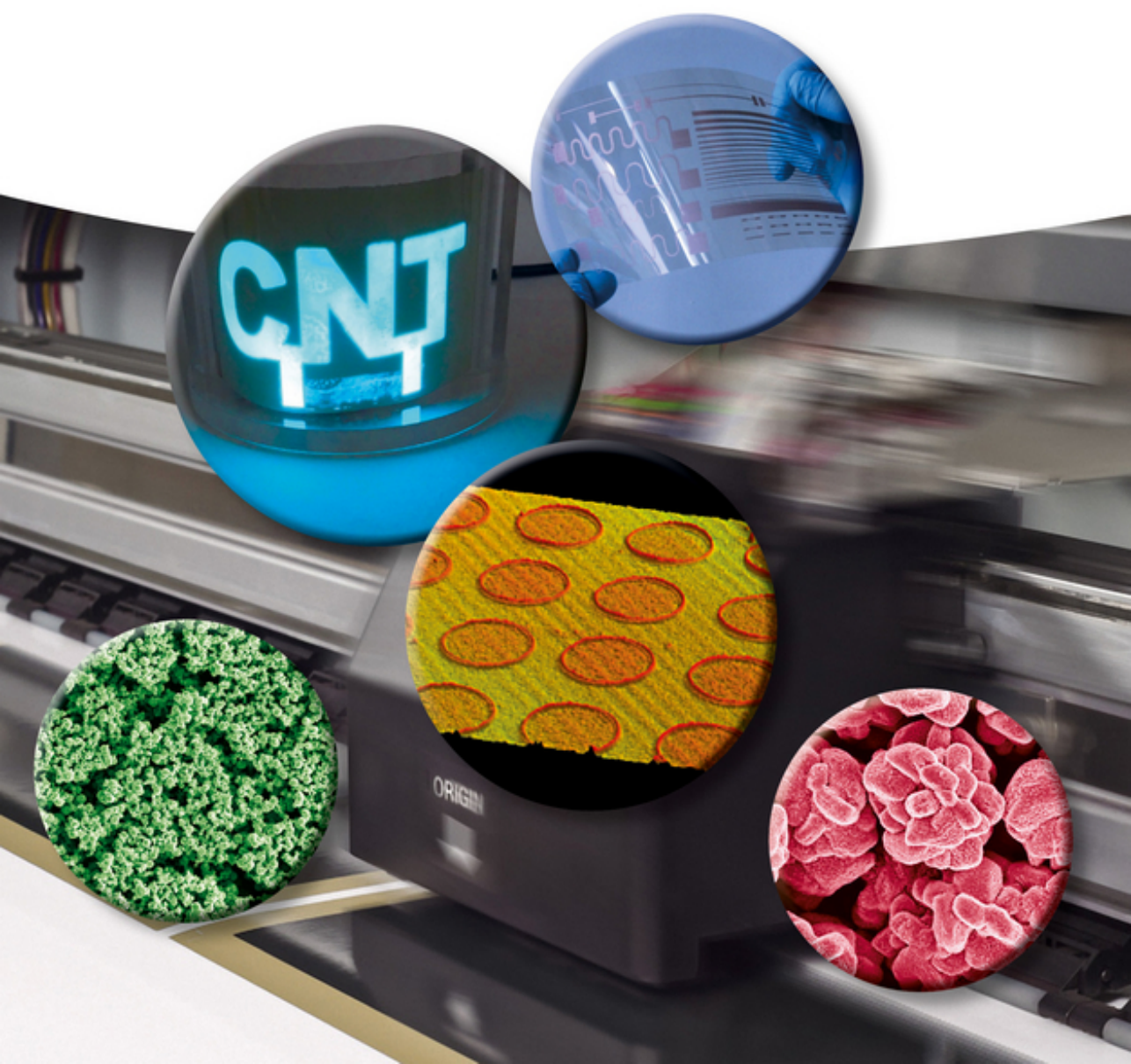


Edited by Shlomo Magdassi, Alexander Kamyshny

# Nanomaterials for 2D and 3D Printing





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*Edited by Shlomo Magdassi and Alexander Kamyshny*

