Analysis of Tetris Ballistic Deposition and the Robustness of the KPZ Universality Class

Le Chen Auburn University

Acknwolegement

NSF 2246850, NSF 2443823, & Simons Foundation Travel Grant (2022-2027)

Emerging Synergies between Stochastic Analysis and Statistical Mechanics
Banff, Alberta, Canada
October 28, 2025

Math 7820/30: Applied Stochastic Processes (2023/24):





Mauricio Montes and Ian Ruau

Plan

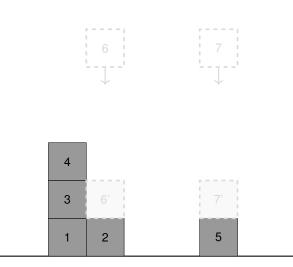
Introduction to growth model and SPDE

Tetromino Pieces

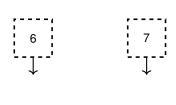
Plan

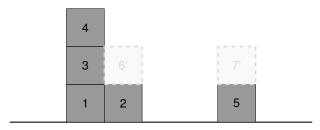
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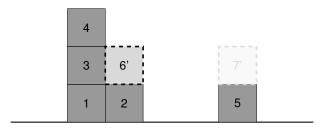
Substrate



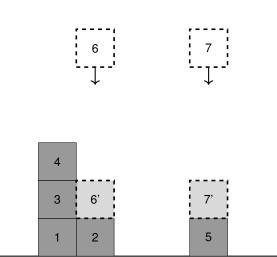


Substrate

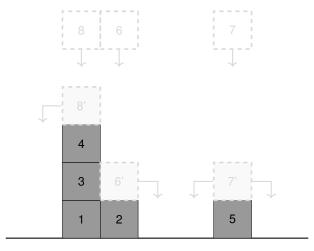




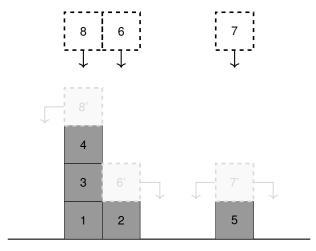
Substrate



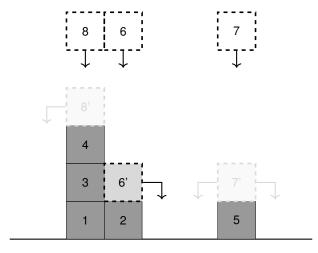
Substrate



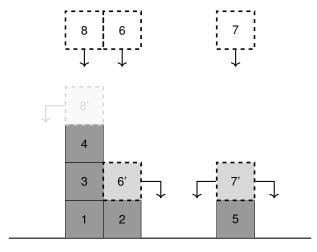
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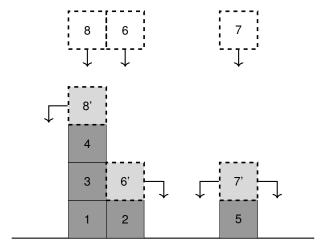
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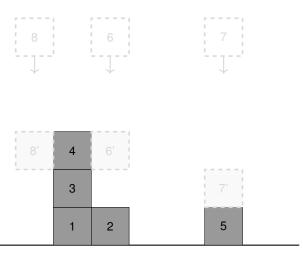
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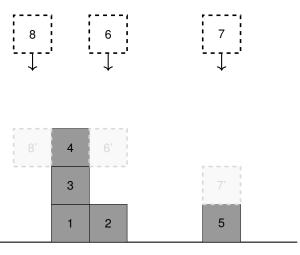
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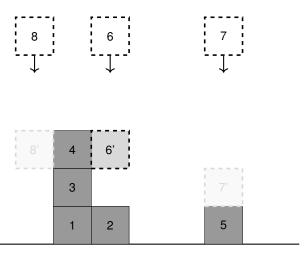
Substrate



