

# Radiometry and reflectance



15-463, 15-663, 15-862  
Computational Photography  
Fall 2020, Lecture 17

# Course announcements

- Homework 4 is due tonight.
  - See Piazza announcement for submission guidelines.
  - Any questions?
- Homework 5 will be posted tonight.
- Project proposals were due on **Friday**.
  - Please make sure to sign up for equipment in the spreadsheet posted on Piazza:  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CVg7nUbl701pvZFPX3BR0uzKB76Y6PEl3tXmq1UF4AU/edit#gid=1109741985>

# Overview of today's lecture

- Appearance phenomena.
- Measuring light and radiometry.
- Reflectance and BRDF.
- Light sources.



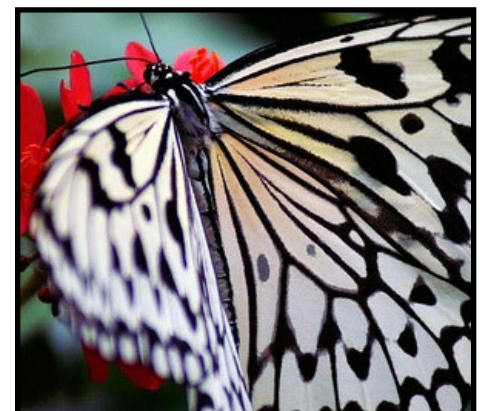
# Slide credits

Most of these slides were adapted from:

- Srinivasa Narasimhan (16-385, Spring 2014).
- Todd Zickler (Harvard University).
- Steven Gortler (Harvard University).

Appearance

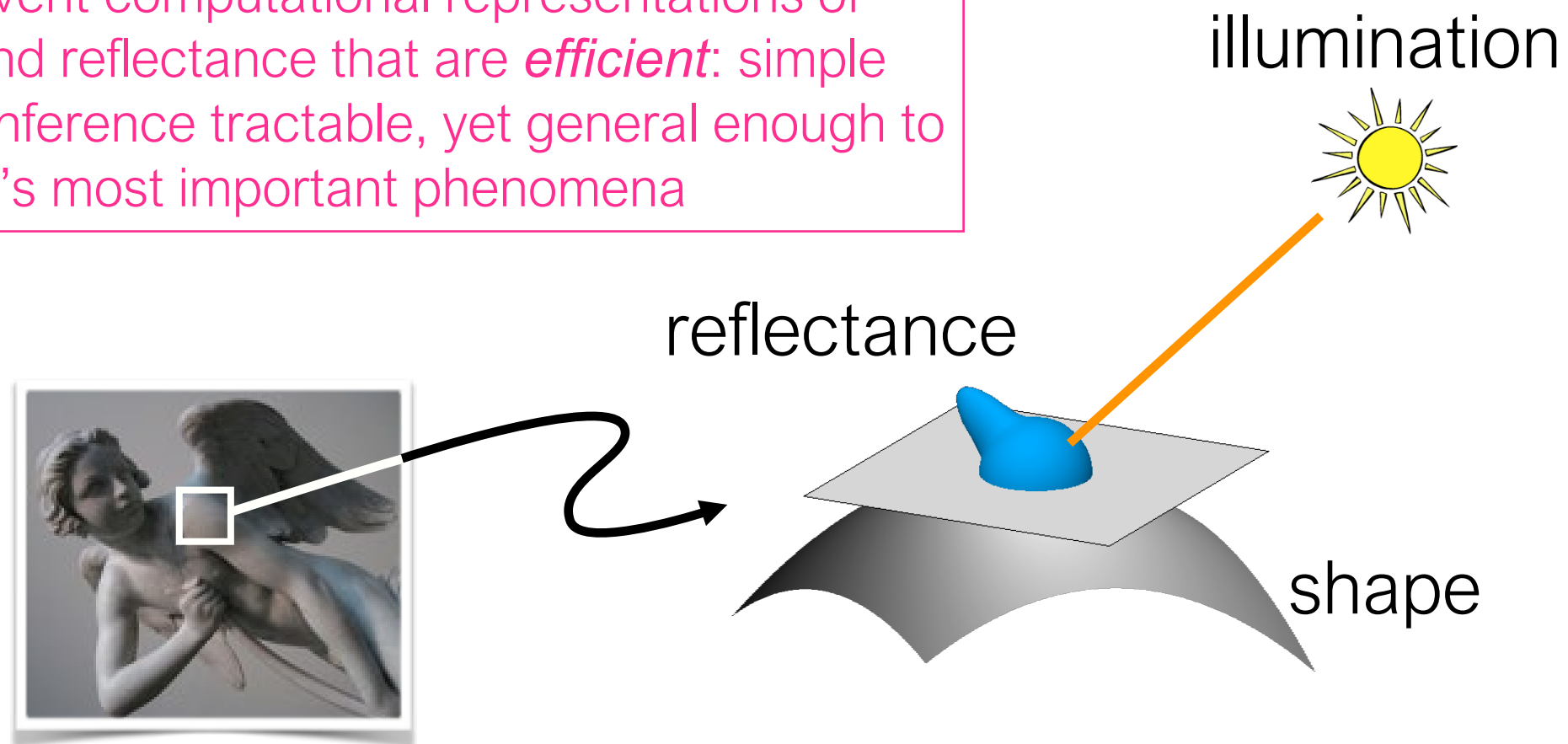
# Appearance





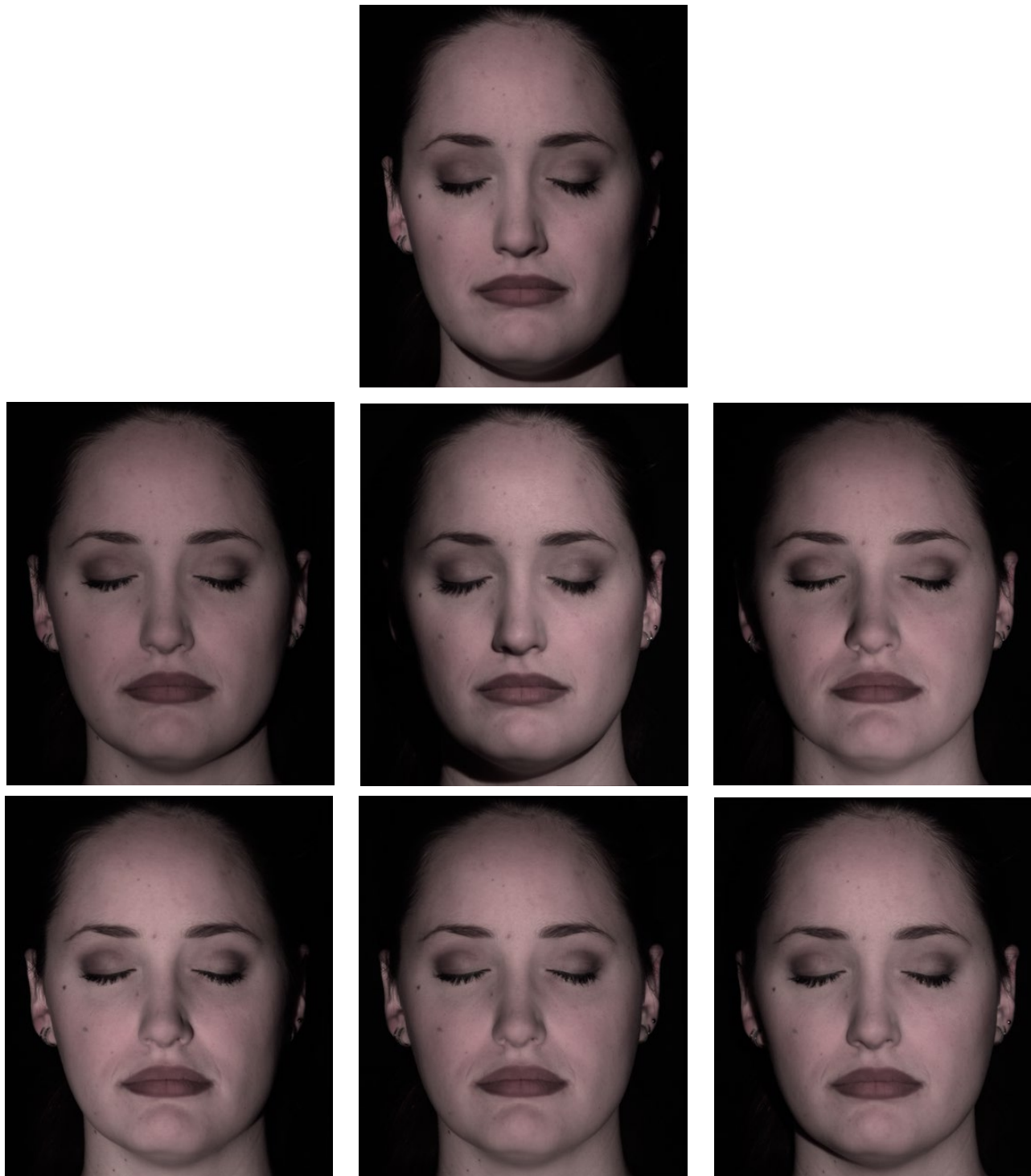
# “Physics-based” computer vision (a.k.a “inverse optics”)

Our challenge: Invent computational representations of shape, lighting, and reflectance that are *efficient*: simple enough to make inference tractable, yet general enough to capture the world’s most important phenomena



**I**  $\longrightarrow$  shape, illumination, reflectance

# Example application: Photometric Stereo





Why study the physics (optics) of the world?

Lets see some pictures!

