

Danna Ma

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EDUCATION

Cornell University

Ph.D in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Ithaca, NY

Aug. 2018 - Present

Research Topics: Modular Robots, Smart Active Matter, Soft Robots, Tactile Sensors

Visiting Researcher: Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems with Prof. Metin Sitti

Academic Advisors: Prof. Kirstin Hagelskjaer Petersen, Prof Nils Napp, Prof Paul McEuen

Cornell University

M.Eng. in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Ithaca, NY

Aug. 2016 – May 2018

National University of Singapore

B.S. in Electrical Engineering

Singapore

Aug. 2012 – May 2016

Thesis Title: On Surface Passivation Mechanism of P-type Aluminum Local Back Surface Field Solar Cells

Thesis Research Institute: Solar Energy Research Institute of Singapore

Undergraduate Thesis Advisor: Prof. Armin Gerhard Aberle

Centrale Supélec

Student Exchange Program

Saint-Aubin, France

Jan. 2015 – June 2015

Grenoble Institute of Technology

Nano-Techonology Summer Program

Grenoble, France

May. 2013 – July 2013

PUBLICATIONS

Ma, D.*, Ceron, S*, Kaiser, G., and Petersen, K. (2020). Simple, Low-Cost Fabrication of Soft Sensors for Shape Reconstruction. *IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters*

Ma, D., Chen, J., Cutler, S., Petersen, K. (2022). Smarticle 2.0: Design of Scalable, Entangled Smart Matter. *International Symposium on Distributed Autonomous Robotic Systems*

Ma, D., Petersen, K., Murphey, T., and Goldman, D. I. (2023) Smarticles 2.0-Robotic Modules Designed for 3D Entanglement. Abstracts. *American Physical Society's March Meeting*

Cutler, S., **Ma, D.**, Petersen, K. (2025). Strain-Coordinated Formation, Migration, and Encapsulation Behaviors in a Tethered Robot Collective. *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation*

Ma, D., Vardhan, A., Chong, B. Goldman, D.I., Petersen, K. Leveraging Hybrid Dynamics for Collective Migration in Simple Robots. *Journal submission* (in progress)

* Equal contributing authors.

INVITED TALKS

“Smarticle into Collective Intelligence.” International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems, Detroit, Michigan, USA, Oct. 2023

“Harnessing Physical Intelligence for Collective Motion in Robotic Matter.” GRASP Laboratory Student Faculty Industry Seminar, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA, Mar. 2025

HONORS AND AWARDS

Cornell Graduate School Travel Grant, 2024 (\$300 awarded)

University of Stuttgart Graduate Research Fellowship, 2023 (€2200 awarded)

Cornell Graduate School Travel Grant, 2023 (\$400 awarded)

National University of Singapore Engineering Colors Award, 2016

Awards for Study Abroad Exchange Scholarship, 2015 (\$2000 awarded)

Singapore Ministry of Education Senior-Middle 1 Scholarship, 2007-2011 (Approximately SGD\$150,000)

TEACHING AND RESEARCH MENTORING

Bio-inspired Coordination of Multi-Agent Systems, Fall 2024

Role: Guest Lecturer, “Exploiting Hybrid Dynamics for Collective Locomotion in Smart Matter.”

Digital Logic and Computer Organization, 2023

Role: Head Teaching Assistant, Laboratory Instructor, Discussion Instructor

Class Information: Weekly laboratory sessions, office hour and discussions, 100 sophomore students

Embedded Systems, 2020

Role: Teaching Assistant, Laboratory Instructor

Class Information: Weekly lab sessions, 60 senior students

Student Mentees:

Sophia Franklin, Undergraduate Student at Cornell University, 2023-2024

Austin Brown, Undergraduate Student at Cornell University, 2022

Greg Kaiser, Undergraduate Student at Cornell University, 2019-2020

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Program committee ANTS 2026 Fifteenth International Conference on Swarm Intelligence

Peer reviewer for IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters

Peer reviewer for Advanced Intelligent Systems

Host for New Vision Engineering Outreach Program, 2022

Organizer for a nationwide Rice Donation Drive and collected 3200 kg of food for more than 200 needy families in Singapore, 2011

More than 100 international volunteering service hours at primary schools in Vientiane, Laos, 2010-2011

LEADERSHIP AND WORK EXPERIENCE

President of NUS Electrical and Computer Engineering Club, 2014-2015

Founding Member of NUS ECE Undergraduate Student Council, 2014-2015

Producer and Chairperson of NUS King Edward VII Hall Chinese Drama, 2013-2014

Software Engineer Intern, Panasonic Automotive, Peachtree City, GA, USA, 2017

Digital Marketing Executive , Furen International School, Singapore, 2016

IT Analyst Intern, Credit Suisse, Singapore, 2015

Service Engineering Intern, Cummins Inc, Singapore, 2014