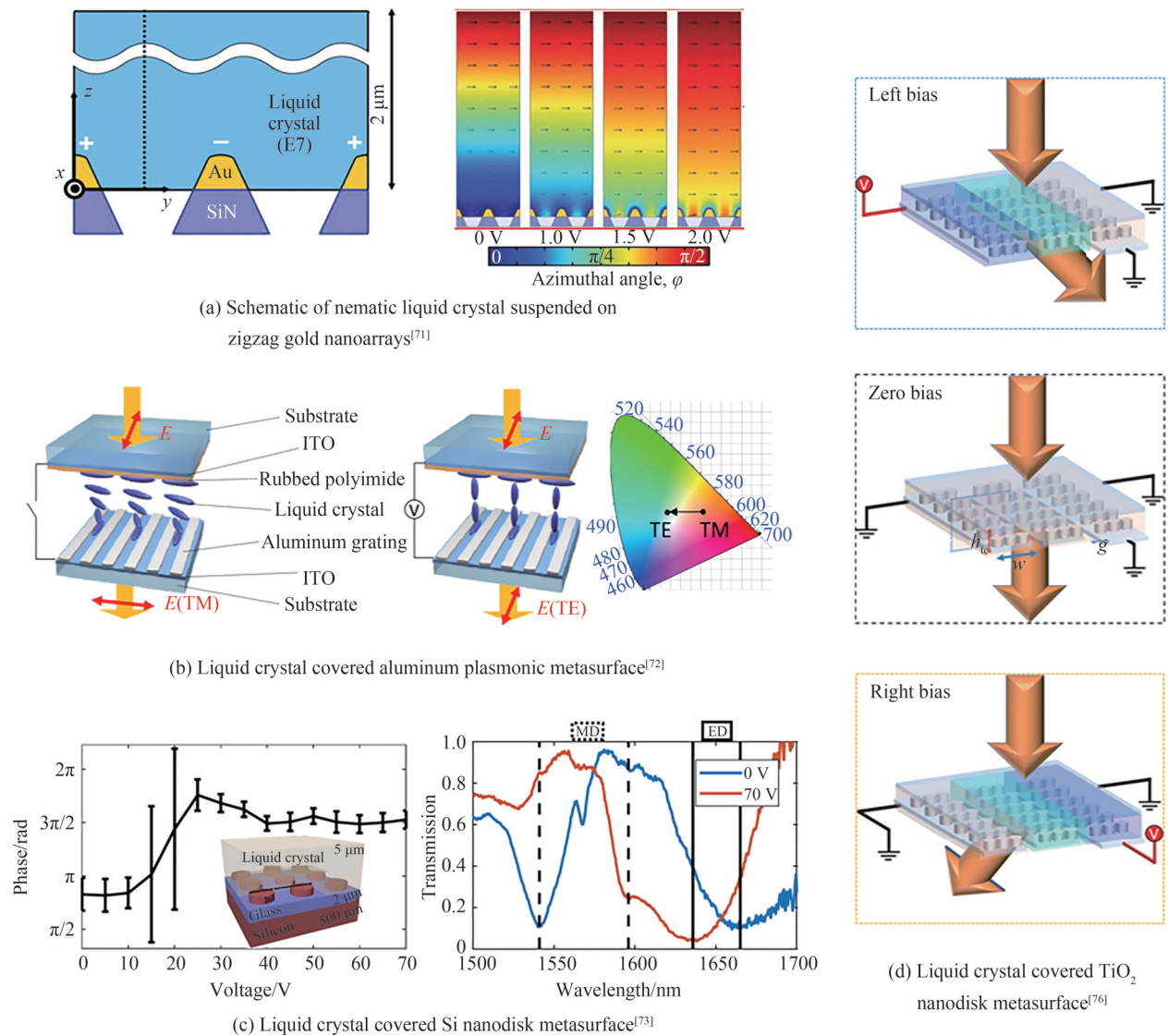


图9 基于液晶的电调谐超构表面
Fig.9 Liquid crystal based electrically tunable metasurfaces

虽然液晶产业技术成熟,但是随着精密光电器件的要求越来越高,液晶材料逐渐暴露了许多不足。液晶设备的响应时间通常在数十毫秒,难以与一些快速响应的光电器件相匹配。其次,由于液晶本身是大分子材料,其分子量可达到200~500 g/mol,目前报道的液晶超构表面的电极间距和像素尺寸通常较大,难以达到亚波长量级。另外,液晶设备在耐受激光功率、自发热效应、光束偏转速度、大角度偏转效率等方面也仍然存在不足^[11, 12]。尽管如此,液晶无与伦比的调控能力仍然在动态有源光子器件的应用中占据重要的地位,如何克服它的缺点值得不断探索。

