Electrowetting on Super-Hydrophobic Surfaces

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Overview

1. Super-Hydrophobicity

2. Electrowetting of Droplets

3. Electowetting on S/H Surfaces

4. Liquid Marbles (and Puddles)

5. Electrowetting of Liquid Marbles

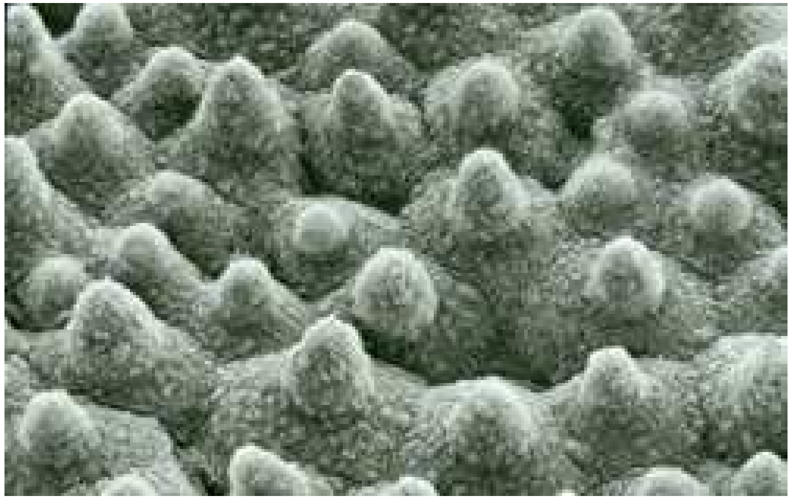
Super-Hydrophobicity

The Sacred Lotus Leaf

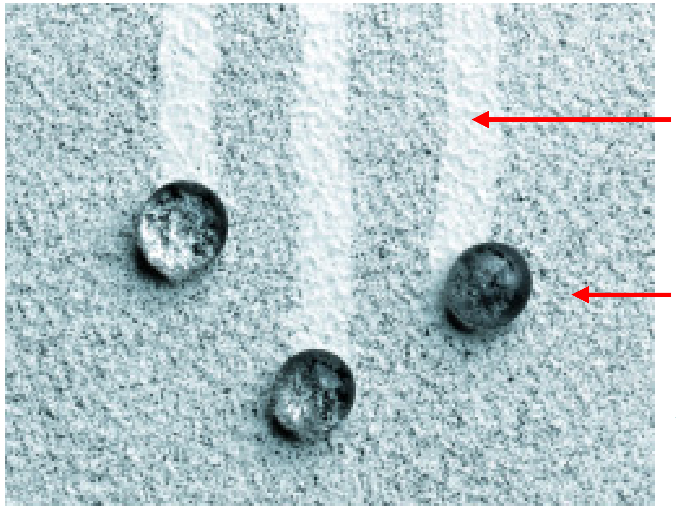
Plants

- Many leaves are super-water repellent
- The Lotus plant is known for its purity
- Super-hydrophobic leaves are self-cleaning under the action of rain

SEM of a Lotus Leaf



Self-Cleaning



Dust cleaned away

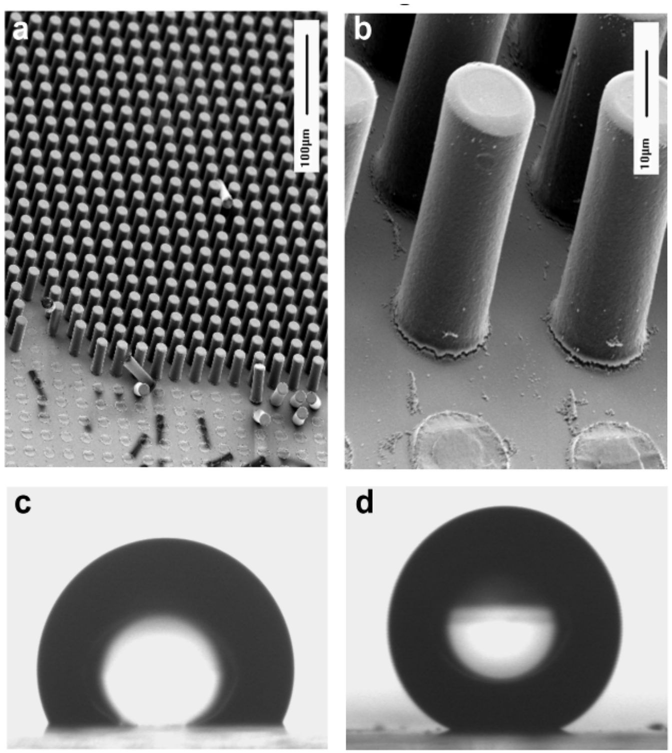
Dust coated droplet

A "proto-marble"

Acknowledgement Neinhuis and Barthlott

Surface Structure

Effect on Water



a), b) Pillars *D*=15 μm, *L* = 2*D*

c) Flat and hydrophobic

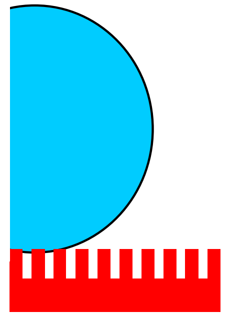
d) Tall and hydrophobic

"Skating" Droplets

Composite air-solid surface

(Cassie-Baxter)

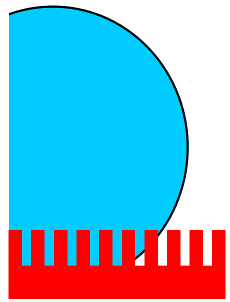
Low hysteresis: "Slippy" surface



"Penetrating" Droplets

Based on roughness (Wenzel)

Large hysteresis: "Sticky" surface

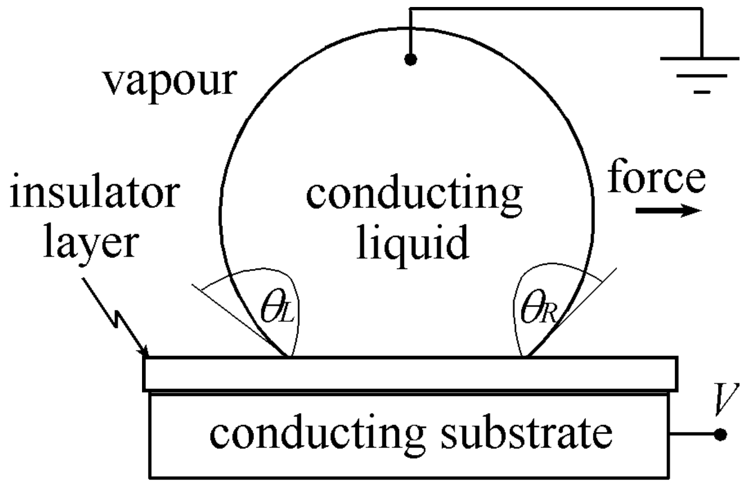


Reference Shirtcliffe *et al*, J. Micromech. Microeng. 14 (2004) 1384-1389.