# Light and Shadows





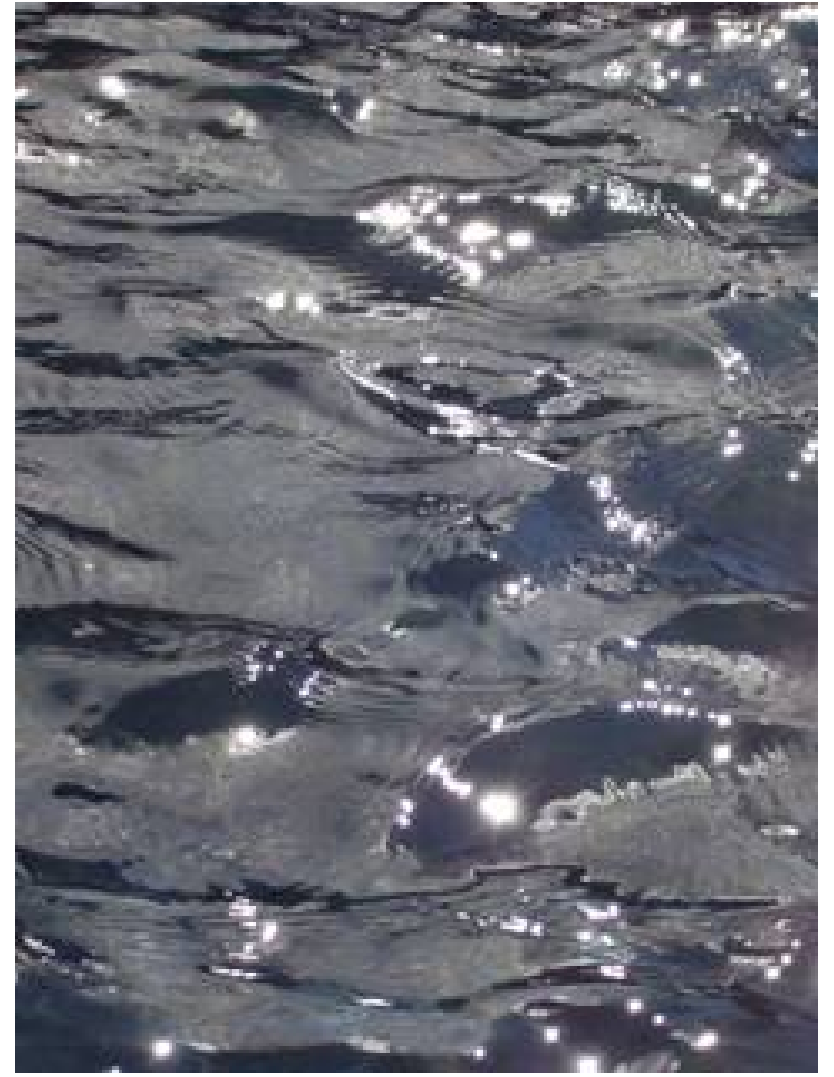


Reflections



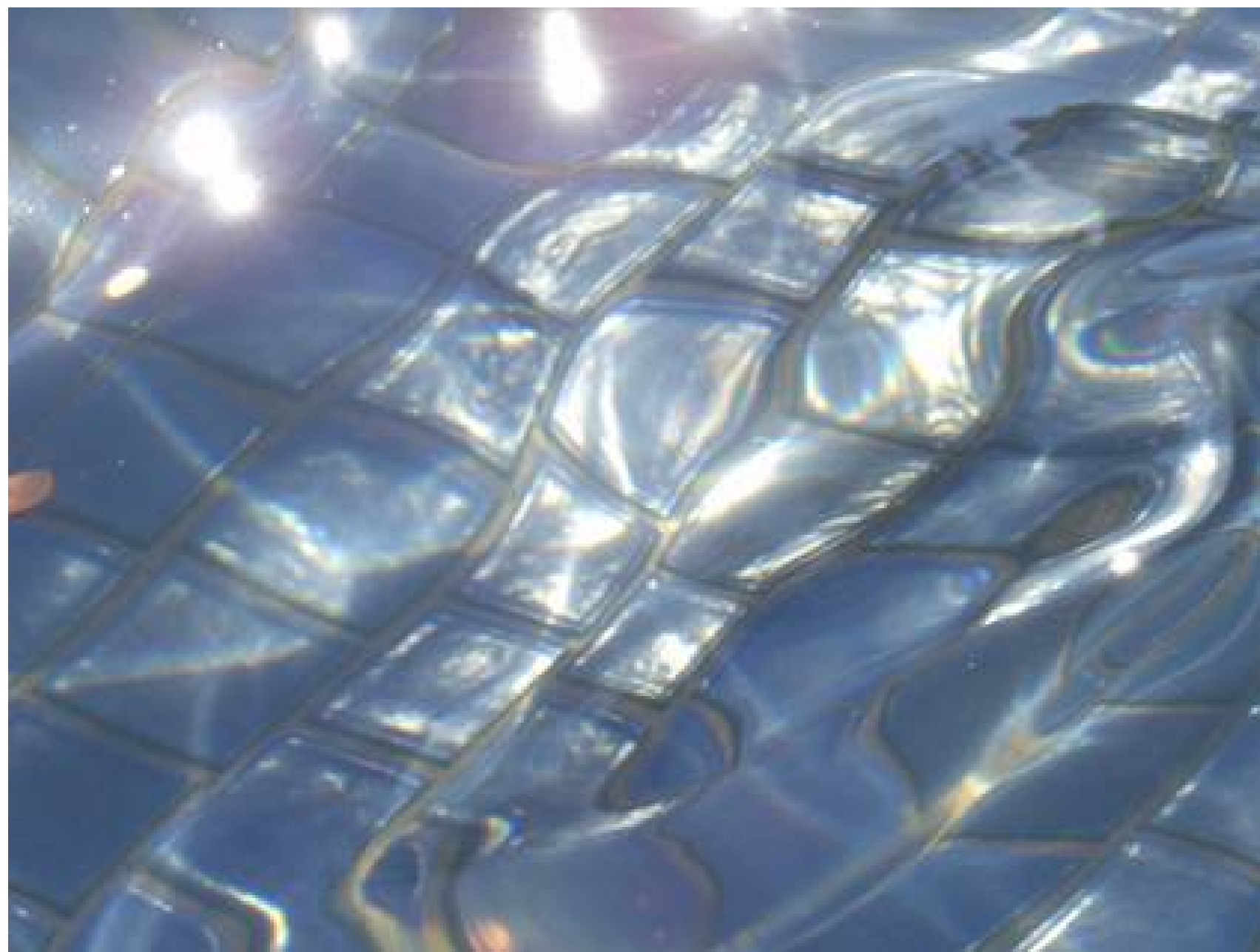


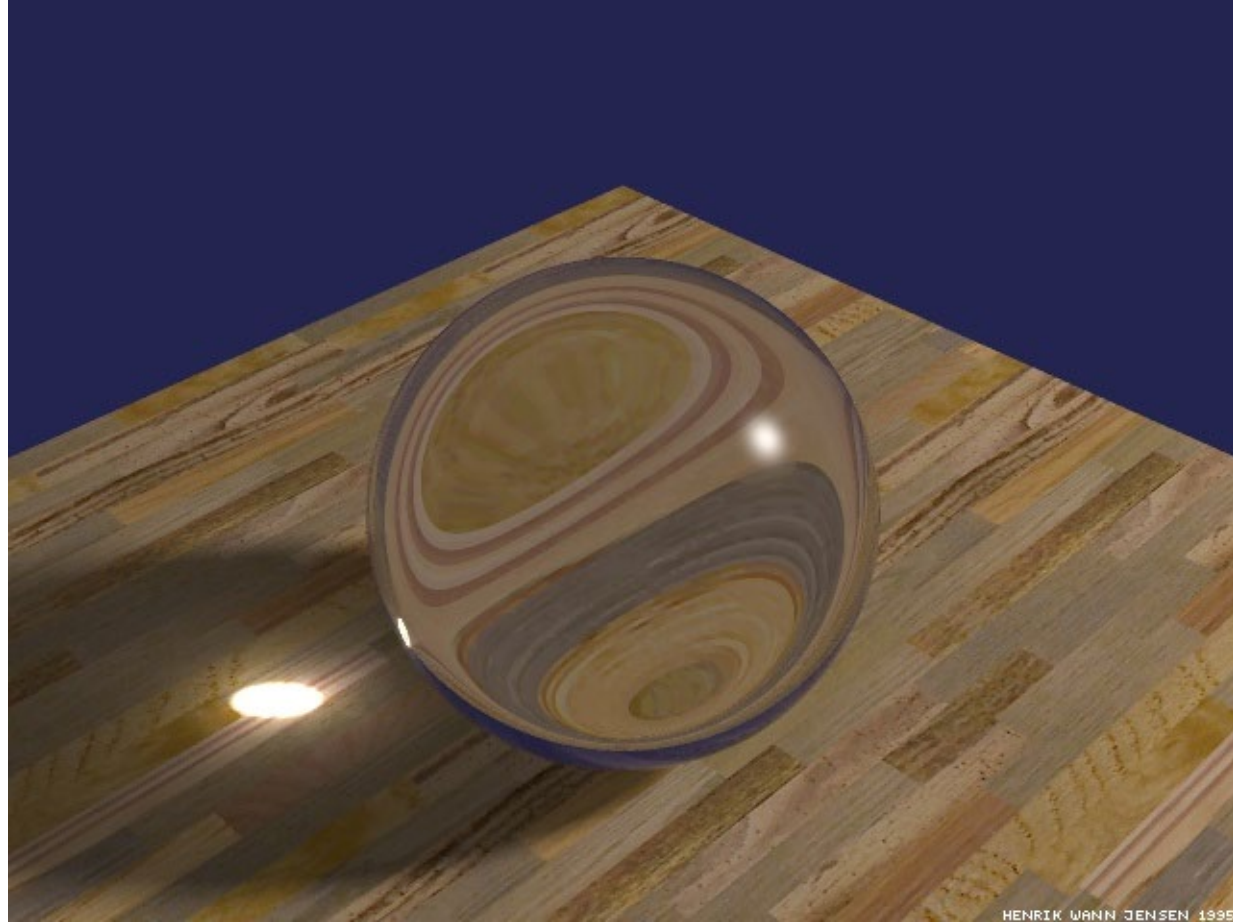




# Refractions









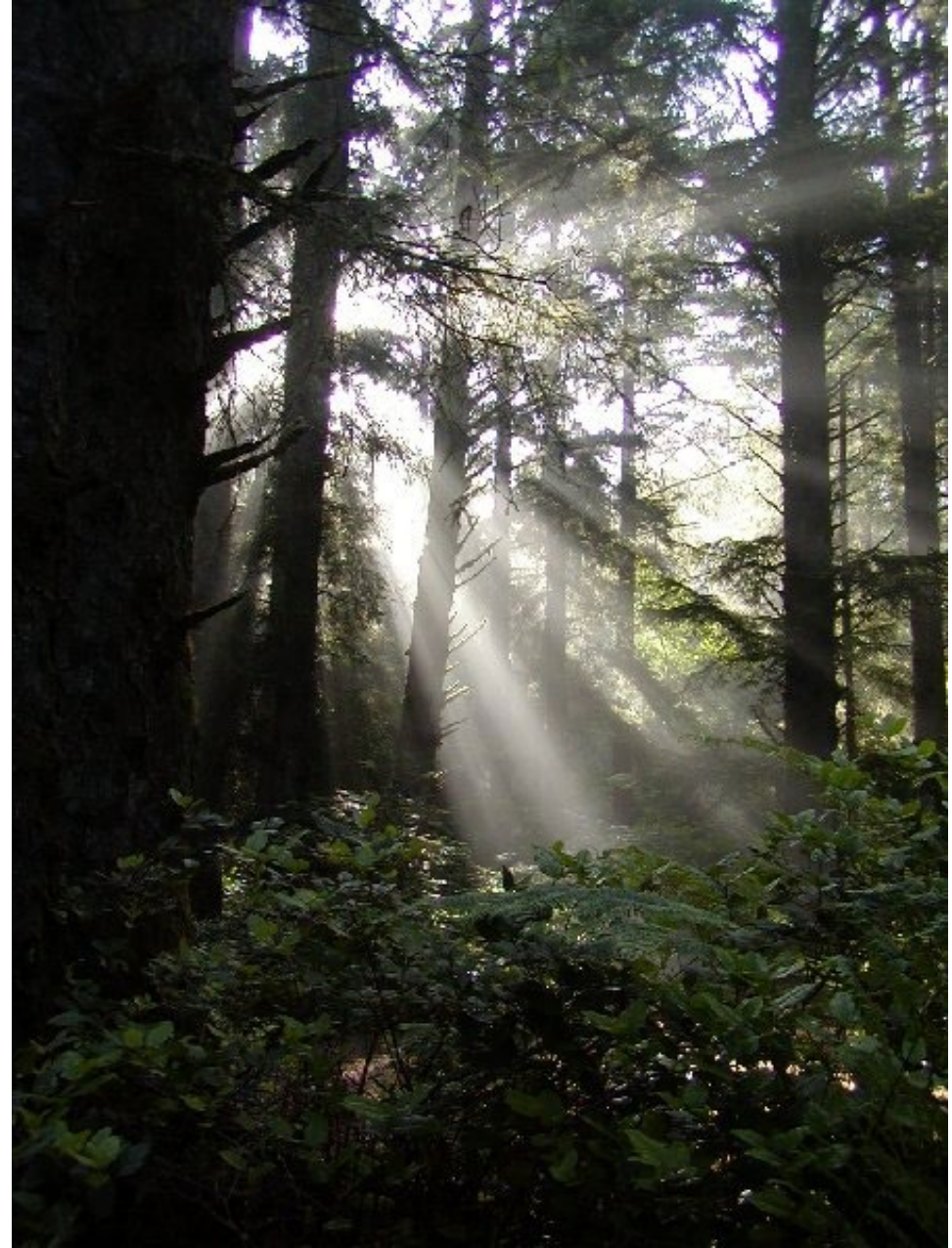


Interreflections

Mies Courtyard House with Curved Elements



Scattering









More Complex Appearances















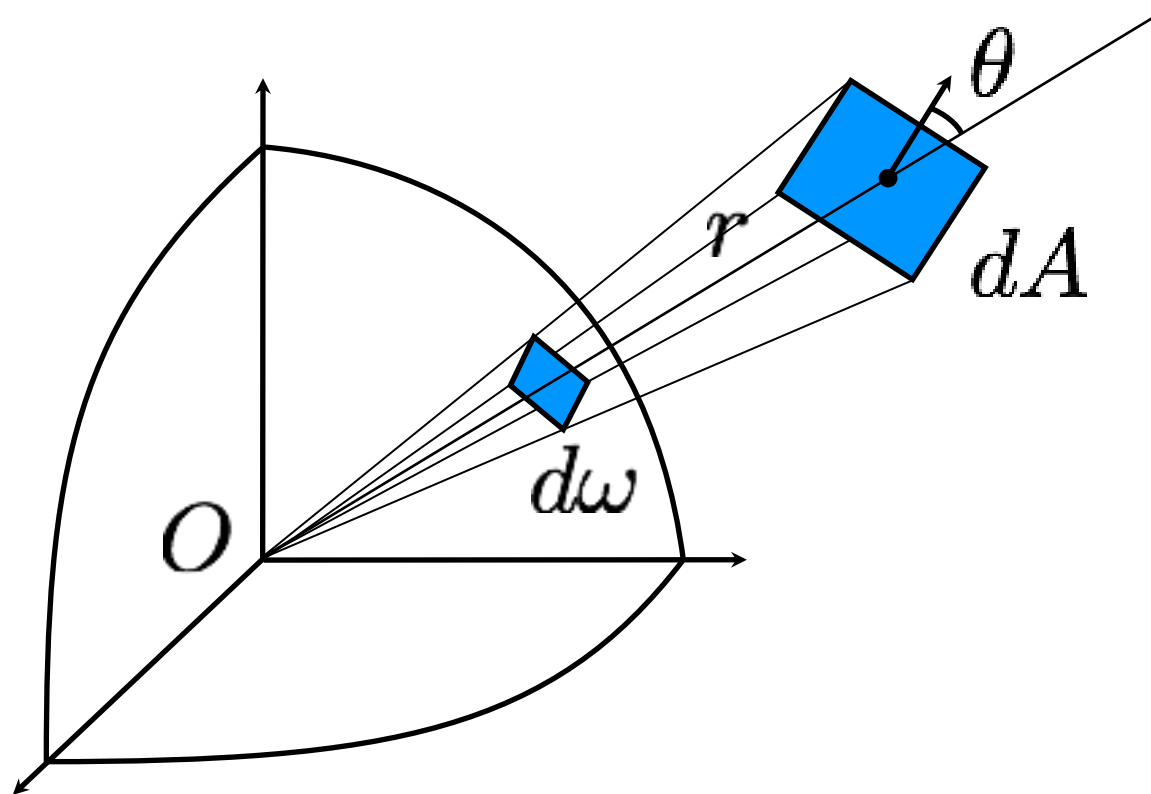




# Measuring light and radiometry

# Solid angle

- ◉ The *solid angle* subtended by a small surface patch with respect to point O is the area of its central projection onto the unit sphere about O



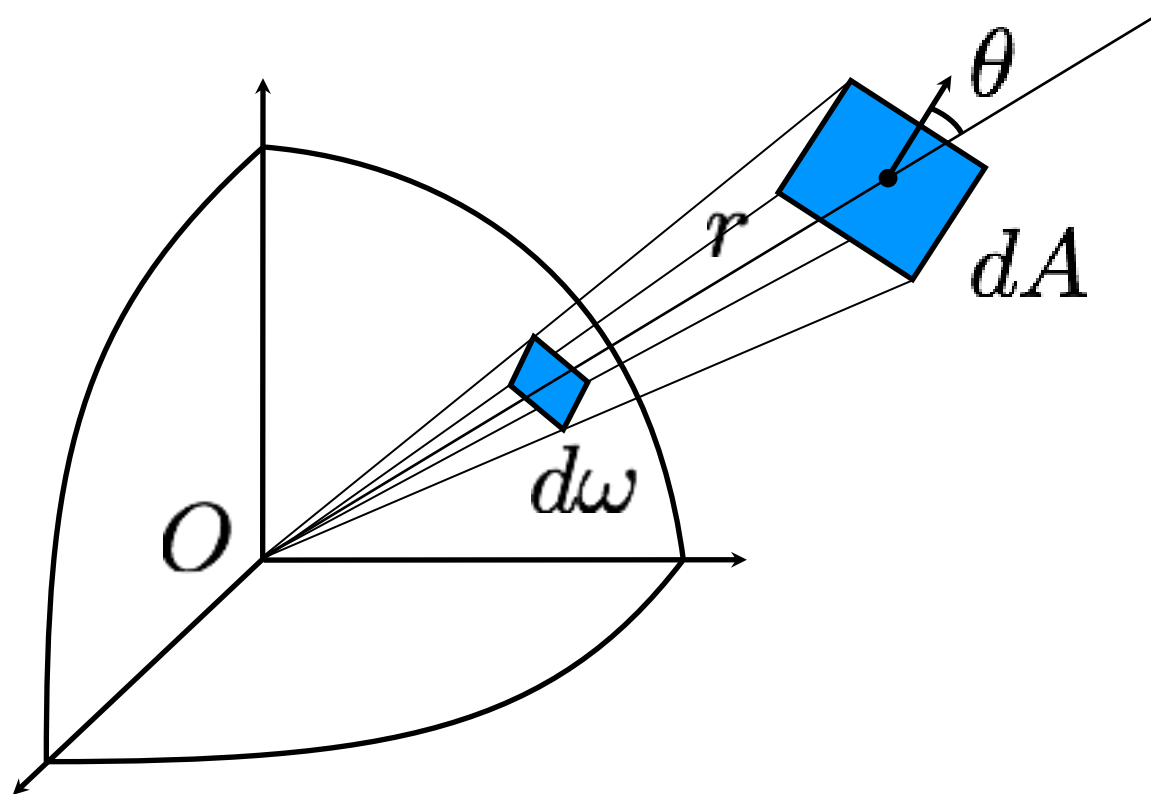
Depends on:

- ◉ orientation of patch
- ◉ distance of patch



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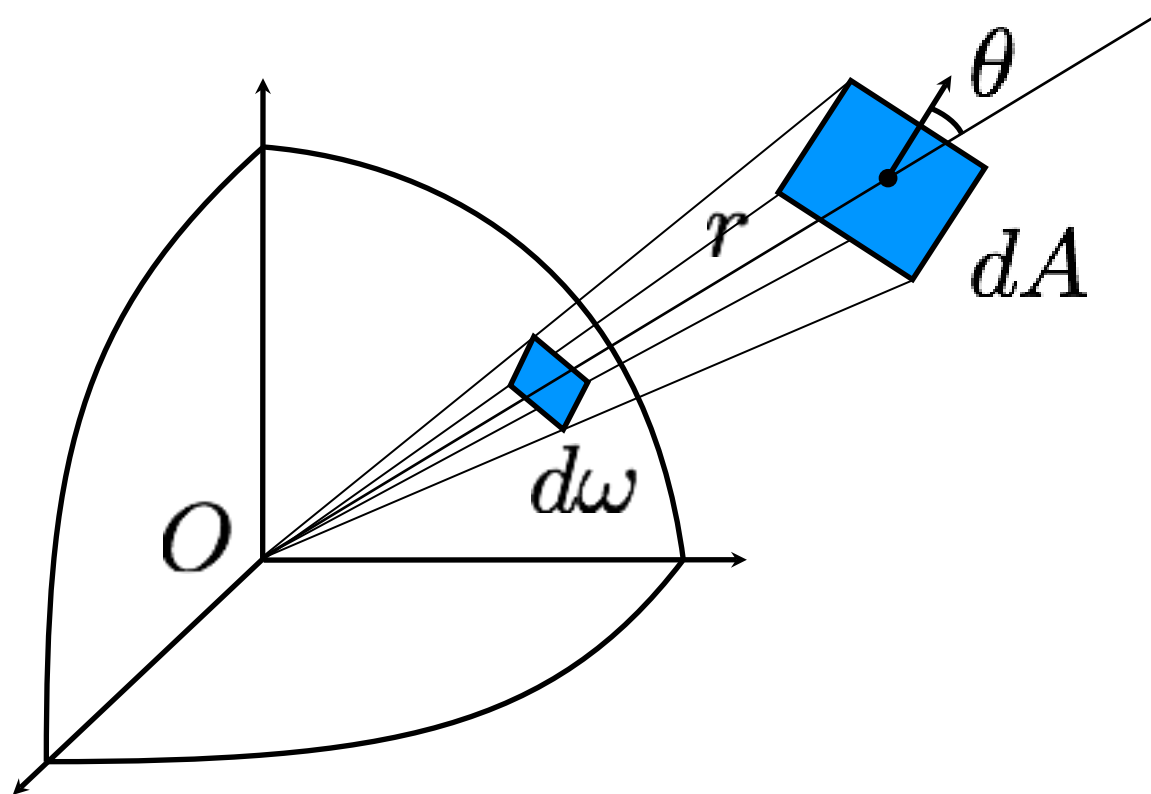
One can show:

$$d\omega = \frac{dA \cos \theta}{r^2}$$

Units: steradians [sr]

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One can show:

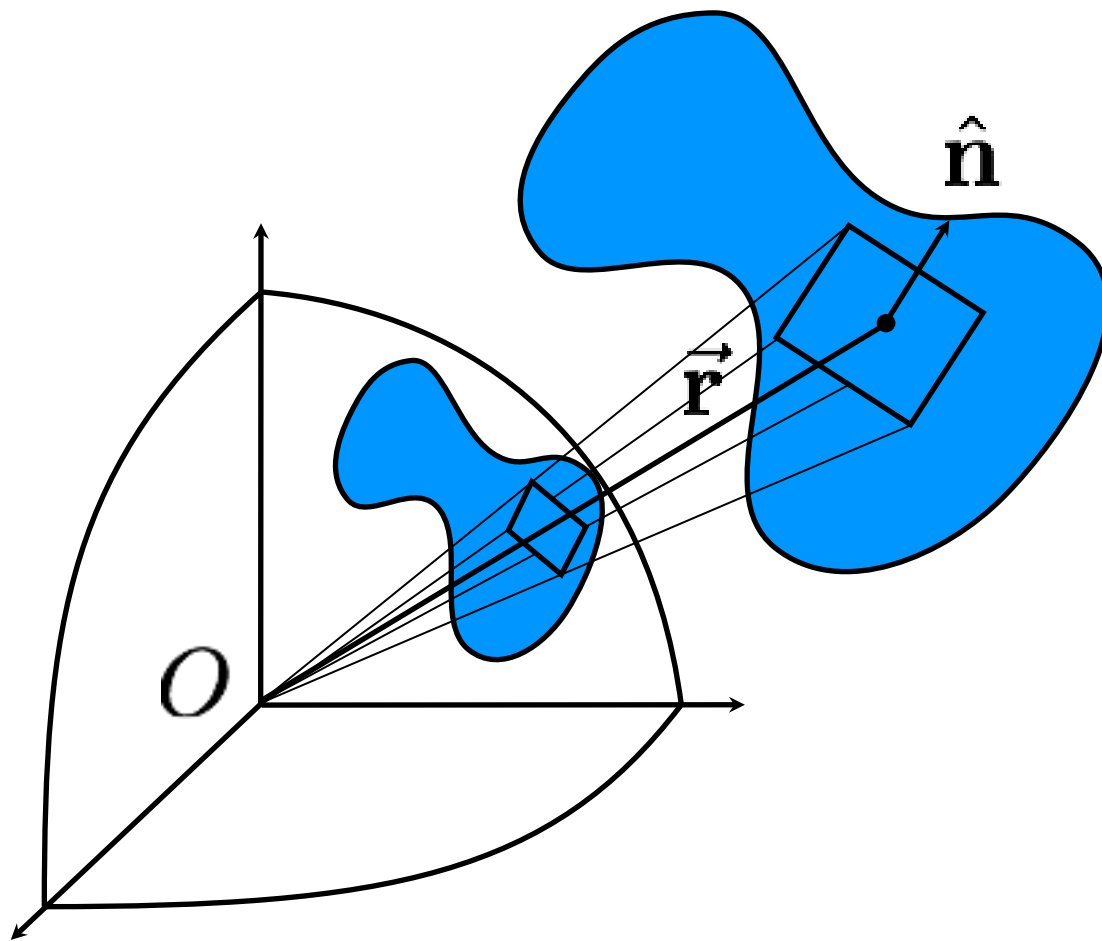
“surface foreshortening”

$$d\omega = \frac{dA \cos \theta}{r^2}$$

Units: steradians [sr]

# Solid angle

- To calculate solid angle subtended by a surface  $S$  relative to  $O$  you must add up (integrate) contributions from all tiny patches (nasty integral)



$$\Omega = \iint_S \frac{\vec{r} \cdot \hat{n} dS}{|\vec{r}|^3}$$

One can show:

“surface foreshortening”

$$d\omega = \frac{dA \cos \theta}{r^2}$$

Units: steradians [sr]

# Question

- Suppose surface  $S$  is a hemisphere centered at  $O$ . What is the solid angle it subtends?

