



(51) International Patent Classification:
G06T 11/00 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/EP2024/068643

(22) International Filing Date:
03 July 2024 (03.07.2024)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
23183246.0 04 July 2023 (04.07.2023) EP

(71) Applicants: **SIRONA DENTAL SYSTEMS GMBH** [DE/DE]; Fabrikstraße 31, 64625 Bensheim (DE). **DEN-TSPLY SIRONA INC.** [US/US]; Susquehanna Commerce Center 221 W. Philadelphia Street, Suite 60, York, Pennsylvania 17401 (US).

(72) Inventors: **BACHMANN, Oliver**; Fabrikstr. 31, 64625 Bensheim (DE). **EICHNER, Stefan**; Fabrikstr. 31, 64625 Bensheim (DE).

(74) Agent: **ÖZER, Alpdeniz**; SIRONA Dental Systems GmbH - Patentabteilung, Fabrikstraße 31, 64625 Bensheim (DE).

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ,

CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CV, CZ, DE, DJ, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IQ, IR, IS, IT, JM, JO, JP, KE, KG, KH, KN, KP, KR, KW, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MU, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, WS, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, CV, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SC, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- with international search report (Art. 21(3))
- in black and white; the international application as filed contained color or greyscale and is available for download from PATENTSCOPE

(54) Title: COMPUTER-IMPLEMENTED METHOD FOR CORRECTING ARTEFACTS DUE TO ELECTROMAGNETIC DISTURBANCES CAUSED IN X-RAY PROJECTION IMAGES

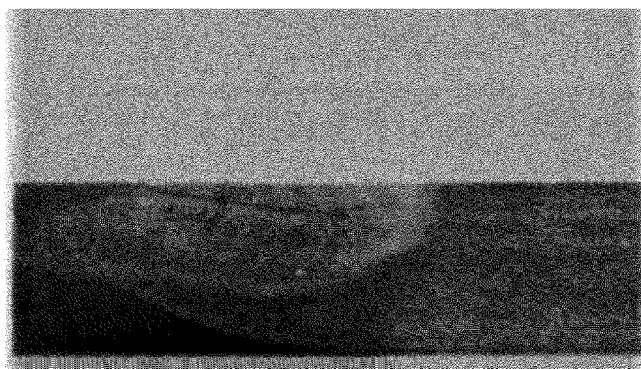


FIG. 11

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to computer-implemented methods for correcting artefacts in x-ray projection images caused by electromagnetic disturbances on an x-ray detector (4) and for generating a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected cephalometric image of a patient based on the artefact corrected projection images.



5 **COMPUTER-IMPLEMENTED METHOD FOR CORRECTING ARTEFACTS**
 DUE TO ELECTROMAGNETIC DISTURBANCES CAUSED IN X-RAY
 PROJECTION IMAGES

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to methods and systems for x-ray imaging of patients in the dental field. The present invention more particularly relates to extraoral x-ray imaging in which artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances caused in x-ray projection images are suppressed in the reconstruction of three-dimensional (3D) volume images, tomosynthesis based images (panoramic images), and/or cephalometric (ceph) images.

BACKGROUND ART OF THE INVENTION

15 Volume images, tomosynthesis based images such as panoramic images, and ceph images are among the standard imaging procedures of all extraoral dental radiographic examinations. Volume images, tomosynthesis based images, and ceph images provide the dentist with information about the patient's dental condition. These images are used by dentists to diagnose problem cases and prepare for treatment.

20 Generally, an extraoral x-ray imaging system has an x-ray source and an x-ray detector that are rotated around the patient's head during the x-ray imaging. The trajectory of the x-ray source and the x-ray detector during the imaging can describe various paths. During the rotation, the x-ray detector acquires x-ray projection images of the patient. The panoramic image is generally reconstructed from the x-ray projection images using standard
25 techniques such a shift-and-add or other techniques known to those skilled in the art. A panoramic image shows the structures located in a physical layer to be sharply viewed within the patient's jaw. The Volume image is generally reconstructed from the x-ray projection images using a standard technique such as the filtered back projection algorithm (e.g., the Feldkamp algorithm). The cheph image can be generated from the volume image.
30 Alternatively, a separate x-ray detector on a cantilever arm can be used for generating a ceph image.

Ambient electromagnetic fields can adversely affect the proper functioning of the x-ray detector, its electrical components, and cabling, so that the acquired x-ray projection

- 5 images may contain image artefacts due to the electromagnetic disturbances. These image artefacts may lead to misdiagnosis and incorrect therapies, which must, however, be avoided accordingly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 The inventors are not aware of any prior art technique in which the image artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances are determined in a frequency domain of the Fourier transformed x-ray projections images, and then subsequently suppressed in the frequency domain or, alternatively, in the spatial domain accordingly to obtain artefact-corrected x-ray projection images for the reconstruction of a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image.

15 Furthermore, the inventors are also not aware of any prior art technique in which the image artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances are determined at least in a region of the x-ray projection image which has been obscured by the x-ray collimator (i.e., unexposed region of the acquired projection image), and subsequently suppressed in the spatial domain accordingly to obtain artefact-corrected x-ray projection images for the
20 reconstruction of a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image.

An objective of the present invention is to provide computer-implemented methods for reducing image artefacts in dental volume images and/or dental tomosynthesis based images and/or ceph images caused by electromagnetic interferences.

25 A further objective of the present invention is to provide an extraoral x-ray imaging system that performs the methods according to the present invention.

These objectives have been achieved by the computer-implemented methods as defined in claim 1, and the x-ray imaging system as defined in claim 4. The subject-matters of the dependent claims define further developments and preferred embodiments.

30 The methods according to the present invention are computer-implemented methods and are each used to correct artefacts in x-ray projection images caused by electromagnetic disturbances on an x-ray detector. These methods are respectively used to generate a

5 corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image of a patient.

According to a first aspect of the present invention the image artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances are determined in a two-dimensional frequency domain of the Fourier transformed x-ray projections images, and then suppressed in the frequency
10 domain.

According to this first aspect of the present invention the method comprises the steps of: providing one or more projection images by means of an x-ray source, an x-ray collimator and the x-ray detector, wherein each projection image is a two-dimensional data array which extends along a first direction and a second direction which is perpendicular to the
15 first direction; Fourier transforming each projection image into a two-dimensional frequency domain; determining for each projection image the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in the two-dimensional frequency domain; suppressing the determined frequency components in each corresponding Fourier transformed projection image in the two-dimensional frequency domain; Inverse Fourier transforming each
20 suppressed projection image in the frequency domain to the two-dimensional spatial domain to obtain an artefact corrected projection image; reconstructing a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image based on the artefact corrected projection images.

An advantageous effect of the present invention is that the artefact correction method
25 reduces the risk of misdiagnosis and incorrect treatment, and avoids repeat exposures. The corrected three-dimensional volume image, the corrected tomosynthesis based image, and the corrected ceph image are substantially free of image artefacts such as ripples and the like.

According to the first aspect of the present invention, the x-ray projection images can be
30 represented as a two dimensional data array, namely a matrix containing the image values. The matrix can correspond to the rows and columns of the x-ray detector. The Fourier transformation of the x-ray projection images are performed numerically as a discrete Fourier transformation with respect to the rows and the columns.

5 According to the first aspect of the present invention, the analysis of the frequency components in the two-dimensional frequency domain, has revealed that the frequency components are characteristically sorted into different ranges which are distinguishable. The first frequency range corresponds to the fundamental frequency. The second frequency range corresponds the frequencies caused by the x-ray collimator. The third frequency
10 range corresponds to the frequencies caused by the artefacts. The fourth frequency range corresponds the frequencies caused by the patient anatomy. Thus, for each projection image the third frequency range can be distinguished from the others, e.g., by setting a mask or a filter that locates the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in the two-dimensional frequency domain.