**WILEY-VCH**

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## Contents

### List of Contributors *xiii*

<b>1</b>	<b>Printing Technologies for Nanomaterials</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>Robert Abbel and Erwin R. Meinders</i>	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Ink Formulation Strategies	4
1.3	Printing Technologies	6
1.3.1	Inkjet Printing	7
1.3.1.1	Toward 3D Printing	10
1.3.2	Laser-Induced Forward Transfer	11
1.3.2.1	Toward 3D Printing	13
1.3.3	Contact Printing Technologies	13
1.3.4	Photopolymerization	17
1.3.5	Powder Bed Technology	19
1.4	Summary and Conclusions	20
	References	20
<b>2</b>	<b>Inkjet Printing of Functional Materials and Post-Processing</b>	<b>27</b>
	<i>Ingo Reinhold</i>	
2.1	Introduction	27
2.2	Industrial Inkjet	28
2.3	Postprocessing of Metal-Based Inks for Conductive Applications	30
2.3.1	Mechanisms in Solid-State Sintering	32
2.3.2	Influence of Drying and Wet Sintering	34
2.3.3	Thermal Sintering	35
2.3.4	Chemical Sintering	35
2.3.5	Plasma Sintering	36
2.3.6	Sintering Using Electromagnetic Fields	37
2.3.6.1	Impulse Light Sintering	39
2.3.6.2	Microwave Sintering	40
2.3.6.3	Influence of the Substrate	41
2.4	Conclusion	42
	References	43

<b>3</b>	<b>Electroless Plating and Printing Technologies</b>	<b>51</b>
	<i>Yosi Shacham-Diamand, Yelena Sverdlov, Stav Friedberg, and Avi Yaverboim</i>	
3.1	Introduction	51
3.2	Electroless Plating – Overview	54
3.2.1	Electroless Plating – Brief Overview	55
3.3	Seed Layer Printing	57
3.4	Electroless Plating on Printed Parts	57
3.4.1	Methods and Approaches	59
3.4.1.1	Printed Pd Seed	59
3.4.1.2	Printed Ag Ink	60
3.4.1.3	Preseed Surface Modification	60
3.4.2	Electroless Metal Integration: Examples	60
3.5	Summary and Conclusions	63
	References	64
<b>4</b>	<b>Reactive Inkjet Printing as a Tool for <i>in situ</i> Synthesis of Self-Assembled Nanoparticles</b>	<b>69</b>
	<i>Ghassan Jabbour, Mutalifu Abulikamu, Hyung W. Choi, and Hanna Haverinen</i>	
4.1	Introduction to Reactive Inkjet Printing	69
4.2	RIJ of Self-Assembled Au NPs	70
4.3	Parameters Influencing the Growth of Au NPs	74
4.4	Simplifying the Approach (Single Cartridge) Using Single Cartridge Step	77
4.5	Further Progress toward Reduction of Fabrication Time (1 min)	77
4.6	Conclusion	79
	References	79
<b>5</b>	<b>3D Printing via Multiphoton Polymerization</b>	<b>83</b>
	<i>Maria Farsari</i>	
5.1	Multiphoton Polymerization	84
5.2	The Diffraction Limit	85
5.3	Experimental Setup	86
5.4	Materials for MPP	88
5.4.1	Introduction	88
5.4.2	Photoinitiators	88
5.4.3	Organic Photopolymers	89
5.4.4	SU-8	90
5.4.5	Hybrid Materials	90
5.4.6	Applications	91
5.4.6.1	Metamaterials	91
5.4.6.2	Biomedical Applications	94
5.5	Conclusions	96
	References	96



