

# Nanomaterials for energy applications: a single particle approach

**Andrea Baldi**

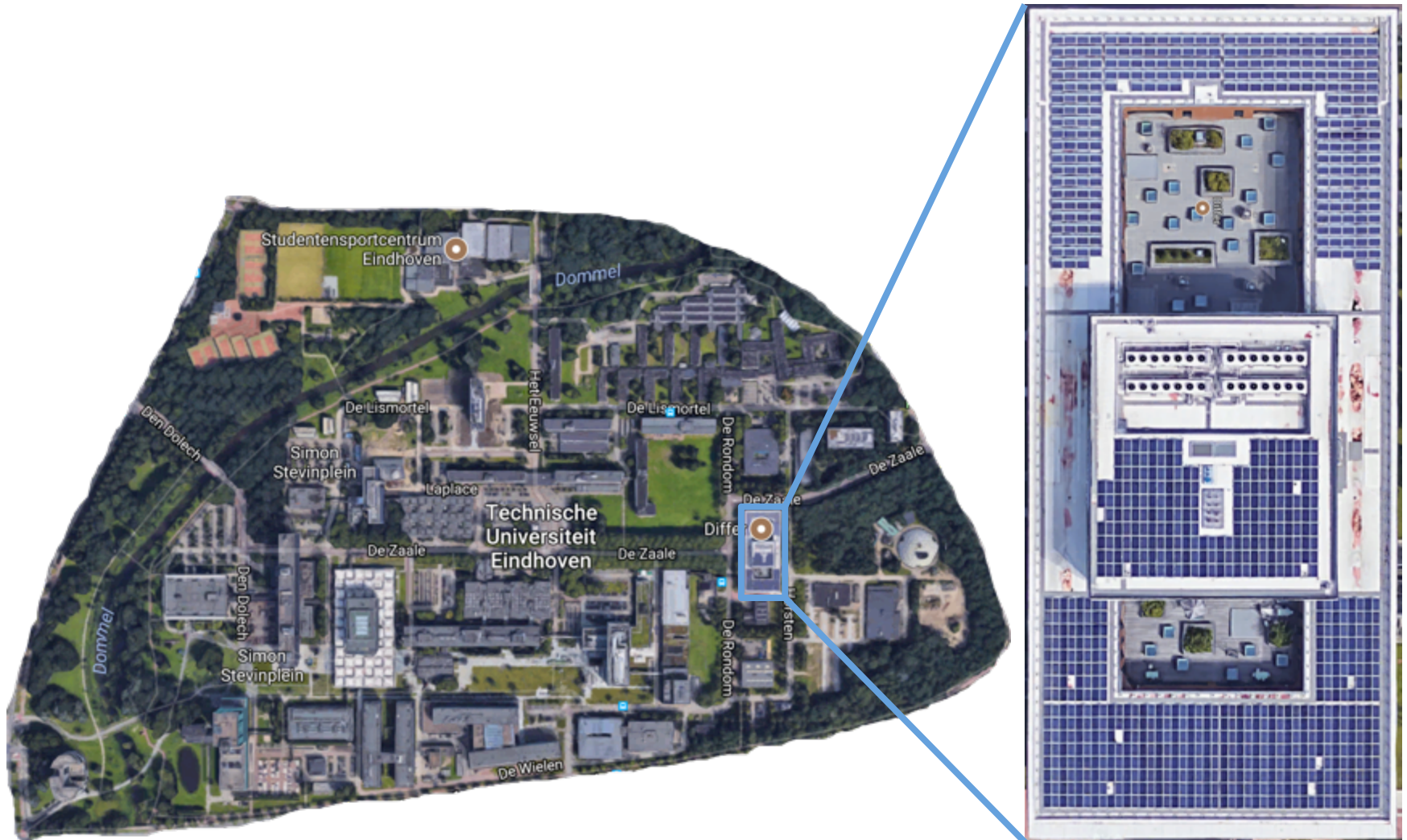
DIFFER - Dutch Institute For Fundamental Energy Research

**Tarun Narayan, Fariah Hayee, Ai Leen Koh, Bob Sinclair, Jen Dionne**  
Stanford University

October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

# DIFFER: Dutch Institute For Fundamental Energy Research

Research Institute located inside the TU/e



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**Solar Fuels & Fusion Energy**  
**~200 Employees**

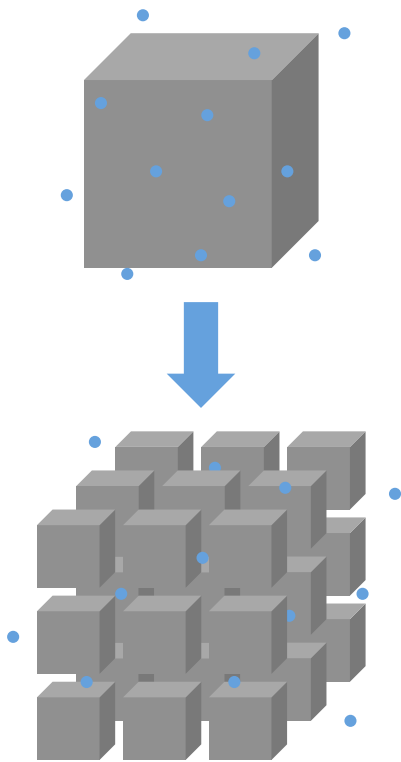


**Nanomaterials for Energy Applications**  
Energy storage in nanomaterials  
Plasmon-driven chemistry  
Single-particle photo-catalysis



Energy storage in nanomaterials

# Nanostructured materials for energy storage offer several advantages compared to bulk



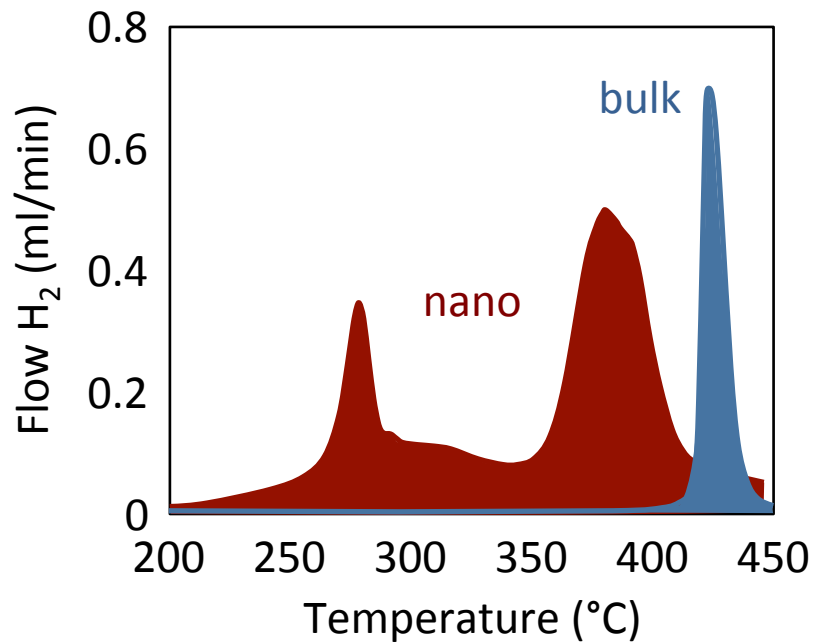
**Faster kinetics**  
shorter diffusion lengths

**Enhanced lifetime**  
reduced defects formation

**Tunable thermodynamics**  
via surface, elastic or quantum effects

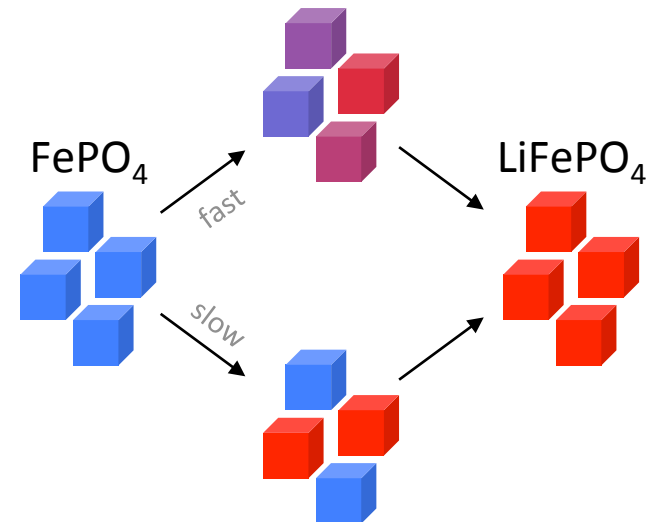
# Nanostructured materials offer several advantages compared to their bulk counterpart

