
Interfaces in disordered systems and directed polymer

Elisabeth Agoritsas

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Disordered elastic systems: Recipe
- 3. Disordered elastic systems: Statics
- 4. Disordered elastic systems: Dynamics
- 5. Concluding remarks



Interfaces in disordered systems and directed polymer

1. Introduction

2. Disordered elastic systems: Recipe

- 2.1 Observables: geometrical fluctuations and center-of-mass dynamics
- 2.2 Model: Hamiltonian, Langevin dynamics, dynamical action

3. Disordered elastic systems: Statics

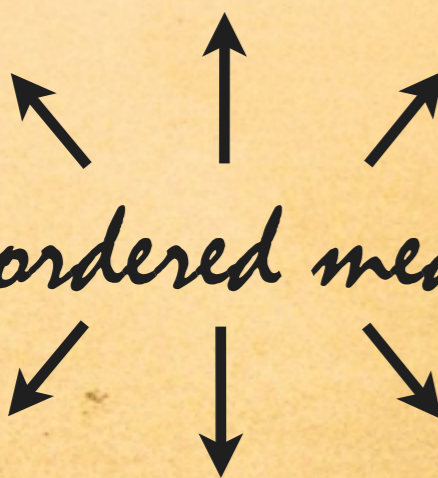
- 3.1 Roughness function & Structure factor
- 3.2 Standard' Flory/Imry-Ma scaling argument
- 3.3 Without disorder: thermal roughness
- 3.4 With disorder (perturbative approach): Larkin model
- 3.5 With disorder: roughness regimes and crossover scales, GVM roughness
- 3.6 Focus on the 1D interface: mapping to the 1+1 Directed Polymer. Connections to the 1D KPZ
- 3.7 Scaling analysis : power counting versus physical scalings

4. Disordered elastic systems: Dynamics

- 4.1 Velocity-force characteristics
- 4.2 Example of model reduction: effective 1D interface starting from a 2D Ginzburg-Landau description
- 4.3 Creep regime: how to recover 1/4 creep exponent from 2/3 KPZ exponent
- 4.4 Fast-flow regime

5. Concluding remarks

Disordered medium



Interface →

*Role of disorder
on the shape & dynamics of
the interface?*

*What can we infer on disorder
from the interface shape?*

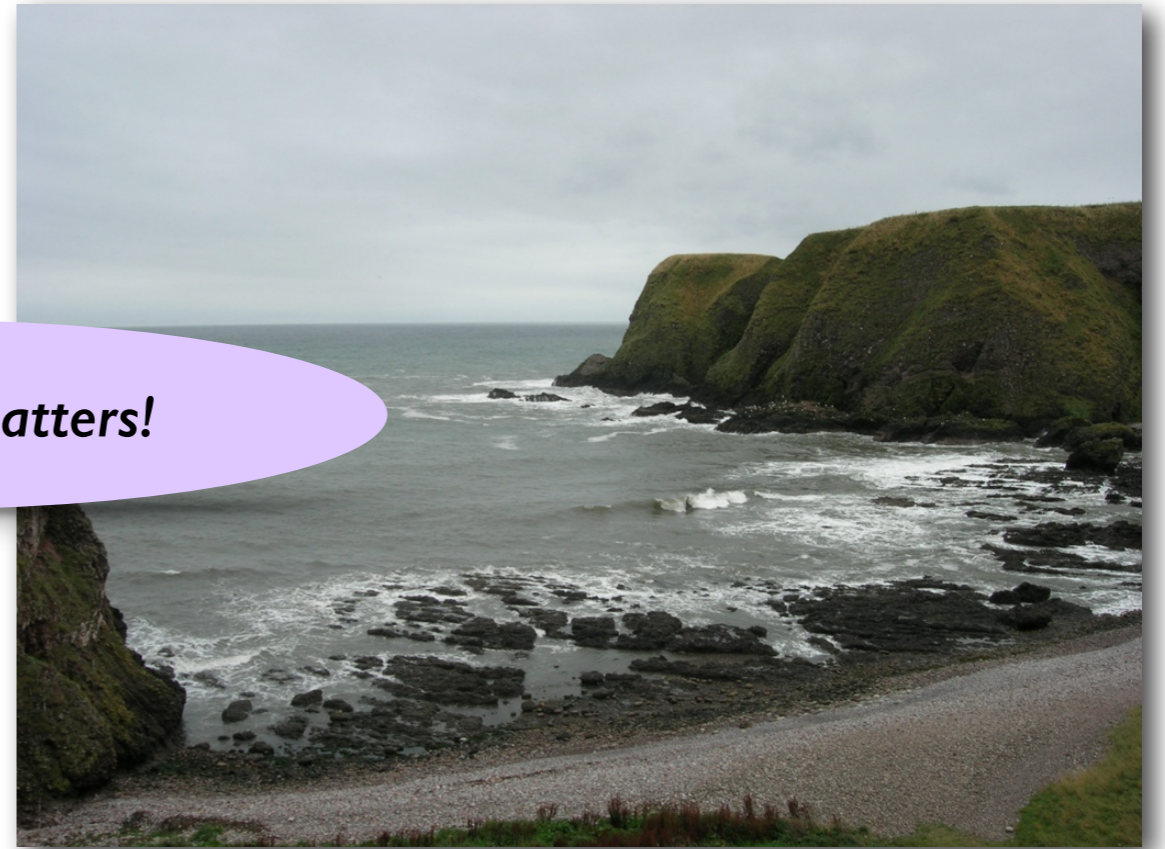
*Can we engineer given
geometrical/dynamical properties
by tuning disorder?*

Interfaces can be found everywhere...



← Scotland coastline

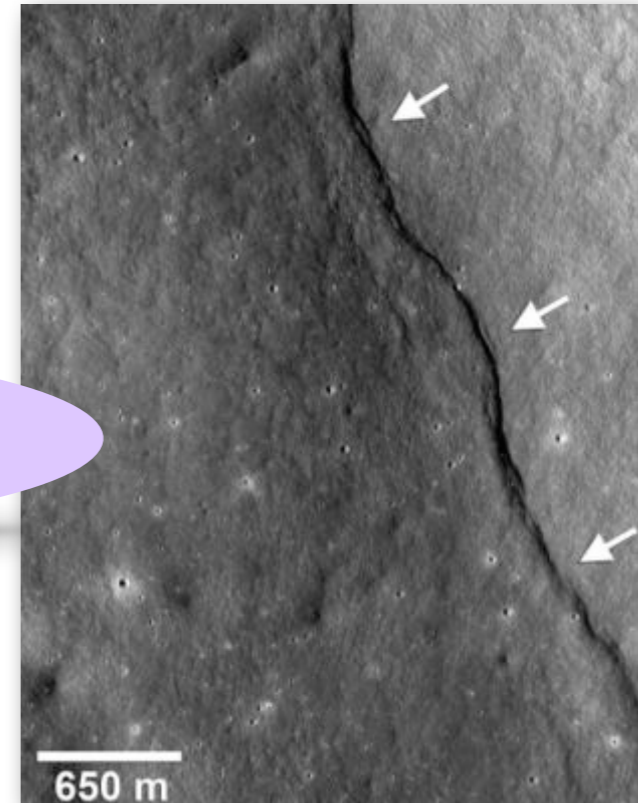
Lengthscale matters!



← Crack in a pavement

Scale invariance?

Crack at the Moon's surface →



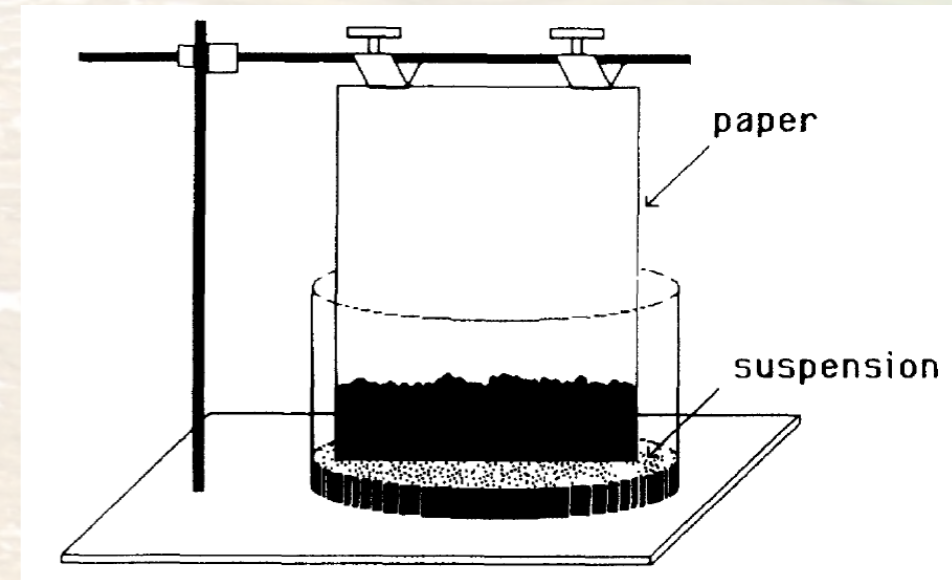
Experimental examples of 'disordered elastic systems'

■ Contact line



Moulinet et al., *Eur. Phys. J. E* **8**, 437 (2002).

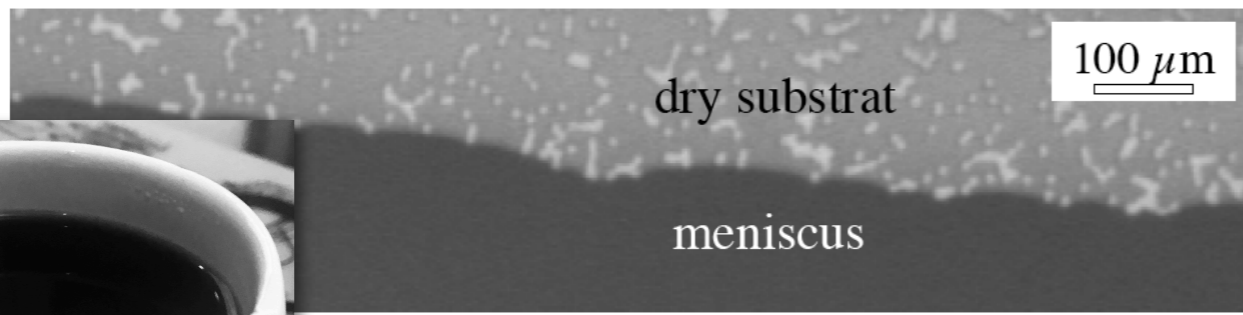
■ Imbibition front



Buldyrev et al., *Phys. Rev. A* **45**, 8313 (1992).

Experimental examples of 'disordered elastic systems'

■ Contact line

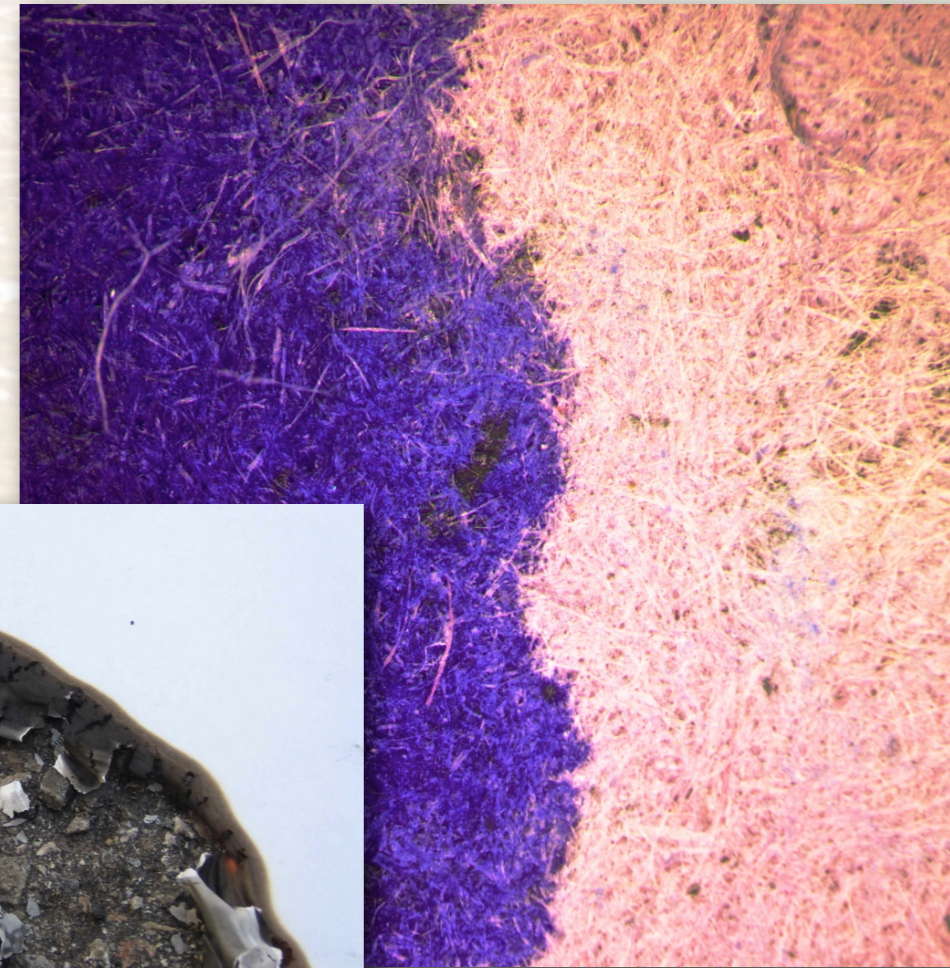


Moulinet et al., *Eur. Phys. J. E* **8**, 437 (2002).

■ Burning front



■ Imbibition front



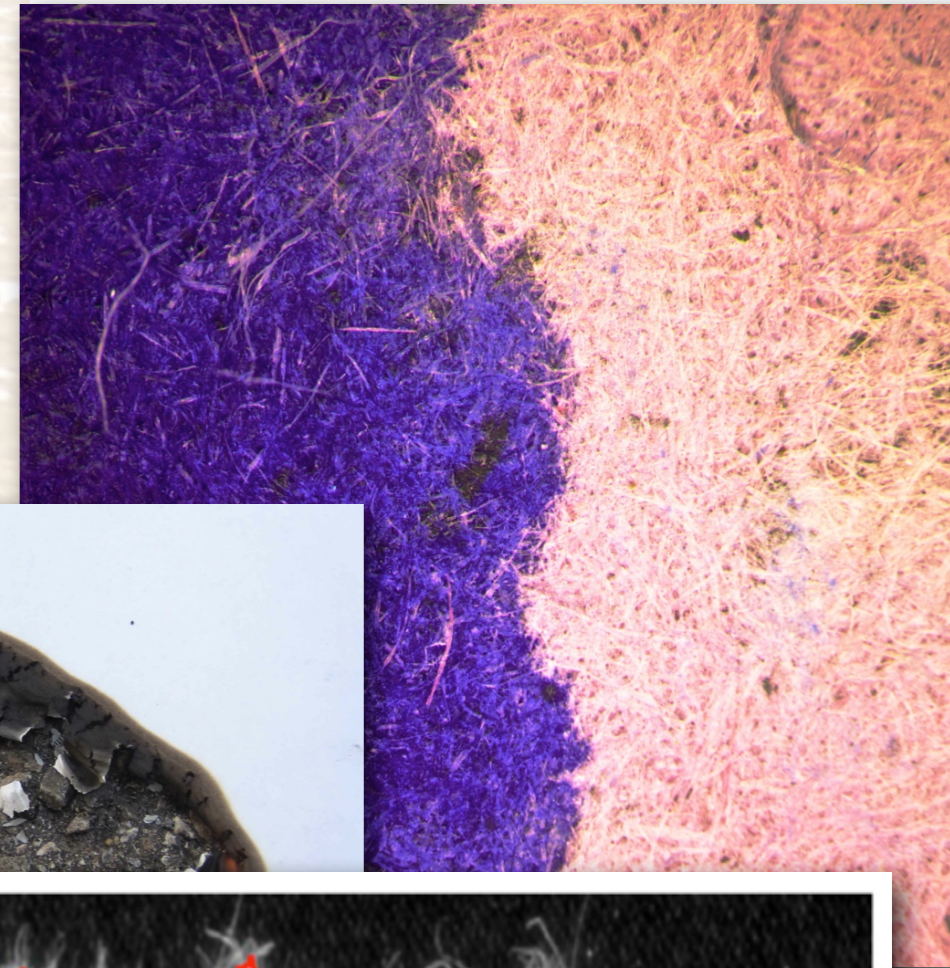
Experimental examples of 'disordered elastic systems'

Contact line

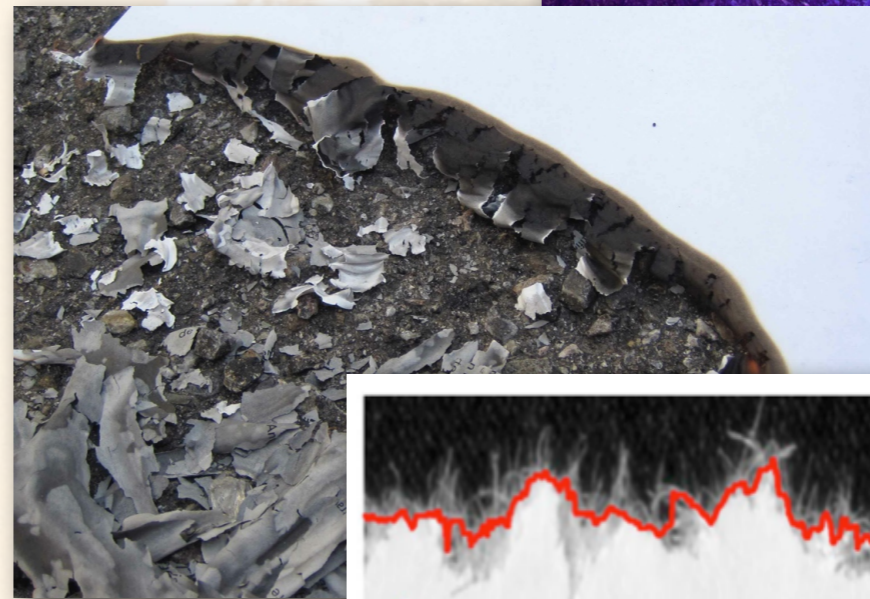


Moulinet et al., *Eur. Phys. J. E* **8**, 437 (2002).