- 6 High Speed Sintering: The Next Generation of Manufacturing** 107  
*Adam Ellis*
- 6.1 The Need for the Next Generation of Additive Manufacturing 107
  - 6.2 High Speed Sintering 109
  - 6.3 Machine Setup & Parameter Control 109
  - 6.4 Materials & Properties 112
  - 6.5 HSS for High-Volume Manufacturing 113
  - 6.6 Case Study: From Elite to High Street 115
  - 6.7 Opening the Supply Chain 115
  - 6.8 The Future of HSS and the Benefits of Inkjet 116
- References 116
- 7 Metallic Nanoinks for Inkjet Printing of Conductive 2D and 3D Structures** 119  
*Alexander Kamyshny and Shlomo Magdassi*
- 7.1 Introduction 119
  - 7.2 Metallic Nanoinks: Requirements and Challenges 120
  - 7.3 Synthesis and Stabilization of Metal NPs for Conductive Nanoinks 121
    - 7.3.1 Synthesis 121
    - 7.3.2 Stabilization 122
      - 7.3.2.1 Stabilization Against Aggregation 122
      - 7.3.2.2 Stabilization Against Oxidation 124
  - 7.4 Formulation of Conductive Metallic Nanoinks 125
  - 7.5 Formation of 2D Conductive Structures: Printing and Sintering 127
  - 7.6 3D Printing of Conductive Patterns: Formation and Sintering 134
  - 7.7 Applications of Metallic Inkjet Nanoinks in Printed Electronics 135
    - 7.7.1 RFID Tags 136
    - 7.7.2 Thin-Film Transistors 136
    - 7.7.3 Electroluminescent Devices and Light-Emitting Diodes 136
    - 7.7.4 Transparent Conductive Electrodes 137
    - 7.7.5 Organic Solar Cells 138
  - 7.8 Outlook 139
- References 140
- 8 Graphene- and 2D Material-Based Thin-Film Printing** 161  
*Jiantong Li, Max C. Lemme, and Mikael Östling*
- 8.1 Introduction 161
  - 8.2 Printing Procedures 162
    - 8.2.1 Ink Formulations 162
    - 8.2.2 Jetting and Patterns 166
    - 8.2.3 Drying 166

8.2.4	Posttreatments	171
8.3	Performance and Applications	172
8.3.1	Transparent Conductors	173
8.3.2	Micro-Supercapacitors	173
8.3.3	Photodetectors	174
8.3.4	Solar Cells	176
8.4	Discussion and Outlook	177
	Acknowledgments	178
	References	178
<b>9</b>	<b>Inkjet Printing of Photonic Crystals</b>	<b>183</b>
	<i>Minxuan Kuang and Yanlin Song</i>	
9.1	Introduction	183
9.2	Inkjet Printing of Photonic Crystals	184
9.2.1	Process of Inkjet Printing	184
9.2.2	Inkjet Printing of Fine Controlled PC Dots and Lines	186
9.2.2.1	Influence of the Ink Formulation	186
9.2.2.2	Influence of Substrate Wettability	188
9.2.2.3	Suppression of “Coffee-Ring” Effect	193
9.3	Application of Printing of Photonic Crystals	196
9.3.1	Photonic Crystal Patterns	196
9.3.2	Printing Patterned Microcolloidal Crystals with Controllable 3D Morphology	199
9.3.3	Inkjet-Printed PCs Applied in Vapor Sensors	201
9.3.4	Inkjet-Printed PCs Applied in Chemical Detection	201
9.4	Outlook	203
	References	204
<b>10</b>	<b>Printable Semiconducting/Dielectric Materials for Printed Electronics</b>	<b>213</b>
	<i>Sunho Jeong and Jooho Moon</i>	
10.1	Introduction	213
10.2	Printable Materials for Semiconductors	213
10.3	Printable Materials for Dielectrics	219
10.4	Conclusions	223
	References	224
<b>11</b>	<b>Low Melting Point Metal or Its Nanocomponents as Functional 3D Printing Inks</b>	<b>229</b>
	<i>Lei Wang and Jing Liu</i>	
11.1	Introduction of Metal 3D Printing	229
11.2	Low Melting Point Metal Ink	230
11.2.1	Liquid Metal Printing Ink	230
11.2.2	Nanofluid Metal	232

- 11.3 Liquid-Phase 3D Printing 234
  - 11.3.1 Fabrication Scheme 234
  - 11.3.2 Forming Principle of Metal Objects in Cooling Liquid 235
  - 11.3.3 Liquid-Phase Printing of Metal Structures 236
  - 11.3.4 Factors Affecting the Printing Quality 237
  - 11.3.5 Comparison Between Liquid-Phase Cooling and Gas-Phase Cooling 238
  - 11.3.6 Vision of the Future Liquid-Phase Printing 240
  - Acknowledgment 241
  - References 241
  
