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## Deflecting flexural wave with high transmission by using pillared elastic metasurface

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1 Keywords: metasurface, metamaterials, flexural wave, wave propagation, refraction,  
2 ultrasonic detection

### 3 **1. Introduction**

4 Metasurface, one kind of ultrathin metamaterials within a more compact and easily  
5 fabricated form, was recently proposed to realize the extreme features of bulky  
6 metamaterials [1-4]. The studies on the metasurface with phase discontinuities, based  
7 on the generalized Snell's law (GSL) [5], have made a significant progress in the fields  
8 of optics [5-7] and acoustics [8-11]. However, subsequent development field of elastic  
9 metasurface is relatively weak. The main reason is that the vector nature of elastic  
10 waves makes the elastic metasurface more complex to design than the optic and  
11 acoustic ones, in spite of providing richer underlying physics.

12 Among the existing studies of the elastic metasurface [12-19], the approaches of  
13 adjusting wave phase shift can be reduced to three types: changing the wave velocity  
14 [12-14], changing the propagation distance [15, 16], and tuning local resonance [17-  
15 19]. In the current study, we only consider the elastic plate wave metasurface. For  
16 designing a metasurface, the aforementioned first type usually needs multiple kinds of  
17 materials, and the second one will enormously destroy the integrity of the host structure,  
18 while the third one only needs a single material and destroy the plate as small as possible.  
19 Therefore, tuning local resonance is a good approach to design the metasurface.

20 For the resonance based metasurface, there is an intrinsic coupled relation between  
21 the effective mass  $M_{\text{eff}}$  and effective stiffness  $K_{\text{eff}}$  of the local resonator.  $M_{\text{eff}}$  and  
22  $K_{\text{eff}}$  are intrinsically responsible for the phase shift and transmission [18], respectively.

1 The coupled relation makes it very challenging to design the metasurface which  
2 supports high transmission and full phase control for transmitted waves. This can be  
3 found from the previous study [17], which obtained a low transmission efficiency of  
4 25% by only considering the effect of  $M_{\text{eff}}$  for covering the  $2\pi$  phase shift span.  
5 Recently, breaking the intrinsic coupled relation, Lee *et al.* [18] proposed a full  
6 transmission metasurface for in-plane longitudinal waves. Nevertheless, similar studies  
7 are lacking for other plate waves, such as flexural waves.

8 On the other hand, without considering the coupled relation, accumulating phase  
9 shift by the combination of multiple single units can also realize both high transmission  
10 and full phase control for the transmitted wave, as applied in the studies of the acoustic  
11 metasurface [11, 20]. Based on this idea, Li *et al.* [19] reported an adaptive metasurface  
12 capable of modulating  $A_0$  Lamb waves through a combination of four single  
13 piezoelectric cells in a functional unit. However, the study did not carry out the  
14 corresponding experimental verification. Therefore, it is necessary to propose a new  
15 elastic metasurface with a simple structure and verify its deflecting functionality by the  
16 corresponding experiments.

17 In this paper, we propose an innovative and simple metasurface, which can support  
18 high transmission and full phase control, to deflect the incident flexural wave. The  
19 metasurface is composed of slots and three-dimensional (3D) functional units. The 3D  
20 functional units are combined with multiple slender pillars for phase shift accumulation.  
21 The 2D functional units are firstly designed, and then they are extended to the  
22 corresponding 3D ones. Furthermore, by integrating the 3D functional units, the