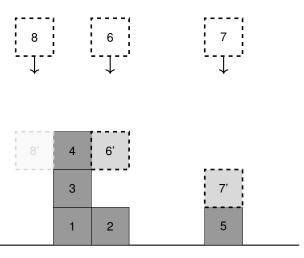
Substrate



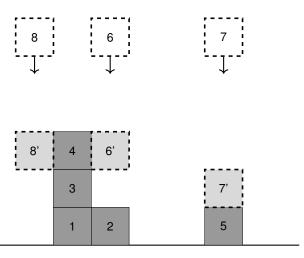
Substrate



Substrate

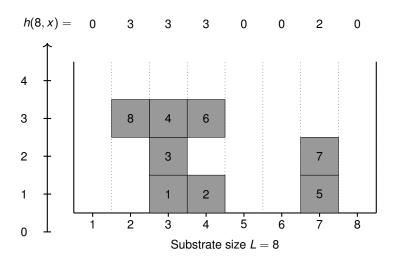


Substrate



Substrate

Average height and fluctuation



Average height and fluctuation

$$\overline{h}(t) = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{x=1}^{L} h(t, x) \qquad \text{Fluctuation } W(L, t) = \sqrt{\frac{1}{L} \sum_{x=1}^{L} \left[h(t, x) - \overline{h}(t) \right]^2}$$

$$h(8, x) = 0 \quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 2 \quad 0$$

$$4 \quad \downarrow \\
3 \quad \downarrow \\
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad 8$$
Substrate size $L = 8$

Average height and fluctuation

$$\overline{h}(t) = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{x=1}^{L} h(t, x) \qquad \text{Fluctuation } W(L, t) = \sqrt{\frac{1}{L} \sum_{x=1}^{L} \left[h(t, x) - \overline{h}(t) \right]^2}$$

$$h(8, x) = 0 \quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 2 \quad 0$$

$$4 \quad \downarrow \quad 3 \quad \downarrow \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad 8$$

$$2 \quad \downarrow \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 5 \quad \overline{h}(8) = \frac{11}{8}$$
Substrate size $L = 8$

Random Deposition (one drop per time step)

Model. L independent columns. At each integer time $t=1,2,\ldots$, drop *one* particle on a uniformly random column. Heights h(t,x), mean $\overline{h}(t)=\frac{1}{L}\sum_{x=1}^{L}h(t,x)=\frac{t}{L}$, width

$$W^{2}(L,t) = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{x=1}^{L} (h(t,x) - \overline{h}(t))^{2}.$$

Single-column law. After t drops total,

$$h(t,x) \sim \operatorname{Binomial}\left(t,\frac{1}{L}\right), \qquad \mathbb{E}[h(t,x)] = \frac{t}{L}, \quad \operatorname{Var}(h(t,x)) = t\frac{1}{L}\left(1 - \frac{1}{L}\right).$$

Width (variance decomposition). By i.i.d. columns,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[W^2(L,t)\right] = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{v=1}^{L} \mathbb{E}\left[h(t,x)^2\right] - \mathbb{E}\left[\overline{h}^2(t)\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[h(t,1)^2\right] - \left(\frac{t}{L}\right)^2 = \left(1 - \frac{1}{L}\right) \operatorname{Var}(h(t,1)).$$

Hence

$$\mathbb{E}\left[W^2(L,t)\right] = \left(1 - \frac{1}{L}\right)t\frac{1}{L}\left(1 - \frac{1}{L}\right) = \frac{t}{L}\left(1 - \frac{1}{L}\right)^2$$

and

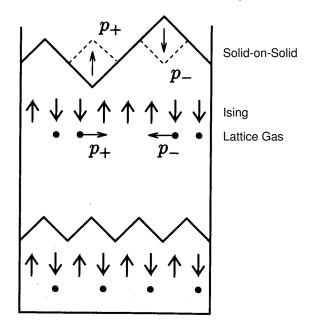
$$W(L,t) \sim \left(1-\frac{1}{L}\right) \left(\frac{t}{L}\right)^{1/2}$$

Scaling. Growth exponent $\beta = \frac{1}{2}$: $W^2(L, t) \simeq t/L$ (no lateral correlations, no true saturation).

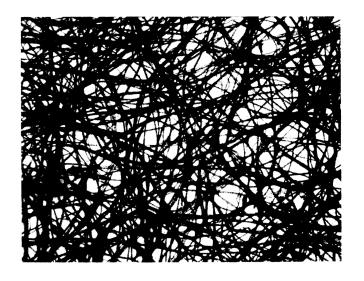
Simulations on

Random deposition vs. Ballistic decomposition

More models? Even more simpler?