Imbibition front

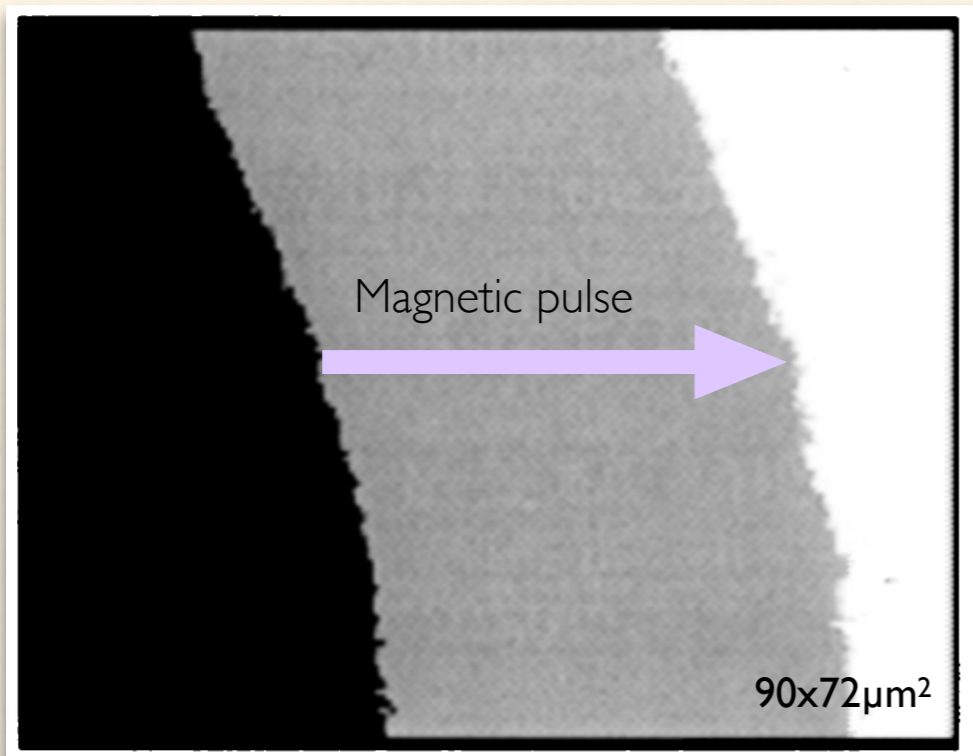
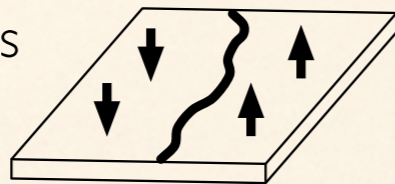


Burning front



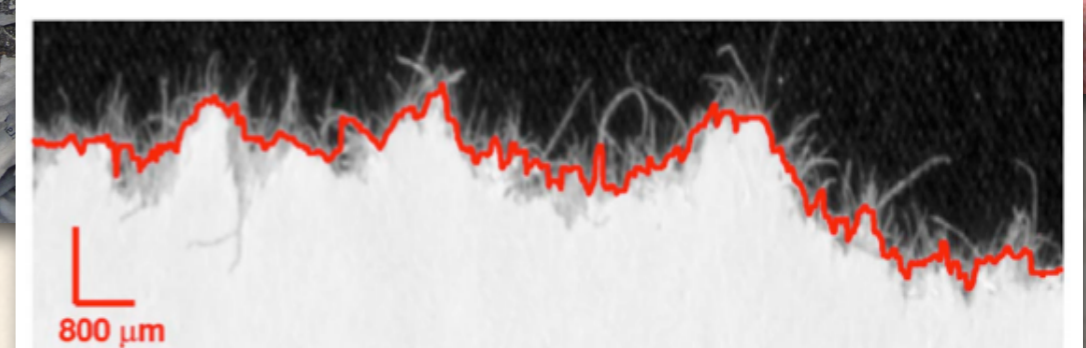
Ferromagnetic domain walls

(Ultrathin film of Pt/Co/Pt)

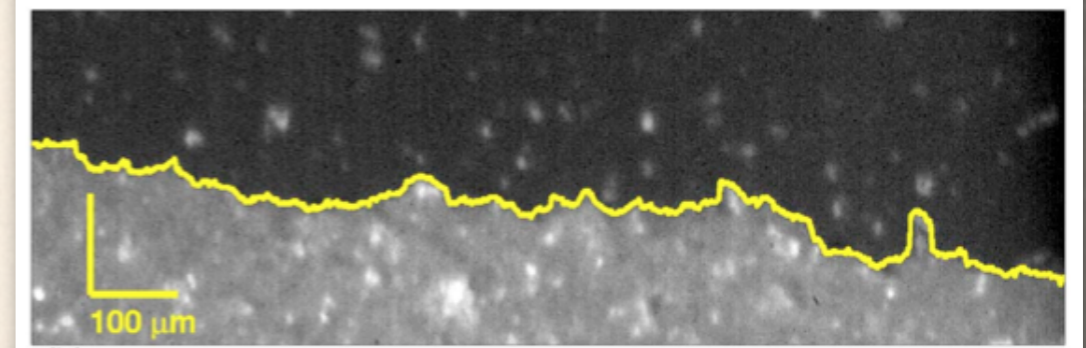


Lemerle et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **80**, 894 (1998).

Crack fronts



(a)

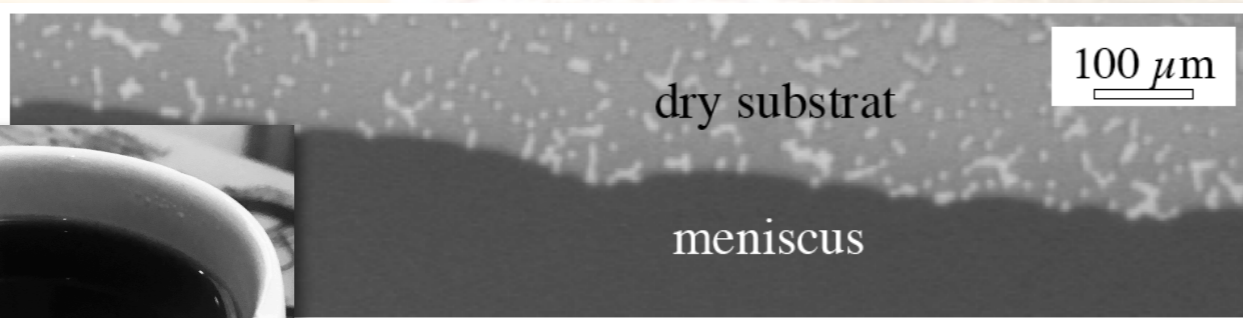


(b)

Santucci et al., *Phys. Rev. E* **75**, 016104 (2007).

Experimental examples of 'disordered elastic systems'

Contact line

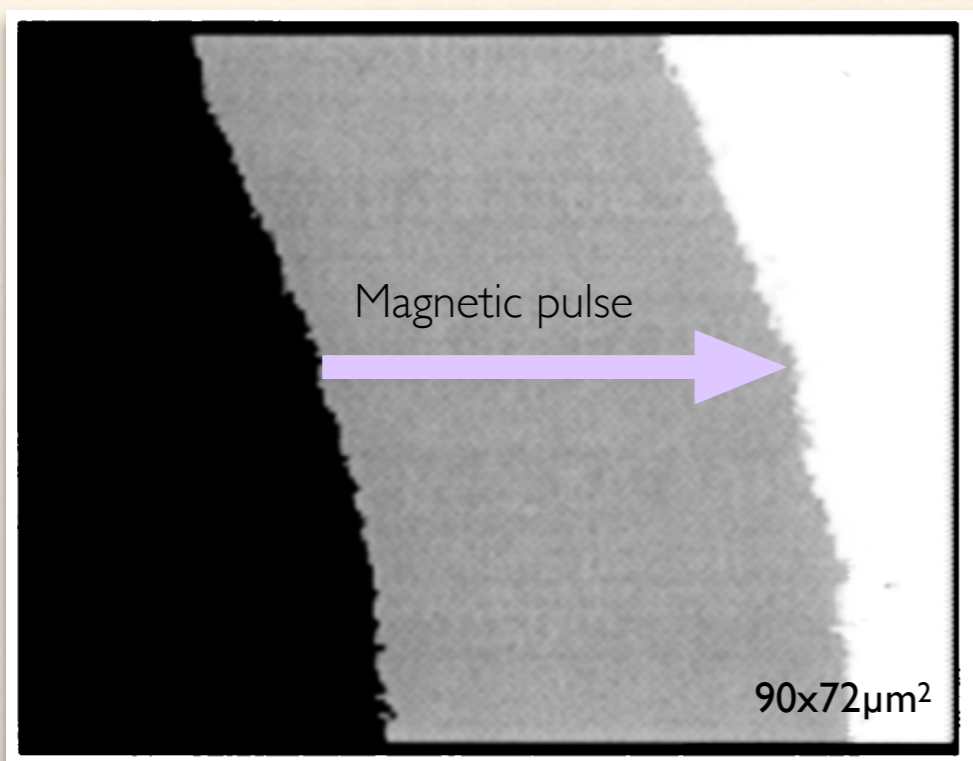
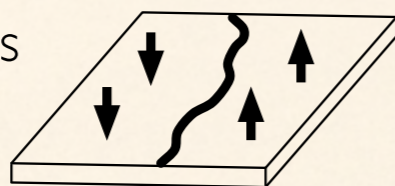


Moulinet et al., *Eur. Phys. J. E* **8**, 437 (2002).

- Imbibition fronts in porous media
- Burning fronts in paper/forest fires
- Fracture/cracks fronts
- Vortices in high-Tc superconductors
- Proliferating bacteria/cell fronts
- etc.

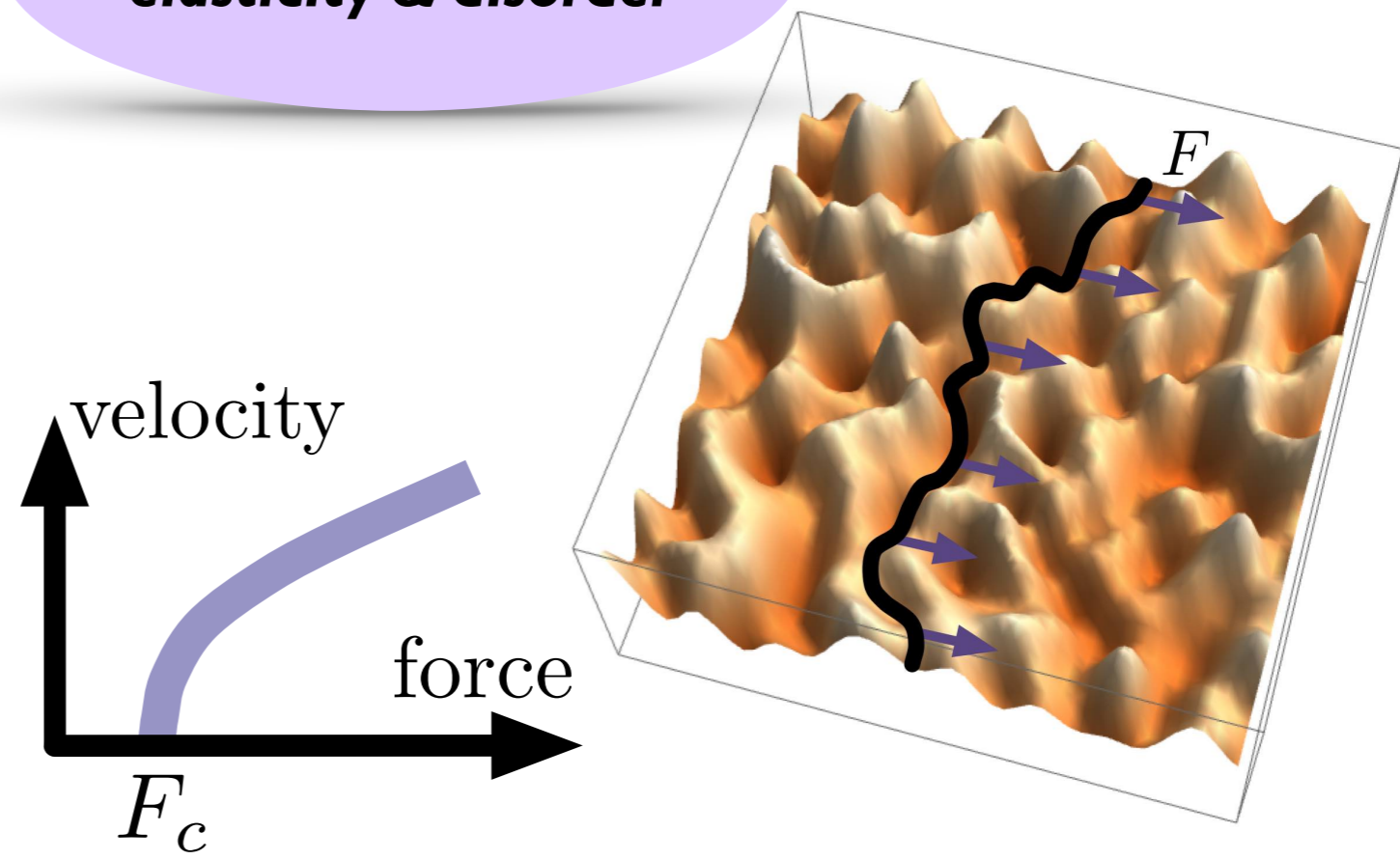
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(Ultrathin film of Pt/Co/Pt)



Lemerle et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **80**, 894 (1998).

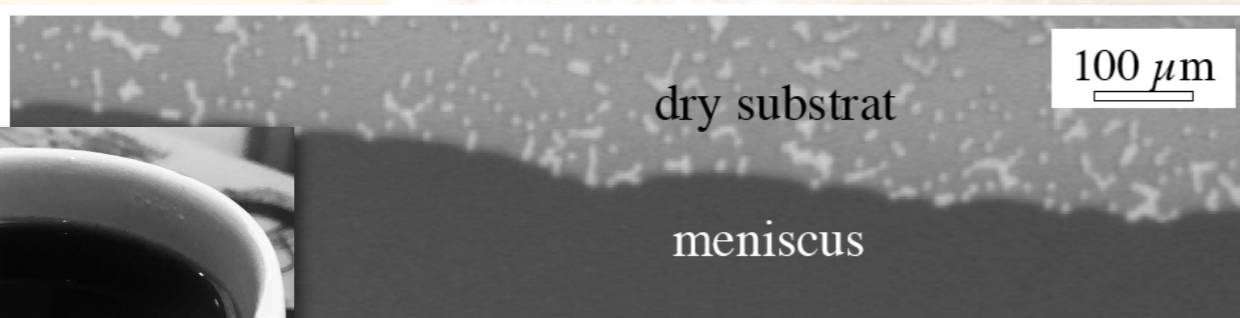
Two competing ingredients:
elasticity & disorder



Mini-review: E. Agoritsas, V. Lecomte, T. Giamarchi, *Physica B* **407**, 1725 (2012).

Experimental examples of 'disordered elastic systems'

Contact line

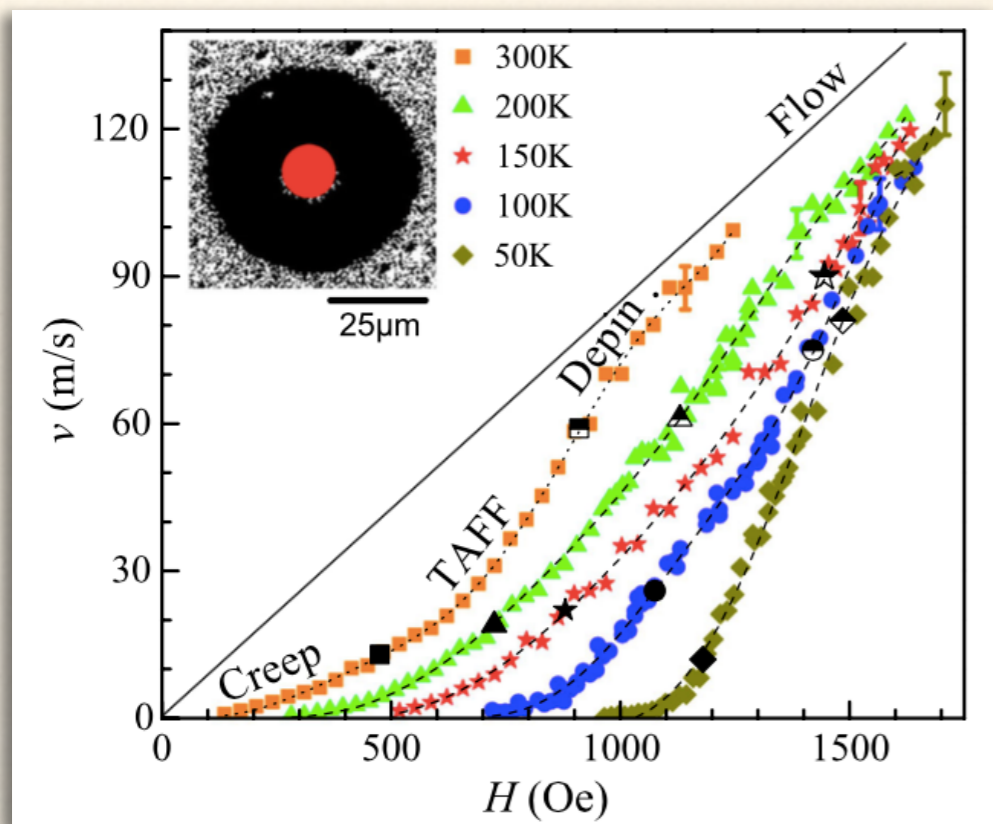
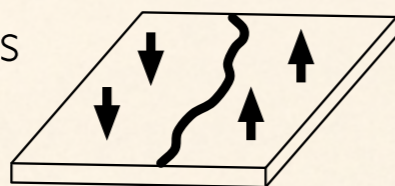


Moulinet et al., *Eur. Phys. J. E* **8**, 437 (2002).