## Hydrogen release from $\text{MgH}_2$



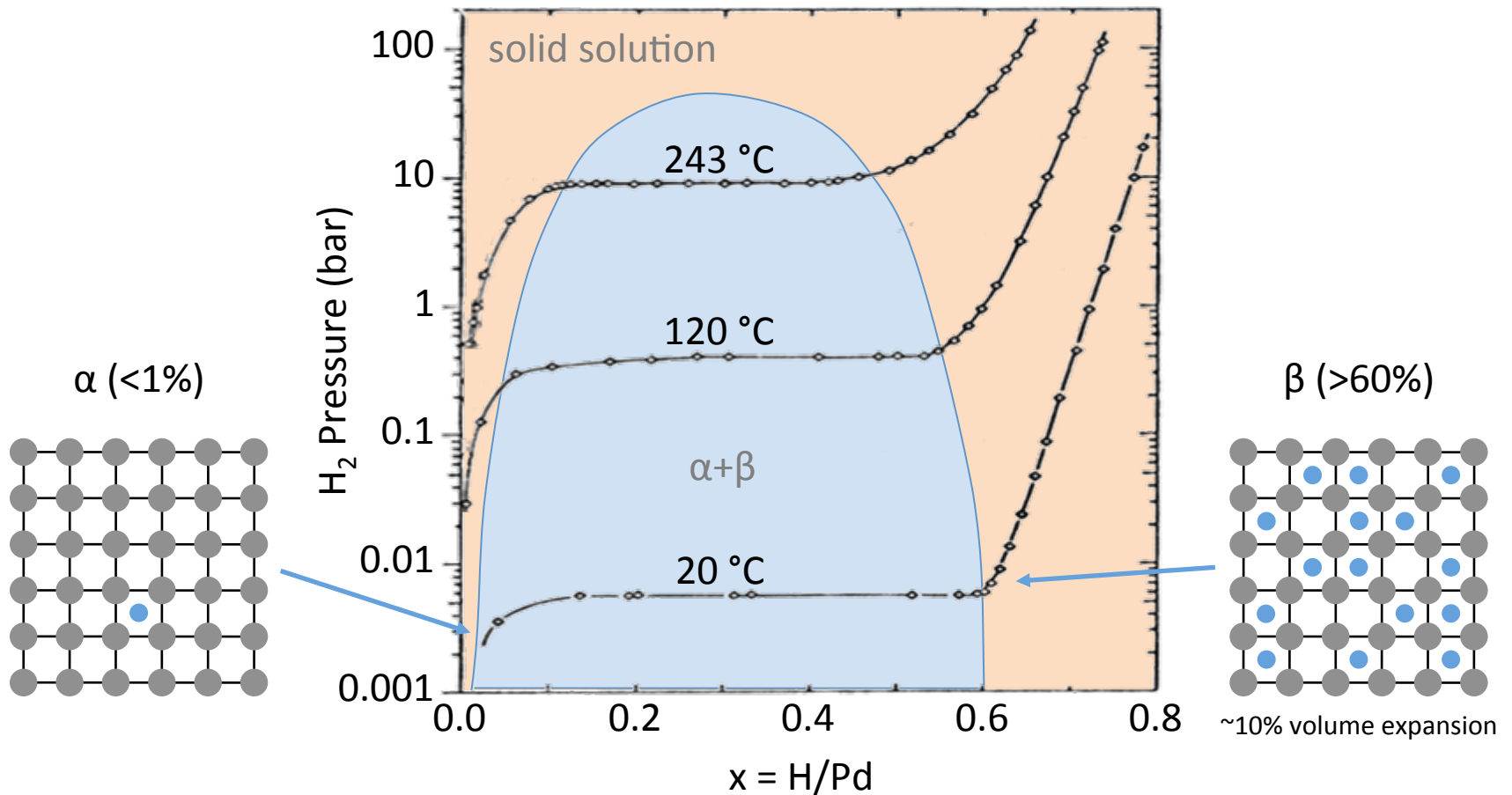
Au, Adv. Funct. Mater. (2014)

## Lithiation of nanosized $\text{FePO}_4$

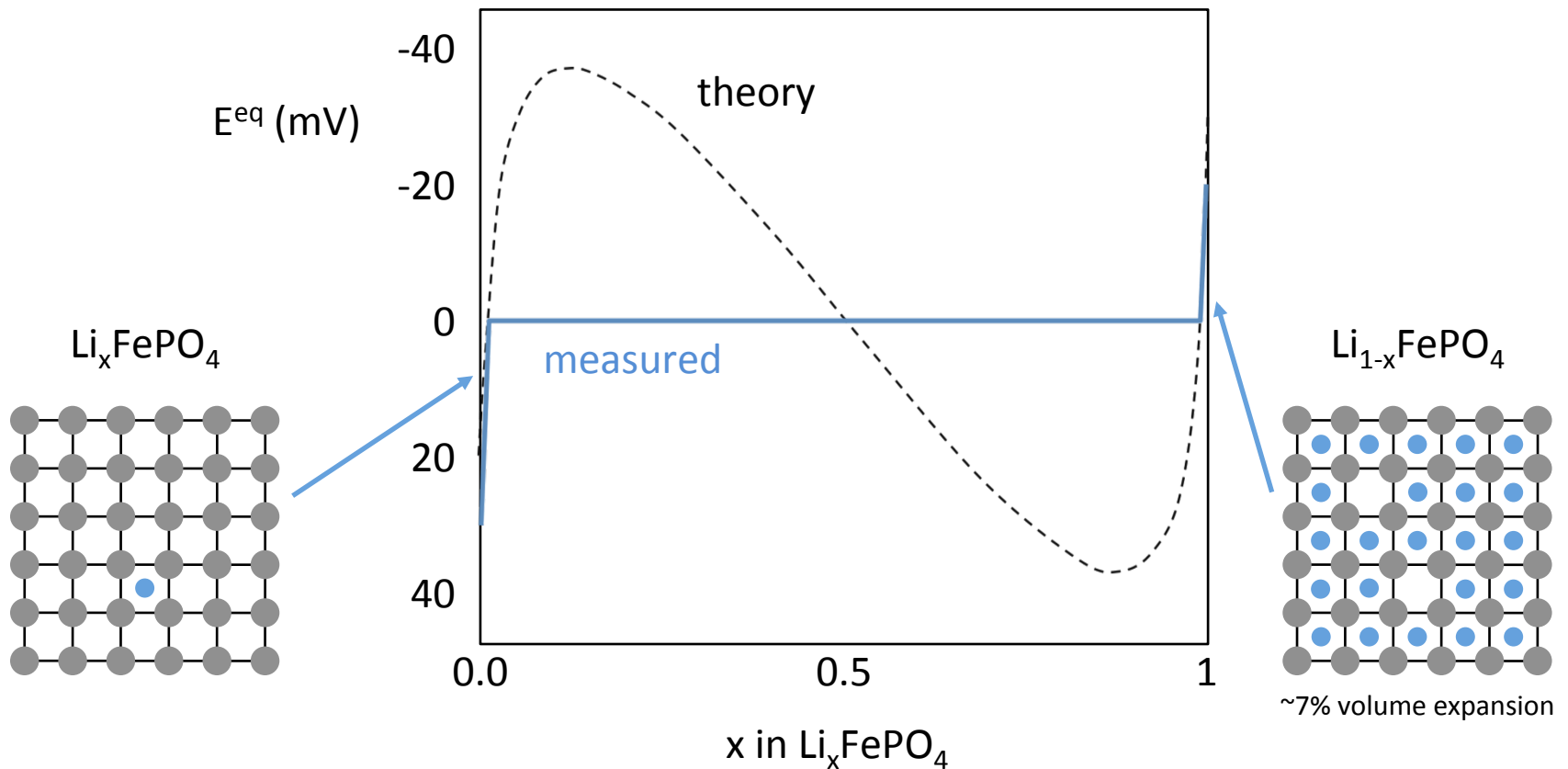


Delmas, Nature Mater. (2008); Liu, Science (2014)

# Hydrogen is readily absorbed in palladium at standard temperatures and pressures

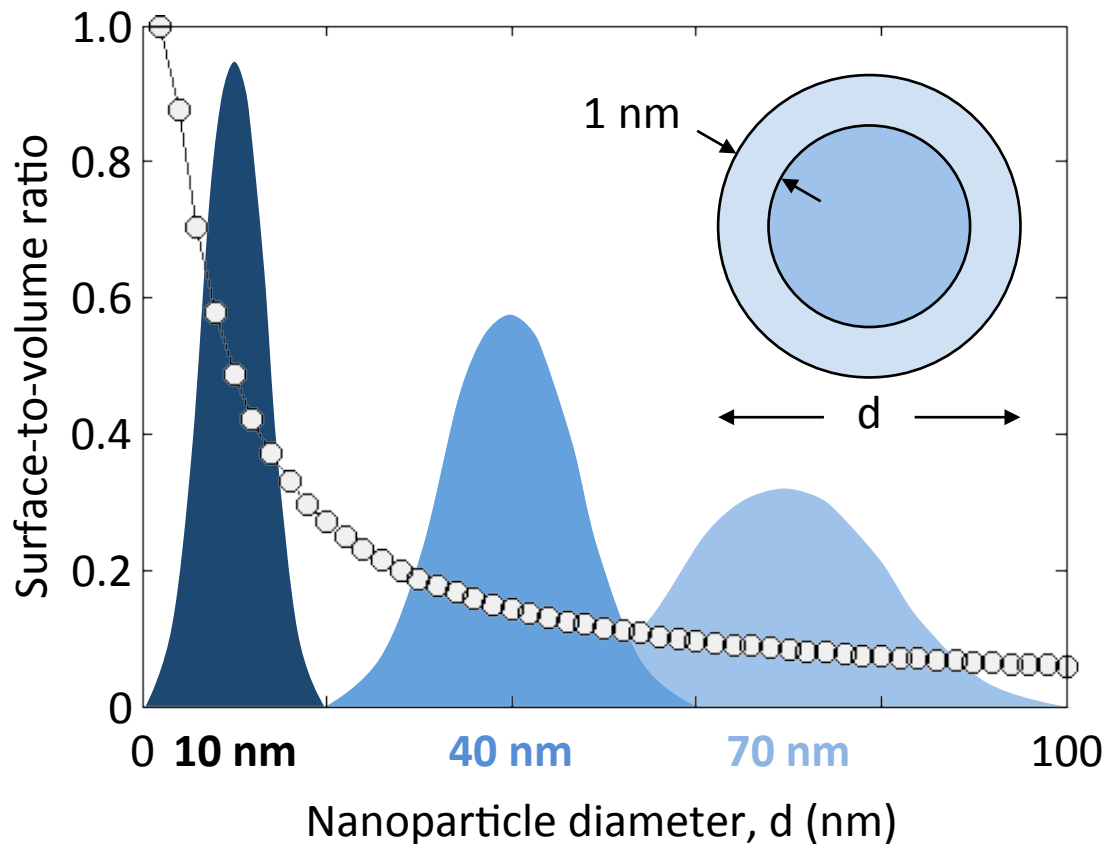


# Electrode materials in Li-ion batteries undergo similar phase transitions upon lithium intercalation





# Ensemble measurements can be affected by sample dispersity particularly at very small scales





**Prof. Zoric's question to God (2010):**

“What is the mechanism of hydrogen absorption in a single metal nanoparticle?”