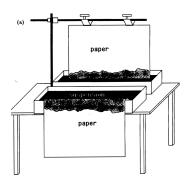


Paper – a random environment



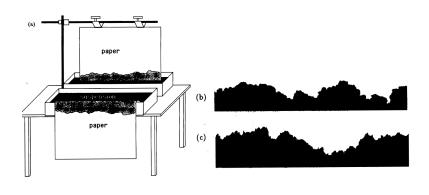
Zhang, J., Zhang, Y.-C., Alstrøm, P., Levinsen, M., Phys. A: Stat. Mech. Appl., 1992

Paper wetting experiment



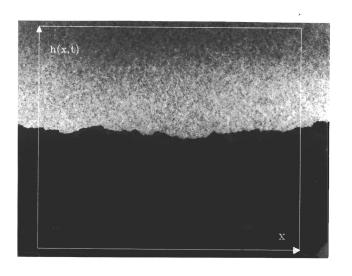
Barabási, A.-L., Stanley, H. E., 1995

Paper wetting experiment



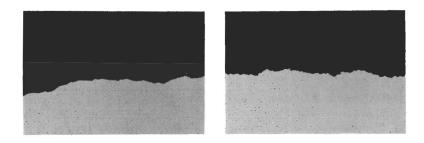
Barabási, A.-L., Stanley, H. E., 1995

Paper burning experiment



Zhang, J., Zhang, Y.-C., Alstrøm, P., Levinsen, M., Phys. A: Stat. Mech. Appl., 1992

Paper rupture experiment



Kertész, J., Horváth, V. k., Weber, F., Fractals, 1993

Study of growing interfaces in a thin film

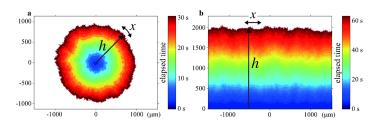
— Convection of nematic liquid crystal*

Show movies!

Takeuchi, K. A., Sano, M., Sasamoto, T., Spohn, H., Sci. Rep., 2011

Study of growing interfaces in a thin film

- Convection of nematic liquid crystal*



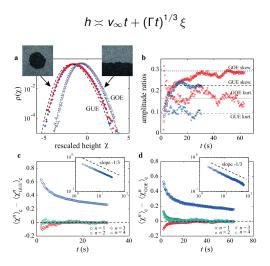
Prediction from KPZ equation:

$$h \simeq v_{\infty}t + (\Gamma t)^{1/3}\xi$$

Takeuchi, K. A., Sano, M., Sasamoto, T., Spohn, H., Sci. Rep., 2011

Study of growing interfaces in a thin film

- Convection of nematic liquid crystal*



Takeuchi, K. A., Sano, M., Sasamoto, T., Spohn, H., Sci. Rep., 2011

KPZ Equation '86

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}h(t,x) = \frac{1}{2}\Delta h(t,x) + \frac{\lambda}{2}\left(\nabla h\right)^2 + \dot{W}(t,x) \tag{KPZ}$$







Mehran Kardar (1957 –) Giorgio Parisi (1948 –)

Yicheng Zhang

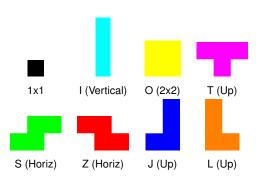
Kardar, M., Parisi, G., Zhang, Y.-C., Phys. Rev. Lett., 1986

Plan

Introduction to growth model and SPDE

Tetromino Pieces

Tetrominoes

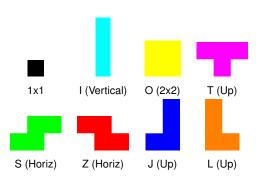


- "1x1": Single (extra single-site particle)
- "I": Horizontal, Vertical
- ▶ "J, L, T": Up, Right, Down, Left
- "S, Z": Horizontal, Vertical
- "O": Single (2x2 square)

