

# Strategies Toward Lunar Dust Adhesion Mitigation

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48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Adhesion Society  
February 16-19, 2025

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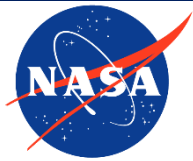
*Specific vendor and manufacturer names are explicitly mentioned only to accurately describe the hardware used in this study. The use of vendor and manufacturer names does not imply an endorsement by the U.S. Government nor does it imply that the specified equipment is the best available.*



# Outline

- ❖ Why lunar dust?
- ❖ Lunar dust adhesion mitigation
- ❖ Evaluation of mitigation efficacy
- ❖ Conclusions and outlook
- ❖ Acknowledgements





# The Lunar Environment

**Low Gravity**  
1/6<sup>th</sup> of Earth's gravity

**Lack of Atmosphere**  
10<sup>-12</sup> Torr

**Elevated Radiation Exposure**  
~200x more than Earth  
~2.6x higher than that of  
International Space Station (ISS)



**Extreme Temperature Variation**  
127°C to  
-173°C

**Lunar Regolith**  
Particle size by weight,  
50% < 50 μm  
20% < 20 μm  
1% < 1 μm



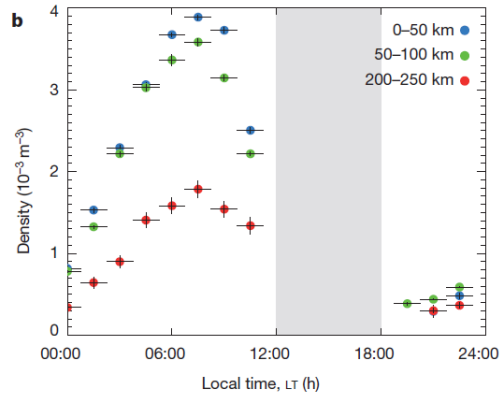
Image credit: NASA

# What, Where, and Why of Lunar Dust



## Particle Counts

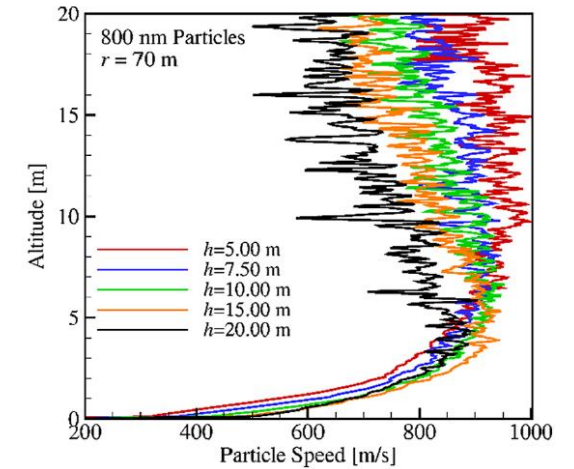
Lunar Dust Experiment (LDEX) Results



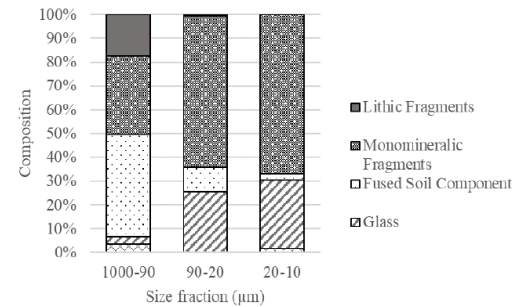
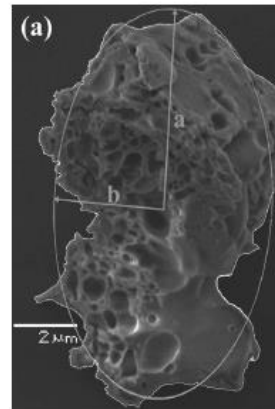
Particle counts as high as  $4 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m}^{-3}$  up to 50 km off the lunar surface. Increased particle counts at terminator.

Single engine plume impingement can generate particle velocities  $> 1000 \text{ m/s}$ .

## Particle Velocity

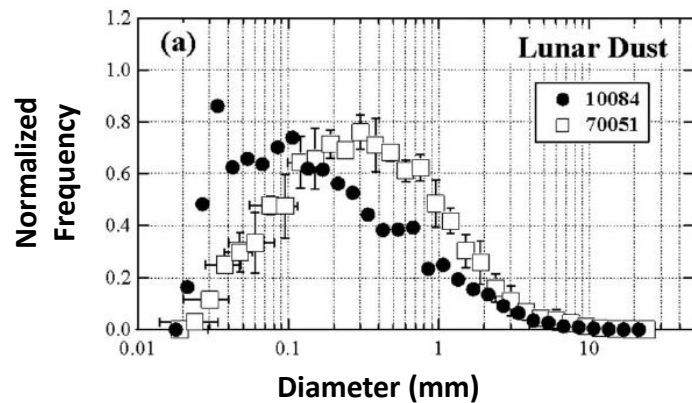


## Particle Morphology



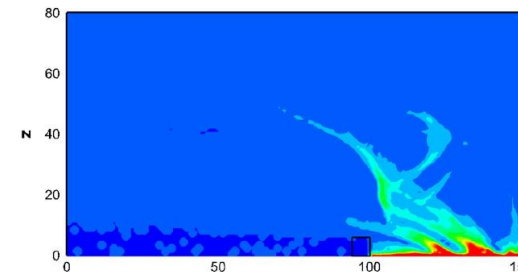
Smooth, glassy spheres  $\leftrightarrow$  High angularity agglutinates

## Particle Size



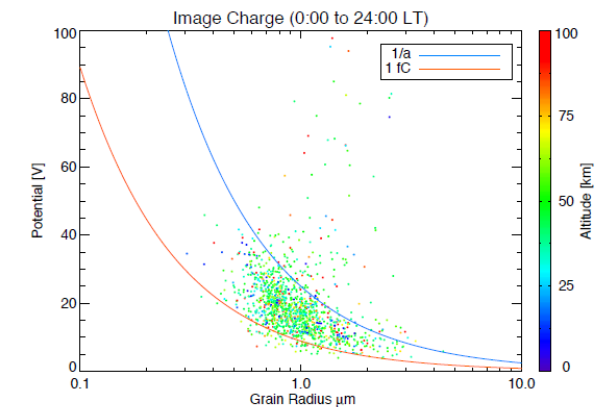
Lunar dust particles range from nm to up to 50  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter.

## Simulated Lofted 10 $\mu\text{m}$ Dust



## Electrostatic Environment

LDEX Results



# Natural vs. Anthropomorphic Lunar Dust Exposure



**Dust Accumulation from Natural Phenomena**  
100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$  annually<sup>1</sup>



**Dust Accumulation from Human Activity**

Lunar landing:  
Apollo 14, 848  $\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$

Lunar rover:  
Dust traveling  $\sim 20$  m away from rover

ISRU and construction:  
Unknown, likely highly variable

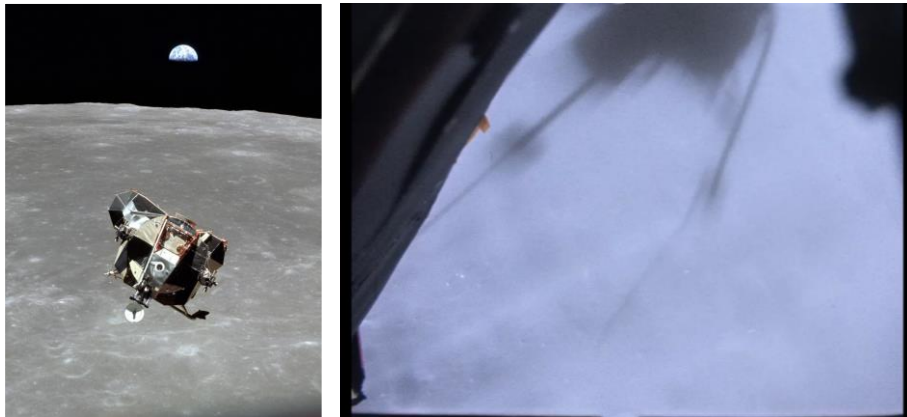


Image generated using Gemini AI

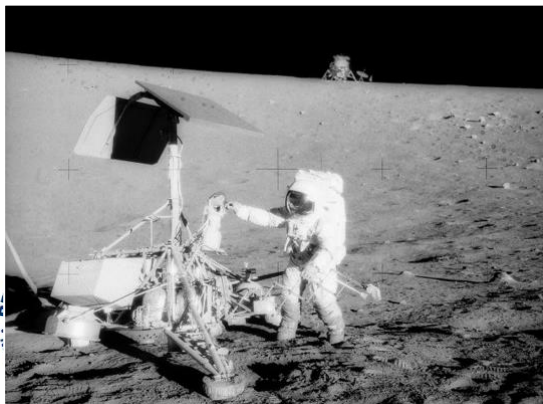
1. Katzan, Cynthia M.; Brinker, David J.; and Kress, Robert: *The Effects of Lunar Dust Accumulation on the Performance of Photovoltaic Arrays*. Space Photovoltaic Research and Technology Conference, Cleveland, OH, 1991.

# Lessons from the Apollo Missions

## Land: Plume surface interactions (PSI)



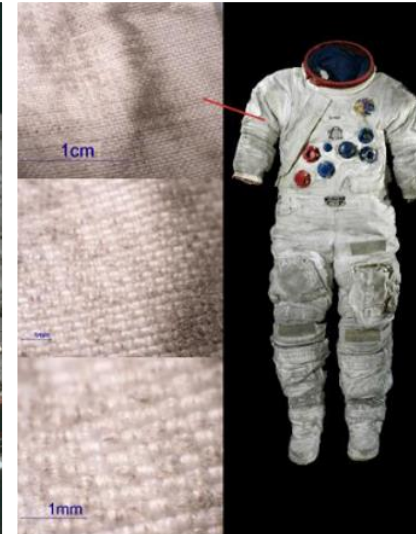
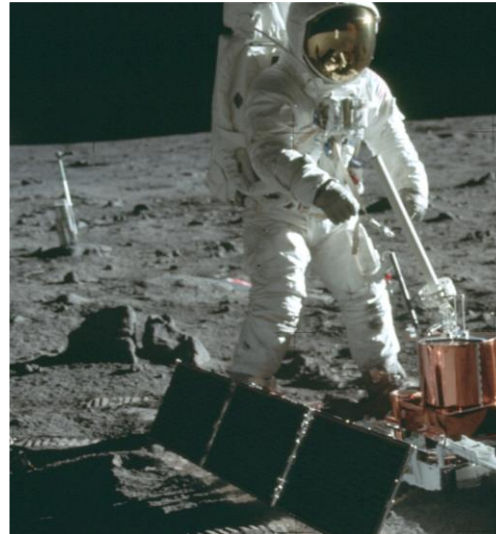
Regolith ejecta from Apollo 12 landing resulted in **scouring, pitting and cracking** of nearby Surveyor III's aluminum spacecraft structure



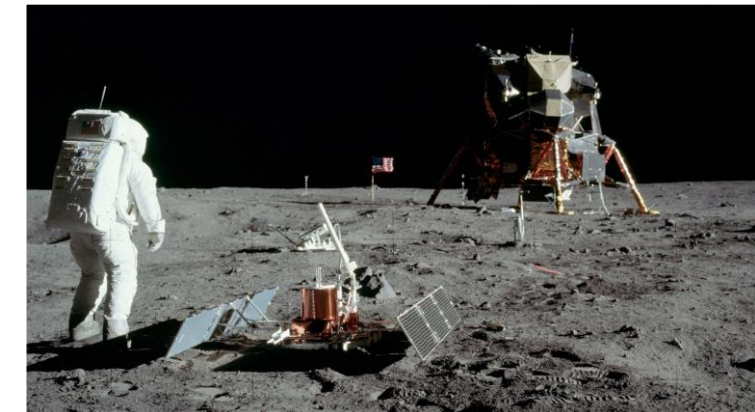
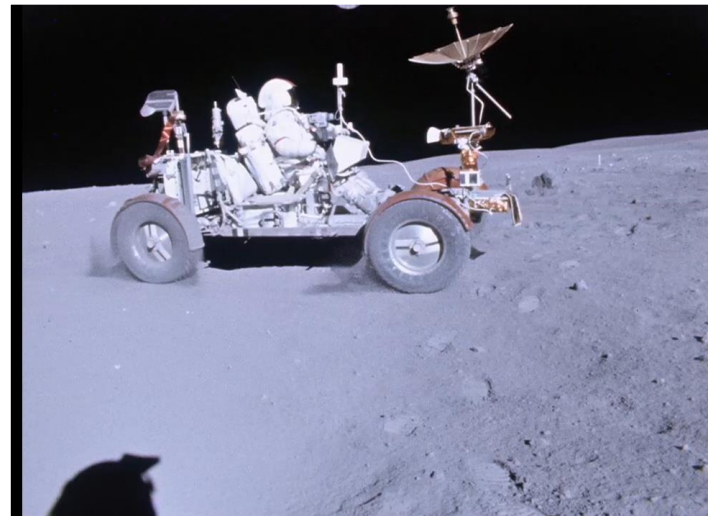
Apollo 12 extravehicular activity (EVA) showing Apollo 12 Lunar Module and Surveyor 3 spacecraft



## Explore: Human-generated surface transported dust



"Dust is probably one of our greatest inhibitors to a nominal operation on the Moon."  
Apollo 17 Commander Gene Cernan



# How do we Consider the Influence Lunar Dust Has?

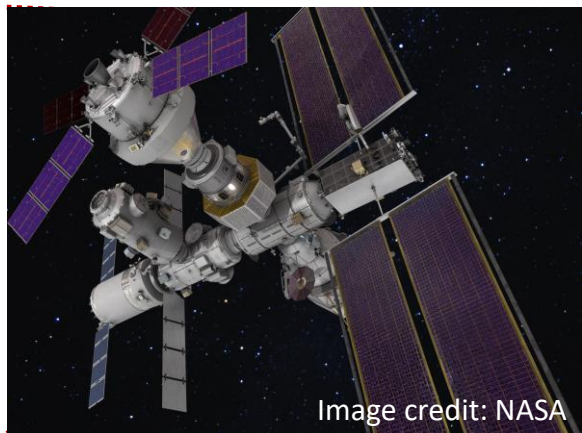


Image credit: NASA

**Gateway**

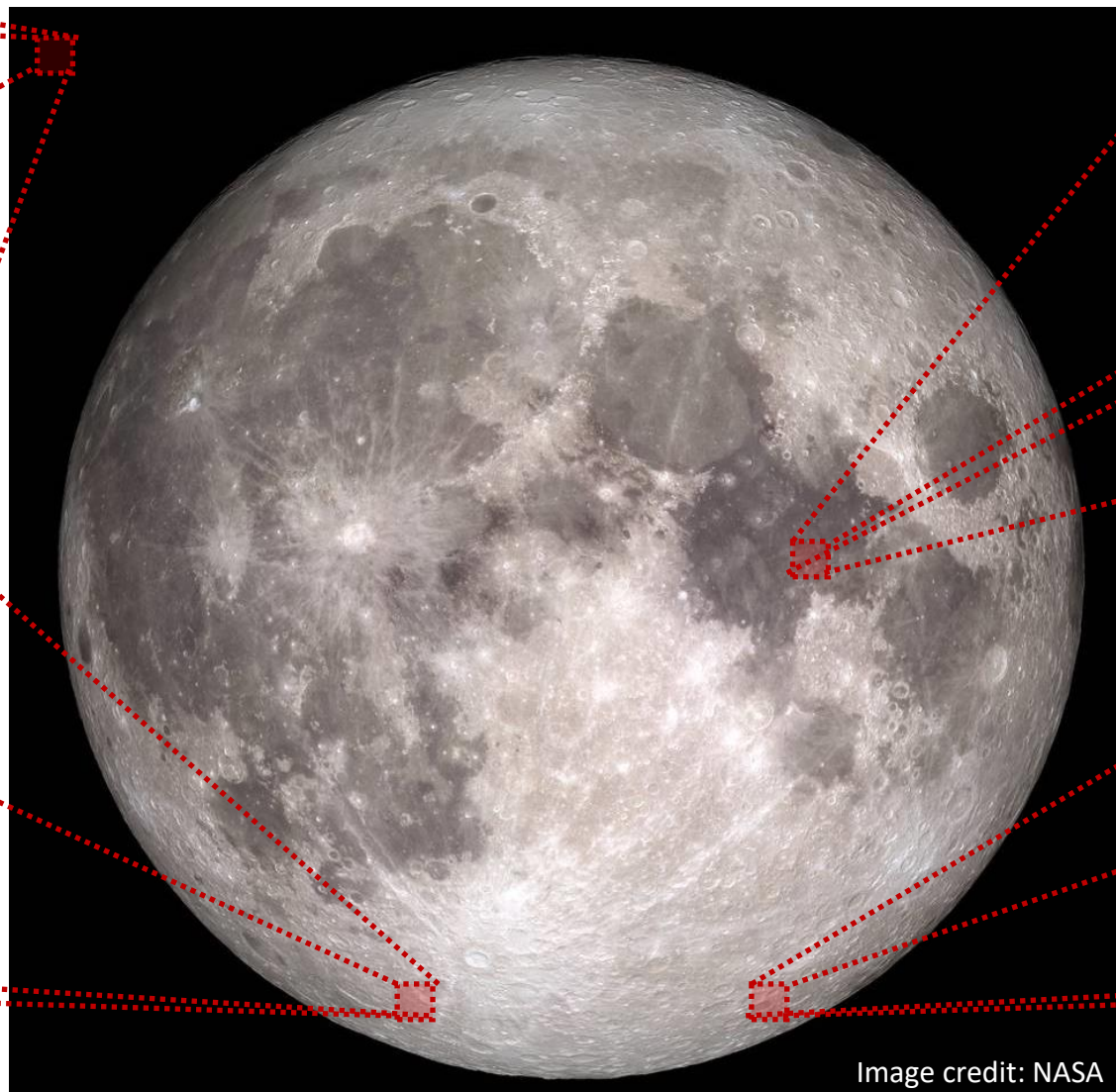


Image credit: NASA



**Lunar Lander**

*Image generated using Gemini AI*

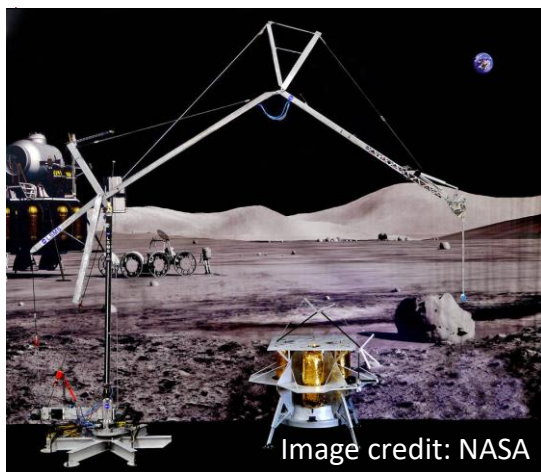
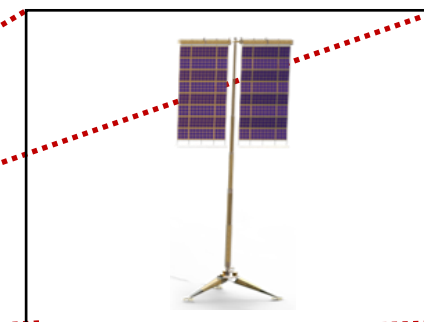