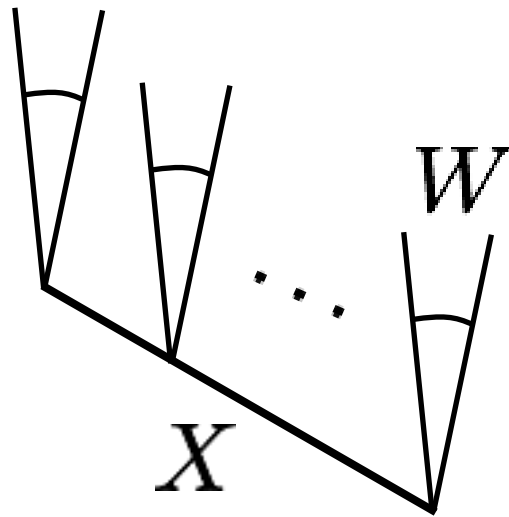
# Question

- Suppose surface  $S$  is a hemisphere centered at  $O$ . What is the solid angle it subtends?
- Answer:  $2\pi$  (area of sphere is  $4\pi r^2$ ; area of unit sphere is  $4\pi$ ; half of that is  $2\pi$ )



# Quantifying light: flux, irradiance, and radiance

- Imagine a sensor that counts photons passing through planar patch  $X$  in directions within angular wedge  $W$
- It measures *radiant flux* [watts = joules/sec]: rate of photons hitting sensor area
- Measurement depends on sensor area  $|X|$



\* shown in 2D for clarity; imagine three dimensions

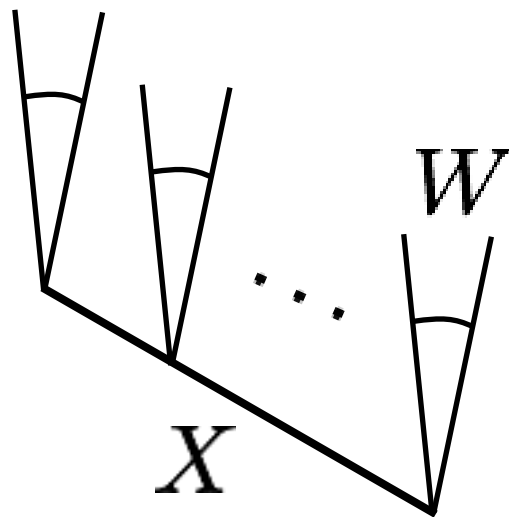
radiant flux  $\Phi(W, X)$

# Quantifying light: flux, irradiance, and radiance

- *Irradiance:*

A measure of incoming light that is independent of sensor area  $|X|$

- Units: watts per square meter  $[W/m^2]$



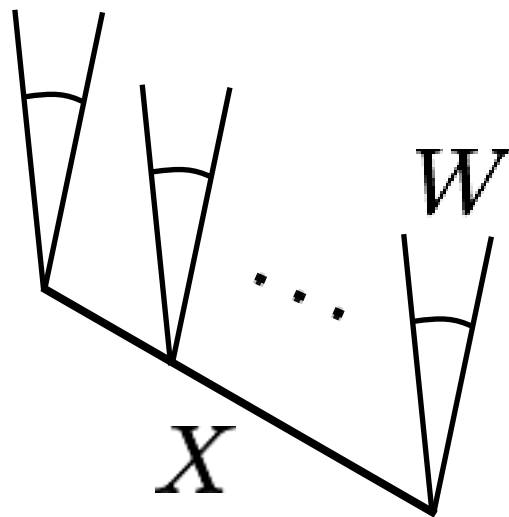
$$\frac{\Phi(W, X)}{|X|}$$

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$$\lim_{X \rightarrow x}$$

$$\frac{\Phi(W, X)}{|X|}$$

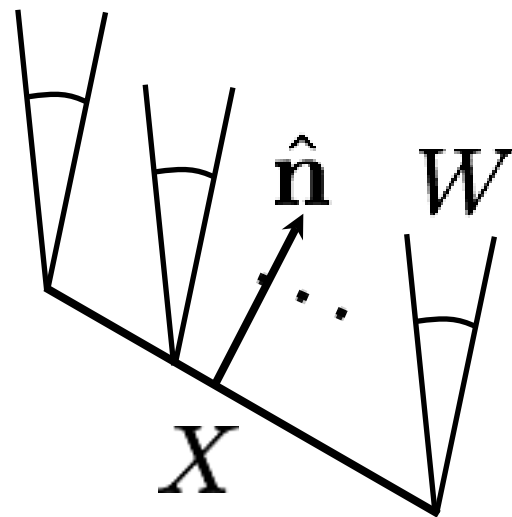
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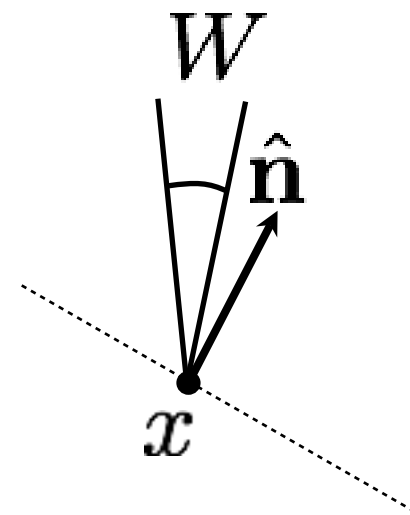
- Units: watts per square meter  $[W/m^2]$

- Depends on sensor direction normal.



$$\frac{\Phi(W, X)}{|X|}$$

$$\lim_{X \rightarrow x}$$



$$E_{\hat{n}}(W, x)$$

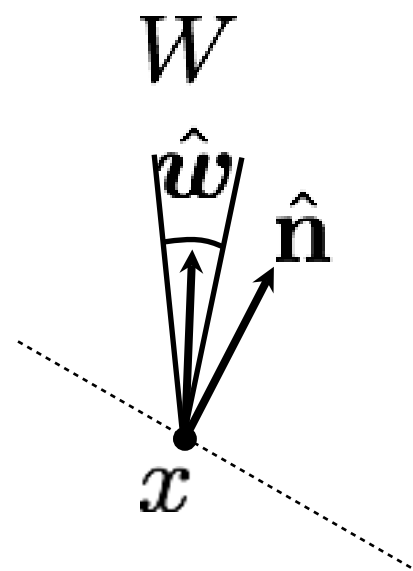
- We keep track of the normal because a planar sensor with distinct orientation would converge to a different limit
- In the literature, notations  $n$  and  $W$  are often omitted, and values are implied by context

# Quantifying light: flux, irradiance, and radiance

- *Radiance:*

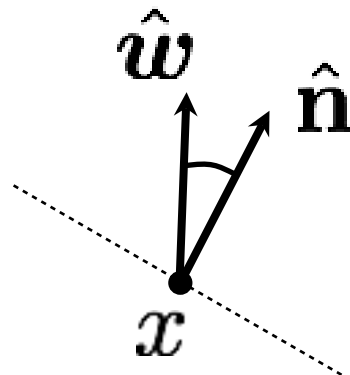
A measure of incoming light that is independent of sensor area  $|X|$ , orientation  $\mathbf{n}$ , and wedge size (solid angle)  $|W|$

- Units: watts per steradian per square meter  $[W/(m^2 \cdot sr)]$



$$\frac{E_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}(W, x)}{|W|}$$

$\lim_{W \rightarrow \hat{\omega}}$



$$L_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}(\hat{\omega}, x)$$

- Has correct units, but still depends on sensor orientation
- To correct this, convert to measurement that would have been made if sensor was perpendicular to direction  $\omega$

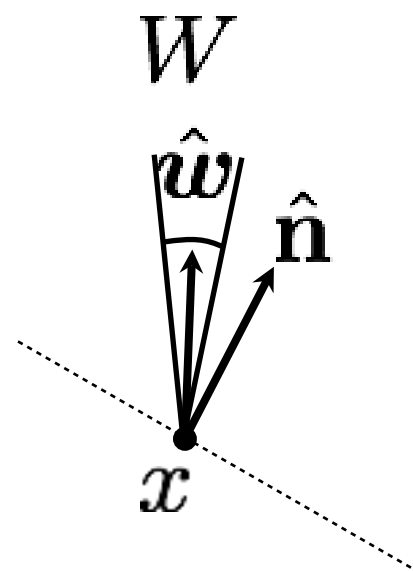


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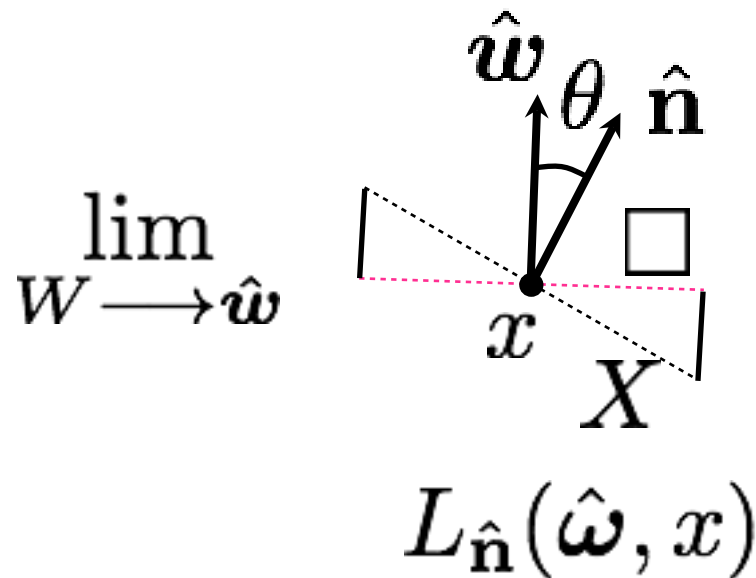
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$$\frac{E_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}(W, x)}{|W|}$$



$$L_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}(\hat{\omega}, x)$$

$$\cos \theta = \frac{\square/2}{|X|/2}$$

$$\rightarrow \square = |X| \cos \theta$$

“foreshortened area”

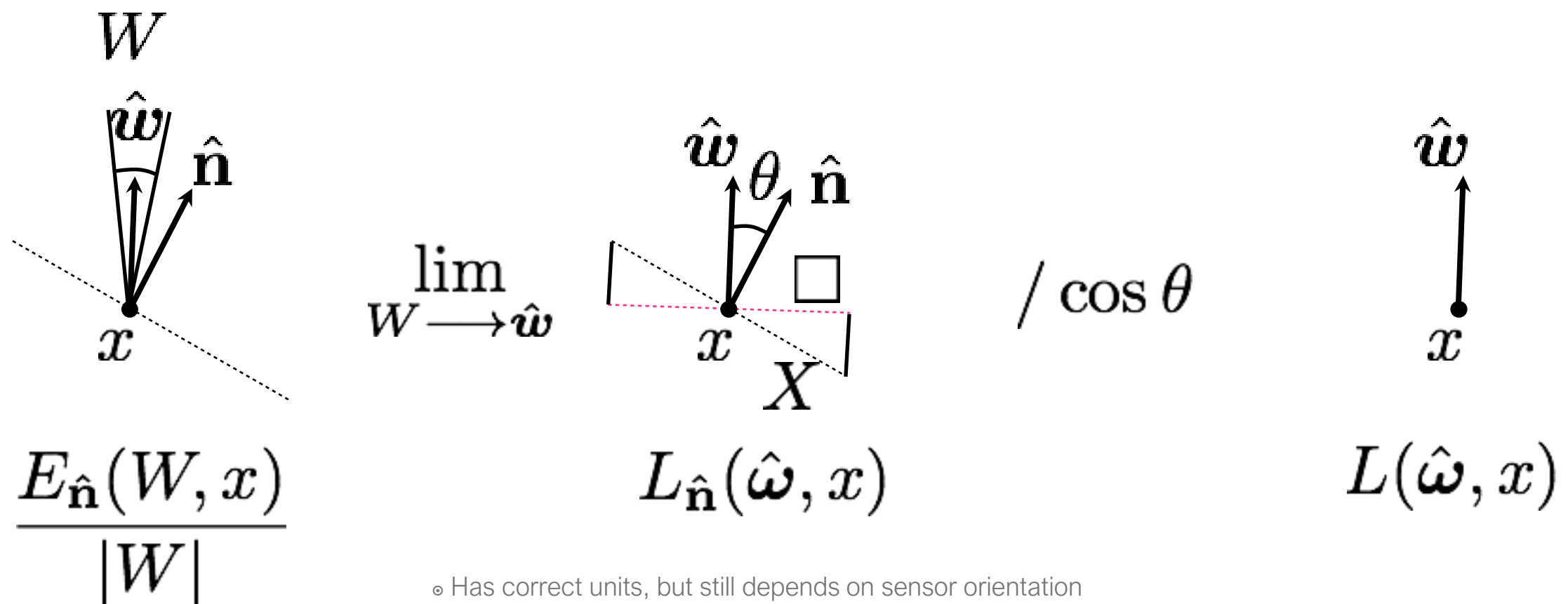
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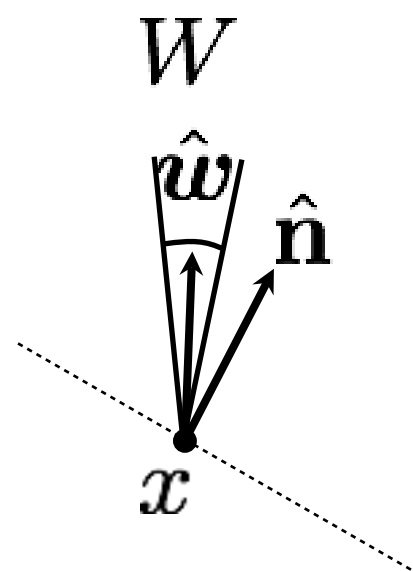
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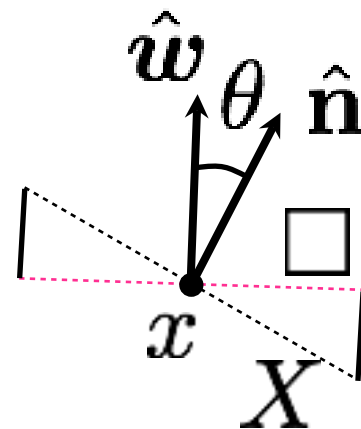
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$$\frac{E_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}(W, x)}{|W|}$$

$\lim_{W \rightarrow \hat{\omega}}$



$$L_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}(\hat{\omega}, x)$$

^  
"foreshortened in the direction of travel"

$/ \cos \theta$

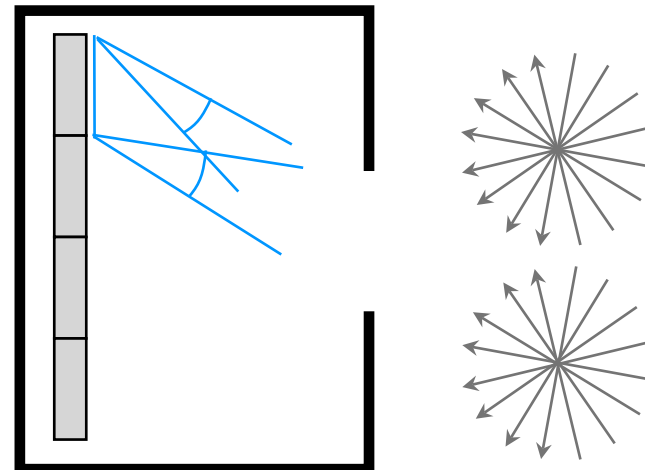


$$L(\hat{\omega}, x)$$

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# Quantifying light: flux, irradiance, and radiance