Liu, N., Tang, M., Hentschel, M., Giessen, H., & Alivisatos, A.  
Nanoantenna-enhanced gas sensing in a single tailored nanofocus  
**Nature Materials 10, 631–636 (2011)**

R. Bardhan, L. O. Hedges, C. L. Pint, A. Javey, S. Whitelam and J. J. Urban  
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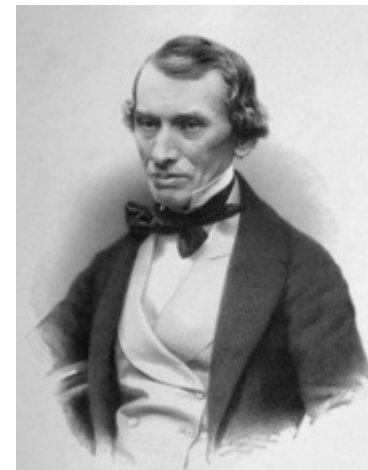
T. C. Narayan, A. Baldi, A. L. Koh, R. Sinclair and J. A. Dionne  
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Grain-Boundary-Mediated Hydriding Phase Transformations in Individual Polycrystalline Metal Nanoparticles  
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T. Graham (1866)

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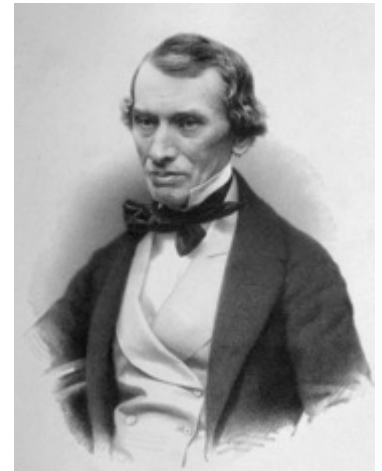
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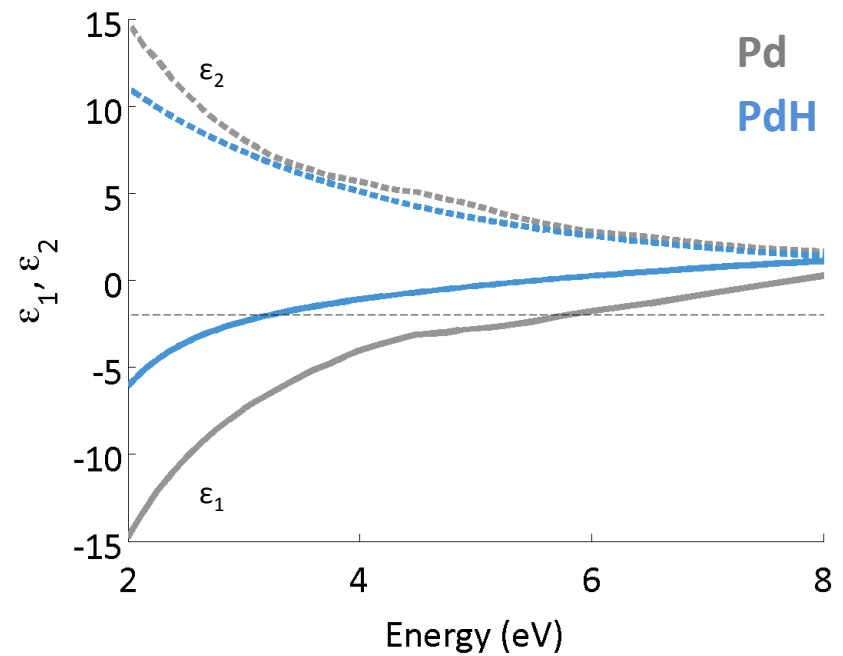
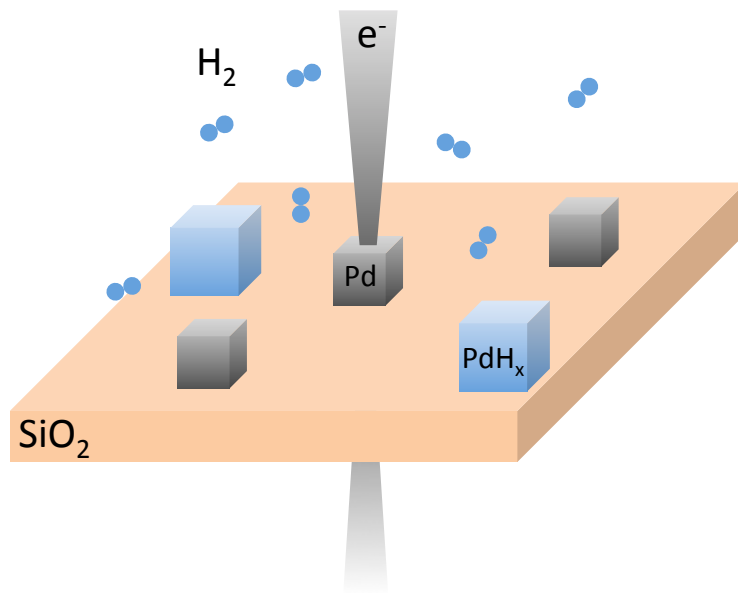
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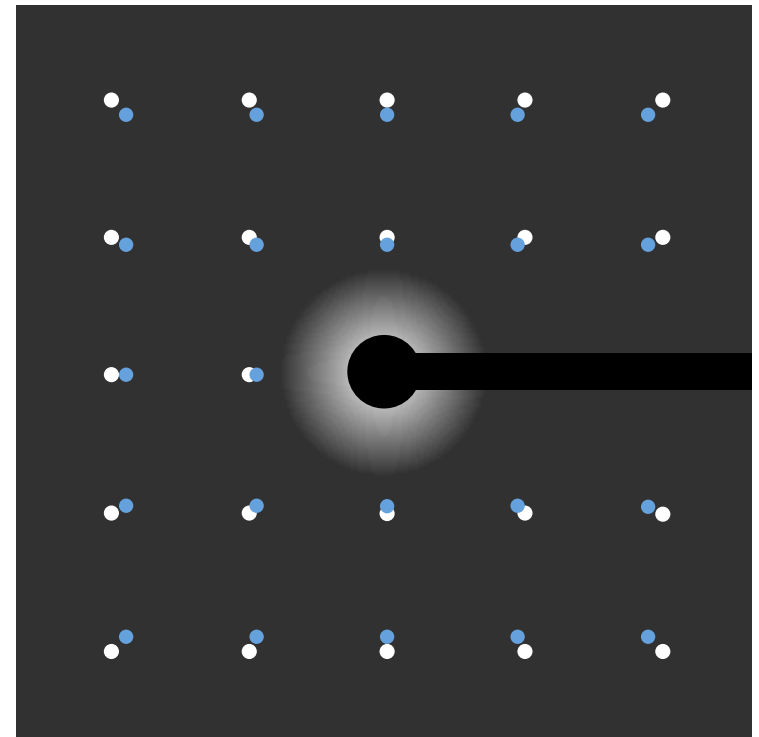
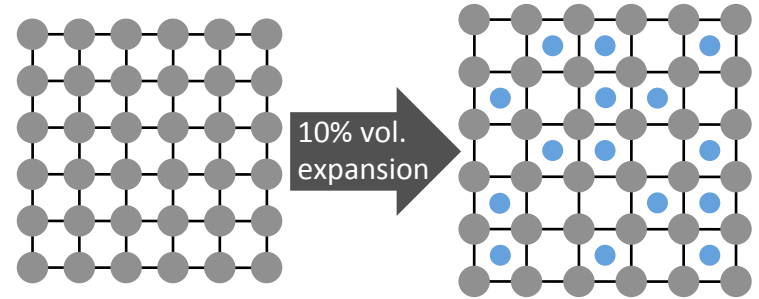
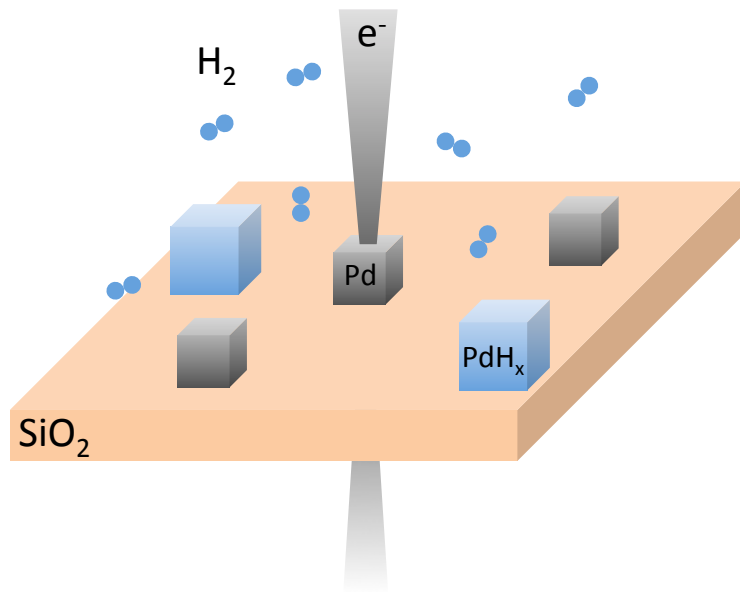
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# We study hydrogen absorption in single palladium nanocrystals using an environmental TEM



Electron Energy-Loss Spectroscopy (EELS)  $\longleftrightarrow$  dielectric function,  $\epsilon$

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Electron Energy-Loss Spectroscopy (EELS)

Electron Diffraction (ED) ↔ lattice expansion

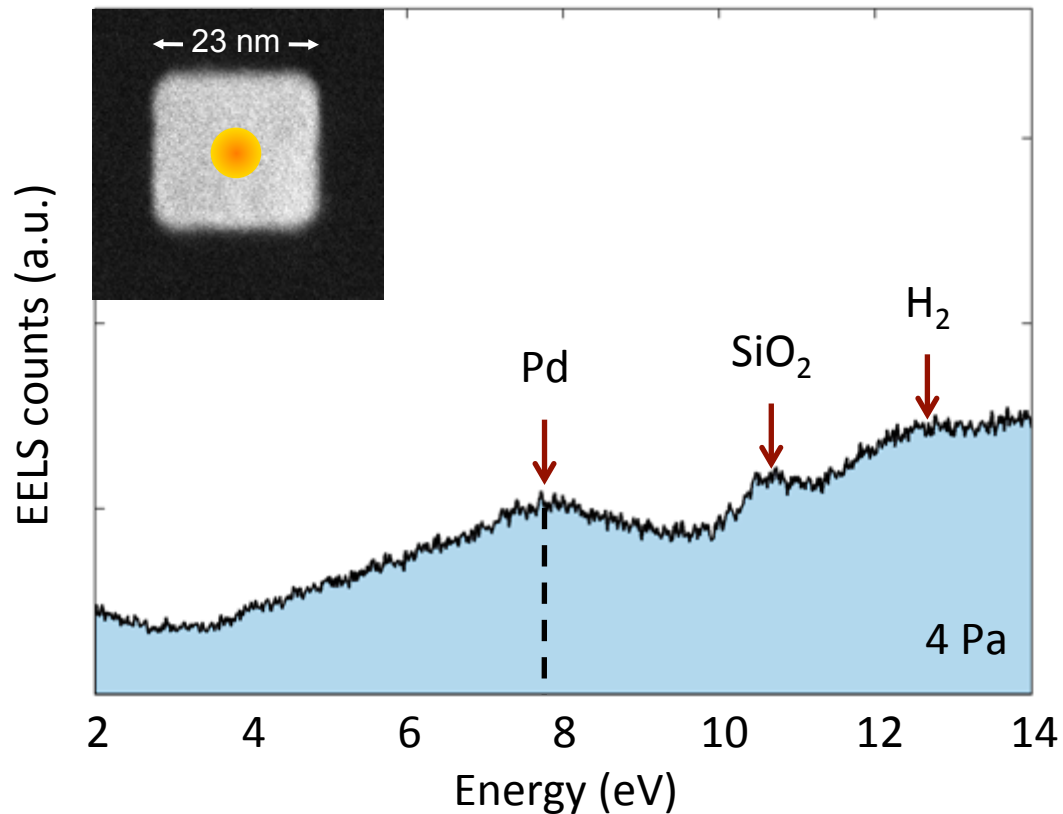
We prepare Pd nanocubes using wet colloidal synthesis