Electrowetting

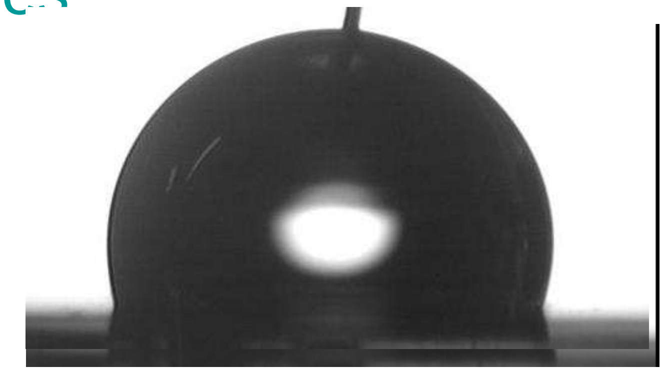
Electrowetting on Dielectric (EWOD)

- Electrowetting Principle
  - Conducting liquid on electrical insulator on conducting substrate



  - Applying voltage electrically charges solid-liquid interface (i.e. a Capacitive effect)
  - Droplet spreads and contact angle reduces

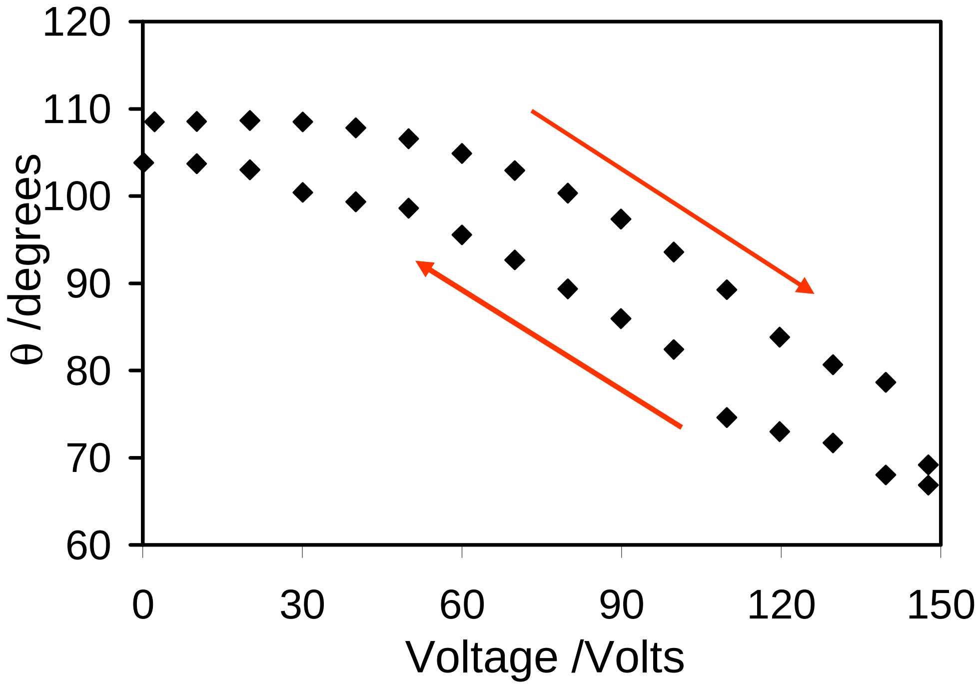
$$\cos\theta_e(V) = \cos\theta_e(0) + CV^2/2\gamma_{LV}$$



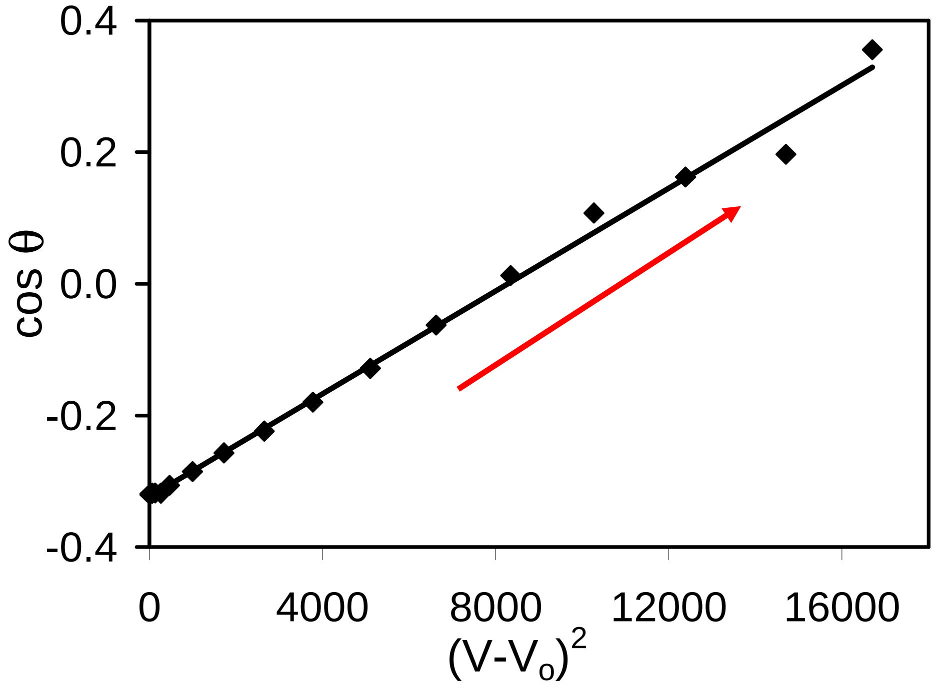
  - Difference in angles at edge of droplet reflects an actuating force

Results on Flat Hydrophobic SU-8

Contact Angle



Fitting



1. Threshold voltage of around 30 V
2. Contact angle hysteresis of around 5^o
3. Offset voltage in fit (~ 18.4 V) represents charging

Electrowetting on S/H Surfaces

Super-hydrophobicity & EWOD

- Idea
  - Use S-H to gain high initial contact angle $\theta\uparrow$
  - Use electrowetting to tune over full angular range $\theta\downarrow$

- Thin Insulator, d
  - Capacitive energy $\propto V^2/d$
  - Thin insulator for lower voltages

- Electrowetting
  - Applying voltage causes electrocapillary pressure into surface texture ("Penetrating")

Contradiction 1

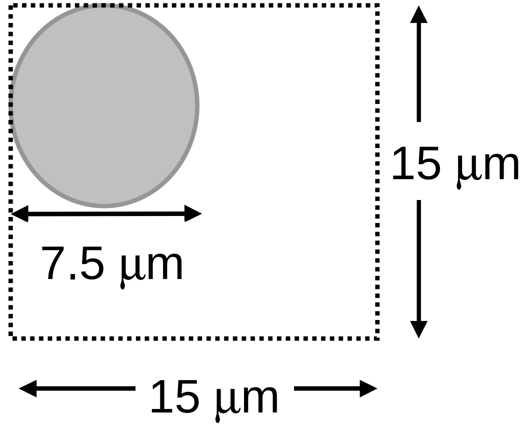
But Super-H via patterning insulator → high aspect ratio