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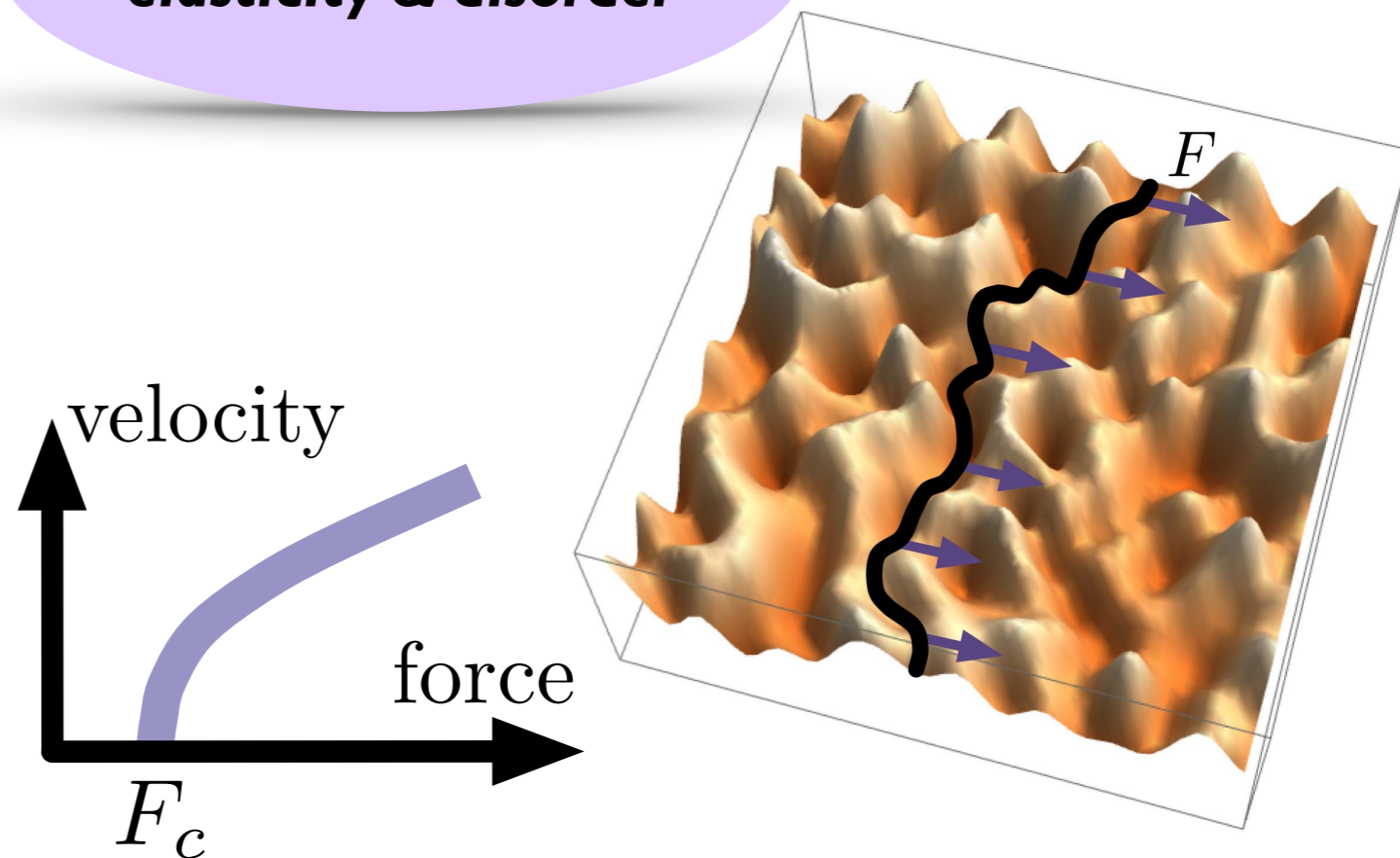
Ferromagnetic domain walls

(Ultrathin film of Pt/Co/Pt)



J. Gorchon et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **113**, 027205 (2014).

Two competing ingredients:
elasticity & disorder



Mini-review: E. Agoritsas, V. Lecomte, T. Giamarchi, *Physica B* **407**, 1725 (2012).

Statistical-physics approach: effective mesoscopic description

- Ubiquitous in nature, large variety of lengthscales & microphysics.

BUT do they share nevertheless common (universal?) features?



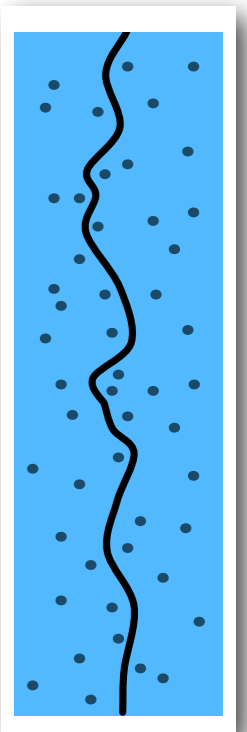
Review: A.-L. Barabàsi & H. E. Stanley, *Fractal Concepts in Surface Growth*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Increasing complexity starting from a microscopic 'bulk' description.
⇒ Need of a mesoscopic effective starting point
- Emergent structures, supported by a disordered underlying medium.
⇒ Only statistical characterization of disorder
- Effective description depending on the lengthscale considered.
⇒ Expectation of some kind of scale invariance

MICRO



MACRO



How do they look like?

How do they respond when one pulls at them?

How does disorder modify a pure system?

Probe of disorder-conditioned features
in statics/dynamics

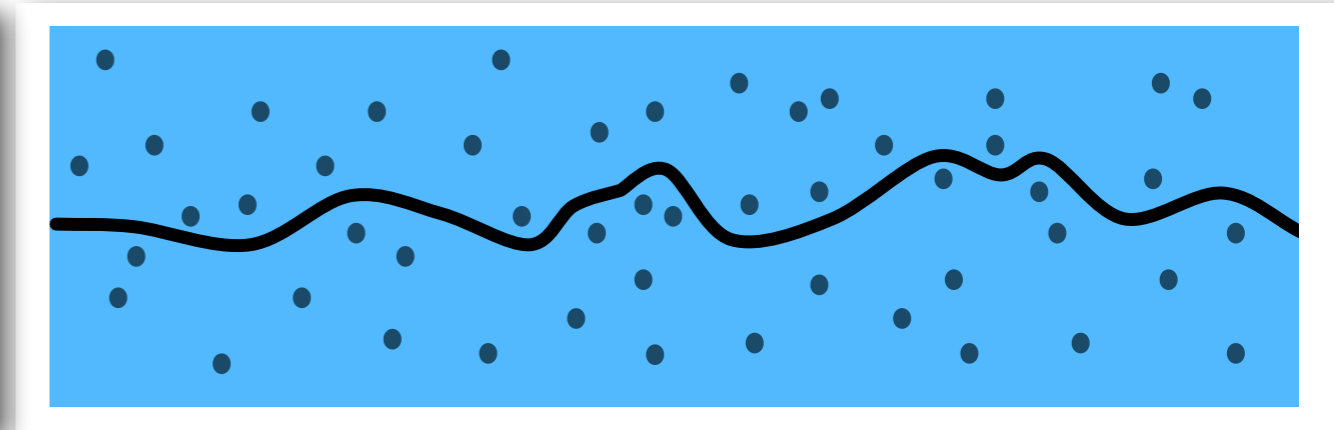
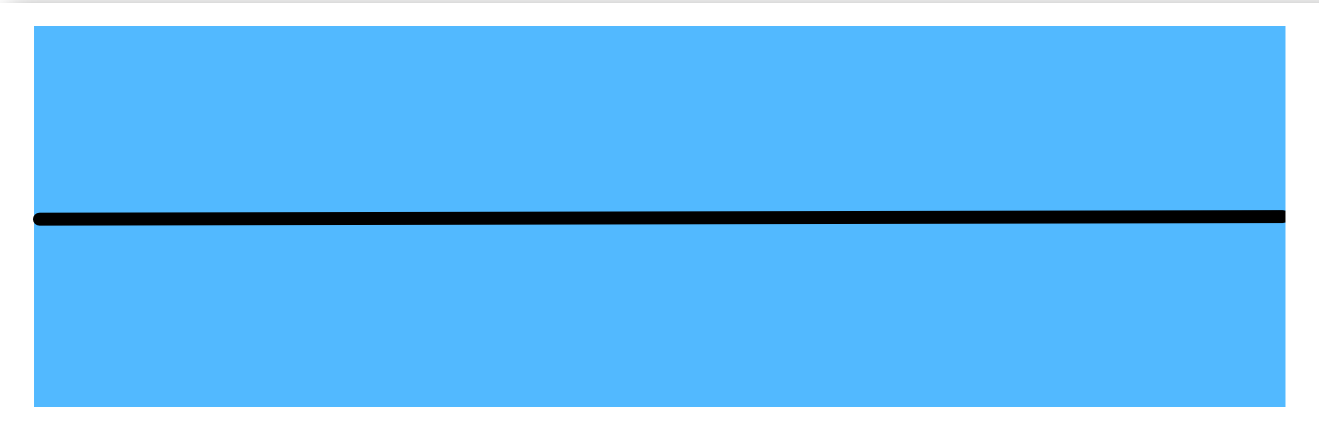
Disordered Elastic Systems (DES) – Generic theoretical framework

- Competition of three physical ingredients:

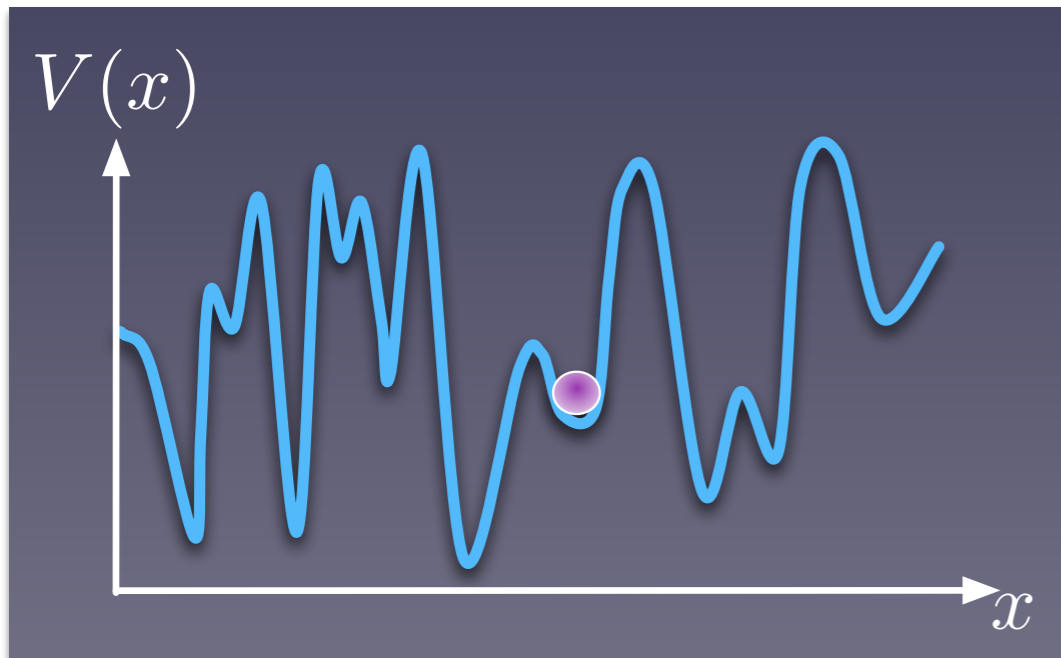
ELASTICITY

TEMPERATURE

DISORDER

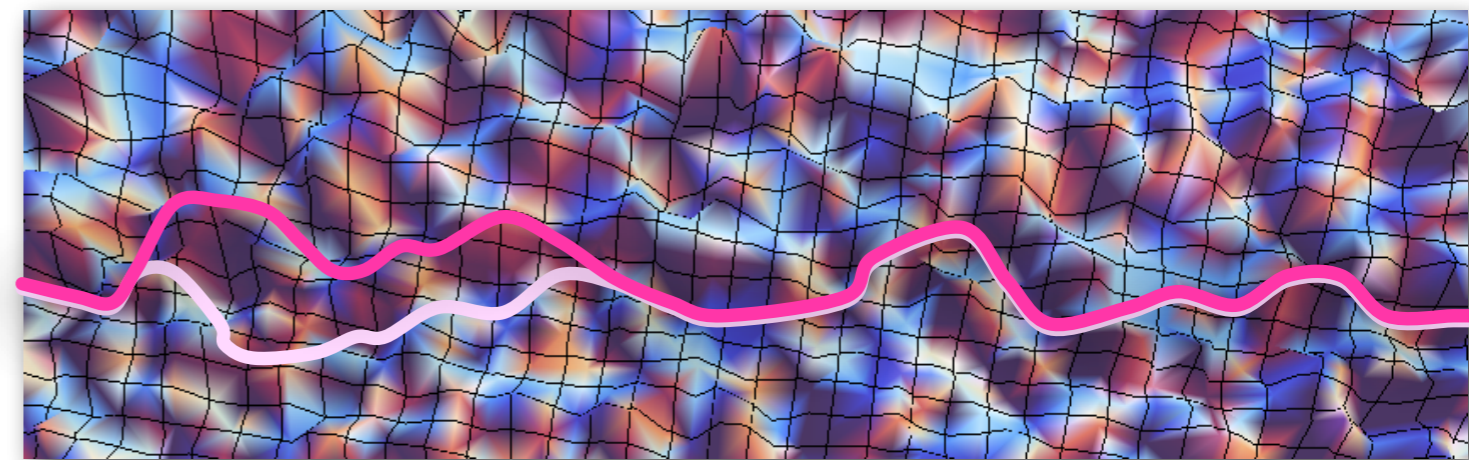


- Exploration of disordered energy landscapes



Simplest extended objects in a quenched disordered landscape

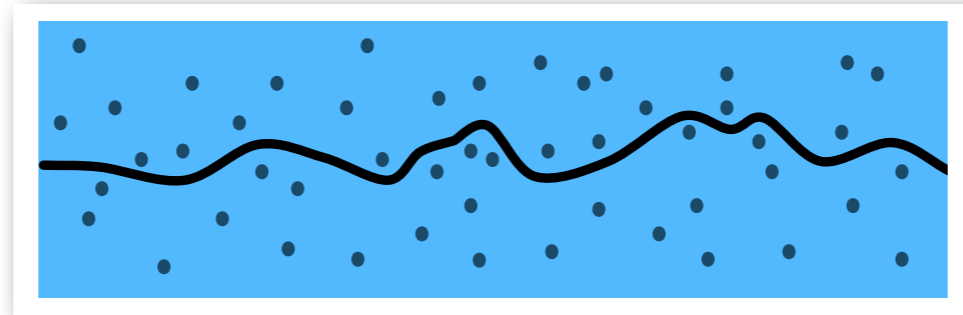
$V(x, z)$



Disordered Elastic Systems (DES) – Physical ingredients

■ Dimensionality Interfaces or periodic systems

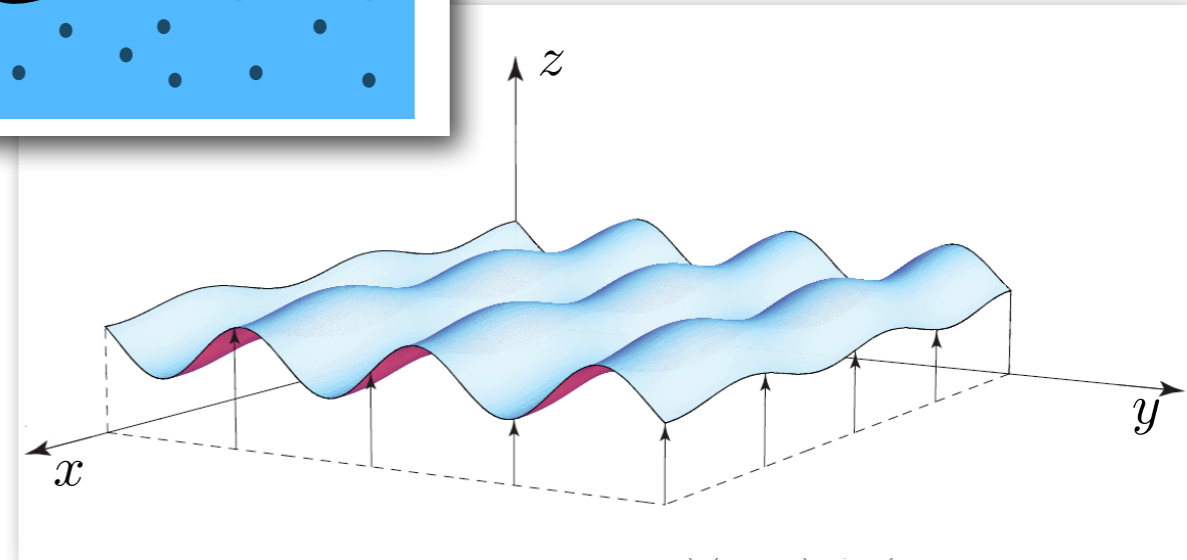
Internal dimension: d
Transverse dimension: m
Physical space dim. $D = d + m$