$\text{H}_2\text{PdCl}_4$  (aq)  
CTAB (aq)  
Ascorbic Acid (aq)

10 nm

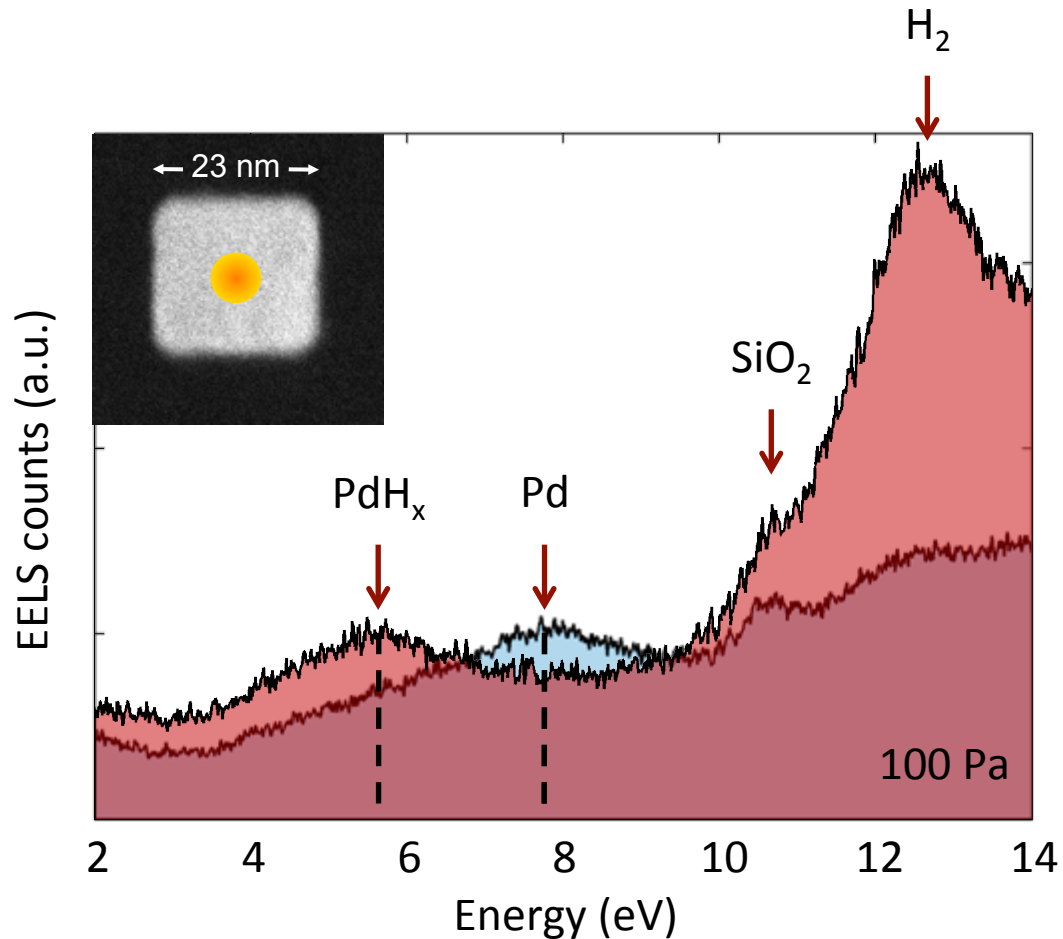


# The bulk plasmon resonance of Pd red-shifts by 2 eV upon H absorption

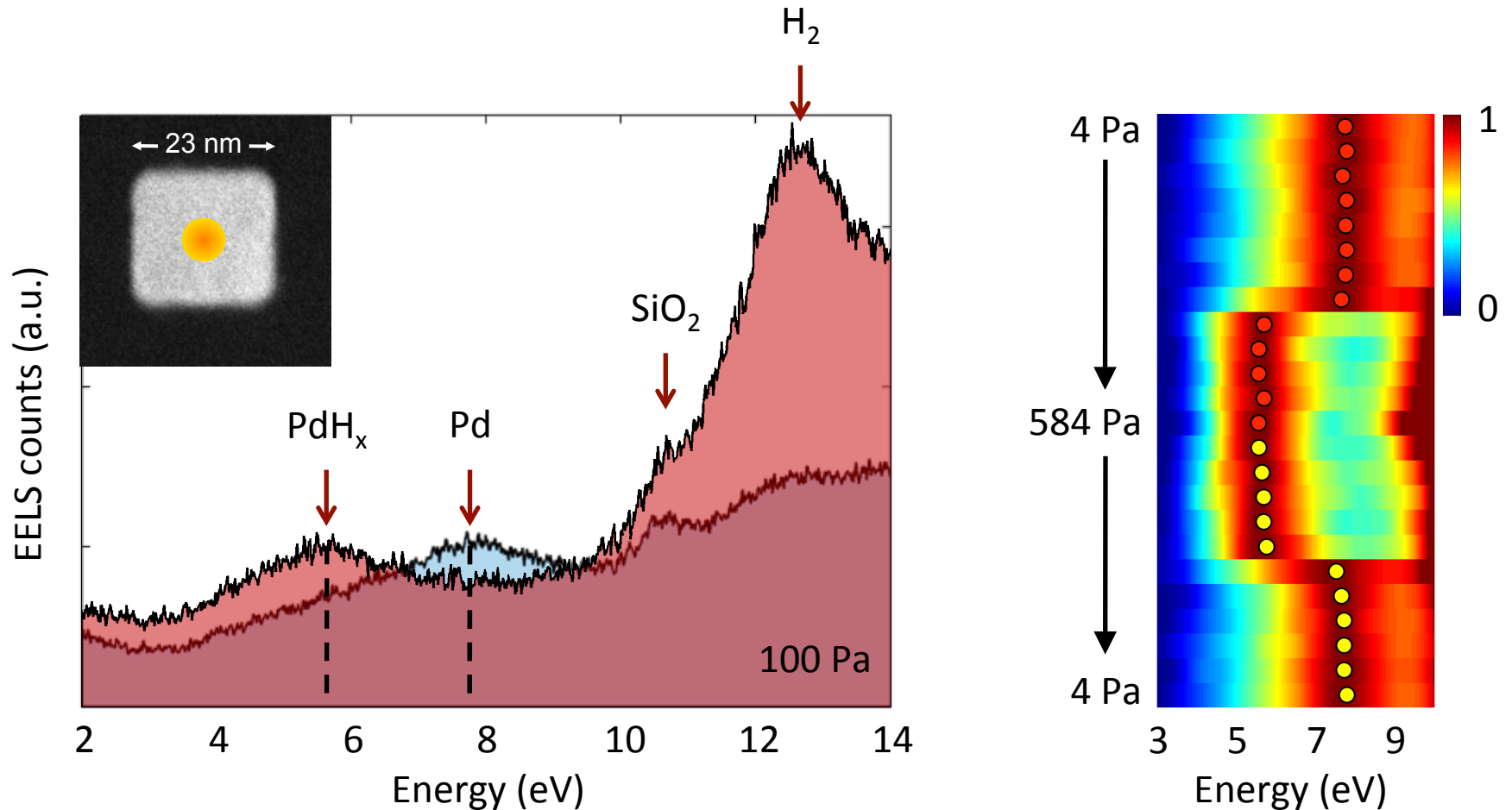




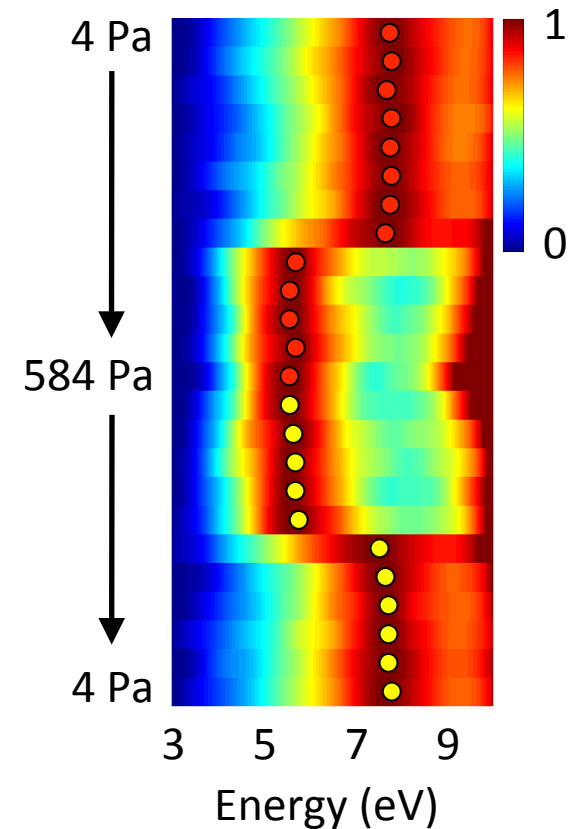
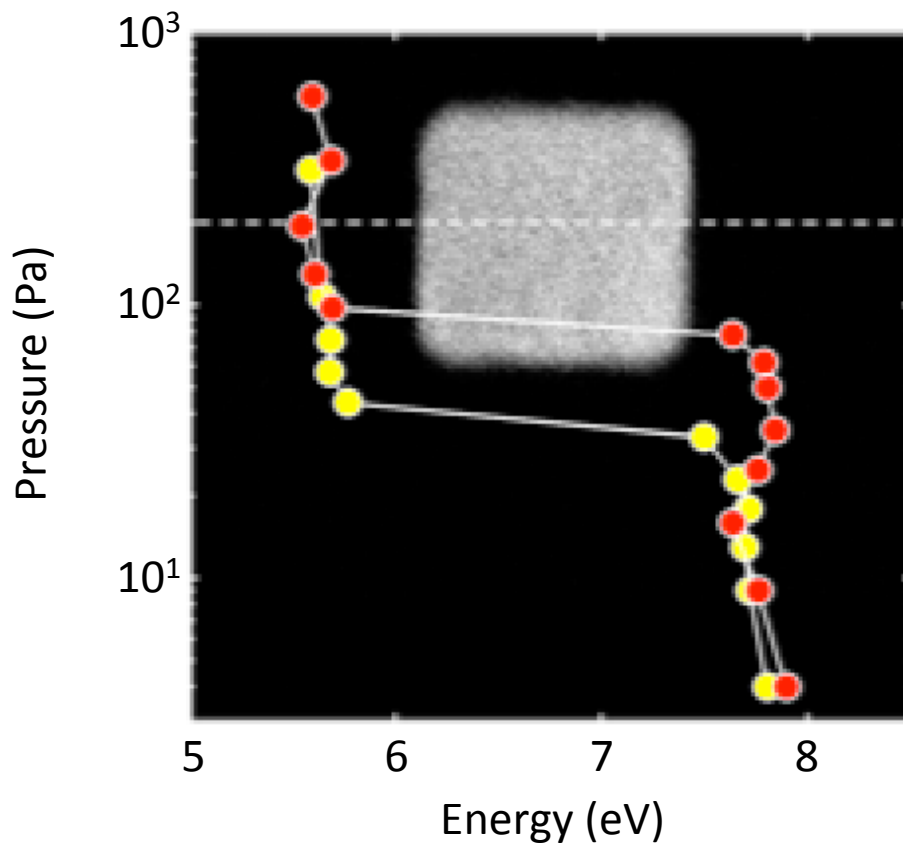
# The bulk plasmon resonance of Pd red-shifts by 2 eV upon H absorption