1.3 电光晶体调控方案

电光晶体是目前商用电光调制器的主要材料,它是一种具有电光效应的功能型晶体。电光效应是晶体折射率在外加电场的作用下发生改变的现象,其折射率和电场的关系可以表示为

$$n = n_0 + \alpha E + \beta E^2 \dots \quad (3)$$

其中等式右边第一项 n_0 是晶体未加电场时的折射率;第二项 αE 为线性电光效应,也称为Pockels效应;第三项 βE^2 为二次电光效应,也称为Kerr效应; α 、 β 是晶体一阶、二阶电光系数,与晶体本身属性有关。一般来讲,电光晶体的二次电光效应以及更高阶项远弱于线性电光效应,因此通常所描述的电光效应以Pockels效应为主。常见的电光晶体具有电光系数大、光学均匀性好、折射率高、性能稳定、鲁棒性好、损耗低、易加工等优点。根据它们的晶体结构和组分可以大致分为以下几类:KDP型(磷酸二氢钾 KH_2PO_4 、磷酸二氧钾 KD_2PO_4 、磷酸二氢铵 $\text{NH}_4\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4$ 、砷酸二氢钾 KH_2AsO_4 等); ABO_3 型(铌酸锂 LiNbO_3 、钽酸锂 LiTaO_3 、钛酸钡 BaTiO_3 、钛酸锶 SrTiO_3 等);AB型(砷化镓 GaAs 、磷化镓 GaP 、硫化锌 ZnS 、硫化镉 CdS 等);其他晶体类型(一些组分比较复杂的复合型晶体如钼酸钪 $\text{Gd}_2(\text{MoO}_4)_3$ 、草酸铵 $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{C}_2\text{O}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ 、铌镁酸铅—钛酸铅PMN-PT等)。其中,铌酸锂(LiNbO_3 , LN)无疑是应用最广的电光晶体。然而,传统的LN电光调制波导器件,大多数通过钛扩散等手段提高部分LN的折射率而制成。这种方式形成的LN波导折射率差小,对于光的限制较弱,因此光模场面积较大,电光重叠度低,导致基于LN体材料的光波导器件尺寸大、集成度低,限制了其发展^[77]。近些年,薄膜LN(绝缘体上铌酸锂, LNOI)的最新发展和商业化为实现片上集成光子器件开辟了一条新道路,在传输损耗、光学非线性和电光可调等方面具有前所未有的高性能^[16, 78-80]。然而,要想在微纳尺度实现理想的电光调制效果,可能需要上千伏的高压才能产生足够的折射率变化,这对功耗和性能都带来了负面影响。

为解决此问题,将电光晶体与超构表面结合,利用亚波长结构中局域电磁模式,增强光场的折射率变化响应灵敏度,成为近年电光调控的重要路线。2021年,WEISS A等将金纳米颗粒置于LN衬底上,使金纳米颗粒的表面等离子体模式与LN层作用。通过施加40 V偏压,在1 550 nm波长处实现反射率40%的调制深度^[81](如图10(a))。WEIGAND H等在薄膜LN上设计了硅纳米柱阵列,阵列所引入的光学共振能够带来80倍的场增强;通过施加小于1 V的电压,实现了10 Hz到2.5 MHz宽带幅度调制^[82](如图10(b))。GAO B等将薄膜LN加工成二维介电光栅,通过斜入射光栅系统的对称性获得具有超高品质因子的准连续域束缚态(Bound States in the Continuum, BIC)模式,在 ± 150 V的电压驱动下,获得了大约 47° 的相位变化^[83](如图10(c))。KLOPFER E等将硅波导与薄膜LN结合,在单个波导的长度方向上通过刻蚀小缺陷引入了品质因子高达30 000的Fano共振。仿真模拟表明, ± 25 V的偏置电压下,能够实现 $0\sim 360^\circ$ 的相位变化,并且反射率保持在90%以上^[84](如图10(d))。