- Sticky
- Nonstikcy

 $(1 + 1 \times 2 + 3 \times 4 + 2 \times 2 + 1) \times 2 = 20 \times 2 = 40$ types of pieces

Tetrominoes

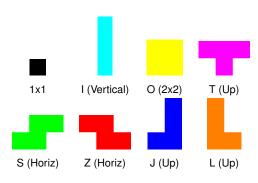


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 $(1 + 1 \times 2 + 3 \times 4 + 2 \times 2 + 1) \times 2 = 20 \times 2 = 40$ types of pieces

Configure files

| steps: 12000 | steps: 12000 | steps: 12000 width: 100 |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| width: 100 | width: 100 | height: 300 |
| height: 300 | height: 300 | seed: 12 |
| seed: 12 | seed: 12 | Piece-00: [0, 0] |
| Piece-00: [20, 0] | Piece-00: [0, 20] | Piece-00: [0, 0] |
| Piece-01: [20, 0] | Piece-01: [0, 20] | |
| Piece-02: [20, 0] | Piece-02: [0, 20] | Piece-02: [0, 0] Piece-03: [0, 0] |
| Piece-03: [20, 0] | Piece-03: [0, 20] | |
| Piece-04: [20, 0] | Piece-04: [0, 20] | Piece-04: [0, 0] Piece-05: [0, 0] |
| Piece-05: [20, 0] | Piece-05: [0, 20] | Piece-06: [0, 0] |
| Piece-06: [20, 0] | Piece-06: [0, 20] | Piece-06: [0, 0] Piece-07: [0, 0] |
| Piece-07: [20, 0] | Piece-07: [0, 20] | |
| Piece-08: [20, 0] | Piece-08: [0, 20] | Piece-08: [0, 0] Piece-09: [0, 0] |
| Piece-09: [20, 0] | Piece-09: [0, 20] | Piece-10: [0, 0] |
| Piece-10: [20, 0] | Piece-10: [0, 20] | Piece-11: [0, 0] |
| Piece-11: [20, 0] | Piece-11: [0, 20] | Piece-12: [0, 0] |
| Piece-12: [20, 0] | Piece-12: [0, 20] | Piece-13: [0, 0] |
| Piece-13: [20, 0] | Piece-13: [0, 20] | Piece-14: [0, 0] |
| Piece-14: [20, 0] | Piece-14: [0, 20] | Piece-14: [0, 0] |
| Piece-15: [20, 0] | Piece-15: [0, 20] | Piece-16: [0, 0] |
| Piece-16: [20, 0] | Piece-16: [0, 20] | |
| Piece-17: [20, 0] | Piece-17: [0, 20] | Piece-17: [0, 0] |
| Piece-18: [20, 0] | Piece-18: [0, 20] | Piece-18: [0, 0] Piece-19: [20, 80] |
| Piece-19: [20, 0] | Piece-19: [0, 20] | Fiece-19: [20, 80] |
| , - | , - | |

All nonsticky pieces with equal prob.

All sticky pieces with equal prob.

20% nonsticky + 80% sticky of 1x1 piece

Main References:

- Barabási, A.-L., & Stanley, H. E. (1995). *Fractal concepts in surface growth*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Family, F., & Vicsek, T. (1985). Scaling of the active zone in the eden process on percolation networks and the ballistic deposition model. *Journal of Physics A: Mathematical and General*, 18(2), L75.
- Kardar, M., Parisi, G., & Zhang, Y.-C. (1986). Dynamic scaling of growing interfaces. Phys. Rev. Lett., 56(9), 889.
- Kertész, J., Horváth, V. k., & Weber, F. (1993). Self-affine rupture lines in paper sheets. Fractals, 01(01), 67–74.
- Takeuchi, K. A., Sano, M., Sasamoto, T., & Spohn, H. (2011). Growing interfaces uncover universal fluctuations behind scale invariance. *Sci. Rep.*, 1(1), 1–5.
- Zhang, J., Zhang, Y.-C., Alstrøm, P., & Levinsen, M. (1992). Modeling forest fire by a paper-burning experiment, a realization of the interface growth mechanism. *Phys. A: Stat. Mech. Appl.*, 189(3), 383–389.

Thank you!

Questions?