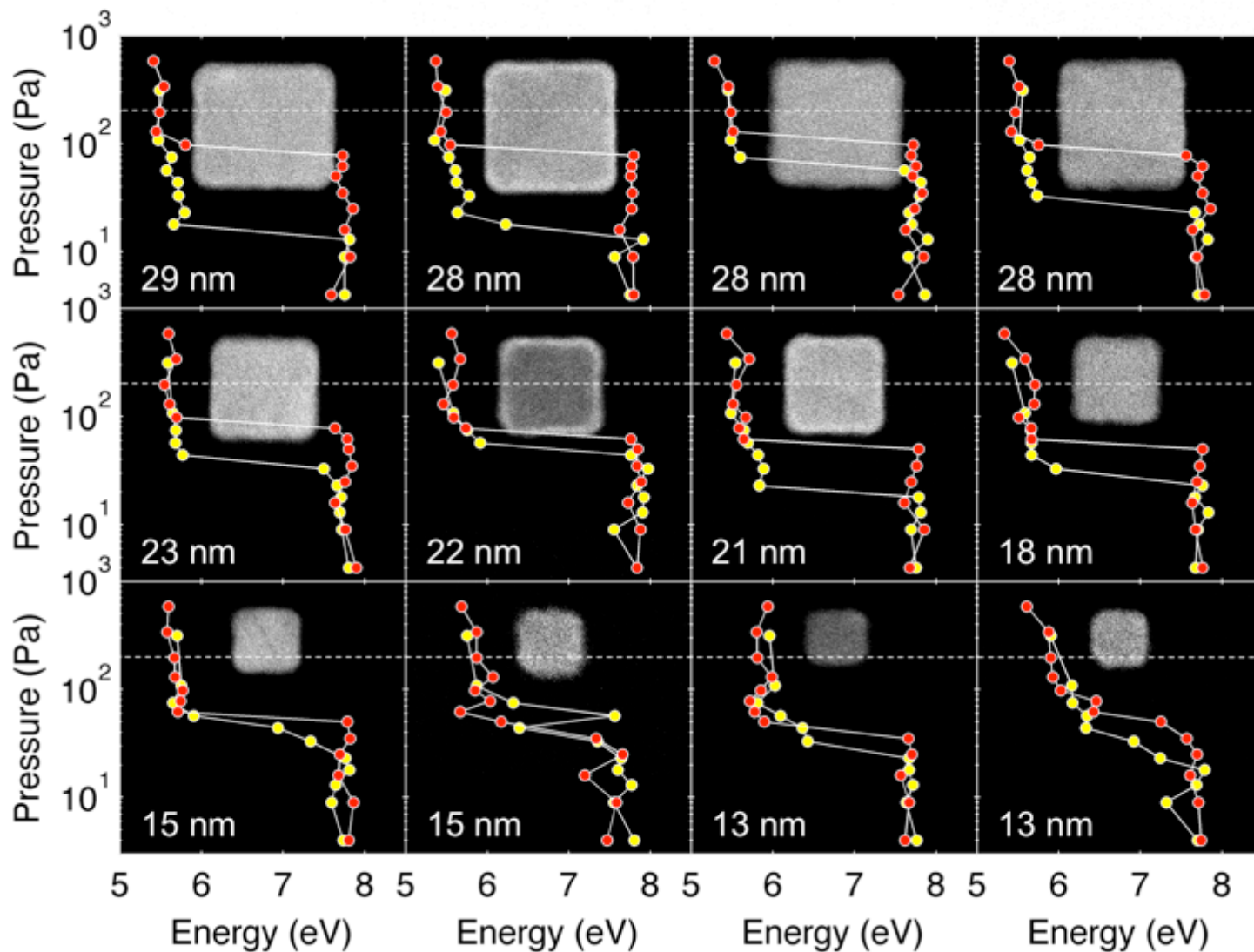
# We construct single-crystal isotherms from the EELS peak energies at various H<sub>2</sub> pressures



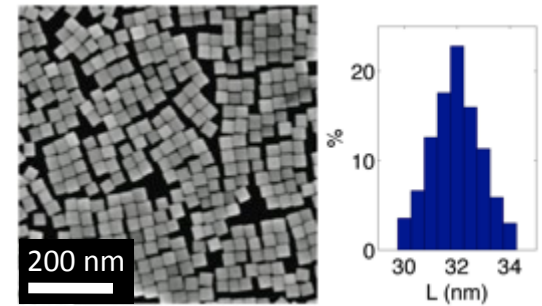
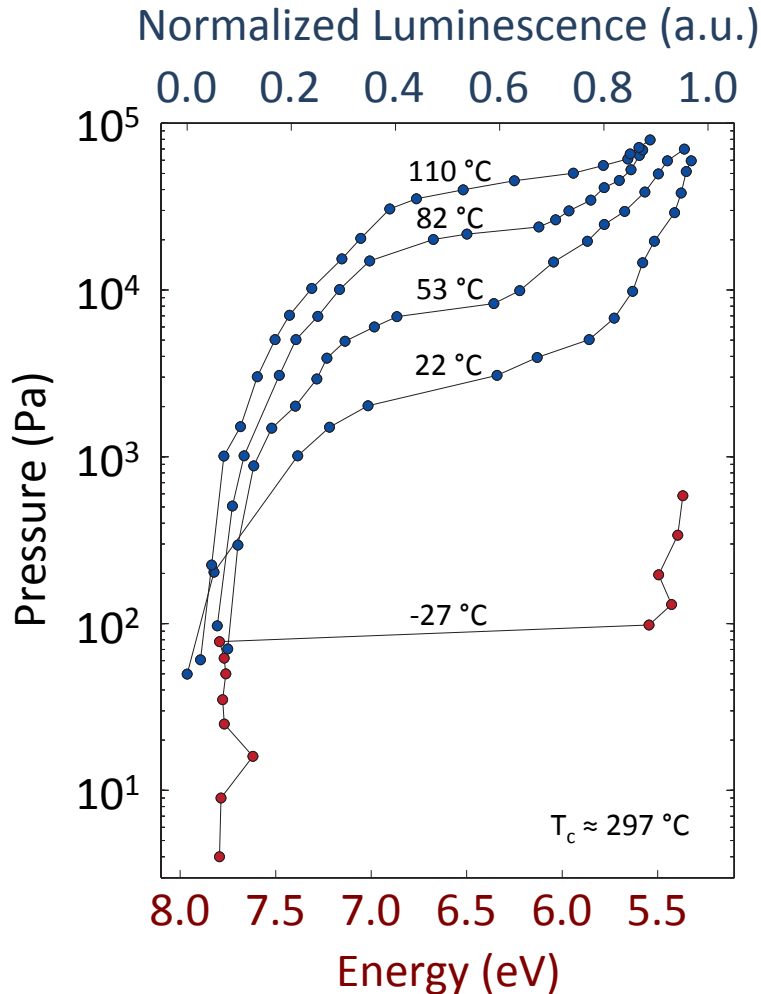
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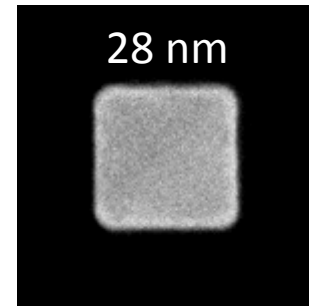
# We construct single-crystal isotherms from the EELS peak energies at various H<sub>2</sub> pressures



