CRYOEM 001 :
EM SUPPORT FILMS AND GRIDS

NCCAT Embedded Training – Master Class series

September 2020

NATIONAL CENTER FOR CRYOEM ACCESS & TRAINING

New York Structural Biology Center

SIMONS ELECTRON MICROSCOPY CENTER

CRYOEM 001 : SINGLE PARTICLE MASTERCLASS

Introduction to cryoEM: SPA

Building a cryoEM toolkit

EM compatible samples

EM support films and grids

Sample preparation

Tools of the trade:
- microscopes and detectors

Microscope operations

Data collection strategies

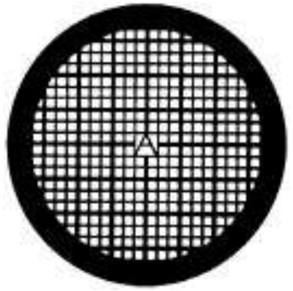
Data assessment & QC

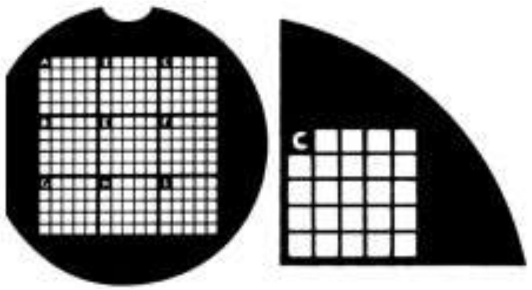
Data processing:
- cryoEM IT infrastructure
- On-the-fly feedback
- 3D Reconstruction

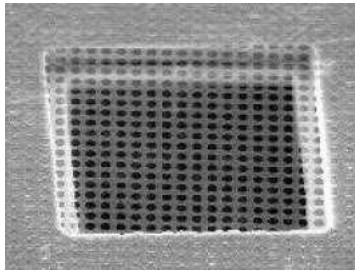
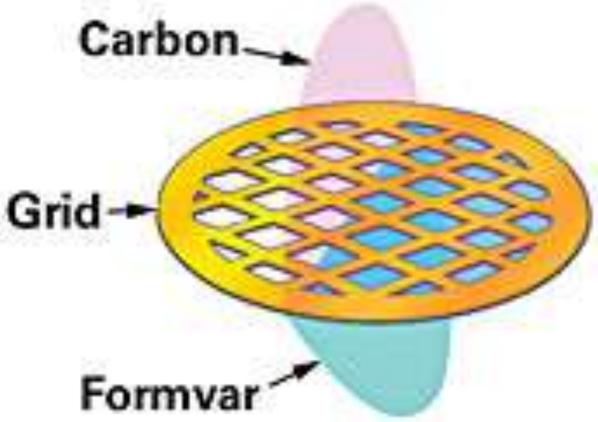
Visualization and validation

GRIDS





Common Materials

Copper

Nickel

Gold

Aluminum

Molybdenum

Titanium

Stainless Steel

https://www.tedpella.com/grids_html/

GRIDS: STATS

Rough grid parameters

Rim Width: 350-400µm.

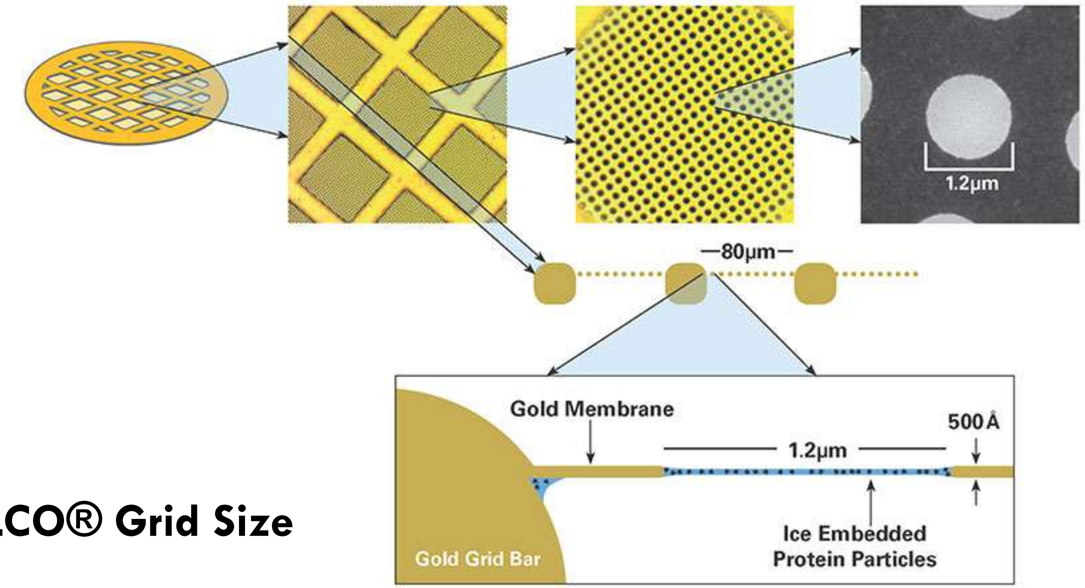
Thickness: PELCO® Grids are approximately 25µm thick.

Diameter: 3.0 to 3.05mm

Finish: Copper, Nickel and Gold grids have a matte finish on one side and a shiny finish on the other side.

Pitch: Is 1"/mesh or 25.4mm/mesh

Example 200 mesh pitch = 25.4/200 = 127µm



PELCO® Grid Size

Square Mesh	Pitch µm	Hole µm	Bar µm	% Trans-mission
50	508	425	83	70
75	339	284	55	70
100	254	204	50	65
150	169	125	44	60
200	127	90	37	50
300	85	54	31	40
400	64	38	26	35
500	51	28	23	30

