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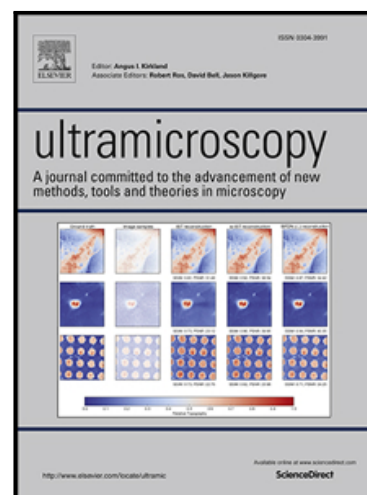
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Charge dynamics in aluminum oxide thin film studied by Ultrafast Scanning Electron Microscopy

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Abstract

The excitation dynamics of defects in insulators plays a central role in a variety of fields from Electronics and Photonics to Quantum computing. We report here a time-resolved measurement of electron dynamics in 100 nm film of aluminum oxide on silicon by Ultrafast Scanning Electron Microscopy (USEM). In our pump-probe setup, an UV femtosecond laser excitation pulse and a delayed picosecond electron probe pulse are spatially overlapped on the sample, triggering Secondary Electrons (SE) emission to the detector. The zero of the pump-probe delay and the time resolution were determined by measuring the dynamics of laser-induced SE contrast on silicon. We observed fast dynamics with components ranging from tens of picoseconds to few nanoseconds, that fits within the timescales typical of the UV color center evolution. The surface sensitivity of SE detection gives to the USEM the potential of applying pump-probe investigations to charge dynamics at surfaces and interfaces of current nano-devices. The present work demonstrates this approach on large gap insulator surfaces.

Keywords

USEM; Ultrafast Scanning Electron Microscopy; Aluminum oxide; Secondary Electrons dynamics; Color centers charge dynamics; Lock-in detection

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