与前述其他的调控方式相比,在微纳尺度使用电光晶体实现电调光的研究相对较少,这主要是因为晶体的薄膜加工技术在近些年才得到突破性的进展,使得电光晶体与超构表面结合成为可能。尽管如此,电光晶体材料仍然以非常快的速度不断更新。一些新兴的电光晶体具有非常大的调控潜力,正在逐渐被发掘。比如某种合成的电光聚合物材料与硅波导组成的超构表面预测可以实现高达118 GHz的调制速率^[85];最新报道的弛豫铁电材料PMN-PT测出了高达900 pm/V的电光系数,是常规电光晶体的30倍以上^[86, 87]。随着电光晶体材料光学特性研究的不断深入,这种调控方式将具有非常大的研究价值与应用潜力。

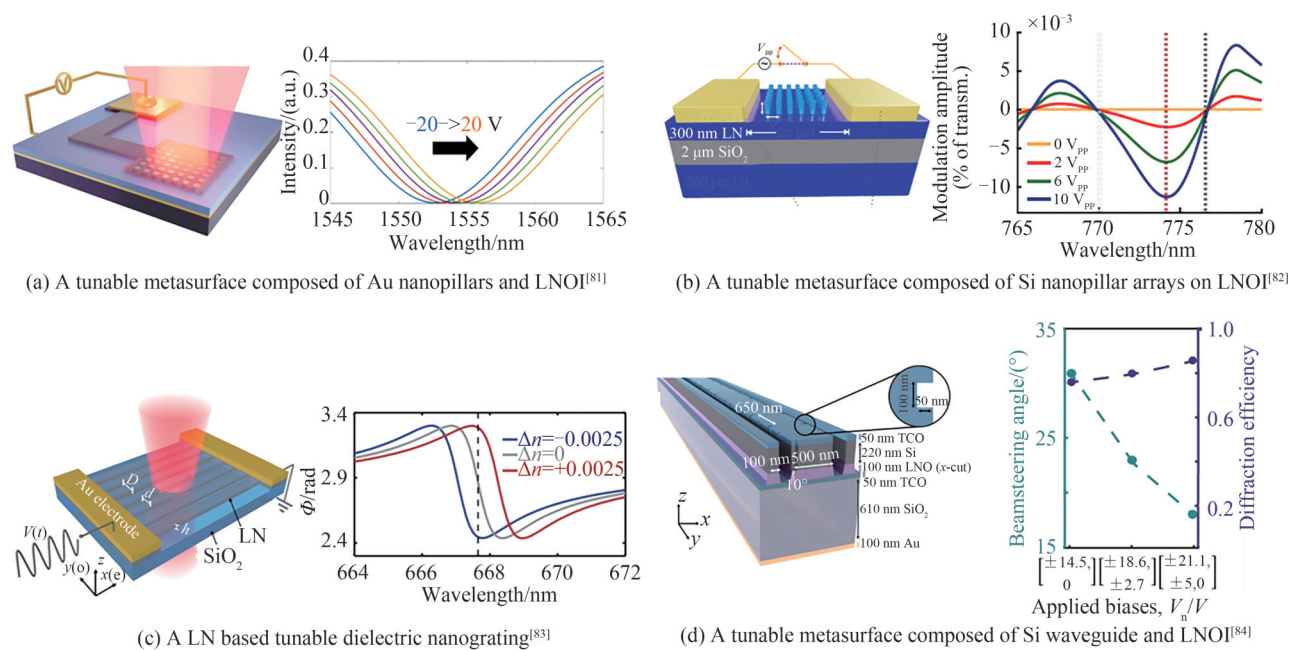


图10 基于电光晶体的电调谐超构表面

Fig.10 Electro-optic crystal based electrically tunable metasurfaces

1.4 MEMS 驱动的调控方案

在超构表面的动态调控路线中,除了通过改变材料自身的光学特性之外,还可以通过改变外部的应力来重新配置超构表面的结构单元。MEMS可以在微纳尺度上通过外加电场、磁场、热刺激等方式精准地对目标结构产生一定的外力(库仑力、安培力等),通过打破超构表面原本的力学平衡使其几何形状发生定量形变,从而对其光学响应进行精准动态调控^[17]。许多研究将电调谐 MEMS 与超构表面结构相结合,研究了从可见光到太赫兹波段的动态超构表面^[88-95]。