15 According to the first aspect of the present invention, the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts are set to zero in the two dimensional Fourier domain during the suppressing step.

The above mentioned advantageous effects can also be achieved accordingly through further alternative methods of the present invention. These alternative methods represent
20 further aspects of the present invention, and are summarized below:

According to a second aspect of the present invention the image artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances are determined in the frequency domain of the Fourier transformed x-ray projections images, but subsequently suppressed in the spatial domain to obtain artefact corrected x-ray projection images for the reconstruction of a corrected
25 three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a cephalometric image.

According to the second aspect of the present invention the method comprises: a providing step in which the projection images are provided by means of an x-ray source, an x-ray collimator and the x-ray detector, wherein each projection image is a two-dimensional data
30 array which extends along a first direction and a second direction which is perpendicular to the first direction; a summing step in which the image values in the plurality of one-dimensional data arrays of each projection image, each along the first direction, are respectively summed up to form a plurality of amplitudes; a Fourier transforming step in which the plurality of amplitudes along the second direction, resulting from the preceding

5 summing step are Fourier transformed into one-dimensional frequency components so as to form a one-dimensional frequency domain; a determining step in which for each projection image the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in the one-dimensional frequency domain are determined; an inverse Fourier transforming step in which the frequency components determined in the determining step are inverse Fourier transformed to the one-dimensional spatial domain; a suppressing step in which the inverse Fourier transformed frequency components are suppressed in the corresponding projection image to obtain an artefact corrected projection image; a reconstructing step in which a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image is reconstructed based on the artefact corrected projection images.

15 According to the second aspect of the present invention, when analyzing the frequency components of the one-dimensional frequency domain, it has been found that the frequency components characteristically sort them into different ranges which are distinguishable. The first frequency range corresponds the fundamental frequency of the projection image. The second frequency range corresponds to the frequencies due to the x-ray collimator. The third frequency range corresponds to the frequencies due to the artefacts. The fourth frequency range corresponds the frequencies caused by the patient anatomy. Thus, for each projection image the third frequency range can be distinguished from the others, e.g., by setting a mask or a filter that locates the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in in the frequency domain.

25 According to the second aspect of the present invention, the inverse Fourier transformed frequency components due to the artefacts are entirely subtracted from the corresponding projection image.

30 According to a third aspect of the present invention, the image artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances are determined at least in a region of the x-ray projection image which has been obstructed by the x-ray collimator, and are suppressed in the spatial domain accordingly to obtain artefact corrected x-ray projection images for the reconstruction of a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image.

5 According to the third aspect of the present invention the method comprises the steps of:
providing the projection images by means of an x-ray source, an x-ray collimator and the
x-ray detector; determining for each projection image the spatial components
corresponding to the artefacts in the two-dimensional spatial domain respectively, wherein
the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts are determined in one or more
10 separate regions of the projection image which has been obscured by the x-ray collimator;
suppressing the artefacts by subtracting the determined spatial components corresponding
to the artefact from the corresponding projection image to obtain an artefact corrected
projection image, wherein in the suppressing step the determined artefacts are subtracted at
least from one or more regions in the corresponding projection image which has *not* been
15 obscured by the x-ray collimator; reconstructing a corrected three-dimensional volume
image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image based on the
artefact corrected projection images.

According to the third aspect of the present invention, depending on the local orientation of
the electromagnetic noise source, the amplitude of the artefacts may spatially vary over the
20 projection images. This anisotropy of the electromagnetic disturbance can be detected by
comparing the amplitudes of the artefacts in the regions of the projection image which has
been obscured by the x-ray collimator. In case of such anisotropy the artefacts determined
in said one or more separate regions of the projection image which has been obscured by
the x-ray collimator, are preferably weighed, and then subtracted at least from one or more
25 regions in the corresponding projection image which has not been obstructed by the x-ray
collimator. By the weighing process, the artifact correction of the projection images can be
more effectively adapted to the actual electromagnetic disturbance pattern/profile.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the following description, the present invention will be explained in more detail with
30 reference to the exemplary embodiments and with reference to the drawings, wherein.

Fig. 1 - shows a schematic drawing of an x-ray imaging system according to an
embodiment according to the present invention;

- 5 Fig. 2A - shows a flowchart of a computer-implemented method according to a first
embodiment according to the preset invention;
- Fig. 2B - shows a flowchart of a computer-implemented method according to a
second embodiment according to the preset invention;
- 10 Fig. 2C - shows a flowchart of a computer-implemented method according to a third
embodiment according to the preset invention;
- Fig. 3 - shows an x-ray projection image having artefacts caused by electromagnetic
disturbances on an x-ray detector;
- Fig. 4 - shows an x-ray projection image which has been Fourier transformed into
the two-dimensional frequency domain according the first embodiment of
15 the preset invention;
- Fig. 5 - shows the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in the two-
dimensional frequency domain of Fig. 4, after the DC noise has been
removed for ease of illustration;
- Fig. 6 - shows the Fourier transformed projection image in the two-dimensional
20 frequency domain of Fig. 5 after the frequency components corresponding
to the artefacts have been suppressed;
- Fig. 7 - shows an artefact corrected x-ray projection image obtained by inverse
Fourier transforming the artefact suppressed Fourier transformed projection
image of Fig. 6;
- 25 Fig. 8 - shows a graphically augmented flowchart of the computer-implemented
method according to the second embodiment of the present invention;
- Fig. 9A - shows various exposed and unexposed regions of a projection image to be
artifact corrected according to the computer-implemented method according
to the third embodiment of the present invention;

- 5 Fig. 9B - shows a graphically augmented flowchart of the computer-implemented method according to a variation of the third embodiment of the present invention;
- Fig. 10 - shows a tomosynthesis based image according to the prior art which has been reconstructed using x-ray projection images having artefacts caused by
- 10 electromagnetic disturbances, wherein the artefacts are visually conspicuous;
- Fig. 11 - shows a corrected tomosynthesis based image obtained through reconstruction of the artefact corrected projection images as shown in Fig. 7.

 The reference numbers shown in the drawings designate the elements listed below, which

15 are referred to in the following description of the exemplary embodiments.

1. X-ray imaging system
2. X-ray imaging device
3. X-ray source
4. X-ray detector
- 20 5. Operating unit (user interface)
6. Head fixation
7. Bite block
8. Computing unit (Computer)
9. Display device (Screen)
- 25 10. Input device (Keyboard)
11. Input device (Mouse)

I: X-ray projection image

X: First direction

Y: Second direction

30 Z: Third direction

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

5 In the following description, an x-ray imaging system (1) and alternative x-ray imaging methods according to the present invention will be explained in more detail. These methods are computer-implemented methods and can be carried out on a computer-implemented x-ray imaging system (1) as schematically shown in an embodiment in Fig. 1.

The present invention also includes corresponding computer programs having computer-readable codes respectively implementing these methods. The computer programs are
10 provided on computer readable storage media (not shown) accessible to the computerized x-ray imaging system (1). In the following description, the x-ray imaging system (1) will be explained in more detail.

The X-ray imaging system

15 The computerized x-ray imaging system (1) (hereinafter shortly referred to as the system (1)) comprises an x-ray imaging device (2) for performing patient dental imaging. The x-ray device (1) has different dental imaging modalities such as volume imaging, panoramic imaging, and ceph imaging.

