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### Monocrystalline halide perovskite nanostructures for optoelectronic applications

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## Summary

Optoelectronic devices have changed human life tremendously. Lighting, energy conversion and storage, communication and imaging are only a few examples of the applications that rely on optoelectronics. Further advances in low-cost, efficient devices requires investigating new materials and designs. Halide perovskites are a promising class of materials for incorporation in optoelectronics with higher efficiency and lower cost. The solution processability of these materials provides unique opportunities for simple nanostructure fabrication. Integration of micro and nanostructured perovskites will open up opportunities for approaching highly efficient devices. In this thesis we explore the fabrication and characterization of monocrystalline halide perovskite micro and nanostructures from solution.

Single crystals are the simplest form of a material and thus provide an ideal model system to study the most fundamental properties of the material in the absence of grain boundaries. Most previous work in this area involves perovskite single crystals grown using lengthy chemical methods, which yield large crystals that are far outside the range that is useful for most optoelectronic devices. In **Chapter 2** we present a method based on confining the solvent evaporation to fabricate thin halide perovskite single crystals that still have lateral dimensions large enough to make microscale devices. The single crystallinity is confirmed by electron back-scatter diffraction (EBSD). Simple back-contacted  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$  single crystal devices are made by deposition of the crystals on pre-fabricated metal electrodes. These devices show photovoltaic behaviour, and present a platform to study the fundamental properties of single crystal perovskites *in operando*.

To have perovskite optoelectronic devices commercially available their working principle and mechanisms, especially the ones that have led to performance instability and degradation, should be fully understood. One of the main causes presented for the short and long-term instability is ionic migration. Halide perovskites as ionic semiconductors are not only electronic but also ionic conductors. In **Chapter 3** we employ the back contacted  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$  single crystal devices to study the ionic migration in the presence of applied electric field. The synchrotron-based nanoprobe X-ray fluorescence (nano-XRF) mapping with 250 nm resolution is used to quantify the changes of bromide distribution



at the nanoscale under applied electric fields. By systematically manipulating the halide concentration laterally with applied voltage bias we observe a quasi-reversible field-assisted halide migration. The photoluminescence mapping of the crystals under the same biasing conditions reveals the corresponding changes due to halide migration in the optical quality of  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$  single crystals. Higher local bromide concentration is correlated with superior optoelectronic performance in  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$ , while regions with lower bromide concentration show decreased PL intensities. Density functional theory (DFT) computations indicate that bromide ions experience a low energy barrier to migration when the  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3^+$  ions are aligned in the presence of an electric field. In this scenario, the migration of halide ions is expected to change the local stoichiometry and therefore optoelectronic quality of perovskite devices during operation. This study clarifies that halide migration is a challenge that is intrinsic to the absorber and one that may play a determining role in the ultimate performance limits of perovskite devices.

In **Chapter 4** we present a method to fabricate free-standing solution-based vertical perovskite nanowires. In this method, the perovskite solution is extruded out of the pores of an anodized aluminum oxide (AAO) template by applying a pressure gradient. Free-standing nanowire arrays are formed upon subsequent evaporation of solvent during the annealing. Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) diffraction confirms the single crystallinity along the nanowire length. The photoluminescence quantum yields (PLQY) of single perovskite nanowires measured using an integrating sphere microscopy setup reach values up to  $\sim 29\%$ . This technique can be generally used to form perovskite nanostructures with arbitrary dimensions and cross-sectional shape because the exit profile of the template is subsequently translated into the final semiconductor geometry. The concept of the fabrication process is very similar to macroscopic profile extrusion used extensively in the plastics industry, but now applied to a nanoscale optoelectronics material. The simplicity and fast speed of this technique make it as a promising approach for the large-scale industrial fabrication of optoelectronic devices based on perovskite nanostructured arrays.