2018年,ARBABIE等介绍了一种基于MEMS的变焦超构透镜。该系统由一个固定的超构表面和一个可移动的超构表面组成。通过施加几十伏的电压,在两个超构表面间产生微米级的相对位移。实验表明,当超构表面移动 $1\ \mu\text{m}$ 时,焦点的偏移量可以达到约 $60\ \mu\text{m}$ 。使用三层超构表面系统,可以在kHz到MHz的运行速度下实现 40° 左右的视野扫描^[96]。ZHAO X等设计了一款由微悬臂梁阵列组成的可重构太赫兹四分之一波片。通过施加40 V电压驱动悬臂移动,在1 THz附近观察到34%的透射光幅度变化和 85° 的相位变化,进而实现了从圆偏到线偏调制^[97]。MANJAPPA M等设计了一款由两个SRR组成的可重构MEMS超构表面。它们可以分别由两个偏置电压通道独立控制超构表面谐振器的面外不对称性,激发Fano共振。这种各向异性的变化导致系统的磁滞回效应,允许通过两个独立控制的电输入和一个太赫兹频率的光学读数执行逻辑操作,实现了太赫兹波段下“与”和“或”门逻辑运算^[98](如图11(a))。HOLSTEEN A L等提出了一款多功能超构表面,可以实现颜色控制、动态光束控制和可见光范围内的光聚焦控制。他们将Mie型谐振器悬于绝缘衬底硅(Silicon on Insulator, SOI)之上,通过MEMS进行机械调节,在不同的电压调控速率下实现了超构表面结构色的转变;在3.2 V的电压下实现了 $0\sim 360^\circ$ 的相位调控以及 $2^\circ\sim 12^\circ$ 的光束偏转;在600 nm波长下,施加2.2 V电压,实现了焦距从 $26\ \mu\text{m}$ 到 $5\ \mu\text{m}$ 的调节^[99](如图11(b))。ZHANG X等提出一款基于焦平面开关阵列(Focal Plane Switch Array, FPSA)的超构表面激光雷达的设计方案。他们在 $1\ \text{cm}^2$ 的SOI材料上设计了 128×128 的光栅型纳米天线阵列,使用MEMS进行列与行的单独选址控制,可以实现 $70^\circ\times 70^\circ$ 的宽视场效果和 $0.6^\circ\times 0.6^\circ$ 精细分辨率,并通过实验演示了激光雷达的测距和三维成像效果^[100](如图11(c))。

MEMS集成的动态超构表面具有低功耗、调制范围大以及从可见光到太赫兹全波段调控等优点,是实现动态光调制最有竞争力的方案之一。然而基于MEMS的紧凑型光子器件在结构设计与表征的过程中通常比较复杂,器件加工也极具挑战,成本较高。此外,目前所报道的基于MEMS的调制速率最高可以达到