Contradiction 2

But low hysteresis requires "Skating"

Irreversible Electrowetting

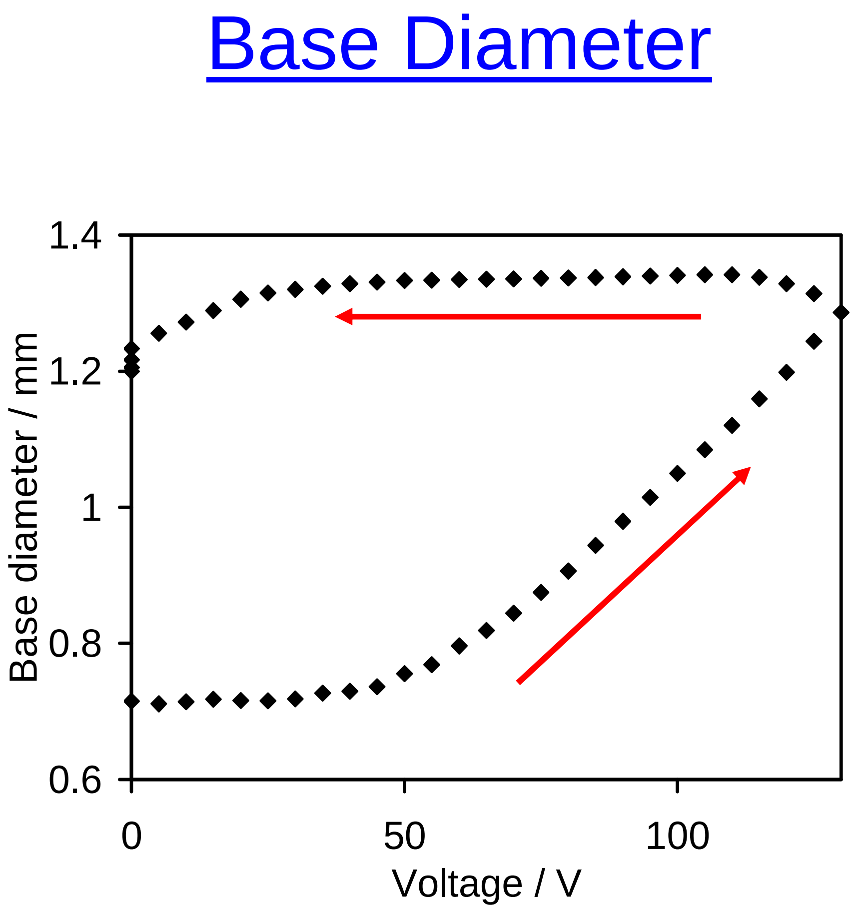
- Lithographic System
  - Ti/Au on glass, SU-8 Pillars, Mask: 7.5 µm circles, 15 µm centre-centre, height 6.5 µm
  - Spin coated Teflon AF1600 (θ_e=114°)
  - Droplets of deionised water with 0.01M KCl, DC voltage by steps up to 130 V

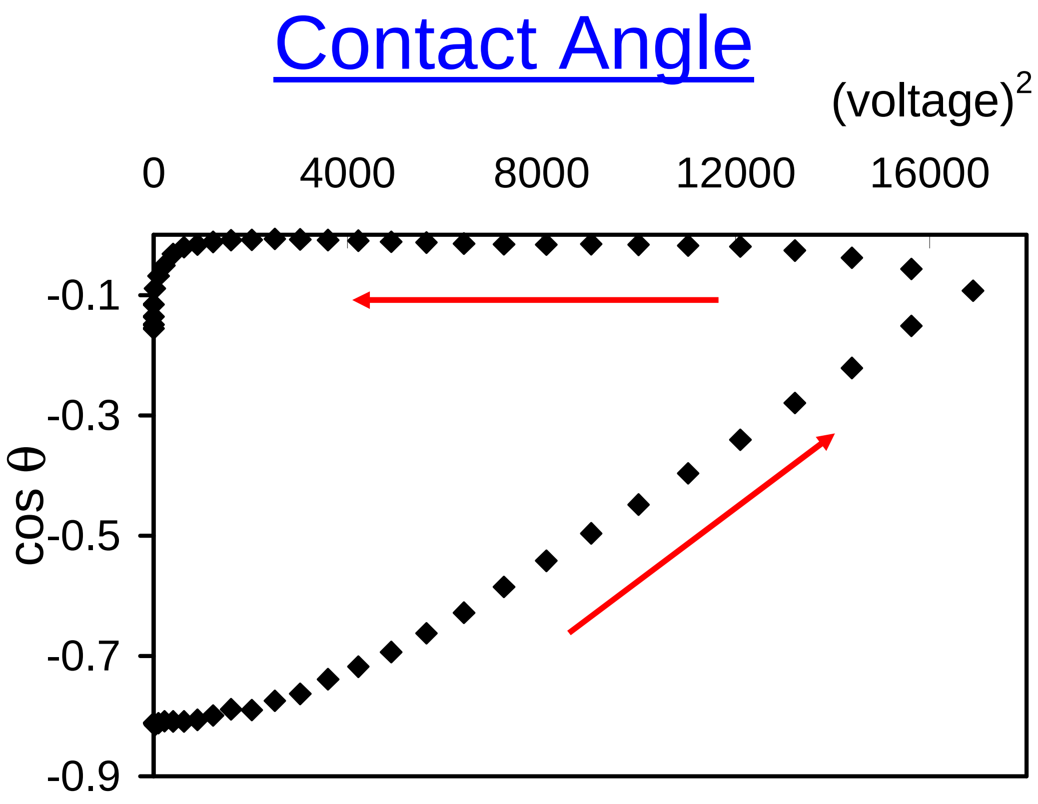


Initial Shape | Applied Voltage | Voltage Removed

152° —— *irreversible* ——→ 114°

Results on SU-8 Pillars





1. ***Threshold*** voltage (~ 45 V) before droplet spreads
2. ***Irreversible*** on removal of voltage