# 1<sup>st</sup> observation: isotherms of single-crystals are flat unlike suggested by ensemble measurements

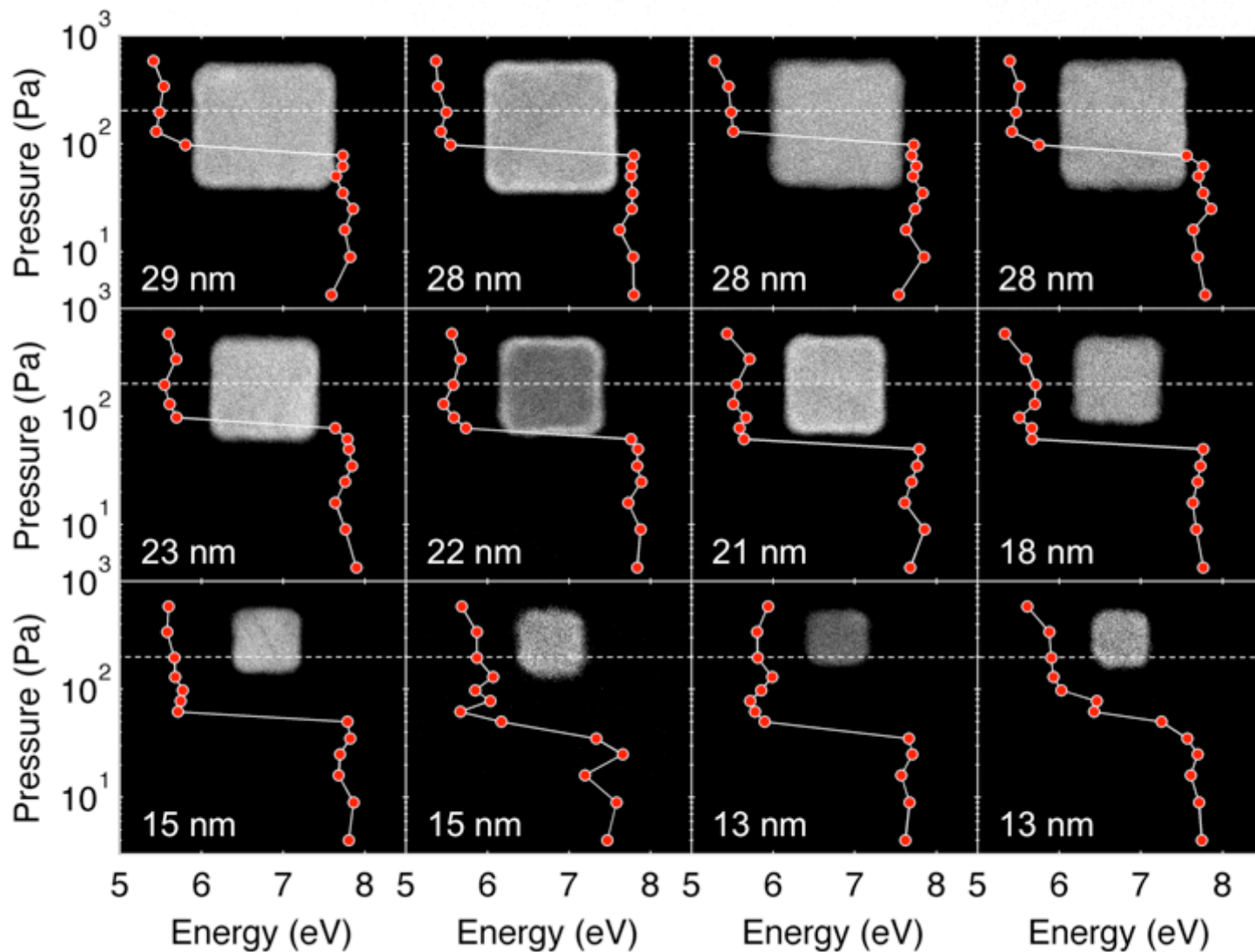


Bardhan et al., Nature Materials (2013)

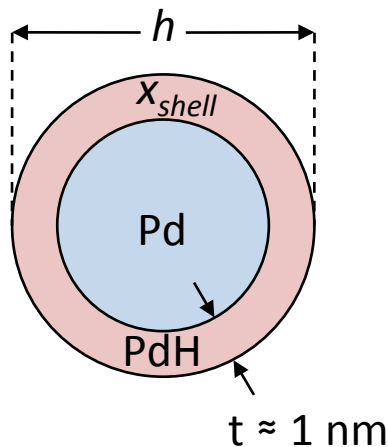


Baldi et al., Nature Materials (2014)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> observation: smaller nanocubes absorb hydrogen at slightly lower H<sub>2</sub> pressures



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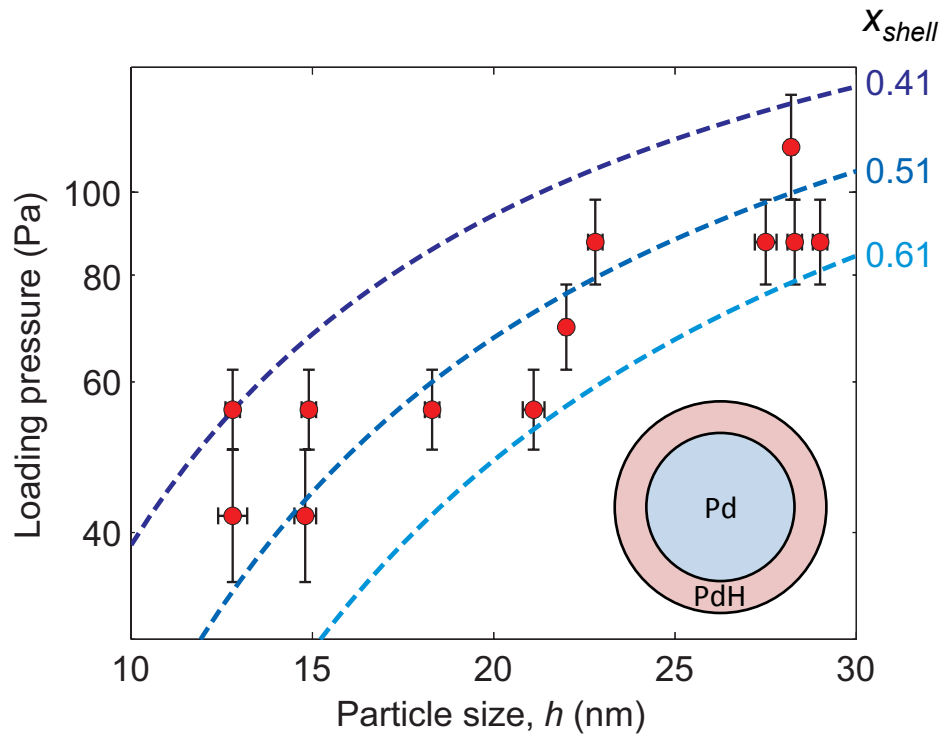


Surface stress induces a negative hydrostatic pressure on the core:

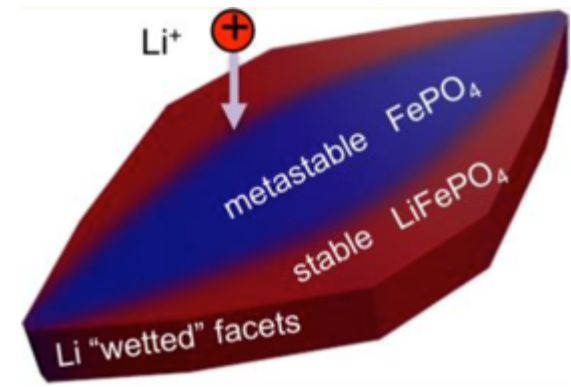
$$\mu_{\text{H,elastic}} \sim -3\varepsilon K \bar{V}_{\text{H}}$$

strain in the core      bulk modulus      partial molar volume of H

## 2<sup>nd</sup> observation: smaller nanocubes absorb hydrogen at slightly lower H<sub>2</sub> pressures



Baldi, Nature Materials (2014)



*"nanoparticles tend to transform in order of increasing size."*

Cogswell, Nano Letters (2013)



We prepare multiply-twinned (icosahedral) nanoparticles using wet colloidal synthesis

$\text{Na}_2\text{PdCl}_4$  (aq)  
CTAB (aq)  
Sodium ascorbate (aq)  
Pd seeds (<5 nm)