The x-ray system (1) is preferably configurable as an IoT system which can be
20 bidirectionally connected via a local area network and/or the Internet (not shown) to other dental devices such as optical intraoral scanners (not shown), dental milling machines (not shown), additive manufacturing machines (not shown), and the like for data exchange, remote control, cloud computing, and the like.

The x-ray device (2) has an x-ray source (3), an x-ray collimator (not shown), and an x-ray
25 detector (4) that are rotated around the patient's head during the imaging by means of a driving mechanism (not shown). The x-ray system (1) may also have an additional x-ray-detector on a cantilever arm (not shown) for acquiring one or more x-ray projection images for cephalometric imaging.

The trajectory of the x-ray source (3) and the x-ray detector (4) during the imaging can
30 describe a circular path. However, it can also assume a form deviating from this. If at least some actuators (not shown) of the driving mechanism are controlled simultaneously, a trajectory deviating from a pure circular path around the patient's head can be achieved.

- 5 The patient's head can be optionally positioned in the x-ray device (2) with a bite block (6) and/or a head fixation (7).

The various possible trajectories (*course*) of the x-ray source (3) and the x-ray detector (4) with respect to the bite block (7) and the head fixation (6) are calibrated for the system (1).

The x-ray detector (4) detects the x-rays emitted by the x-ray source (3) during the rotation.

- 10 The x-ray projection images (I) are acquired, namely read out from the x-ray detector (4) in synchronization with x-ray source (3) and the driving mechanism.

- The computerized x-ray system (1) comprises an operating unit (5) such as a user interface, a computing unit (8) such as a computer (8) which can be connected to the x-ray device (2), a display device (9) such as a screen for visualizing data sets, and input devices such as a keyboard (10) and a mouse (11). The operating unit (5) can be connected to x-ray system (1) through wireless or alternatively through a wire communication. The operating unit (5) has a display, preferably with a touchscreen for controlling, setting and operation of the x-ray device (2).
- 15

- The computer (8) may be connected to the x-ray device (2) through a wired or alternatively through a wireless communication via a local area network (not shown) or, alternatively, via the Internet. The computer (8) may be also part of a cloud. Alternatively, the computer (8) may be integrated into the x-ray device (2). Alternatively, all or some of the computations of the computer-implemented methods may take place in the cloud as cloud computing.
- 20

- 25 The screen (9) may be provided spatially separate from or integrated with the x-ray device (2). Preferably, the computer (8) may also be used to control all functions, settings, and operation of the x-ray device (2). Alternatively, one or more computers (8) may be used for controlling the setting and operation of the x-ray system (1).

- The computer (8) executes the computer program and provides the data sets, e.g., the projection images, the three-dimensional volume images or tomosynthesis based images or ceph images for visualization on the screen (9).
- 30

X-ray imaging methods for Artefact Correction

- 5 In the following description Embodiment 1 and Embodiment 2 are examples for better understanding the invention. These are outside the scope of the invention as claimed.

1st Embodiment

A flowchart of a method according to the first embodiment for correction of artefacts due to electromagnetic disturbances (herein shortly referred to as “artefacts”) caused in x-ray
10 projection images is shown in Fig. 2A.

In step (S1), the x-ray projection images (I) as shown in Fig. 3 are acquired by means of the x-ray source (3), the x-ray collimator and the x-ray detector (4) of the x-ray system (1). Each x-ray projection image (I) (herein also shortly referred to “projection image”) is a
15 two-dimensional data array which extends along a first direction (x) and a second direction (y) which is perpendicular to the first direction. The first direction (x) and the second direction (y) are preferably aligned with the rows and columns of the x-ray detector (4).

In step (S2), each projection image is Fourier transformed into a two-dimensional frequency domain as shown in Fig. 4 (see eq. 1 below). In the Fourier transforming step
20 (S2), the plurality of one-dimensional data arrays of the projection image, each along the first direction (x), are respectively Fourier transformed into a plurality of one-dimensional frequency components each along the first direction (x). Subsequently, the plurality of one-dimensional frequency components, each along the second direction (y), resulting from the preceding step, are Fourier transformed into a plurality of one-dimensional frequency
25 components each along the second direction (y) so as to form a two-dimensional frequency domain. Eq.1 is:

$$\hat{a}_{k,l} = \sum_{m=0}^{M-1} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} a_{m,n} \cdot e^{-2\pi i \frac{mk}{M}} \cdot e^{-2\pi i \frac{nl}{N}}$$

Wherein $k = 0, \dots, M - 1$ and $l = 0, \dots, N - 1$. Wherein the x-ray projection images can
30 be represented as a two-dimensional data array, namely as matrix with size M times N including the image values $a_{m,n}$ in the spatial domain. And $\hat{a}_{k,l}$ denotes the image values in the frequency domain. The matrix can be coincided with the rows (M) and columns (N) of the x-ray detector (4).

5

In step (S3), for each projection image the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in the two-dimensional frequency domain are determined. The frequency components corresponding to the artefacts are shown in Fig. 5 by the dashed line. The DC noise has been optionally removed for better illustration. In the determining step (S3), the

10

frequency components of the two-dimensional frequency domain are sorted increasingly according to their frequencies so as to correspond to at least four frequency ranges. The

artifacts can be identified as those frequency components in the 3rd frequency range,

viewed from the counting direction from lowest to the highest frequency range. The first frequency range comprises the fundamental frequency of the projection image. The second

15

frequency range comprises the frequencies due to the x-ray collimator. The third frequency range comprises the frequencies due to the artefacts. The fourth frequency range comprises the frequencies due the patient anatomy. Herein, for each projection image the third

frequency range is determined to correspond to the artefacts in the two-dimensional

frequency domain. The identification of the artefacts can be implemented by using a mask

20

for the first column in Fig. 5. As a result, the first column represent the low frequency part and allows to identify the fundamental frequency, and the spectral range due the collimator and the patient anatomy. wherein the rest allows to identify the spectral range for the artefacts.

25

In step (S4), the determined frequency components in the corresponding Fourier transformed projection image are suppressed in the two-dimensional frequency domain as shown in Fig. 6. In the suppressing step (S4), the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts are preferably set to zero. Wherein $\hat{a}_{k,l}$ denotes the image values in the frequency domain after suppression of the artefacts in $\hat{a}_{k,l}$.

30

In step (S5), the suppressed projection images in the frequency domain are inverse Fourier transformed to the two-dimensional spatial domain to obtain the artefact-corrected projection images as shown in Fig. 7.

$$\hat{a}_{m,n} = \frac{1}{MN} \sum_{k=0}^{M-1} \sum_{l=0}^{N-1} \hat{a}_{k,l} e^{2\pi i \frac{mk}{M}} e^{2\pi i \frac{nl}{N}}$$

Wherein $m = 0, \dots, M - 1$ and $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$. Wherein $\hat{a}_{m,n}$ denotes the artefact-corrected projection image.

- 10 In step (S6), a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image is reconstructed based on the artefact corrected projection images. As an example, the corrected tomosynthesis based image is shown in Fig. 11. For comparison, a tomosynthesis based image according to the prior art is shown in Fig 10. The tomosynthesis based image of Fig. 10 has been reconstructed by using x-ray
15 projection images having artefacts caused by electromagnetic disturbances. The artefacts are visually conspicuous (see ripple shaped structures). In contrast thereto, the artefacts are substantially reduced, thus corrected as seen in Fig. 11.

2nd Embodiment

- 20 An artefact correction method according to the second embodiment is shown in Fig. 2B.