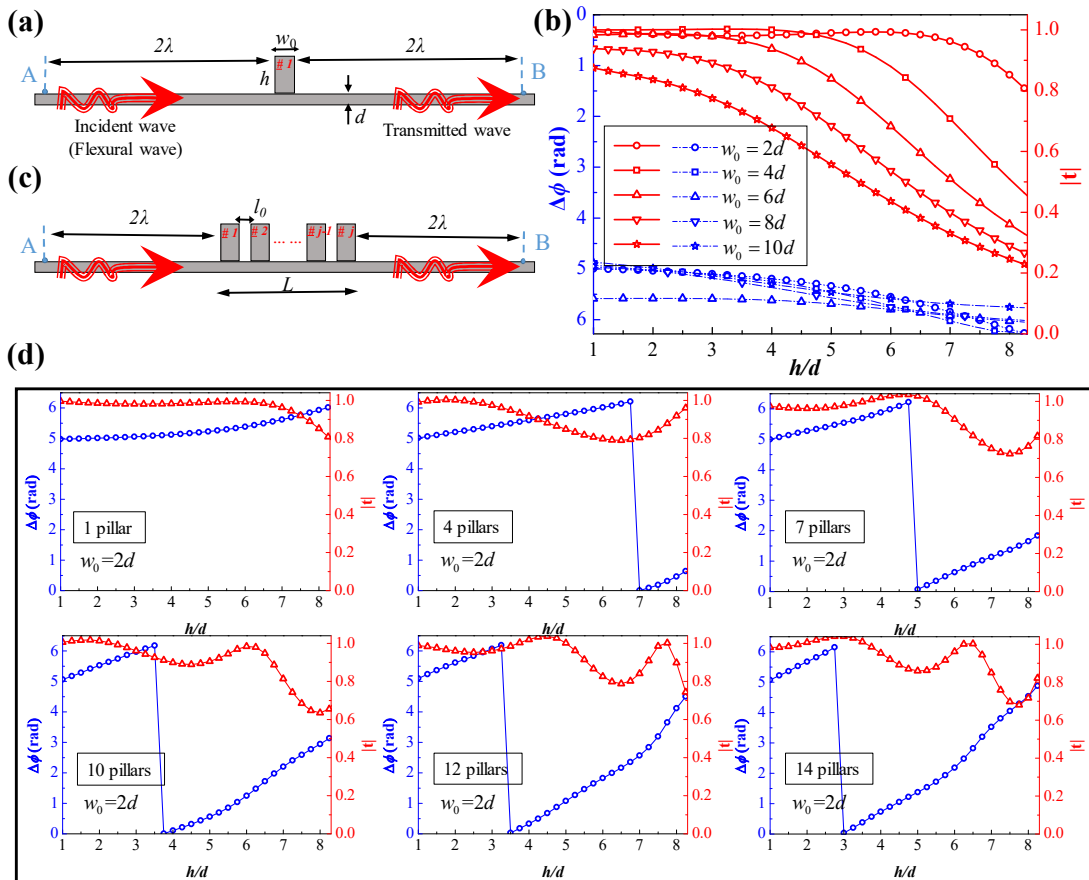
1 metasurface is theoretically designed according to the GSL. Finally, we numerically  
2 investigate wave propagation through the designed metasurface, and carry out the  
3 corresponding verification experiments.

## 4 **2. Design of the pillared metasurface unit**

5 The pillared metasurface is based on the local resonance of the pillar structure. We  
6 firstly consider a single pillar as the unit and use this unit to adjust the amplitude and  
7 phase shift of the transmitted waves by varying the pillar height. However, the pillar  
8 width in the unit needs to be particularly designed. To reduce the computation cost in  
9 the design, the 2D finite element model of a plate with the pillar unit is built in  
10 COMSOL MULTIPHYSICS software (solid mechanics module), as depicted in Fig. 1  
11 (a). The whole pillar and plate are made of aluminum alloy, with elastic modulus of  
12  $E_{\text{alu}} = 70 \text{ GPa}$ , Poisson's ratio of  $\nu_{\text{alu}} = 0.33$ , and the density of  $\rho_{\text{alu}} = 2700 \text{ kg/m}^3$ .  
13 The left and right boundaries of the plate are set as the perfect matched layer (PML) to  
14 avoid any reflection from the boundaries of the plate. An excitation frequency in the  
15 presented study is selected as 6 kHz, which is one of the typical excitation frequencies.  
16 For the aluminum plate with the thickness of  $d = 1 \text{ mm}$  in the established model, the  
17 flexural wave wavelength  $\lambda$  is 40 mm [21]. The exciting force is applied normally  
18 on the surface of the plate (at Point A in Fig. 1 (a)). The amplitude and phase of the  
19 excited flexural wave in the far field (at Point B in Fig. 1 (a)) are examined by varying  
20 the pillar height  $h$ , while the pillar width  $w_0$  is set as five values  
21  $w_0 = 2d, 4d, 6d, 8d, 10d$ , respectively.

22 The transmittance is defined as the ratio of the wave amplitude in the transmitted

1 field (Point B) to that in the incident field. For a plate with pillars, the wave field in the  
 2 incident region is a superposition of the incident field and the small reflection one.  
 3 Therefore, the amplitude of pure incident field needs to be obtained in the plate without  
 4 the pillar. The phase shift is obtained by subtracting the phase in Point B from the initial  
 5 phase in excitation position (Point A). The transmittance and phase shift of transmitted  
 6 waves along with the varying of  $w_0$  and  $h$  are shown in Fig. 1 (b). It can be observed  
 7 that the phase shift does not significantly change along with the varying of the pillar  
 8 height and width. However, the transmittance increases along with the reduction of  
 9 pillar width. Therefore, to obtain the high transmission, the pillar width is selected as  
 10  $2d$  in the metasurface unit.

