

Nikhil Tilak, Ph.D.

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SUMMARY

Postdoc in Physics with 8+ years of research experience. Expert at device fabrication using e-beam lithography and characterization via tunneling and transport measurements. Highly skilled at analyzing data and summarizing findings. Experienced in numerical and machine learning techniques using Python and always working to expand my skill set. Pursuing process/yield engineering roles in the semiconductor manufacturing industry.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Postdoctoral Associate, Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA.

07/2023 - present

My research focuses on correlated phases in two-dimensional heterostructures and moire materials.

Physics Faculty, Bakliwal Tutorials, Pune, India.

06/2014 - 05/2015

Taught calculus-based physics for the highly selective Indian institutes of technology joint entrance exam (IIT-JEE). 1200+ hours of teaching experience to over 550 high school juniors and seniors.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Physics, Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA.

09/2015 - 06/2023

B.Tech. in Engineering Physics, I.I.T. Guwahati, Assam, India.

08/2010 - 05/2014

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Structure and electronic properties of marginally twisted MoS₂.

Studied lattice-relaxation, moire potentials and interfacial ferroelectricity in marginally twisted MoS₂ bilayers using scanning tunneling microscopy (STM) and piezoresponse force microscopy (PFM).

Carrier confinement in magic-angle twisted bilayer graphene.

Investigated the effects of substrate potential disorder on magic-angle twisted bilayer graphene using STM/STS.

Proximity-induced charge density wave in graphene/1T-TaS₂.

Investigated the incommensurate and commensurate CDW phases in 1T-TaS₂. Used graphene as a cover to protect TaS₂ surface from degradation.

Design and construction of a low temperature scanning tunneling microscope.

Designed and constructed a dip-stick style STM and a scanner head capable of operating from 300 K to 4.2 K. System was optimized to reduce heat-load to reduce cryogen consumption.

Effect of strain on CVD graphene microdrums.

Optimized the growth of monolayer graphene on copper foils. Transferred the graphene to holey silicon nitride substrates to make suspended graphene devices for strain measurements.

SKILLS

Device fabrication: Expertise in making van der Waals heterostructures. Electrical contact fabrication using e-beam lithography and photolithography, thermal metal deposition, reactive ion etching, wet etching etc. Experienced in working with air-sensitive materials inside an inert gas filled glovebox.

Characterization techniques: Scanning tunneling microscopy (STM), scanning probe microscopy (AFM, KPFM, EFM, PFM, force-distance spectroscopy), electronic transport, Raman spectroscopy, optical microscopy.

Vacuum and cryogenic techniques: Expert at design, construction and maintenance of ultra/high vacuum chambers and cryogenic temperature measurement apparatus. Highly experienced in helium leak detection.

Mechanical and electronics: Soldering, Brazing, CAD, Machining (Drilling, Lathe, Milling), Arduino based circuits.

Data analysis and programming:

Languages & platforms: Python, C, SQL, HTML, CSS, Git/Github.

Python packages: NumPy, SciPy, Pandas, Scikit-Learn, OpenCV, NLTK, TensorFlow.

Machine learning: Linear/Logistic regression, KNN, SVM, PCA, Random Forests, XGBoost, NLP.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS ([google scholar](#))

- ¹N. Tilak, M. A. Altwater, S.-H. Hung, C.-J. Won, T. Kaleem, G. Li, S.-W. Cheong, C.-H. Chung, H.-T. Jeng, and E. Y. Andrei, "Revealing the charge density wave proximity effect in graphene 1t-TaS₂", (under review at Nature materials) (2023).
- ²N. Tilak, G. Li, T. Taniguchi, K. Watanabe, and E. Y. Andrei, "Moiré potential, lattice relaxation, and layer polarization in marginally twisted MoS₂ bilayers", Nano Letters (2022).
- ³N. Tilak, X. Lai, S. Wu, Z. Zhang, M. Xu, R. d. A. Ribeiro, P. C. Canfield, and E. Y. Andrei, "Flat band carrier confinement in magic-angle twisted bilayer graphene", Nature communications **12**, 4180 (2021).
- ⁴M. A. Altwater, N. Tilak, S. Rao, G. Li, C.-J. Won, S.-W. Cheong, and E. Y. Andrei, "Observation of a topological defect lattice in the charge density wave of 1t-tas₂", Applied Physics Letters **119**, 121601 (2021).
- ⁵R. S. Bisht, J. Park, H. Yu, C. Wu, N. Tilak, S. Rangan, T. J. Park, Y. Yuan, S. Das, U. Goteti, H. T. Yi, H. Hijazi, A. Al-Mahboob, J. T. Sadowski, H. Zhou, S. Oh, E. Y. Andrei, M. T. Allen, D. Kuzum, A. Frano, R. C. Dynes, and S. Ramanathan, "Spatial interactions in hydrogenated perovskite nickelate synaptic networks", Nano Letters (2023).
- ⁶R. K. Biroju, N. Tilak, G. Rajender, S. Dhara, and P. Giri, "Catalyst free growth of zno nanowires on graphene and graphene oxide and its enhanced photoluminescence and photoresponse", Nanotechnology **26**, 145601 (2015).

CONFERENCE TALKS AND POSTERS

STM studies of marginally twisted MoS₂ bilayers [poster]

Rutgers Center for Materials Theory symposium, 2022

Moiré bands in twisted MoS₂ homobilayers [talk]

APS March Meeting 2022, Chicago

Observation of charging peaks near the flat band in magic-angle twisted bilayer Graphene [talk]
2021, Virtual

APS March Meeting

A method for controllably inducing ultra-high strain in suspended 2D materials [talk]
Angeles

APS March Meeting 2018, Los

RECENT HONORS

David C. Langreth Graduate Development Award

2017

"Presented annually to an especially promising early-stage graduate student by the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Rutgers"

MITACS Globalink Research Internship

Summer 2013

Was selected for a competitive 12-week research internship at the *Institut national de la recherche scientifique*, Varennes, Quebec, Canada.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Rutgers University, NJ, USA.

Fall 2015 - Spring 2018

TA for extended analytical physics (115), analytical physics (123 & 124), intro solid state physics (406), graduate quantum mechanics 1 (501), electromagnetism (385) and classical physics lab (276).

LEADERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP

Directly mentored five undergraduate students leading to successful transitions to graduate school and industry.

Student representative on the graduate studies and life committee (AY 2018-19)

Vice President of the Physics and Astronomy Graduate Student Organization. (AY 2016-17)