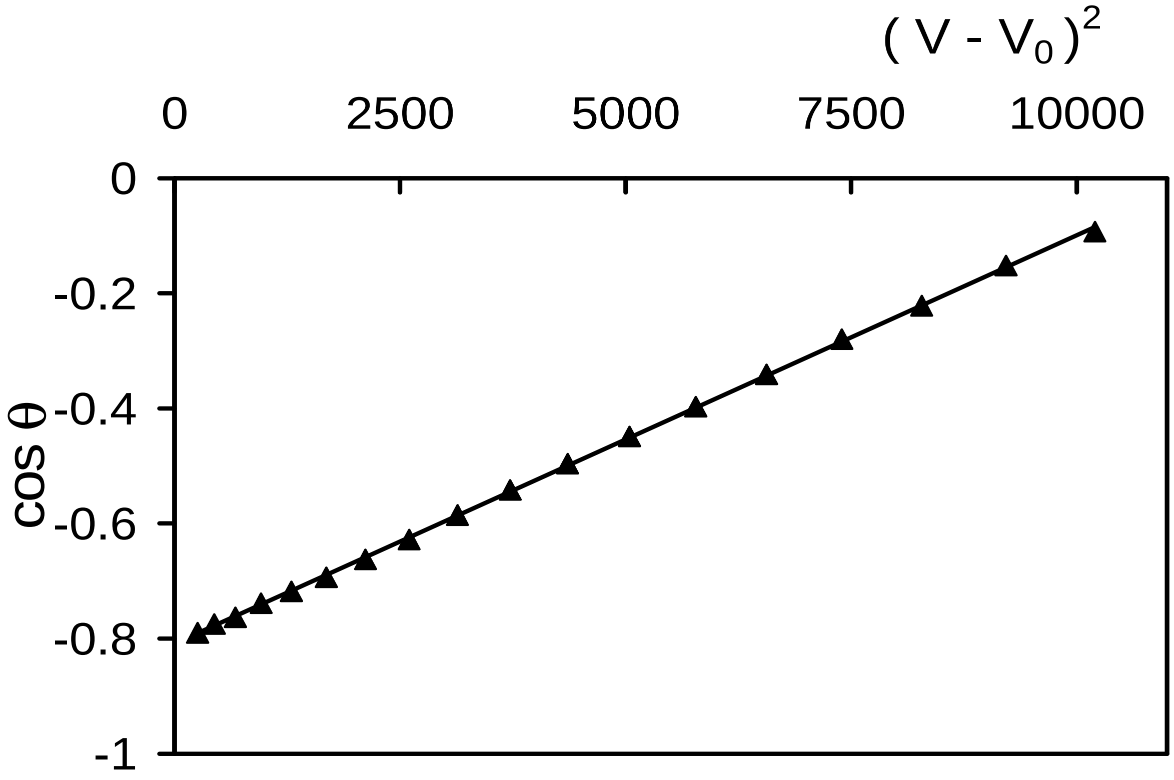
Reference Herbertson *et al*, Sens. Act. A (2006).

Fitting of Results

- Increasing Voltage Half Cycle
  - Advancing droplet charges substrate before contact with liquid
  - Modified fitting equation to include a constant V_o

$$\cos\theta_e(V) = \cos\theta_e(0) + C(V-V_o)^2/2\gamma_{LV}$$

$r\cos\theta_{flat}(0)$ *Wenzel*



Interpretation

1. V_o=28V represents charging
2. Conversion from "skating" to "penetrating" regime
3. Fitted $\theta_e(0)$ gives Wenzel angle of 143° and predicts roughness of r=1.92

Determination of Roughness Factor

SEM Measurements

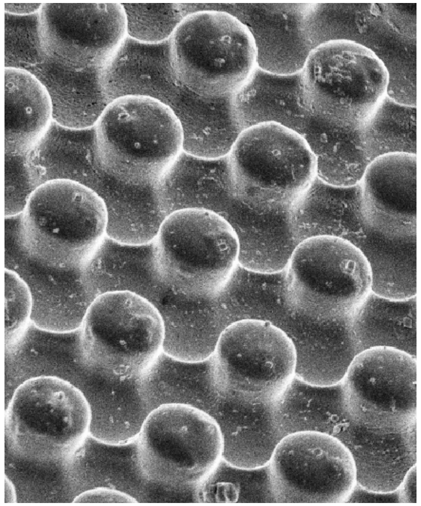
Pillar diameter = 7.5±0.5 μm

Centre-centre separation 15 μm

Height = 6.5±1.3 μm

Unintended "ribs"

Teflon on flat surface $\theta_e = 114^o$



Comparison to EWOD Data

Cassie-Baxter solid factor of $f = 0.12 \pm 0.02$ *Pre-electrowetting*

$\cos\theta_{CB} = f\cos\theta_e - (1-f) \Rightarrow \theta_{CB} = 152^o \pm 1^o$ $\theta_{CB} = 152^o$

Ignoring "ribs" Wenzel factor is $r = 1.7 \pm 0.1$ *EWOD Intercept*

Assuming ribs are ~ 1/2 pillar heights $r \sim 1.9$ $r = 1.92$

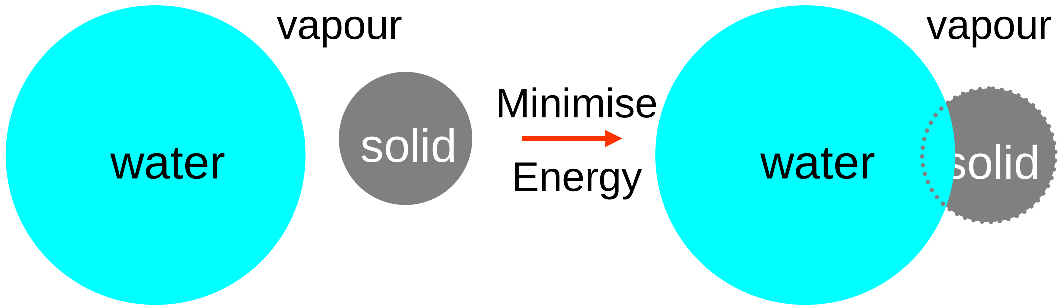
Principles of Liquid Marbles

Liquid Marbles

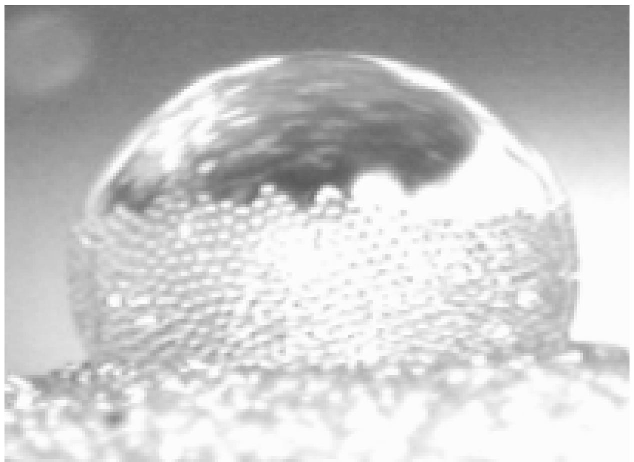
- Hydrophobic Grains Adhere to the Solid-Liquid Interface