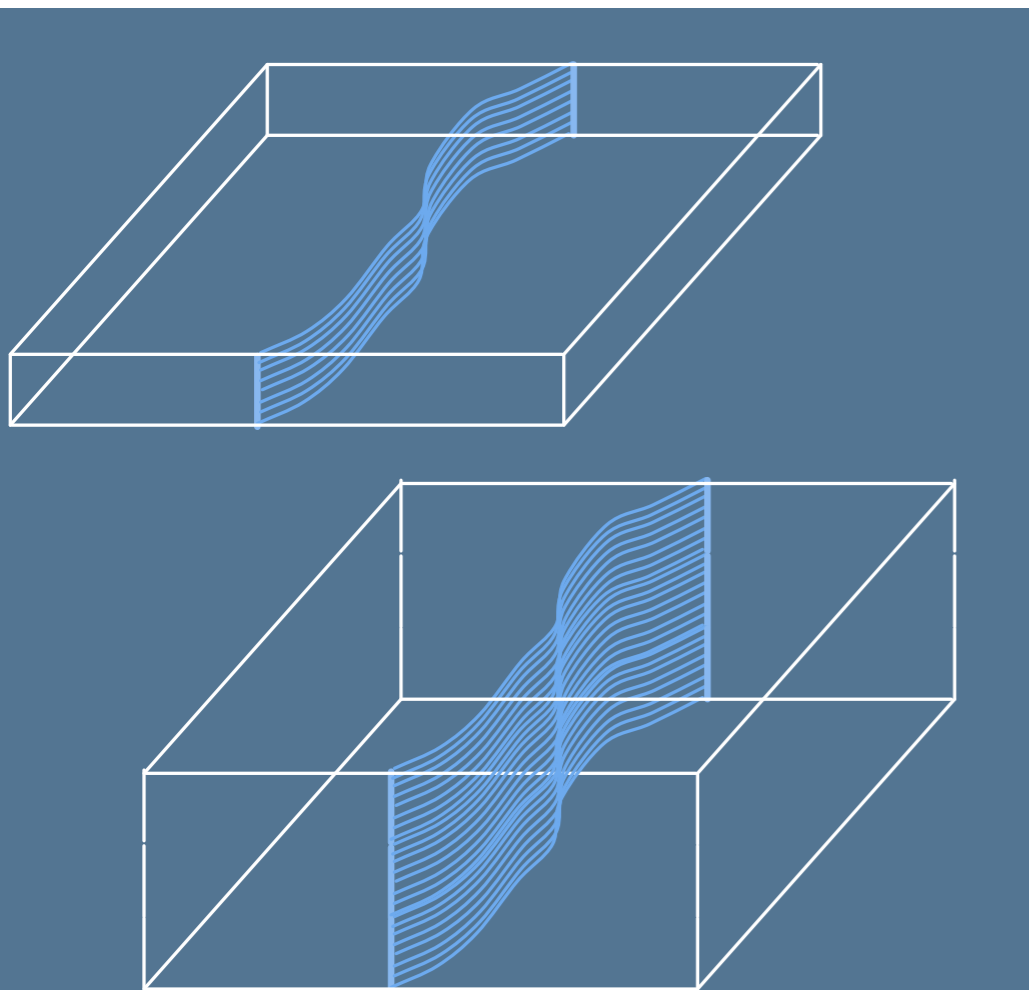
$$d = m = 1$$

← ID interface

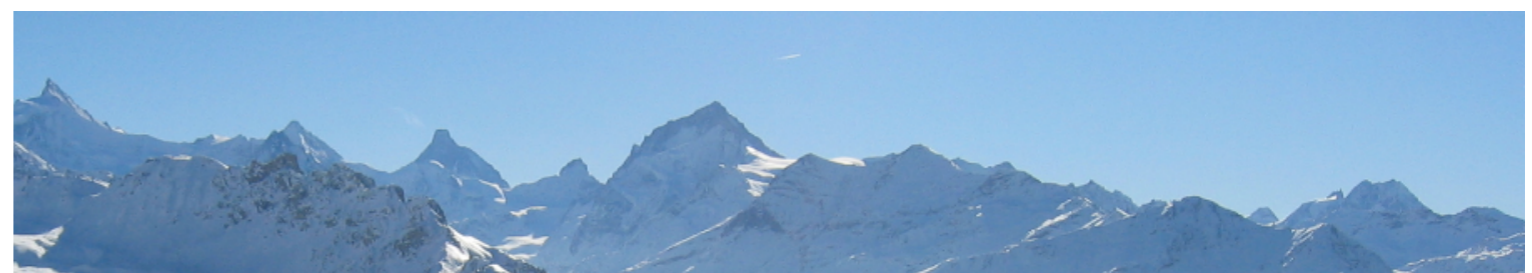
2D interface →
 $d = 2, m = 1$



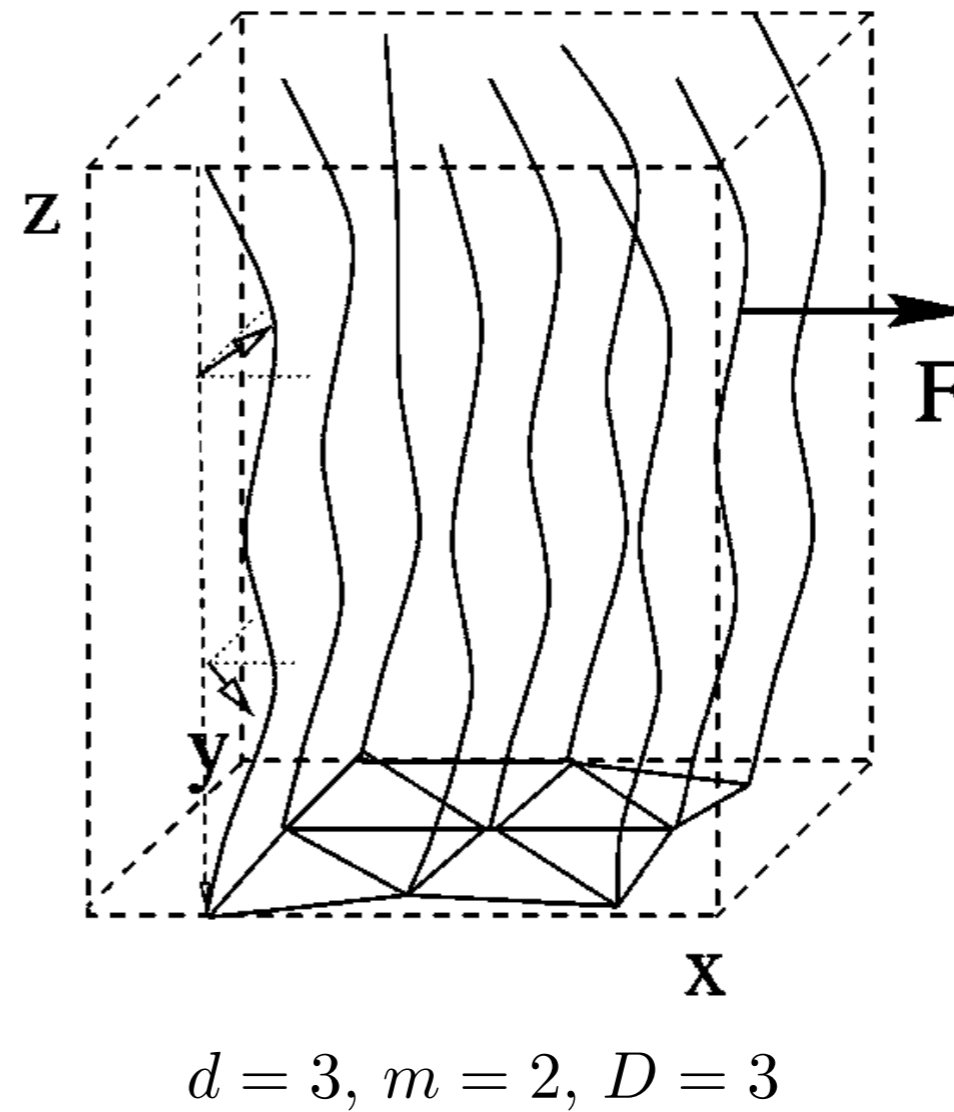
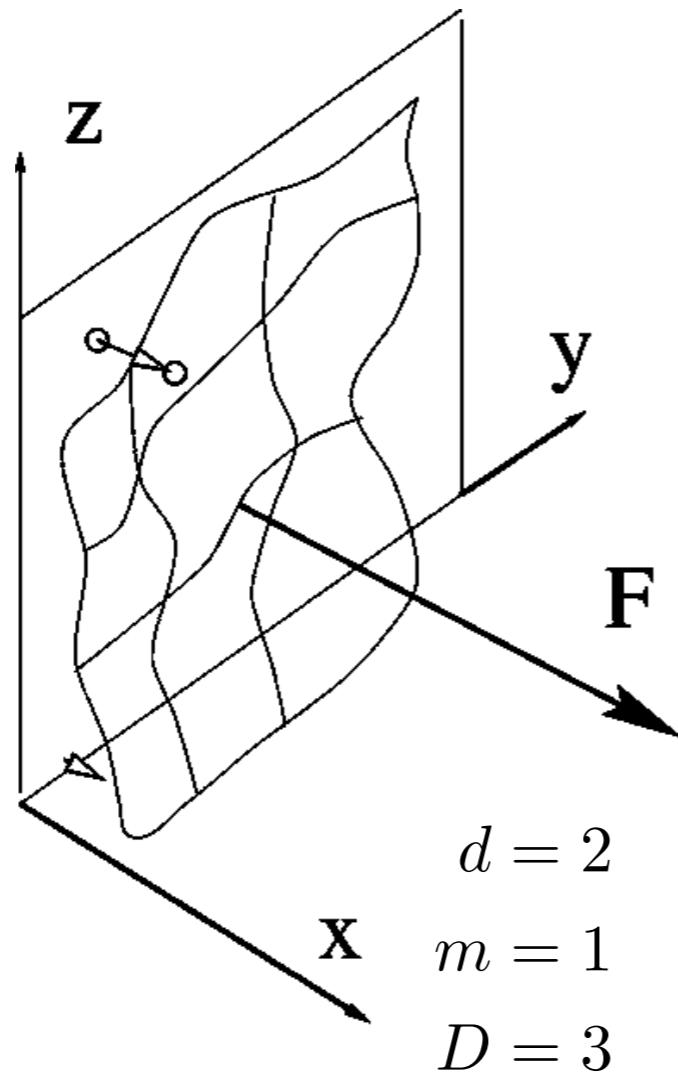
Dimensional crossover?



Effective 1D interface? NO!



■ **Dimensionality** Interfaces or periodic systems

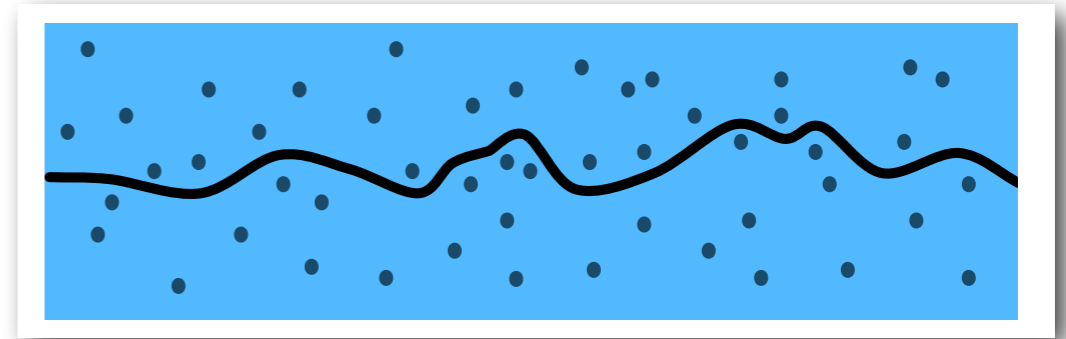
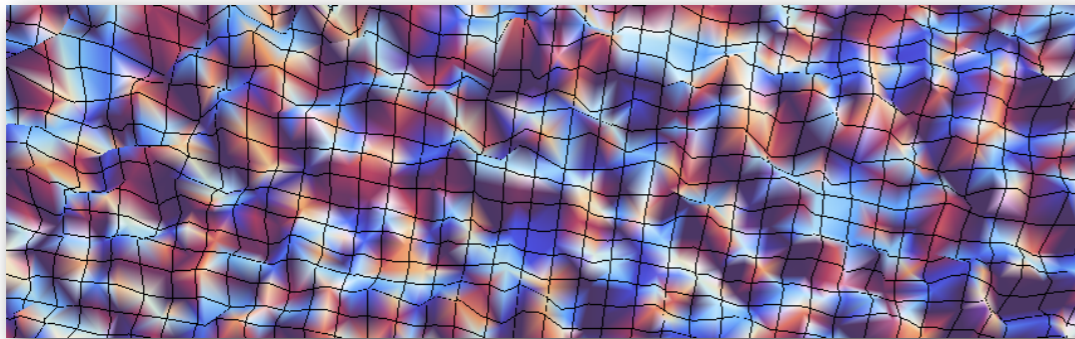


Disordered Elastic Systems (DES) – Physical ingredients

- **Dimensionality** Interfaces or periodic systems
- **Elasticity:** Long-range versus short-range, e.g. $\mathcal{H}_{el} \propto$ system size

- **Disorder:**
 - Quenched versus annealed disorder
 - 'Random-bond' versus 'random field'
 - Collective weak pinning versus strong individual pinning centers

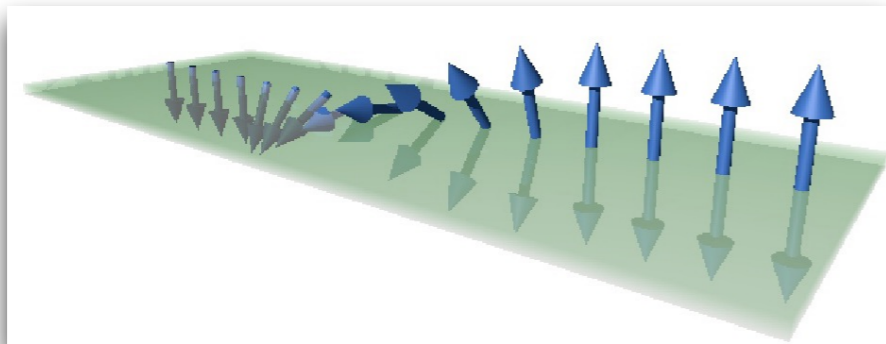
$$\mathcal{H}_{DES} = \mathcal{H}_{el} + \mathcal{H}_{dis}$$



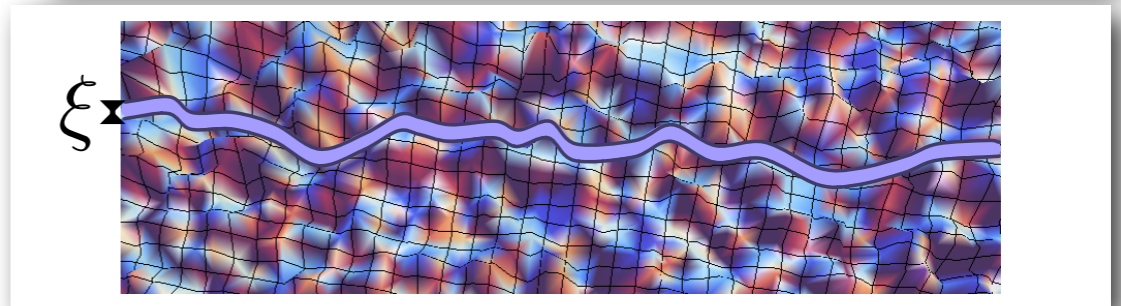
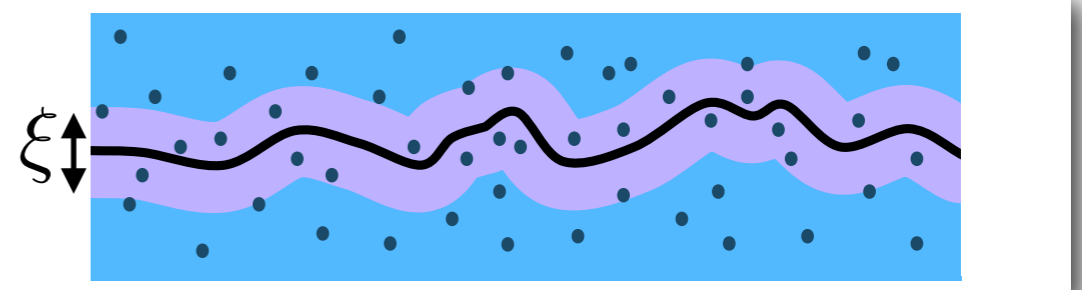
- **No bubbles nor overhangs**



- **Internal degree of freedom?**



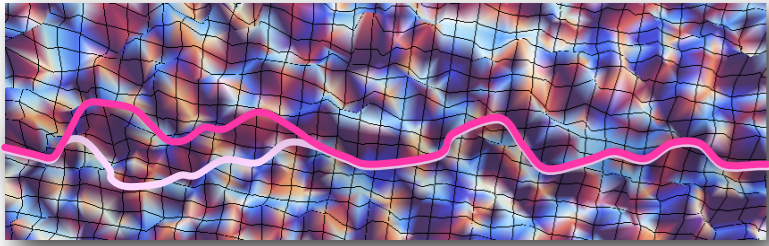
- **Finite width / Disorder correlation**



- **Equilibrium / Out-of-equilibrium?**

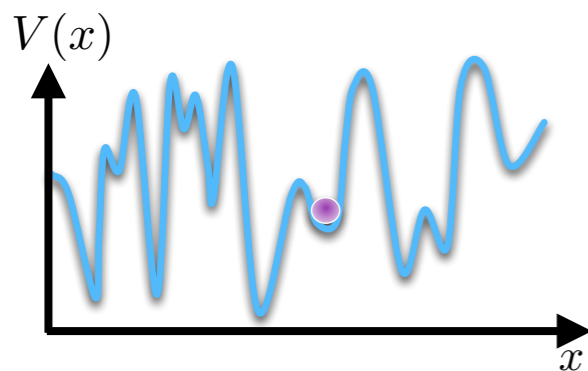
Disordered Elastic Systems (DES) – Observables for probing disorder

$V(x, z)$



How do they look like?
How do they respond when one pulls at them?
How does disorder modify a pure system?