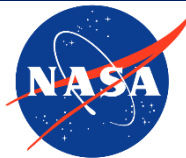
Image credit: NASA

**Infrastructure**



**Vertical Solar Array Technology (VSAT)**

Image credit: NASA



# How do we Approach Lunar Dust Adhesion Mitigation?

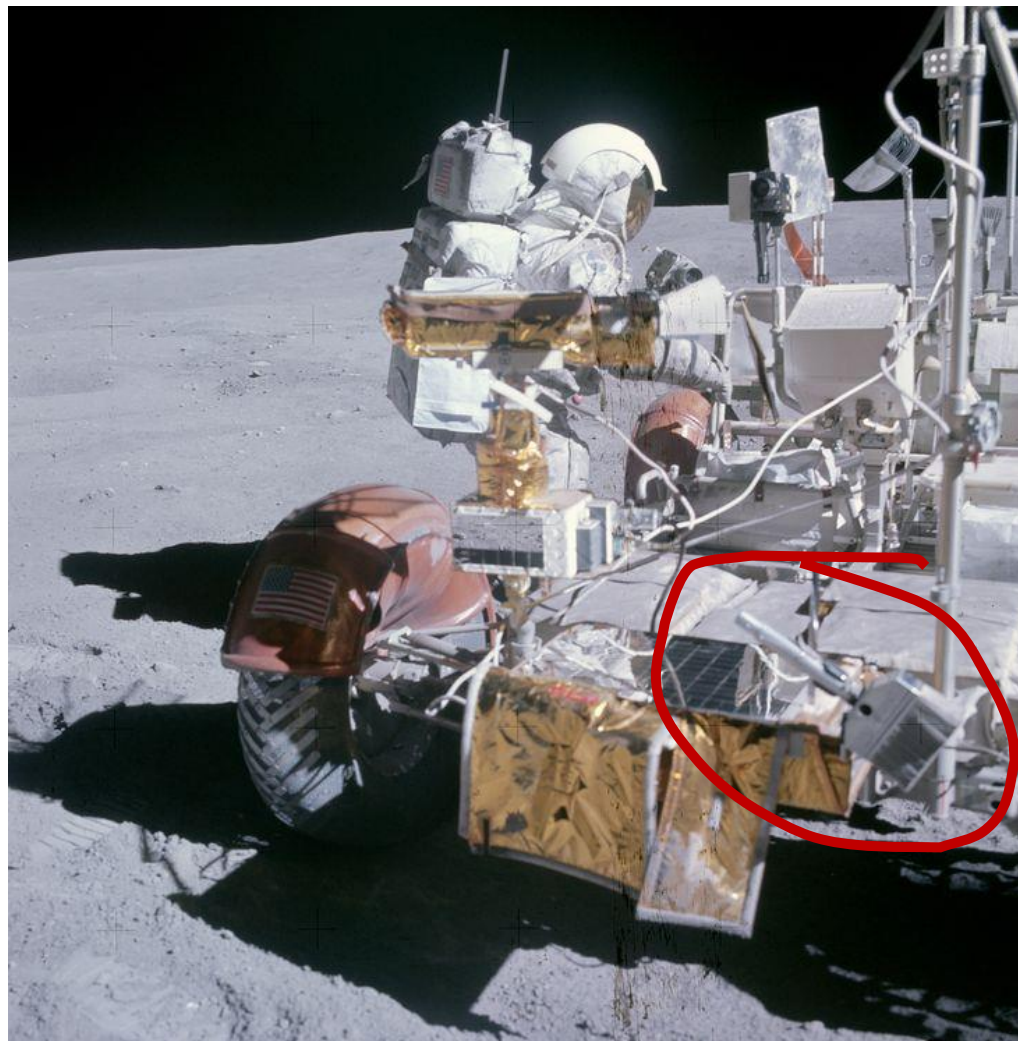
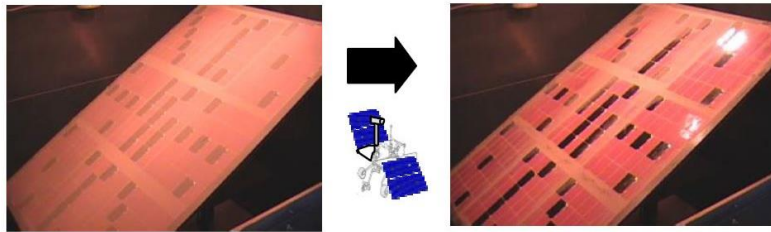
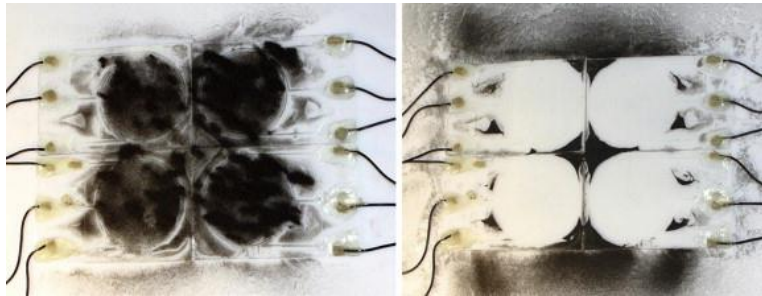
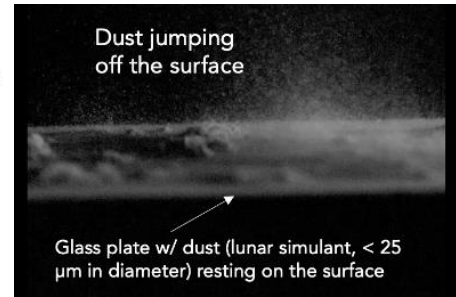
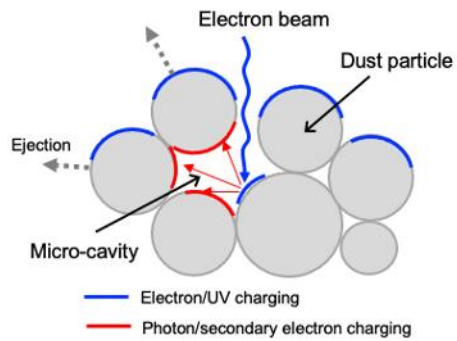


Image credit: NASA

# Lunar Dust Adhesion Mitigation Strategies

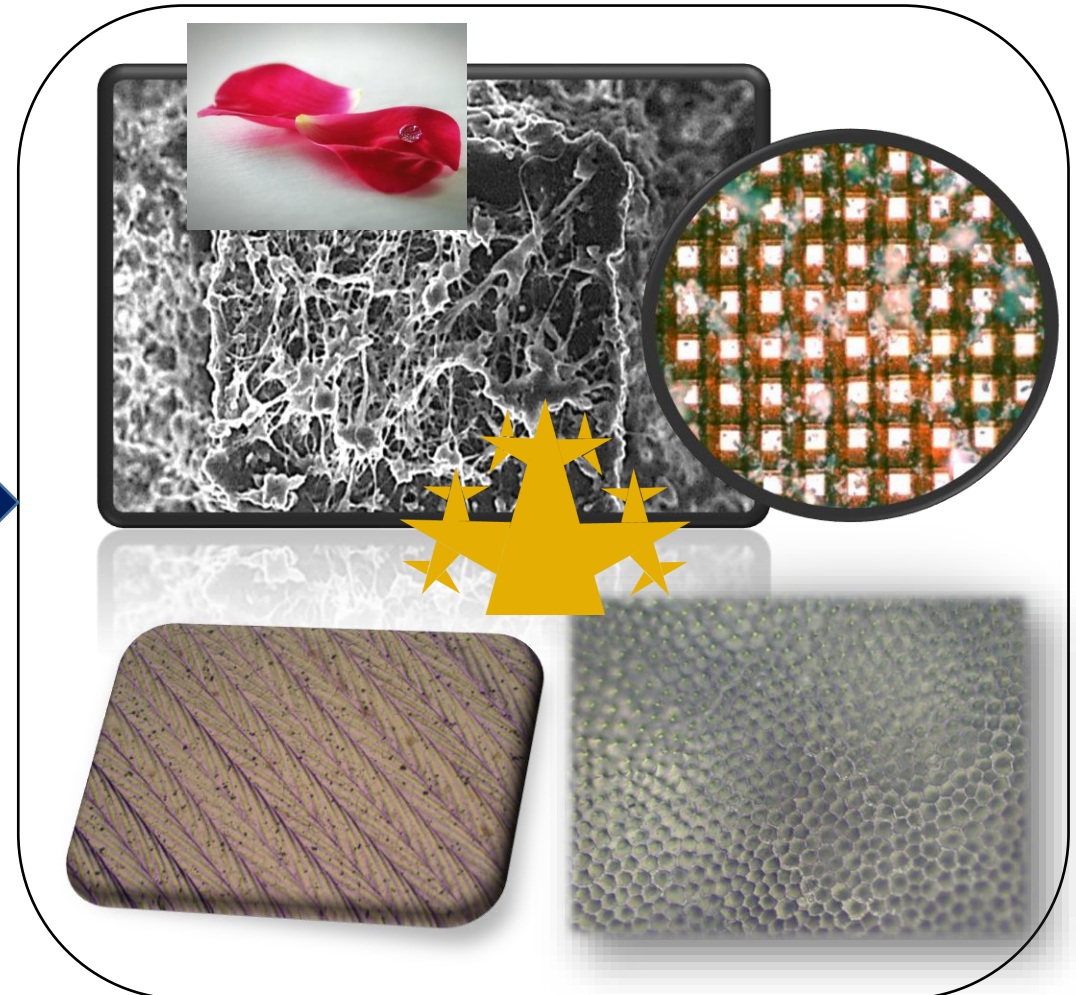
## Active Mitigation Strategies



Dust Accumulated

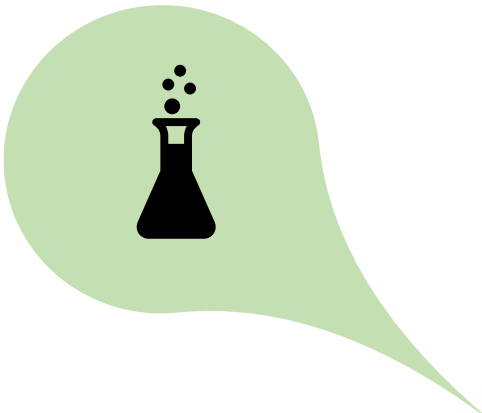
>90% of Full Power Restored

## Passive Mitigation Strategies





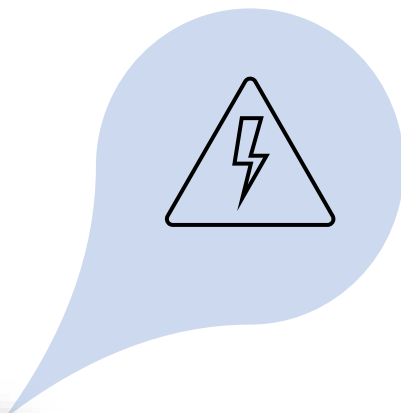
Surface Chemistry



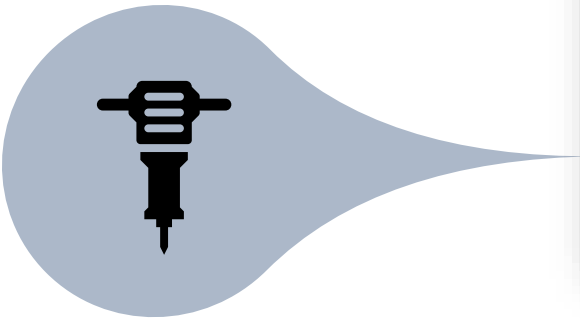
Surface Topography



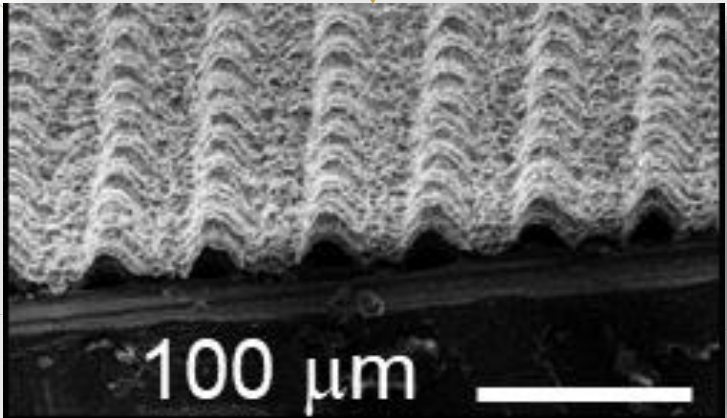
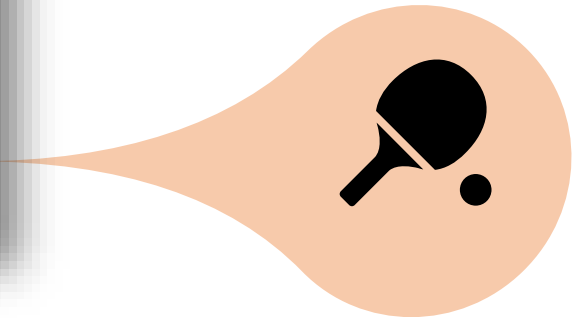
Surface Conductivity



Surface Mechanical Properties



Responsive Surfaces

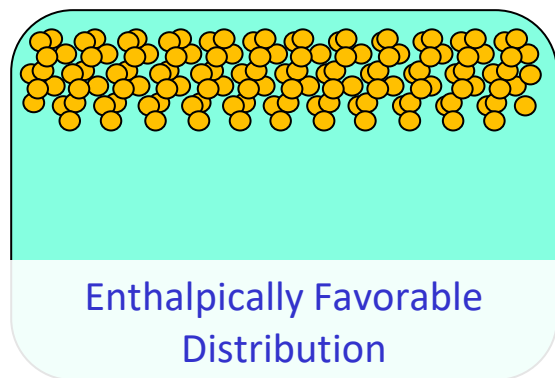
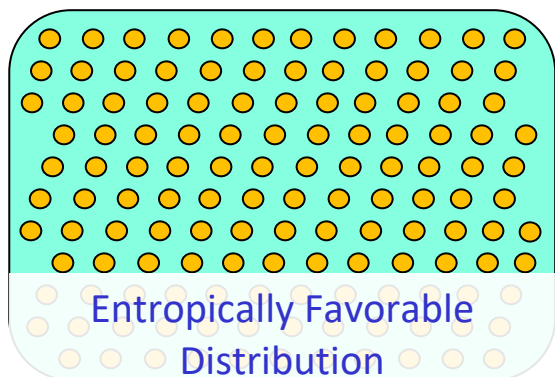


Surface Hardness



# Surface Chemical Modifications

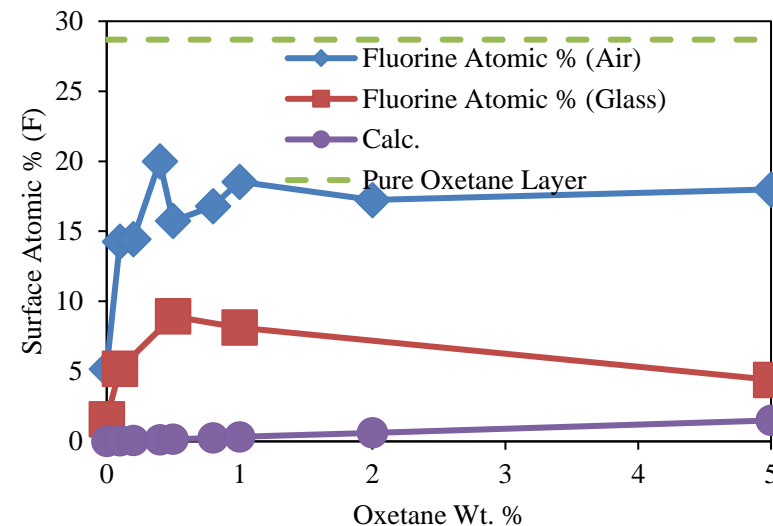
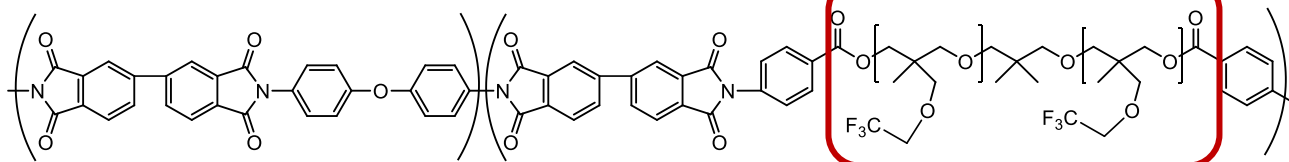
## Surface Migration Agents (SMA)



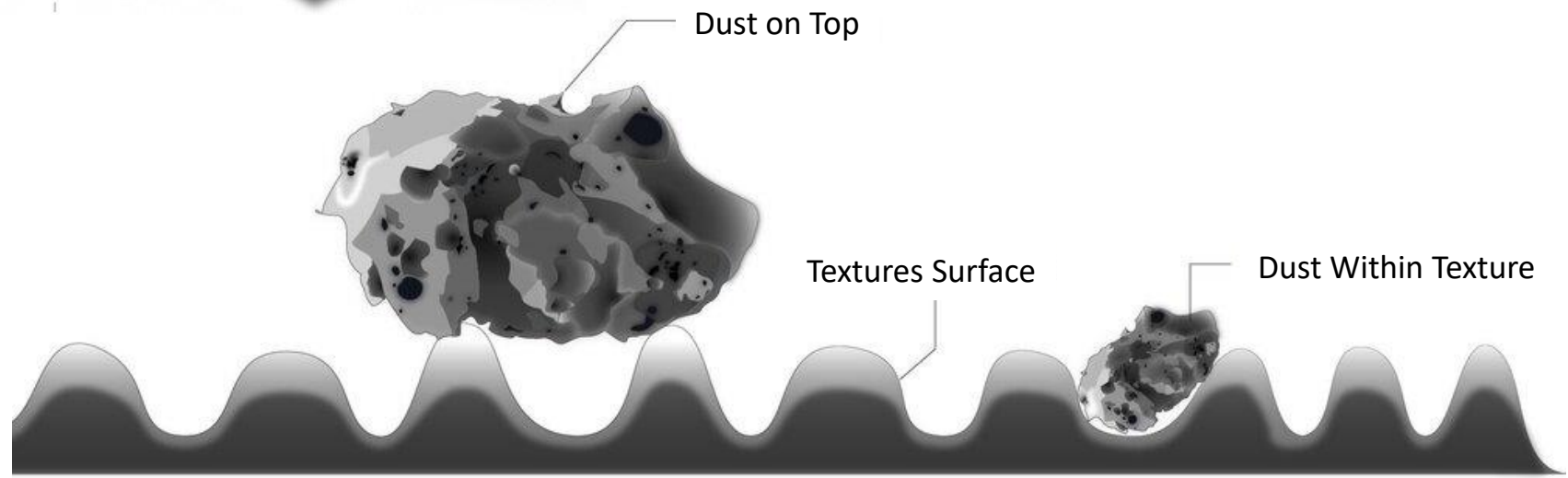
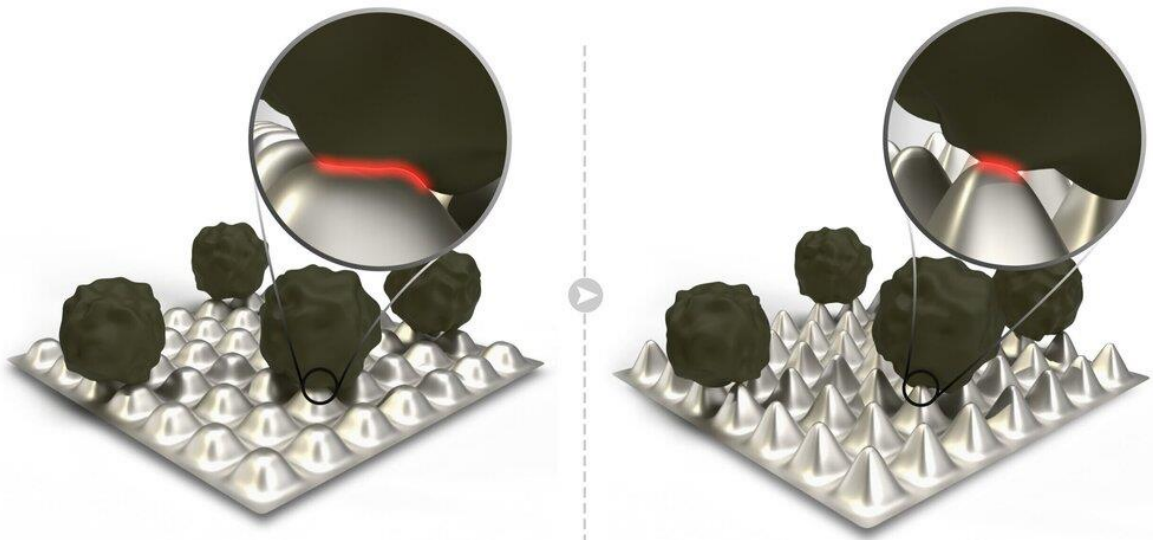
### Thermodynamic Response of SMA



Arrows indicate enthalpy-driven migration of **LOW** and **HIGH** surface energy components



# Surface Topographical Modification



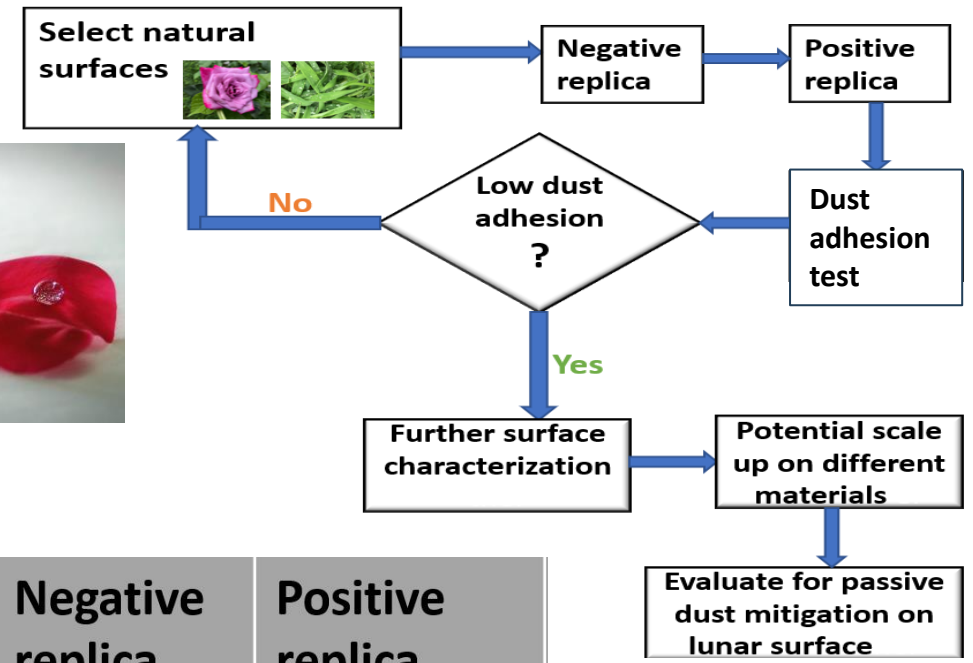
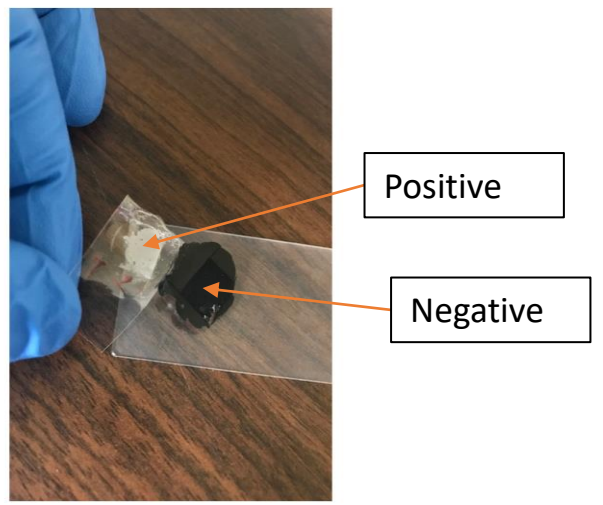
# Surface Topographical Modification

## Biomimetic Surfaces

Natural adhesion mitigating surfaces



Replication example: rose petal



Sample name	Original surface	Negative replica	Positive replica (ctrl)
Rose petal			



Das, Lopamudra; et al., "Extending Lunar Presence: Dust Adhesion Mitigation Materials and Surfaces to be Evaluated on the Lunar Surface," Acta Astronautica, 2024, 219, 532-541.