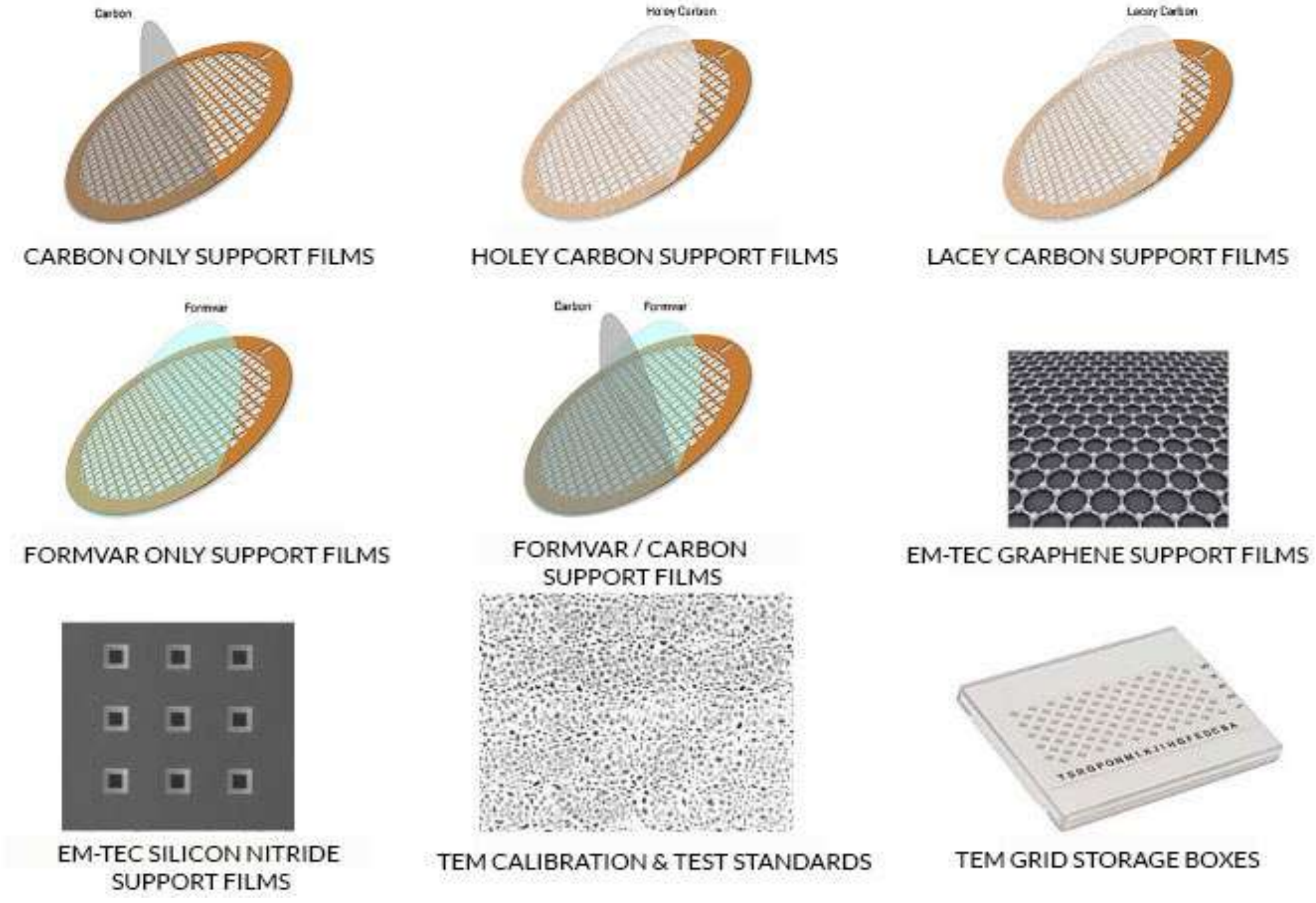
TERMINOLOGY

Grid (Cu, Au, Mo, etc…)

- mesh

Foil (C, Au, etc…)

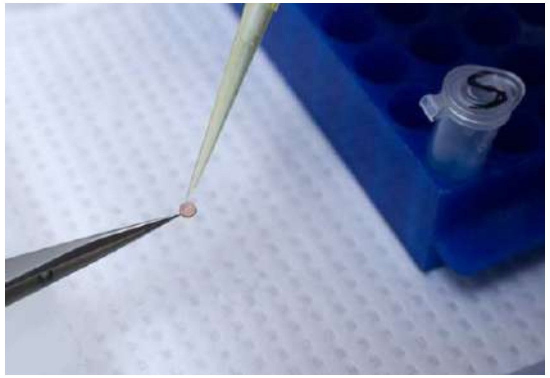
- Continuous
- lacy
- holey (hole size and spacing)

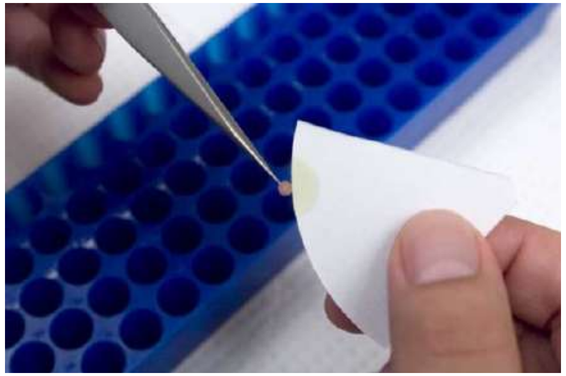


https://edgescientific.com/product-category/tem-supplies/tem-support-films/

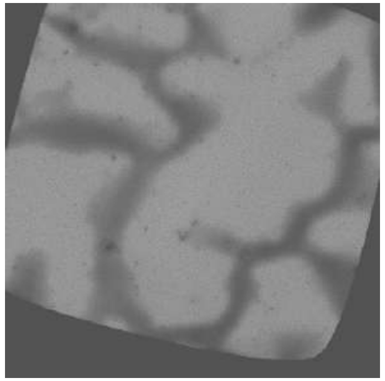
SUPPORT FILMS

Support films used in negative stain





Baker, 2007



www.mcb.ucdavis.edu/cryoem/microscopy101.html

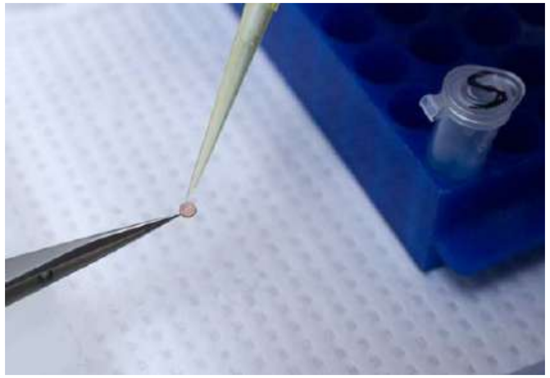
NEGATIVE STAINING

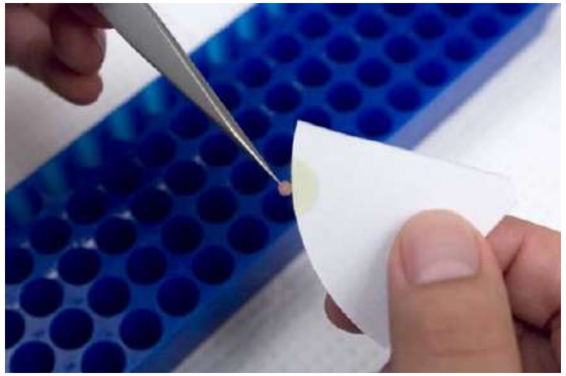
Heavy metal salt solution surrounds sample

- Continuous carbon support film
- Protocol: glow discharge, sample, wash, stain
- NCCAT: UA/UF, PTA, ammonium molybdate

Advantages: high contrast, easy to learn, high SNR, radiation resistant, 3D reconstruction possible

Disadvantages: structural collapse & flattening artifacts, non-native environment, ~20 Å max resolution





