



Fig. 1(a)

Valerie Thomas is an American scientist and inventor who patented the illusion transmitter in 1980. After seeing an illusion that involved concave mirrors and light bulbs in a museum, she became curious about how she might apply concave mirrors in her work at NASA. Her invention, the illusion transmitter grew out of her experimentation with concave mirrors. You could call it early 3D technology. Her invention transmits an optical illusion of a 3D image between concave mirrors that looks real on the receiving end. NASA continues to use her technology to this day. She also developed real-time computer data systems to support satellite control centers and oversaw the creation of the NASA Landsat program that spearheaded some of the first image transmissions from space.