# Surface Topographical Modification

## Laser Ablation

### Laser Ablation Patterning

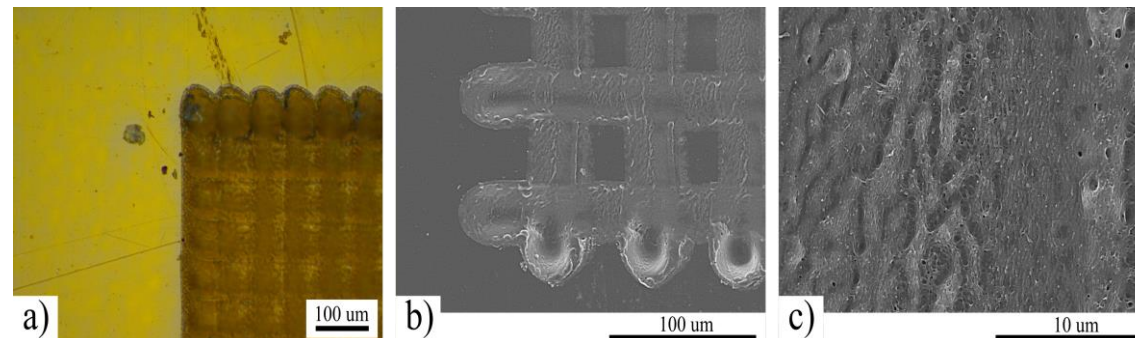
Pulsed Laser Beam

Volatilized / Ejected Material

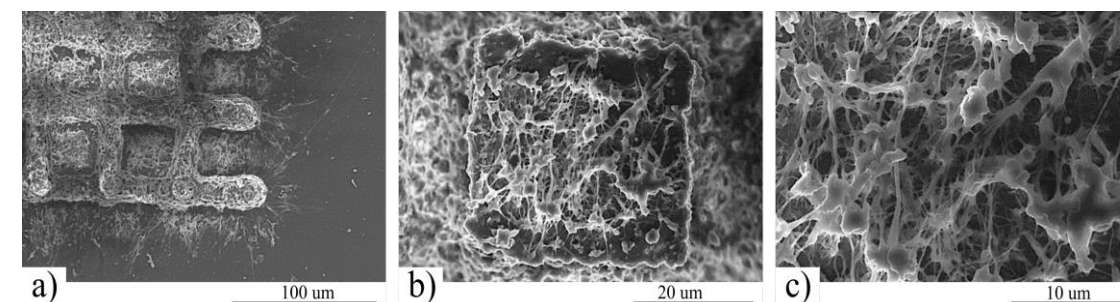
- Photochemical
- Photophysical
- Photothermal

Substrate

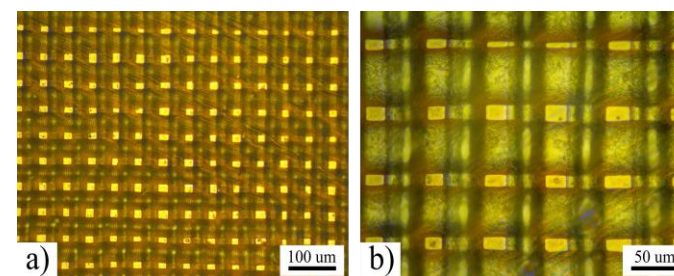
Polyimide



Fluorinated Ethylene Propylene (FEP)

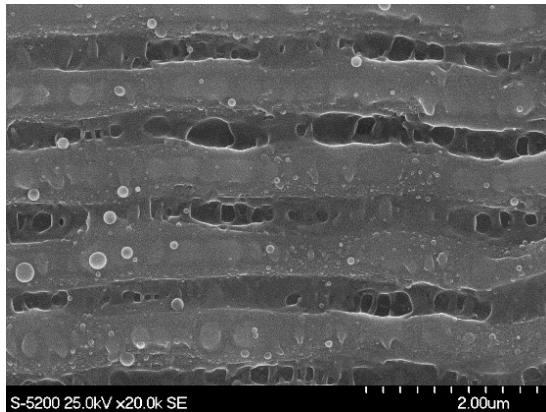


Epoxy

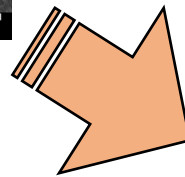


# Surface Topographical Modification

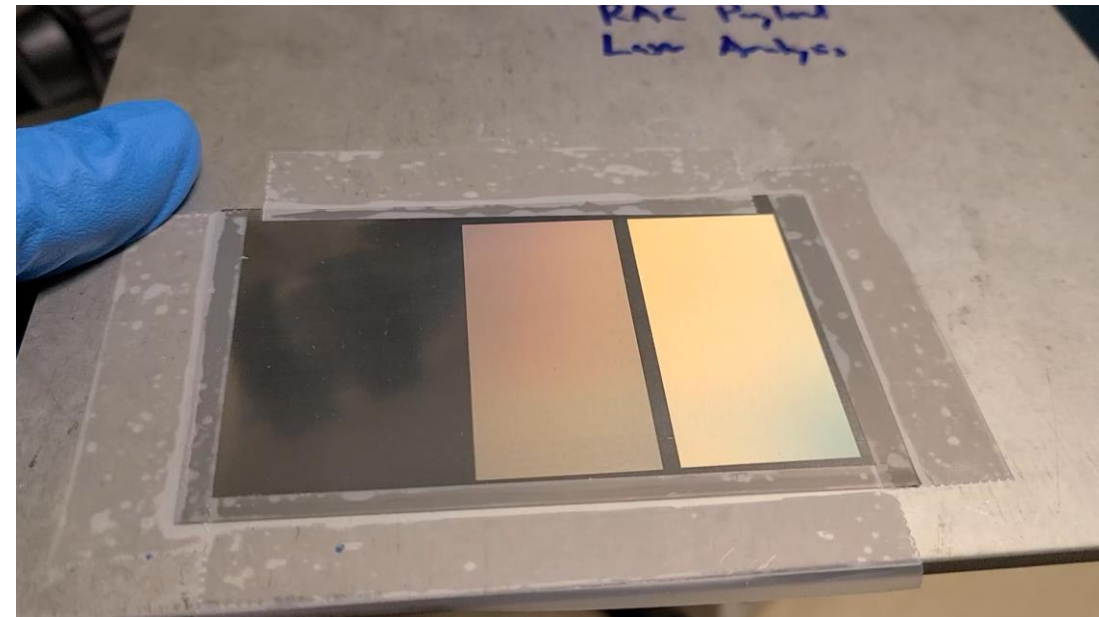
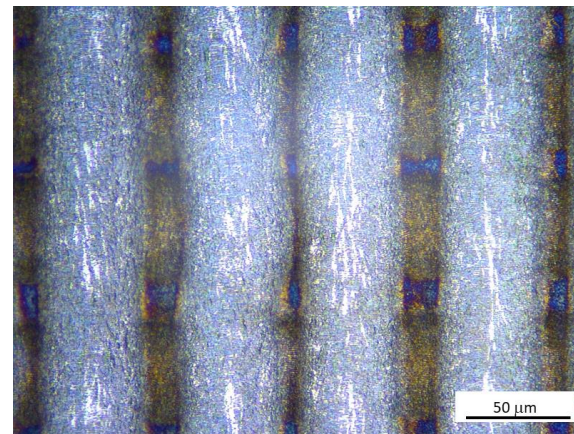
## Laser Ablation



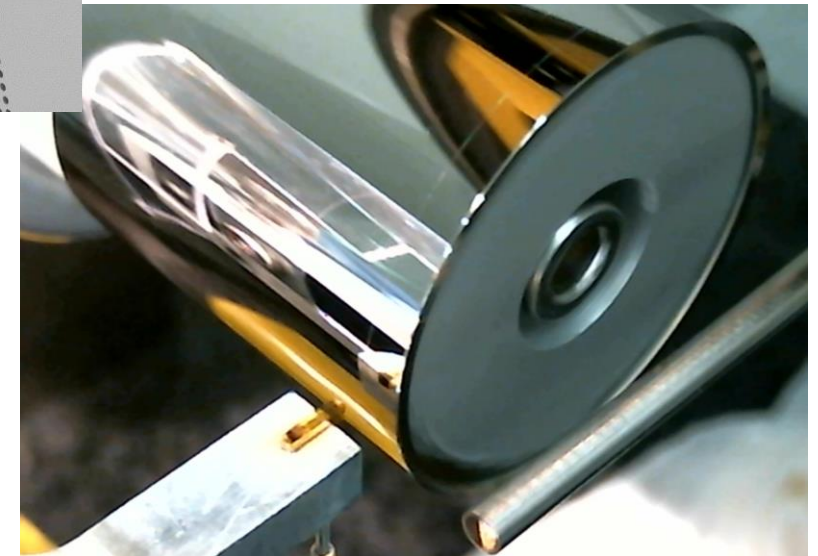
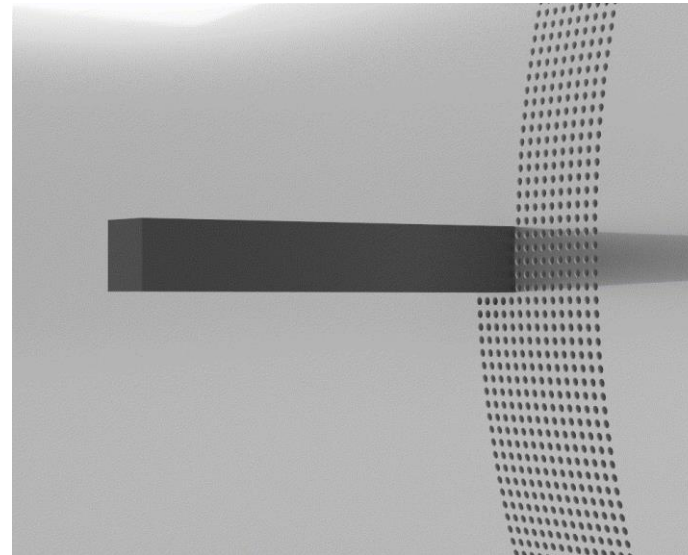
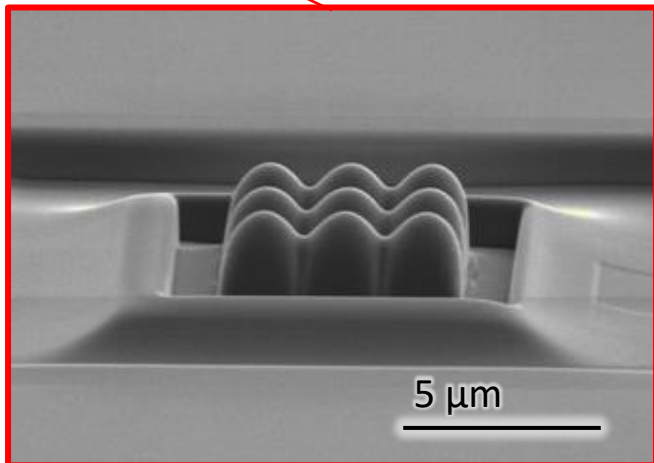
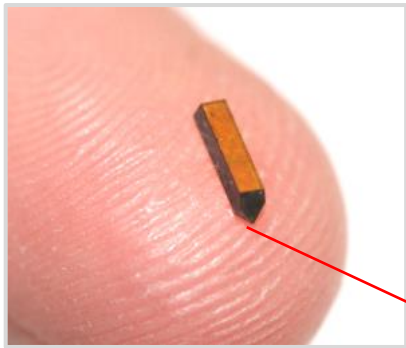
Nanometer-scaled Laser-Induced Period Surface Structure (LIPSS)



Micrometer-scaled Direct-write Laser Patterning

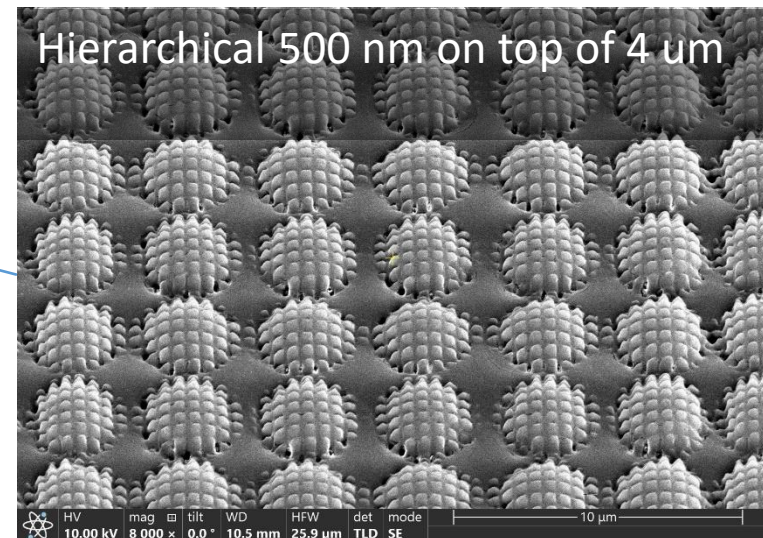
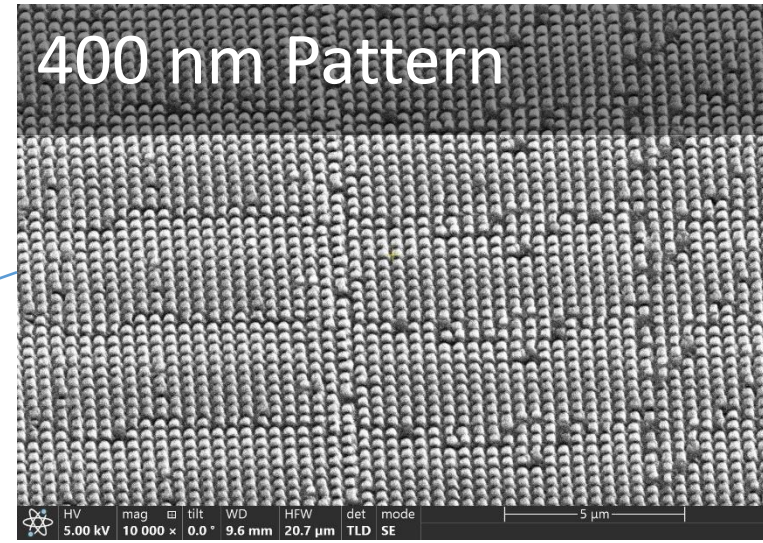
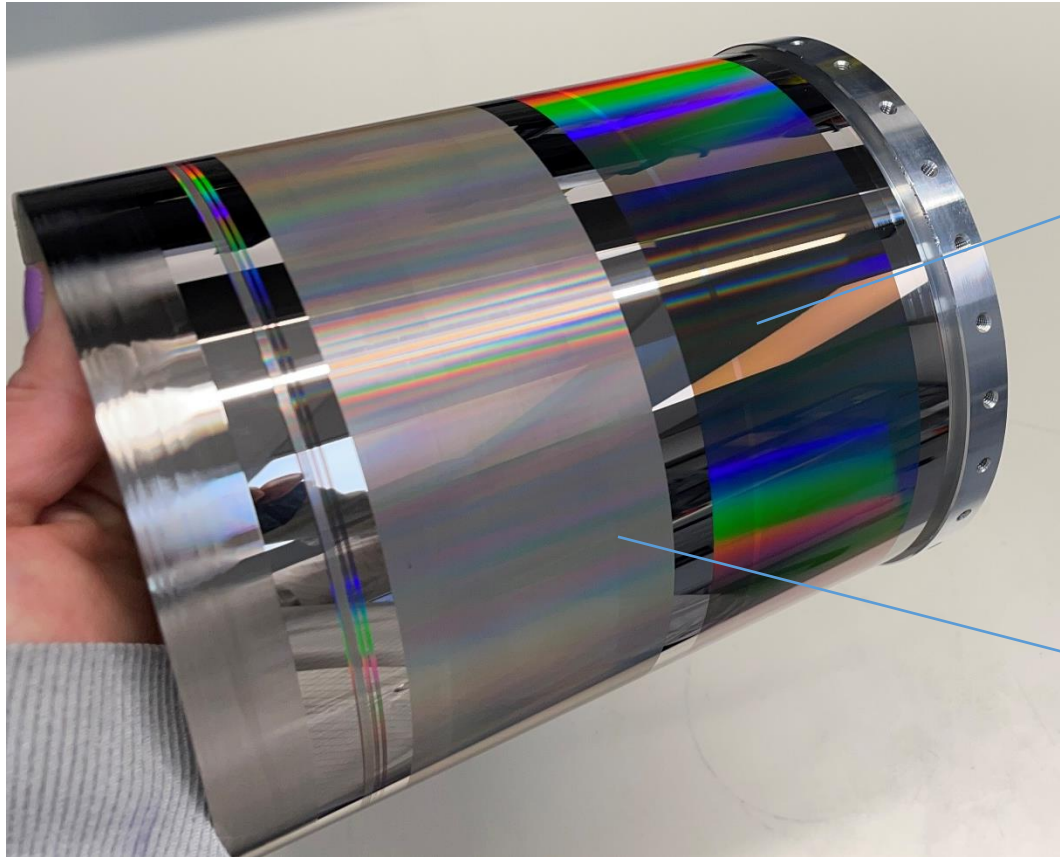
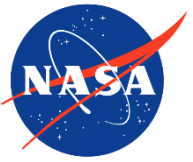


# Surface Topographical Modification Nanocoining



# Surface Topographical Modification

## Nanocoining

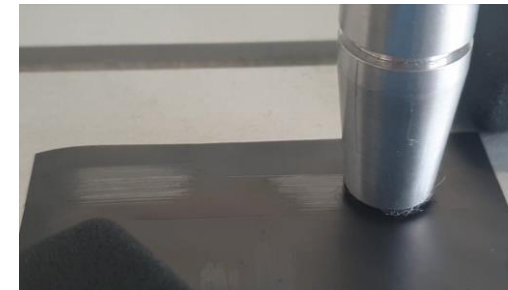
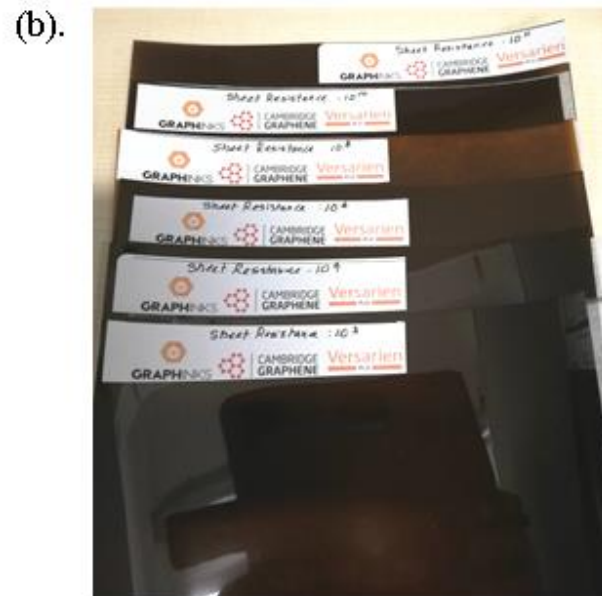


POC: Stephen Furst, Smart Material Solutions, [furst@smartmaterialsolution.com](mailto:furst@smartmaterialsolution.com); Chih-Hao Chang, University of Texas-Austin, [chichang@utexas.edu](mailto:chichang@utexas.edu)

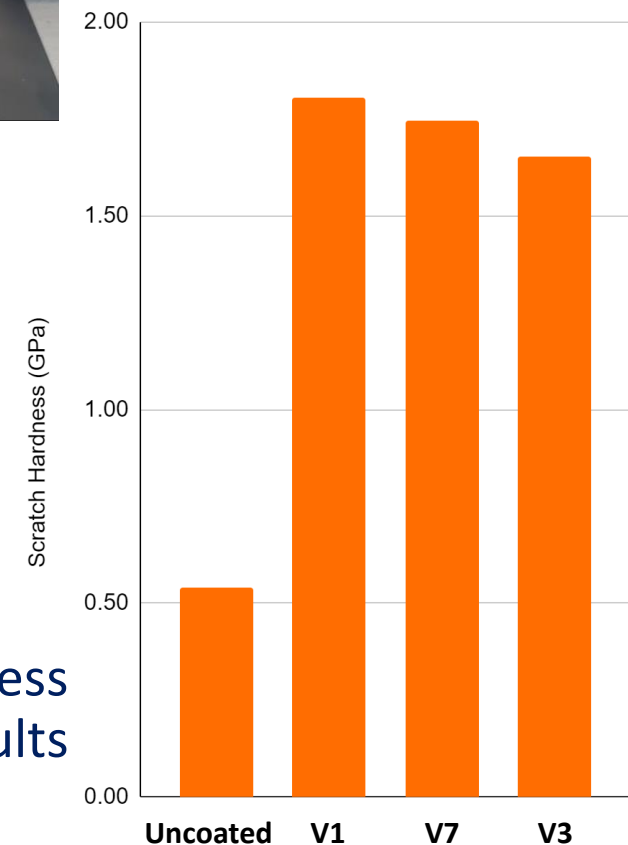
# Surface Conductivity Modifications

(a).