Water droplets can self-coat to create perfect marbles

Ideal "droplet" (180º contact angle) which rolls around on a solid surface



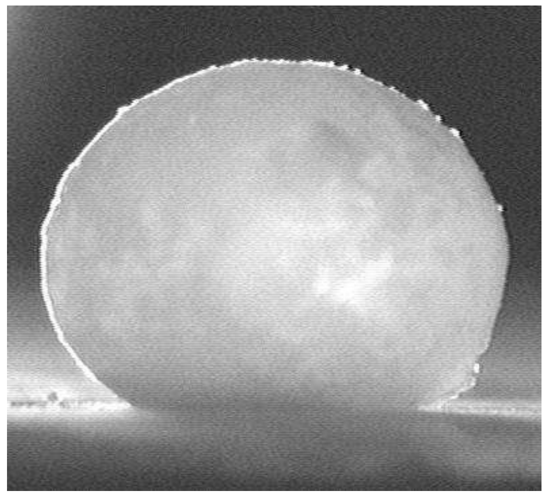
Large Silica



Lycopodium

Lycopodium grains are 15-19 µm, but monolayers can be achieved

Silica Powder

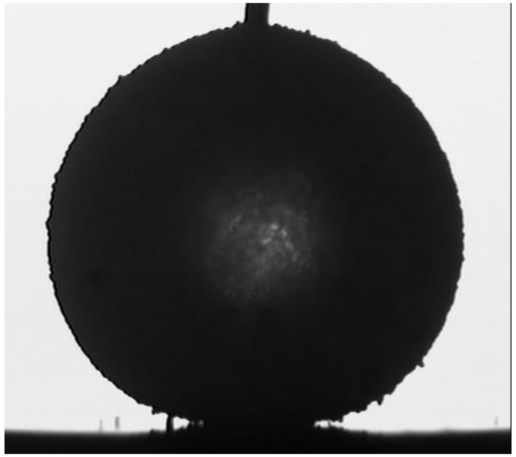


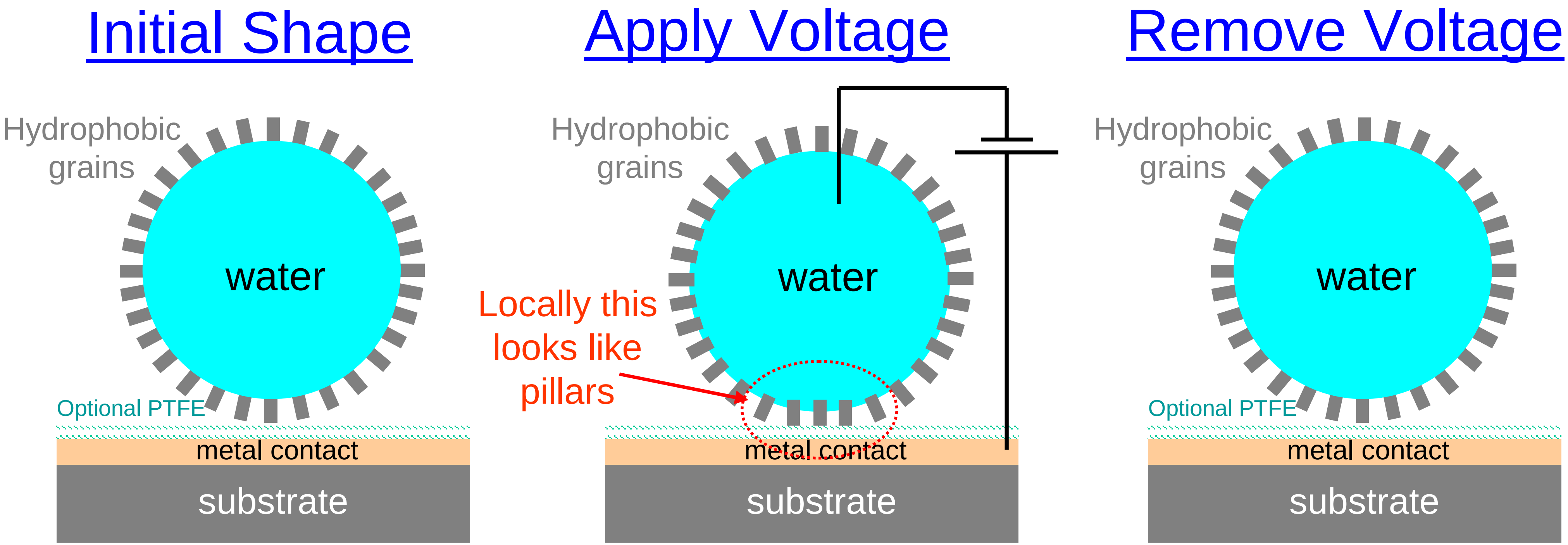
Silica grains are sub-µm, but layer is thick

Acknowledgement David Quéré, College de France, Paris.

Electrowetting of Liquid Marbles

- Reversibility Idea
  - Make the solid "pillars" adhere more to the liquid than to the substrate
  - Provides insulating "pillars" conformal to the liquid shape
  - More hydrophobic grains "stick out" further (i.e. taller pillars)
  - Spin coated Teflon AF1600 on substrate to stop complete breakthrough if grains coating is breached





Theory of Liquid Marbles

Minimise total energy of a spherical cap

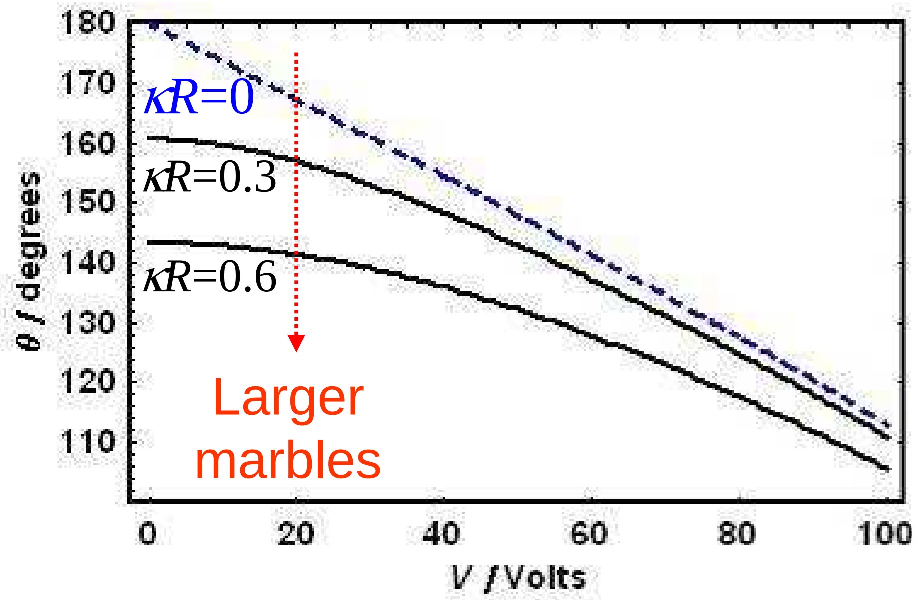
$$\cos\theta = \cos\theta_e + (\kappa h)^2/6 + CV^2/2\gamma_{LV}$$

