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Electronic properties of amorphous DLC films embedded with platinum nanoparticles

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In this report the results of electronic properties and structure study in amorphous diamond-like carbon films with platinum nanoparticles (a-C:H<Pt> films) are presented. The films were produced by ion-plasma magnetron sputtering of combined polycrystalline graphite-metal target. The sputtering process was produced in hydrogen and argon gas mixture. The films were deposited on quartz and silicon substrates. The content of platinum impurity in the carbon matrix was changed from 0 to 9 at. %. Concentrations of metal impurity in the films were alternated by change of platinum and graphite area relation in the combined target.

Platinum embedded in a-C:H films lead to increase in their conductivity. Impurity influence on the conductivity of a-C:H<Pt> films substantially depends on the films deposition temperature. It was found that conductivity of amorphous a-C:H<Pt> films deposited at a temperature of 200°C results in substantially by 13 orders of magnitude more than that of pure films. The most significant increase of a-C:H<Pt> films conductivity occurs at the Pt concentration lied in the range from 3 to 7 at. %.

Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) showed the presence of isolated particles in the a-C:H<Pt> films. The diameter of particles weakly changed with a rise of a metal content, and it was ~5 nm.

One of the important peculiarity of a-C:H<Pt> films optical properties was the appearance of absorption peak in the visible range of the optical absorption spectra. The absorption peaks in spectra of the a-C:H<Pt> films situated in the range from 495 to 498 nm. The intensity of the peak rose with increase of platinum content in the films. It is supposed that the absorption peaks are the result from surface plasmon resonance on metal nanoparticles in the a-C:H<Pt> films. Sizes of particles were determined from resonance absorption spectra, and these results were in a good agreement with TEM results.

Modeling of the resonance absorption procedure with use of Mie theory for the isolated metal particles embedded in the dielectric matrix provides good coincidence with our experiment.

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Mortes Bajo, V.	250	Nickel, N. H.	58, 58, 252	Paniel-Salc B.	
Moon, S. -J.	220	Nicolay, S.	220	Pedrosa, C.	108
Morales, A. B.	166	Niehaus, T.	277	Paer, A.	189
Moreno, M.	43, 101, 125, 222	Niesen, B.	220	Peibst, R.	220
Mongaki, K.	21	Nikolskaia, A.	172	Peligrini, M. V.	171, 185
Mota, M. D. L.	222	Nishio, K.	114	Pennartz, F.	252
Motaung, D.	63, 256	Nomura, M.	207	Pepene, R.	90
Moulin, E.	176	Nonomura, S.	163, 207	Perani, M.	120
Mousa, I.	13	Novikov, S.	27, 75	Pere Roca, C.	88
Moussi, A.	60	Nqondo, S.	57	Pere, R. I. C.	254
Mu, W.	52	Nuys, M.	131, 246	Pereira, L.	200
Mukhametkarimov, Y.	95	Nyapshaev, I.	167	Pereira, R. N.	18
Muller, M.	15			Peres, N. M. R.	244
Muller, T.	57, 63, 90, 256	O	ID	Perevednisev, A.	271
Muller-Landau, H.	109	Oda, S.	282	Pereyra, I.	122, 128, 171, 179, 185
Murata, D.	49	Oddo, A.	41	Perez Rodriguez, P.	266
Munas, D.	101, 222	Ogihara, C.	21	Pezeshki, A.	61
Muthmann, S.	131, 132, 226, 234, 246, 255	Ohashi, F.	207	Pikna, P.	44, 206, 211
Muñoz, D.	135	Ohdaira, K.	128	Pinho, P.	154
Möller, M.	44, 206	Ohki, T.	5	Piotr, P.	224
		Ohno, Y.	159	Plantevin, O.	16
		Olga, M.	201	Pomaska, M.	226
		Oliphant, C.	63, 90, 256	Poortmans, J.	190
		Olivares Vargas, A.	33	Popescu, M.	112
N	ID	Onmori, R.	45	Popkirov, G.	92
Nagai, T.	273	Orekhov, D.	167	Popov, A.	28, 29
Naikeow, A.	158	Ortega, P.	166	Popov, S.	232, 232
Nakanishi, A.	269	Ouzenzabet, R.	60	Pospelov, G.	31
Nam, S. H.	46	Ozanne, A. -S.	135	Poulain, G.	180
Neher, D.	94, 235, 236, 242			Poulos, I.	195
Neizert, H. -G.	119	P	ID	Prager, N.	194
Nelson, J.	213, 225, 271, 288	Paetzold, U. W.	188, 190, 194, 263	Prajongtal, P.	158
Nemec, P.	98	Paika, K.	88	Prasai, K.	14
Neophytides, S.	238	Pandey, A.	14	Pieissler, N.	71
Netivalova, M.	138	Papet, P.	173	Pikhoika, O.	95
Neubert, S.	242	Park, K. -S.	46	Prodanovic, N.	83
Ng, T. N.	111	Paulke, A.	94, 236	Puigdollers, J.	166
Nguen, H. P.	160			Purkt, A.	177, 205
Ni, J.	34, 280			Puspitosari, N.	54

prikh|