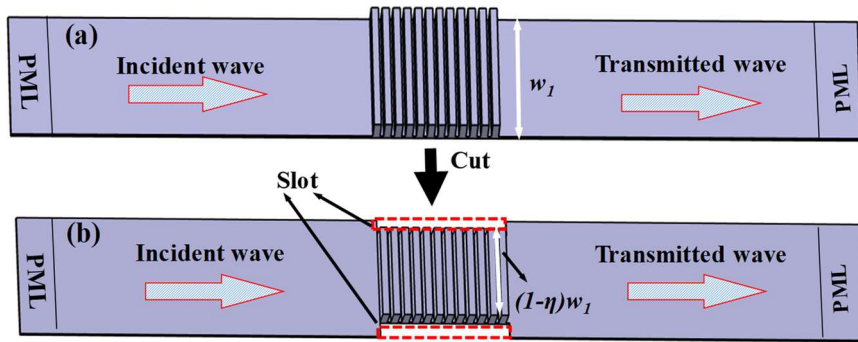


11  
 12 Figure 1. (a) The 2D model diagram of the plate with a single pillar; (b) Phase shift (blue dotted)

1  $\Delta\phi$  and transmittance (red solid)  $|t|$  along with the varying of the dimensionless height  $h/d$ ,  
2 while the width  $w_0$  is set as five values  $w_0 = 2d, 4d, 6d, 8d, 10d$ , respectively; (c) The 2D  
3 model diagram of the plate with multiple single pillars; (d) Phase shift (blue circle)  $\Delta\phi$  and  
4 transmittance (red triangle)  $|t|$  along with the varying of the dimensionless height  $h/d$ , while the  
5 number of identical pillars is set as 1, 4, 7, 10, 12 and 14, for  $w_0 = 2d$ , respectively.

6 The unit must have the capability of shaping the full phase range of  $2\pi$  according  
7 to the GSL. However, for the above unit with the selected pillar width of  $2d$ , the phase  
8 shift span (see Fig. 1 (b)) is limited within a small range (around 0.98 rad with a high  
9 transmittance) along with the varying of the pillar height. For obtaining a full  $2\pi$  phase  
10 shift span, multiple identical pillars are combined to accumulate the phase shift. The  
11 multiple identical pillars make up a functional unit, as shown in Fig. 1 (c). The number  
12 of identical pillars and the gap width between adjacent ones are denoted as  $j$  and  $l_0$ ,  
13 respectively. The gap width  $l_0$  is set as  $d$ . Subsequently, the pillar number in the unit  
14 need to be determined to extend the phase shift span. The transmittance and phase shift  
15 of transmitted waves are examined by varying the pillar height  $h$ , while the pillar  
16 number is set as six values  $j = 1, 4, 7, 10, 12, 14$ , respectively, as shown in Fig. 1 (d). It  
17 can be observed that the phase shift of transmitted waves with high transmission by  
18 varying the pillar height can span over a full  $2\pi$  phase range when the pillar number is  
19 more than 12. Therefore, the pillar number is selected as 12 to constitute the sub-  
20 wavelength functional unit. In this case, its thickness ( $L=35 \cdot d = 35$  mm) is less than  
21 the incident wavelength ( $\lambda = 40$  mm). At this stage, we can tune the only parameter,  
22 i.e. pillar height, to realize full phase control of high transmission wave.

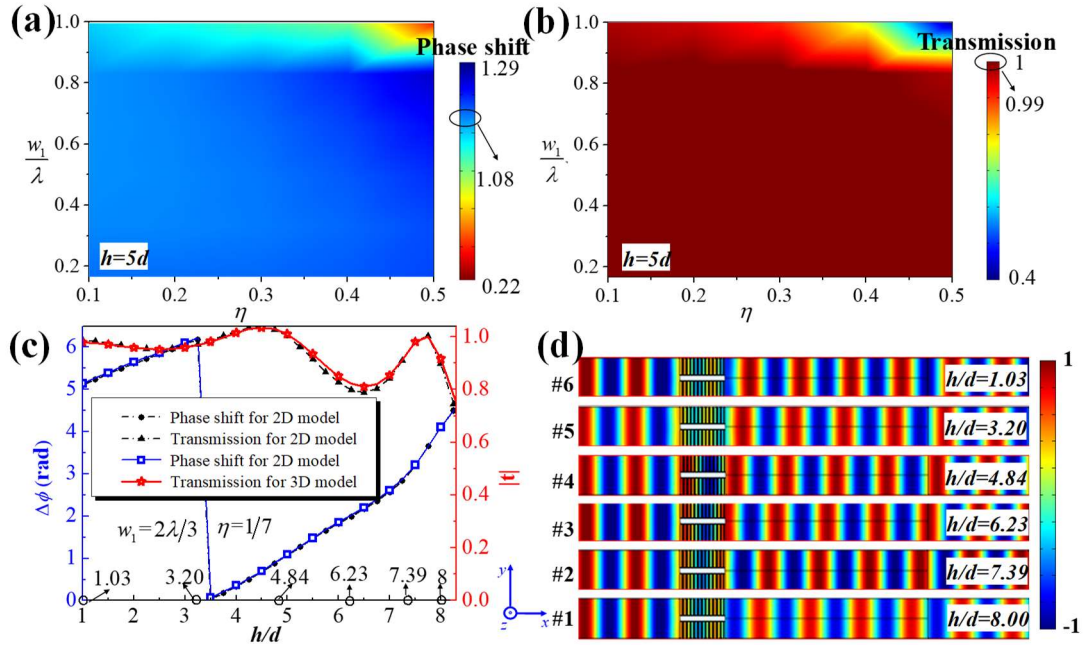
1 The above designed functional unit is embodied in its 2D model. To deflect a  
 2 flexural wave, the functional unit should be designed as the corresponding 3D one in  
 3 Fig. 2 (a), which can be formed by simply stretching the 2D model in Fig. 1 (c). The  
 4 stretched width is denoted as  $w_1$ . The 3D functional unit can be analyzed by applying  
 5 the periodic boundary conditions on the two long boundaries in the 3D strip-like model  
 6 in Fig. 2 (a). The reason is that the metasurface is formed by periodically integrating  
 7 different 3D functional units. Here, the formed 3D functional unit is equivalent to the  
 8 corresponding 2D one after applying the periodic boundary conditions. However, slots  
 9 should be cut from the 3D functional unit to separate adjacent different 3D functional  
 10 units in a metasurface, as shown in Fig. 2 (b). The aim is to avoid the coupling [22]  
 11 between the adjacent different 3D functional units in the integrated metasurface. The  
 12 filling ratio of the slots in one functional unit is denoted as  $\eta$ , which is defined as  
 13 dividing the slot width by the stretched width in a functional unit.