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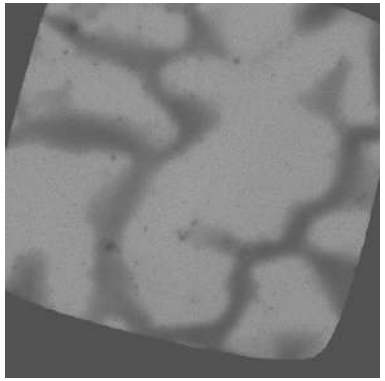
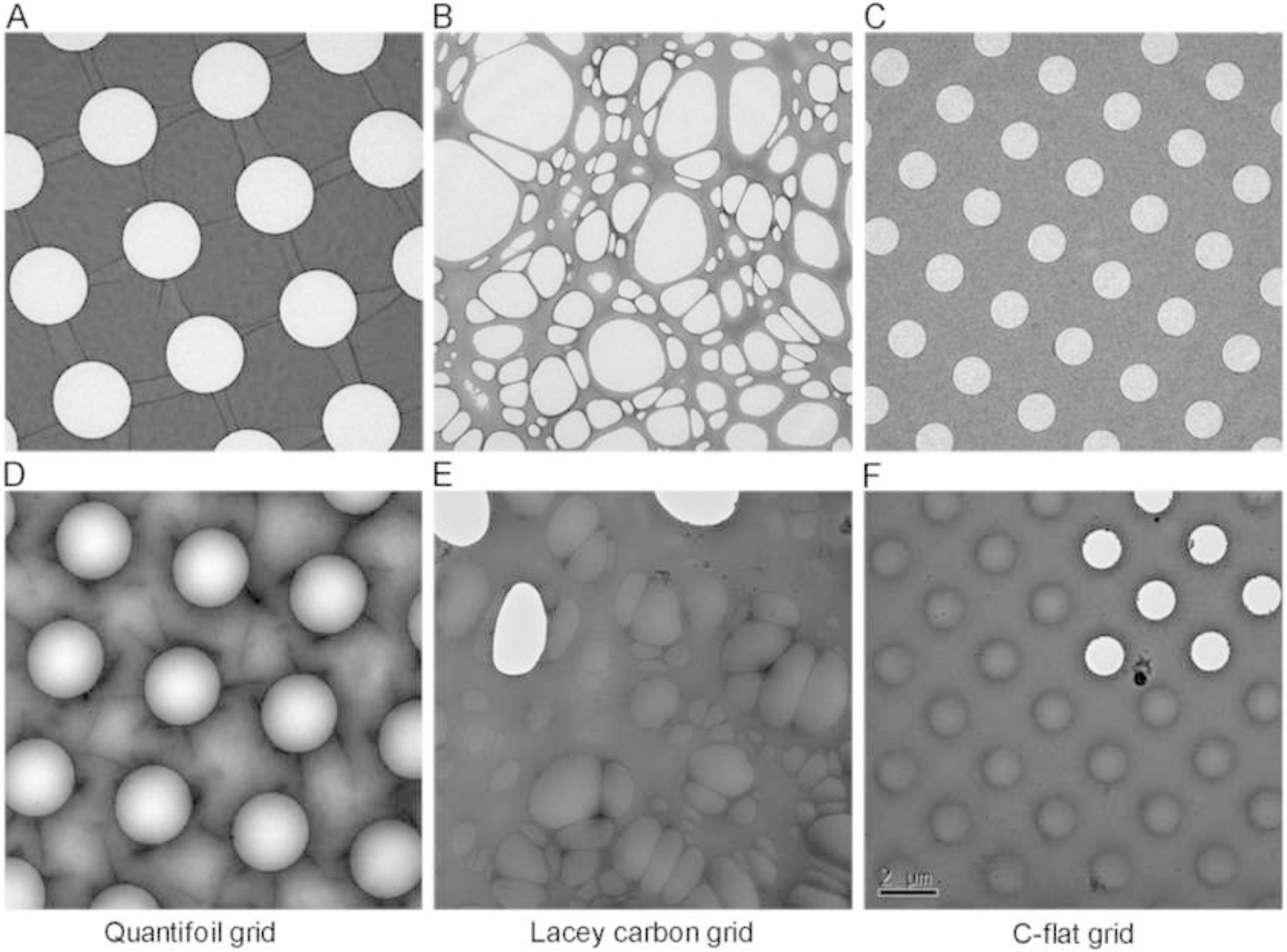


www.mcb.ucdavis.edu/cryoem/microscopy101.html

SUPPORT FILMS

Cho, Hye-Jin & Hyun, Jae-Kyung & Kim, Jin-Gyu & Jeong, Hyeong & Park, Hyo & You, Dong-Ju & Jung, Hyun. (2013). Measurement of ice thickness on vitreous ice embedded cryo-EM grids: investigation of optimizing condition for visualizing macromolecules. Journal of Analytical Science and Technology. 4. 10.1186/2093-3371-4-7.



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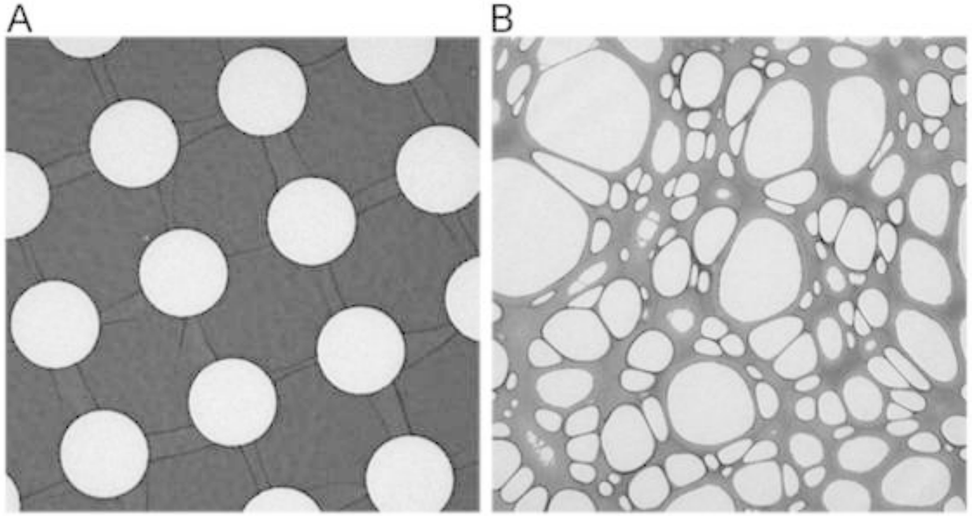