Graphene ink coated Kapton sheets	Surface Resistivity (Ohms/sq)
V1	0
V2	$10^3$
V3	$10^4$
V4	$10^6$
V5	$10^8$
V6	$10^{10}$
V7	$10^{11}$



Abrasion testing with steel wire mesh



Scratch hardness results

Decreasing sheet resistance

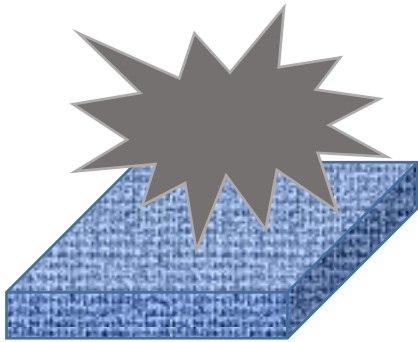


Gordon, Keith L.; et al., "Spray-deposition of Graphene/Polymer Thin Coatings on Polyimide Sheets for Lunar Dust Adhesion Mitigation," *Acta Astronautica*, 2024, 219, 449-458.

# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Generation of a Contaminated Surface

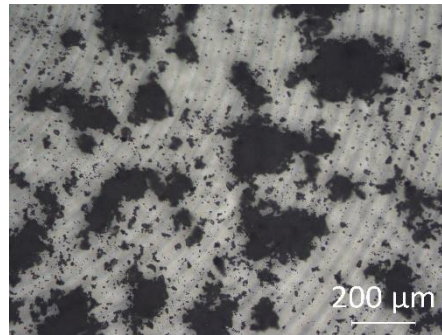
### Ideal Case: Isolated Particle



- Adhesion forces
  - Van der Waals
  - Electrostatic
  - Magnetic
  - Chemical
  - Mechanical

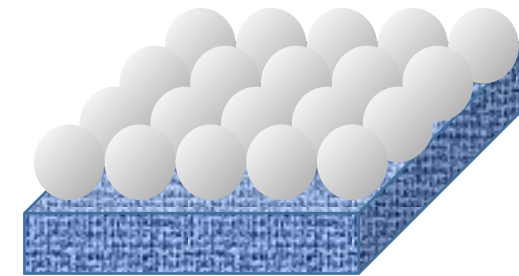
- Contributing forces
  - Gravitation (Earth)
  - Capillary (ambient atmosphere)

### Actual Case: Aggregated Particles



- Contributing forces
  - Cohesion force
  - Mechanical interlocking
  - Deformation

### Hypothetical Case: Particle Monolayer

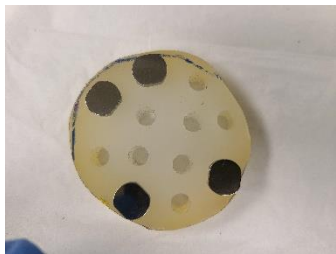


- Contributing forces
  - Cohesion force
  - Mechanical interlocking

# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Generation of a Contaminated Surface

### Step 1. Prepare Samples

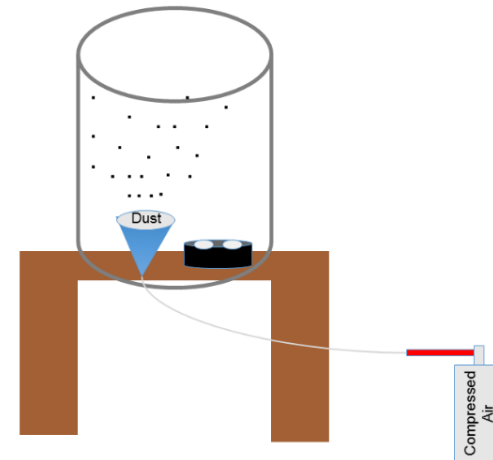


Sonic wand samples on sample holder



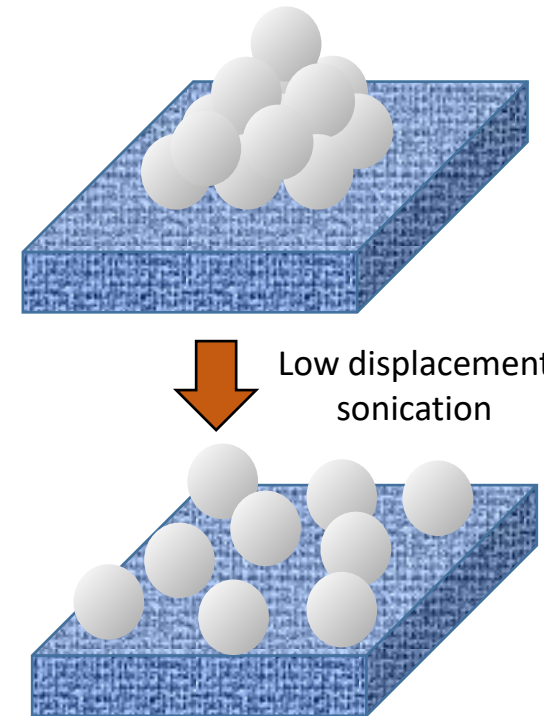
Sample deposition screen

### Step 2. Deposit Simulant



Aerosolization technique selected

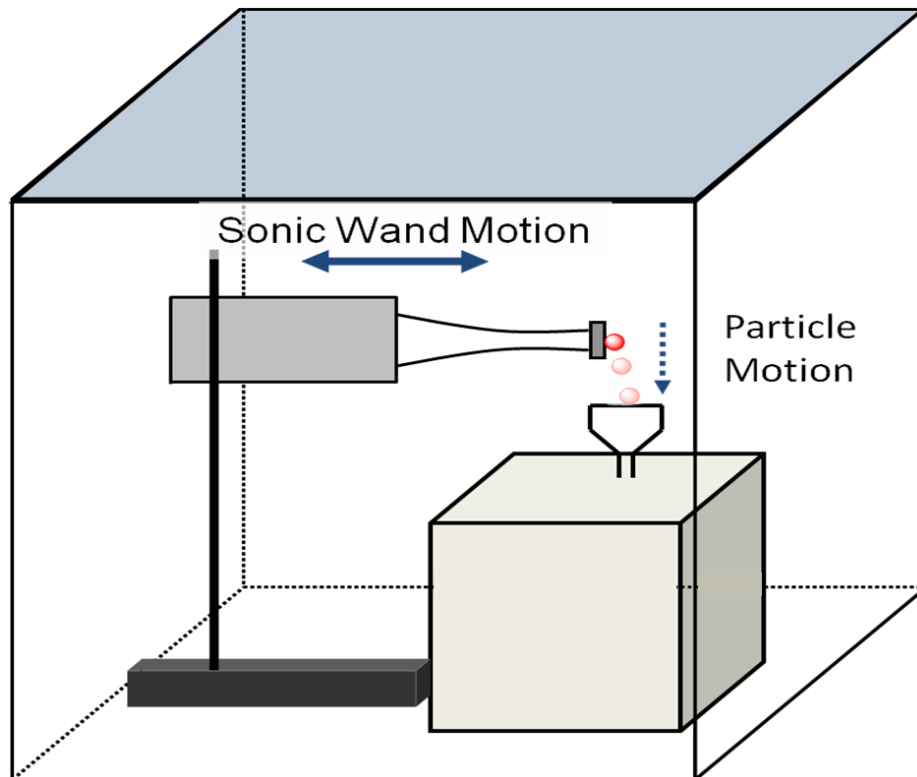
### Step 3. Resolve Cohesion



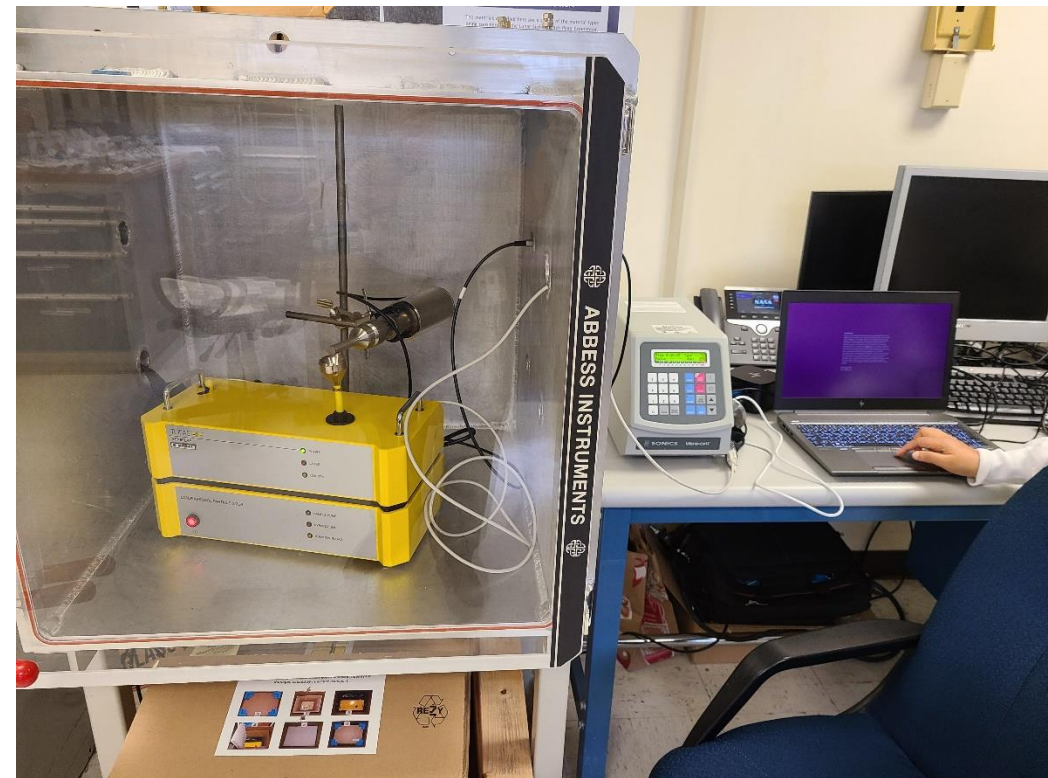
# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Sonication Instrument

### Schematic

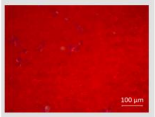
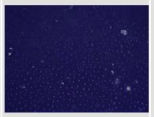
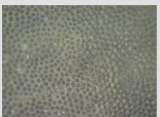
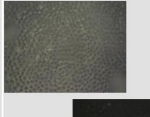

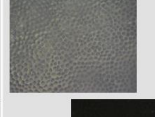

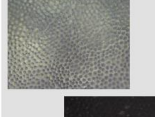

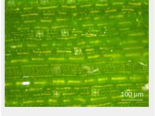
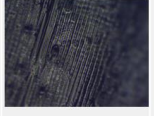
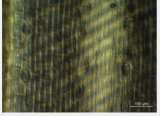
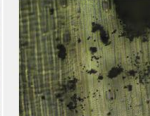

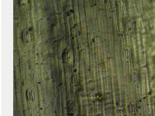
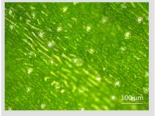


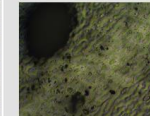

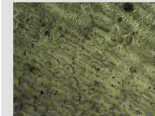


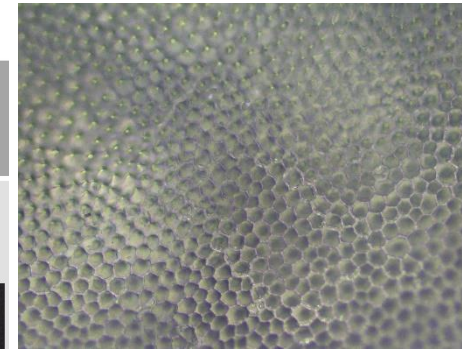
### Actual Instrument



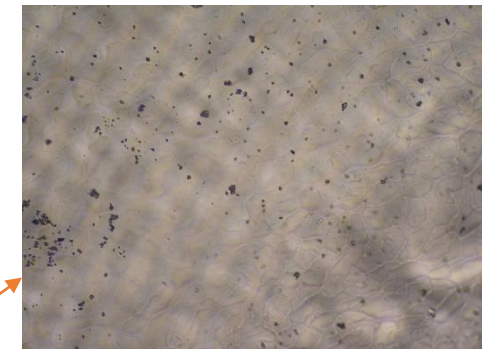


# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy Sonication Instrument-Biomimetic Surfaces

Sample no.	Sample name	Original surface	Negative replica	Positive replica (ctrl)	Dust	First run	Full run
1)	Rose petal				 	 	 
2)	Grass leaf						
3)	Water clover						

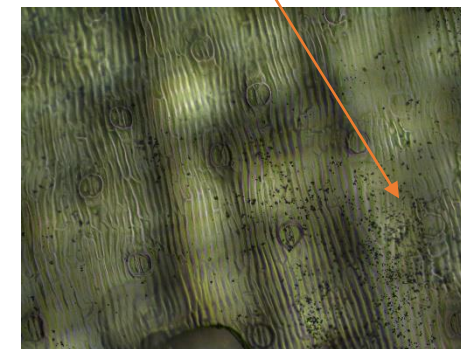


Rose Petal



Cabbage

Clusters of dust particles remain adhered



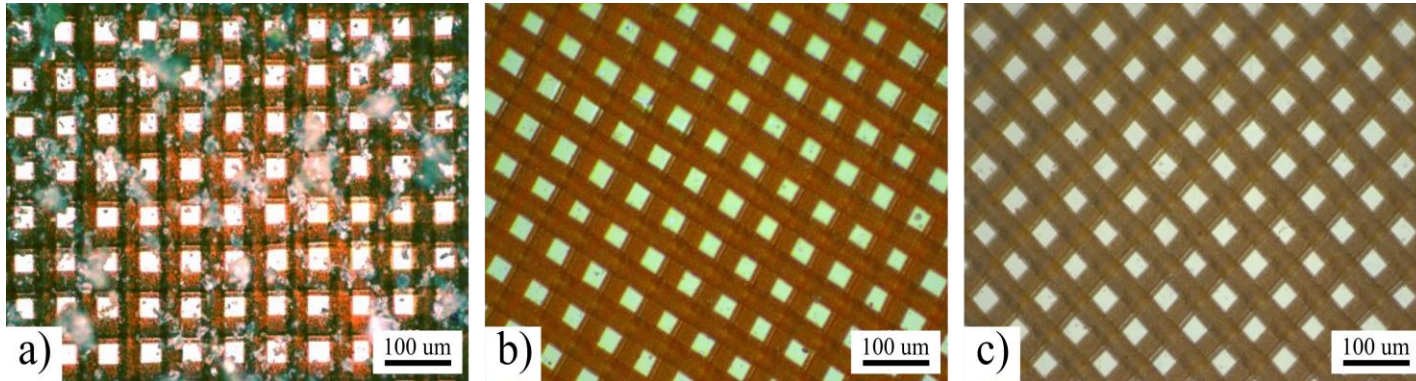
Banana Leaf

**Certain surface topographies exhibited better lunar simulant adhesion mitigation**



# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Sonication Instrument-Laser Patterning

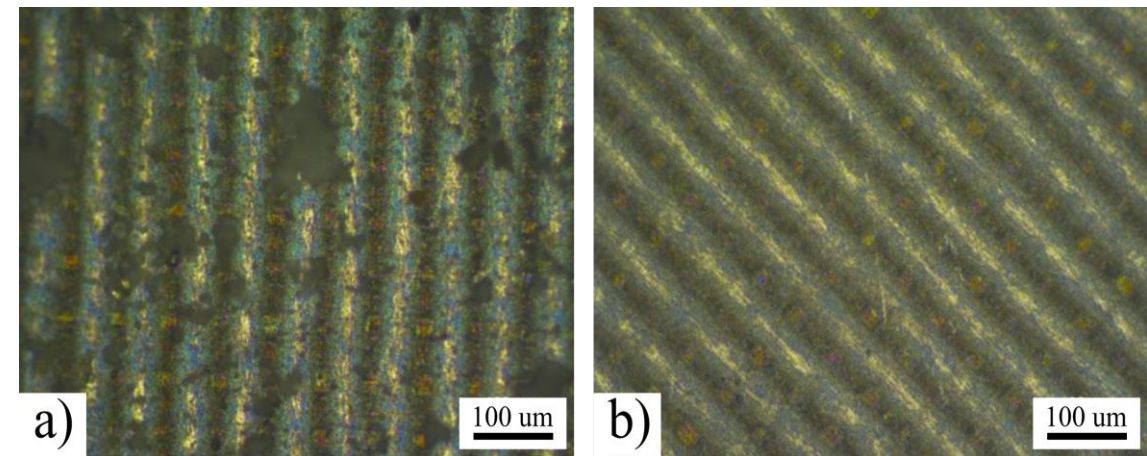


### Polymeric Surface

–Left to Right: Contaminated Surface,  
Cohesion Removal, Full Test

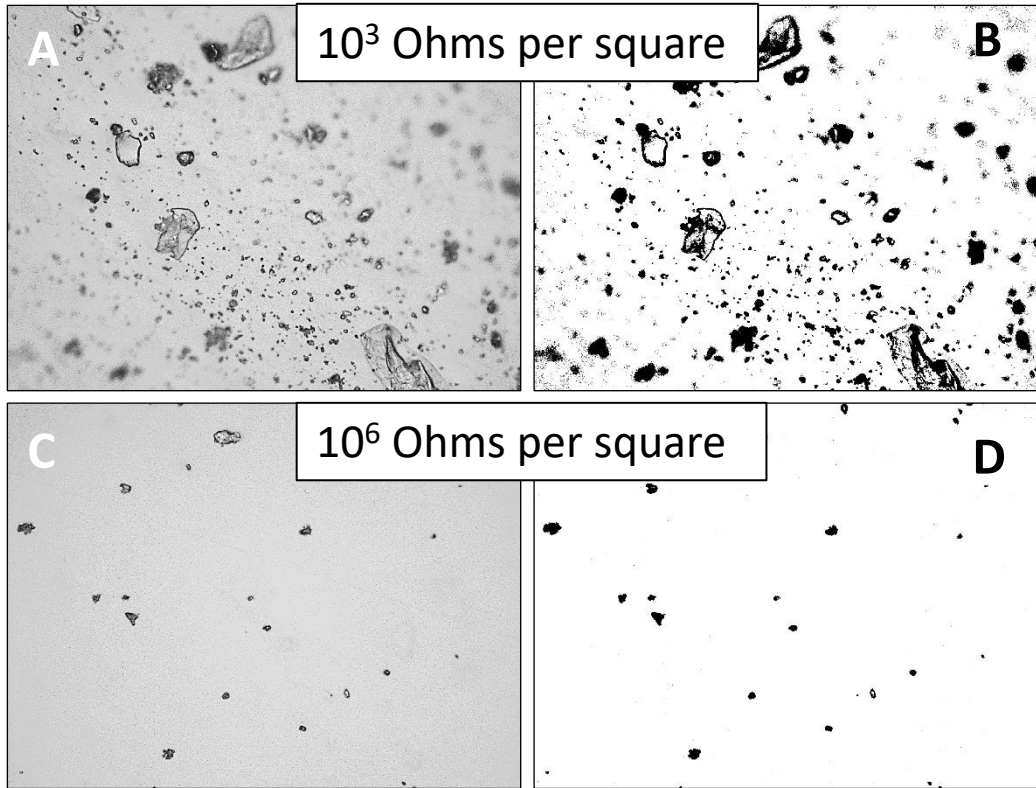
### Titanium Surface

–Left to Right: Contaminated Surface,  
Cohesion Removal

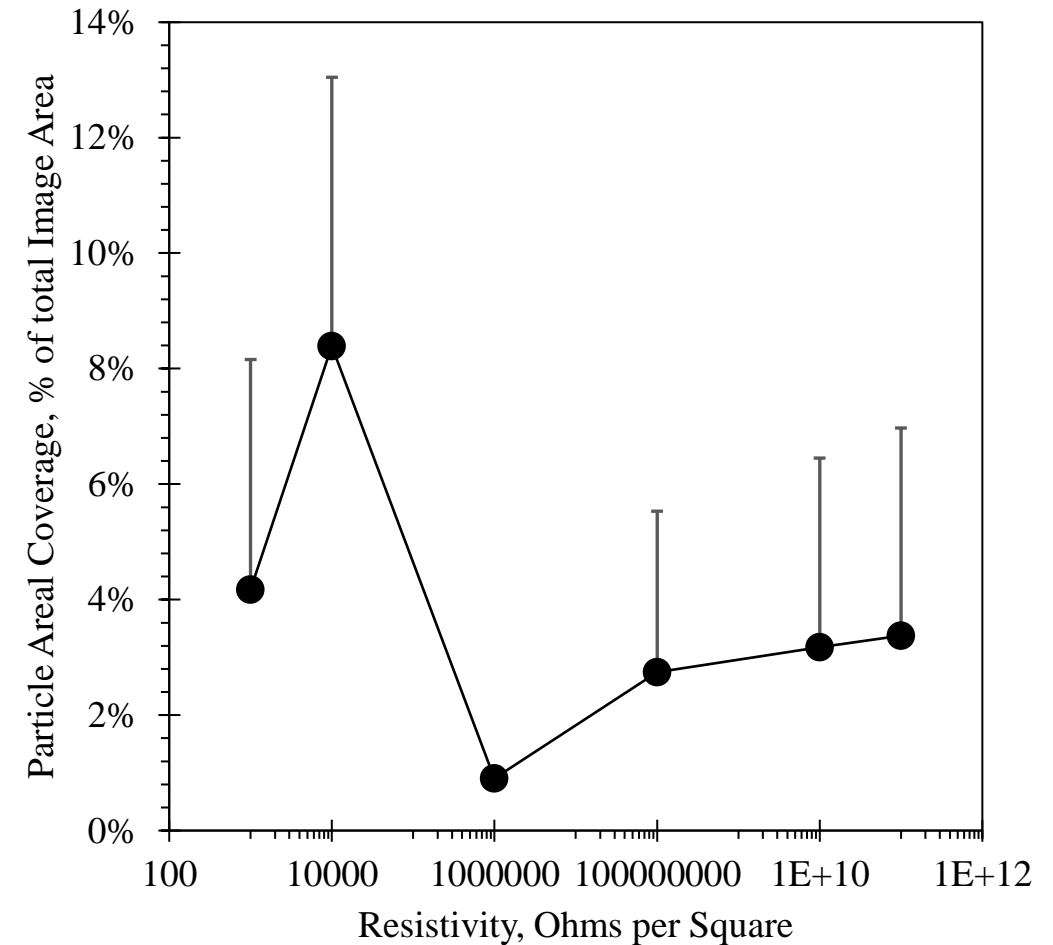


# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Sonication Instrument-Surface Conductivity