14  
 15 Figure 2. (a) The model diagram of the 3D functional unit without slots; (b) The model diagram of  
 16 the 3D functional unit with slots.

17 After filling slots, the 3D functional unit structure, which can be equivalent to the  
 18 corresponding 2D one, has been changed. The influence of  $w_1$  and  $\eta$  on the  
 19 functionality of the 3D functional unit needs to be investigated. Firstly, the pillar height

1 of the 3D functional unit is arbitrarily selected as  $5d$ . The phase shift and transmittance  
 2 of the transmitted waves are obtained by varying  $w_1$  and  $\eta$ , as shown in Fig. 3 (a)  
 3 and (b). For comparison, the phase shift and transmittance of the transmitted wave for  
 4 the corresponding 2D model without  $w_1$  and  $\eta$  are marked by small circles on the  
 5 right color legend in Fig. 3 (a) and (b). It can be observed that the adjusting wave effect  
 6 of the 3D functional unit and that of the corresponding 2D one are same when  $w_1$  is  
 7 less than  $0.8\lambda$ . The reason is that the greater the value of  $w_1$  is, the bigger the slot is,  
 8 when the filling ratio is fixed (i.e. a small value). The big slot will leads to a strong  
 9 flexural wave scattering. The wave scattering affects the transmission and phase shift.  
 10 Other 3D functional units with different pillar heights also satisfy the same conclusion.



11  
 12 Figure 3. (a) Phase shift and (b) transmittance for the 3D functional unit along with varying the  
 13 stretched width and the filling ratio of slot when the pillar height is  $5d$ . Phase shift and transmittance  
 14 for the corresponding 2D functional unit are marked by small circles on the right color legend; (c)  
 15 Phase shift  $\Delta\phi$  and transmittance  $|t|$  along with varying the dimensionless height  $h/d$  for the

1 3D functional unit. For comparison, phase shift and transmittance for the corresponding 2D  
2 functional unit are also added; (d) The corresponding out-of-plane ( $z$  component) displacement  
3 distribution for the six specific 3D functional units with the height values marked by small circles  
4 in the  $x$  axis of (c).

5 Based on the results shown in Fig. 3 (a) and (b), the stretched width and the filling  
6 ratio of the slots are selected as  $2\lambda/3$  and  $1/7$ , respectively, for realizing equivalence  
7 between the 3D functional unit and the corresponding 2D one. For further verifying the  
8 conclusion, the adjusting wave effect of the designed 3D functional unit is compared  
9 with that of the corresponding 2D one, as shown in Fig. 3 (c). It can be clearly observed  
10 that the phase shift and transmittance curves for the 3D functional unit have a good  
11 agreement with that of the 2D one. It demonstrates that the design of 2D functional unit  
12 is successfully extended to that of the corresponding 3D one. In Fig. 3 (c), six specific  
13 3D functional units are selected to achieve six steps of an equally spaced phase shift to  
14 cover a full  $2\pi$  range. The corresponding dimensionless heights  $h/d$  are shown by six  
15 small circles in the  $x$  axis of Fig. 3 (c). The corresponding out-of-plane ( $z$  component)  
16 displacement distributions are plotted in Fig. 3 (d). Similarly, other number of specific  
17 3D functional units in one supercell can also be selected to cover a full  $2\pi$  range.