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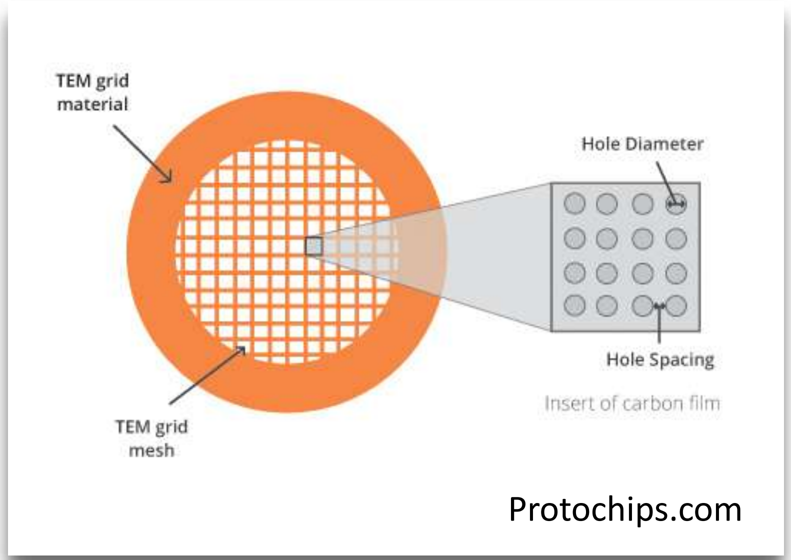
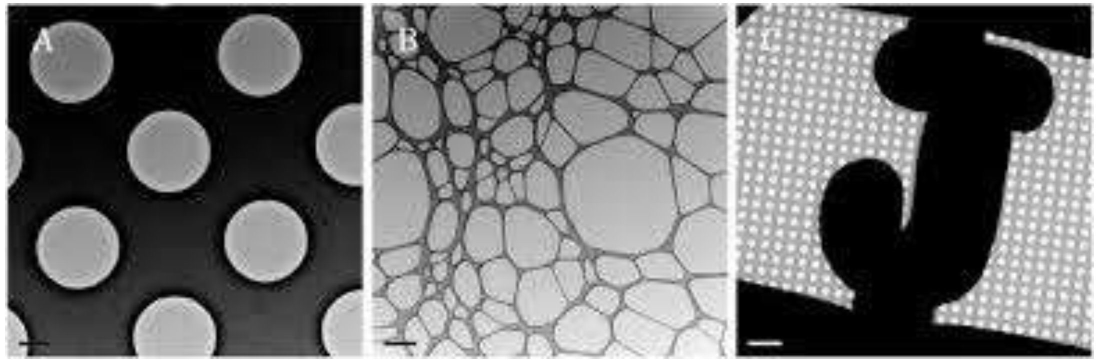
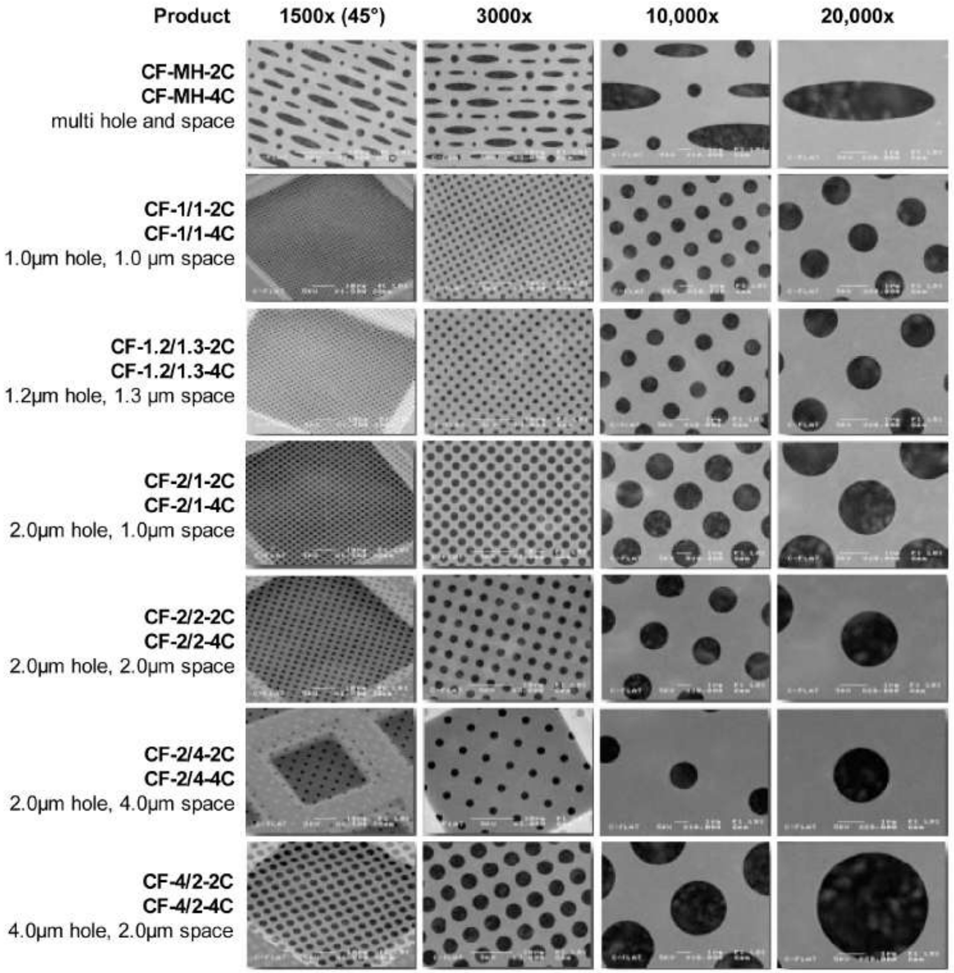
Making your own holey carbon:
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsb.2013.11.002

Making your own lacey carbon:
https://www.2spi.com/making-lacey-carbon/

PLUNGE FREEZING







https://scienceservices.de/de/verbrauchsmaterial-werkzeuge/tem-grids/info-tem-grids/coatings-and-coating-materials

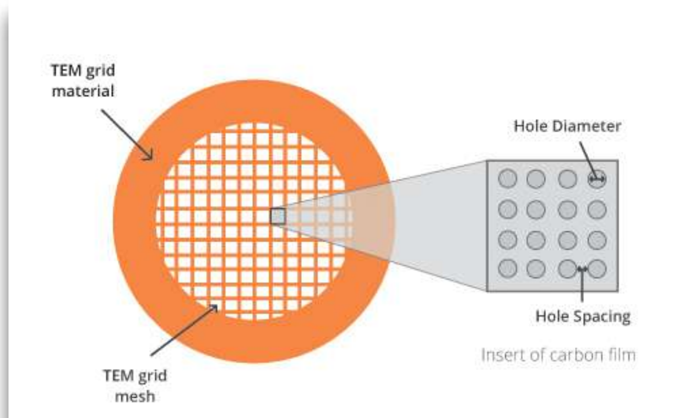
PLUNGE FREEZING

Sample suspended in physiological buffer

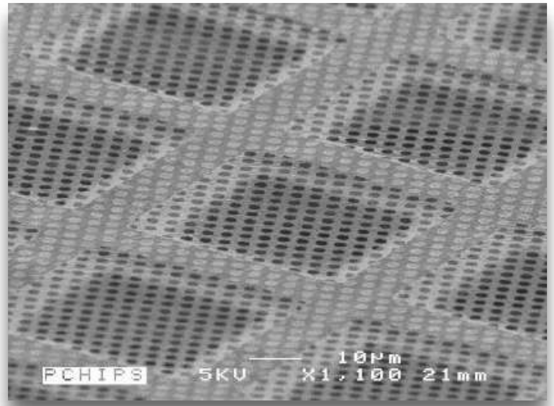
- Holey carbon support film: C-flats, Quantifoil
- Protocol: glow discharge, sample, blot, plunge freeze
- NCCAT: TFS Vitrobot, Leica EM GP, Gatan CryoPlunge Freezer 3, manual plunge freezer

Advantages: no fixation/dehydration/staining artifacts, learning curve, random orientation, higher resolution than stain

Disadvantages: low contrast, low SNR, radiation sensitive, difficult to visualize <100 kD, freezing artifacts