In step (S10), the x-ray projection images (I) as shown in Fig. 3 are acquired by means of the x-ray source (3), the x-ray collimator and the x-ray detector (4) of the x-ray system (1). Each x-ray projection image (I) is a two-dimensional data array which extends along a first direction (x) and a second direction (y) which is perpendicular to the first direction. The
25 first direction (x) and the second direction (y) are preferably aligned with the rows and columns of the x-ray detector (4).

In step (S20), a summing operation is performed. In Step (20), the image values in the plurality of one-dimensional data arrays of the projection image, each along the first
30 direction (x), are respectively summed up to form a plurality of amplitudes. This is shown in the first frame (a) of Fig. 8. This can be described as follows:

$$A_m = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} a_{m,n} \omega^{mn} = a_{m,0} + a_{m,1} + a_{m,2} + \dots + a_{m,N-1}$$

$$\omega := e^{-2\pi i/4}$$

Wherein $a_{m,n}$ represents the image value in the data array (M x N) of the projection image along long the first direction (x). And A_m represents the amplitudes along the second direction (y) which result after the summation.

- 10 In step (S21), the plurality of amplitudes along the second direction (y), resulting from the preceding summing step (S20) are Fourier transformed into one-dimensional frequency components so as to form a one-dimensional frequency domain. This is shown in the second frame (b) of Fig. 8.

$$\hat{A}_k = \sum_{m=0}^{M-1} A_m \omega^{\frac{mk}{M}}$$

- 15 In step (S30) for each projection image the frequency components corresponding to the artefacts in the one-dimensional frequency domain are determined. This is schematically shown in the third frame (c) of Fig. 8. In step (S30), the frequency components of the one-dimensional frequency domain are sorted increasingly according to their frequencies so as to correspond to at least four frequency ranges. The first frequency range comprises the
 20 fundamental frequency of the projection image. The second frequency range comprises the frequencies due to the x-ray collimator. The third frequency range comprises the frequencies due to the artefacts. The fourth frequency range comprises the frequencies due the patient anatomy. Herein, for each projection image the third frequency range is determined to correspond to the artefacts in the spatial domain. Wherein $\hat{A}_k$ are the
 25 artefacts.

- Artifacts are identified as the frequency components in the 3rd frequency range, viewed from the counting direction from lowest to the highest frequency range. This can be implemented as above by using a mask which identifies the fundamental frequency and the spectral range due the collimator and the patient anatomy. The rest is identified as the
 30 spectral range for the artefacts.

- 5 In step (S40), the frequency components determined in the determining step (S30) are inverse transformed to the one-dimensional spatial domain. This is shown in the fourth frame (d) of Fig. 8.

$$\hat{A}_m = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{k=0}^{M-1} \hat{A}_k \omega^{\frac{mk}{M}}$$

- 10 In step (S50), the inverse Fourier transformed frequency components in step (S40) are suppressed in the corresponding projection image. This is shown in the last frame (e) of Fig. 8.

In the suppressing (S50) step, the inverse Fourier transformed frequency components in step (S40) are subtracted column wise from the corresponding projection image to obtain an artefact corrected projection image.

- 15 In step (S60) step, a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image based on the artefact corrected projection images is reconstructed.

3rd Embodiment

- 20 An artefact correction method according to the third embodiment is shown in Fig. 2C.

- In step (S100), the x-ray projection images (I) as shown in Fig. 3 (see also Fig. 9A) are acquired by means of the x-ray source (3), the x-ray collimator and the x-ray detector (4) of the x-ray system (1). Each x-ray projection image (I) is a two-dimensional data array which extends along a first direction (x) and a second direction (y) which is perpendicular to the first direction. The first direction (x) and the second direction (y) are preferably aligned with the row and column direction of the x-ray detector (4).
- 25

- In step (S300) for each projection image (I), the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts are determined in the two-dimensional spatial domain respectively, wherein specifically the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts are determined in one or more separate regions (R1; R2) of the projection image as shown in Fig. 9A, which have
- 30

5 been obscured by the x-ray collimator. The dashed lines show example regions which have been (see R1; R2) and have not been (see R1'; R2') obstructed by the x-ray collimator.

In step (S400), the determined spatial components corresponding to the artefact are suppressed by subtracting them from the corresponding projection image. In particular, in
10 the suppressing step (S400) the determined artefacts are subtracted at least from one or more regions (R1', R2') as shown in Fig. 9A in the corresponding projection image which has not been obstructed by the x-ray collimator.

In step (S600), a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis
15 based image or a corrected ceph image is reconstructed based on the artefact corrected projection images.

Weighing of Artefacts

In a variation of the third embodiment, the artefacts are weighted. In the determining step
20 (S300), the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts determined in said one or more separate regions (R1, R2) are weighted as shown in part (a) of Fig 9B.

In the subtracting step (S400), the weighted artefacts are subtracted at least from one or more regions (R1', R2') in the corresponding projection image which has not been
25 obstructed by the x-ray collimator.

In Fig. 9B an example for the weighing has been illustrated graphically for a random electromagnetic disturbance profile. According thereto, the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts in one or more regions (R1', R2') are weighted e.g, summed
30 up on the unexposed region in the second direction (y), and interpolated towards the exposed region of the projection image in the second direction (y). Depending on the local orientation of the electromagnetic noise source, the effect of the amplitude of the artefact may vary spatially. Therefore, the interpolation between the opposed unexposed regions can be performed linearly and/or non-linearly, and can preferably assume

- 5 decreasing/increasing amplitude value (third direction (z)) in view of the mentioned orientation of the electromagnetic noise source. The third direction (z) is perpendicular to both the first and the second direction and denotes the image / artefact Amplitude.

5 CLAIMS

1. Computer-implemented method for correcting artefacts in x-ray projection images caused by electromagnetic disturbances on an x-ray detector (4) and for generating a
10 corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected tomosynthesis based image or a corrected cephalometric image of a patient, comprising the steps of:

providing (S100) one or more projection images by means of an x-ray source (3),
an x-ray collimator and the x-ray detector (4);

characterized by further comprising the steps of:

15 determining (S300) for each projection image the spatial components
corresponding to the artefacts in the two-dimensional spatial domain respectively, wherein
the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts are determined in one or more
separate regions (R1, R2) of the projection image which has been obscured by the x-ray
collimator;

20 suppressing (S400) the artefacts by subtracting the determined spatial components
corresponding to the artefact from the corresponding projection image to obtain an artefact
corrected projection image, wherein in the suppressing step (S400) the determined artefacts
are subtracted at least from one or more regions (R1', R2') in the corresponding projection
image which has not been obscured by the x-ray collimator;

25 reconstructing (S600) a corrected three-dimensional volume image or a corrected
tomosynthesis based image or a corrected ceph image based on the artefact corrected
projection images.

30 2. The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, characterized in that in
the determining step (S300) the spatial components corresponding to the artefacts
determined in said one or more separate regions (R1, R2) are weighted, and in the
subtracting step (S400) the said weighted artefacts are subtracted at least from one or more
regions (R1', R2') in the corresponding projection image which has not been obstructed by
35 the x-ray collimator.

5

3. A computer program comprising computer-readable code which, when executed by a computer-assisted x-ray imaging system (1), causes said system (1) to perform the
10 method of any one of the preceding claims.

4. A computer-assisted x-ray imaging system (1) comprising a computing unit (8) configured to execute the computer program according to claim 3.