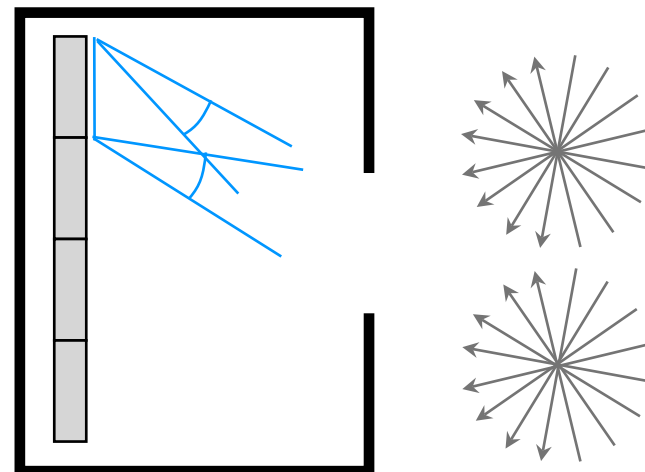
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  - Allows computing the radiant flux measured by *any* finite sensor



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- ◉ Attractive properties of radiance:
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$$\Phi(W, X) = \int_X \int_W L(\hat{\omega}, x) \cos \theta d\omega dA$$





# Quantifying light: flux, irradiance, and radiance

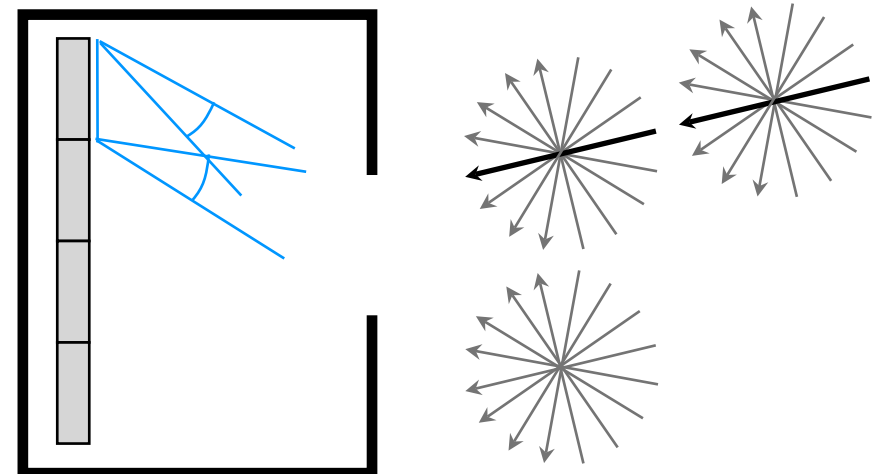
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- Constant along a ray in free space

$$L(\hat{\omega}, x) = L(\hat{\omega}, x + \hat{\omega})$$



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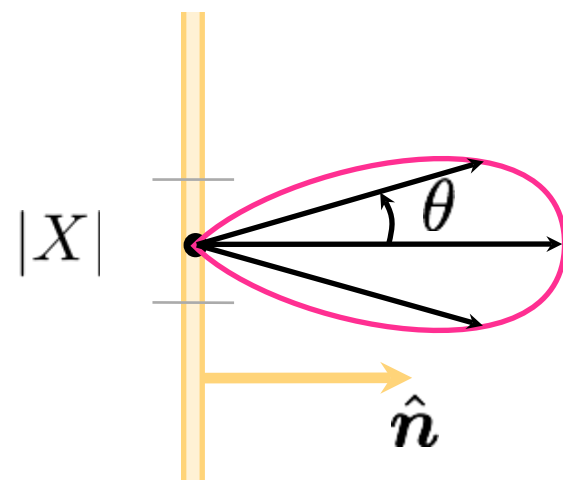
- Constant along a ray in free space

$$L(\hat{\omega}, x) = L(\hat{\omega}, x + \hat{\omega})$$

- A camera measures radiance (after a one-time radiometric calibration).  
So RAW pixel values are proportional to radiance.
  - “Processed” images (like PNG and JPEG) are not linear radiance measurements!!

# Question

- Most light sources, like a heated metal sheet, follow Lambert's Law



“Lambertian  
area source”

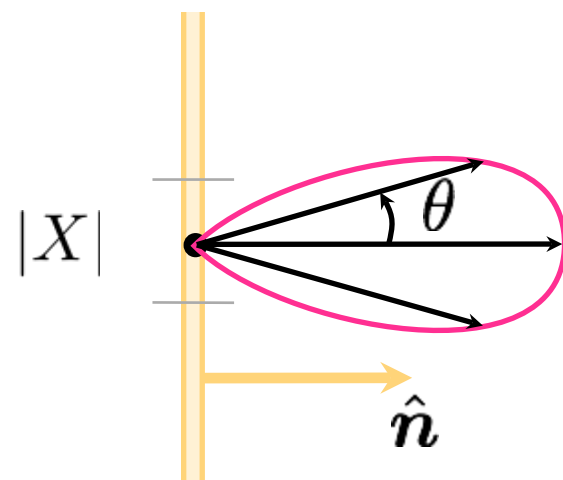
$$J(\hat{\omega}) = J_o \langle \hat{\omega}, \hat{n} \rangle = J_o \cos \theta$$

↑  
radiant intensity [W/sr]

- What is the radiance  $L(\hat{\omega}, \mathbf{x})$  of an infinitesimal patch [W/sr·m<sup>2</sup>]?

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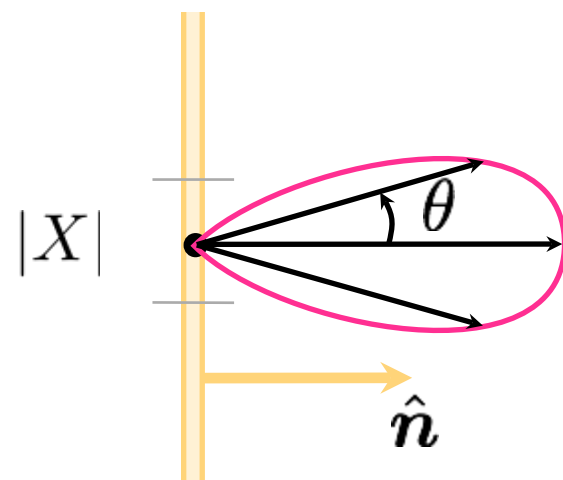
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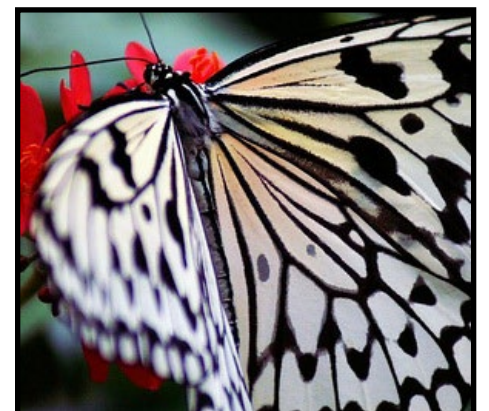
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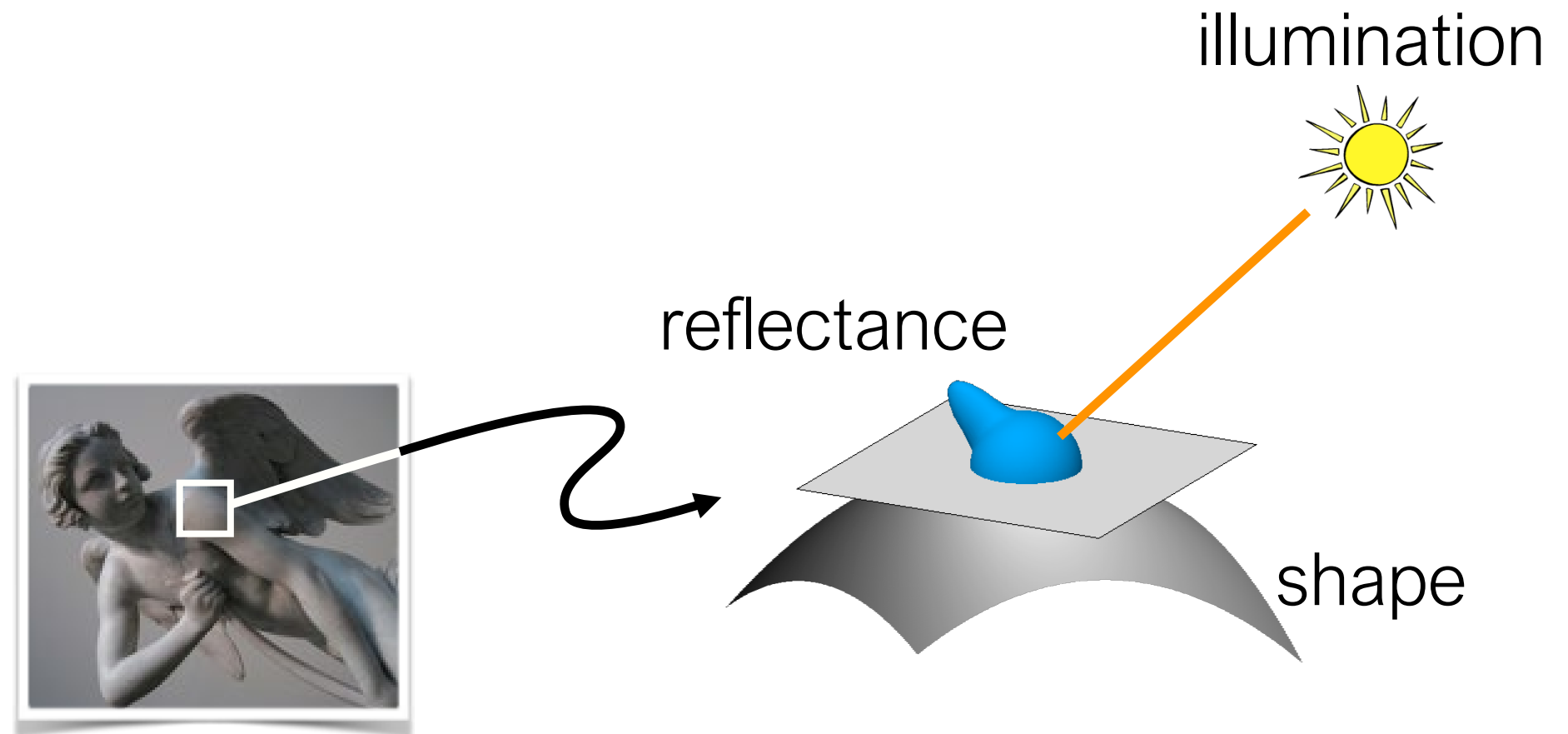
“Looks equally bright when viewed from any direction”



# Appearance



# “Physics-based” computer vision (a.k.a “inverse optics”)



**I**  $\longrightarrow$  shape, illumination, reflectance

# Reflectance and BRDF

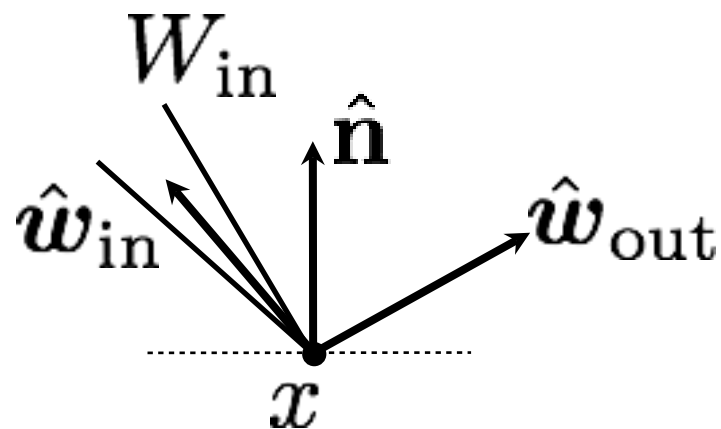
# Reflectance

- Ratio of outgoing energy to incoming energy at a single point
- Want to define a ratio such that it:
  - converges as we use smaller and smaller incoming and outgoing wedges
  - does not depend on the size of the wedges (i.e. is intrinsic to the material)



# Reflectance

- Ratio of outgoing energy to incoming energy at a single point
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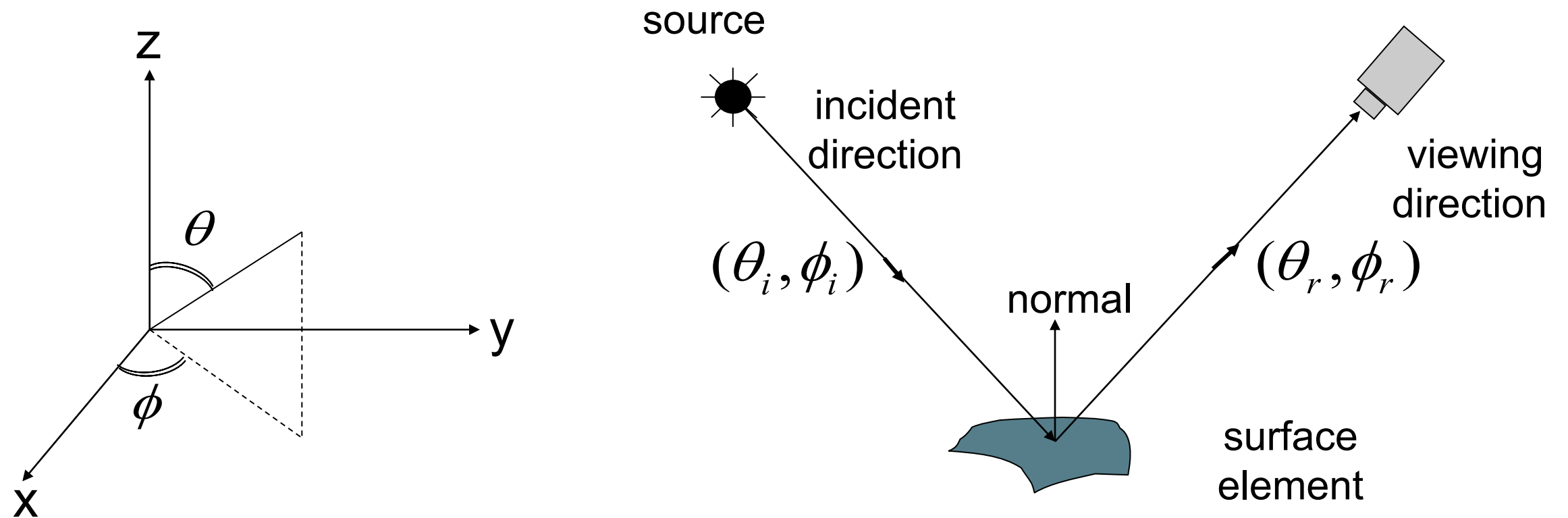
$$\lim_{W_{\text{in}} \rightarrow \hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}} f_{x, \hat{\mathbf{n}}}(\hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}, \hat{\omega}_{\text{out}})$$

$$f_{x, \hat{\mathbf{n}}}(W_{\text{in}}, \hat{\omega}_{\text{out}}) = \frac{L^{\text{out}}(x, \hat{\omega}_{\text{out}})}{E_{\hat{\mathbf{n}}}^{\text{in}}(W_{\text{in}}, x)}$$

- Notations  $x$  and  $n$  often implied by context and omitted; directions  $\omega$  are expressed in local coordinate system defined by normal  $n$  (and some chosen tangent vector)
- Units:  $\text{sr}^{-1}$
- Called Bidirectional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)



# BRDF: Bidirectional Reflectance Distribution Function



$E^{surface}(\theta_i, \phi_i)$  Irradiance at Surface in direction  $(\theta_i, \phi_i)$

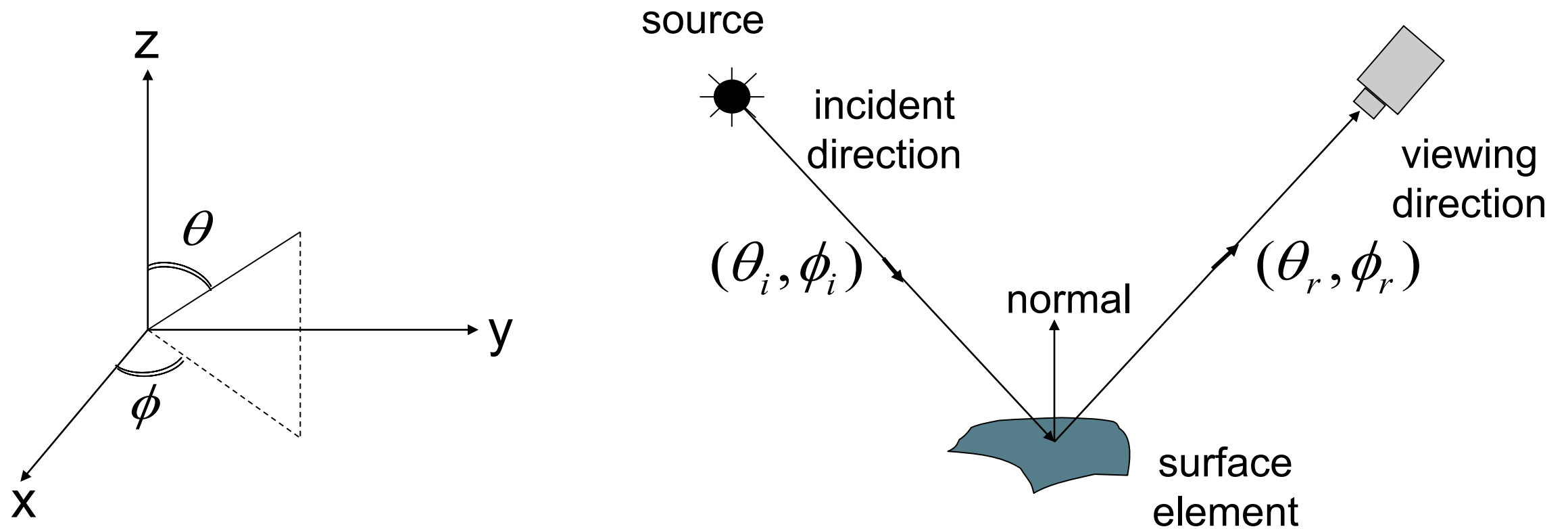
$L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r)$  Radiance of Surface in direction  $(\theta_r, \phi_r)$

$$\text{BRDF} : f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r) = \frac{L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r)}{E^{surface}(\theta_i, \phi_i)}$$

