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Portuguese Society for Microscopy

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Dear Abbe

Dear Abbe,

I know this question gets asked over and over, but I am determined that there must be a basis for choosing either side of a TEM grid when picking up sections. Which side works best and why—the dull side or the shiny side? By the way, I love you and simply must meet you to share my micrographs. Is there a time when we could get together?

Adoring Fan in Adelaide

Dear Adoring Stalker,

More mundane questions! Does no one ever have more pressing issues to resolve, such as how to formulate the best margarita? I believe I addressed the issue earlier. We never used commercially made grids when I was a whelp of a microscopist, and we were never concerned with what side we were using. But I must admit that (after being repeatedly asked to use one side or the other to be consistent) I set about to determine if there was a better side. I will give you concise description of how I decided. At first I studied and conferred with other great minds and chose a side based on empirical data. Now I choose a side based on what annoys fellow lab mates. Come to think of it, these days I do almost everything based on its annoyance factor. Regarding your offer to peruse your images: how about “never”? Is never good for you?

Dear Abbe,

Lately I've noticed that my TEM is acting up during alignment. When the gun tilt and rotational center are aligned properly, there is a caustic spot that is asymmetric. I've also noticed the TEM software getting sarcastic back at me. I'm not sure how to handle this.

Going Soft in Gainesville

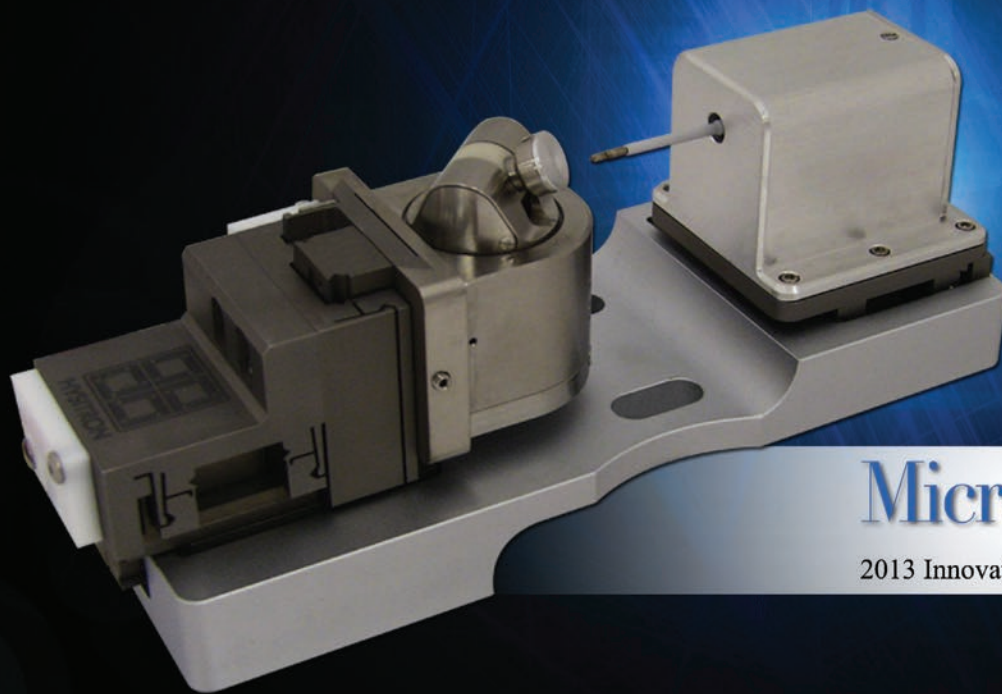
Dear Softie,

In my mind, there is nothing worse than a caustic, asymmetric spot and a sarcastic attitude. I blame it on computers. The symptoms your TEM is exhibiting are common to adolescent scopes starting to go through a stage of Annoying Scope Sass. It's beginning to test the boundaries between being an independent scope addicted to software and having the loving attention of its human controller. I had a scope once that got caustic with me, and I set it straight in a hurry. I sense that you are one of those people uncomfortable with conflict. As long as you mollycoddle your precious instrument, it will never respond in a respectful manner. I've seen some pretty sassy scopes in my day and have not held back the hammer or pliers when necessary. Sometimes a good reboot is necessary to show it who's the boss. In extreme situations an intervention may be necessary with a good TEM therapist. Tough love is hard, but better than an uncooperative, rude, and socially unacceptable scope.

Although Abbe can't answer all queries of a sensitive nature, he'll be sure to make all readers feel special about your problems. Send questions to his personal assistant at jpshield@uga.edu.

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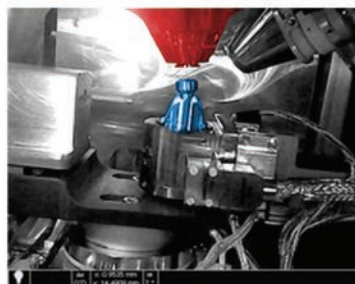
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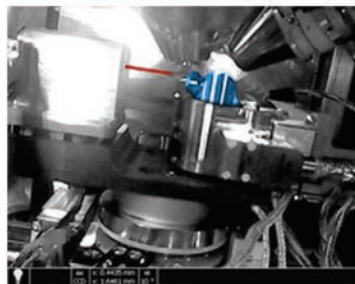
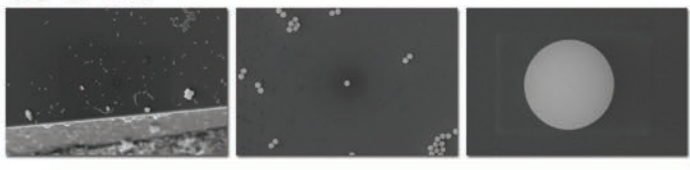
Microscopy
TODAY

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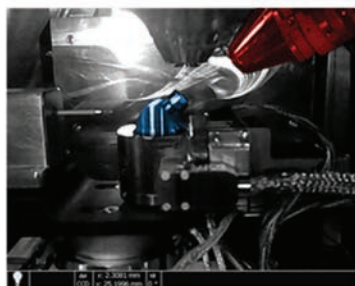
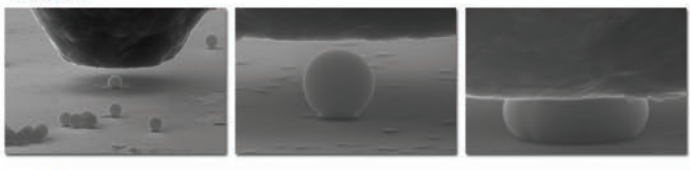
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT:
+1-952-835-6366 • picoindenter@hysitron.com

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