Highly efficient perovskite nanostructured optoelectronic devices will depend critically on the density of defects at the surface and in the bulk. Passivating the surface defects with metal oxide such as  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  has been introduced as a common strategy to decrease the charge carrier recombination at the surface of perovskites. In **Chapter 5** we study the surface passivation effect of alumina on perovskite nanowires embedded in AAO templates. A similar extrusion technique with shorter time of the applied pressure gradient is used to fill the AAO pores with perovskite nanowires. These perovskite/alumina nanowire arrays are used as a well-controlled platform to study the charge carrier dynamics and effect of surface passivation with alumina. A charge carrier lifetime of more than 20 ns is calculated from obtaining the recombination rate coefficients. We develop a model to relate the charge carrier lifetimes with the nanowire radii. Using this model, we extract a remarkably low surface recombination velocity (SRV) of  $37.2 \pm 20 \text{ cm}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  for the perovskite/alumina inter-

face which confirms the passivation role of alumina. Perovskite nanowire arrays in AAO templates have high potential for integration in highly efficient optoelectronic devices due to the ease of fabrication and excellent photophysical properties.

Overall, this thesis provides an insight into new solution-processed methods for fabrication of high quality single crystalline halide perovskite micro- and nanostructures. The fabricated perovskite microcrystals and nanowires are used as simple model systems to study the fundamental properties of halide perovskites by asking questions such as: Which ions are moving in halide perovskites under electric field? How does ionic migration affect the optoelectronic properties of halide perovskites? What is the potential for improving the surface properties of halide perovskites by alumina passivation? The answers to these questions expands our understanding of halide perovskite nanostructures and their potentials and limitations for incorporation into future optoelectronic devices.



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## Samenvatting

Opto-elektronische apparaten hebben de wereld om ons heen zeer ingrijpend beïnvloed. Verlichting, energieconversie en -opslag, communicatie en beeldvorming (imaging) zijn slechts enkele voorbeelden van toepassingen van de opto-elektronica. Om de vooruitgang in nieuwe, betaalbare, opto-elektronische apparaten met een hoge efficiëntie verder te stimuleren, is onderzoek naar nieuwe materialen en ontwerpen noodzakelijk. Halogenide perovskieten zijn een veelbelovende familie van materialen voor de incorporatie in opto-elektronische apparatuur, met hogere efficiëntie, en lagere kosten. De mogelijkheid om deze materialen te verwerken vanuit de oplossing biedt unieke mogelijkheden voor eenvoudige fabricatie van nanostructuren. Daarnaast zal integratie van micro- en nano-gestructureerde perovskieten mogelijkheden scheppen tot de fabricatie van zeer efficiënte apparaten met nieuwe toepassingen. Dit proefschrift richt zich op de fabricage, en karakterisatie, van deze monokristallijne, halogenide, perovskieten nanostructuren, gefabriceerd vanuit de oplossing.

Monokristallen zijn de meest eenvoudige soort materiaal, en zijn daarom bij uitstek geschikt om als modelsysteem te dienen voor het bestuderen van fundamentele eigenschappen van het materiaal, zonder effecten van korrelgrenzen (grain boundaries) te ondervinden. Het meeste voorafgaande onderzoek op dit onderwerp heeft zich gericht op monokristalperovskieten, die volgens lange (en vaak gecompliceerde) chemische methodes zijn gesynthetiseerd, waarbij lange kristalstructuren ontstaan, die niet bruikbaar zijn voor de voornaamste toepassingen in opto-elektronische apparaten. In **hoofdstuk 2** wordt een methode gepresenteerd waar door insluiten van vloeistofevaporatie dunne, halogenide, perovskieten monokristallen worden gefabriceerd, waarbij de laterale dimensies nog van een proportie zijn dat apparaten op microschaal kunnen worden verwezenlijkt. De monokristalliniteit wordt bevestigd met de elektronroteringsstrooidiffractietechniek (electron back-scatter diffraction, EBSD). Eenvoudige 'back-contact' zonnecellen op basis van  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$  monokristallen zijn gemaakt door middel van depositie van deze kristallen op een netwerk van voorgefabriceerde metalen elektroden. Deze zonnecellen verdienen de naam, doordat zij fotovoltaïsch gedrag vertonen, en bieden daarmee een platform

voor onderzoek naar de fundamentele eigenschappen van monokristallijne perovskieten, *in operando*.