- DES recipe
- Dimensionality
 - Elasticity
 - Disorder
 - Temperature
- No bubbles/overhangs
 - Internal structure (width, internal DoF, ...)
 - At (non-)equilibrium / external drive



Probe of disorder-conditioned features
in STATICS/DYNAMICS

Geometrical fluctuations
& roughness
as function of the lengthscale

Center-of-mass dynamics:
Steady-state velocity
under an external force

About ~50 years of literature in theory/experiments/numerics! ⇒ See reviews with refs therein

- T. Giamarchi, Encyclopedia of Complexity and Systems Science (2009), "Disordered Elastic Media"

Introduction to
DES

- E. Agoritsas, V. Lecomte, T. Giamarchi, *Physica B* 407, 1725 (2012), "Disordered elastic systems and one-dimensional interfaces"

Statics

- T. Giamarchi, A. B. Kolton, A. Rosso, *Lecture Notes in Physics* 688, 91 (2006) [arXiv:0503437], "Dynamics of disordered elastic systems"

Dynamics

- K. J. Wiese, *Reports on Progress in Physics* 85, 086502 (2022), "Theory and experiments for disordered elastic manifolds, depinning, avalanches, and sandpiles"

Very recent
extended review

- D. S. Fisher, *Physics Reports* 301, 113 (1998), "Collective transport in random media: from superconductors to earthquakes"

Lectures (1998)


- G. Blatter, M. V. Feigel'man, V. B. Geshkenbein, A. I. Larkin, V. M. Vinokur, *Reviews of Modern Physics* 66, 1125 (1994), "Vortices in high-temperature superconductors"

"Canonical review"

Interfaces in disordered systems and directed polymer

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- 1. Introduction
- ➔ ■ 2. Disordered elastic systems: Recipe
- 3. Disordered elastic systems: Statics
- 4. Disordered elastic systems: Dynamics
- 5. Concluding remarks



2.1 **Observables:** geometrical fluctuations and center-of-mass dynamics

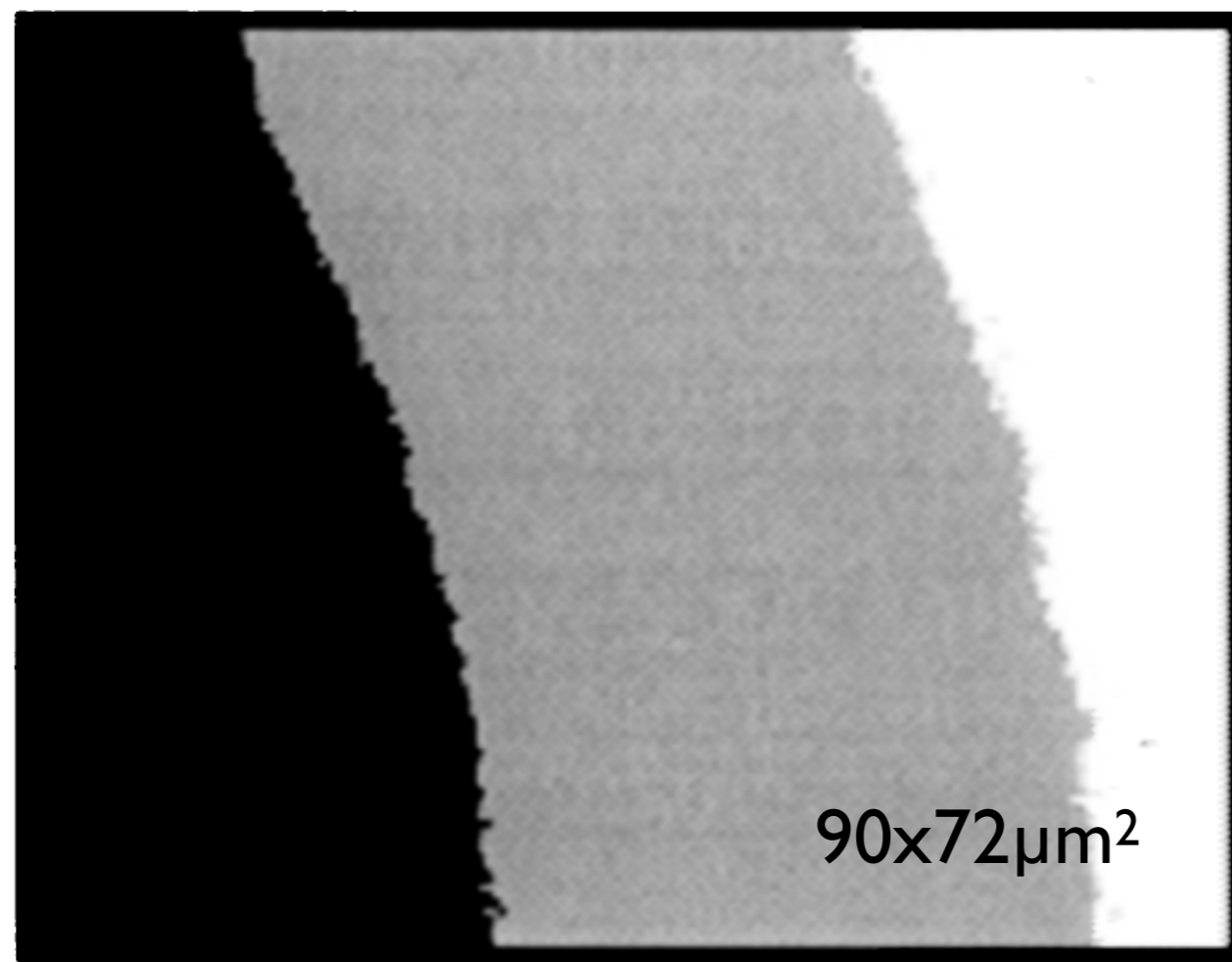
2.2 **Specific model:** Hamiltonian, Langevin dynamics, dynamical action

Observable 1: Geometrical fluctuations & roughness

Ferromagnetic domain wall ($\xi \sim 50\text{nm}$)

RESOLUTION: $1\mu\text{m}$

Ultrathin film of Pt/Co/Pt (a few atomic layers)

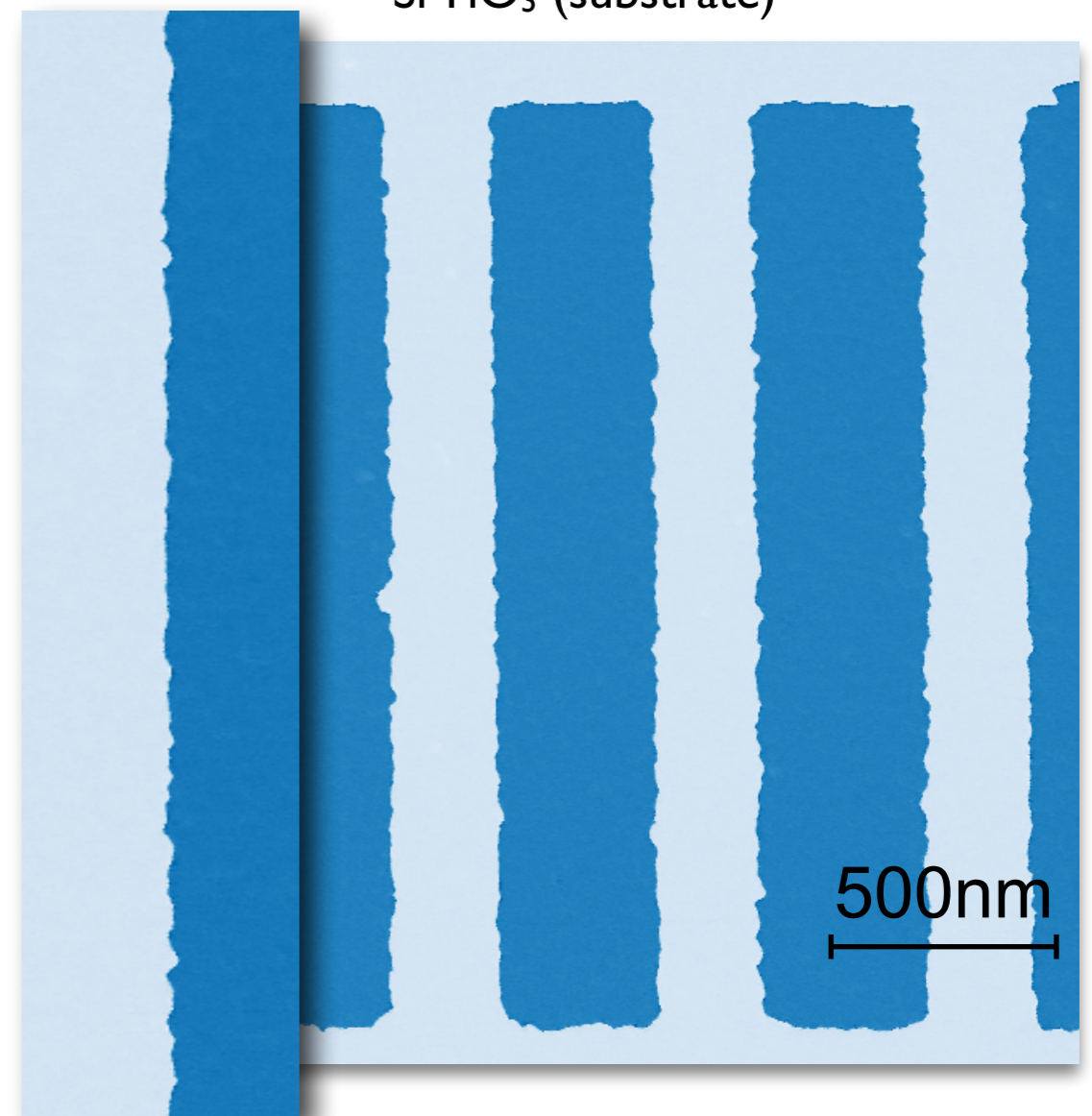


S. Lemerle, J. Ferré, C. Chappert, V. Mathet, T. Giamarchi, & P. Le Doussal, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 80, 849 (1998).

Ferroelectric domain wall ($\xi \sim 1\text{nm}$)

RESOLUTION: 5nm

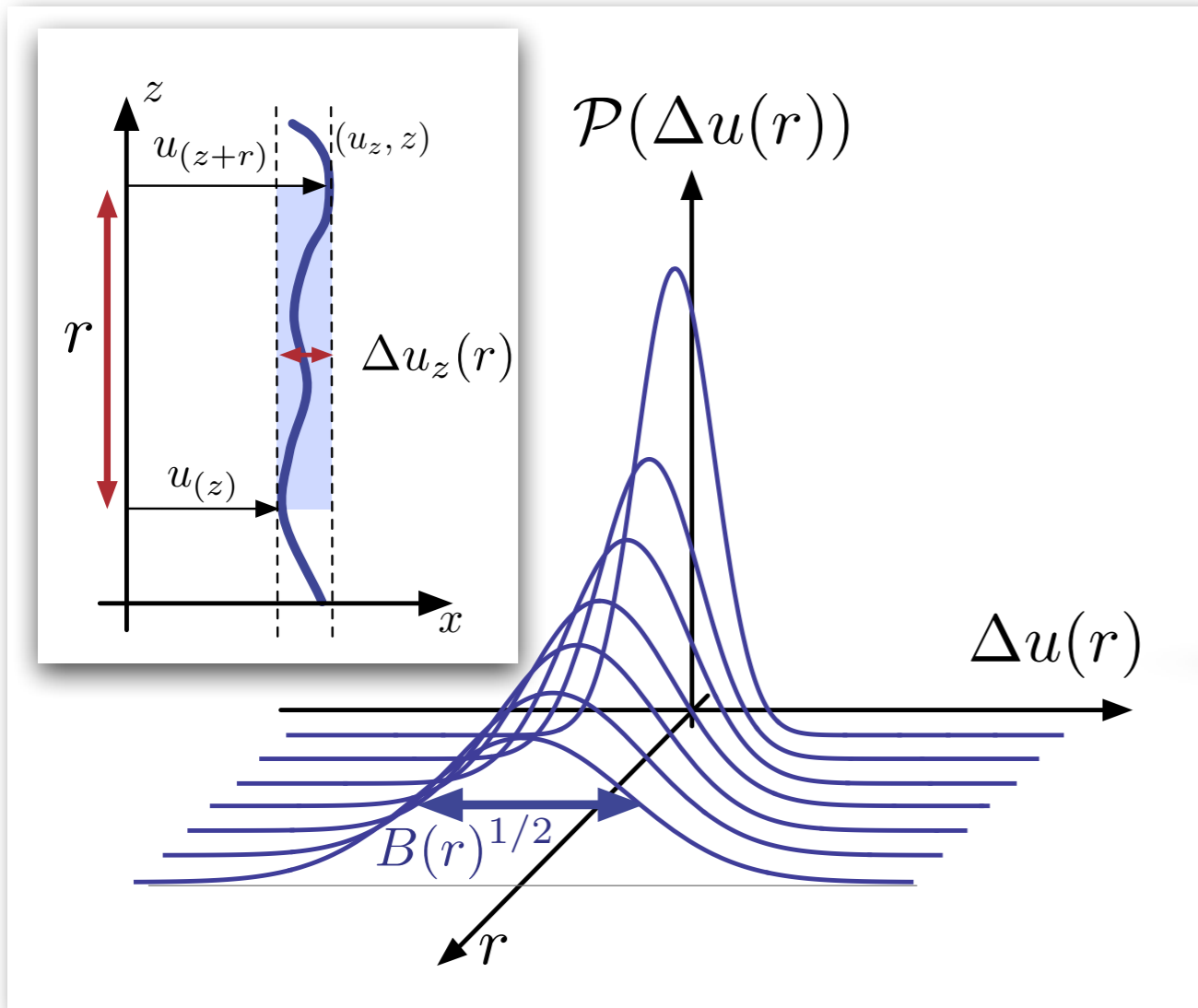
PbZr_{0.2}Ti_{0.8}O₃ 70nm / SrRuO₃ 30nm (electrode) / SrTiO₃ (substrate)



J. Guyonnet, E. Agoritsas, S. Bustingorry, T. Giamarchi, & P. Paruch, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 109, 147601 (2012).

Observable 1: Geometrical fluctuations & roughness

- Statistical analysis of a snapshot of an interface configuration \Rightarrow access to the roughness



- Lengthscale r - Relative displacement $\Delta u(r)$
- Probability distribution function $\mathcal{P}(\Delta u(r))$
- Roughness function: $B(r) = \overline{\langle \Delta u(r)^2 \rangle} \sim A r^{2\zeta}$

Roughness exponent ζ :
Signature of the predominant physics
 \Rightarrow *Universality classes?*

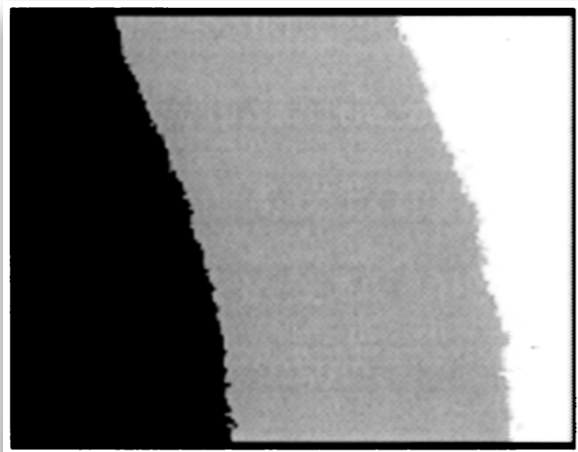
Different roughness regimes?
 Amplitude(s)/Crossover(s)

- Roughness exponent for 1D interface:
 (short-range elasticity & random-bond disorder)

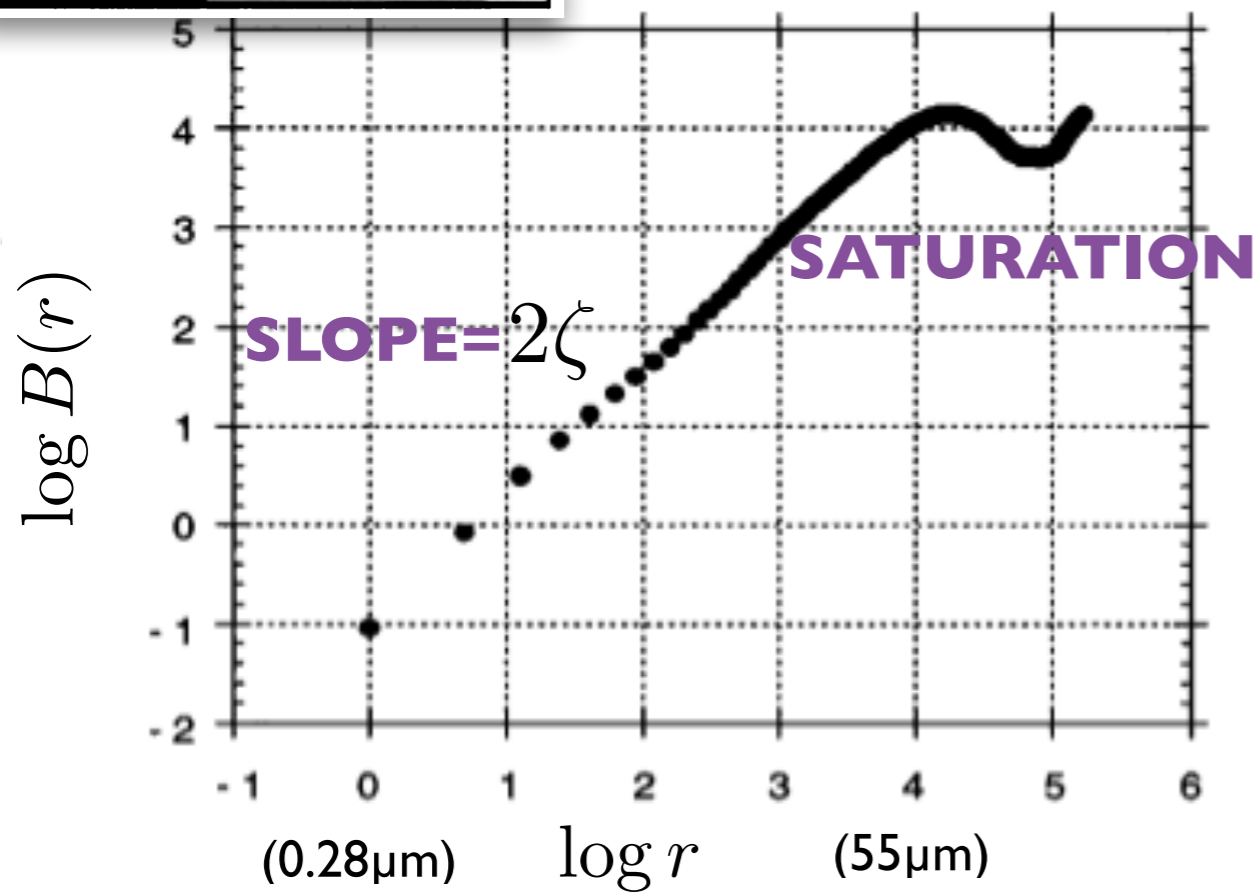
$$\begin{cases} \zeta_{\text{thermal}} = 1/2 \\ \zeta_{\text{KPZ}} = 2/3 \end{cases}$$