# Reflectance: BRDF

- Units:  $\text{sr}^{-1}$
- Real-valued function defined on the double-hemisphere
- Has many useful properties

# Important Properties of BRDFs

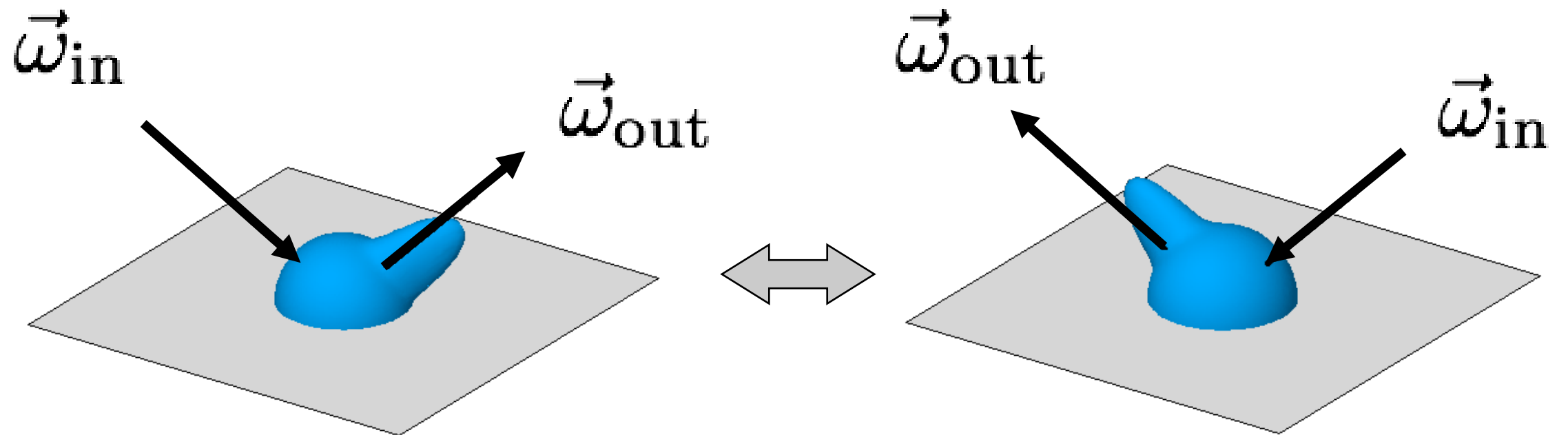


- Conservation of Energy:

$$\forall \hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}, \int_{\Omega_{\text{out}}} f(\hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}, \hat{\omega}_{\text{out}}) \cos \theta_{\text{out}} d\hat{\omega}_{\text{out}} \leq 1$$

Why smaller than or equal?

Property: “Helmholtz reciprocity”

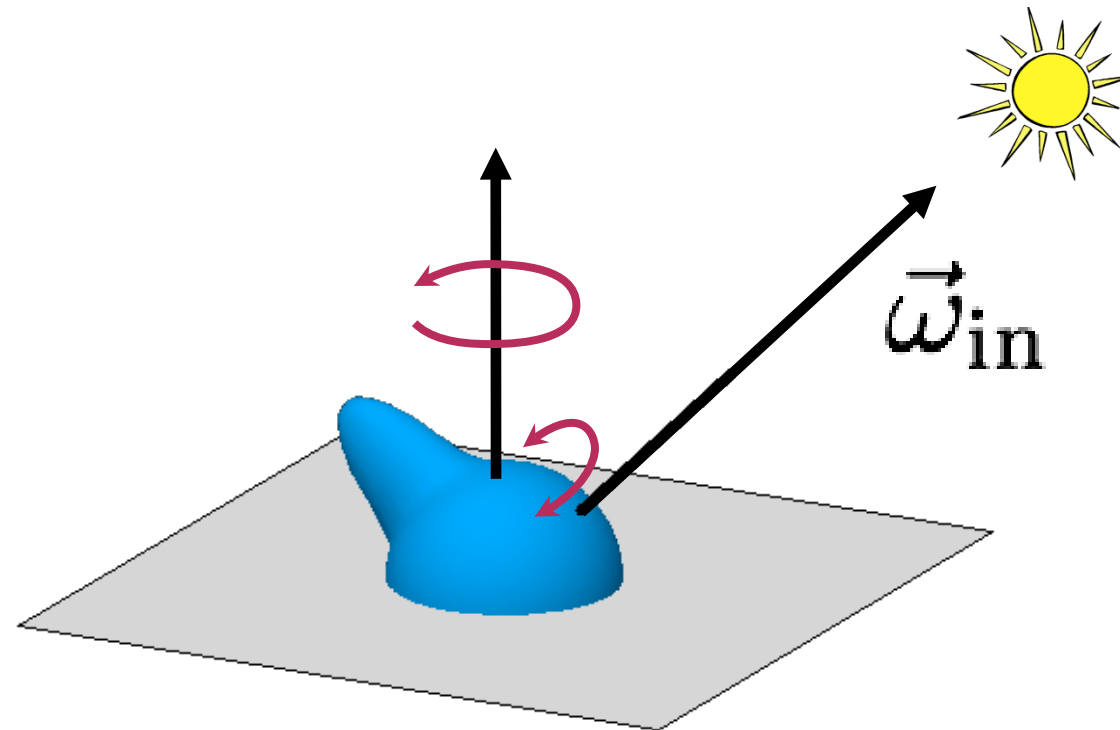
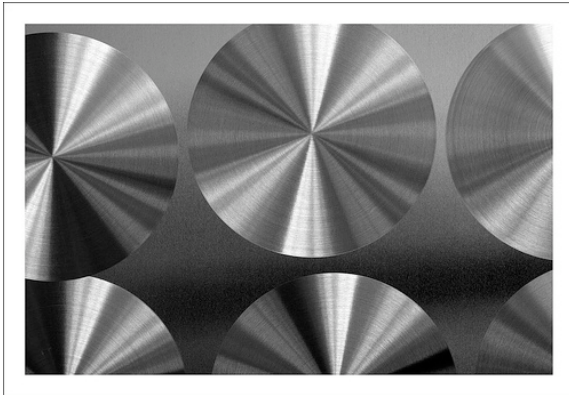


- **Helmholtz Reciprocity:** (follows from 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics)

BRDF does not change when source and viewing directions are swapped.

$$f_r(\vec{\omega}_{in}, \vec{\omega}_{out}) = f_r(\vec{\omega}_{out}, \vec{\omega}_{in})$$

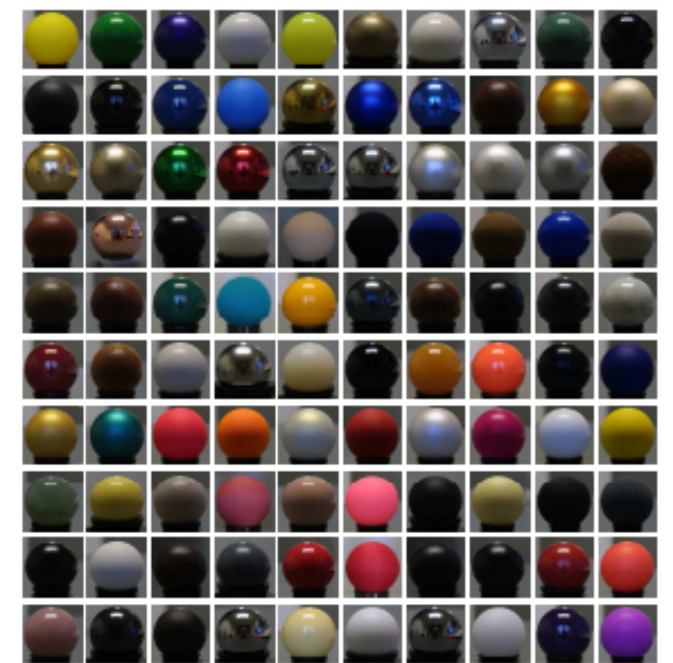
# Common assumption: Isotropy



BRDF does not change  
when surface is rotated  
about the normal.

4D  $\rightarrow$  3D

$$f_r(\vec{\omega}_{in}, \vec{\omega}_{out})$$



[Matusik et al., 2003]

Bi-directional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)

Can be written as a function of 3 variables :  $f(\theta_i, \theta_r, \phi_i - \phi_r)$



# Reflectance: BRDF

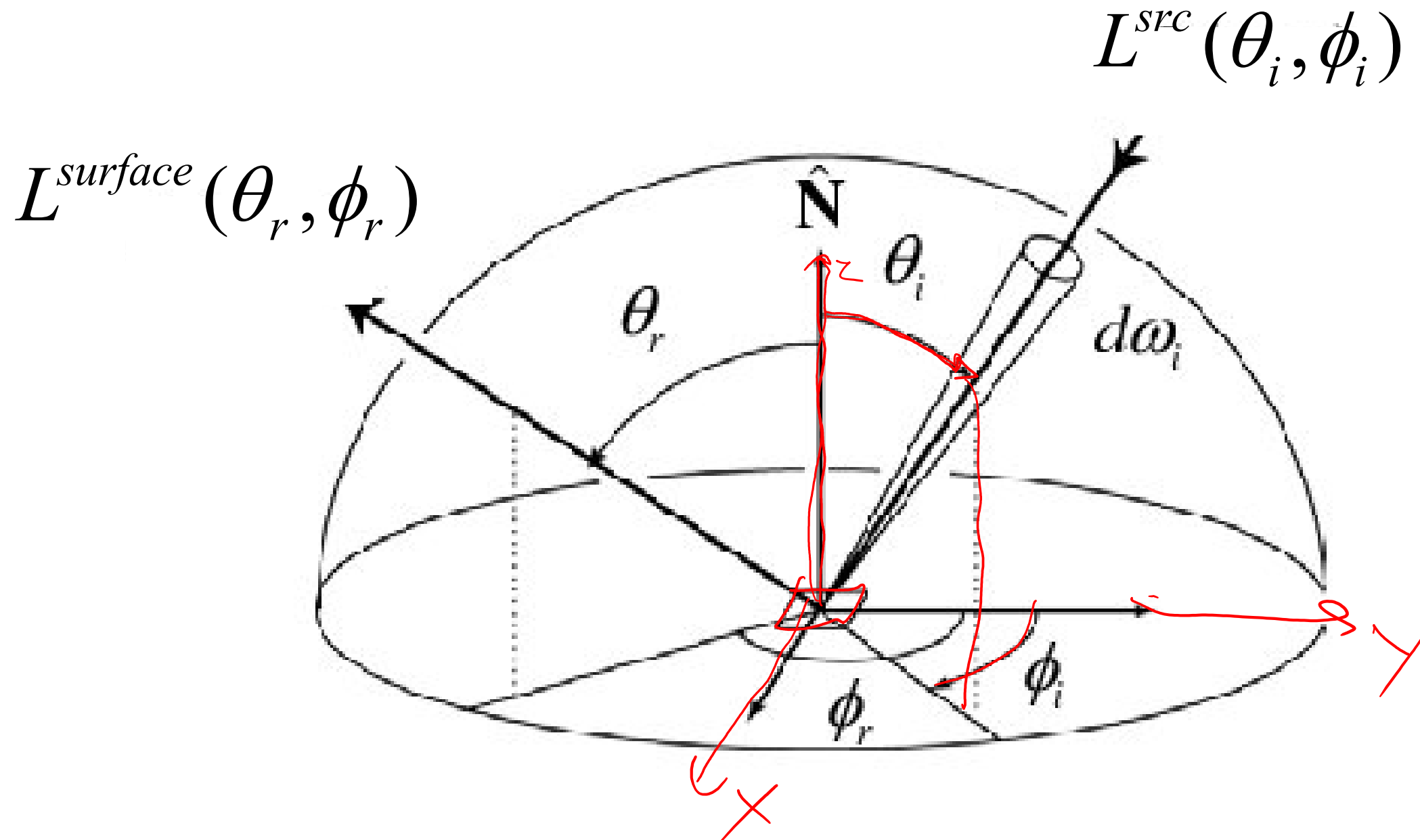
- Units:  $\text{sr}^{-1}$
- Real-valued function defined on the double-hemisphere
- Has many useful properties
- Allows computing output radiance (and thus pixel value) for *any* configuration of lights and viewpoint

$$L^{\text{out}}(\hat{\omega}) = \int_{\Omega_{\text{in}}} f(\hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}, \hat{\omega}_{\text{out}}) L^{\text{in}}(\hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}) \cos \theta_{\text{in}} d\hat{\omega}_{\text{in}}$$

reflectance equation

Why is there a cosine in the reflectance equation?

# Derivation of the Reflectance Equation



From the definition of BRDF:

$$L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r) = E^{surface}(\theta_i, \phi_i) f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r)$$

# Derivation of the Scene Radiance Equation

From the definition of BRDF:

$$L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r) = \frac{E^{surface}(\theta_i, \phi_i) f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r)}{}$$

Write Surface Irradiance in terms of Source Radiance:

$$L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r) = \frac{L^{src}(\theta_i, \phi_i) f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r) \cos \theta_i d\omega_i}{}$$

Integrate over entire hemisphere of possible source directions:

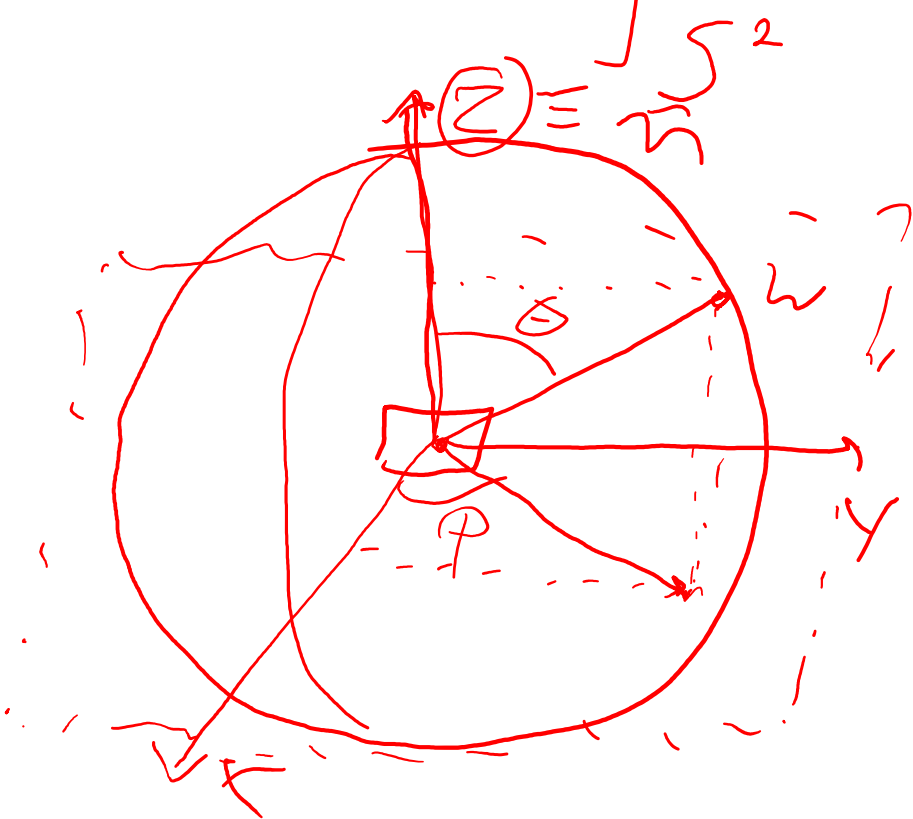
$$L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r) = \int_{2\pi} L^{src}(\theta_i, \phi_i) f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r) \cos \theta_i \underline{d\omega_i}$$