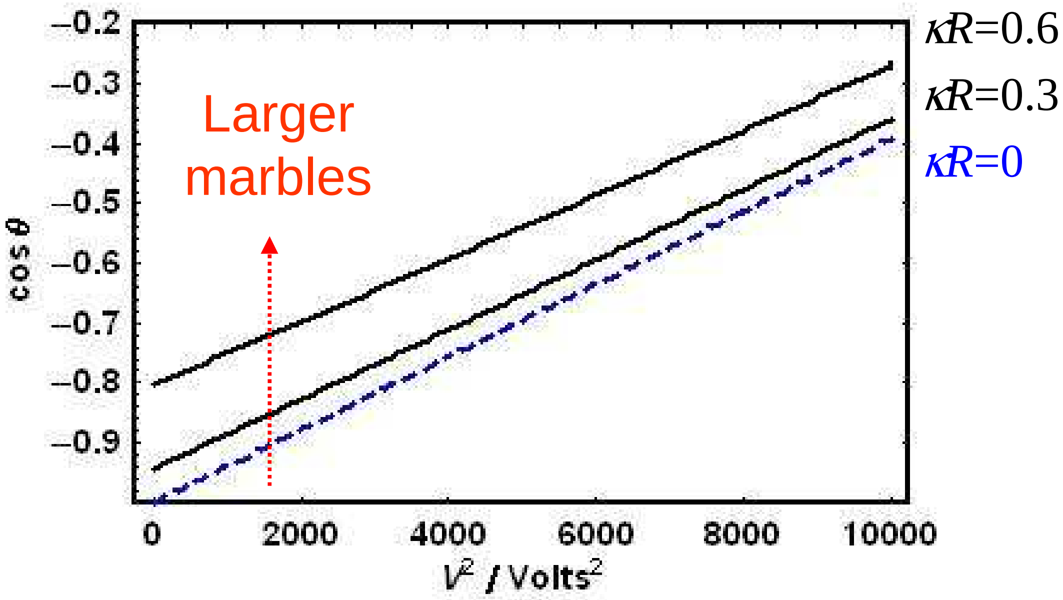
From surface energy
-1 for marble

Gravitational energy gives a drop size factor with $h = h(\theta)$, so non-linear

Capacitive energy from electrowetting

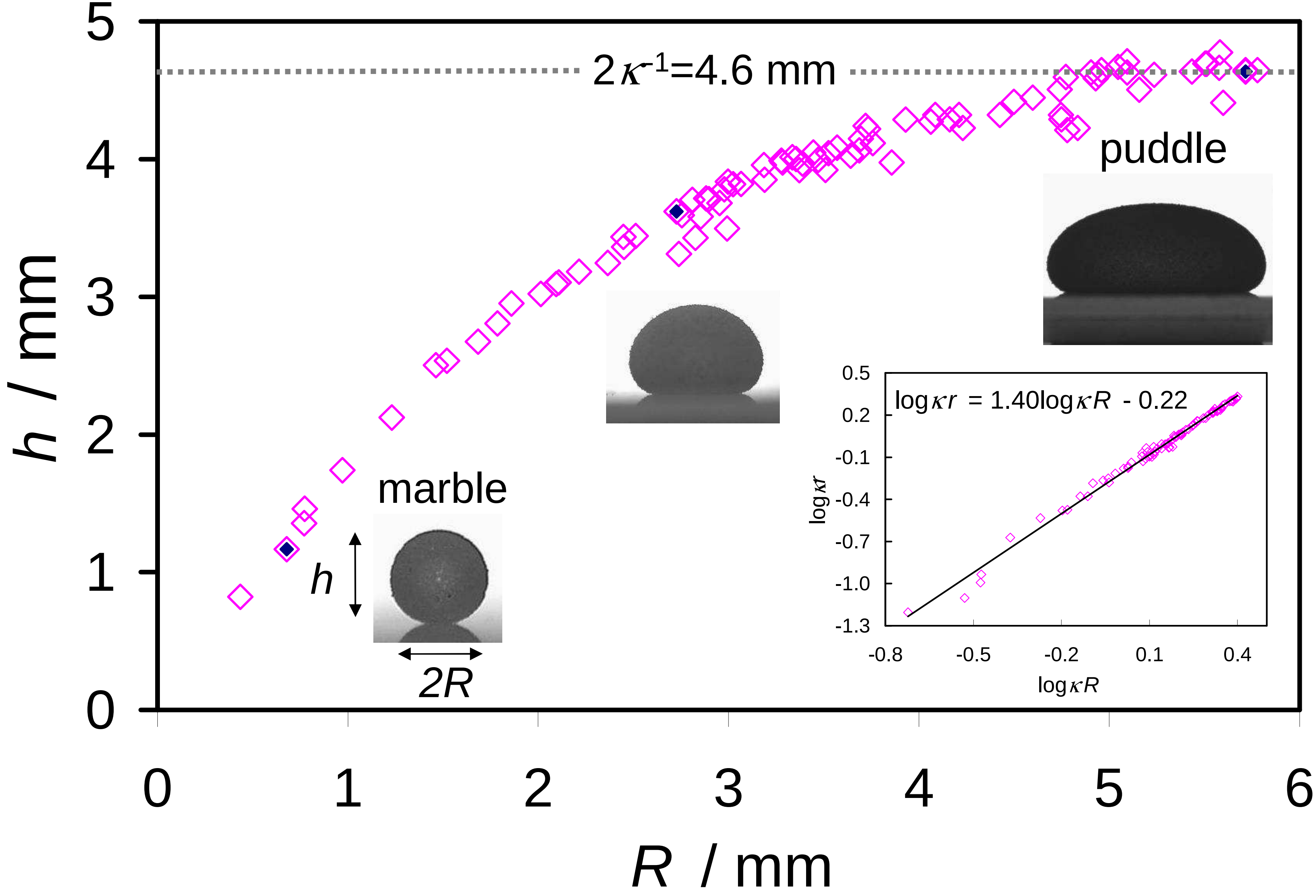
Numerical Results





Experiments on Liquid Marbles

Size Data (Lycopodium)



Mobility of Liquid Marbles

Video's:

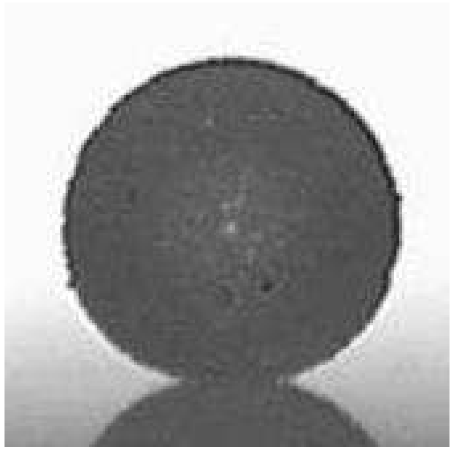
"Small on WatchGlass avi"

"Large on WatchGlass avi"