Observable 1: Geometrical fluctuations & roughness

Domain walls in ultrathin Pt/Co/Pt ferromagnetic films

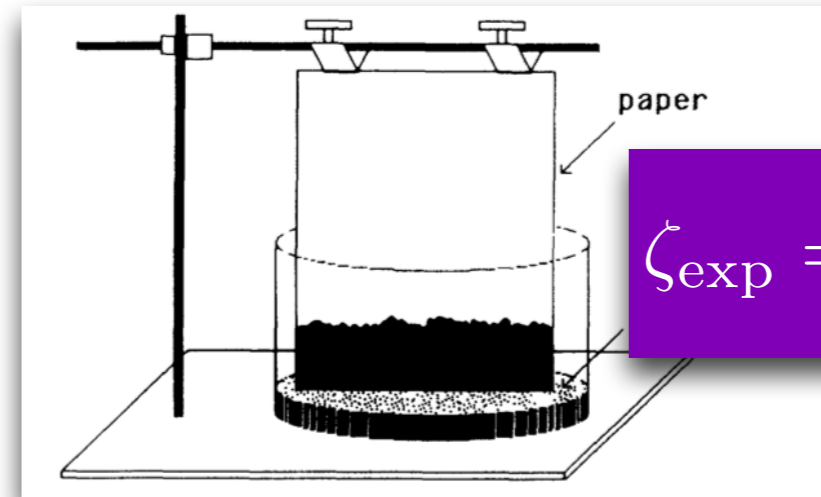


$$\zeta_{\text{exp}} = 0.69 \pm 0.07$$

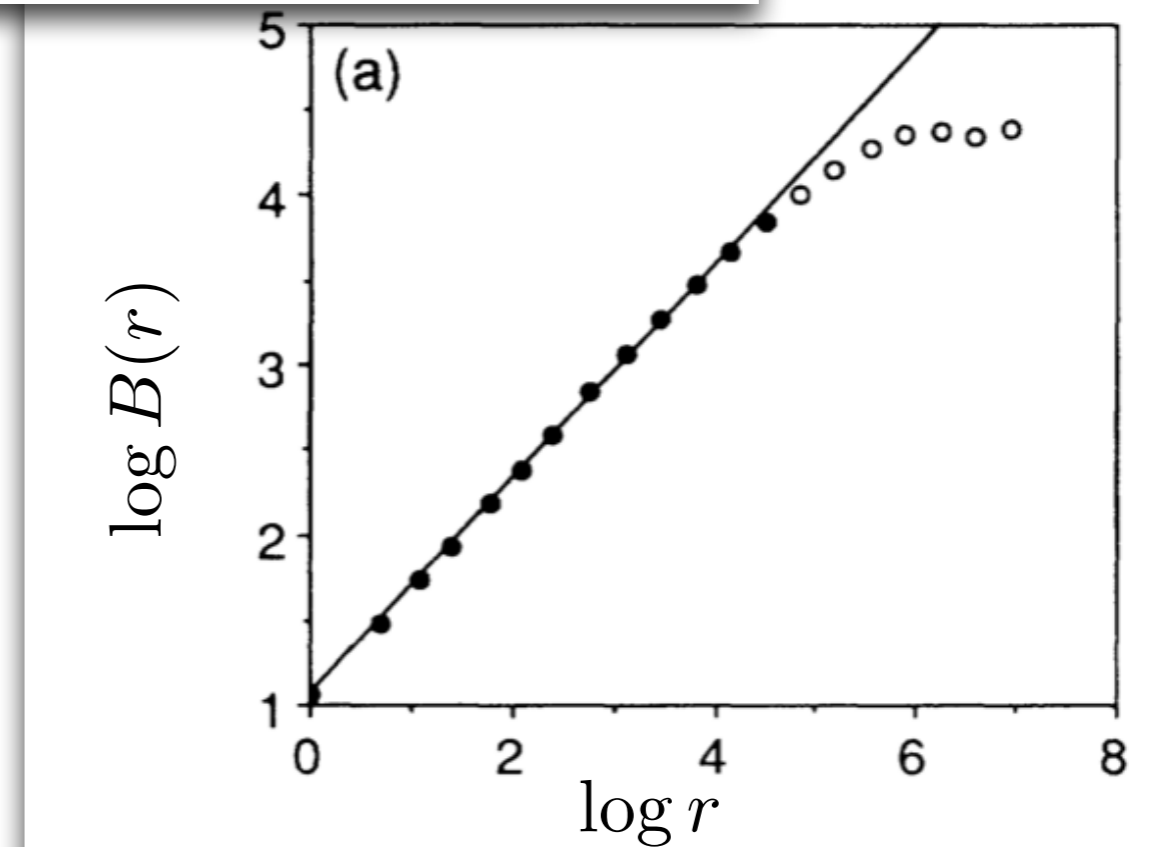


S. Lemerle et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **80**, 849 (1998).

Fluid invasion in a porous medium

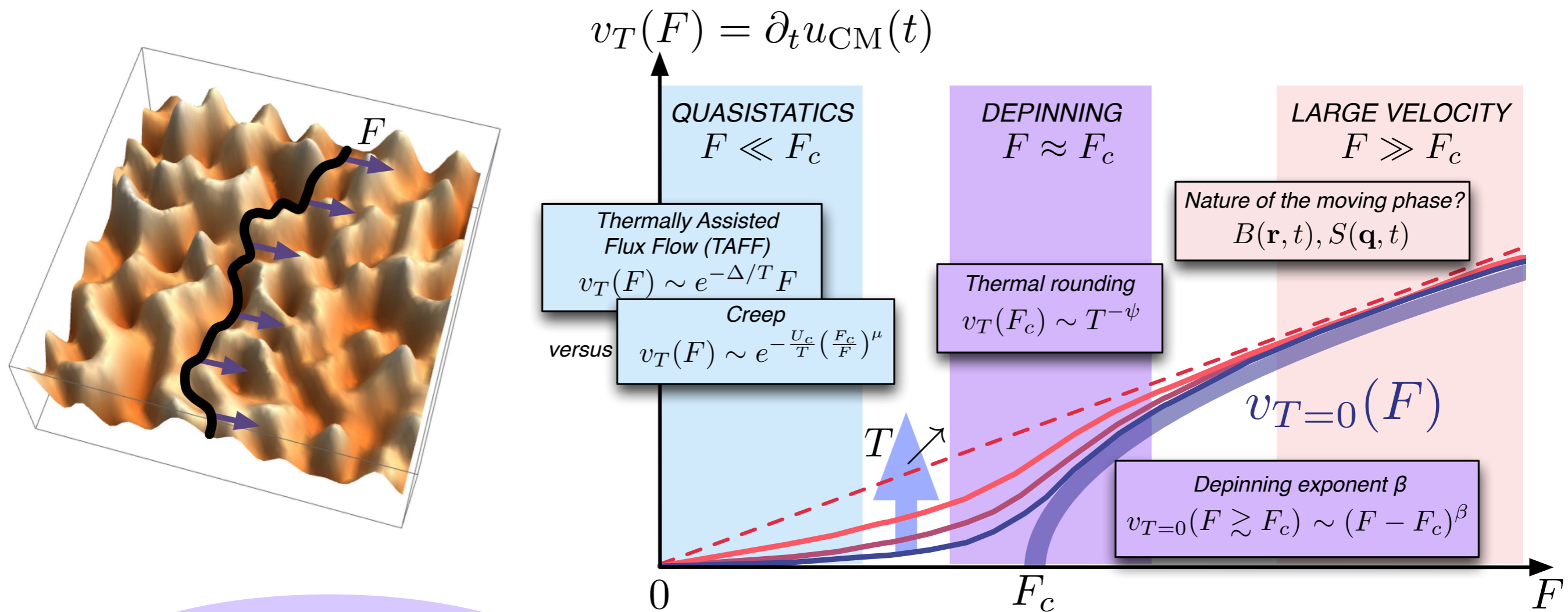


$$\zeta_{\text{exp}} = 0.63 \pm 0.04$$



Buldyrev et al., *Phys. Rev. A* **45**, 8313 (1992).

Observable 2 — Steady-state velocity-force characteristics



‘Creep’ regime:
quasistatics at low temperature
& small force

E. Agoritsas et al., *Physica B* 407, 1725 (2012).
 T. Giamarchi et al., *Lecture Notes in Physics* 688, 91 (2006).
 E. Ferrero et al., *Comptes Rendus Physique* 14, 641 (2013).
 E. Ferrero et al., *Annu. Rev. Con. Math. Phys.* 12, 111 (2021).

■ Focus on low temperature T / small force f / large system size L : creep prediction?

$v_T(F) \sim e^{-\frac{U_c}{T}} \left(\frac{F_c}{F}\right)^\mu$	ID interface, short-range elasticity (elastic limit), random-bond disorder	$\mu = \frac{d - 2 + 2\zeta}{2 - \zeta} \underset{(d=1)}{\overset{(\zeta=2/3)}{=}} = \frac{1}{4}$
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In ferromagnetic domain walls: S. Lemerle et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 80, 849 (1998).

Observable 2 — Steady-state velocity-force characteristics

Elastic line, short-range elasticity (elastic limit), random-bond disorder

■ Vortices in high- T_c superconductors

A. I. Larkin, *Sov. Phys. JETP* 31, 784 (1970),

"Effect of inhomogeneities on the structure of the mixed state of superconductors"

VOLUME 63, NUMBER 20

PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS

13 NOVEMBER 1989

Theory of Collective Flux Creep

M. V. Feigel'man, V. B. Geshkenbein, A. I. Larkin,^(a) and V. M. Vinokur^(b)

PHYSICAL REVIEW B

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 13

1 MAY 1990

Thermal fluctuations of vortex lines, pinning, and creep in high- T_c superconductors

M. V. Feigel'man

*Institut für Theoretische Physik, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Hönggerberg, 8093 Zürich, Switzerland
and Landau Institute for Theoretical Physics, 117940 Moscow, U.S.S.R.**

V. M. Vinokur

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VOLUME 64, NUMBER 20

PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS

14 MAY 1990

Scaling Approach to Pinning: Charge-Density Waves and Giant Flux Creep in Superconductors

Thomas Nattermann^(a)

PHYSICAL REVIEW B

VOLUME 52, NUMBER 2

1 JULY 1995-II

Elastic theory of flux lattices in the presence of weak disorder

Thierry Giamarchi*

Laboratoire de Physique des Solides, Université Paris-Sud, Bâtiment 510, 91405 Orsay, France

Pierre Le Doussal†

Laboratoire de Physique Théorique de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, 24 Rue Lhomond, F-75231 Paris Cedex, France

(Received 16 January 1995)

Institut

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wave

value of the
in the pres-
single-vortex

Observable 2 — Steady-state velocity-force characteristics

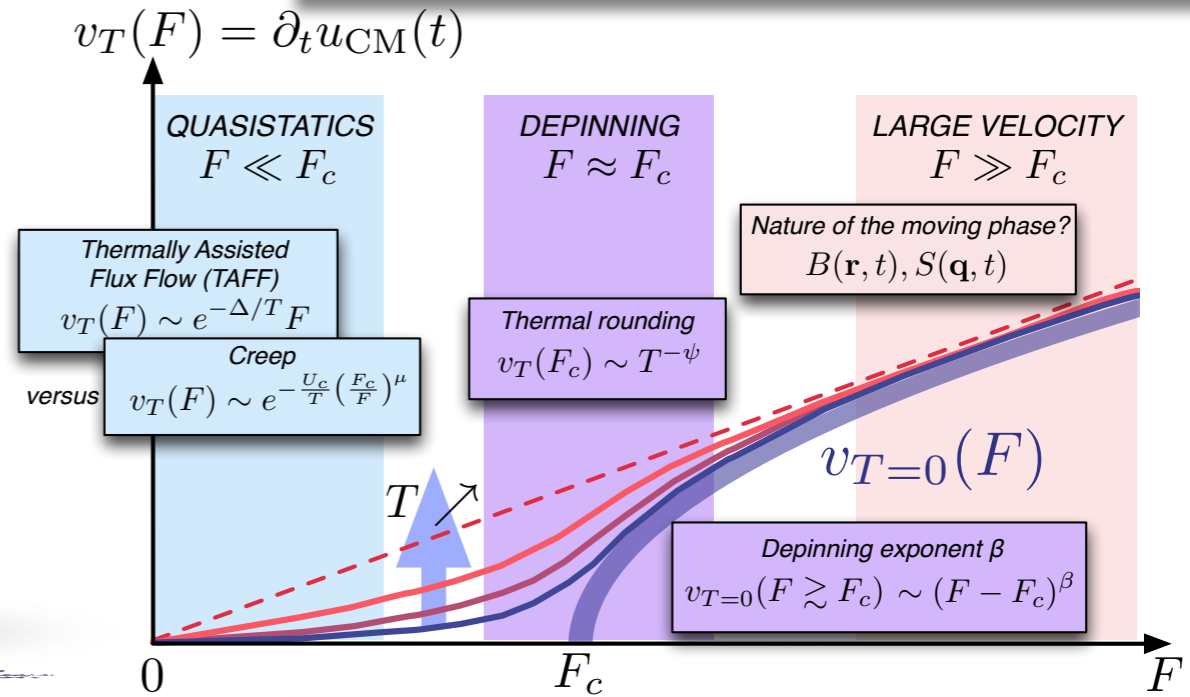
Vortices in high- T_c superconductors

- A. I. Larkin, *Sov. Phys. JETP* 31, 784 (1970).
- M.V. Feigel'man et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 63, 2303 (1989).
- M.V. Feigel'man & V. M. Vinokur., *Phys. Rev. B* 41, 8986 (1990).
- T. Nattermann, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 64, 2454 (1990).
- T. Giamarchi & P. Le Doussal, *Phys. Rev. B* 52, 1242 (1995).
- Etc.

Individual vortex v.s. collective pinning

Scaling argument for the creep

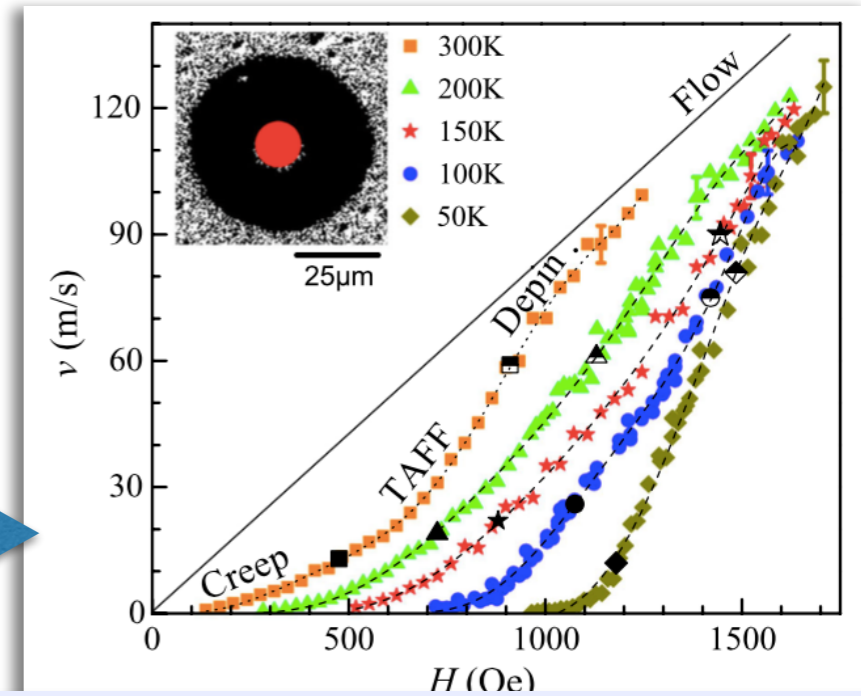
Elastic line, short-range elasticity (elastic limit), random-bond disorder



Ferromagnetic domain walls in ultra-thin films

90x72 μm^2
Pt/Co/Pt

- S. Lemerle et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 80, 849 (1998).
- J. Ferré, P. T. Metaxas, A. Mougin, J.-P. Jamet, J. Gorchon, & V. Jeudy, *Comptes Rendus Physique* 14, 651 (2013).
- S. Bustingorry et al., *Phys. Rev. B* 85, 214416 (2012).
- J. Gorchon et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 113, 027205 (2014).
- V. Jeudy et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 117, 057201 (2016).
- etc.



Other dimensionality/elasticity/disorder

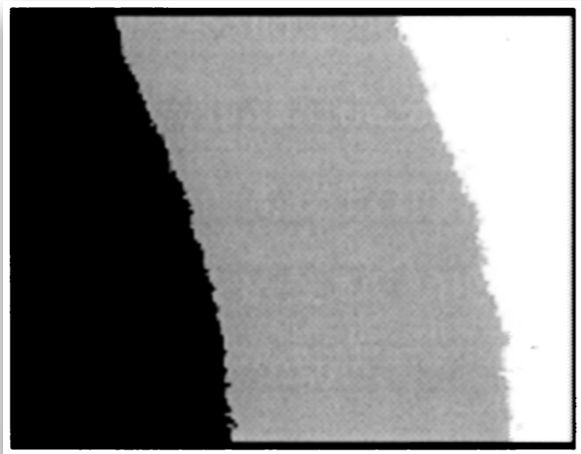
Ferroelectric domain walls in thin film (e.g. $\text{Pb}(\text{Zr}_{0.2}\text{Ti}_{0.8})\text{O}_3$)