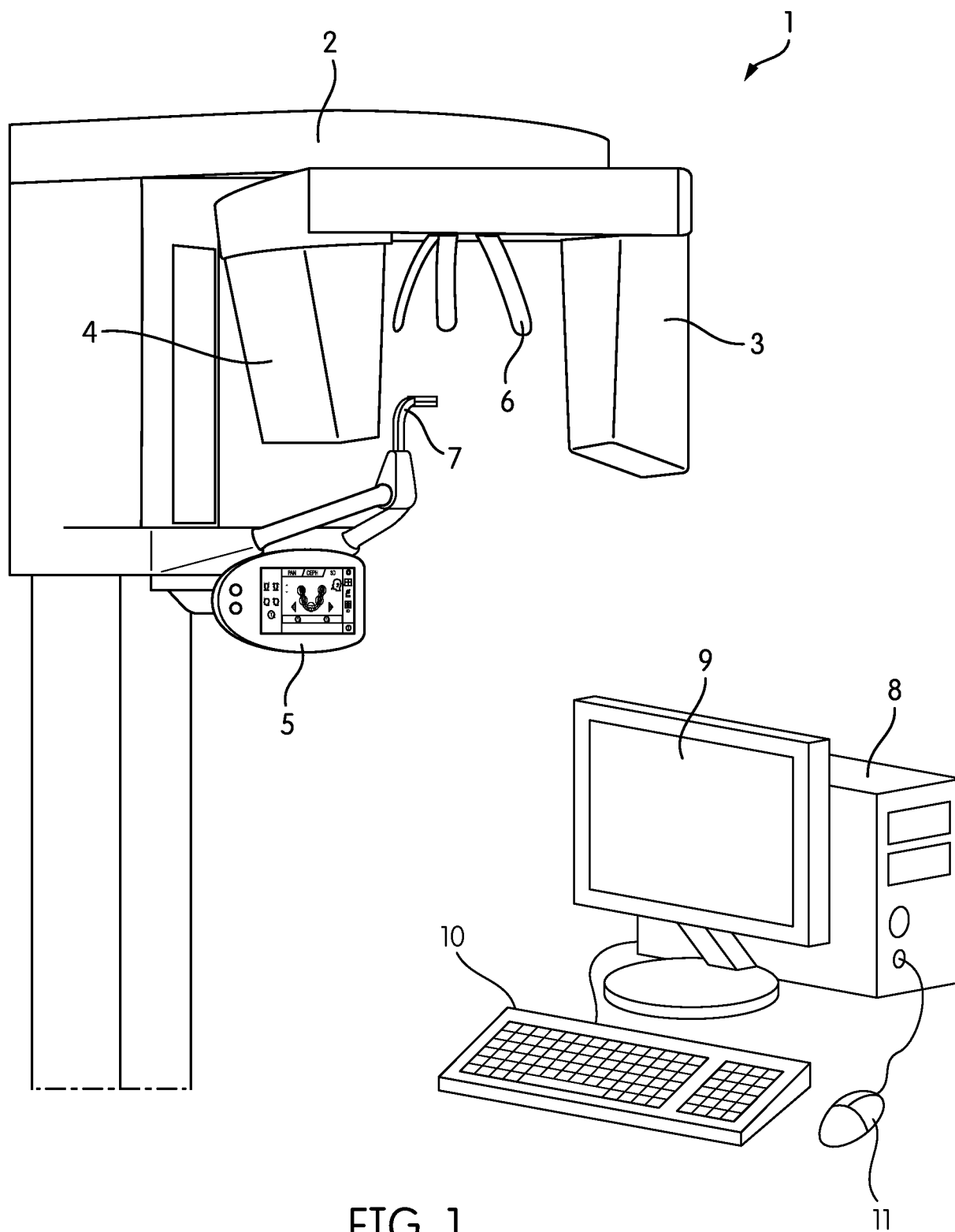


FIG. 1

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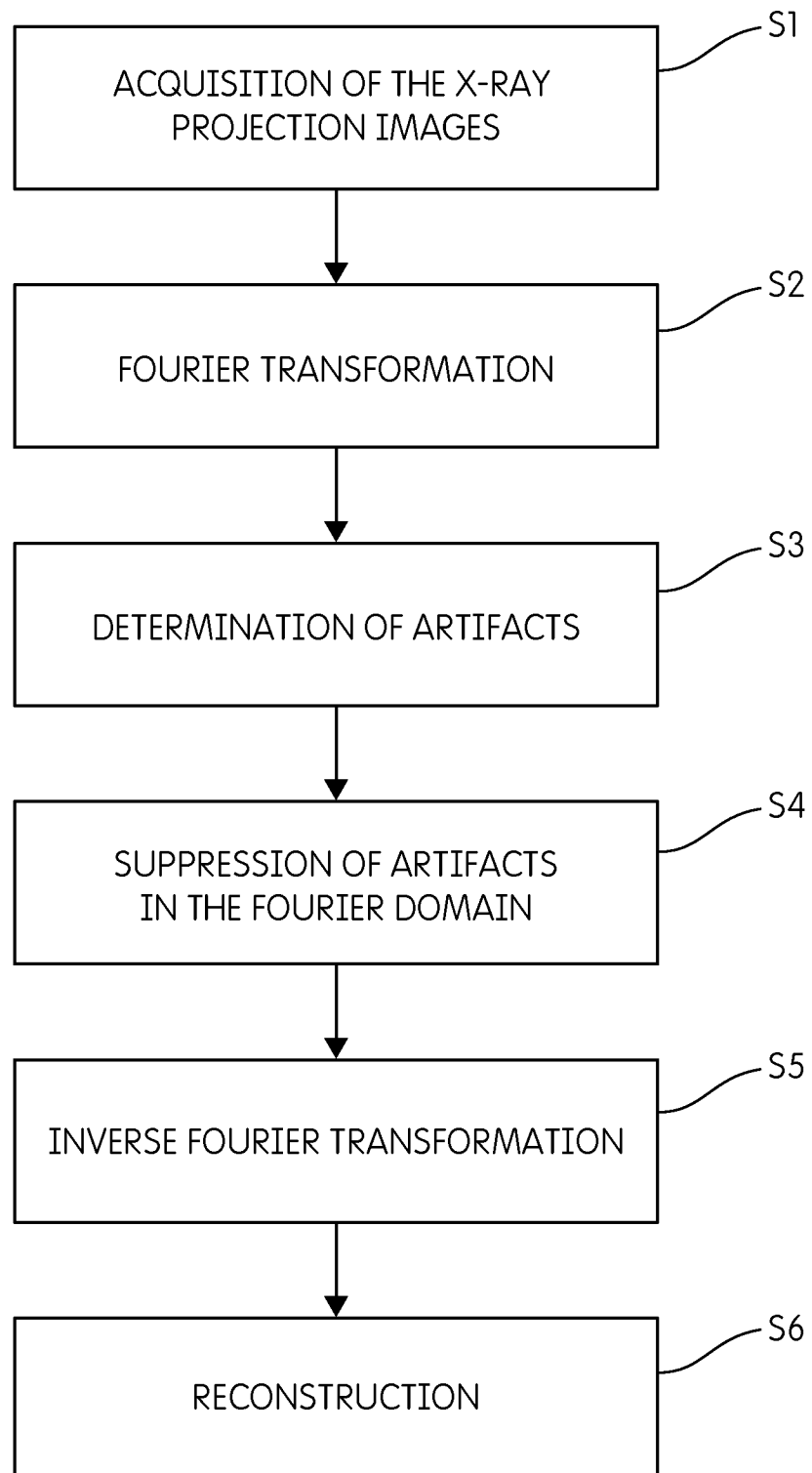