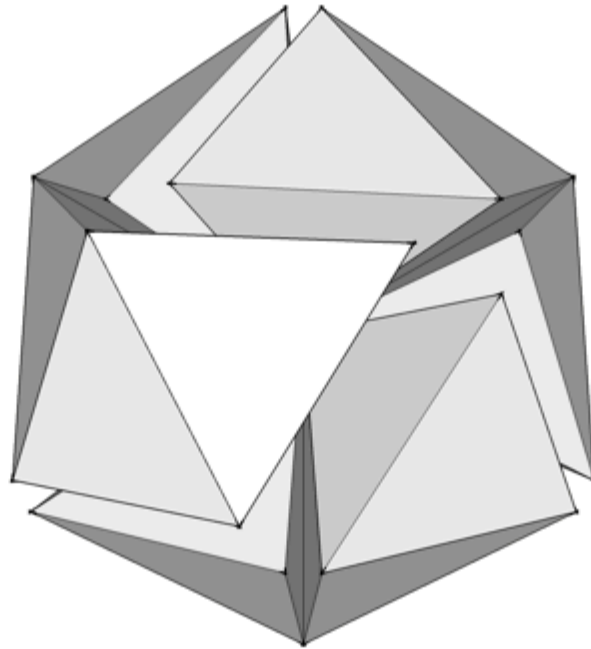


icosahedron

10 nm

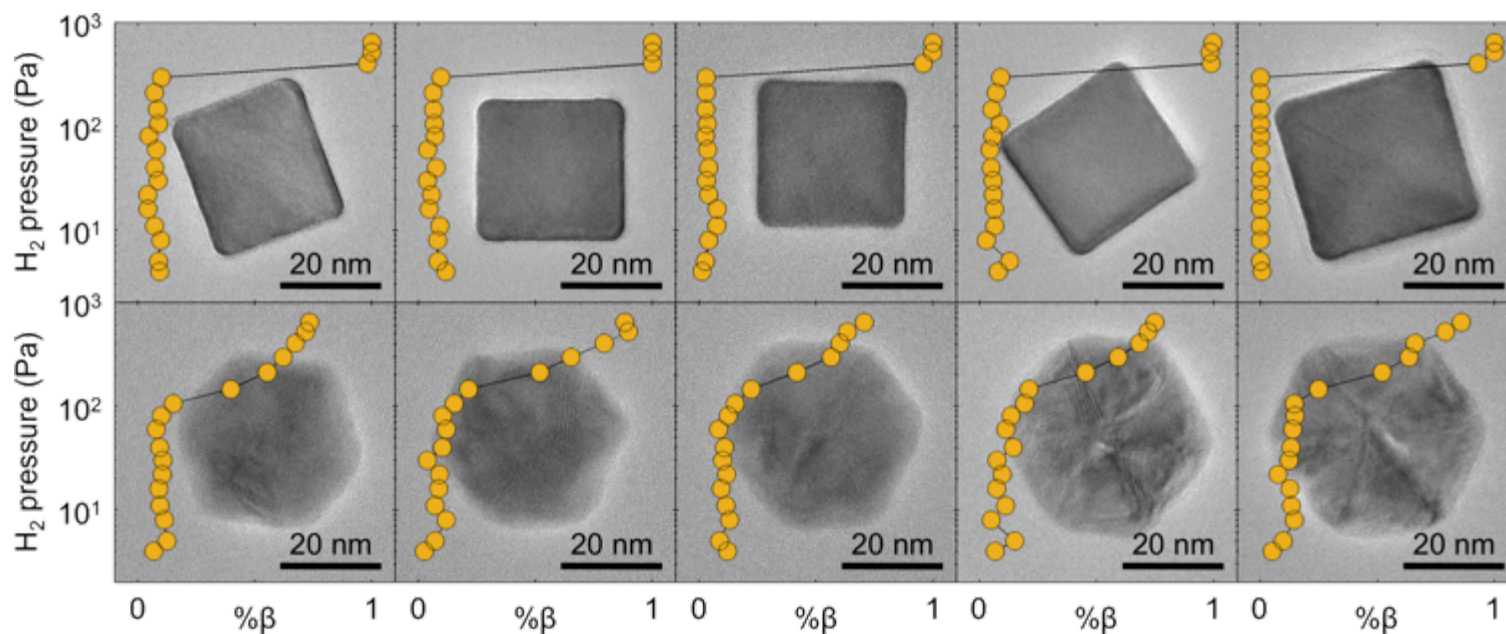


Icosahedral nanoparticles are made  
of 20 distorted tetrahedra



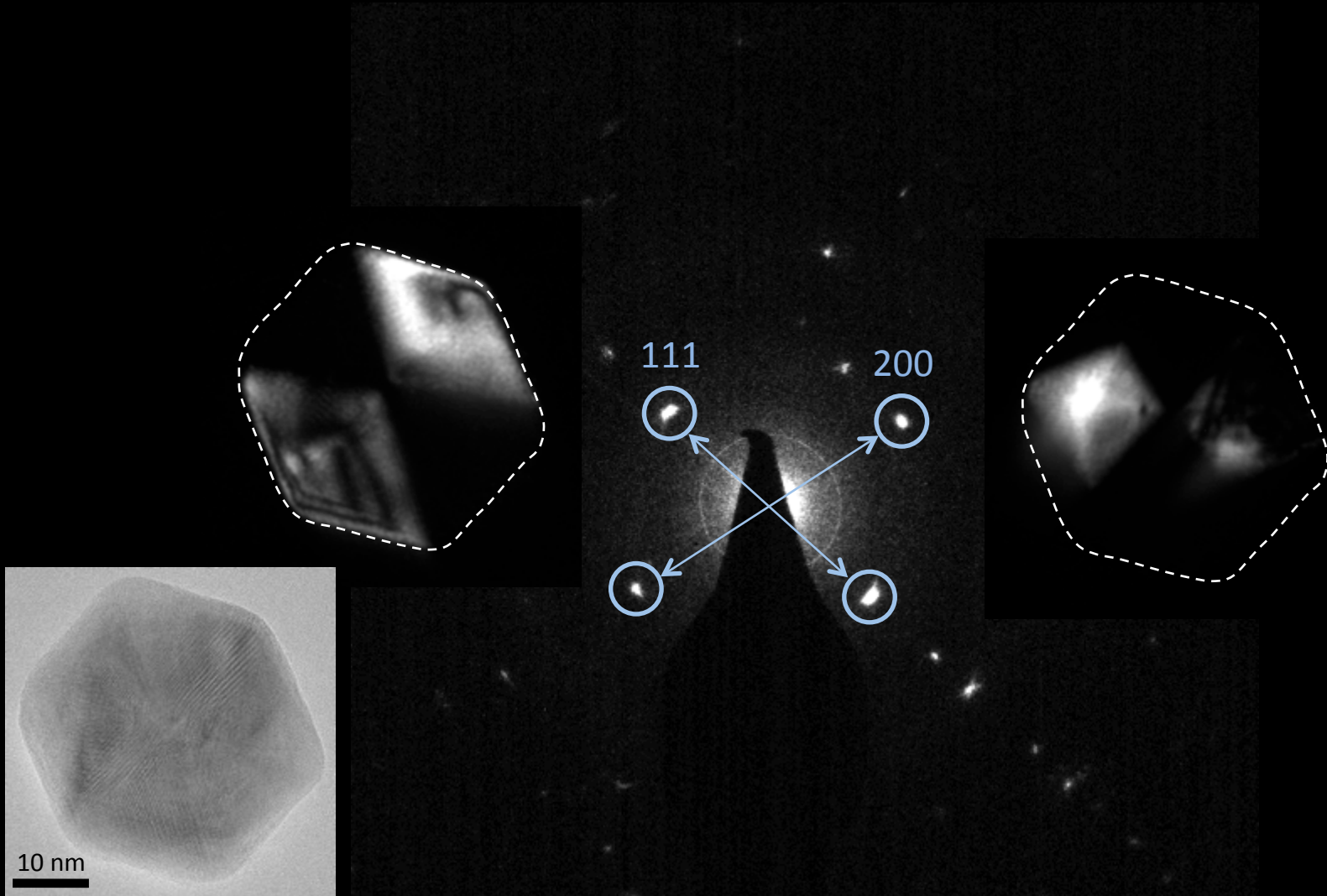
The misfit must be accommodated by strain and/or defects

# EELS loading isotherms of individual icosahedral nanoparticles show sloped isotherms

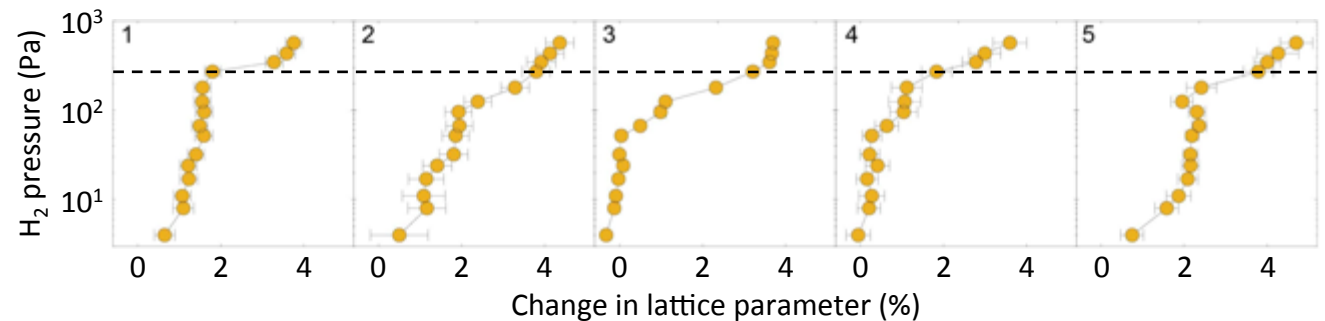
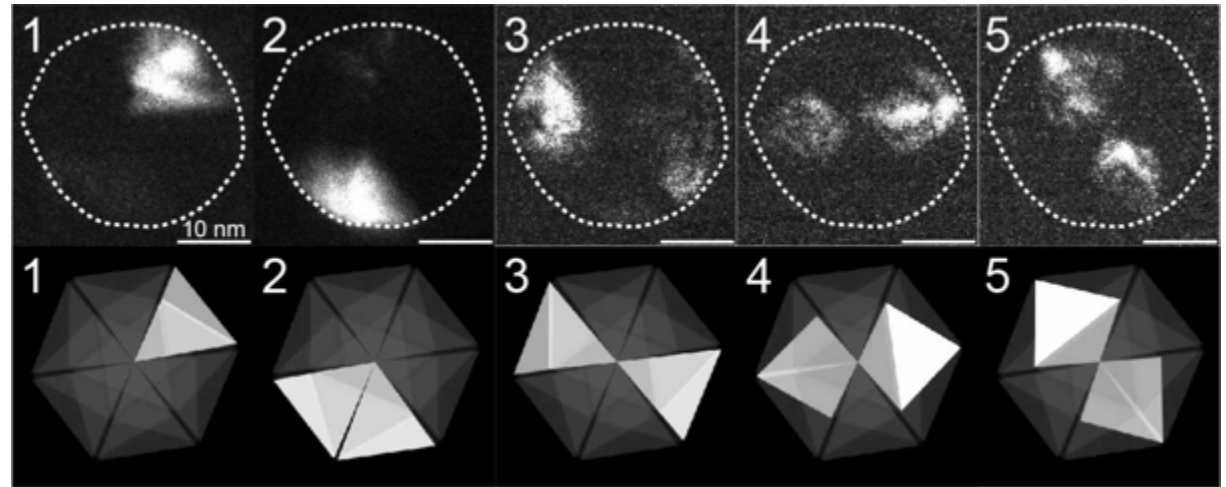
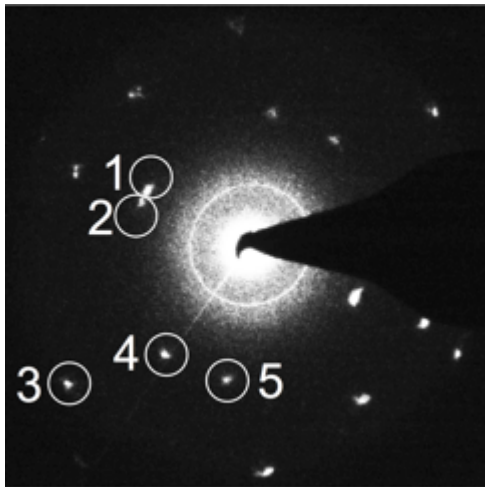


Why do they load gradually?