- 12 Inkjet Printing of Conducting Polymer Nanomaterials 245**  
*Edward Song and Jin-Woo Choi*
  - 12.1 Introduction 245
  - 12.2 Inkjet Printing of Polyaniline Nanomaterials 246
    - 12.2.1 Introduction 246
    - 12.2.2 Chemical Structure, Electrochemical Properties, and Conductivity of Polyaniline 246
    - 12.2.3 Inkjet-Printed Polyaniline Nanomaterials 249
    - 12.2.4 Applications of Inkjet-Printed Polyaniline Nanomaterials 250
  - 12.3 Polypyrrole 251
    - 12.3.1 Properties and Synthesis of Polypyrrole (Ppy) Nanomaterials 251
    - 12.3.2 Inkjet Printing and Applications of Ppy Nanomaterials 254
  - 12.4 Polythiophene (Pth) and Poly(3,4-Ethylenedioxythiophene) (PEDOT) 258
    - 12.4.1 Properties and Synthesis of Pth and PEDOT Nanomaterials 258
    - 12.4.2 Inkjet Printing and Applications of Pth Nanomaterials 258
  - 12.5 Conclusions and Future Outlook 258
  - References 260
  
- 13 Application of Printed Silver Nanowires Based on Laser-Induced Forward Transfer 265**  
*Tepei Araki, Rajesh Mandamparambil, Jinting Jiu, Tsuyoshi Sekitani, and Katsuaki Suganuma*
  - 13.1 Introduction 265
  - 13.2 Ag NW Transparent Electrodes 266
    - 13.2.1 Background 266
    - 13.2.2 Transparent Electrodes Formed from Ultra-Long Ag NWs 267
  - 13.3 Printed Ag NW Electrodes 269
    - 13.3.1 Fabrication and Properties of Stretchable Electrodes 269
    - 13.3.2 Ag NWs Printing by LIFT 269
  - 13.4 Summary 271
  - References 271

- 14 Inkjet Printing of Functional Polymers into Carbon Fiber Composites 275**  
*Patrick J. Smith, Elliot J. Fleet, and Yi Zhang*
- 14.1 Inkjet Printing 275
  - 14.2 Carbon Fiber Composites 276
  - 14.3 Mechanical Tests 276
  - 14.4 Printing and Sample Preparation 277
  - 14.5 Carbon Fiber Composites that Contain Inkjet-Printed Patterns Composed of PMMA Microdroplets 278
  - 14.6 Carbon Fiber Composites that Contain Inkjet-Printed Patterns Composed of PMMA and PEG Microdroplets 283
  - 14.7 Morphology of the Printed PMMA and PEG Droplets 284
  - 14.8 Printed Polymers for Intrinsic Repair of Composites 286
  - 14.9 Conclusions 288
- Acknowledgments 289  
References 289
- 15 Inkjet-Printable Nanomaterials and Nanocomposites for Sensor Fabrication 293**  
*Niamh T. Brannelly and Anthony J. Killard*
- 15.1 Introduction 293
  - 15.2 Metallic Inks 294
    - 15.2.1 Gold 294
    - 15.2.2 Silver 296
    - 15.2.3 Copper, Nickel, and Alumina 296
    - 15.2.4 Metal Oxides 297
  - 15.3 Conductive Polymers 298
    - 15.3.1 Polyaniline 299
    - 15.3.2 Polypyrrole 300
    - 15.3.3 Prussian Blue 301
    - 15.3.4 PEDOT 302
  - 15.4 Carbon Nanomaterials 302
    - 15.4.1 Graphene Oxide 302
    - 15.4.2 Carbon Nanotubes 304
  - 15.5 Future Outlooks and Conclusions 308
- References 308
- 16 Electrochromics for Printed Displays and Smart Windows 317**  
*Pooi See Lee, Guofa Cai, Alice L.-S. Eh, and Peter Darmawan*
- 16.1 Overview on Electrochromics 317
    - 16.1.1 Electrochromics for Green Buildings 318
    - 16.1.2 Electrochromics for Displays 320
      - 16.1.2.1 Solution Processing of Electrochromics 322
      - 16.1.2.2 Printing Techniques in Electrochromics 324
  - 16.2 Screen Printing 324
  - 16.3 Inkjet Printing 326