### 18 **3. Metasurface design for deflecting flexural wave**

19 The selected 3D functional units, which cover a full  $2\pi$  range, make up the individual  
20 supercell. The width of the formed supercell can be obtained as

$$21 \quad W = i \cdot w_1 \quad (1)$$

22 where  $i$  is the number of functional units in one supercell. The metasurface is formed

1 by periodically integrating the supercells, as shown in Fig. 4. In one supercell, phase  
 2 shift of functional units is set as increasing (decreasing is similar) along the opposite  
 3 direction of the  $y$ -axis. Here, recalling that phase shift of one supercell covers a full  $2\pi$   
 4 range, due to the wave periodicity, phase shift of the transmitted wave through the  
 5 functional units linearly increases along with the opposite direction of the  $y$ -axis.

6 Therefore, the spatial phase shift gradient can be described as

$$7 \quad \frac{d\phi}{dy} = \frac{2\pi}{W} = \frac{2\pi}{i \cdot w_1} \quad (2)$$

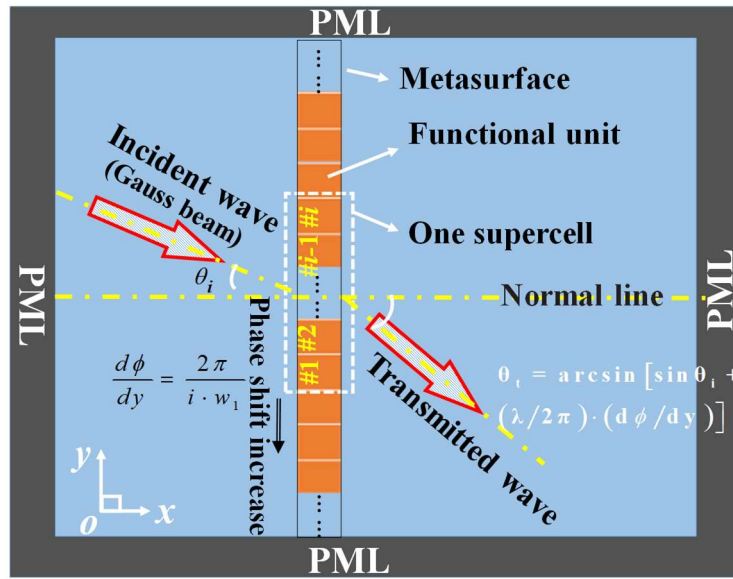
8 According to the GSL, the theoretical refraction angle  $\theta_i$  of the incident wave can be  
 9 calculated by

$$10 \quad \theta_i = \arcsin \left[ \sin \theta_i + \frac{\lambda}{2\pi} \cdot \frac{d\phi}{dy} \right] \quad (3)$$

11 where  $\theta_i$  is the incident angle. According to the above equation, we can adjust the  
 12 phase shift gradient  $d\phi/dy$  to design the arbitrarily required refraction angle of the  
 13 incident wave when the incident angle is given.

14 Firstly, a vertical incident flexural wave is considered, i.e.  $\theta_i = 0$ . When the  
 15 metasurface is composed of the above six selected 3D functional units, the theoretical  
 16 refraction angle of the transmitted wave can be calculated to be  $14.5^\circ$  according to Eqs.  
 17 (2) and (3). To numerically verify tunability of the metasurface, we calculate the  
 18 refraction angle of the incident wave as  $10.8^\circ$  for the metasurface composed of the eight  
 19 different functional units. It should be pointed out that the change of the unit number in  
 20 one supercell will affect spatial resolution along the metasurface direction. The more  
 21 the unit number in one supercell is, the higher the spatial resolution is, and vice versa.

1 A high spatial resolution will lead to a good quality of deflecting phenomenon [23].  
 2 The deflecting phenomenon with a good quality is that the transmitted wave can be  
 3 deflected without any unwanted distortion and other diffraction waves. When the unit  
 4 number in one supercell is more than six, high quality deflecting can be obtained for  
 5 our design.



6  
 7 Figure 4. The schematic diagram of deflecting an incident wave by the metasurface composed of  
 8 periodical supercells. One supercell has  $i$  functional units.