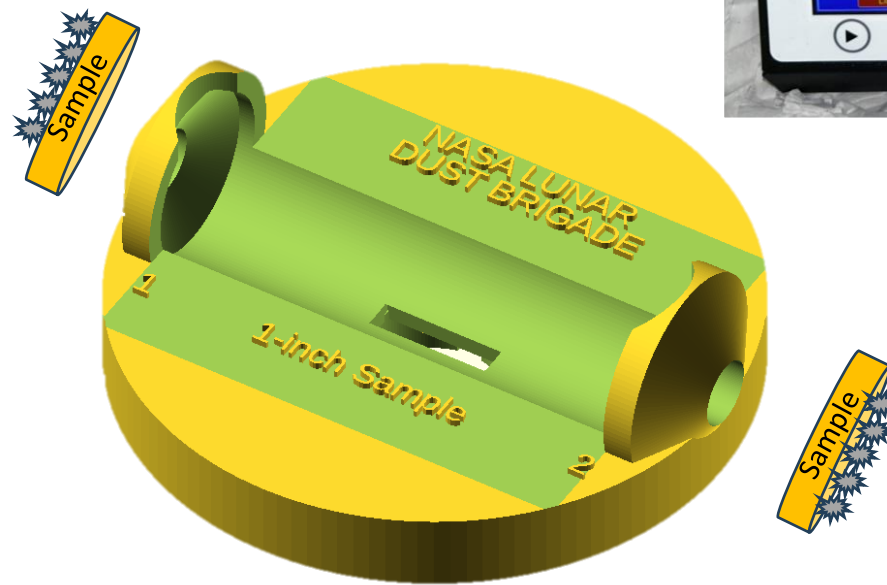
(A and C) Optical micrographs of simulant particles present on the transfer tape and (B and D) binary image for determination of simulant areal coverage

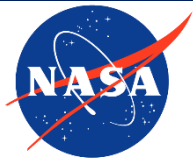


# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Centrifuge Instrument

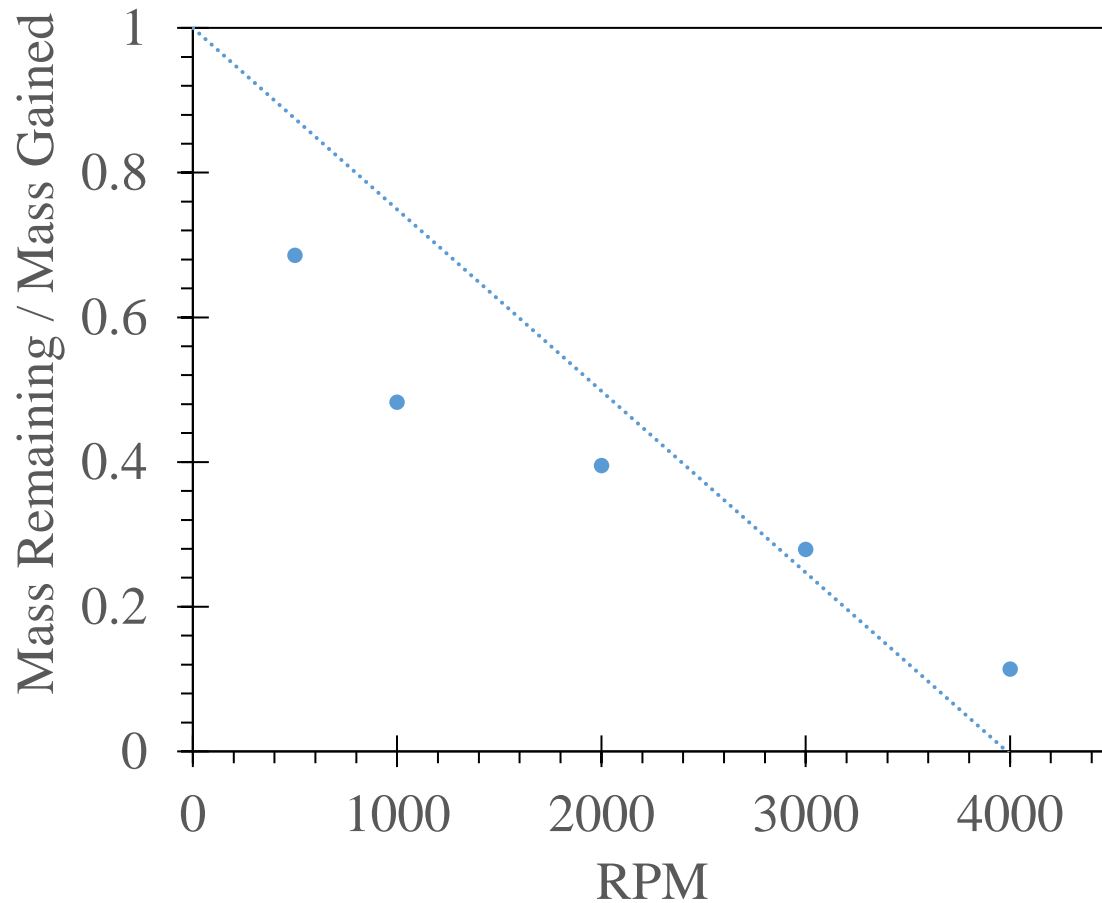
- ❖ Take mass of clean sample
- ❖ Deposit simulant and take mass
  - ❖ Aerosolize 500 mg of dust in chamber and allow it to fall onto sample
- ❖ Run the sample at a given speed (500-4000 RPM) in centrifuge and take mass
  - ❖ Custom 3D printed sample holder





# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Centrifuge Instrument-Calculating Clearance Velocity



Mass Remaining

Mass Gained

Hoekstra-Voigt Coefficient

Angular Velocity

$$\frac{m_1}{m_0} = -\mu\omega + 1$$

Zero Mass Remaining at rotations per minute (RPM) of...

$$m_1 = 0$$

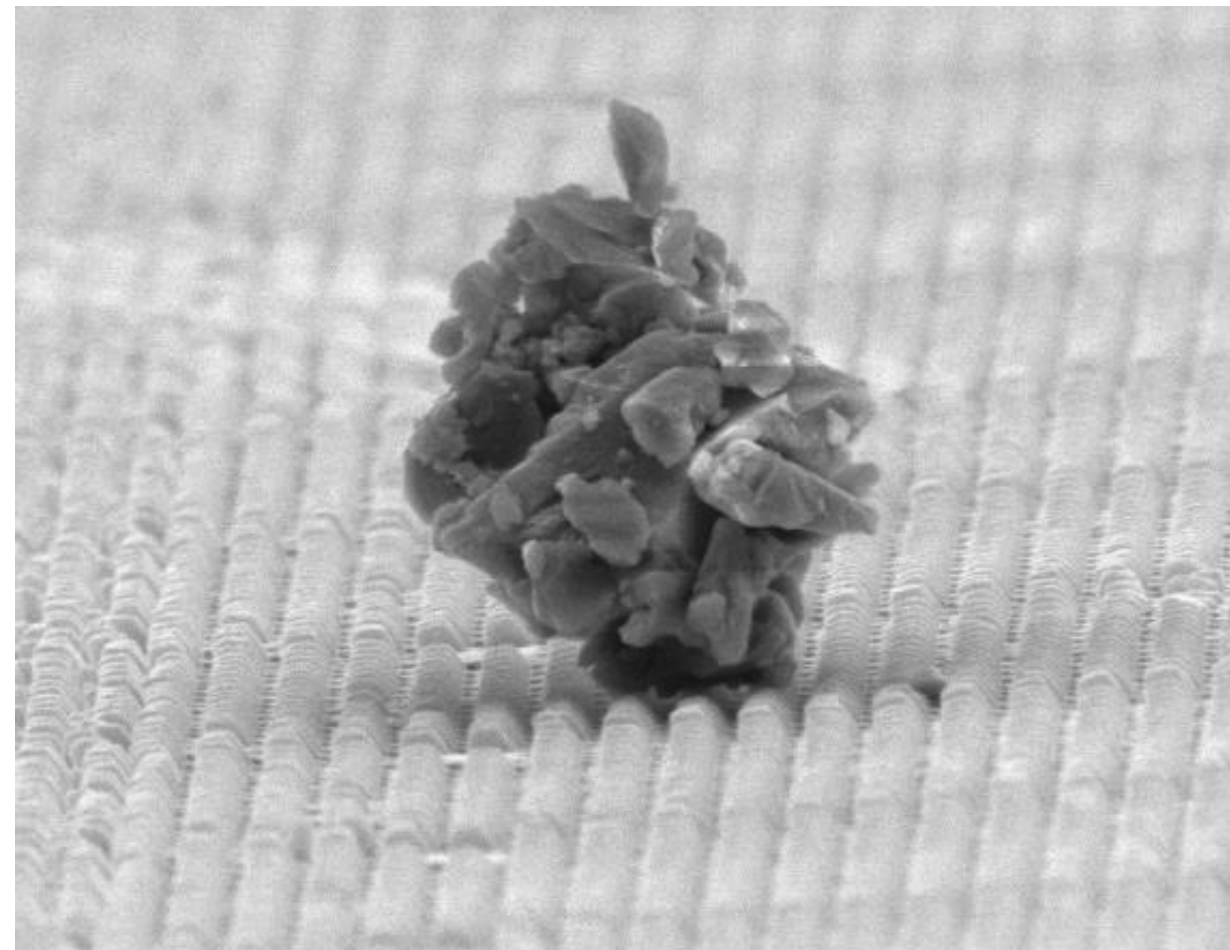
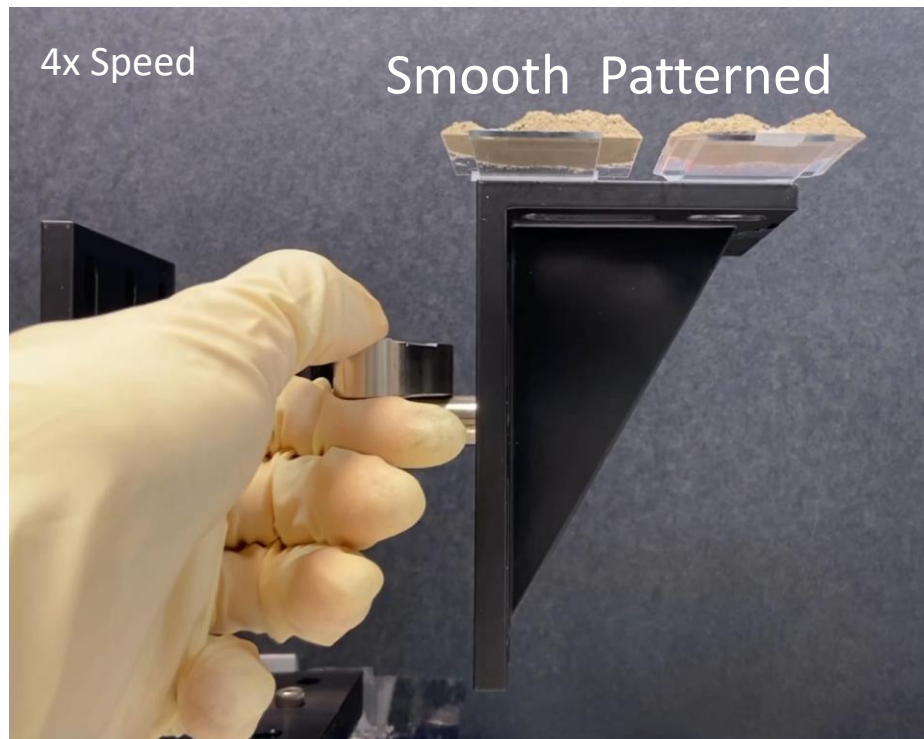
$$0 = -\mu\omega + 1$$

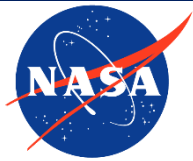
$$-1 = -\mu\omega$$

$$\frac{1}{\mu} = \omega$$

# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Tilt Testing





# Evaluation off Planet

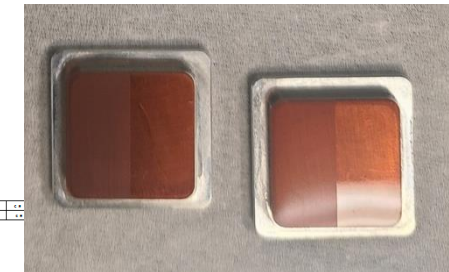
## Materials International Space Station Experiment (MISSE) Samples

Copper Zirconium	Bulk Metallic Glass	Considered for RAC Payload
Boron Carbide (B4C)	Ceramic	Considered for RAC Payload
Chrome Carbide	Ceramic	LO-DuSST, high wear surface
Chromium Oxide	Ceramic	LO-DuSST, high wear surface
Laser Patterned Kapton	Polymer	On RAC Payload
Laser Patterned FEP	Polymer	On RAC Payload
Laser Patterned Low Creep/Relaxation Polymer	Polymer	Considered for RAC Payload
Laser Patterned Low Creep/Relaxation Composite	Polymer	On RAC Payload (Secondary)

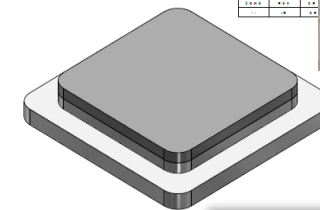
## Regolith Adhesion Characterization (RAC) Payload



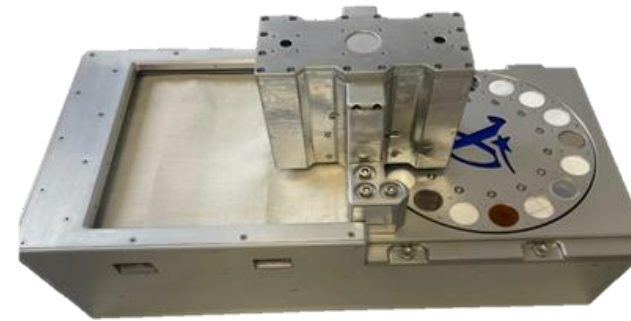
## Honeybee Robotics PlanetVac



Coupon Schematic



Launched on July 15, 2022 (SpaceX CRS-25)  
Returned to Earth on April 15, 2023 (CRS-27)



Images credit: Aegis Aerospace

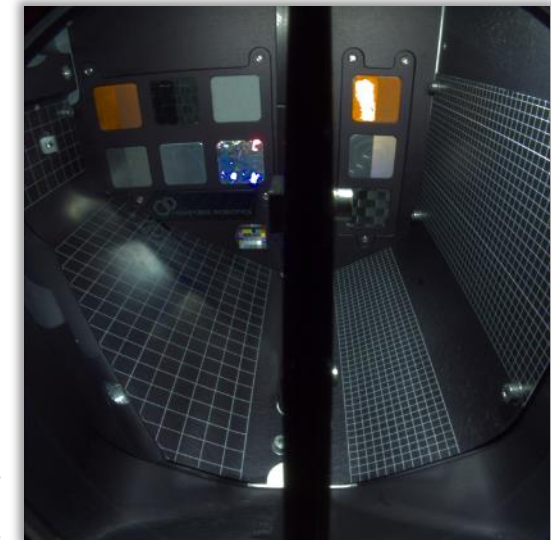
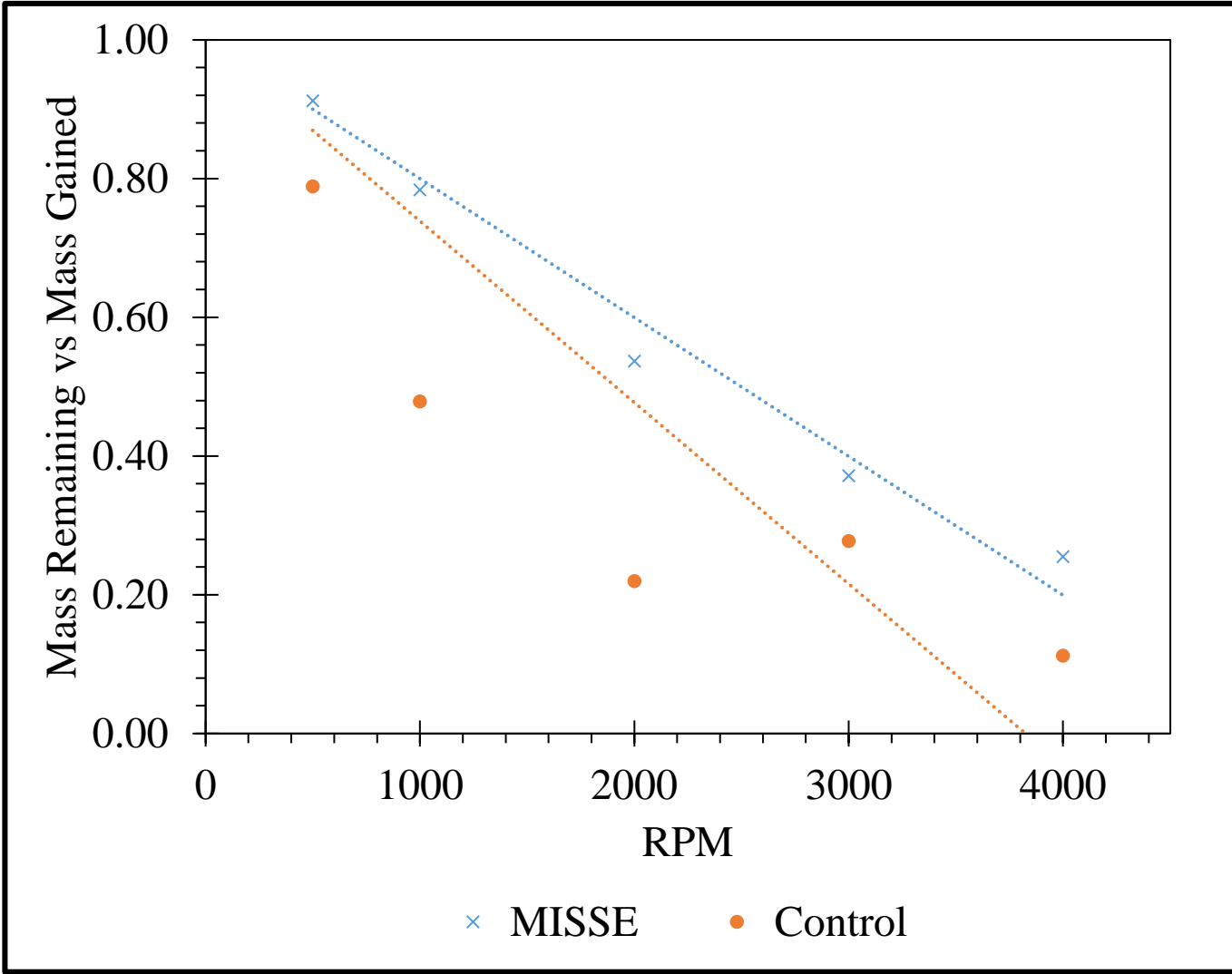
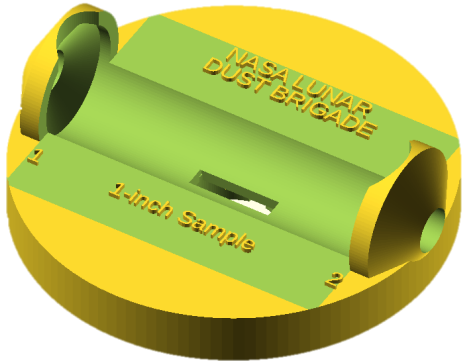


Image credit: NASA

Both payloads launched on SpaceX Falcon 9 - Firefly Blue Ghost lander, on January 15, 2025.  
**Landing on the Moon on March 2, 2025!**