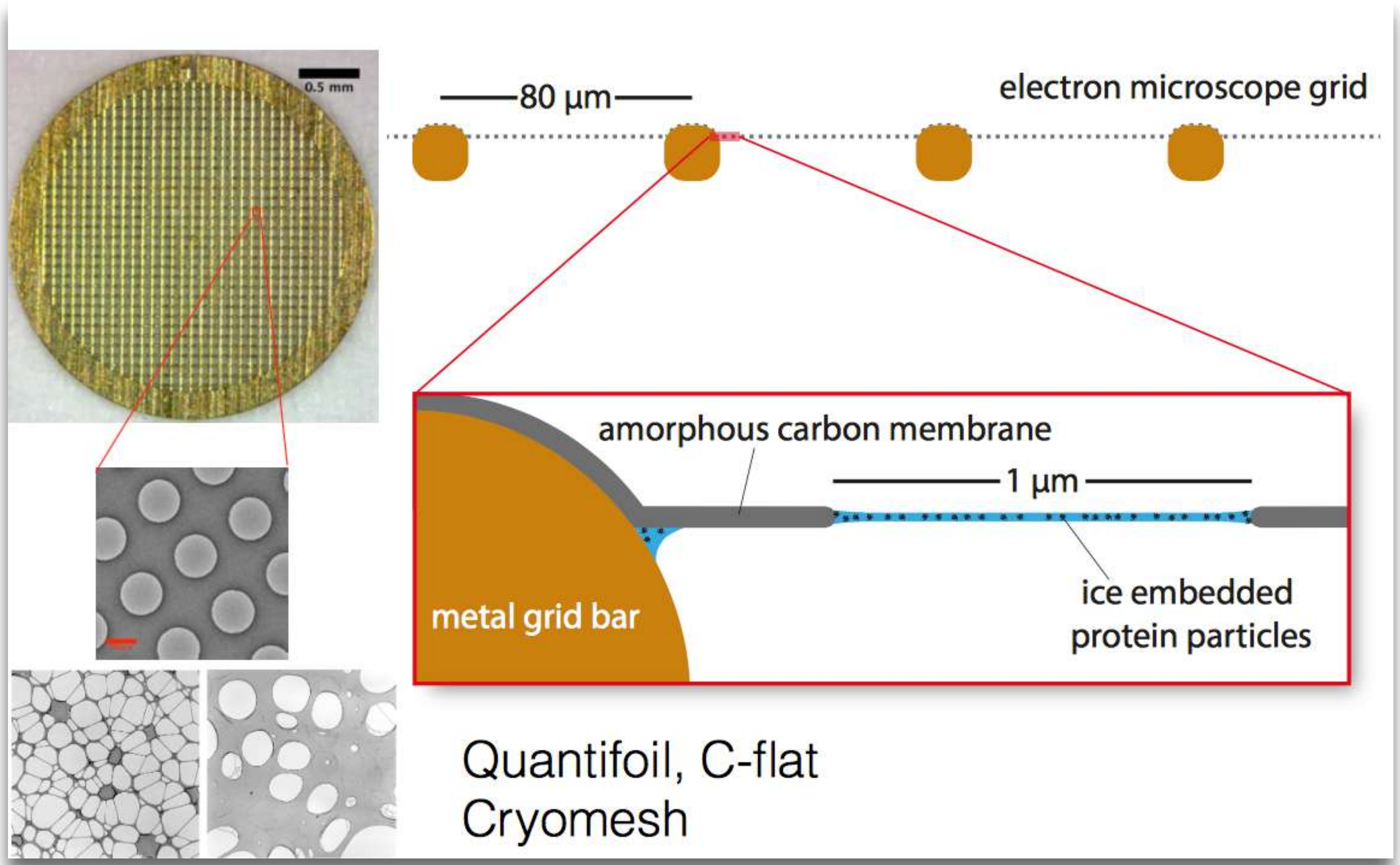


Protochips.com



www.mcb.ucdavis.edu/cryoem/microscopy101.html
www.mcb.ucdavis.edu/cryoem/microscopy101.html

TRADITIONAL SUBSTRATES FOR CRYOEM



Russo & Passmore, 2015

CHALLENGES

Proteins interact with surfaces present during the blotting process

Denaturation of proteins, preferential orientations

Electron radiation induces motion of the particles and substrates

Image blurring

Additional layer of carbon reduces signal to noise per particle

alignment more difficult

Overall lack of reproducibility from grid to grid

GOLD GRIDS

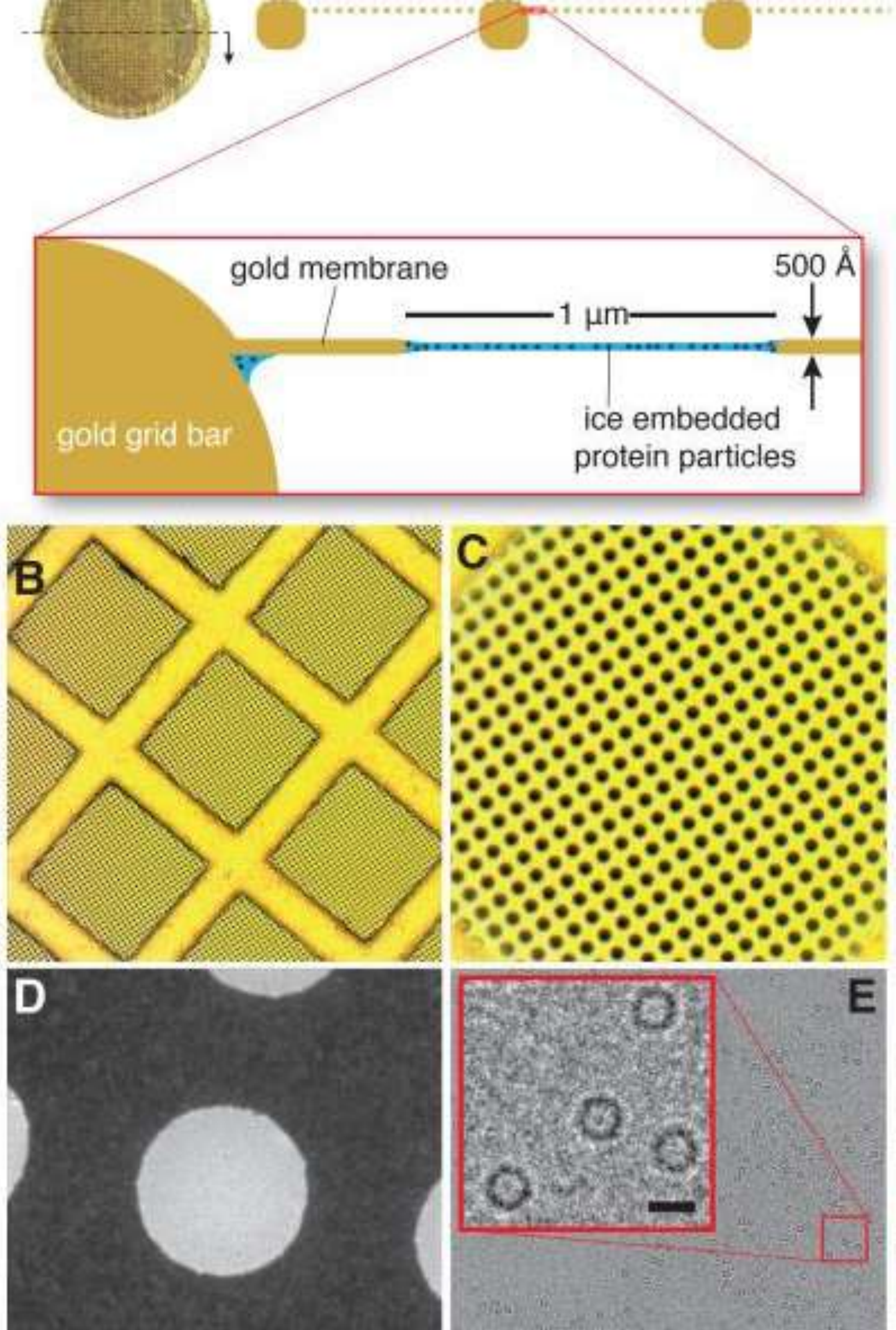
- Holey gold foil on gold mesh grid

Advantages:

- Prevents differential thermal contraction when freezing
- Reduces beam-induced specimen movement
- Combined with direct detector technology allows for near atomic resolution

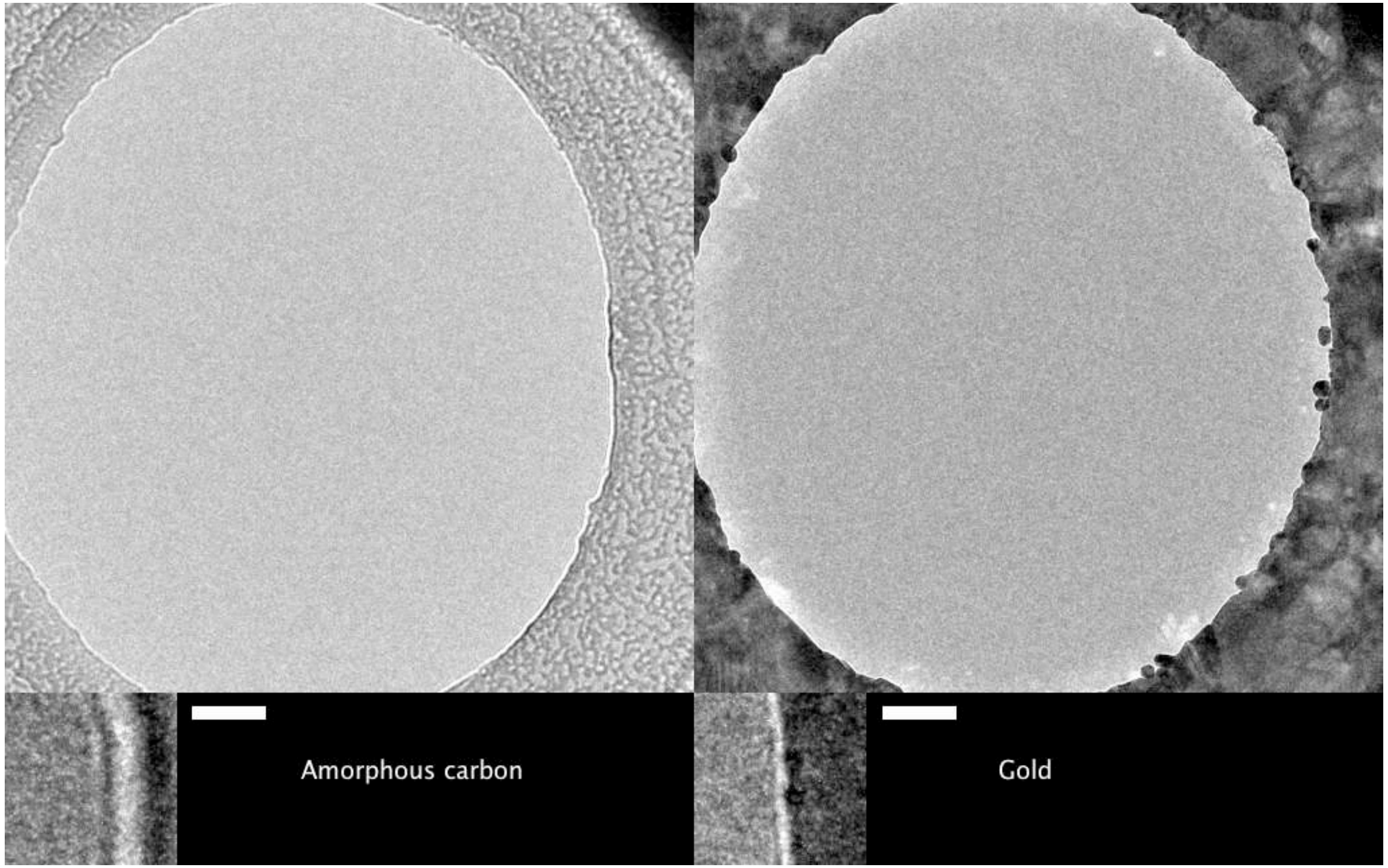
Disadvantages:

- Difficult to find focus due to lack of amorphous substrate



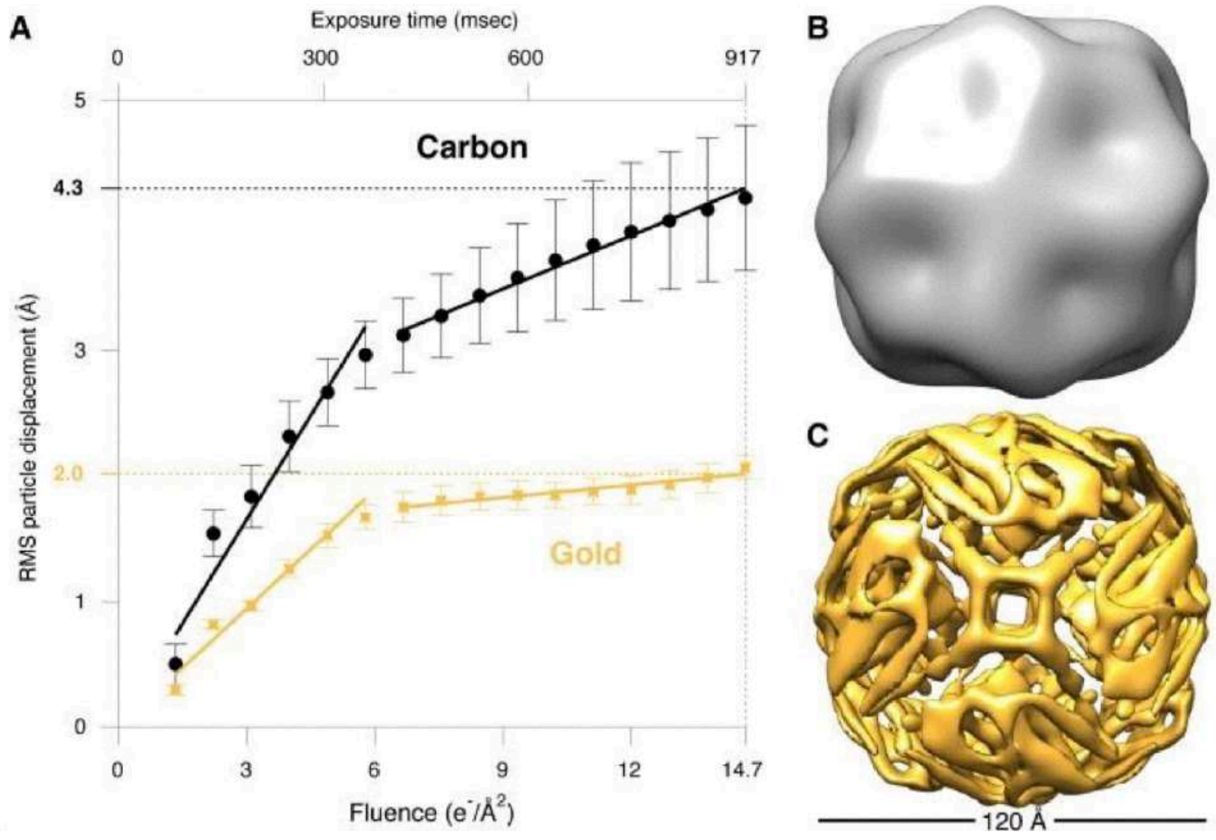
Russo & Passmore, 2015

GOLD GRIDS



Russo & Passmore, 2015

GOLD GRIDS: HOW MUCH BETTER?



A. 80S ribosome movement during irradiation supported by amorphous carbon and gold using same imaging conditions.

Apoferritin density maps using same imaging conditions and identical processing for **B.** carbon and **C.** gold substrates. **B.** is at 25 Å and **C.** 8 Å resolution.

Russo & Passmore, 2015

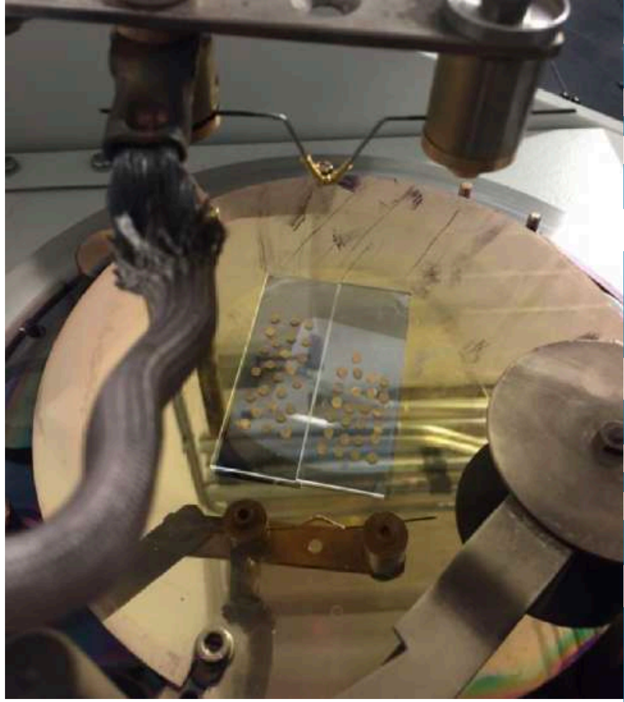
HOMEMADE GOLD GRIDS

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN GOLD GRIDS

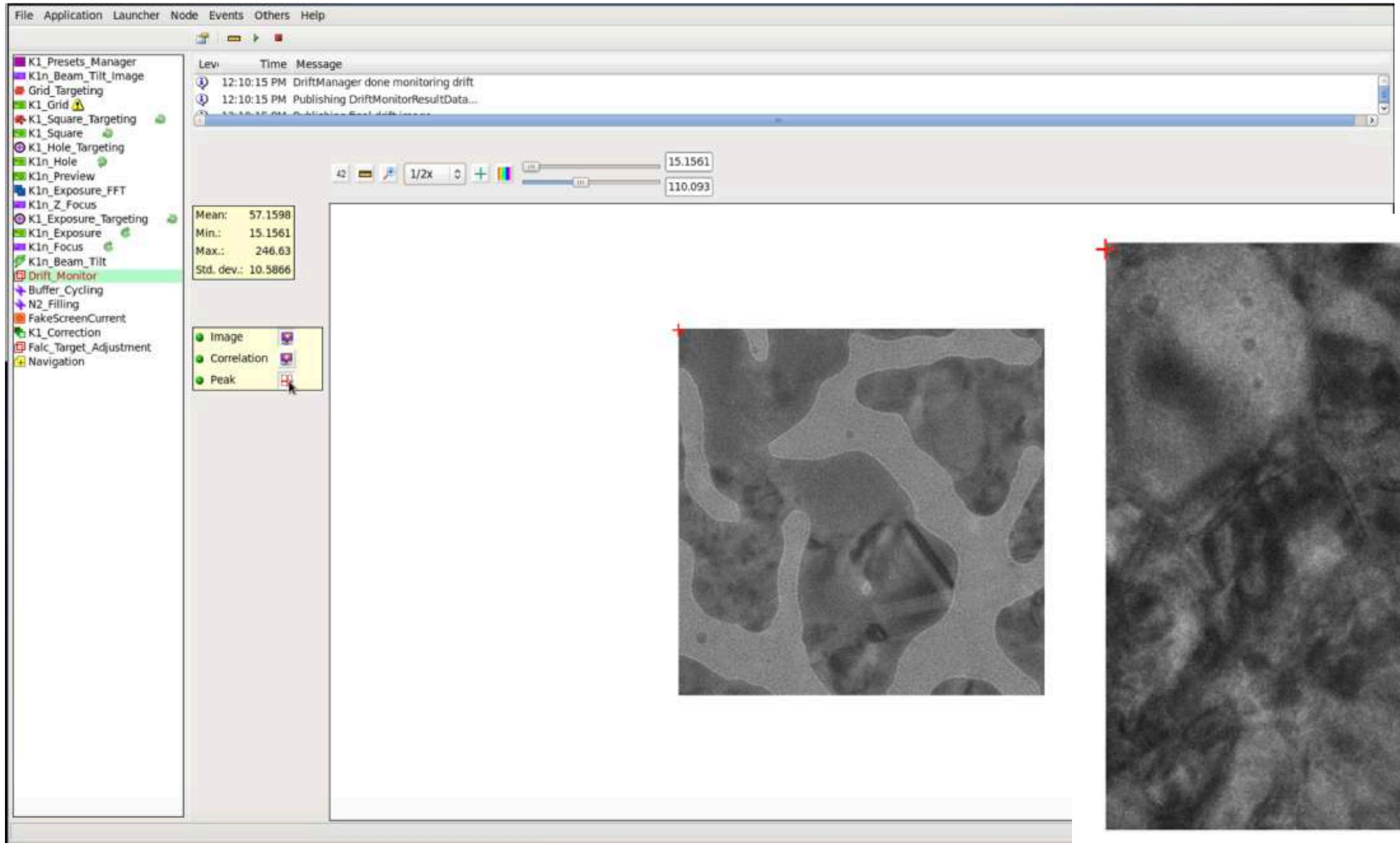
1. Buy gold grids with holey carbon on them
2. Evaporate gold on the grids
3. Remove carbon