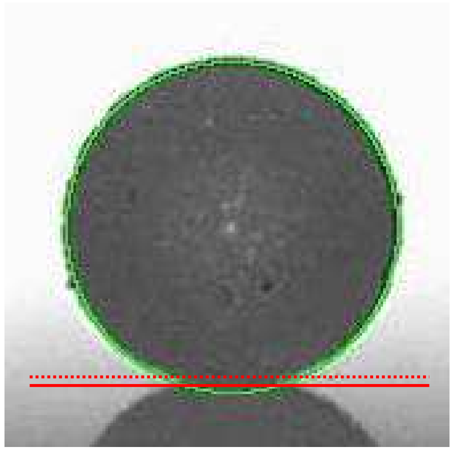
Displayed in Separate Program

Accuracy of Measurements

Marble



Circular Fit



Comments

Almost perfect circle $\theta \rightarrow 180^{o}$

Spherical radius, *R*, is OK

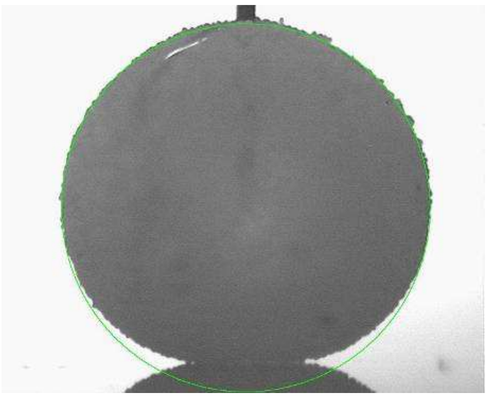
Baseline difficult due to grains in "skin"

Contact radius *r*, is sensitive to baseline

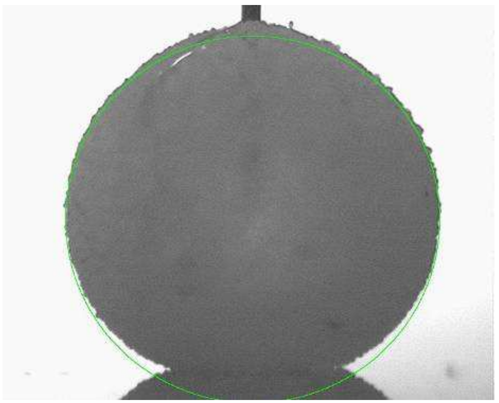
Contact angle θ, is sensitive to baseline