FIG. 2A

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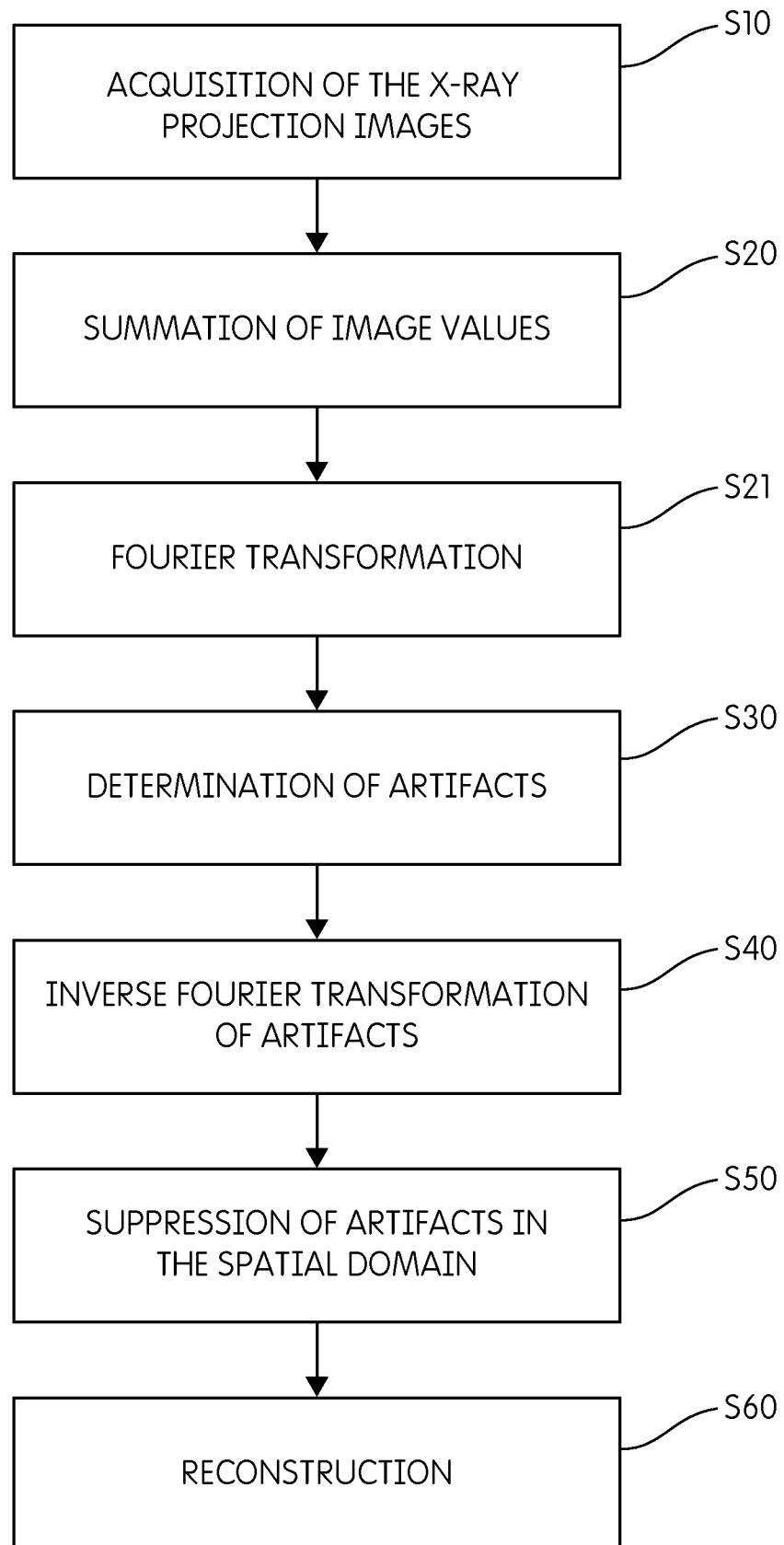