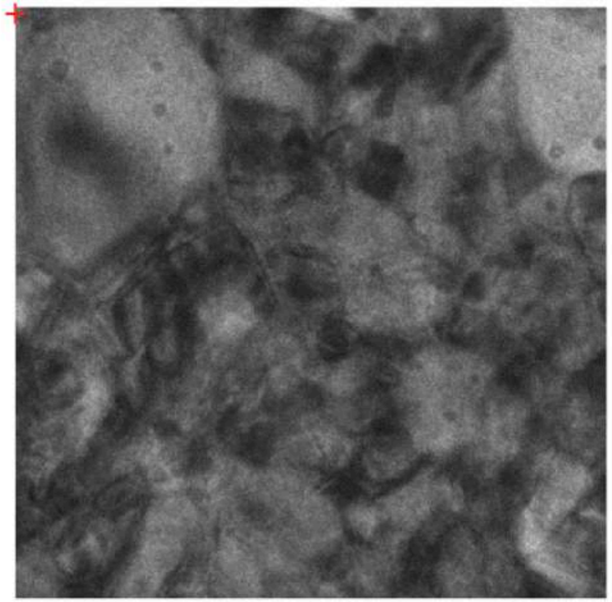
HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN GOLD GRIDS

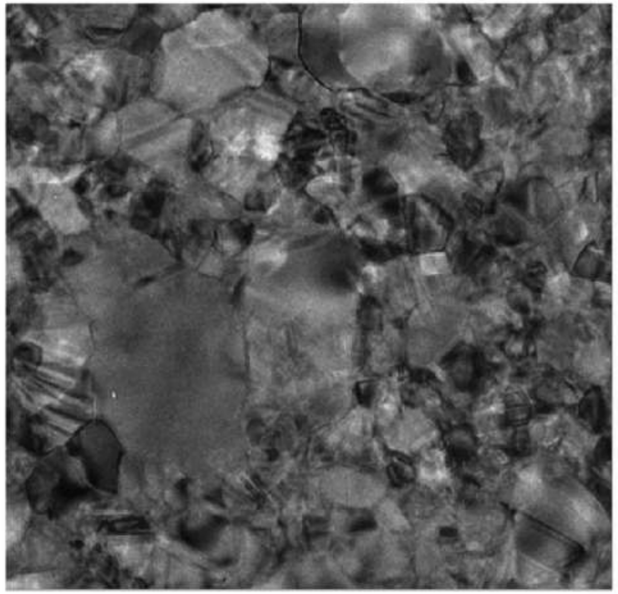
Edwards Auto306



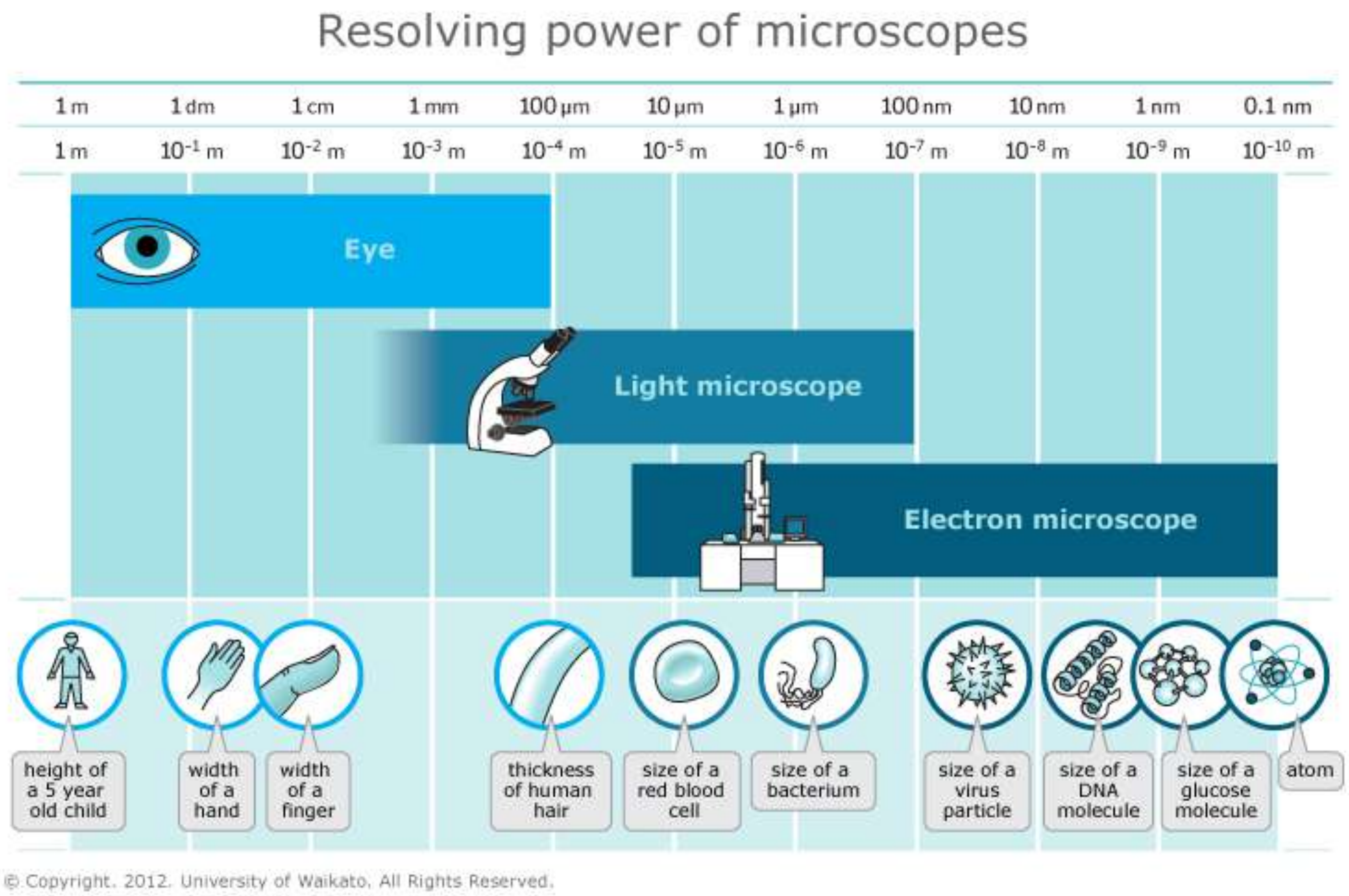
WHY NOT JUST BUY GOLD GRIDS?







SUPPORT FILMS AND GRIDS



http://www.boruhealthmachine.org/what-is-meant-by-the-resolving-power-of-a-microscope.html

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FILM TOPICS

Graphene Oxide

Thin Continuous carbon

Affinity grids

Grid treatments

- Glow discharging
- Poly-lysine
- PEG
- ECM proteins

SUPPORT FILMS AND GRIDS

Questions?

WHAT NEXT?

cryoEM 001 : Single Particle Masterclass

1. Building a cryoEM toolkit
2. EM compatible samples
3. EM support films and grids
4. Sample preparation
5. Tools of the trade: microscopes and detectors
6. Microscope operations
7. Data collection strategies
8. Data assessment & QC
9. Data processing:
    - cryoEM IT infrastructure
    - On-the-fly feedback
    - 3D Reconstruction
10. Visualization and validation