P. Paruch & J. Guyonnet, *Comptes Rendus Physique* 14, 667 (2013).

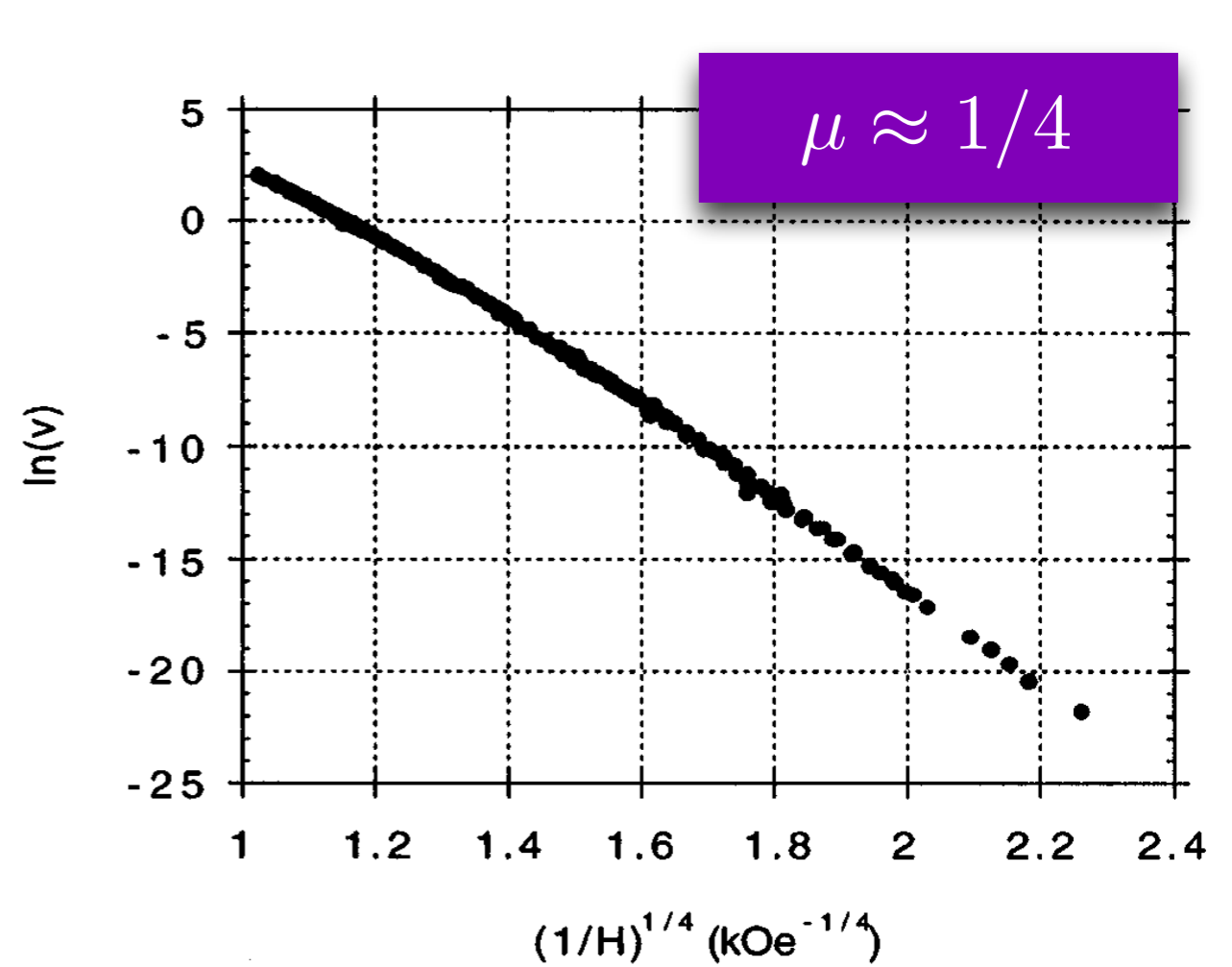
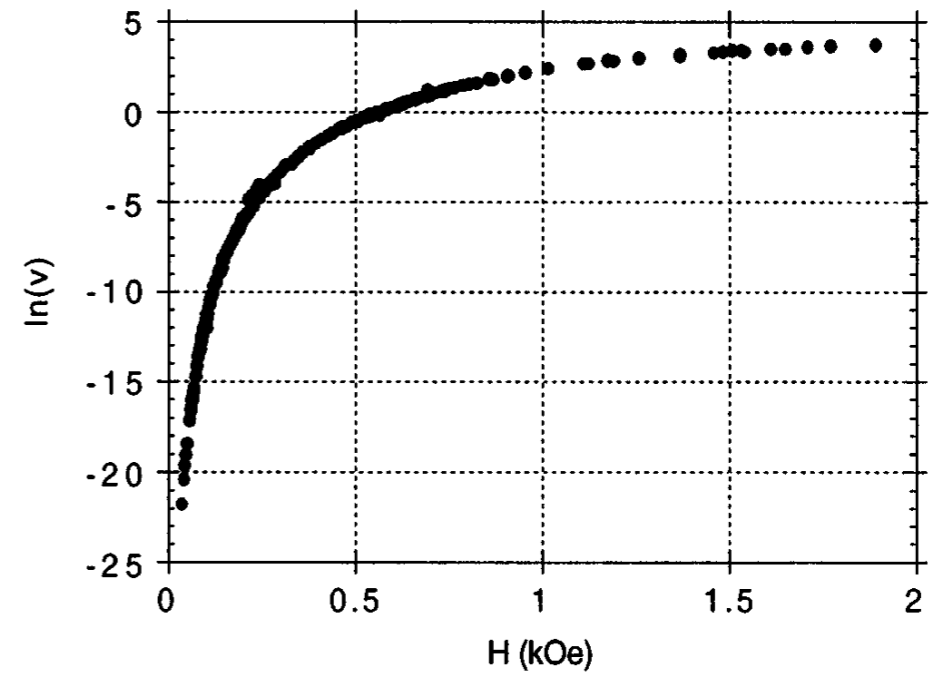
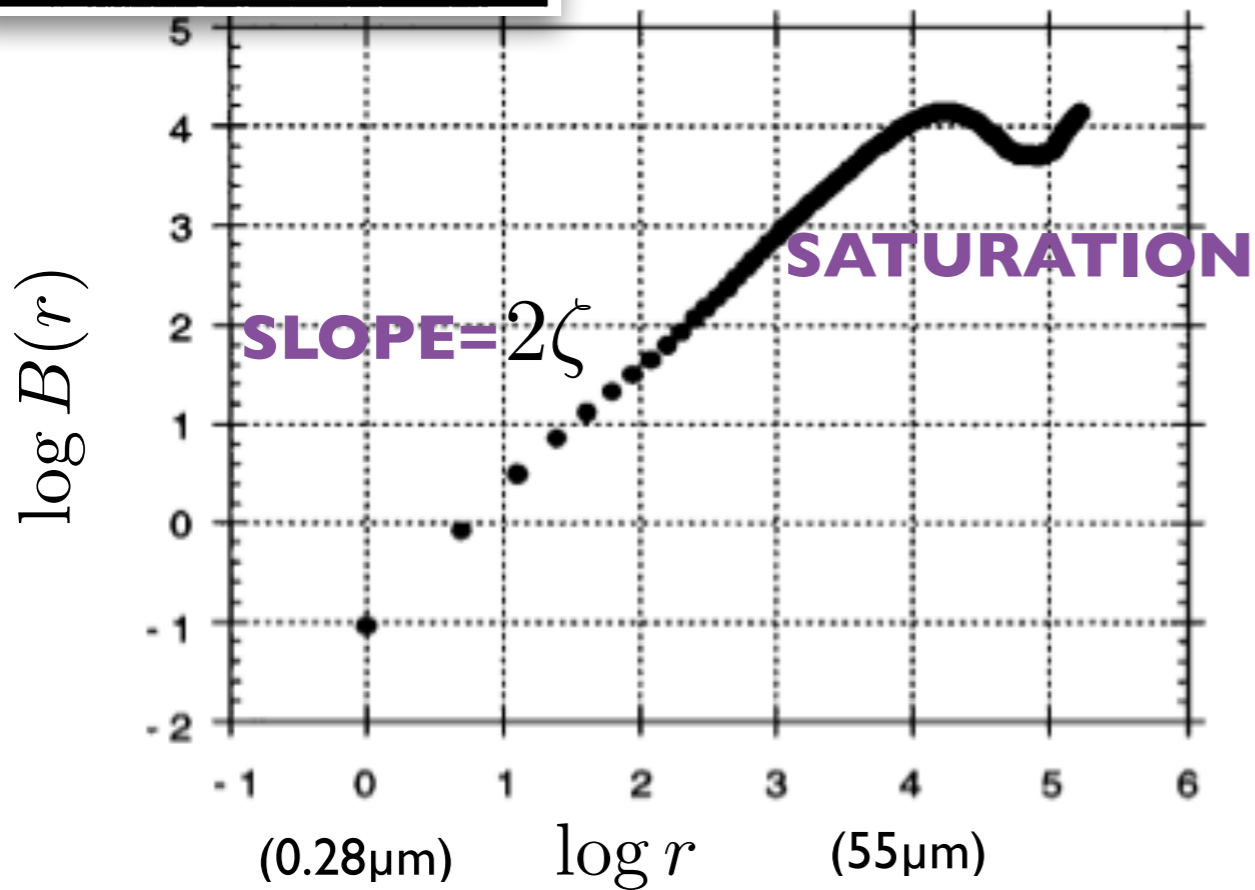
Imbibition fronts, fractures, fluid invasion in porous medium, etc. via DES modelling

Roughness and creep exponents

Domain walls in ultrathin Pt/Co/Pt ferromagnetic films



$$\zeta_{\text{exp}} = 0.69 \pm 0.07$$



S. Lemerle et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **80**, 849 (1998).

Model: 1D interface with finite width / short-range correlated disorder

- Short-range elasticity & Elastic limit / Quenched random-bond weak disorder

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{DES}} = \mathcal{H}_{\text{el}} + \mathcal{H}_{\text{dis}}$$

$$\text{Hamiltonian: } \mathcal{H}[u, \tilde{V}] = \int_{\mathbb{R}} dz \cdot \left[\frac{c}{2} (\nabla_z u(z))^2 + \int_{\mathbb{R}} dx \cdot \rho_{\xi}(x - u(z)) \tilde{V}(z, x) \right]$$

Elasticity Effective random potential $V(z, u(z))$

- Density $\rho_{\xi}(x - u(z))$ & random potential $\tilde{V}(z, x)$

$$\overline{\tilde{V}(z, x)} = 0$$

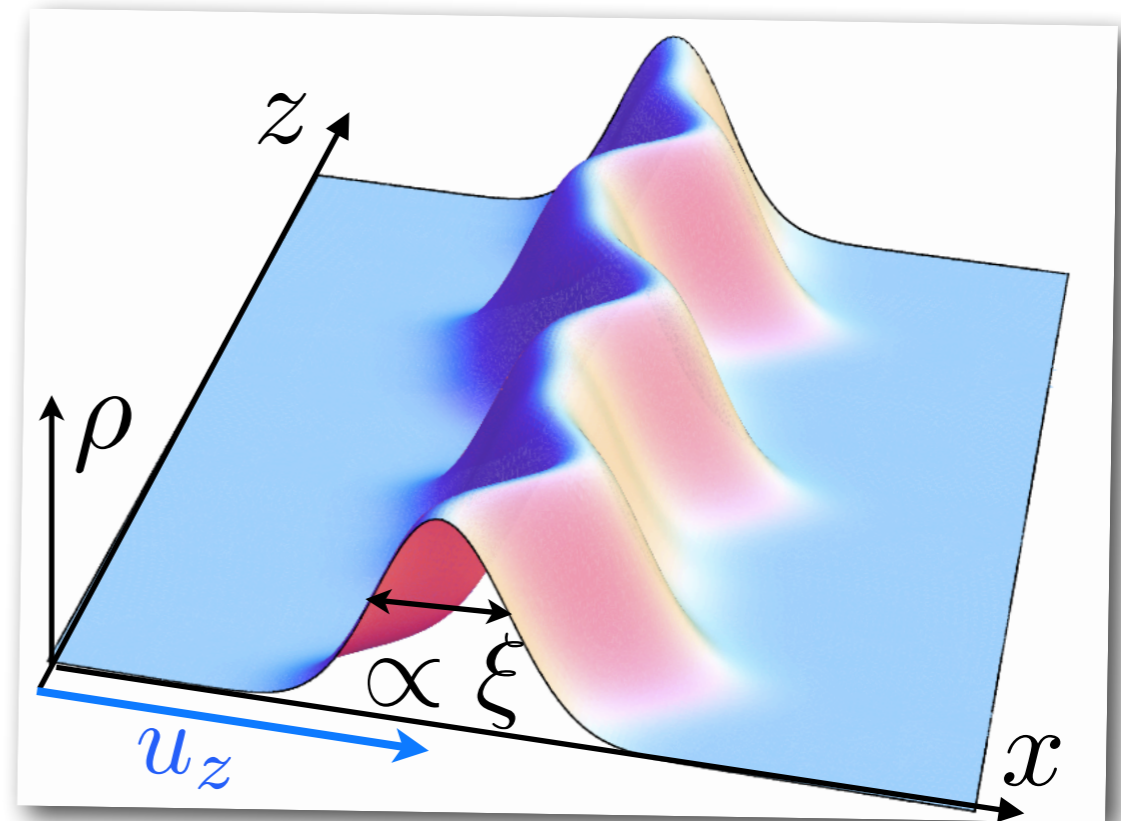
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- Alternative: **correlated** effective potential $V(z, u(z))$

$$\overline{V(z, x) V(z', x')} = D \delta(z - z') R_{\xi}(x - x')$$

- Exponentially decaying with following scaling:

$$R_{\xi}(x) = \xi^{-1} R_1(x/\xi) \quad \text{e.g.} \quad R_{\xi}^G(x) = \frac{e^{-x^2/(2\xi^2)}}{\sqrt{2\pi\xi}}$$



Elastic constant c / Width ξ / Disorder strength D / Temperature T

- Overdamped dynamics: 'quenched Edwards-Wilkinson':

$$\gamma \partial_t u(z, t) = c \partial_z^2 u(z, t) + F_{\text{dis}}(z, u(z)) + f_{\text{ext}} + \eta_{\text{thermal}}(z, t)$$

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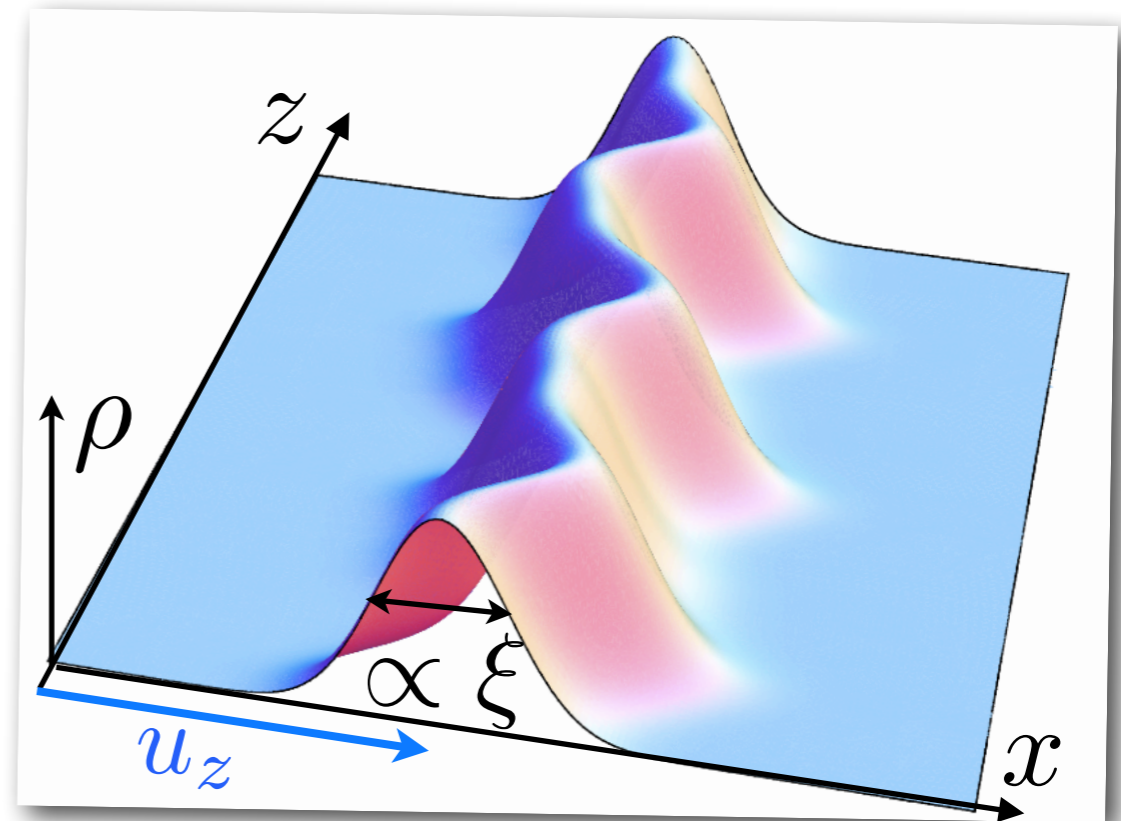
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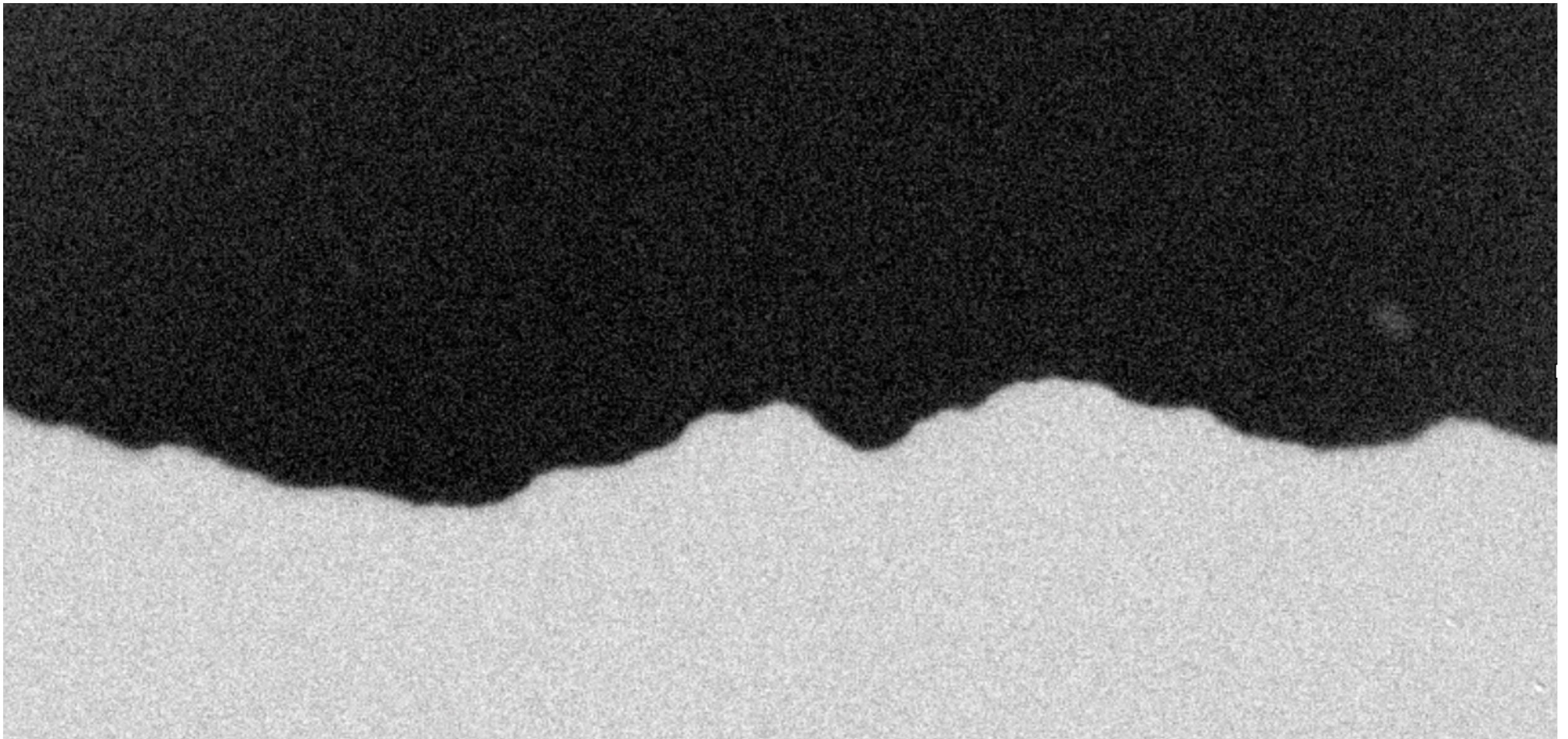
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Experimental realisation: moving ferromagnetic domain wall