9 Secondly, the incident wave with an incident angle of  $\theta_i = 14^\circ$ , which is one of  
 10 the typical incident angles, is considered to explore the deflecting functionality of the  
 11 metasurface for oblique incident waves. For the convenience of the following  
 12 experimental verification, the metasurface composed of six different functional units is  
 13 considered here. According to Eqs. (2) and (3), the corresponding theoretical refraction  
 14 angle of the transmitted wave can be calculated to be  $29.5^\circ$ . Particularly, when a  
 15 negative incident angle meets with the relation  $|\sin \theta_i| < (\lambda/2\pi) \cdot (d\phi/dy)$ , a positive  
 16 refraction angle can be obtained according to Eq. (3). It demonstrates that negative

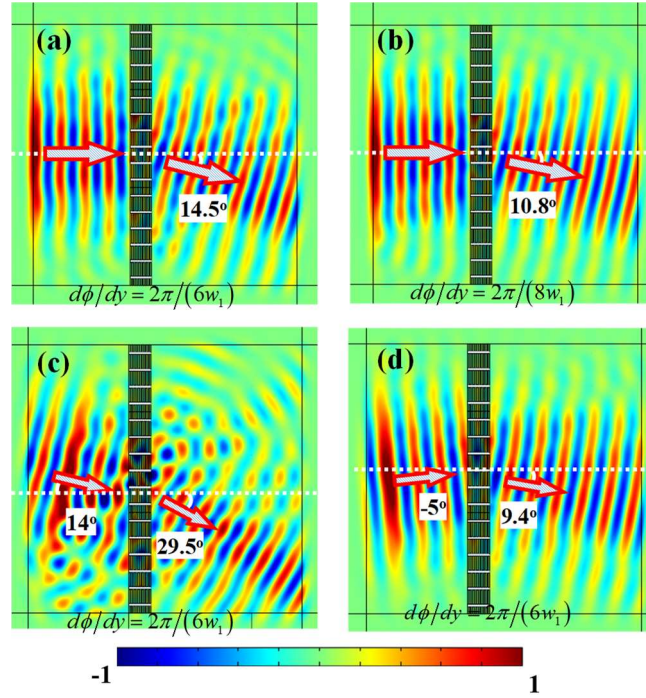
1 refraction will occur. When an incident (transmitted) wave and the one in Fig. 4 are on  
2 the different sides of the normal line, the incident (refraction) angle can be defined as a  
3 negative incident (refraction) angle. The negative refraction means that the incident and  
4 transmitted angle are on the same side of the normal line. As a typical example to realize  
5 negative refraction, the incident angle is set as  $\theta_i = -5^\circ$ , the corresponding theoretical  
6 refraction angle is calculated to be  $9.4^\circ$ .

#### 7 **4. Flexural wave deflection - numerical simulations**

8 The numerical simulations are implemented to demonstrate the deflecting functionality  
9 of designed metasurface for flexural waves. The simulation model is built according to  
10 the model in Fig. 4, and the width of designed metasurfaces is fixed as  $24w_1$ . Firstly,  
11 the black line, which is perpendicular to the prescribed incident wave direction, is built  
12 at the left side of the simulation domain, as shown in Fig. 5. Then, prescribed  
13 displacements in the  $z$ -direction are applied along the black line to generate flexural  
14 wave Gaussian beam. The distribution function of prescribed displacement is  
15  $w_y = \exp\{-[(y-\mu)/\cos\theta_i]^2/(2\delta^2)\}$ , where  $\mu$  is the ordinate of the midpoint in the  
16 black line and the variance  $\delta$  determines the width of Gaussian beam.

17 The flexural wave fields are obtained in terms of out-of-plane displacements ( $z$   
18 component) at the slice located in the upper surface of the plate. The numerical results  
19 are shown in Fig. 5 and the corresponding phase shift gradients of the metasurfaces are  
20 inserted in the bottom of the figures. It can be clearly observed that the vertical and  
21 oblique incident waves have been deflected by the designed metasurface and the  
22 negative refraction appears in the transmitted field. For comparison, the theoretical

1 predictions (see arrows in Fig. 5) are superimposed on the full wave fields obtained  
 2 from the numerical simulations. It can be observed that the theoretical refraction angles  
 3 have an excellent agreement with the numerical ones. It confirms that the designed  
 4 metasurface has the effectively deflecting functionality for vertical and oblique incident  
 5 flexural waves.