Convert from solid angle to theta-phi representation:

$$L^{surface}(\theta_r, \phi_r) = \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \int_0^{\pi/2} L^{src}(\theta_i, \phi_i) f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r) \cos \theta_i \underline{\sin \theta_i d\theta_i d\phi_i}$$

$$\int_{H^2_+} f(w) dw = \int_{\theta=0}^{\frac{\pi}{2}} \int_{\varphi=0}^{2\pi} F(\theta, \varphi) \sin \theta d\theta d\varphi$$

$$\int_{S^2} f(w) dw = \int_{\theta=0}^{\pi} \int_{\varphi=0}^{2\pi} f(\theta, \varphi) \sin \theta d\theta d\varphi$$



$$\langle \vec{w}, \vec{n} \rangle = \cos \theta$$

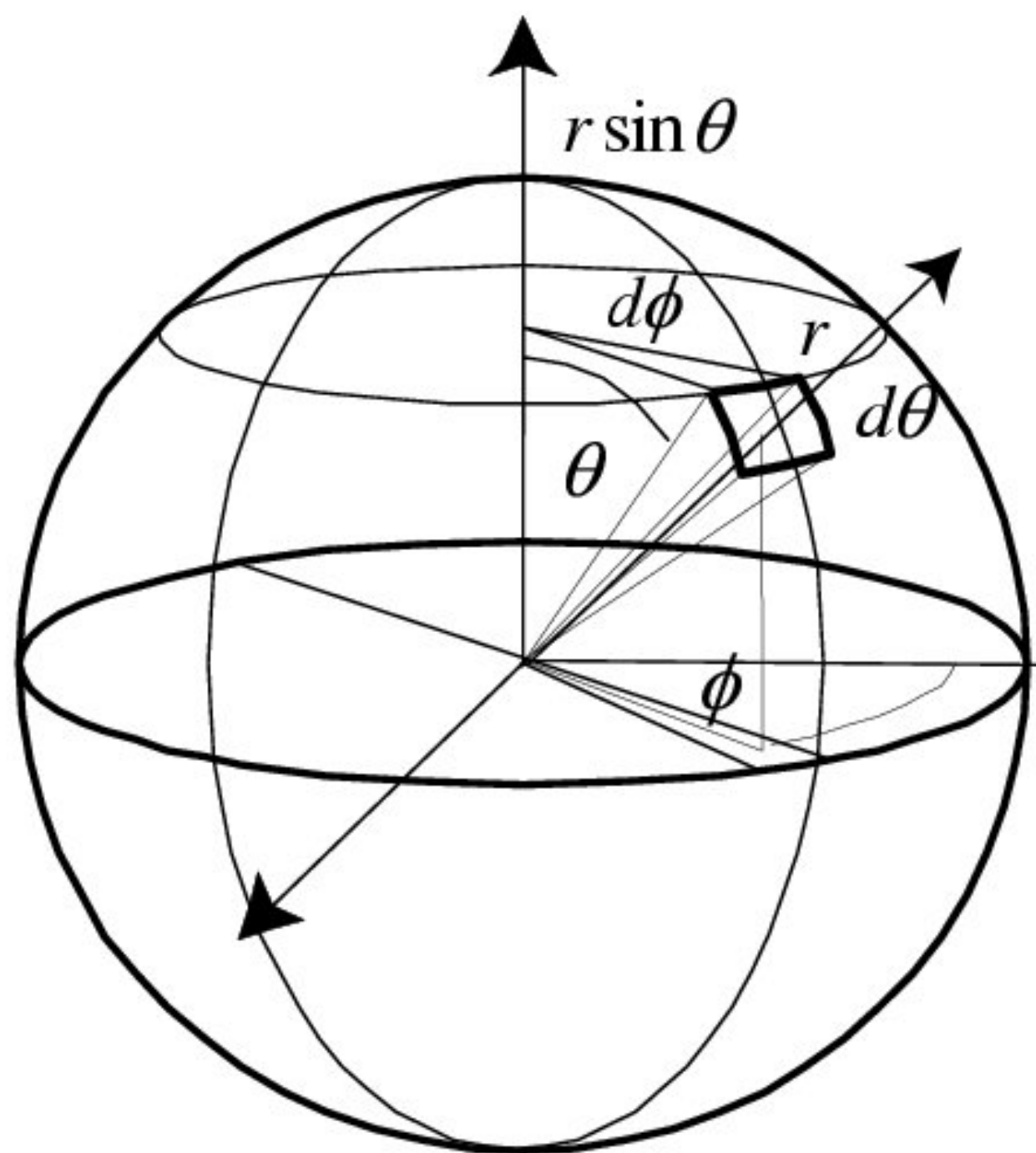
$$\vec{w} = (x, y, z)$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} z = R \cos \theta \\ x = \sin \theta \cos \varphi \\ y = \sin \theta \sin \varphi \end{bmatrix}$$

$z$ : azimuthal direction

# Differential Solid Angles

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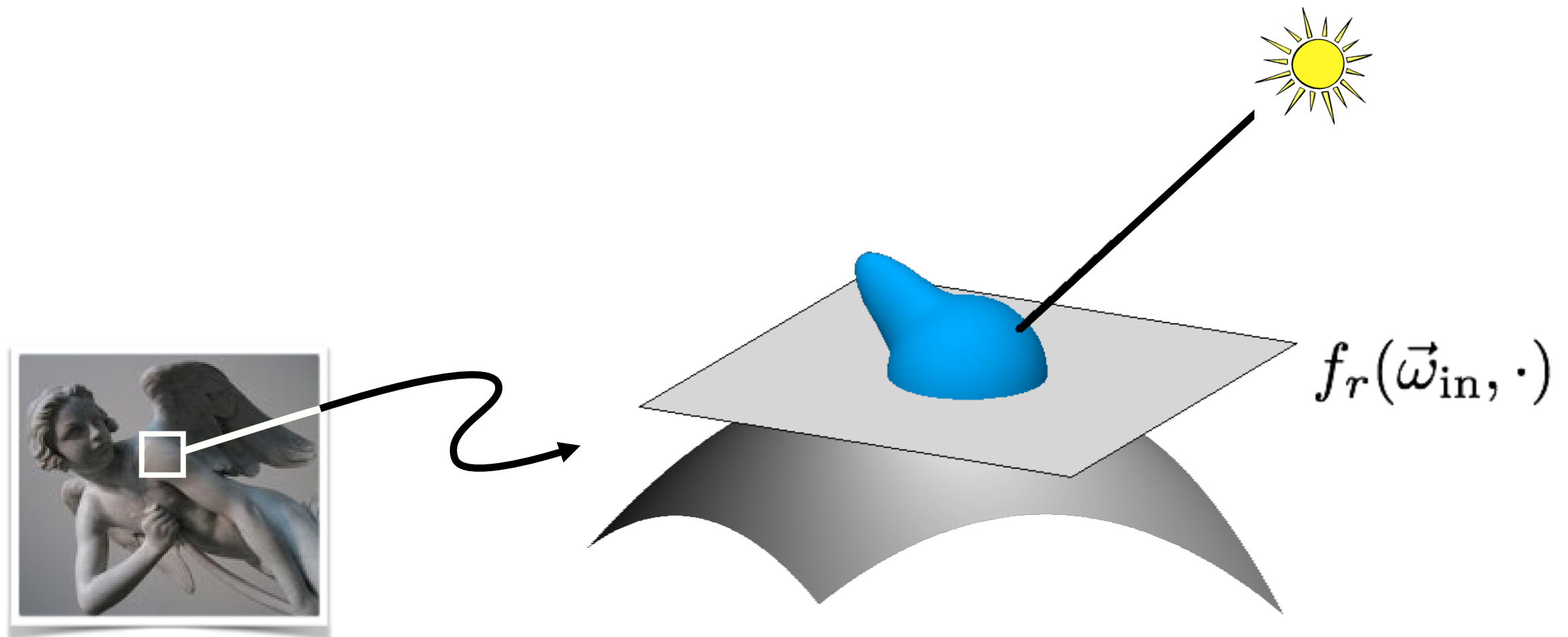


$$\begin{aligned} dA &= (r d\theta)(r \sin \theta d\phi) \\ &= r^2 \sin \theta d\theta d\phi \end{aligned}$$

$$d\omega = \frac{dA}{r^2} = \sin \theta d\theta d\phi$$

$$S = \int_0^\pi \int_0^{2\pi} \sin \theta d\theta d\phi = 4\pi$$

# BRDF



$$f_r(\vec{\omega}_{in}, \vec{\omega}_{out})$$

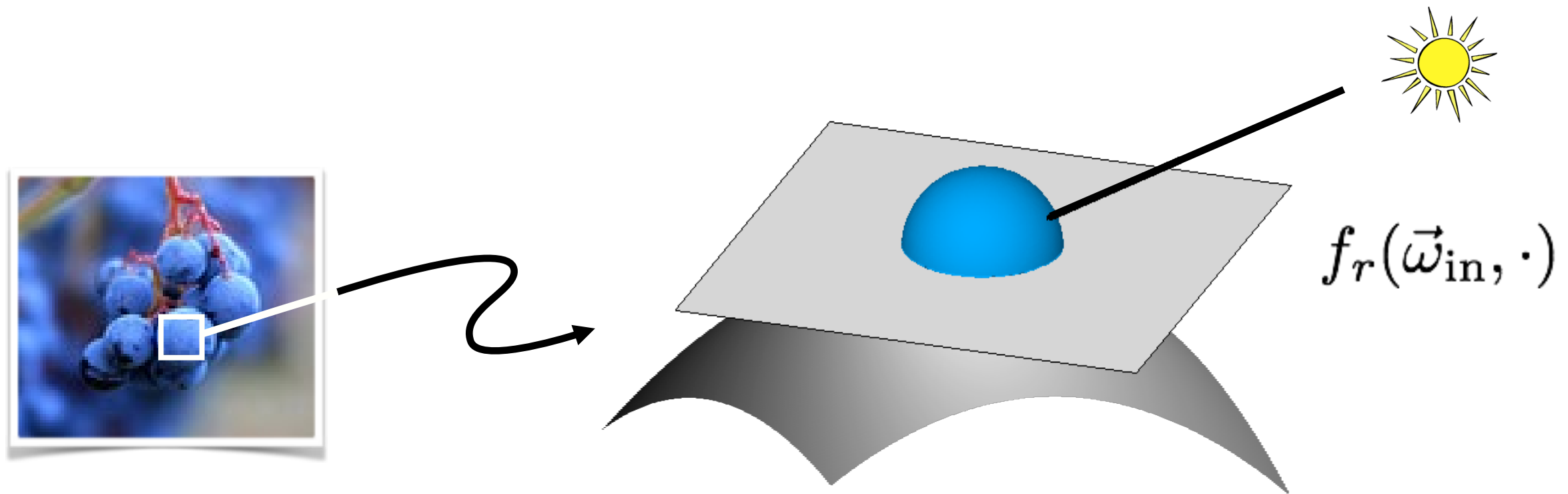
Bi-directional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)



# BRDF

Lambertian (diffuse) BRDF: energy equally distributed in all directions

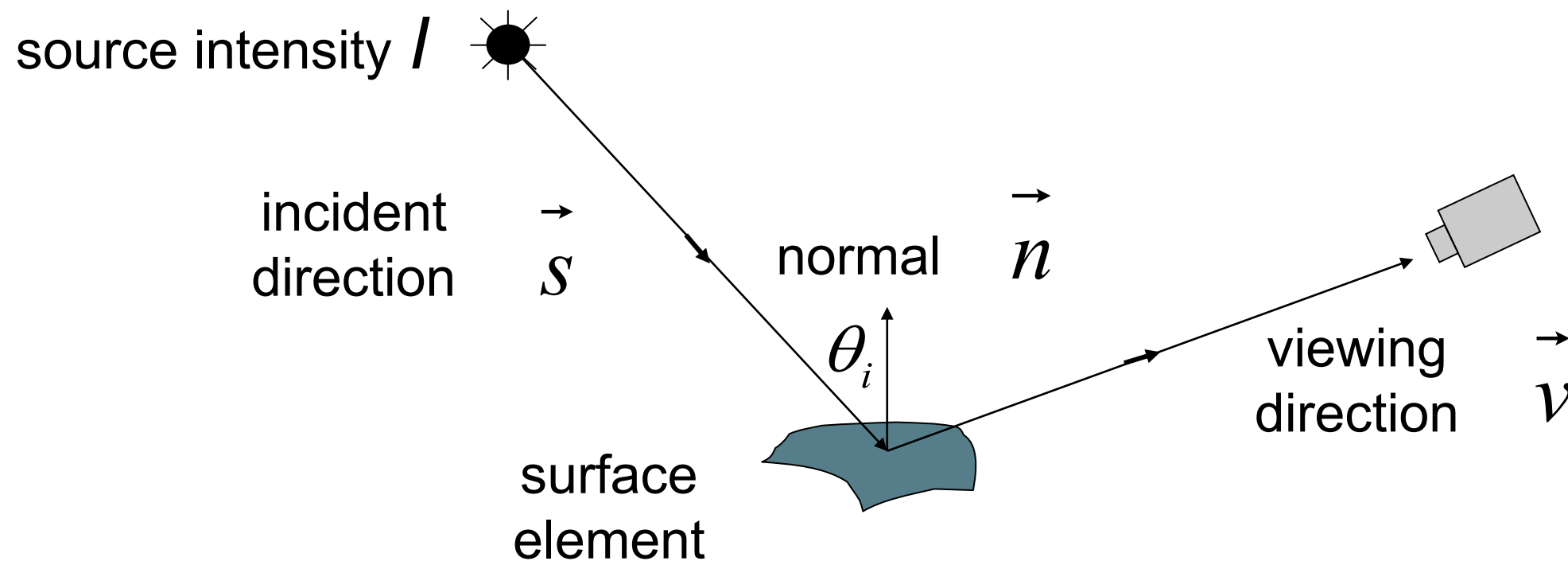
What does the BRDF equal in this case?



$$f_r(\vec{\omega}_{\text{in}}, \vec{\omega}_{\text{out}})$$

Bi-directional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)

# Diffuse Reflection and Lambertian BRDF



- Surface appears equally bright from ALL directions! (independent of  $\vec{v}$ )
- Lambertian BRDF is simply a constant :  $f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_r, \phi_r) = \frac{\rho_d}{\pi}$  ↗ albedo
- Most commonly used BRDF in Vision and Graphics!

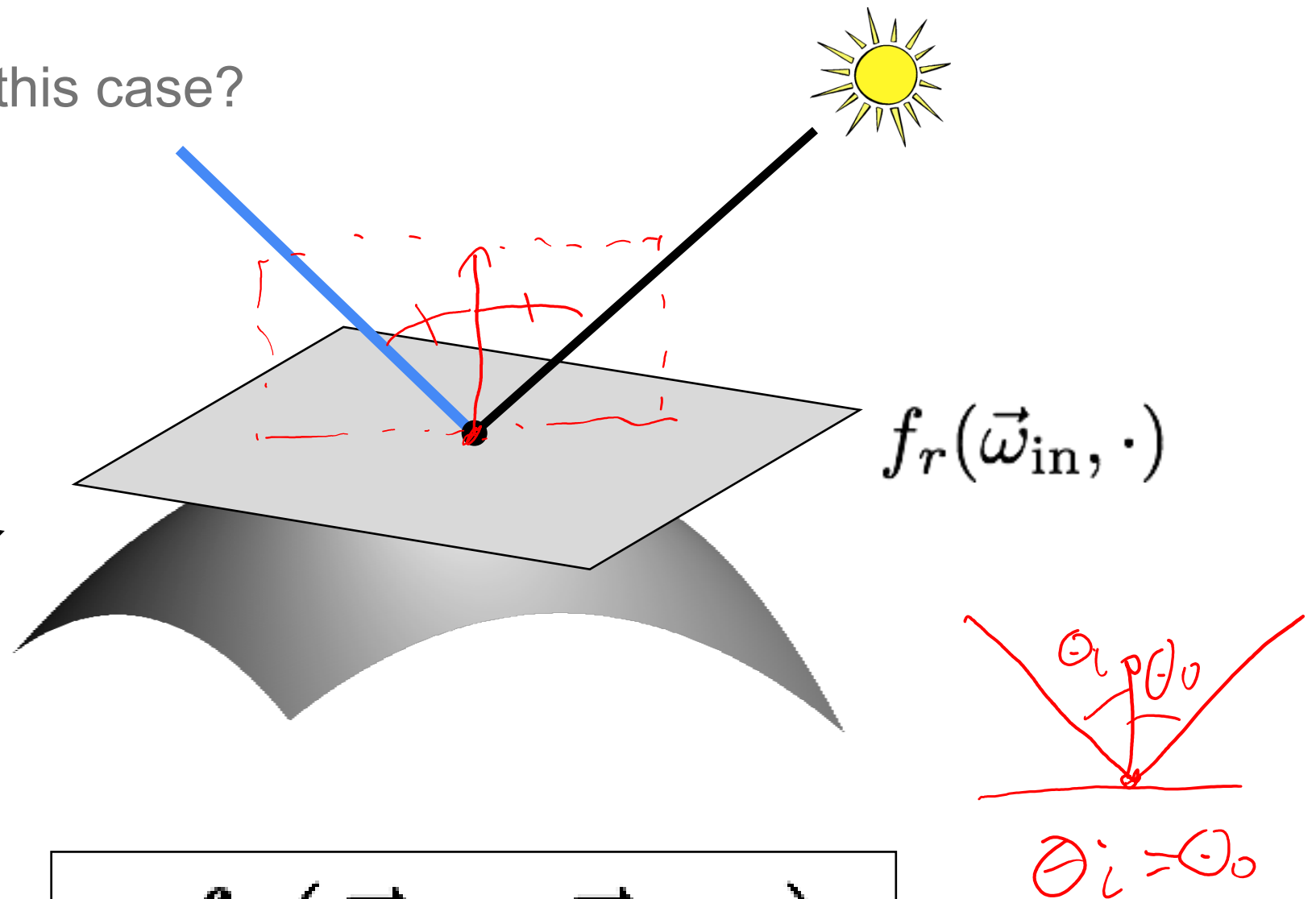
$$0 \leq \rho_d \leq 1$$

$$\underbrace{\int f(\omega_i, \omega_o) \cos \theta_o d\omega_o}_{\rho_d} \leq 1$$