# Results: MISSE-16



Zero Mass Remaining:  
3825.26 RPM

Zero Mass Remaining:  
4996.25 RPM

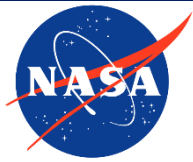




# Conclusions

- ❖ Shortfalls Assessment ... why does this work need to continue
- ❖ There is great work going on across the agency and supported by the agency to make significant inroads to mitigate mission impact as a result of lunar dust contamination
- ❖ An array of materials solutions will be required to address the breadth of the need for lunar dust adhesion mitigation
- ❖ Evaluation of candidate surfaces is complex and will not be able to completely represent the lunar surface unless it is conducted on the lunar surface





# Acknowledgements

## ❖ NASA Langley Research Center

- ❖ Valerie Wiesner, Lopamudra Das, Keith Gordon, Glen King, Jonathan Hernandez, Jackson Hoekstra, Eric Voigt, John Hopkins, Michael Oliver, Wade Hall, John Lowe, John W. Connell (retired)

## ❖ NASA Glenn Research Center

- ❖ Sharon Miller, Meghan Bush

## ❖ NASA Johnson Space Center

- ❖ Josh Litofsky

## ❖ NASA Marshall Space Flight Center

- ❖ Miria Finckenor

## ❖ NASA Game Changing Development (GCD) and NASA Lunar Surface Innovation Initiative (LSII)

- ❖ Niki WerkHeiser, Michael Johansen, Erica Montbach, Jennifer Fothergill, Kristen John, Cameron Hartman

## ❖ Smart Material Solutions/ UT Austin

- ❖ Dr. Stephen Furst, Dr. Nicky Cates, Robin McDonald, Sidney Cox, Lauren Micklow, Andrew Tunell, and Chih-Hao Chang





# Back Up

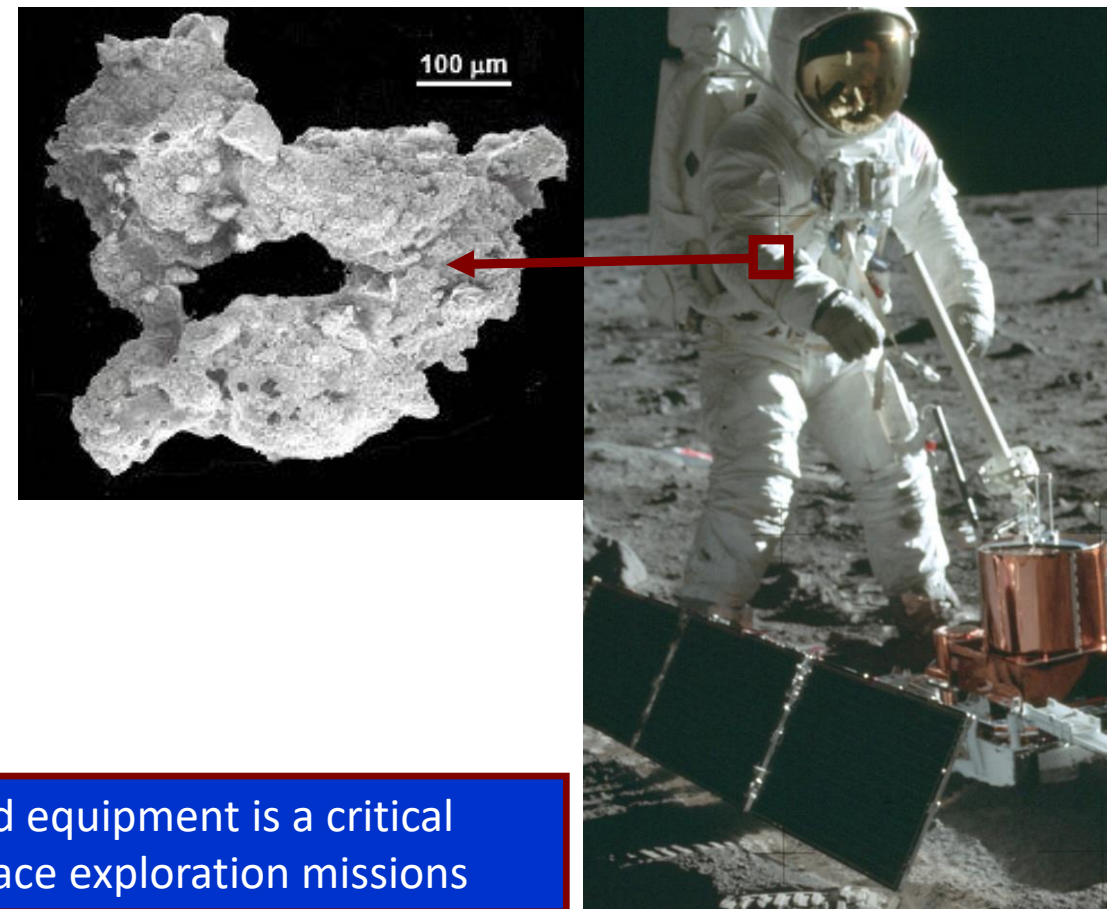


# Lunar Dust Composition and Characteristics



**Composition (by wt.):** 50% SiO<sub>2</sub>, 15% Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, 10% CaO, 10% MgO, 5% TiO<sub>2</sub> and 5-15% Fe

- Composition varies depending on location [1]
  - Lesser amounts of sodium, potassium, chromium and zirconium
  - Trace amounts of virtually all elements from parts per billion (ppb) to parts per million (ppm) level
  - Mixture of crystalline and amorphous material
- Particle properties [2]
  - Particle size varies from nm to mm; range of primary concern 1 to 100 μm-sized particles
  - Nominal density ~1.5 g/cm<sup>3</sup>
  - Irregular, jagged morphology
  - Electrically charged



Preventing dust adhesion and wear to spacesuits and equipment is a critical component of safety and success of future lunar surface exploration missions

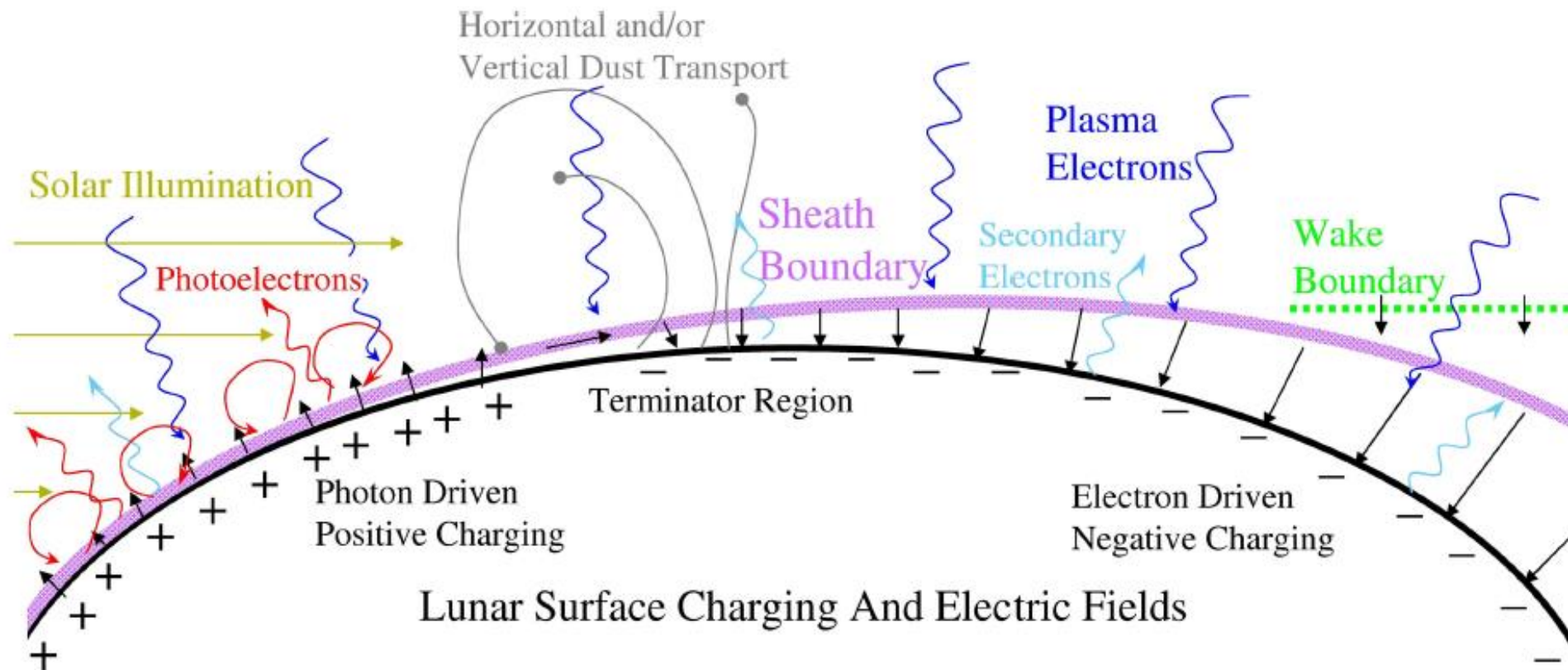


Image Credits Left: NASA Right: NASA AS11-40-5951

[1] D.J. Loftus, et al., "The Chemical Reactivity of Lunar Dust Relevant to Human Exploration of the Moon," *Planetary Science Division Decadal Survey white paper* (2020).

[2] C. Meyer, NASA Lunar Petrographic Thin Section Set (2003).

# Lunar Surface Electrostatic Environment



Lunar Surface Charging And Electric Fields

# What Else Can Stir up Dust?

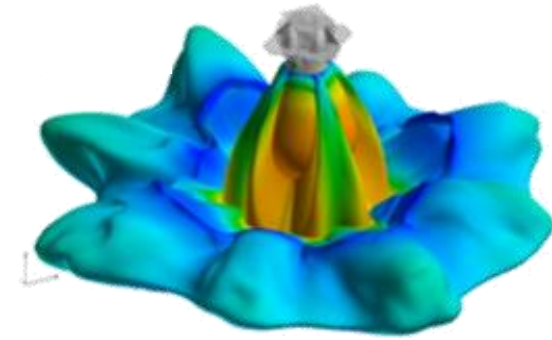
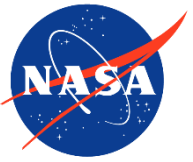
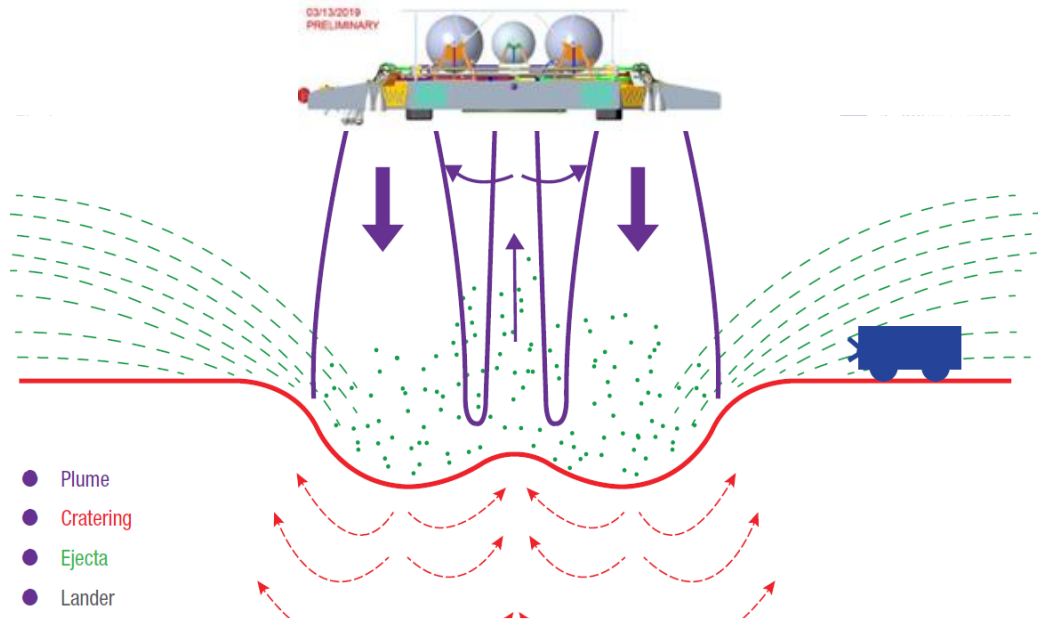
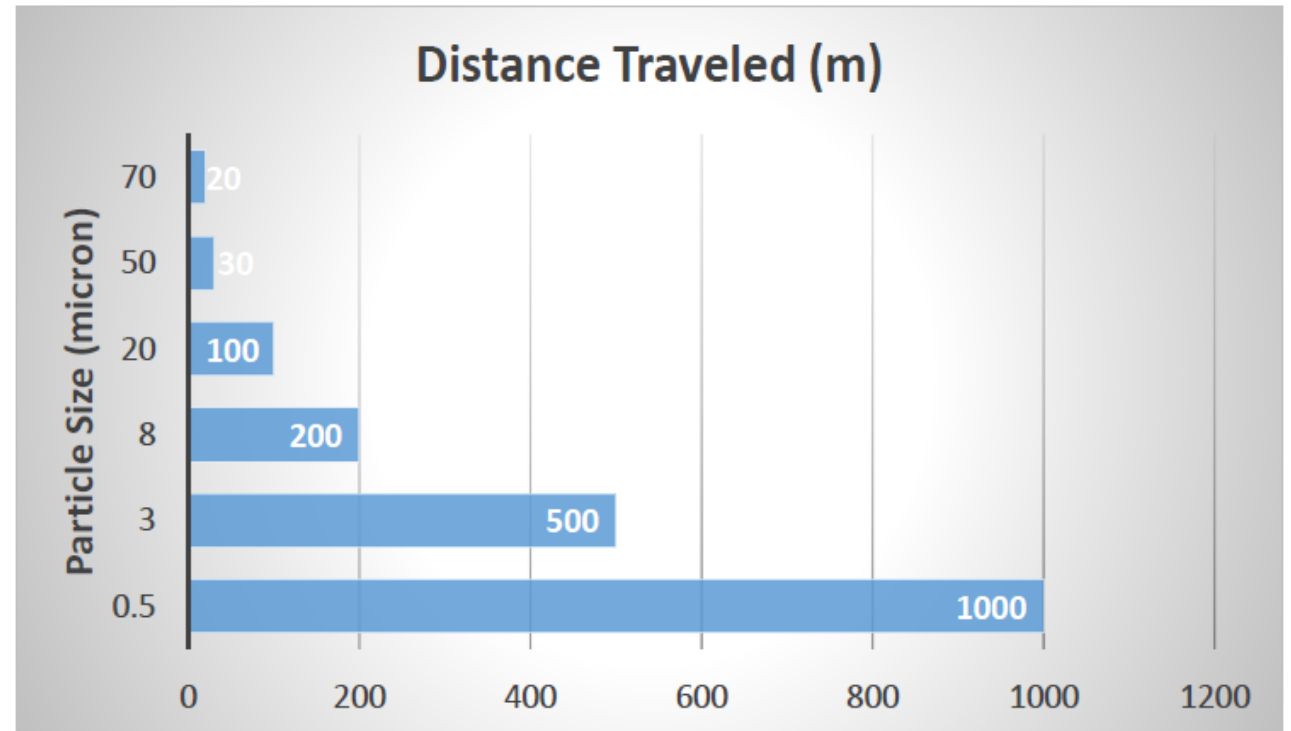


Image Credit: NASA MSFC/Peter Liever

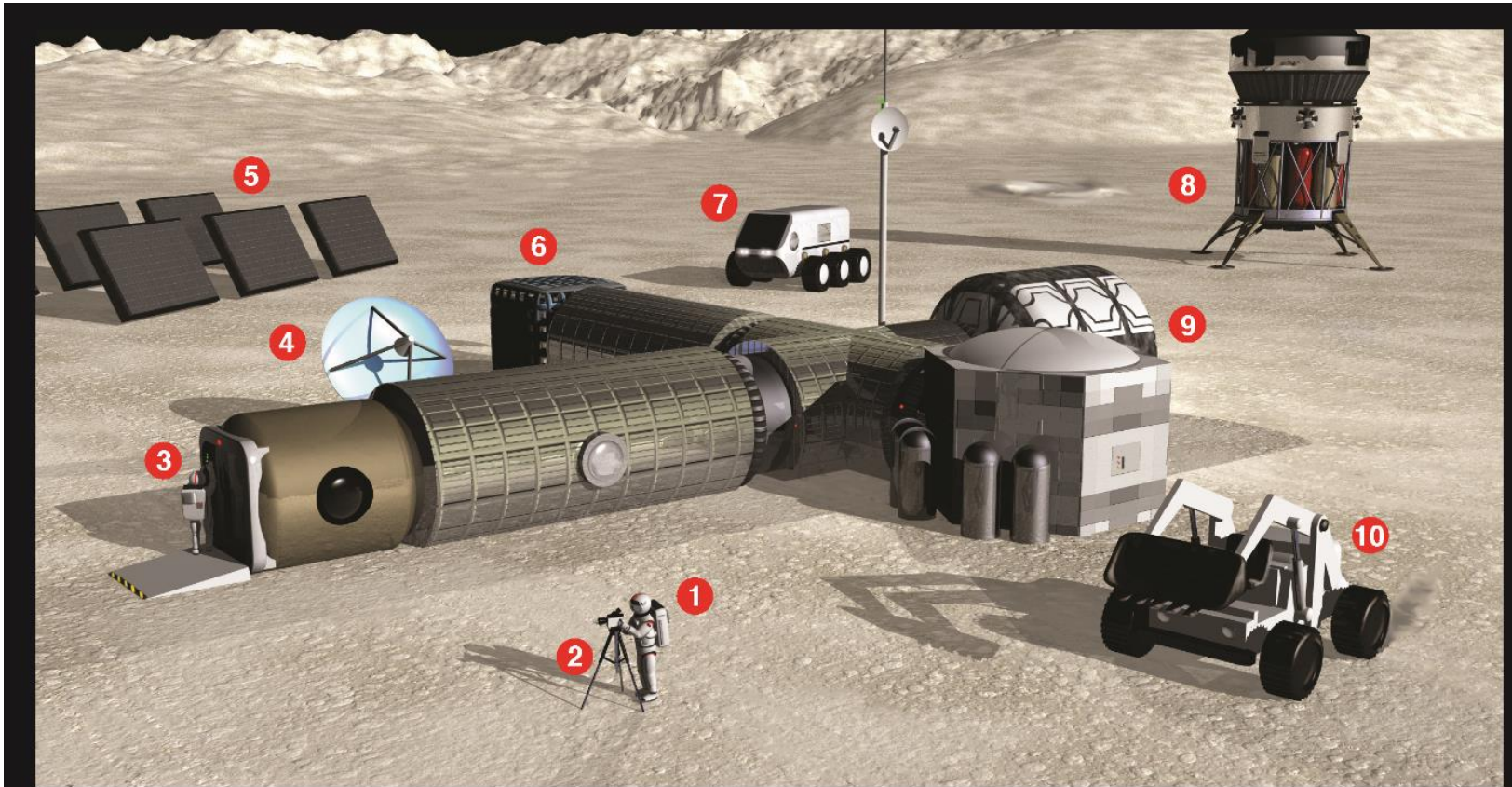


Within 50 m of landing site, particle velocity estimates range from 300 m/s – 2000 m/s

Image credit: Michelle Munk, NASA LaRC



# Where will Lunar Dust Pose a Challenge?

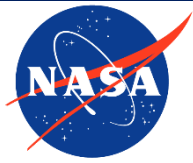


## Lunar Dust Adhesion Mitigation Opportunities and Needs

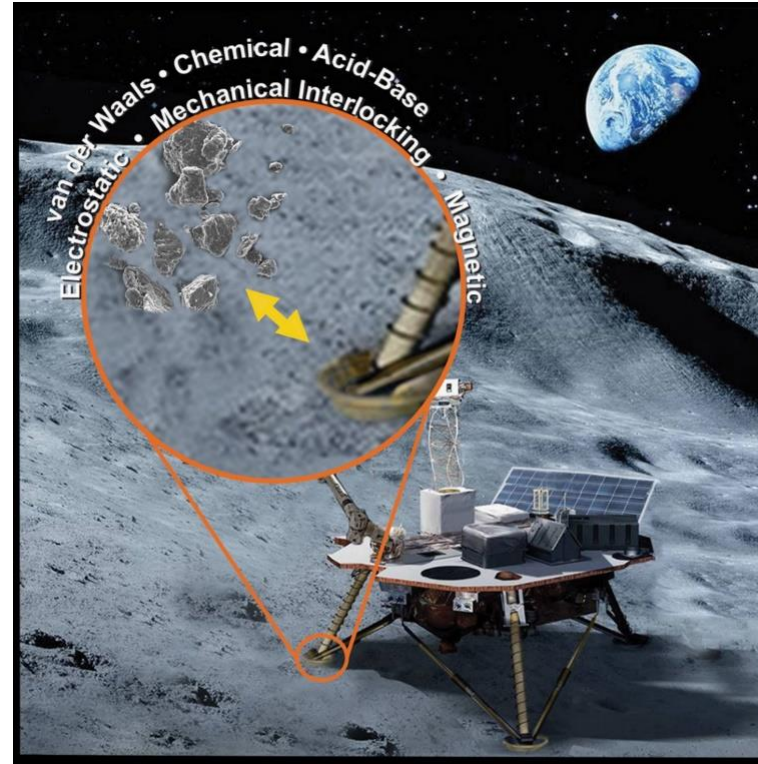
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1 Environment suits</b> Visors, joints, controls              | <b>6 Power distribution equipment</b> Connectors, radiators                        |
| <b>2 Sensing / optical equipment</b> Lenses, sensors, connectors | <b>7 Lunar rovers</b> Gears, bearings, shafts, screens, radiators, instrumentation |
| <b>3 Airlocks</b> Door seals, interior surfaces, controls        | <b>8 Lander / Landing site</b> Hatches, instrumentation, fueling equipment         |
| <b>4 Communications equipment</b> Dish surfaces, sensors         | <b>9 Habitat</b> Joints / seals / interlocks                                       |
| <b>5 Solar arrays</b> Panel surfaces                             | <b>10 Excavating equipment</b> Bearings, controls, gears                           |