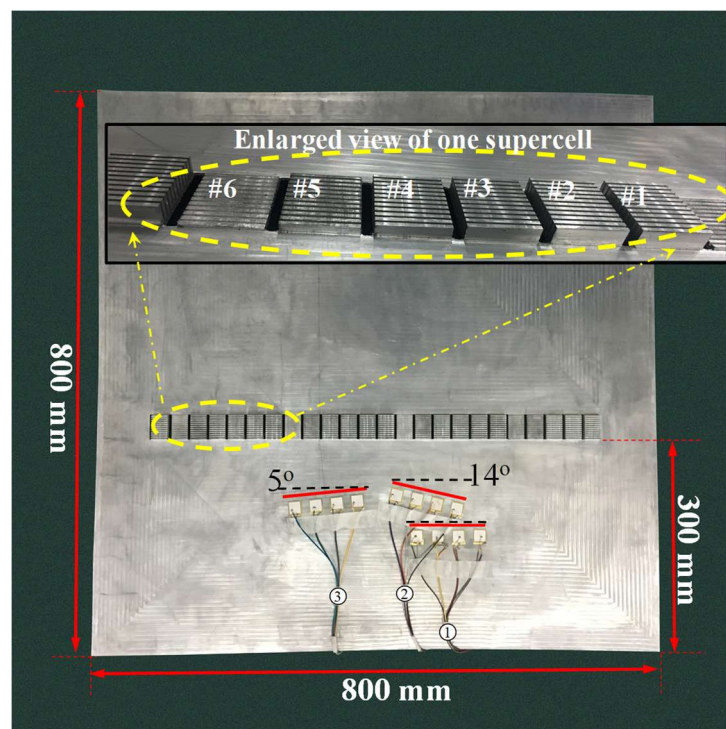


6  
 7 Figure 5. Wave fields for vertical incident flexural wave Gaussian beams through two metasurfaces  
 8 with different phase shift gradients: (a)  $d\phi/dy = 2\pi/(6w_1)$ , (b)  $d\phi/dy = 2\pi/(8w_1)$ . Wave fields for  
 9 oblique incident flexural wave Gaussian beams with different incident angles: (c)  $\theta_i = 14^\circ$ , (d)  
 10  $\theta_i = -5^\circ$  through the metasurface with phase shift gradient  $d\phi/dy = 2\pi/(6w_1)$ .

## 11 5. Flexural wave deflection - experiment

12 In order to further validate the deflecting functionality, we select above designed  
 13 metasurface composed of six different functional units to perform a set of experimental  
 14 investigations. To accurately fabricate the metasurface, the Computer Numerical

1 Control (CNC) milling machine with a manufacturing precision of 0.01 mm is adopted.  
2 Both the metasurface structure and 1-mm-thick aluminum plate are directly obtained  
3 by milling a thick aluminum plate (800 mm × 800 mm × 10 mm), as shown in Fig. 6.  
4 The enlarged view of one supercell in the metasurface sample is shown in the top of  
5 Fig. 6. An array of four piezoelectric patches (19.5 mm × 22 mm × 0.3 mm) is bonded  
6 on the surface of the plate as actuators. The spacing of adjacent piezoelectric patches is  
7 half of the piezoelectric patch width. By rotating the direction of the bonded  
8 piezoelectric patch array, we can get the different incident angles, such as obtaining the  
9 incident angle 14° and -5°, as shown in Fig. 6.



10

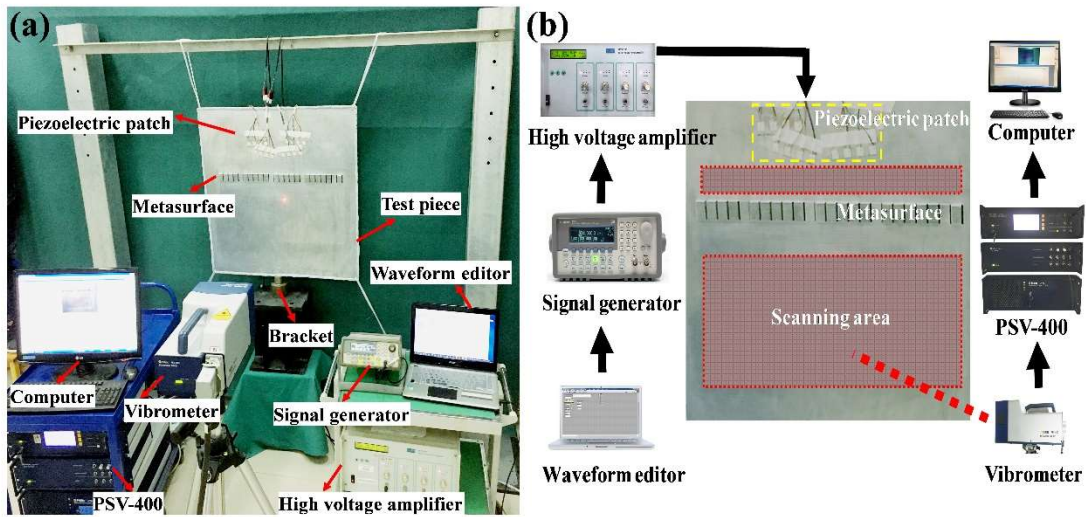
11 Figure 6. The model diagram of the test piece.