With Needle/Contact Wire

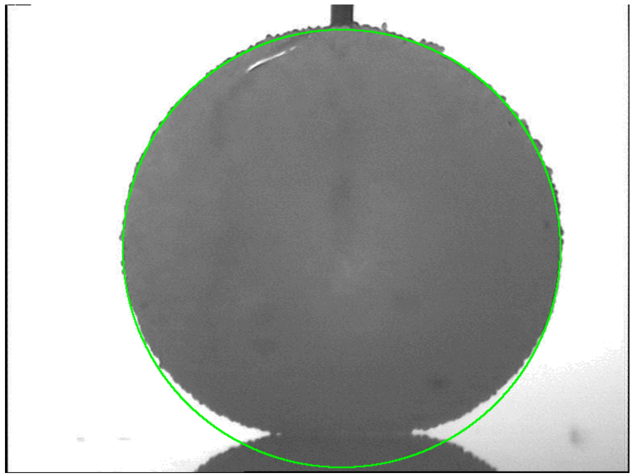
No Voltage



With Voltage

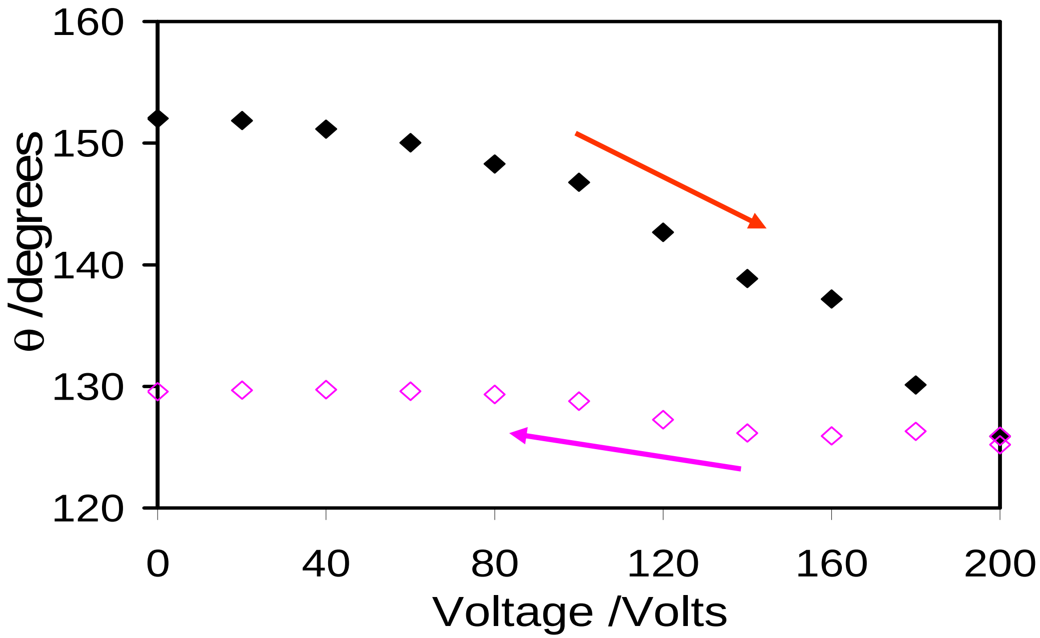


Reversibility – Low V Cycle

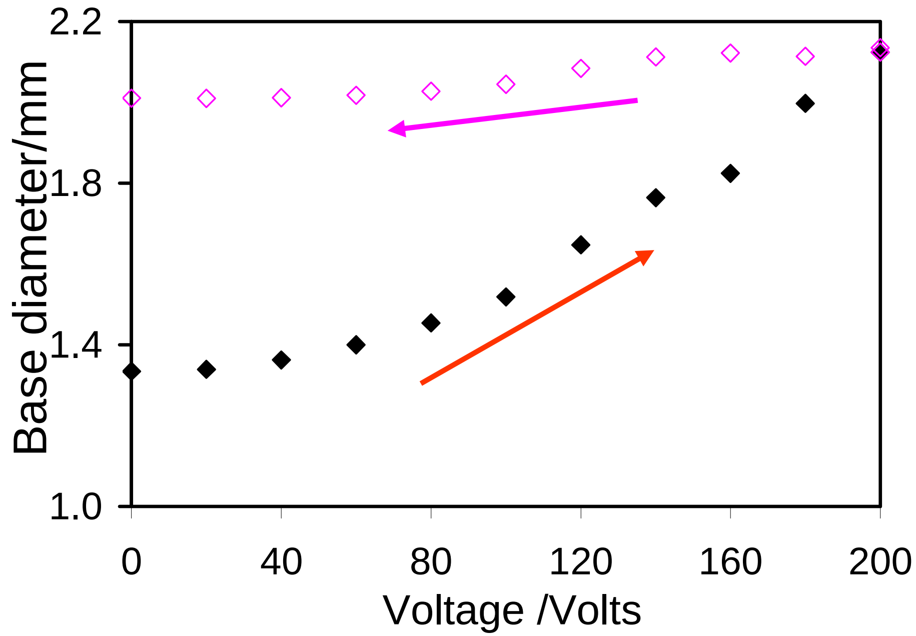


Results using Hydrophobic Lycopodium

Contact Angle



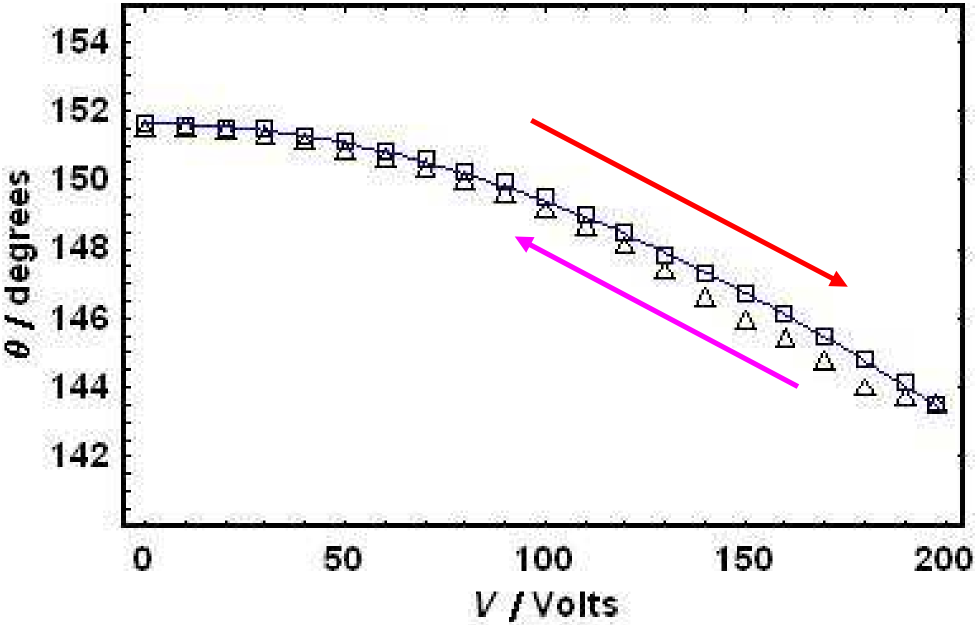
Base Diameter



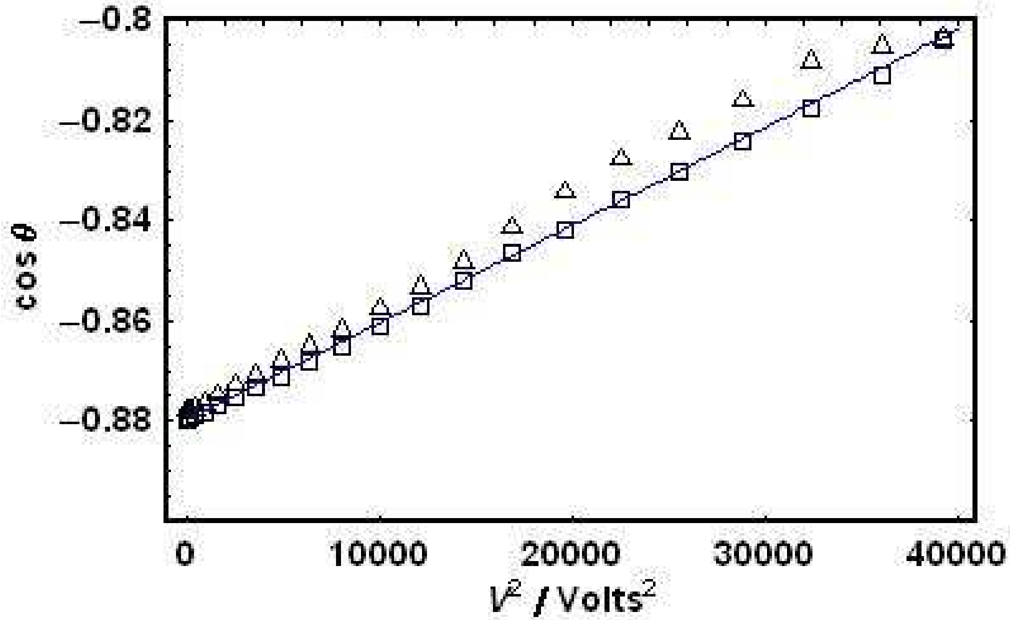
1. No significant threshold voltage
2. Reversibility is compromised at highest voltages due to contact area becoming pinned – "*liquid breakthrough*"

Results using Hydrophobic Silica

Contact Angle



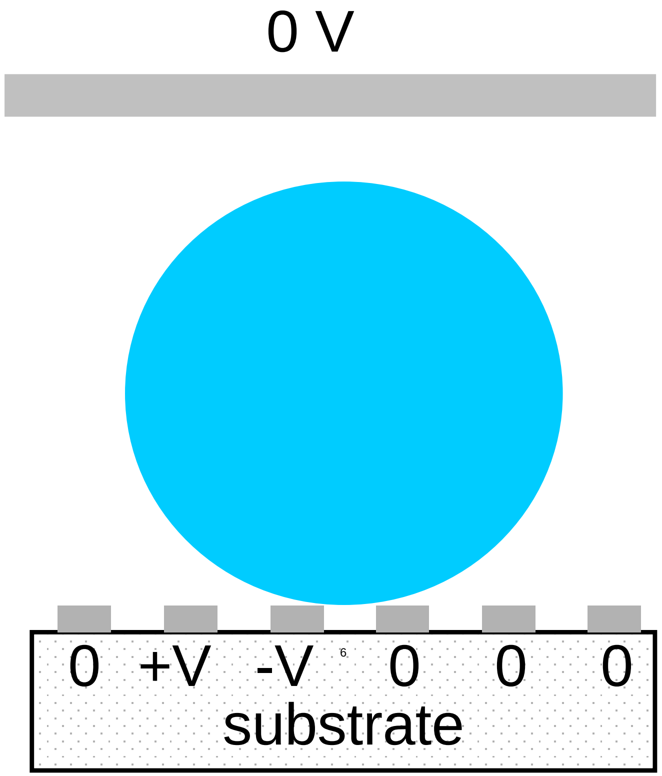
Fitting



1. *No threshold* voltage
2. Virtually *no* contact angle *hysteresis*
3. Current experiments show a limited range (155º to 130º)
4. Fit uses κR=0.45

A Hint of Controllable Motion

1. Liquid marble using hydrophobic lycopodium
2. Upper earth plane, planar strip electrodes, pairs switched to ±150 V DC



Future Work

1. Structure of Liquid Marbles

   Greater stability

   Reduction of charging

   Size ranges for marbles/puddles

2. Droplet Motion

   Non contact mode of generating contact angle changes

   Droplet actuation – Different left v right side contact angles

   Magnetic powder

The End

Acknowledgements

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EPSRC
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

COST