A sophisticated research instrument for directly measuring static and dynamic forces between surfaces (inorganic, organic, metal, oxide, polymer, glasses, biological, etc.) and for studying interfacial and thin film phenomena at the molecular level. Modular design allows for expansion with numerous attachments and customized upgrades (see page 3).

**APPLICATIONS**

Research areas and types of interactions that can be directly measured *

- **Dispersion science** – “colloidal” forces between surfaces in liquids and controlled vapors
- **Adhesion science** – long-range colloidal forces and short-range adhesion forces
- **Surface chemistry** – surface and electrochemical interactions between dissimilar materials
- **Detergency, food research** – forces between surfactant and lipid monolayers and bilayers
- **Biomaterials and biosurfaces** – forces between protein and polymer-coated surfaces
- **Biomedical interactions** – ligand-receptor, protein and model biomembrane interactions
- **Tribology** – friction, lubrication and wear of smooth or rough surfaces, thin film rheology
- **Powder technology** – capillary effects and surface deformations during interactions
- **Materials research** – mechanical and failure properties of metal and oxide surfaces and films

* This list is not exhaustive; contact us for your specific needs.
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The SFA measures forces between two surfaces in vapors or liquids with a sensitivity of a few nN and a distance resolution of 1Å (0.1 nm). It can also measure the refractive index of the medium between the surfaces, adsorption isotherms, capillary condensation, surface deformations arising from surface forces, dynamic interactions such as viscoelastic and frictional forces, thin film rheology, and other time-dependent phenomena in real time at the molecular (nano-) scale. The molecularly smooth surfaces of hard materials such as mica, silica, sapphire, polymers, serve as suitable substrate surfaces in most measurements; these can also be coated with thick or thin layers of surfactants, lipids, polymers, metals, metal oxides, proteins and other biomolecules.

HOW IT WORKS

The figure below is a schematic drawing of the SFA 2000 configured with the Piezoelectric Top Mount (attached to the exterior of the Main Chamber and hosts the top surface) and the Main Translation Stage Bottom Mount (resides inside the Main Chamber and hosts the bottom surface) ready for use. The shapes of the interacting surfaces, the absolute separation between them, and the thickness of any adsorbed layer on the surfaces, are measured (to within 0.1 nm) by analyzing the optical interference fringes (known as FECO fringes) produced when white light passes through the two surfaces. The distance between the surfaces is controlled by a four-stage mechanism of increasing sensitivity from millimeters to ångstroms. The stiffness of the force-measuring springs can be adjusted during experiments to enable forces of greatly differing magnitudes to be measured. Dynamic measurements are conducted with surfaces in motion (vertically, horizontally, or in any direction in 3D space) using one of the attachments described in the following pages.

USES

The SFA technique is routinely used to characterize and quantify various types of interactions between surfaces in liquids and vapors (see references on page 4). Static interactions include van der Waals and electrostatic forces, forces due to solvent structure (solvation and hydration forces), capillary forces, hydrophobic interactions, polymer-mediated steric and depletion forces, surfactant monolayers and lipid bilayers, adhesion and bio-specific receptor/ligand or other “lock-and-key” type binding interactions. Dynamic and time-dependent interactions include the viscosity of liquids in ultra-thin films (nano-rheology), slow relaxations of liquids, and polymers in confined geometries, and surface deformations during the approach, separation and lateral sliding of two surfaces. More recent applications have included food technology, the friction of clutches, how geckos run on walls and ceilings, the bioadhesion of mussels, and the biolubrication of joints.
MAIN FEATURES AND ATTACHMENTS

For anyone who wants to accurately measure the forces or any type of “interaction” between two material surfaces at any given separation in air, vapor or liquid, including their local geometry (shape) and deformations, the SFA 2000 stands unrivalled as to directness of measurement and visualization, unambiguous (sub-ångstrom) accuracy, and stability to thermal drift. Unlike some surface force-measuring instruments, such as scanning probe microscopes and pin-on-disk tribometers, the SFA 2000, especially when used with FECO optics, measures forces between surfaces at precisely known surface separations, providing the local surface geometry (shape), directly at the point of interaction. A number of capabilities that appeared as accessories in earlier models (such as the SFA 3) are now part of the SFA 2000, and new attachments allow for various dynamic measurements to be made, for example, of friction, lubrication and viscoelastic forces over a large range of speeds or shear rates. Some of these capabilities are illustrated below:

OTHER CUSTOMIZED ATTACHMENTS INCLUDE:

1. Variable Stiffness Force-Measuring stage
2. Constant Force-Measuring Balance
3. Attachments for moving and detecting forces in 3D
4. High-Speed Friction attachment (pin-on-disk type)
5. Attachments for applying electric or magnetic fields
6. Short Working Distance Top Mount for in-situ fluorescence & FRAP measurements (FL-SFA)
7. Attachment for electrochemical studies (EC-SFA)

SurForce, LLC
354 S Fairview Ave, Suite B,
Goleta, California 93117-3629 USA
(California Reg ID No. 22-3891910)
THE SFA AND FECO OPTICAL TECHNIQUE


COLLOIDAL, POLYMER AND ADHESION INTERACTIONS
Transient Interfacial Patterns and Instabilities Associated with Liquid Film Adhesion and Spreading. H. Zeng et al., Langmuir (2007) 23 6126-6135.

BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL INTERACTIONS
Interaction forces and adhesion of supported myelin lipid bilayers modulated by myelin basic protein. Younjin Min, Kai Kristiansen, Joan M. Boggs, Cynthia Husted, Joseph A. Zasadzinski, Jacob Israelachvili, PNAS (2009) 106 3154-3159.

DYNAMIC, RHEOLOGICAL AND TRIBOLOGICAL INTERACTIONS

DIFFERENT SURFACES (MATERIALS) AND INTERFACING WITH OTHER TECHNIQUES