12 The test set-up and signal flow chart are shown in Fig. 7 (a) and (b), respectively.

13 The thin test piece is fixed by the lines in four corners of test piece and the bracket in

14 the bottom of test piece. A layer of blue-tack is glued on the boundary edges in order to

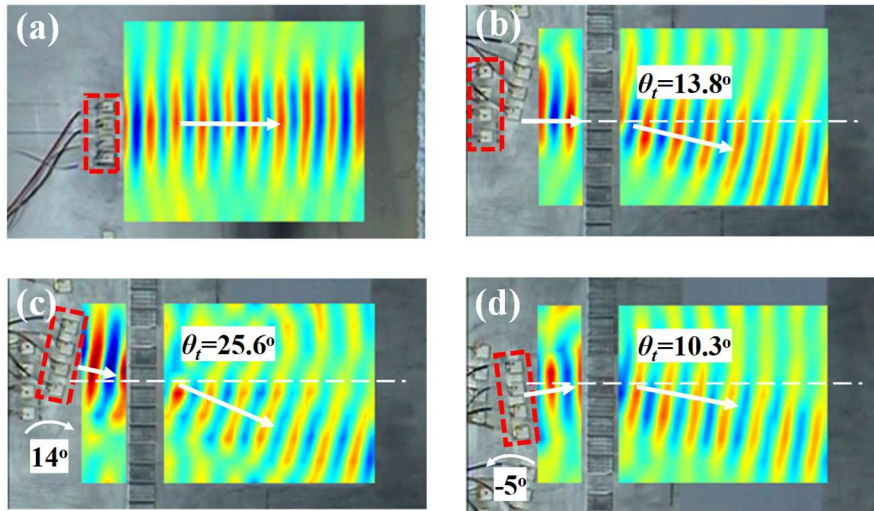
1 minimize reflections from the outer boundary of the test piece. With the controlling of  
 2 the waveform editor (based on Labview Software), the signal generator (Agilent  
 3 33220A) generates a 5-cycle tone burst  $w_t = A_0 [1 - \cos(2\pi f_c t / 5)] \sin(2\pi f_c t)$ , where  
 4  $f_c = 6 \text{ kHz}$  is the central frequency. The piezoelectric patches are driven by a power  
 5 amplifier (HVPA05). The amplified voltage for the two middle piezoelectric patches is  
 6 two times of that for the two external piezoelectric patches. The bonded piezoelectric  
 7 patch array can approximately excite the flexural wave Gaussian beam. The wave fields  
 8 are measured by a PSV-400 scanning laser Doppler vibrometer, which is  
 9 perpendicularly aimed to the plate surface in order to scan the out-of-plane  
 10 displacement fields. In measurement mode of the frequency domain, the full field  
 11 measurements are obtained by scanning about 7 points per flexural wavelength in the  
 12 incident and transmitted areas, except for the metasurface region.



13  
 14 Figure 7. (a) Test set-up; (b) Signal flow chart.

15 The full field experimental measurements for the flexural waves in a plate with  
 16 the metasurface are shown in Fig. 8 (b)-(d). For comparison, the test result for the  
 17 flexural waves in a plate without the metasurface is also given in Fig. 8 (a). From the

1 four test results, it is found that the designed metasurface can abnormally deflect both  
 2 the vertical and oblique incident flexural waves. The experimentally observed angles  
 3 are  $13.8^\circ$ ,  $25.6^\circ$  and  $10.3^\circ$  in Fig. 8 (b)-(d), respectively, recalling that the corresponding  
 4 theoretical angles are  $14.5^\circ$ ,  $29.5^\circ$  and  $9.4^\circ$ . More importantly, all the experimental test  
 5 results are in good agreement with both the theoretical and numerical results. The small  
 6 error mainly comes from the angle of the incident wave excited by the bonded  
 7 piezoelectric patch array.



8  
 9 Figure 8. Test results. (a) Referenced transmitted wave field in a plate without the metasurface;  
 10 Incident and transmitted wave fields in a plate with the metasurface for the incident angles: (b)  $0^\circ$ ,  
 11 (c)  $14^\circ$  and (d)  $-5^\circ$ .

## 12 6. Conclusions

13 We propose and design a simple pillared metasurface to abnormally deflect vertical and  
 14 oblique incident flexural waves based on phase accumulation. The designed  
 15 metasurface supports high transmission and full phase control for flexural waves. It is  
 16 shown that the design of 3D functional units can be guided from that of the  
 17 corresponding 2D ones for simplicity. We have numerically and experimentally verified

1 the functionality of deflecting vertical and oblique incident flexural waves in the  
2 theoretically designed metasurface. The results show that the proposed metasurface is  
3 effective for deflecting the vertical and oblique incident flexural waves in the sub-  
4 wavelength regime. In particular, negative refraction is also realized. The designed  
5 metasurface with a simple structure can lead to promising practical application based  
6 on flexural wave steering in many fields, such as ultrasonic detection, energy harvesting,  
7 and vibration control.

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12

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