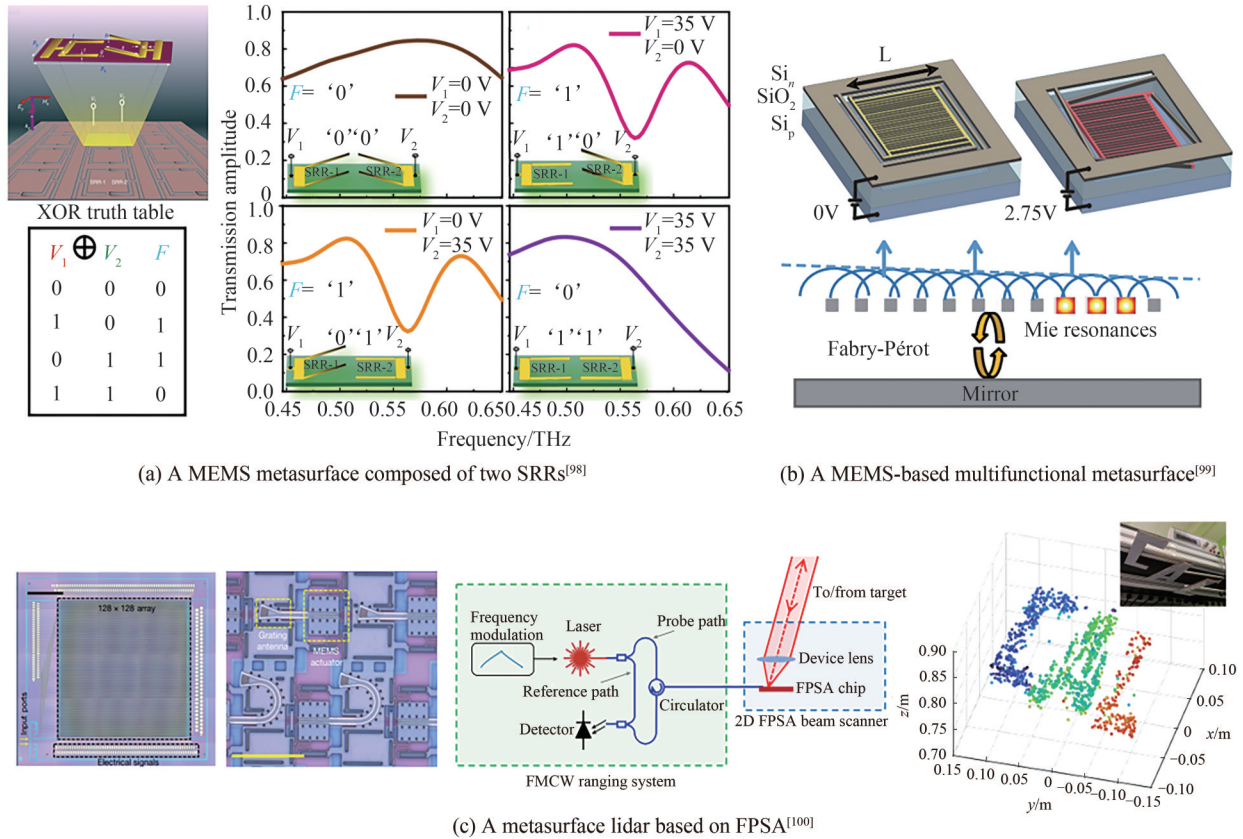


图 11 基于 MEMS 的超构表面功能型器件
Fig.11 MEMS-based metasurface functional devices

MHz,这与上述的基于载流子激发以及电光晶体所实现的调制速率(GHz)相比要慢许多,难以满足一些高速应用要求。尽管如此,随着 MEMS 技术的快速发展,基于 MEMS 的有源超构表面依然具有巨大的潜力,并非非常有希望在可变焦透镜、激光雷达、光子芯片、光电探测器等先进光子器件中发挥重要作用。

2 总结与展望

众多动态超构表面的不断发展正推动着下一代可调谐光学元件的变革。本文根据调控机制将电调谐超构表面的设计路线分为电控载流子激发、液晶调控、电光晶体调控以及 MEMS 驱动四个方向,它们依托于各自的优势在过去的十几年里蓬勃发展并衍生出了许多不同的设计方案。借助于超构表面独特的电磁场局域模式,各个设计方案都在向着 360°的全相位调控以及更大的调制深度不断探索。然而,这些设计方案之间并不是简单的替代关系,而是面向不同的应用环境,可以根据各自的特点相互补充。比如在可见光到太赫兹的调控波段内,TCO、TMDs 以及液晶调控主要应用在可见光到近红外的波段范围。而石墨烯调控、III-V 族半导体与多量子阱调控主要面向中红外到太赫兹波段的应用。在调制速率方面,基于载流子激发原理的调控方案凭借着载流子迁移速度快的优势基本上可以达到 GHz 的调制速率,可以面向许多高速响应的应用。而液晶调控与 MEMS 调控受限于自身响应的滞后性,其调制速率分别只能达到 KHz 以及 MHz。但它们凭借着自身的稳定性以及成熟的工艺技术,已经成功的实现了许多低响应速度的应用。

值得一提的是,电光晶体调控可以覆盖可见光到太赫兹的全波段范围,并且可以具有 GHz 以上的超高调制速率,在众多调制方案中崭露头角。但电光晶体受制于加工工艺以及薄膜化产业不够成熟,基于电光晶体的超构表面设计起步较晚,目前相关的研究还比较少。同时,由于在微纳尺度下的电光效应很弱,带来了调制深度与功耗之间的矛盾,这对超构表面的设计提出了更高的挑战。尽管如此,作为传统电光调制器的主导材料,基于电光晶体的动态超构表面设计仍然潜力巨大。

随着工业 4.0 的深入推进,许多技术应用对易于集成的可调谐光学元件将会有更大的需求。其中包括各种可穿戴设备、自动驾驶、机器人、增强和虚拟现实、通信、传感、成像和显示技术等^[101-104]。电调超构表面

技术与半导体集成电路技术的结合有希望在这些技术的变革升级中发挥重要的作用。许多新颖的调控方式正在不断诞生,比如通过深度学习设计的可编程超构表面^[105, 106],以及通过脑电波无线远程操控超构表面^[107, 108]等等。然而,可调谐超构表面技术目前各自存在着不同的优势和劣势,尽管已经实现了许多出色的应用,但还没有某一种完美的调谐方法可以在各个指标上都满足这些更高级的工业化应用需求。可调谐超表面的研究仅仅发展了十几年,仍然有巨大的研究潜力值得去探索。比如推动微纳加工技术的升级、研究新的活性材料以及新的调控方法,或者将多种调控方案结合使其优势互补,构建复合型可调谐超构表面。尽管实现动态超构表面的工业级应用相当充满挑战,我们仍然可以预见,未来可调谐超构表面的研究将会在跨领域、多学科的协调努力下高速发展,并能够成为推动小型化、集成化新型光电器件应用的重要力量。