# BRDF

Specular BRDF: all energy concentrated in mirror direction

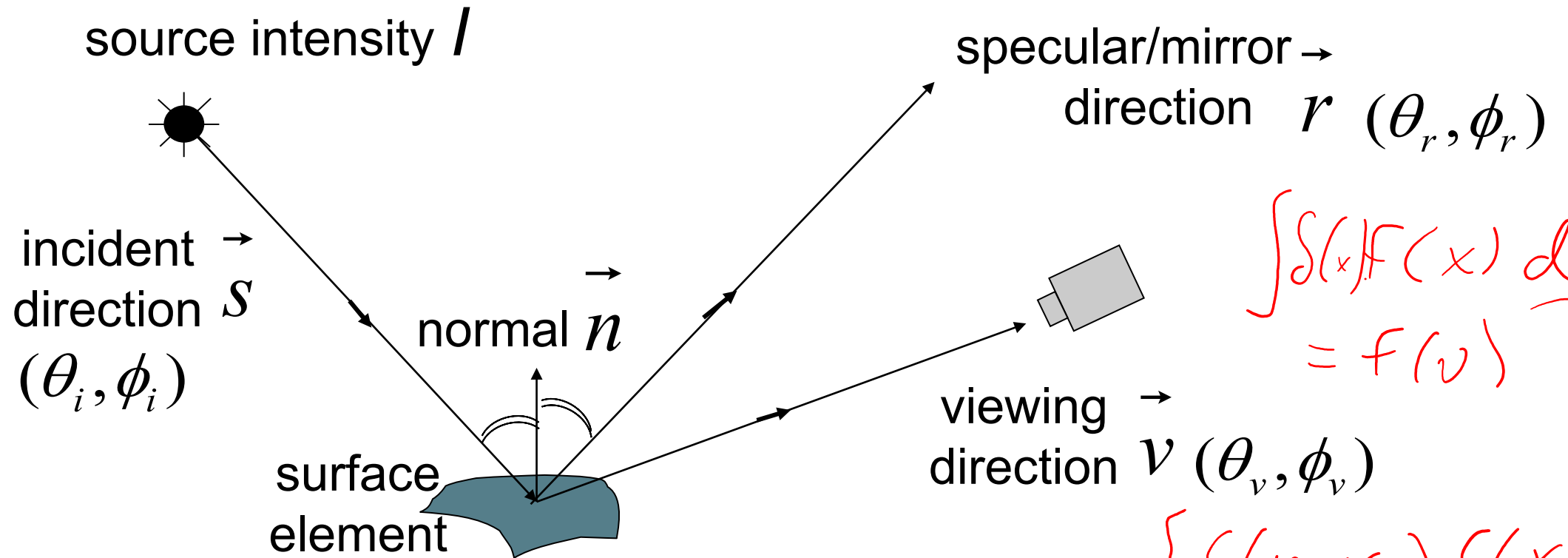
What does the BRDF equal in this case?



$$f_r(\vec{\omega}_{in}, \vec{\omega}_{out})$$

Bi-directional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)

# Specular Reflection and Mirror BRDF



- Valid for very smooth surfaces.
- All incident light energy reflected in a SINGLE direction (only when  $\vec{v} = \vec{r}$ ).
- Mirror BRDF is simply a double-delta function :

$$f(\theta_i, \phi_i; \theta_v, \phi_v) = \frac{\rho_s}{\cos \theta_i} \delta(\theta_i - \theta_v) \delta(\phi_i + \pi - \phi_v)$$

specular albedo

term canceling out foreshortening

$$\int \delta(x-x_0) f(x) dx = f(x_0)$$

$$L_0(w_0) = \rho L_i(w_{i,m})$$

$$L_0(w_{0,m}) = \int_{H^2} f(w_i, w_{0,m}) \cos \theta_i L_i(w_i) dw_i$$

$$= \int_{H^2} \rho \underbrace{\delta(\underline{w_i} - w_{i,m})}_{\substack{\uparrow \\ \angle m, w_i}} \cos \theta_i L_i(w_i) dw_i$$

$$= \rho L(w_{i,m}) \underbrace{\cos \theta_{i,m}}$$

$$f(w_i, w_{0,m}) = \rho \frac{\delta(\dots)}{\cos \theta_i}$$



# Example Surfaces

Body Reflection:

Diffuse Reflection  
Matte Appearance  
Non-Homogeneous Medium  
Clay, paper, etc



Surface Reflection:

Specular Reflection  
Glossy Appearance  
Highlights  
Dominant for Metals

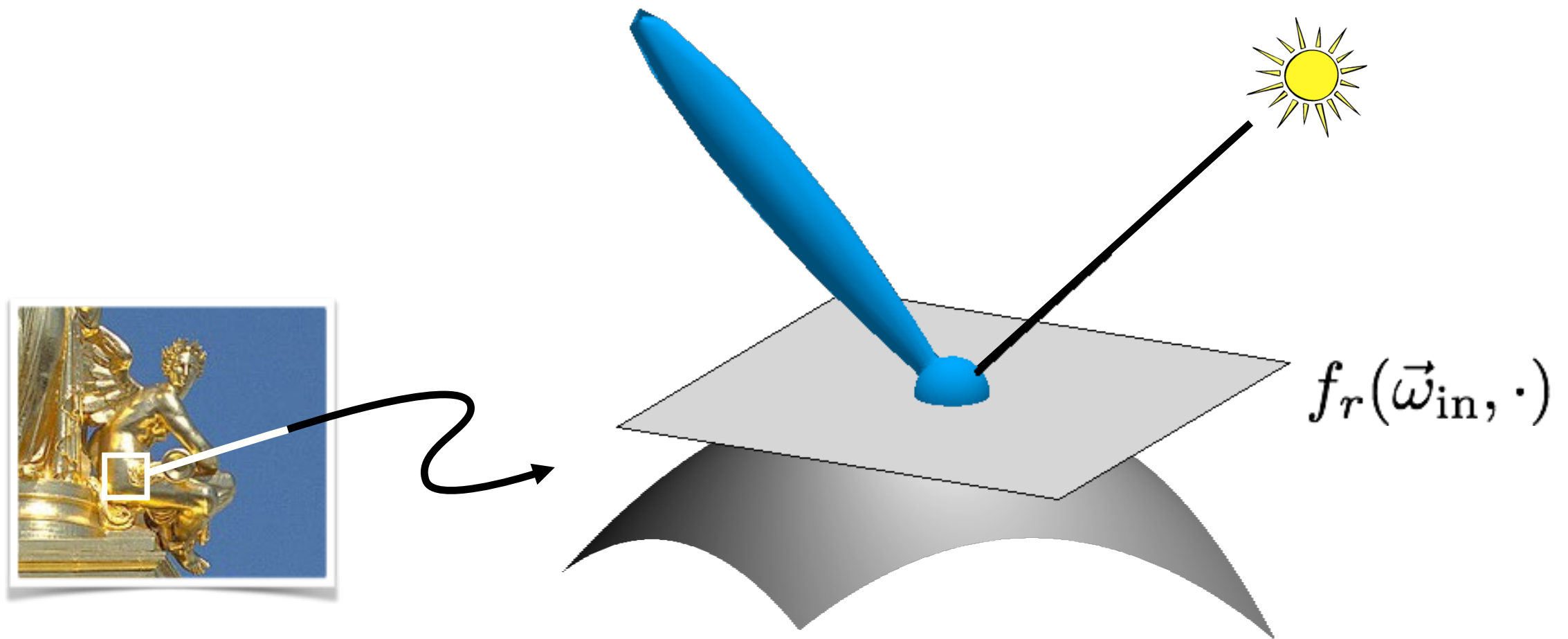


Many materials exhibit  
both Reflections:



# BRDF

Glossy BRDF: more energy concentrated in mirror direction than elsewhere



Bi-directional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)

# Trick for dielectrics (non-metals)

- BRDF is a sum of a Lambertian diffuse component and non-Lambertian specular components
- The two components differ in terms of color and polarization, and under certain conditions, this can be exploited to separate them.

$$f(\vec{\omega}_i, \vec{\omega}_o) = f_d + f_s(\vec{\omega}_i, \vec{\omega}_o)$$

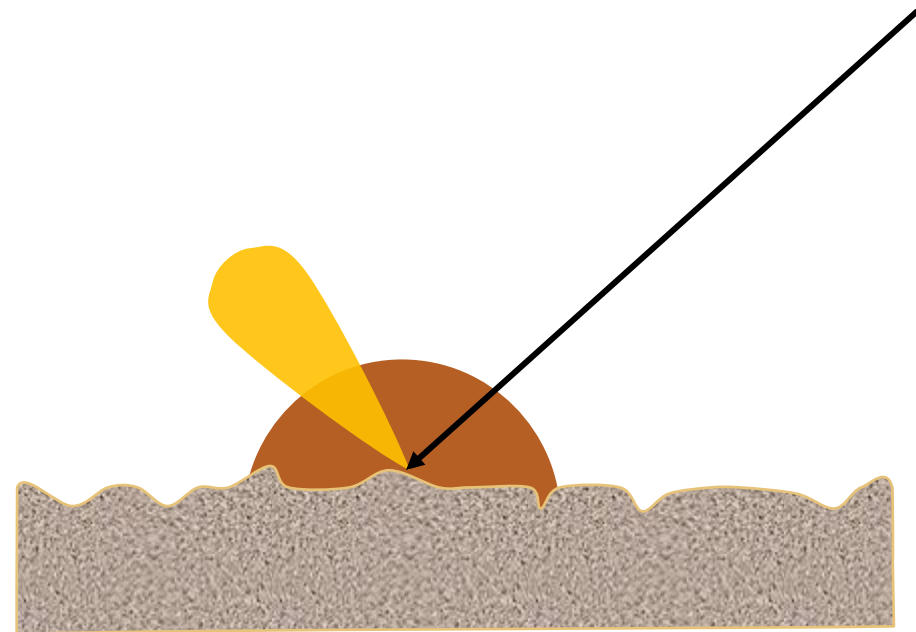
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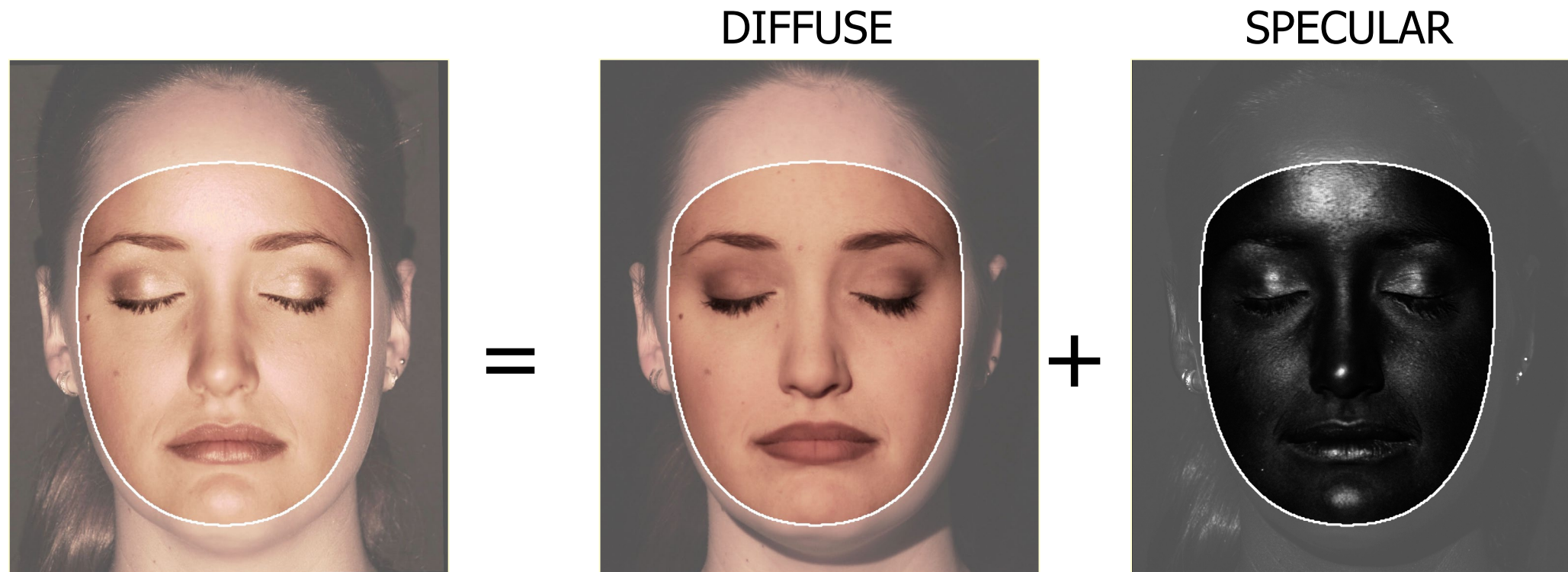
$$f(\vec{\omega}_i, \vec{\omega}_o) = f_d + f_s(\vec{\omega}_i, \vec{\omega}_o)$$

Often called the *dichromatic BRDF*:

- Diffuse term varies with wavelength, constant with polarization
- Specular term constant with wavelength, varies with polarization



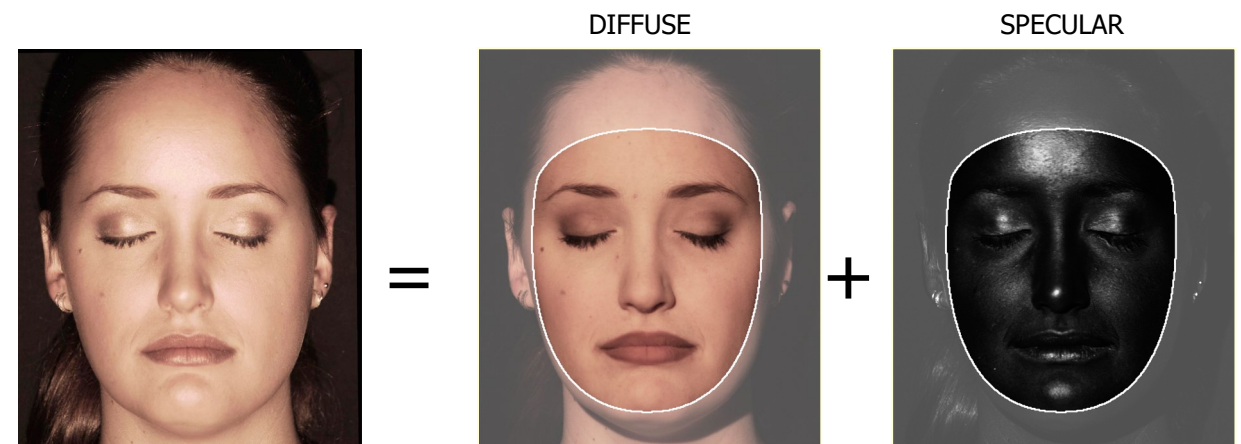
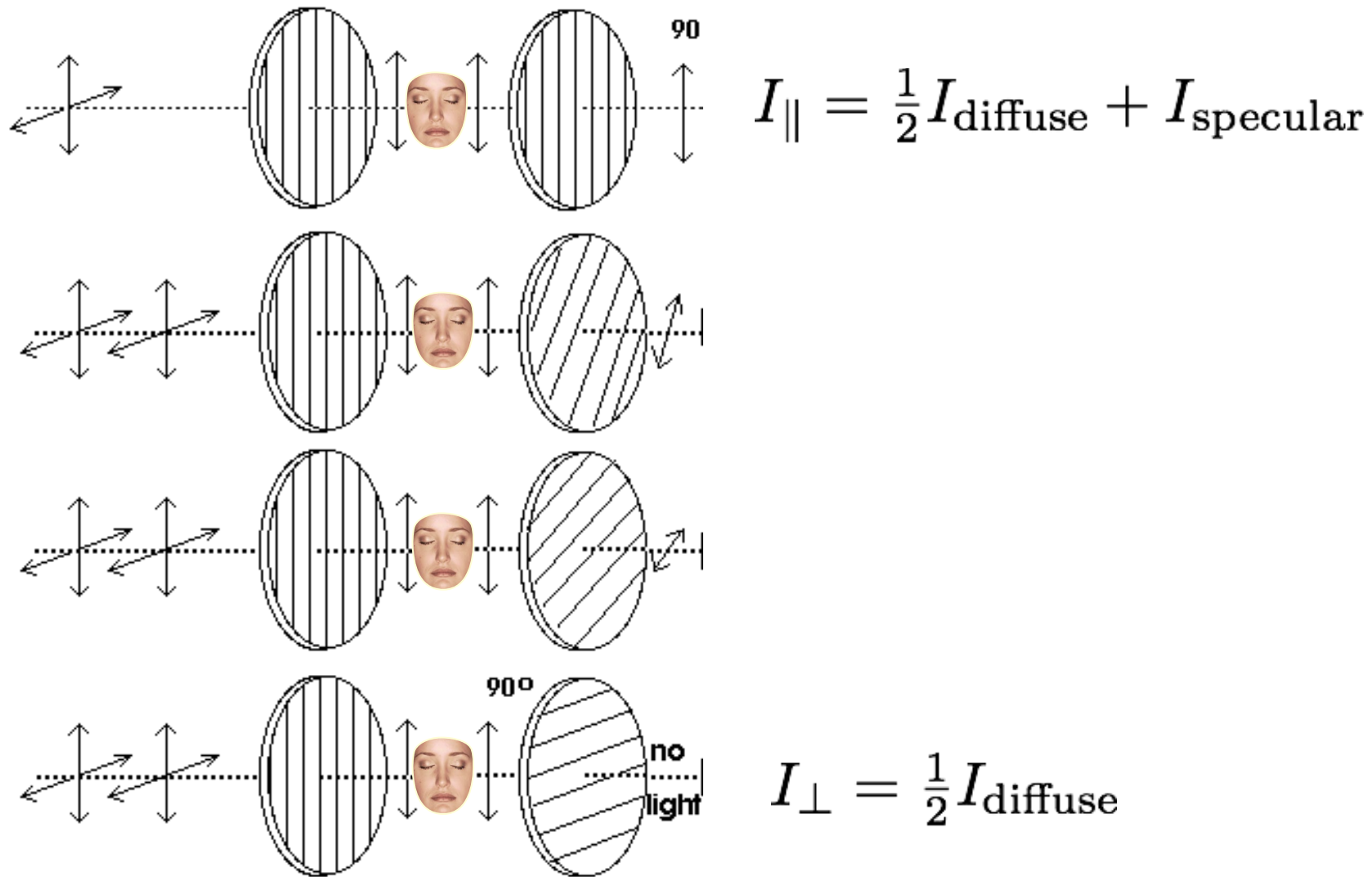
# Trick for dielectrics (non-metals)



- In this example, the two components were separated using linear polarizing filters on the camera and light source.

