### Accepted Manuscript

Short communication

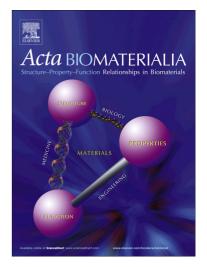
Accepted Date:

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PII:	S1742-7061(18)30118-1
DOI:	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actbio.2018.02.035
Reference:	ACTBIO 5340
To appear in:	Acta Biomaterialia
Received Date:	23 November 2017
Revised Date:	13 February 2018

28 February 2018



Please cite this article as: Rodriguez, M.J., Dixon, T.A., Cohen, E., Huang, W., Omenetto, F.G., Kaplan, D.L., 3D freeform printing of silk fibroin, *Acta Biomaterialia* (2018), doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actbio.2018.02.035

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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

#### **Article type: Brief Communication**

#### **3D** Freeform Printing of Silk Fibroin

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Keywords: silk, printing, freeform, biomaterials, laponite

#### Abstract

Freeform fabrication has emerged as a key direction in printing biologically-relevant materials and structures. With this emerging technology, complex structures with microscale resolution can be created in arbitrary geometries and without the limitations found in traditional bottomup or top-down additive manufacturing methods. Recent advances in freeform printing have used the physical properties of microparticle-based granular gels as a medium for the submerged extrusion of bioinks. However, most of these techniques require post-processing or crosslinking for the removal of the printed structures. [1,2] In this communication, we introduce a novel method for the one-step gelation of silk fibroin within a suspension of synthetic nanoclay (Laponite) and polyethylene glycol (PEG). Silk fibroin has been used as a biopolymer for bioprinting in several contexts, but chemical or enzymatic additives or bulking agents are needed to stabilize 3D structures. Our method requires no post-processing of printed structures and allows for *in situ* physical crosslinking of pure aqueous silk fibroin into arbitrary geometries produced through freeform 3D printing.

#### 1. Introduction

Silk fibroin is an attractive biopolymer for diverse applications due to its all-aqueous and

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