Om de commercialisatie van opto-elektronische apparaten van perovskiet te realiseren, moeten de werkingsprincipes -en mechanismen volledig worden begrepen, met inbegrip van de stabiliteit- en degradatieprocessen, als grootste invloeden op de efficiëntie, en prestaties over tijd, van deze apparaten. Ionenmigratie is een van de voornaamste oorzaken voor korte- en lange termijn instabiliteit. Halogenide perovskieten zijn zowel elektronische -en ionische geleiders, als ionische halfgeleiders. In **hoofdstuk 3** worden de 'back-contact'  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$  monokristallen apparaten gebruikt om ionenmigratie te bestuderen onder invloed van een aangebracht elektrisch veld. Nanosonde X-ray fluorescentie metingen, gedaan in een synchrotron, worden gebruikt om een afbeelding met een resolutie van 250 nm te realiseren, om de veranderingen in bromidedistributie op de nanoschaal in kaart te brengen, onder invloed van een aangebracht elektrisch veld. Door systematisch de halogenideconcentratie lateraal aan te passen, door middel van een toegepaste voorspanning, wordt een quasi-reversibele, halogenide migratie gerealiseerd. De fotoluminescentie -afbeelding van de kristallen onder dezelfde toegepaste voorspanning toont de overeenstemmende veranderingen in de optische kwaliteit van de  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3\text{PbBr}_3$  monokristallen, ten gevolge van de halogenide migratie. Een hogere, plaatselijke, concentratie van bromide is gecorreleerd met superieure opto-elektronische prestaties, terwijl regio's met lagere bromide concentraties verlaagde fotoluminescentie-intensiteiten vertonen. Dichtheidsfunctionaaltheorieberekeningen (density function theory, DFT) bepalen dat bromide-ionen een lage energiebarrière ondervinden voor migratie, wanneer de  $\text{CH}_3\text{NH}_3^+$  ionen worden gealigneerd door aanbrenging van een elektrisch veld. In dit scenario is de verwachting dat de migratie van halogenide ionen verandert door de plaatselijke stoichiometrie, en daarbij de opto-elektronische kwaliteit van de perovskieten apparaten tijdens gebruik. Deze studie verduidelijkt dat de halogenidemigratie een uitdaging is, die intrinsiek is aan het absorberend materiaal, en een bepalende rol kan spelen in de uiteindelijke prestatielimieten van perovskieten apparaten.

In **hoofdstuk 4** wordt een methode gepresenteerd om perovskieten verticaal-vrijstaande nanodraden te fabriceren, vanuit de oplossingsfase. In deze methode worden de perovskieten in oplossingsfase uit een sjabloon met geanodiseerde aluminiumoxide (AAO) poriën geëxtrudeerd, door toepassing van een drukgradiënt. Reeksen van vrijstaande nanodraden worden gevormd door herhaaldelijke evaporatie van de oplossing, tijdens thermisch gloeien. Transmissie-elektronenmicroscopiediffractie bevestigt de monokristalliniteit van de nanodraden over hun gehele lengte. De fotoluminescentiekwantumopbrengsten (photoluminescence quantum yields, PLQY) van monokristallen perovskieten nanodraden, gemeten met behulp van een bol van Ulbricht microscoop, behalen waardes tot 29%. Deze techniek kan algemeen gebruikt worden om perovskieten nanostructuren te fabriceren met willekeurige dimensies en arbitraire transversale vorm, doordat het uitgangsprofiel van het sjabloon leidend is in de uiteindelijke geometrie van de vorm, die het halfgeleidermateriaal aanneemt. Het concept van

het fabricatieproces heeft grote gelijkenis met macroscopische sjabloonextrusie, zoals extensief gebruikt wordt in de plasticindustrie, maar nu toegepast op een opto-elektronisch materiaal op nanoschaal. De eenvoud en snelheid van deze methode maken dat het een veelbelovende methode is voor fabricatie van opto-elektronische apparaten op industriële schaal, gebaseerd op perovskieten nanogestructureerde reeksen en matrices.