FIG. 2B

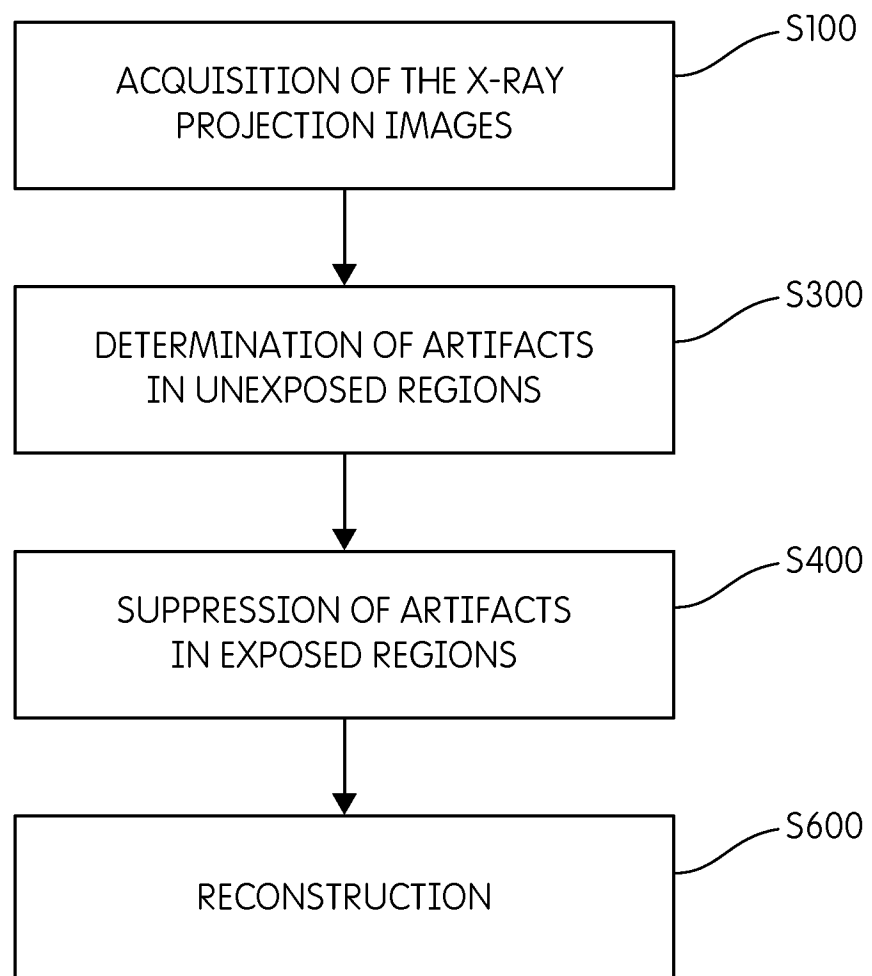


FIG. 2C

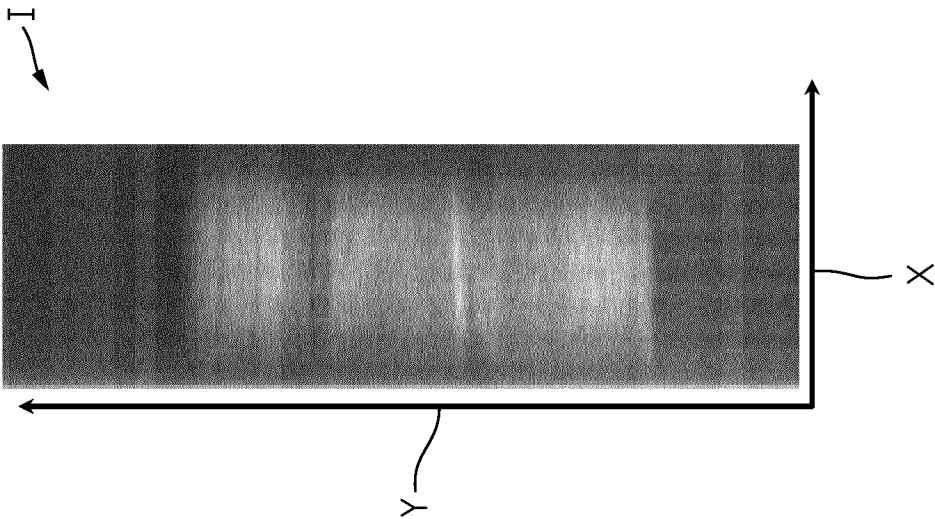


FIG. 3

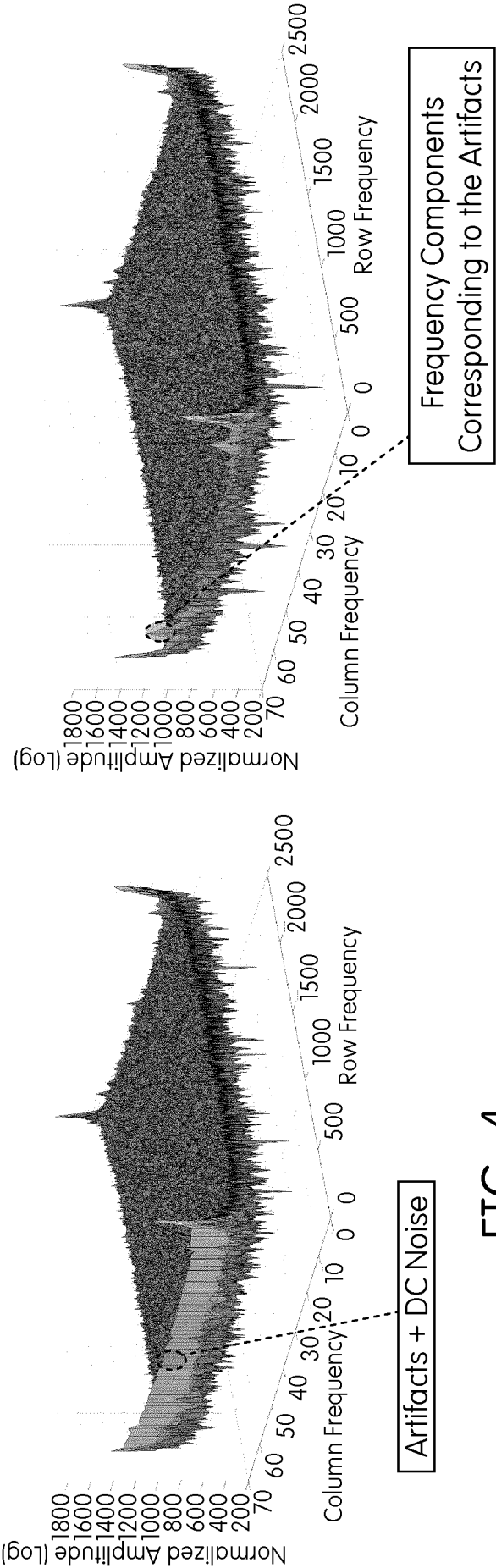


FIG. 4

FIG. 5

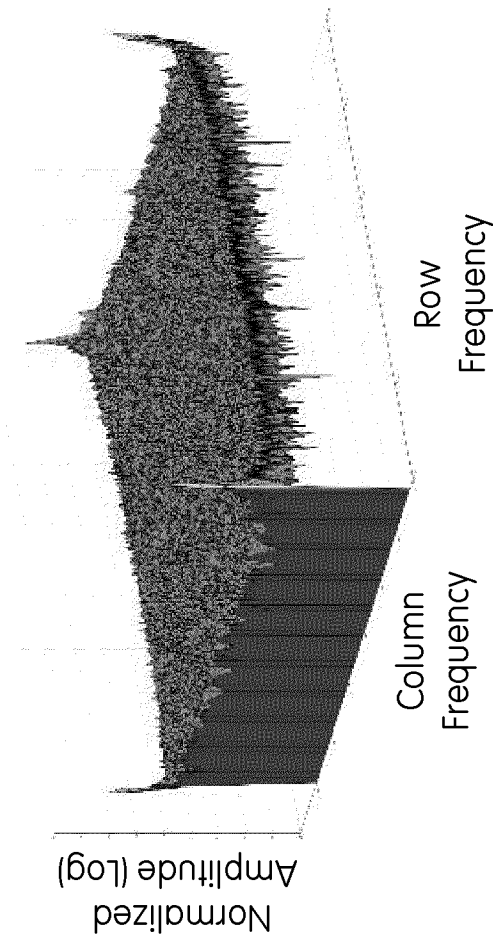


FIG. 6

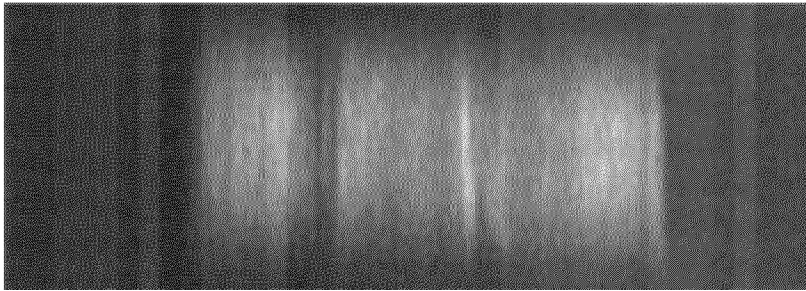


FIG. 7

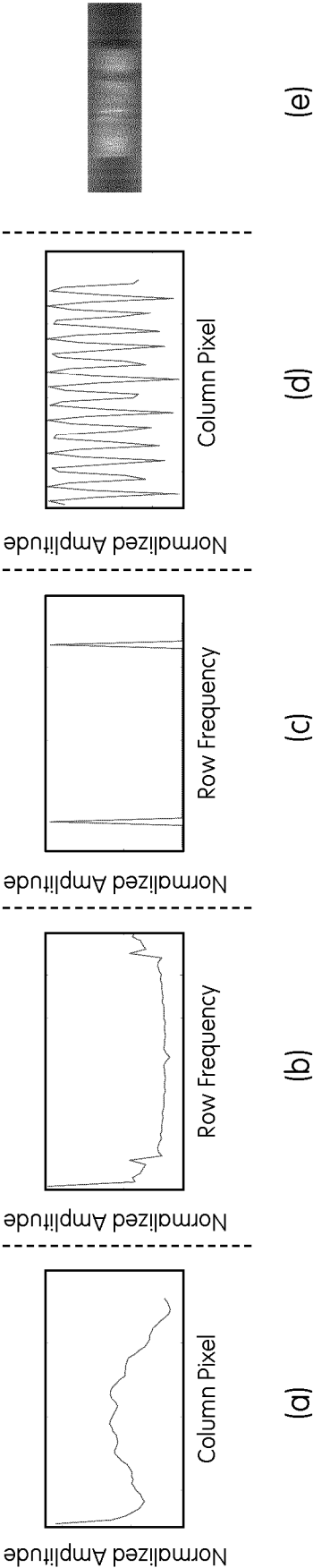
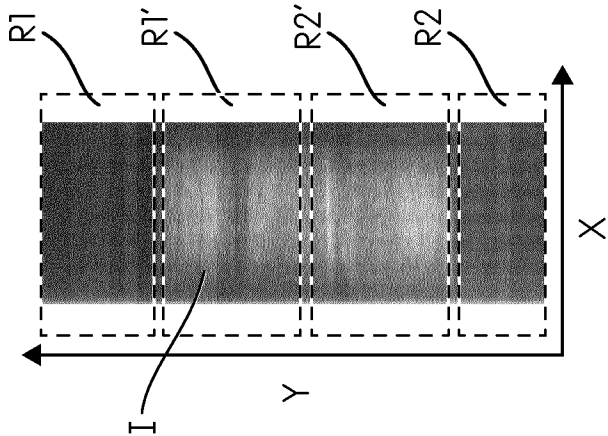
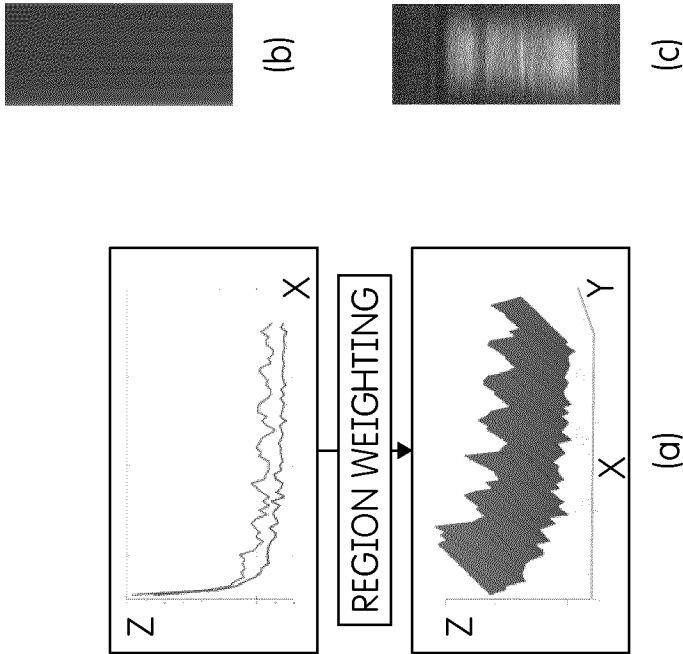


FIG. 8



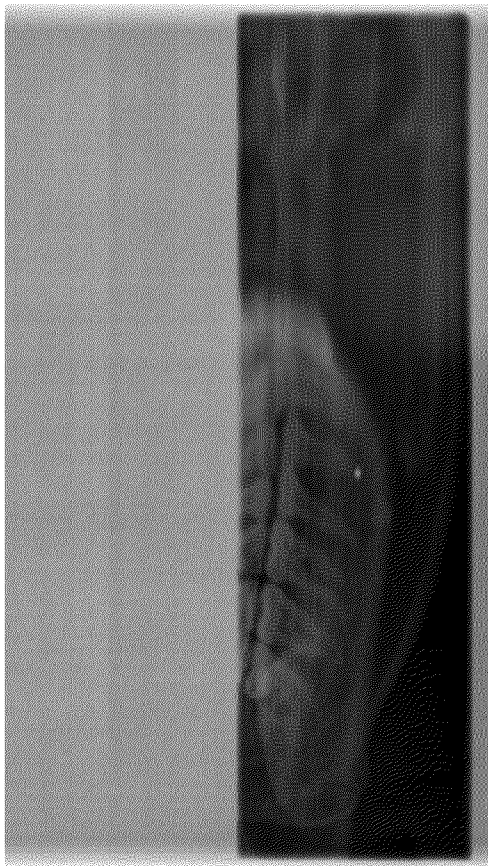


FIG. 10

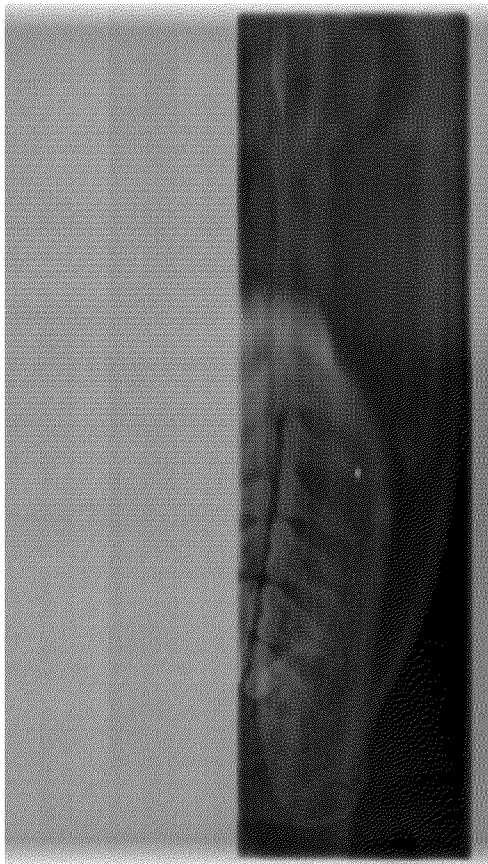


FIG. 11

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2024/068643

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. G06T11/00

ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

G06T

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, COMPENDEX, INSPEC, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	J. H. SIEWERDSEN: "A simple, direct method for x-ray scatter estimation and correction in digital radiography and cone-beam CT", MEDICAL PHYSICS., vol. 33, no. 1, 27 December 2005 (2005-12-27), pages 187-197, XP093157562, US ISSN: 0094-2405, DOI: 10.1118/1.2148916 the whole document -----	1 - 4
A	JP 2013 138803 A (ASAHI ROENTGEN IND) 18 July 2013 (2013-07-18) the whole document -----	1 - 4



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance;; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance;; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

28 August 2024

Date of mailing of the international search report

16/09/2024

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2

NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk

Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040,

Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Werling, Alexander

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/EP2024/068643

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☒ Claims Nos.: **1-4 (partially)**
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
see FURTHER INFORMATION sheet PCT/ISA/210
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims;; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

Continuation of Box II.2

Claims Nos.: 1-4 (partially)