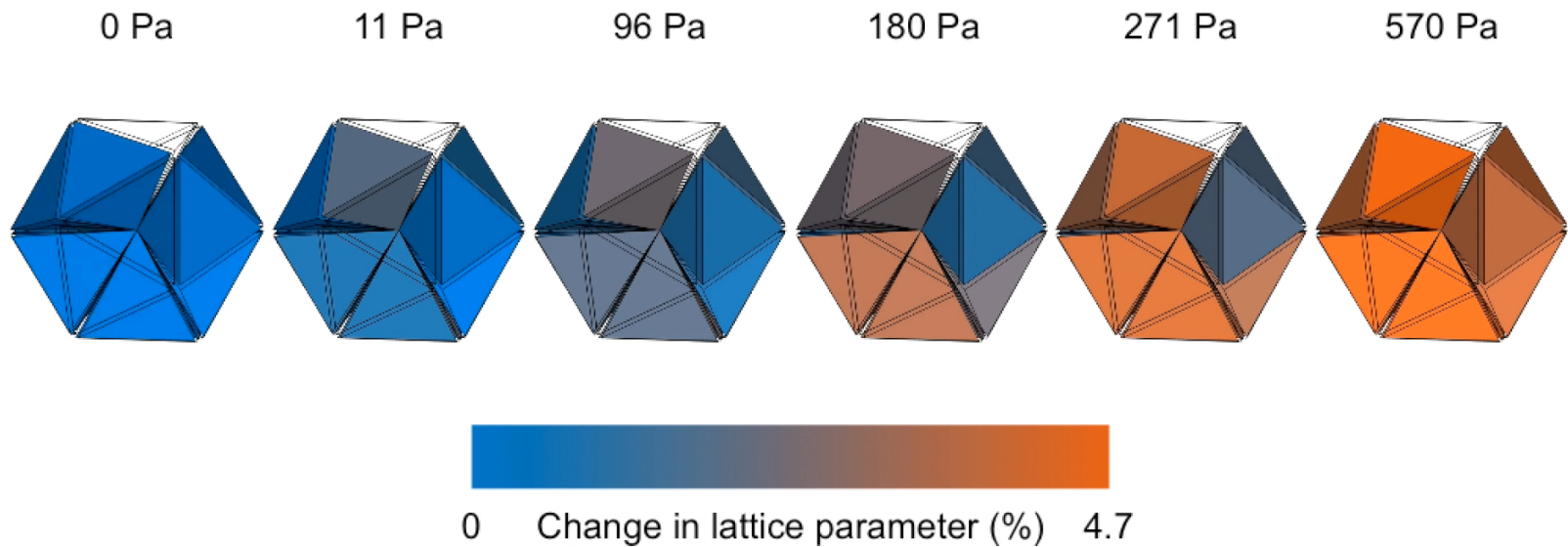
We can “look inside” a single nanoparticle by combining dark-field imaging + electron diffraction



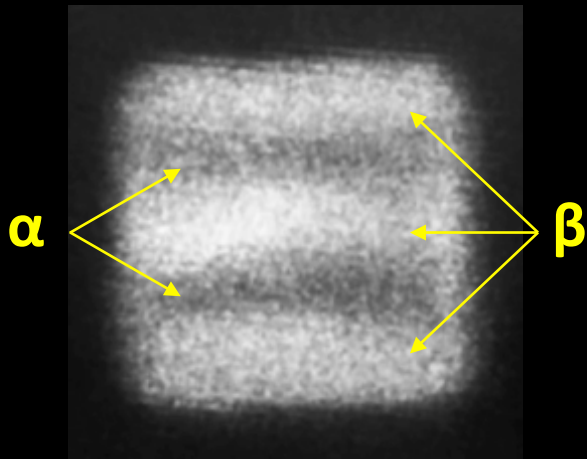
# Using ED we can reconstruct the 3D hydrogen distribution *within* individual nanoparticles during hydrogen uptake



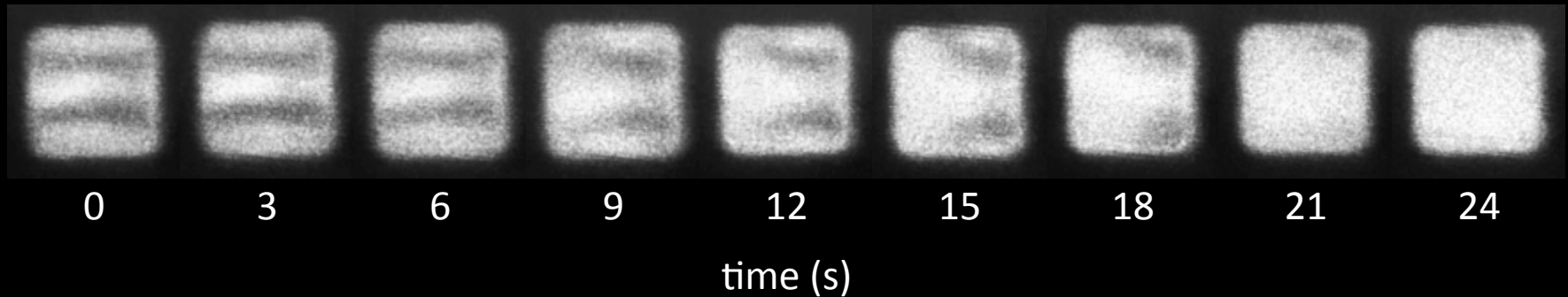
# The sloped isotherms of icosahedral nanoparticles are due to the independent loading of the crystallites



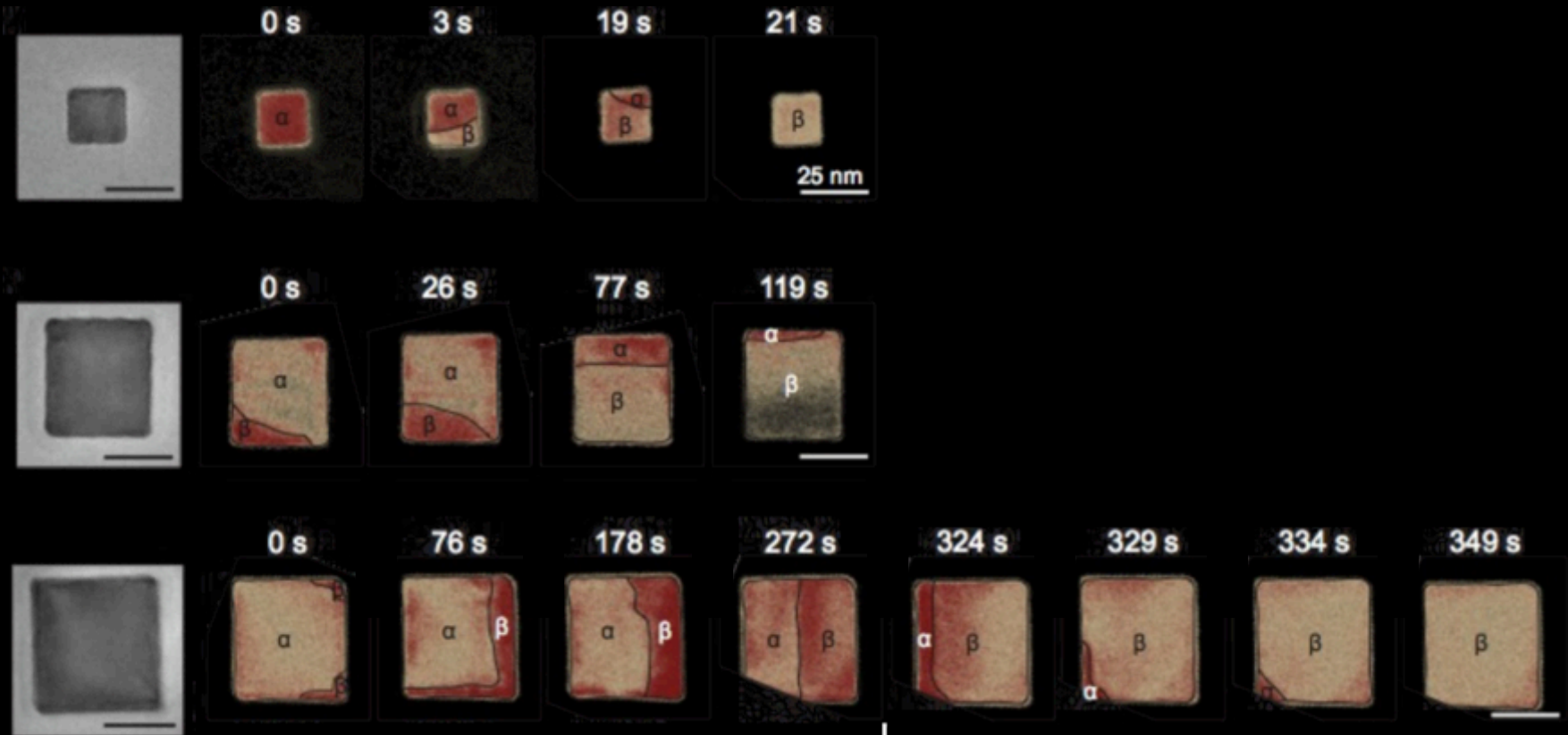
We can also monitor the dynamics of hydrogen absorption in real time with nm spatial resolution



STEM intensity contrast can be used to distinguish the  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  phases in real time with nm spatial resolution



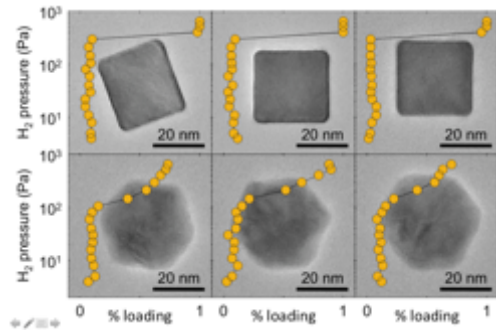
# The hydrogenated phase nucleates at the cube corners and grows by minimizing elastic strain at the $\alpha/\beta$ interface





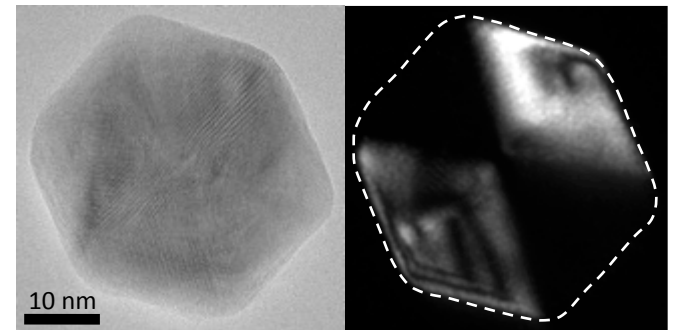
# Summary

Single particle results differ from ensemble and highlight the role of surface stress



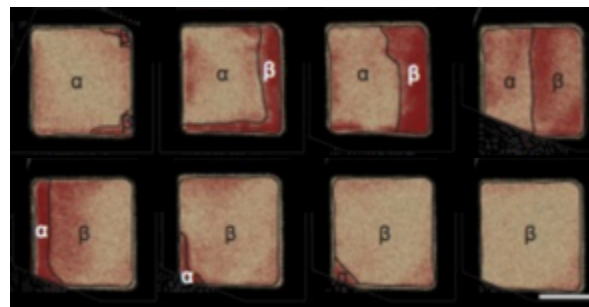
Baldi et al., Nature Materials (2014)

Elastic strain and defects dictate the phase distribution also within single nanocrystals



Narayan et al., Nature Materials (2016)

Nucleation and growth mechanism are influenced by the particle shape



Narayan et al., Nature Communications (2017)

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