# Material Design and Selection for Lunar Applications



Dust Mitigation-  
Must Remove



Dust Management-  
Must Tolerate



❖ Goal: Engage aspects of lunar dust from mitigation to management



# Surface Chemical Modifications

## Work Function Matched Surfaces

### Ground Testing:

- Simulant (JSC-1AF, LHT-1...) sifted onto surfaces in vacuum ( $<1e-6$  Torr) after bakeout at 200 °C for several hours
- Non-adhering simulant removed by nitrogen jet



### Lunar Dust Adhesion Belljar



Sample pair under nitrogen jets after dusting, prior to nitrogen jet



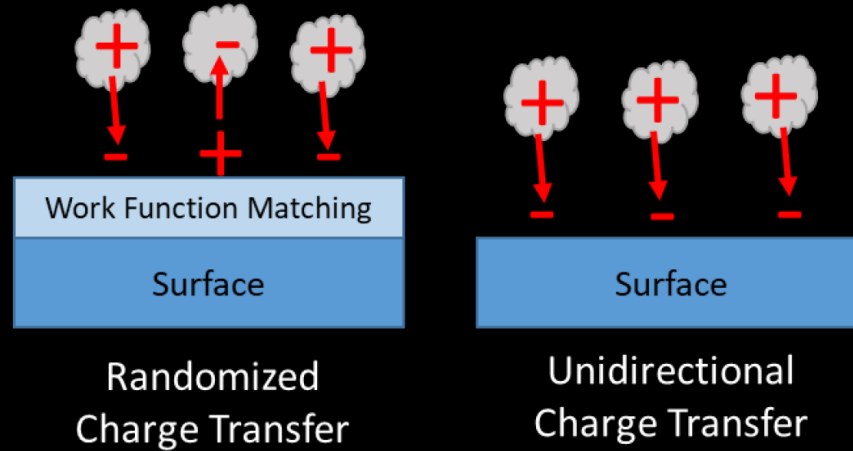
Sample pair after exposure to nitrogen jet

\*Simulants: JSC-1AF, fine portion of JSC simulant; LHT-1, lunar highland terrain simulant

# Surface Chemical Modifications

## Work Function Matched Surfaces

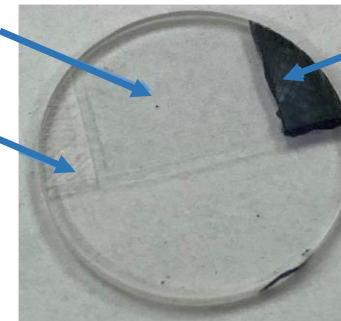
### Work Function Matching Coatings for Passive Dust Mitigation



Coating Generation Facility

Work Function Matched Coating, 1000 Å

Scribed, Coated Surface



Scribed, Coated Surface with Black Ink



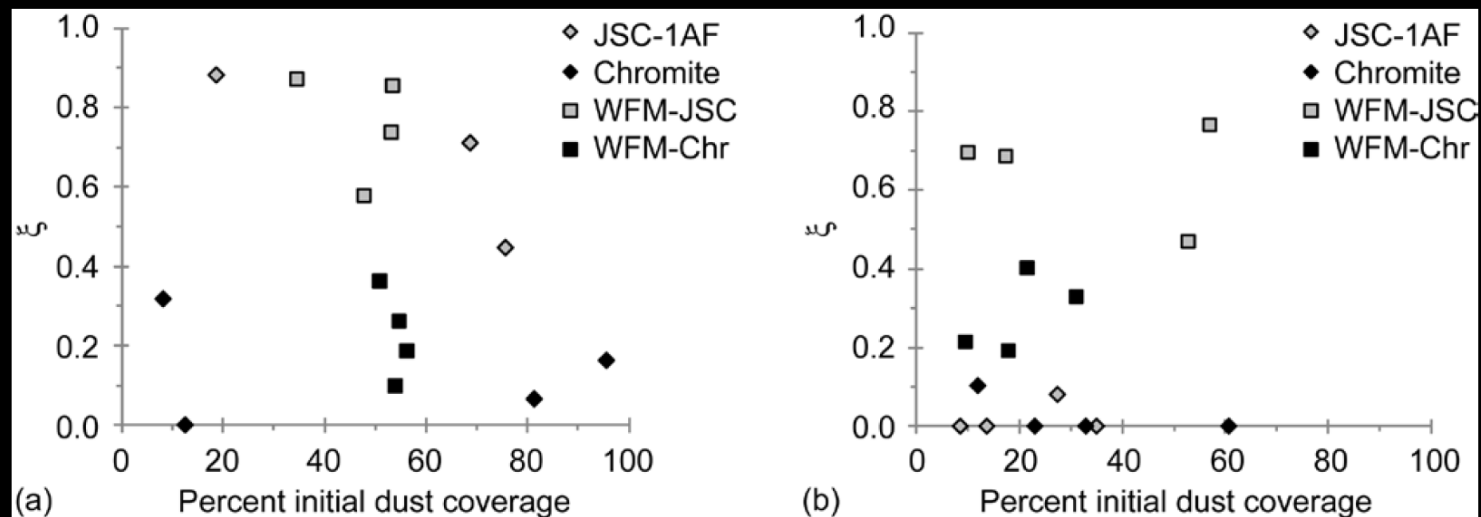
POC: Sharon Miller, NASA Glenn Research Center, [Sharon.k.miller@nasa.gov](mailto:Sharon.k.miller@nasa.gov)

Image credit: NASA

# Surface Chemical Modifications

## Work Function Matched Surfaces

### Effectiveness of Work Function Matching Coatings in Removal of Lunar Simulant Using a Regulated Puff of Nitrogen Gas



Dust removal efficiency,  $\xi$ , calculated for pristine and workfunction matching coated (a) AZ93 and (b) AxFEP using JSC1-AF and Chromite simulants for dusting. (From Gaier, J.R., Waters, D.L., Misconin, R.M., Banks, B.A and Crowder, M. "Evaluation of Surface Modification as a Lunar Dust Mitigation Strategy for Thermal Control Surfaces" NASA/TM—2011-217230.)



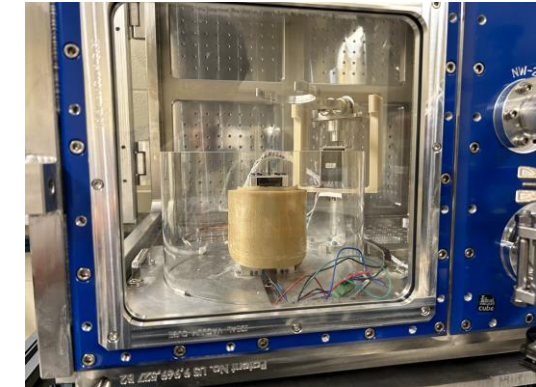
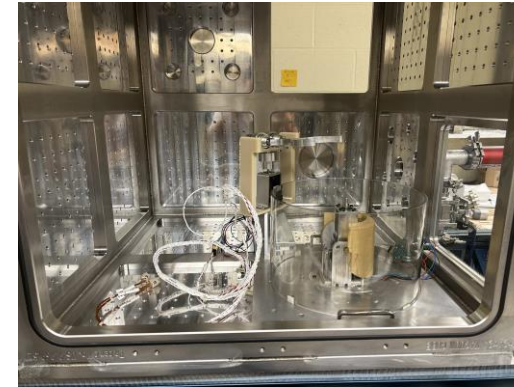
# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy Dust Ejection by Excessive Rotation (DEER)

## Purpose

- ❖ To determine the adhesive forces of lunar simulant on a variety of materials. These forces are determined by centripetal force calculations after ejection or adhesion on a rapidly spinning sample holder.
  - ❖ Tests performed in a vacuum chamber ( $10^{-6}$  Torr) with and without UV light exposure.

## Objectives

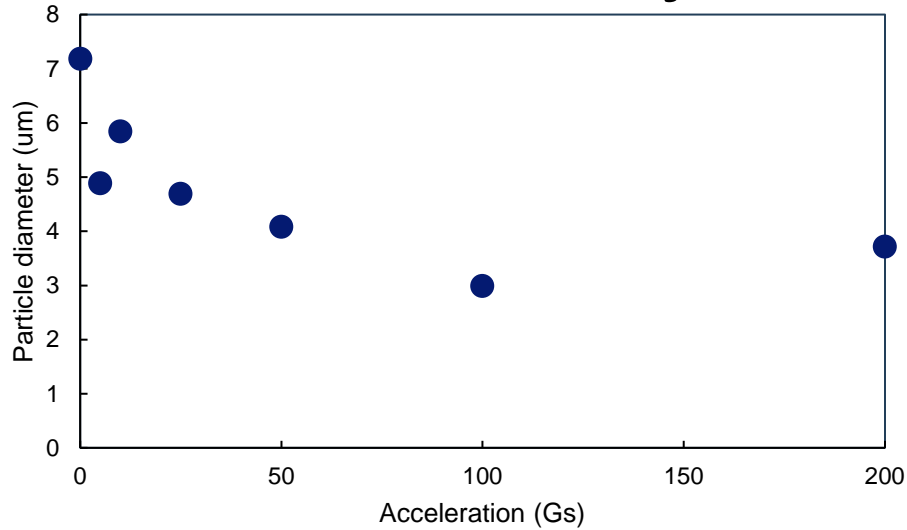
- ❖ (Primary) determine the adhesive forces of lunar simulant on a variety of materials
- ❖ (Secondary) establish a facility to continue this testing, as needed, for Providers and stakeholders



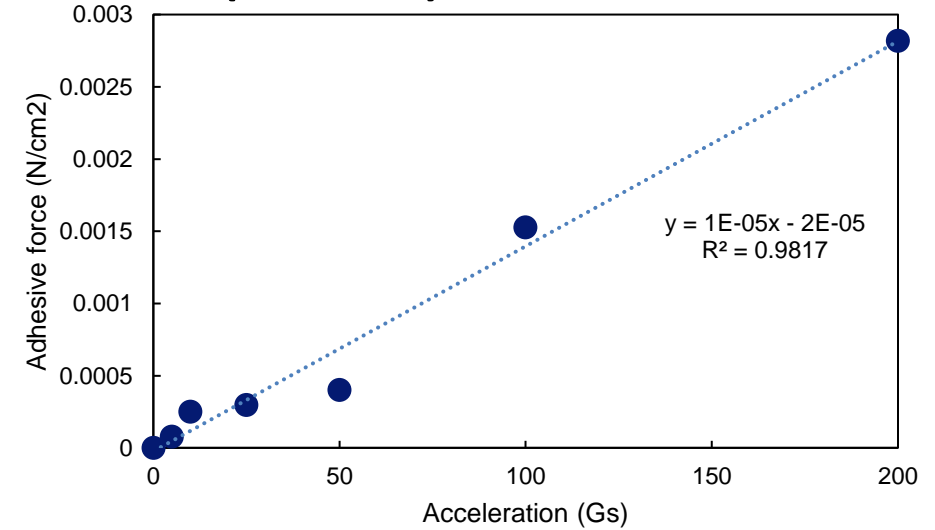


# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

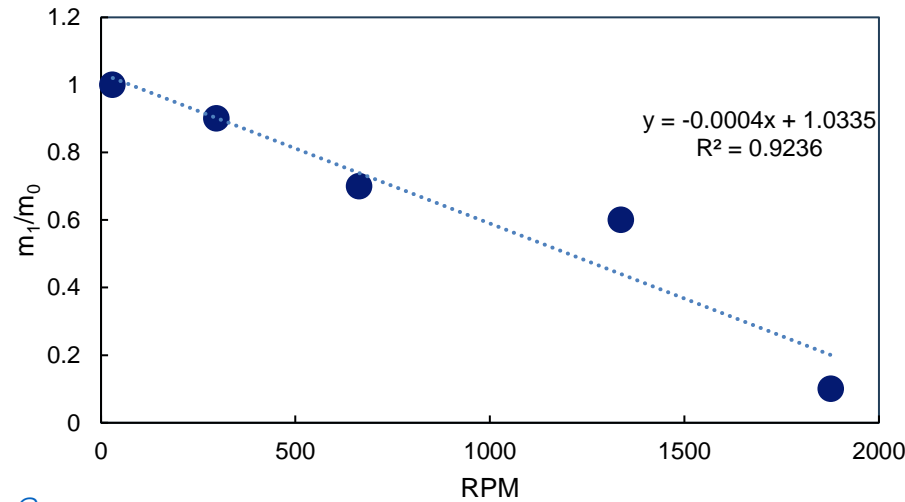
## Dust Ejection by Excessive Rotation (DEER)



Adhesion force increased linearly with centripetal force



Average particle diameter decreased with increasing centripetal force

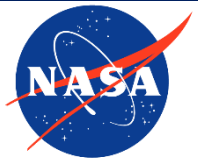


Remaining simulant mass decreased linearly with increasing centripetal force

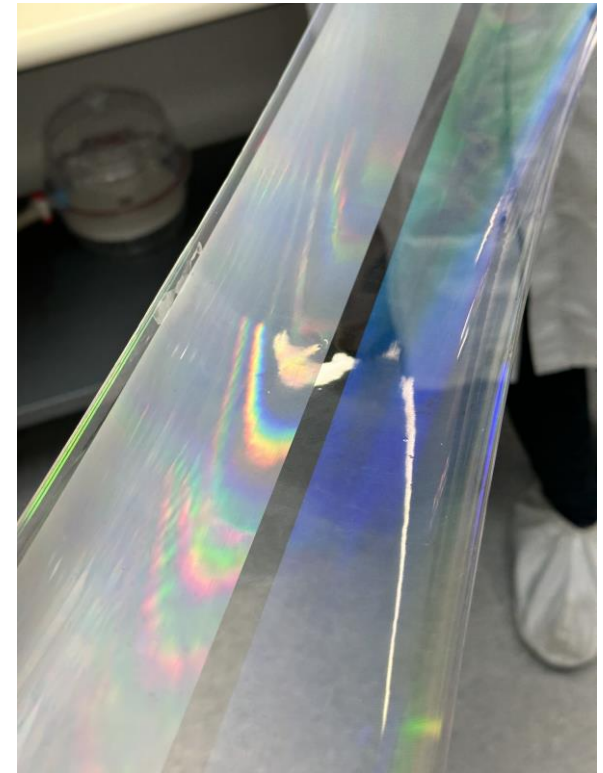


POC: Josh Litofsky, NASA Johnson Space Center, [Joshua.h.Litofsky@nasa.gov](mailto:Joshua.h.Litofsky@nasa.gov)

# Surface Topographical Modification Nanocoining



More than 150 ft. of imprinted polycarbonate



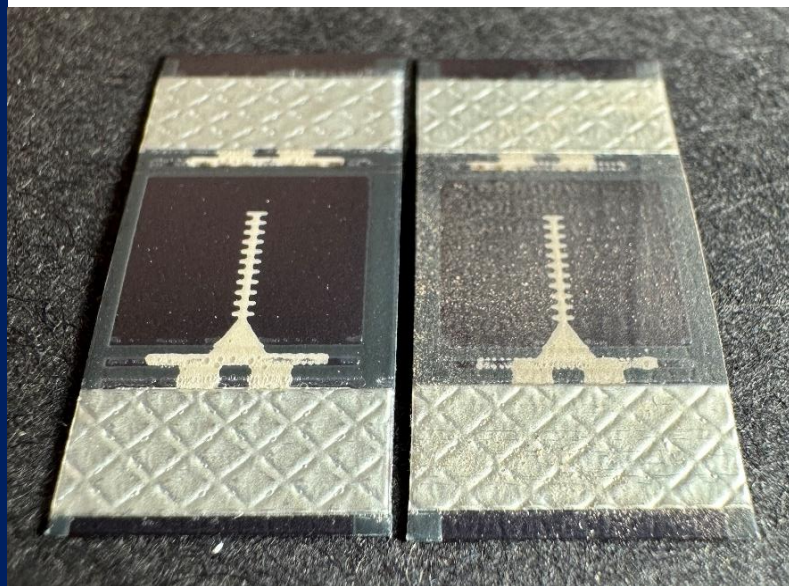
POC: Stephen Furst, Smart Material Solutions, [furst@smartmaterialsolution.com](mailto:furst@smartmaterialsolution.com); Chih-Hao Chang, University of Texas-Austin, [chichang@utexas.edu](mailto:chichang@utexas.edu)

# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Tilt Testing- Solar Cells with Nanocoin Topography

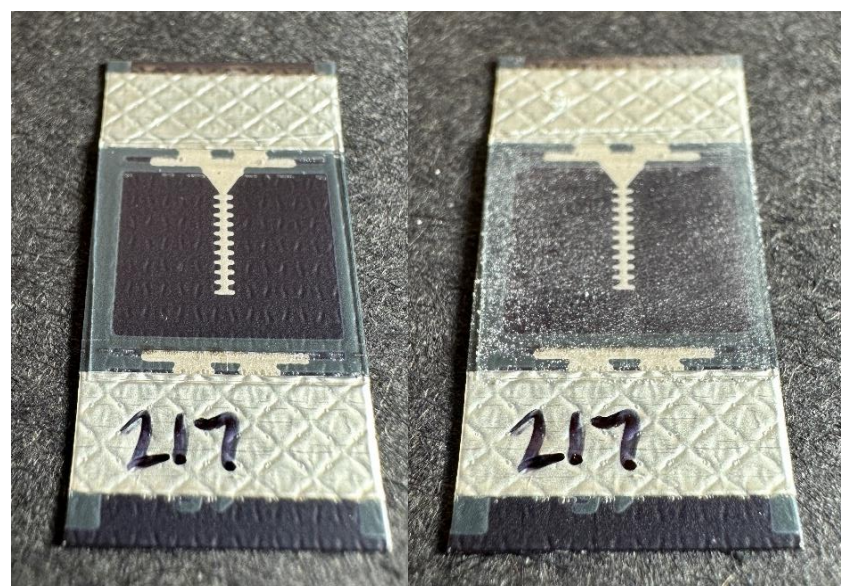
### No Coating

Before dusting    After dusting



### Smooth Coating

Before dusting    After dusting



### Hierarchical Coating

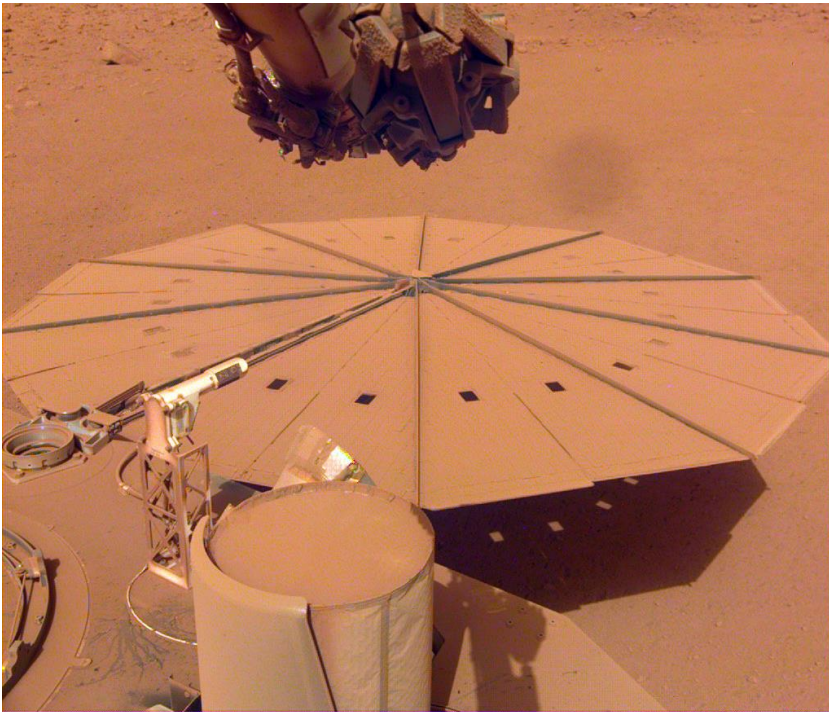
Before dusting    After dusting



# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Solar Cell Testing- Evaluation of Vibromechanical Dust Removal