Present claims 1-4 relate to a computer-implemented method which has a given desired property or effect, namely to correct artefacts by determining/suppressing the frequency components of said artefacts in projection space.

Filtering a signal, in this case an image, by Fourier domain processing is a technique well known in the art which is covered by entire textbooks and also a CPC class, i. e. G06T5/10. Therefore, the problem addressed by the invention, namely the removal of artefacts caused by electromagnetic disturbances, essentially consists of determining their corresponding frequency components in Fourier or projection space. Once these components being known, their removal in Fourier or projection space is trivial.

However, the description does not provide support and disclosure within the meaning of Articles 6 and 5 PCT for any such determining step having the said property or effect and there is no common general knowledge of this kind available to the person skilled in the art. The only disclosure relating to the determining step is on p. 12, l. 5-22 which is a qualitative description of fig. 5, showing frequency components corresponding to artefacts. However, no computer-implemented method allowing for some automatic processing is provided, as required by claims 1-4, thus giving rise to an objection under Art. 5 for lack of sufficient disclosure and Art. 6 for lack of support.

The non-compliance with the substantive provisions is to such an extent, that the search was performed taking into consideration the non-compliance in determining the extent of the search of claims 1-4 (PCT-EPO Guidelines B-VIII, 3).

The search of claims 1-4 was restricted to the broad concept of a method having the desired property or effect, namely 2D tomographic projection correction using shaded areas.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure. If the application proceeds into the regional phase before the EPO, the applicant is reminded that a search may be carried out during examination before the EPO (see EPO Guidelines C-IV, 7.3), should the problems which led to the Article 17(2) PCT declaration be overcome.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2024/068643

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
JP 2013138803 A	18-07-2013	NONE	