- Here focus on 'quenched Edwards-Wilkinson' (qEW):

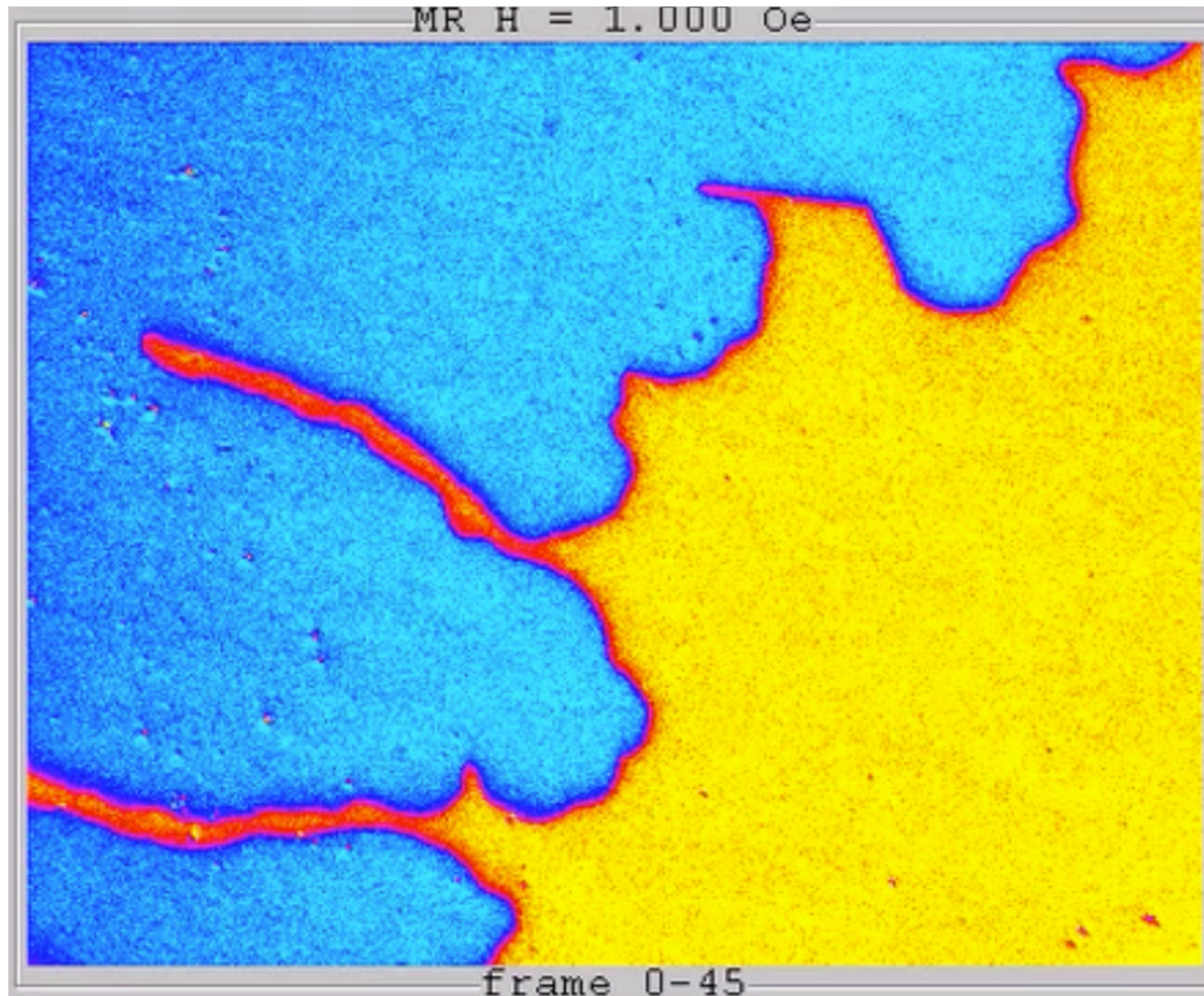
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- V. Repain et al. @ Orsay (Pt/Co/Pt)



Experimental realisation: moving ferromagnetic domain wall

■ V. Repain et al. @ Orsay: **Pt/Co(0,5 nm)/Pt/SiO₂**



■ Overdamped dynamics for numerics / field-theory:

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{DES}} = \mathcal{H}_{\text{el}} + \mathcal{H}_{\text{dis}}$$

$$\underbrace{m\partial_t^2 u(z, t)}_{\text{Acceleration}} + \gamma\partial_t u(z, t) = \underbrace{-\frac{\delta\mathcal{H}_{\text{el}}[u]}{\delta u(z, t)}}_{F_{\text{el}}(z, t)} - \underbrace{\frac{\delta\mathcal{H}_{\text{dis}}[u, V]}{\delta u(z, t)}}_{F_{\text{dis}}(z, t)} + f_{\text{ext}} + \eta_{\text{thermal}}(z, t)$$

🔊 Gaussian noise of zero mean and 2-pt correlator: $\langle \eta_{\text{th}}(z, t)\eta_{\text{th}}(z', t') \rangle = 2\gamma T\delta(z - z')\delta(t - t')$

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$$\int dx \Delta(x) = 0 \quad \text{random-bond (RB)}$$

$$\int dx \Delta(x) > 0 \quad \text{random-field (RF)}$$

🔊 Typically with periodic boundary condition: $u(z + L_z) = u(z)$, and also $L_x \sim L_z^\zeta$

Overdamped dynamics & MSR dynamical action

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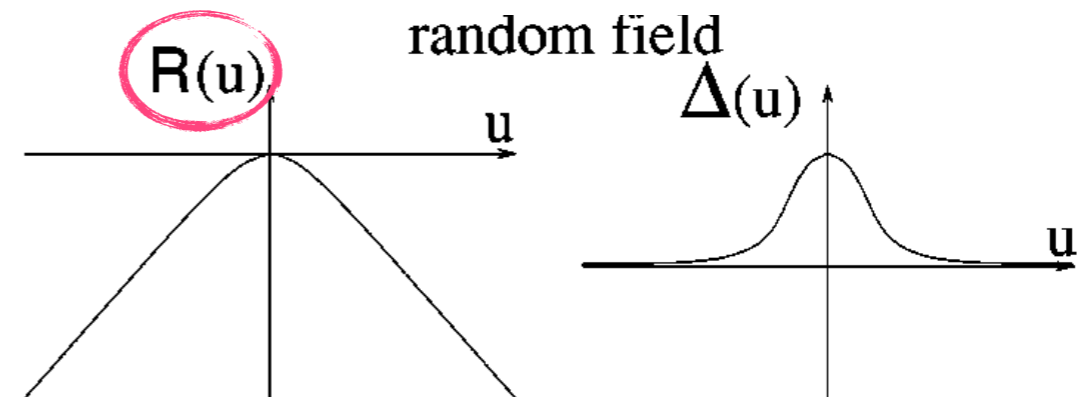
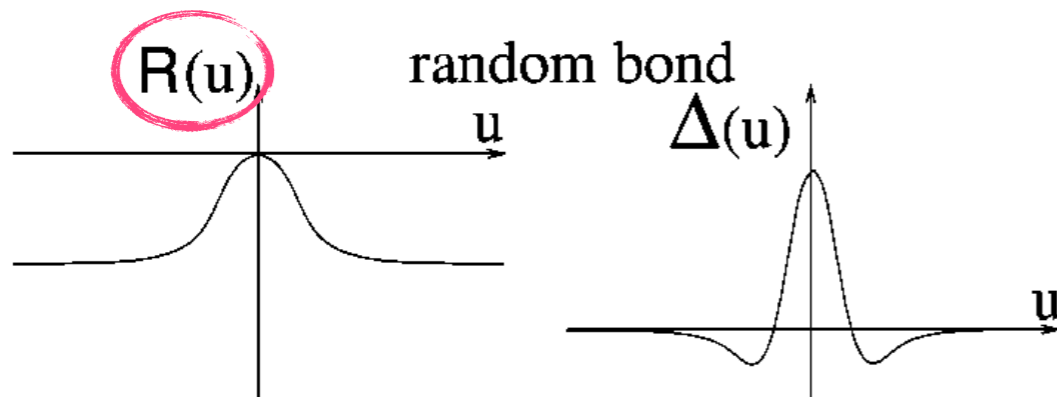
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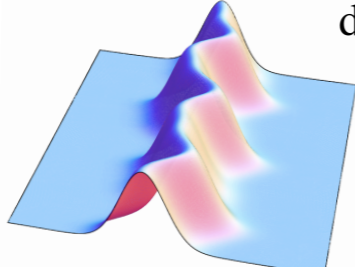
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Force-force correlator
= central object for FRG

Interlude: random-bond versus random-field

- Two equivalent formulations of the disorder Hamiltonian:

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{dis}} = \int d^d z d^m x \cdot \underbrace{\rho_u(x, z)}_{\text{density}} \cdot \underbrace{V(x, z)}_{\text{random potential}} = \int d^d z d^m x \cdot \underbrace{P_u(x, z)}_{\text{profile}} \cdot \underbrace{h(x, z)}_{\text{random field}}$$



$-\nabla_x V(x, z) = h(x, z)$

$\nabla_x P_u(x, z) = \rho_u(x, z)$

- Random-bond \leftrightarrow delta-correlated random potential:

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{dis}}^{\text{RB}} [u, V] = \int dz \underbrace{\int dx \cdot \rho_u(x, z) \cdot V(x, z)}_{\text{effective random potential}} = \int dz \cdot \tilde{V}(u_z, z)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \overline{V(x, z)V(x', z')} &= D \cdot \delta(z - z') \cdot \delta(x - x') \\ \overline{\tilde{V}(x, z)\tilde{V}(x', z')} &= \delta(z - z') \cdot R_\rho^{\text{RB}}(u_z, u'_z) \end{aligned}$$

$$\implies R_\rho^{\text{RB}}(u_z, u'_z) \equiv D \int dx \cdot \rho_u(x, z) \rho_{u'}(x, z)$$

- Random-field \leftrightarrow delta-correlated random force:

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{dis}}^{\text{RF}} [u, h] = \int dz dx \cdot P_u(x, z) \cdot h(x, z) = \int dz \frac{1}{2} \left(\int_{-\infty}^{u_z} - \int_{u_z}^{\infty} \right) dx \cdot \tilde{h}(x, z)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \overline{h(x, z)h(x', z')} &= D \cdot \delta(z - z') \cdot \delta(x - x') \\ \overline{\tilde{h}(x, z)\tilde{h}(x', z')} &= \delta(z - z') \cdot \Delta_\rho^{\text{RF}}(x, x') \end{aligned}$$

$$\implies \Delta_\rho^{\text{RF}}(u_z, u'_z) \equiv D \int dx \cdot \rho_u(x, z) \rho_{u'}(x, z)$$

Interlude: random-bond versus random-field

- Quenched Gaussian disorder \Rightarrow Focus on the mean & two-point correlator

📌 Random force: $F_{\text{dis}}(z, x) = -\partial_x V(z, x)$

$$\Delta(x) = -D R''(x)$$

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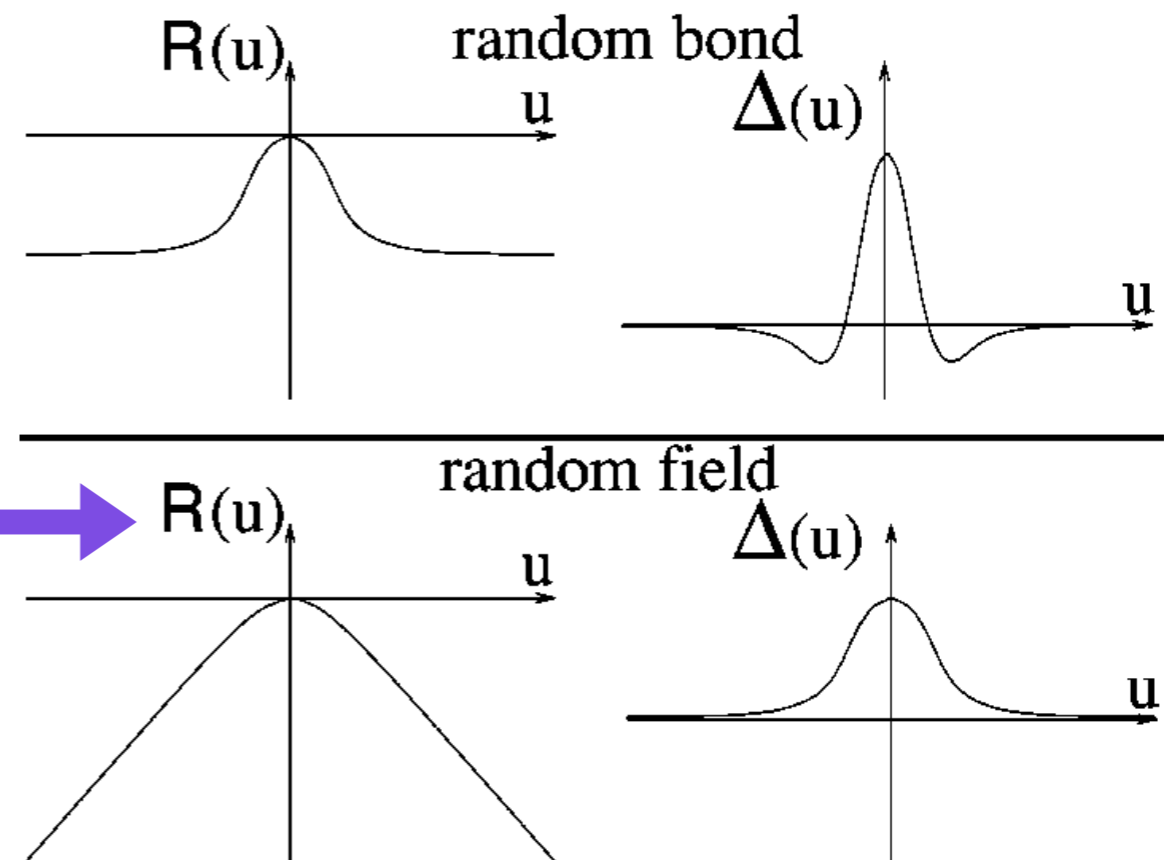
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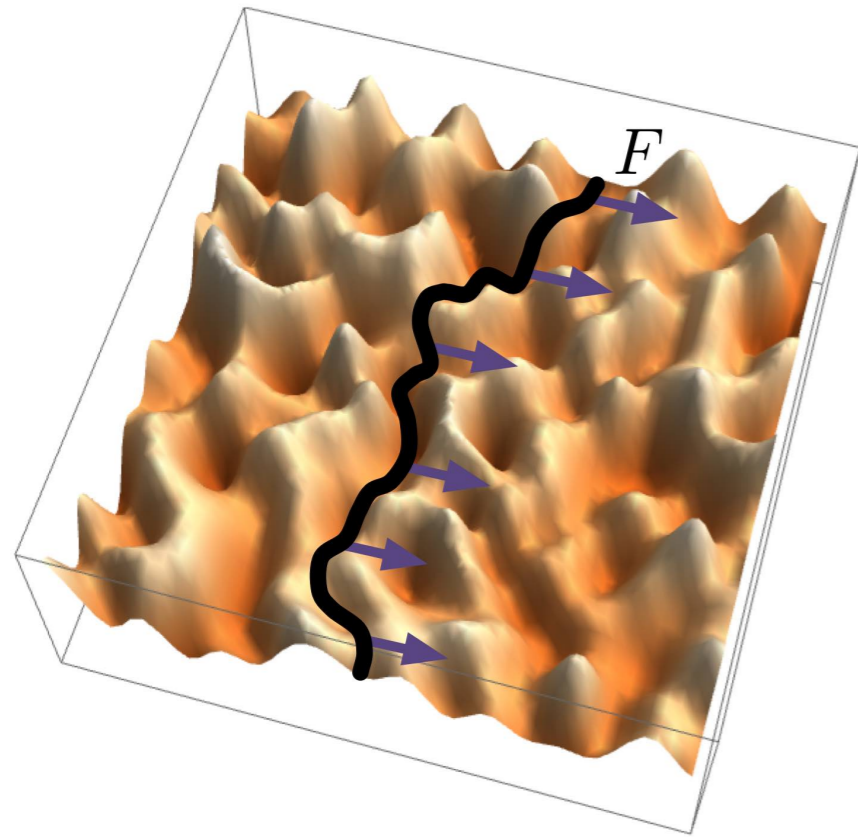
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Case study of the 1D interface in short-range correlated disorder ($\xi > 0$)



- **Experimental motivation:**
relevant e.g. for ultrathin ferromagnetic domain walls Pt/Co/Pt looking for characteristic length- and energy-scales
- **Statistical-physics motivation:**
simplest extended object in a *quenched* disorder
⇒ Model reduction? Center-of-mass dynamics, effective disorder/noise? Mean-field descriptions?
- **Technical motivation:**
comparison of analytical approximation schemes on a well-defined system, while predictions possibly relevant more broadly for the 1D KPZ universality class

Universal scalings:
roughness exponent $\zeta=2/3$ at asymptotically large scales

Non-universal features:
characteristic crossover scales & roughness amplitude

- Accessible assuming uncorrelated disorder (because of ad hoc exact solutions & symmetries, renormalization fixed points, ...)
- How does universality emerge from specific microphysics, e.g. from correlated disorder?

- If correlated disorder, no exact solutions anymore but possible pathologies/divergences are regularized
- Allows for existence of physically relevant temperature-induced crossover



Groupement
de recherche

IDE Interactions, Désordre, Elasticité

Vivien Lecomte, Elisabeth Agoritsas, Damien Vandembroucq
Laura Foini, Kirsten Martens, Alberto Rosso, Jérôme Weiss



<https://groupes.renater.fr/sympa/info/gdr-ide>



Next annual meeting: **June 17-21, 2024 in Grenoble**

Registration deadline: April 30, 2024 ⇒ <https://gdr-ide-2024.sciencesconf.org>