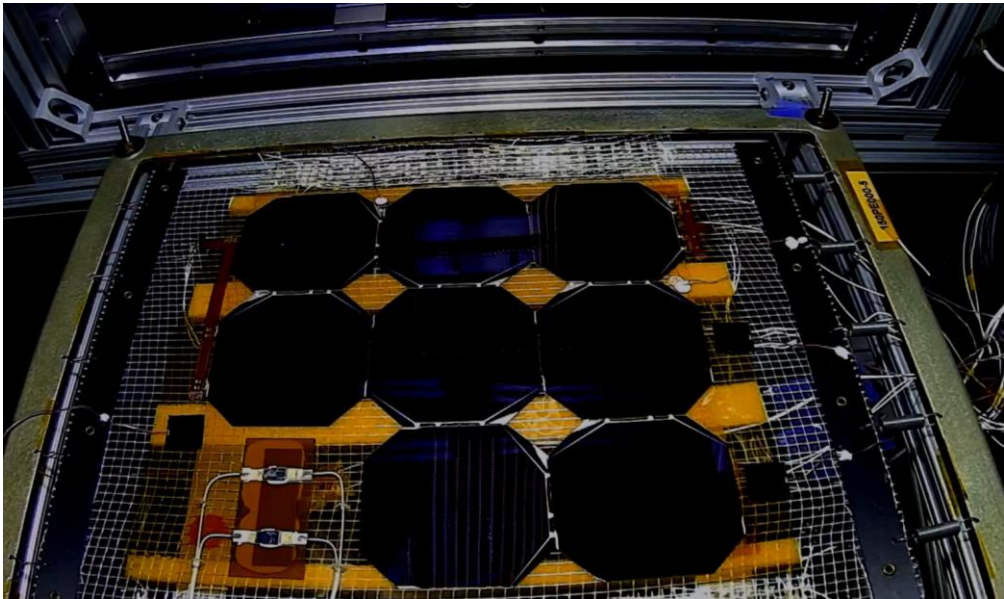
Mars Insight Lander



forward bias solar cell



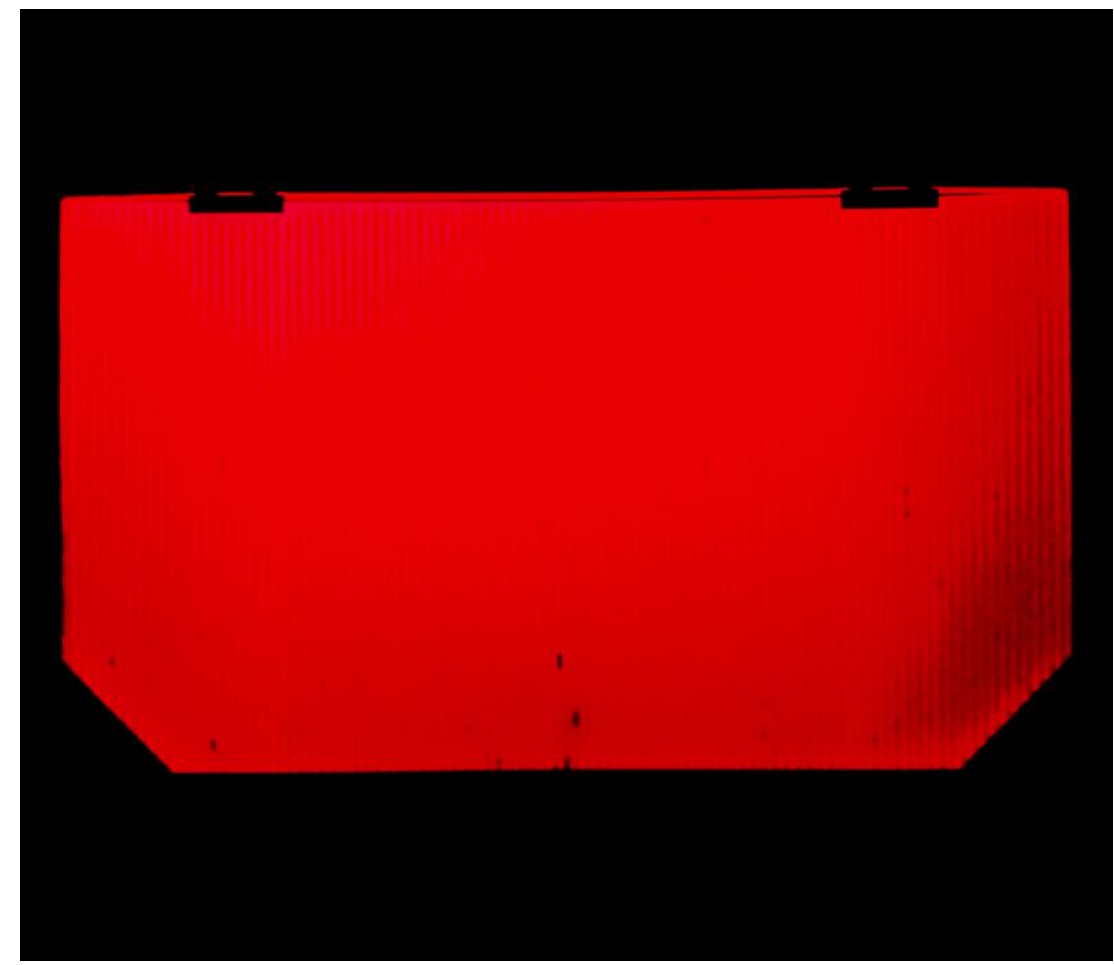
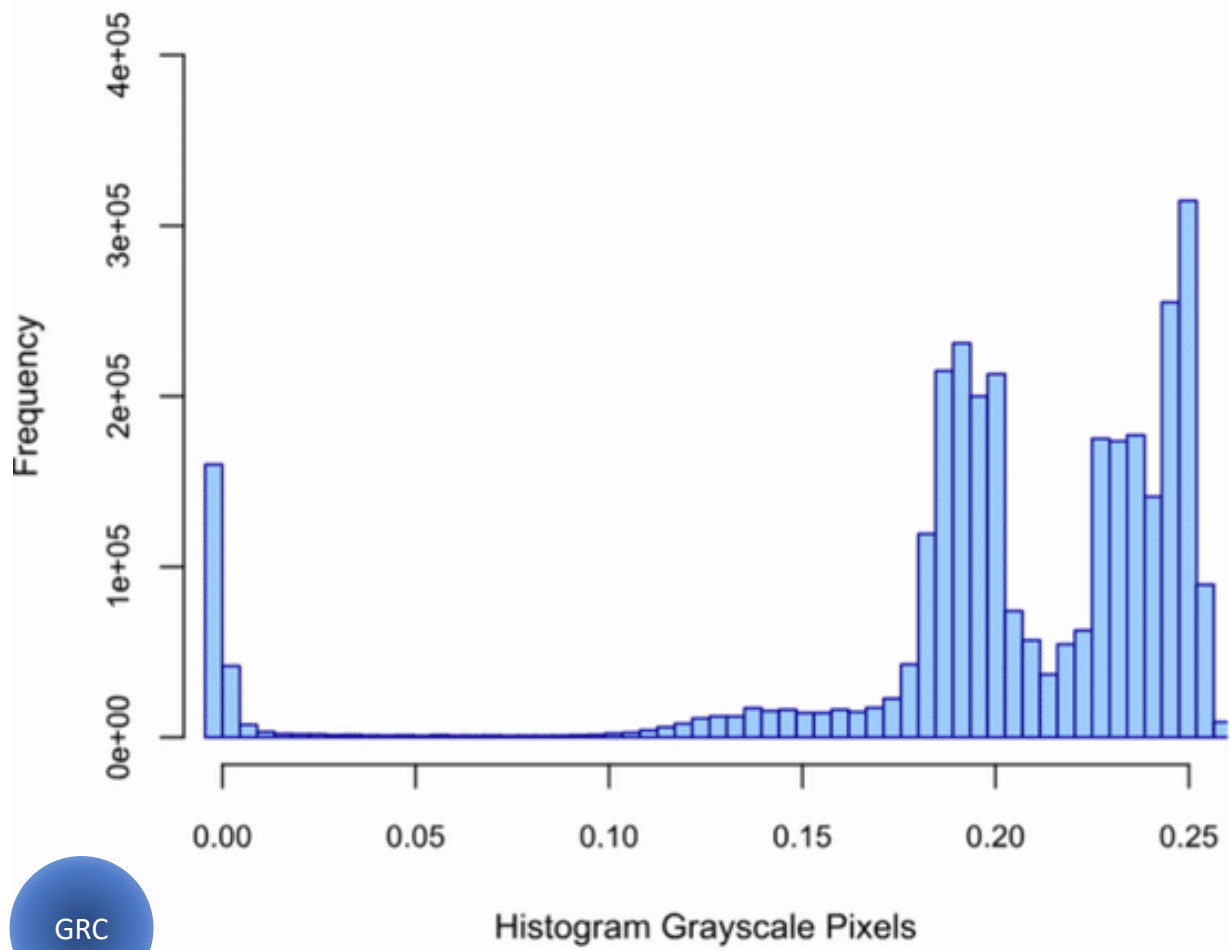
solar cell emits light



# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

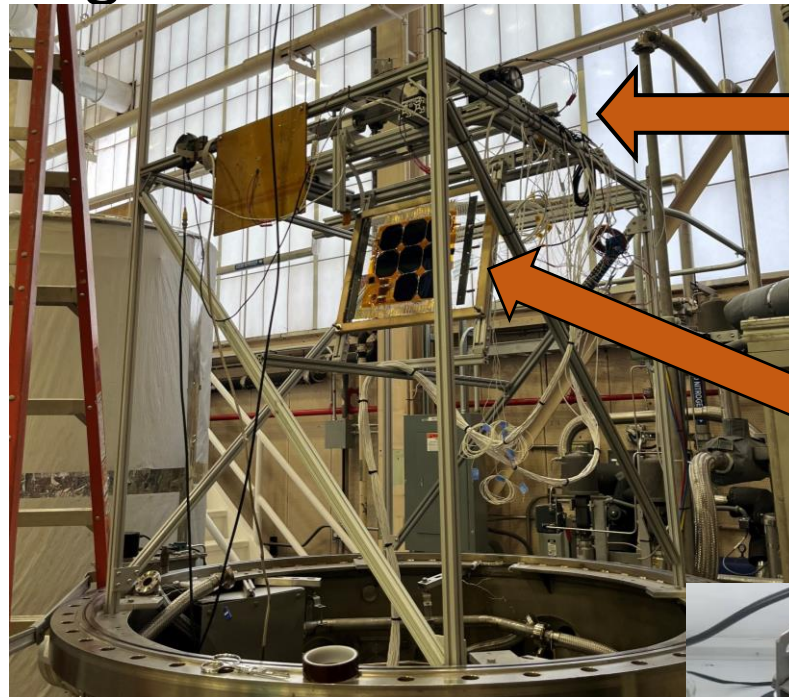
## Solar Cell Testing- Evaluation of Vibromechanical Dust Removal

Sample 8 - Pristine



# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

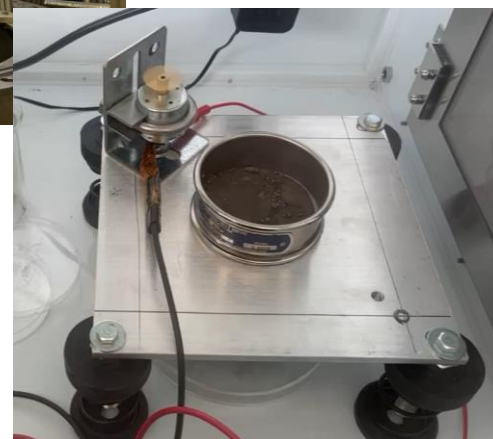
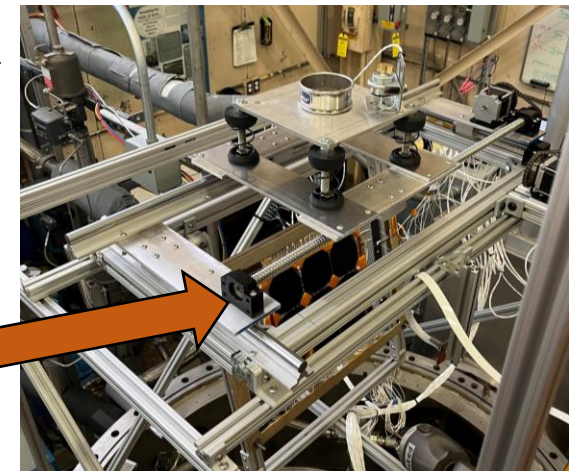
## Solar Cell Testing- Evaluation of Vibromechanical Dust Removal



*Dust Deposition System*

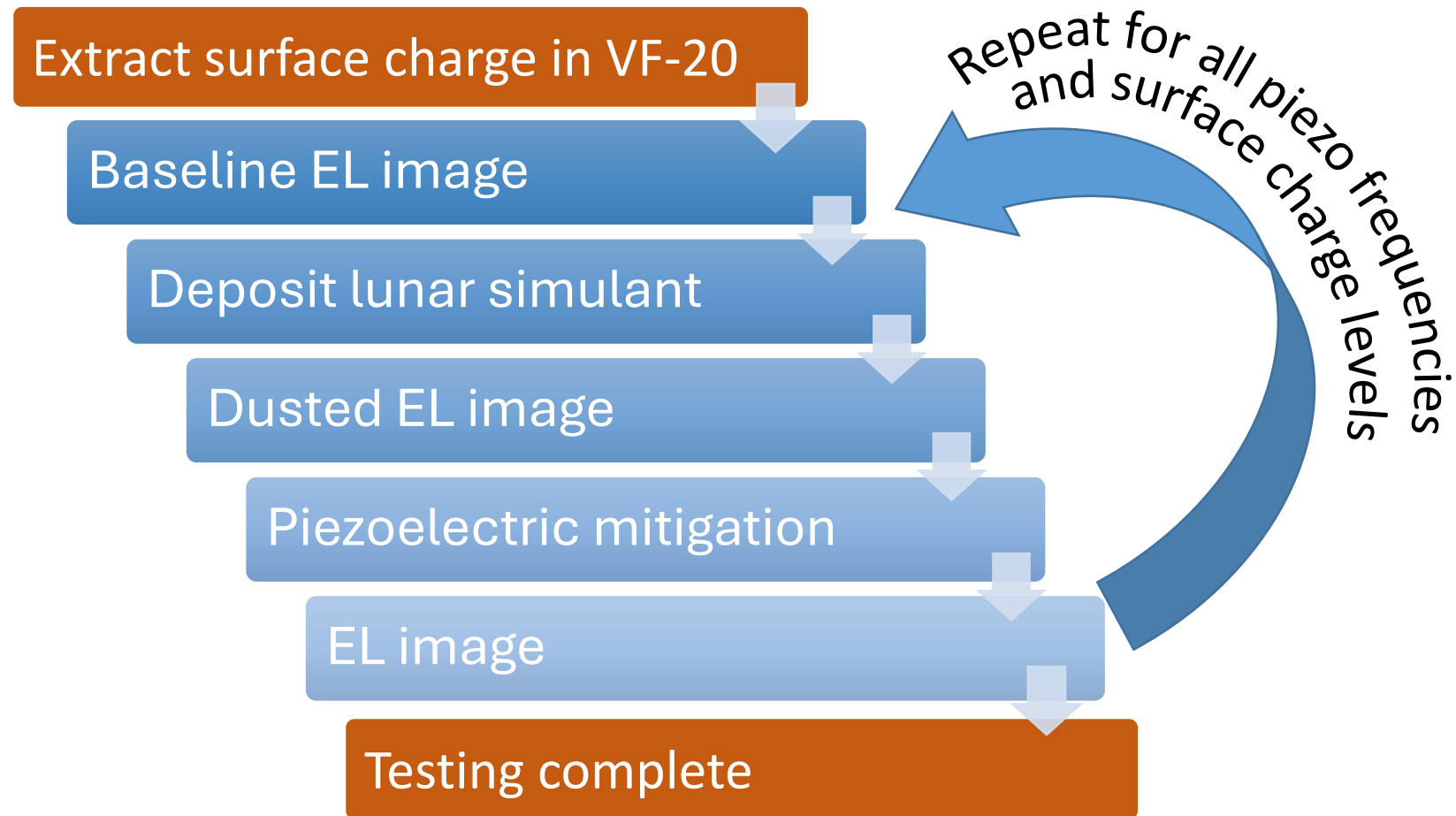


*Test coupon*



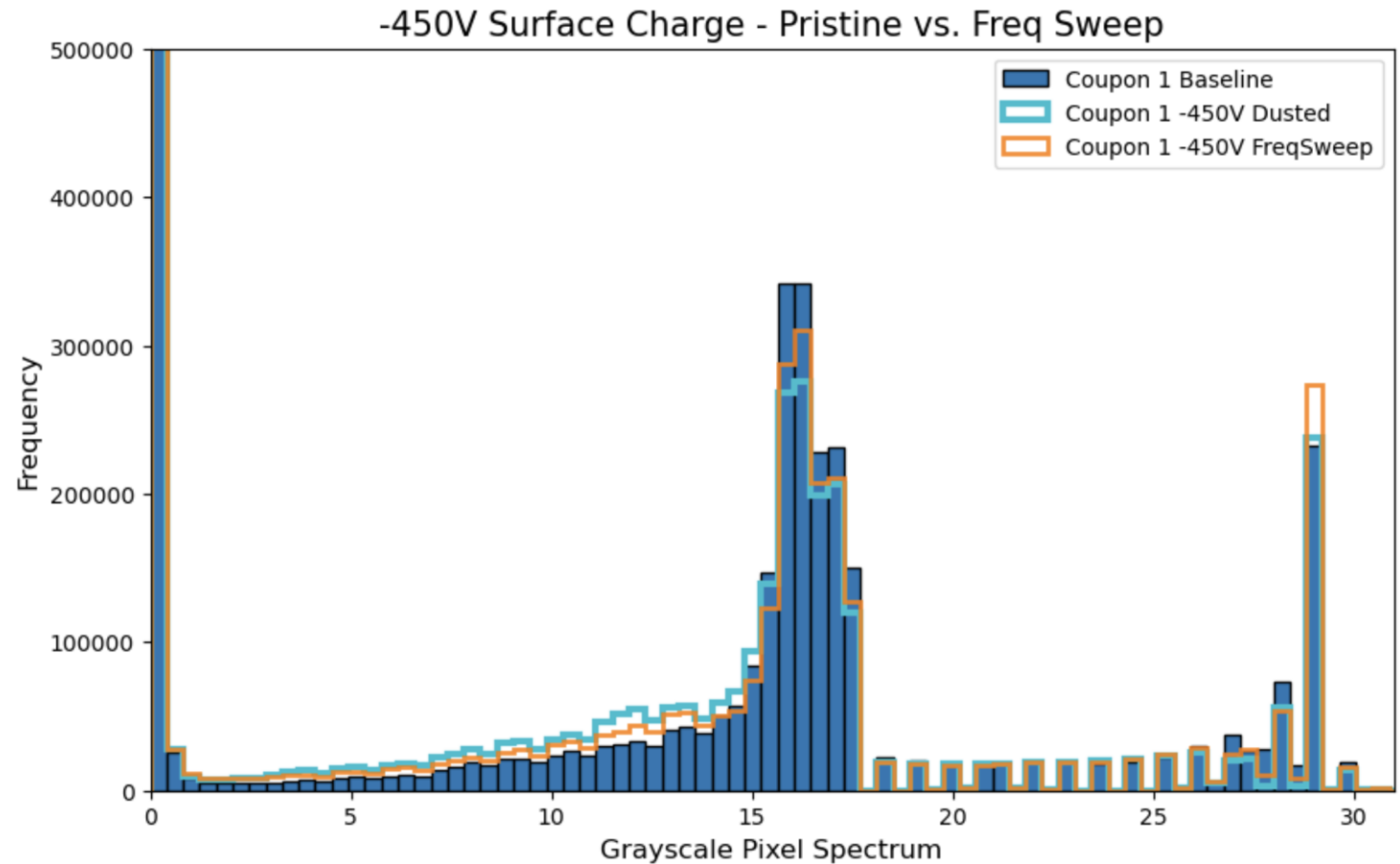
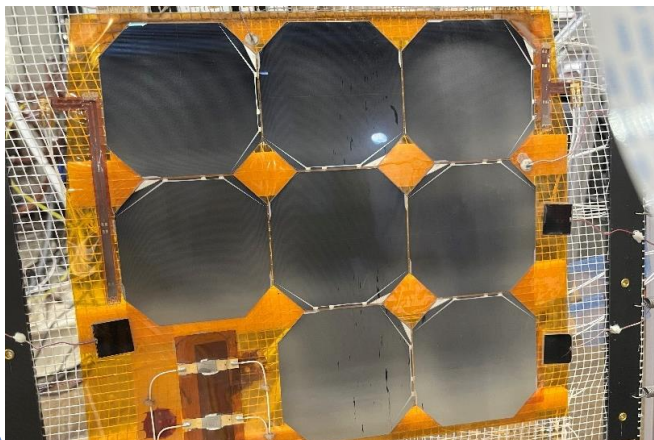
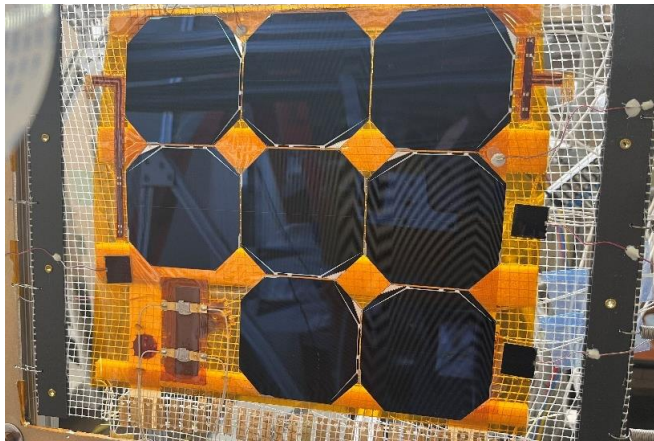
# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Solar Cell Testing- Evaluation of Vibromechanical Dust Removal



# Evaluation of Mitigation Efficacy

## Solar Cell Testing- Evaluation of Vibromechanical Dust Removal



GRC

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