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Advances in Electrically Tunable Metasurfaces (Invited)

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Abstract: Metasurfaces have attracted extensive attentions due to their great flexibility in controlling the properties of electromagnetic wave in the past decade. Through engineering the geometry and configuration of building subwavelength structures, all the properties of electromagnetic wave, such as amplitude,

phase, polarization, etc., can be fully manipulated at will. However, the existing metasurfaces usually provide fixed functions after the structure has been fabricated, which is unfriendly to the trend of high-integration and multifunctional nanophotonic devices. Therefore, tunable metasurfaces gradually become a new growth area.

The optical response of metasurfaces highly relies on the resonant properties of individual subwavelength structures. In general, the optical resonance of each subwavelength structure is dependent on the geometry size, configuration and refractive index of either building material or the immediate environment, leading to several mechanisms to realize tunable metasurfaces, i.e., actively tuning the geometry characteristics of structures or the refractive index of involved materials.

At present, there are three design routes for tunable metasurfaces: 1) changing the optical response of the structure by external excitation, such as electric/magnetic/optical excitation, chemical reaction and thermal excitation; 2) using special active materials, such as liquid crystals, phase change materials and functional optical crystals; 3) applying an external force to make the structure deformation, such as Micro-electro-mechanical System (MEMS), flexible tensile materials, etc. These control schemes can make the metasurfaces show flexible dynamic response to incident light. Among various tuning mechanisms, the functionalities of electrically tuning metasurfaces grow as one of the most promising technical routes because it can be readily integrated with mature optoelectric devices and semiconductor manufacturing process.

Based on different responses of some special materials to electric fields, the design scheme of electrically tunable metasurfaces can be classified into several groups. The refractive index of some active materials, such as Transparent Conducting Oxide (TCO), graphene, Transition Metal Dichalcogenides (TMDs) and III-V compound semiconductors, can be electrically tuned by controlling the carrier density. As a result, the amplitude and phase of metasurfaces can be effectively controlled. In particular, by combining with plasmonic resonances or other types of local resonances, the tuning range and rate of amplitude and phase can be further improved. Beam deflection, dynamic focusing, optical switch, etc., have been demonstrated at a wide frequency range by selecting suitable materials. However, the thickness of active layer contributing to the tuning effect is usually very thin, which limits the tuning performance and increases the fabrication challenging.

In contrast, tunable metasurfaces based on liquid crystals provide large refractive index range along with the advantages of low loss and low cost. By covering the dielectric subwavelength structures with liquid crystals, light propagation behaviors can be controlled with low external voltages. However, long response time and microscale molecule size are inapplicable to high speed and miniaturized optoelectric devices. In addition, it is still challenging to improve the damage threshold for high power applications.

Electro-optic (EO) crystals, such as lithium niobate, have an excellent optical response to external voltage and have been widely used in commercialized optoelectric devices. By integrating with subwavelength structures, such tuning capability can be further enhanced with the footprint of the related devices several orders of magnitude smaller. With the advent of new materials, such as PMN-PT, EO crystal based optoelectric devices will attract increasing interest.

Despite the refractive index tuning scheme, the geometry or structure configuration can also be manipulated by an external voltage. Various applications based on the combination of MEMS and subwavelength structures have been demonstrated, such as varifocal lens, logical calculation, and Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) covering a broad frequency range, which will play a crucial role in photonic devices and nanophotonic chips.

In this paper, the main design schemes of electrically tunable metasurfaces in recent years have been reviewed. According to the active materials, electrically tunable metasurfaces can be divided into four groups: electrically controlled carrier excitation, liquid crystal, electro-optic crystal and MEMS. The underlying mechanisms, the developing status, pro and con of various schemes are summarized. Finally, the application prospects of different tuning schemes are discussed and the development trend of this area is forecasted. As the development of design theory, material growth and fabrication technique, we believe that electrically tunable metasurfaces will proliferate rapidly and pave the avenue for miniaturized and integrated multifunctional optoelectric devices.

Key words: Metasurface; Electrical tuning; Active material; Micro-nano structure; Resonance

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