Perovskieten nanogestructureerde opto-elektronische apparaten met hoge efficiëntie zijn sterk afhankelijk van de mate en dichtheid van deficiënties in het kristalrooster, zowel aan het oppervlak alsmede in de bulk van het materiaal. Oppervlakteplassivering met metaaloxide, zoals  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ , is een welbekende strategie om ladingdragerrecombinatie aan het oppervlak van perovskietstructuren tegen te gaan. In **hoofdstuk 5** wordt het oppervlakteplassiveringseffect van aluminiumoxide op perovskieten nanodraden, ingebed in AAO sjablonen, bestudeerd. Een vergelijkbare extrusietechniek wordt gebruikt om de AAO-poriën te vullen met perovskieten nanodraden, waarin voor een kortere tijd een drukgradiënt wordt aangebracht. Deze reeksen van perovskiet-aluminiumoxide nanodraden worden gebruikt als een podium om goed controleerbaar de ladingsdragerdynamiek te bestuderen, alsmede de uitwerking van oppervlakteplassivering met aluminiumoxide. Een ladingsdragerlevensduur van meer dan 20 ns wordt aangetoond, door middel van het verkrijgen van recombinatiesnelheidscoëfficiënten, door fotoluminescentievalsoren aan te passen aan een reactiesnelheidsmodel (rate equation model). De ladingsdragerlevensduur kan worden bepaald met behulp van informatie over de radii van de nanodraden, door middel van een zelfontwikkeld model. Met hetzelfde model wordt een opmerkelijk lage oppervlaktere-combinatiesnelheid (surface recombination velocity, SRV) van  $37.2 \pm 20 \text{ cm/s}$  bepaald voor het perovskiet-aluminiumoxide raakvlak, hetgeen de passiveringsrol van aluminiumoxide bevestigt. Perovskieten nanodraadreeksen in AAO sjablonen hebben een grote potentie voor integratie in opto-elektronische apparaten met hoge efficiëntie, doordat ze relatief makkelijk te fabriceren zijn, en excellente fotofysische eigenschappen vertonen.

Samenvattend biedt dit proefstuk inzicht in nieuwe technieken om uit de oplossingsfase verwerkte, hoge kwaliteit, monokristallijne, halogenide, perovskieten, micro- en nanostructuren te fabriceren. De gefabriceerde perovskieten microkristallen en nanodraden worden gebruikt als eenvoudige modelsystemen om de fundamentele eigenschappen van halogenide perovskieten te bestuderen, door vragen te stellen zoals: "Welke ionen migreren in halogenide perovskieten onder het aanbrengen van een elektrisch veld", "Hoe beïnvloedt ionenmigratie de opto-elektronische eigenschappen van halogenide perovskieten", en "Wat is de verbeterpotentie van oppervlakte-eigenschappen van halogenide perovskieten, met gebruik van aluminiumoxide-oppervlakteplassivering?" De antwoorden op deze vragen verbreden ons begrip van halogenide, perovskieten nanostructuren, en de potenties en limitaties voor de incorporatie van deze materialen in toekomstige opto-elektronische apparaten.



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## List of publications

### This thesis is based on the following publications:

- *Growth and characterization of PDMS-stamped halide perovskite single microcrystals*  
P. Khoram, S. Brittman, W.I. Dzik, J.N.H. Reek, E.C. Garnett  
J. Phys. Chem. C, 2016, 120 (12), 6475. **(Chapter 2)**
- *Direct observation of halide migration and its effect on the photoluminescence of methylammonium lead bromide perovskite single crystals*  
Y. Lou\*, P. Khoram\*, S. Brittman, Z. Zhu, B. Lai, S.P. Ong, E.C. Garnett, D. Fenning  
Adv. Mater., 2017, 29 (43), 1521. **(Chapter 3)**  
\*equal contribution
- *Perovskite nanowire extrusion*  
S.Z. Oener\*, P. Khoram\*, S. Brittman, S.A. Mann, Q. Zhang, Z. Fan, S.W. Boettcher, E.C. Garnett  
Nano Lett., 2017, 17 (11), 6557. **(Chapter 4)**  
\*equal contribution
- *Charge carrier dynamics at the perovskite/alumina interface*  
P. Khoram, S.Z. Oener, E.C. Garnett  
(in preparation) **(Chapter 5)**



**Other publications by the author:**

- *Organic ternary solar cells: A review*  
T. Ameri, P. Khoram, J. Min, C.J. Brabec  
Adv. Mater., 2013, 25 (31), 1521.
- *Morphology analysis of near IR sensitized polymer/fullerene organic solar cells by implementing low bandgap heteroanalogue C-/Si-PCPDTBT*  
T. Ameri, P. Khoram, T. Heumuller, D. Baran, F. Machui, A. Troeger, V. Sgobba, D.M. Guldi, M. Halik, S. Rathgeber, U. Scherf, C.J. Brabec  
J. Mater. Chem. A., 2014, 2 (45), 19461.

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