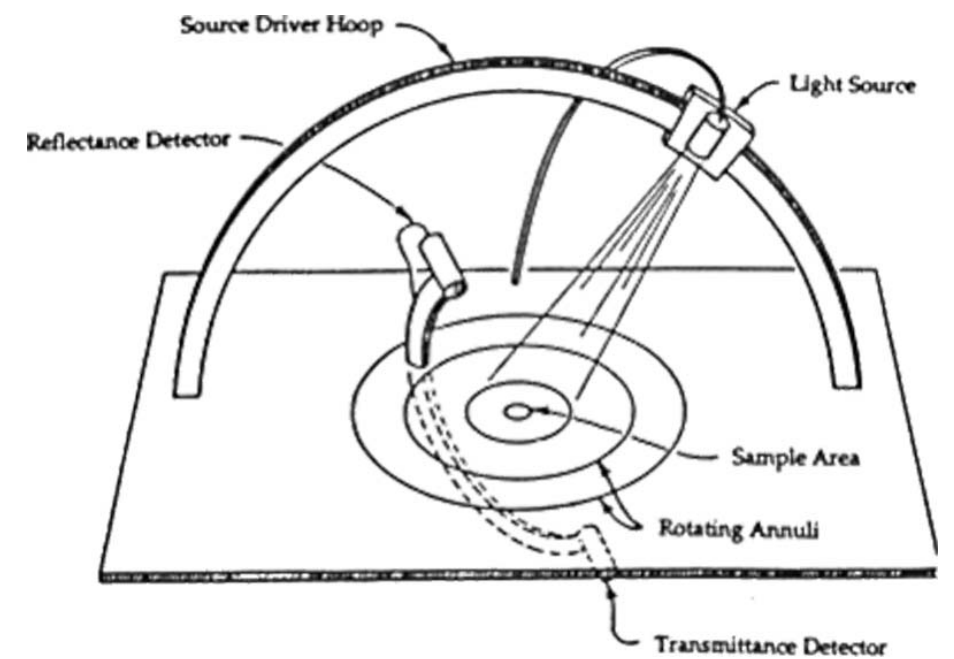
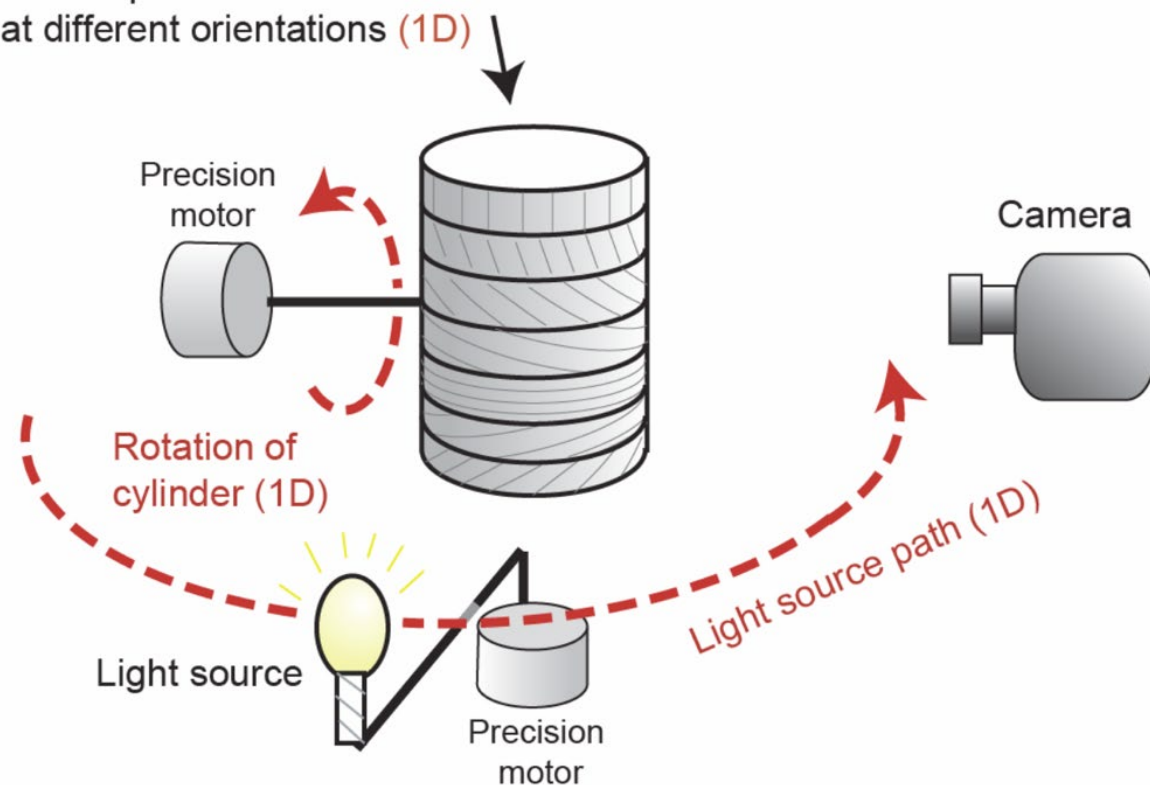


# Trick for dielectrics (non-metals)

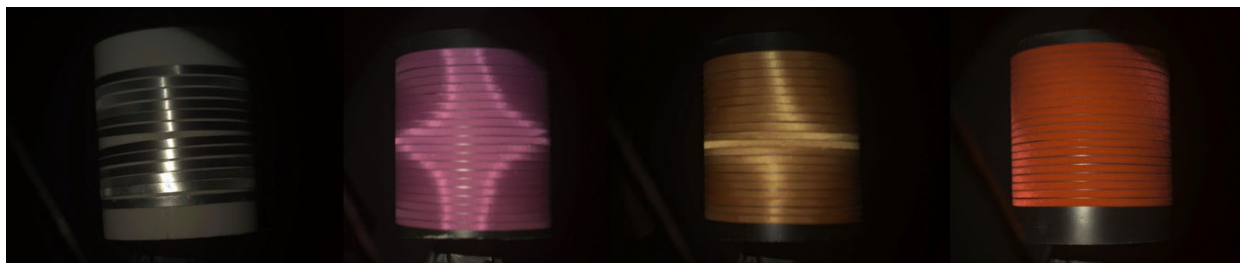


# Tabulated 4D BRDFs (hard to measure)

Cylinder (1D normal variation)  
with stripes of the material  
at different orientations (1D)



Gonioreflectometer



[Ngan et al., 2005]

# Low-parameter (non-linear) BRDF models

- A small number of parameters define the (2D,3D, or 4D) function
- Except for Lambertian, the BRDF is non-linear in these parameters
- Examples:

Lambertian:  $f(\omega_i, \omega_o) = \frac{a}{\pi}$  ← Where do these constants come from?

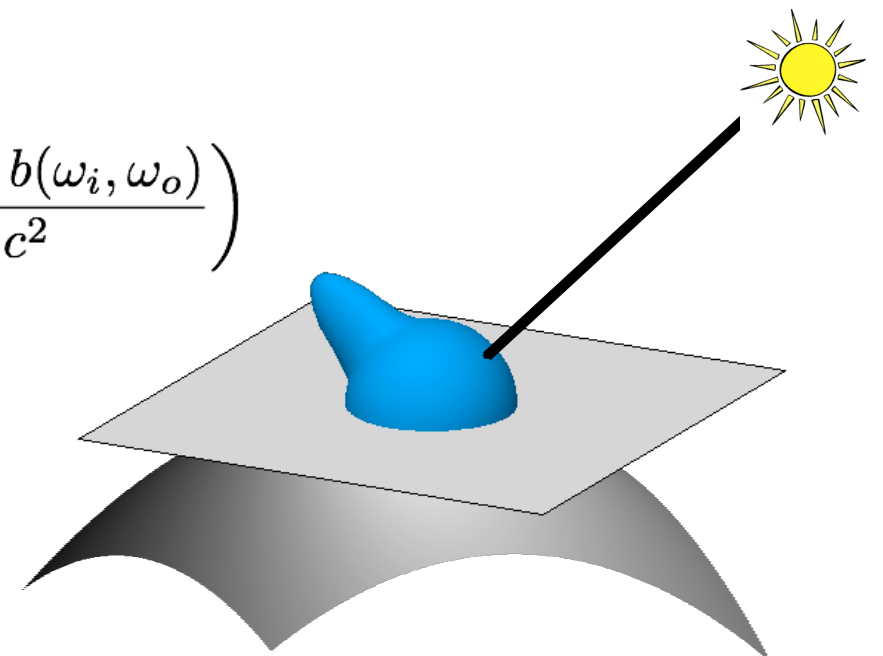
Phong:  $f(\omega_i, \omega_o) = \frac{a}{\pi} + b \cos^c (2\langle \omega_i, n \rangle \langle \omega_o, n \rangle - \langle \omega_i, \omega_o \rangle)$

Blinn:  $f(\omega_i, \omega_o) = \frac{a}{\pi} + b \cos^c b(\omega_i, \omega_o)$

Lafortune:  $f(\omega_i, \omega_o) = \frac{a}{\pi} + b(-\omega_i^\top A \omega_o)^k$

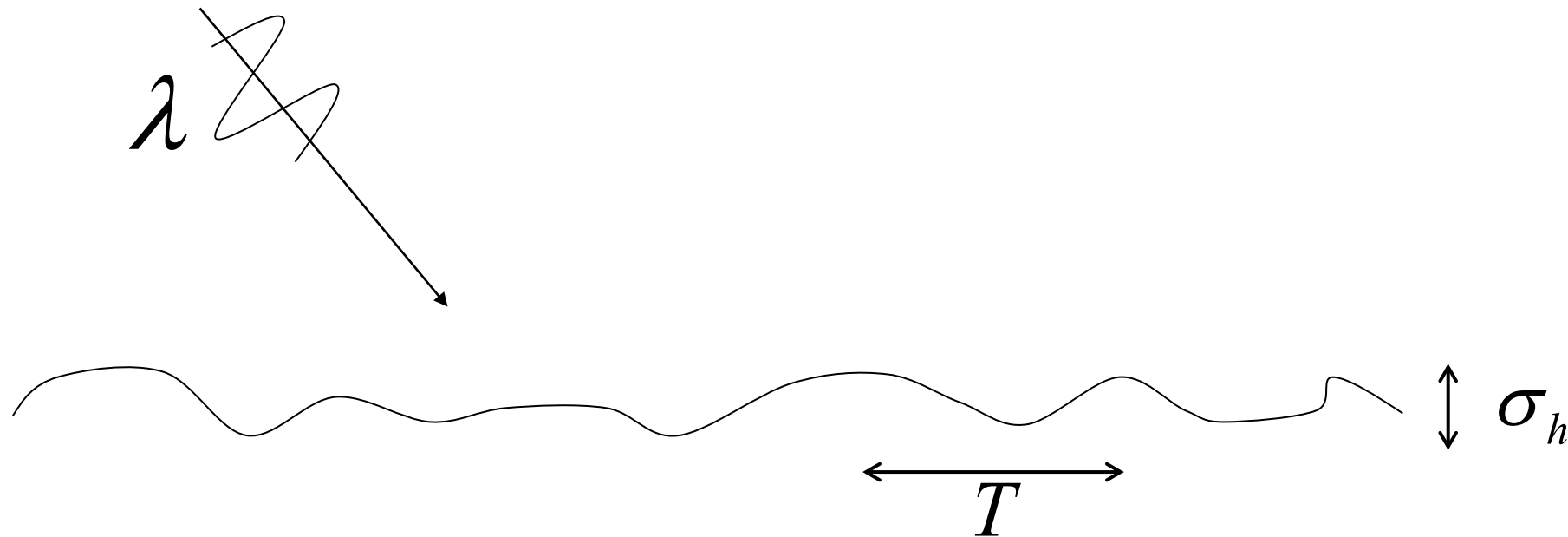
Ward:  $f(\omega_i, \omega_o) = \frac{a}{\pi} + \frac{b}{4\pi c^2 \sqrt{\langle n, \omega_i \rangle \langle n, \omega_o \rangle}} \exp\left(\frac{-\tan^2 b(\omega_i, \omega_o)}{c^2}\right)$

$\alpha$  is called the *albedo*



# Reflectance Models

Reflection: An Electromagnetic Phenomenon

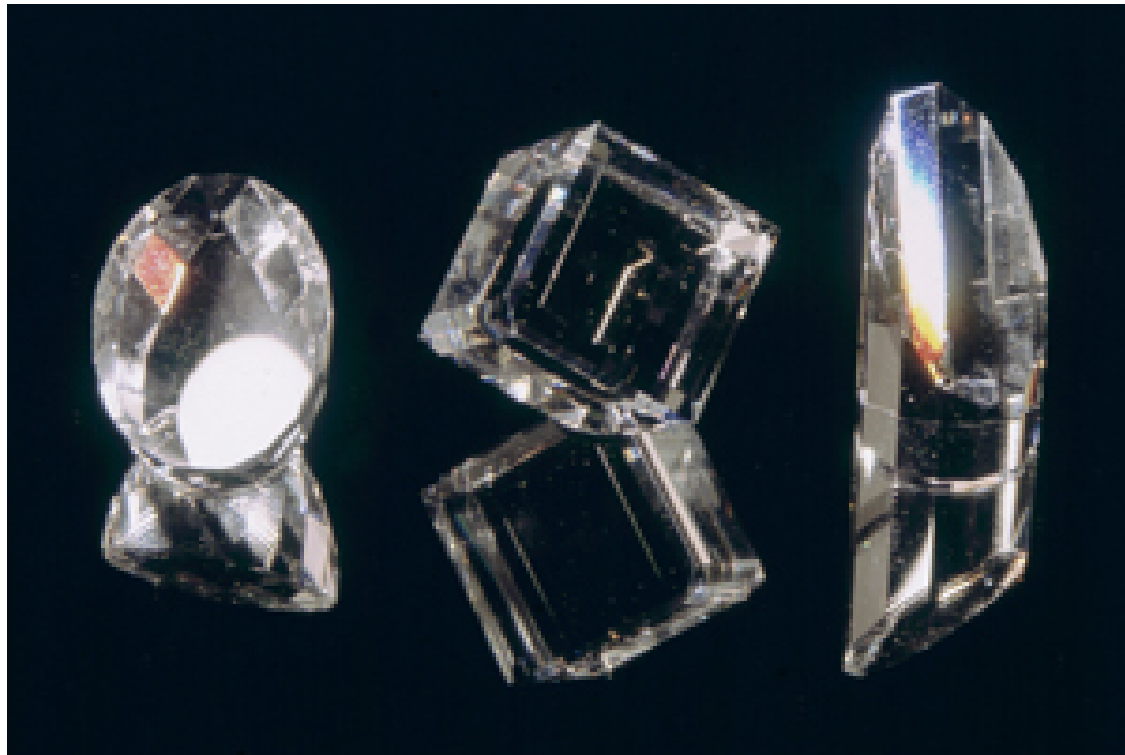


Two approaches to derive Reflectance Models:

- Physical Optics (Wave Optics)
- Geometrical Optics (Ray Optics)

Geometrical models are approximations to physical models  
But they are easier to use!

# Reflectance that Require Wave Optics



# References

Basic reading:

- Szeliski, Section 2.2.
- Gortler, Chapter 21.

This book by Steven Gortler has a great *introduction* to radiometry, reflectance, and their use for image formation.

Additional reading:

- Arvo, “Analytic Methods for Simulated Light Transport,” Yale 1995.
- Veach, “Robust Monte Carlo Methods for Light Transport Simulation,” Stanford 1997.  
These two theses are foundational for modern computer graphics. Among other things, they include a thorough derivation (starting from wave optics and measure theory) of all radiometric quantities and associated integro-differential equations. You can also look at them if you are interested in physics-based rendering.
- Dutre et al., “Advanced Global Illumination,” 2006.  
A book discussing modeling and simulation of other appearance effects beyond single-bounce reflectance.
- Weyrich et al., “Principles of Appearance Acquisition and Representation,” FTGV 2009.  
A very thorough review of everything that has to do with modeling and measuring BRDFs.
- Walter et al., “Microfacet models for refraction through rough surfaces,” EGSR 2007.  
This paper has a great review of physics-based models for reflectance and refraction.
- Matusik, “A data-driven reflectance model,” MIT 2003.  
This thesis introduced the largest measured dataset of 4D reflectances. It also provides detailed discussion of many topics relating to modelling reflectance.
- Rusinkiewicz, “A New Change of Variables for Efficient BRDF Representation,” 1998.
- Romeiro and Zickler, “Inferring reflectance under real-world illumination,” Harvard TR 2010.  
These two papers discuss the isotropy and other properties of common BRDFs, and how one can take advantage of them using alternative parameterizations.
- Shafer, “Using color to separate reflection components,” 1984.  
The paper introducing the dichromatic reflectance model.
- Stam, “Diffraction Shaders,” SIGGRAPH 1999.
- Levin et al., “Fabricating BRDFs at high spatial resolution using wave optics,” SIGGRAPH 2013.
- Cuypers et al., “Reflectance model for diffraction,” TOG 2013.  
These three papers describe reflectance effects that can only be modeled using wave optics (and in particular diffraction).