16.4	Flexographic Printing	329
16.5	Roll-to-Roll Printing	329
16.6	Other Printing Methods	329
16.7	Conclusions and Perspectives	330
	References	332

<b>Index</b>	<i>341</i>
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## 1

## Printing Technologies for Nanomaterials

*Robert Abbel and Erwin R. Meinders*

### 1.1 Introduction

For centuries, printing of texts and graphics on flat (two-dimensional) substrates such as textiles and paper has been an essential enabling technology for the cultural development of mankind. Only recently has this technique been considered as a valuable tool for the processing of functional nanomaterials, for example, in the electronics and biomedical industries [1–6]. For electronics manufacturing, for example, printing has some decisive advantages compared with the more traditional approaches of semiconductor processing. First of all, printing is an additive process, meaning that functional materials are deposited only where needed and can be used much more efficiently than with subtractive techniques, which tend to produce a lot of waste [7, 8]. In addition, printing can be carried out at atmospheric pressure, making high-vacuum technologies obsolete, which also contributes to significant savings on production costs. A third advantage is the selectivity of printing, making multimaterial applications such as multicolor lighting [9–11] or printed thin-film transistors [12, 13] possible. Since in the graphics printing industry, many 2D printing technologies have already been developed toward roll-to-roll processing, commercial mass production of nanomaterial-based printed electronics devices in a continuous manufacturing mode is also within reach [14–16].

A wide variety of 2D printing technologies has been applied for the processing of functional nanomaterials, which can be subdivided into two different groups: noncontact or digital (maskless) printing technologies (without physical contact between printing equipment and substrate) and contact (mask-based) printing technologies (with physical contact). In noncontact printing, droplets or jets of the functional ink are generated at a (small) distance from the substrate and transferred onto it by a pressure pulse that propels them across the interspace. Contact printing typically makes use of a predetermined pattern, embedded as a mask in a drum or screen, which is repeatedly replicated on the substrate by directly touching it. Typical examples for noncontact techniques are inkjet printing (IJP) and laser-induced forward transfer (LIFT), and examples of contact technologies are offset, flexo, gravure, screen, and microcontact printing.

In general, critical issues to be considered during the choice for a specific printing technology for functional nanomaterials are technical aspects such as resolution, feature definition, adhesion, process reliability and stability, manufacturing speed, and device performance. Also nontechnical process features such as production volume and cost, environmental impact, and operator and customer safety are important, since all of these combined will determine whether printing will be a technically and economically viable option for a specific type of device. Since functional electronic and biomedical devices are frequently composed of complex ultrathin stacks of various (nano)materials, some of which can be highly sensitive to mechanical pressure, contactless printing can be a decisive advantage [17]. The balance between design flexibility and the potential for mass manufacturing is another consideration. Digital printing technologies offer a lot of design freedom and easily allow for image adjustments to compensate for possible substrate deformations (for instance, in the case of flexible or stretchable substrates [18]). However, productivity should come from mass parallelization with the obvious challenges such as yield, stability, reproducibility, and durability.

By contrast, all contact printing techniques involve some kind of physical stencil that determines the printing pattern and needs to be adjusted every time a different image is to be produced. This feature, in combination with its potential for very-high-throughput production, makes many contact printing techniques especially suited for the production of large numbers of identical devices [15]. In mature industrial production processes, contact printing is therefore usually preferred, unless possible damage to the products by mechanically touching the surface prohibits its use. By contrast, noncontact processes are generally the technology of choice where small series are required, such as in many academic research laboratories and in early-stage industrial research and development. However, the potential for scalability or transfer to other processes, which are more adept for mass production, is required for the latter to be of any practical use.

In addition to nanomaterials' deposition in two dimensions on flat substrates, functional printing has recently also been applied for the construction of three-dimensional objects [6, 19, 20]. 3D printing or additive manufacturing (AM) is known as a layer-by-layer manufacturing technology to build 3D products. In analogy to 2D technologies, it is an enabling approach with numerous advantages compared with the conventional (subtractive) manufacturing technologies. AM enables the cost-effective manufacturing of complex, personalized, and customized products. It also offers the possibility to introduce multimaterial products or parts with material gradients [21]. AM integrates very well with design tools and computer-aided design (CAD) software and as a result, the AM approaches can significantly impact both time and cost savings, as well as inventory, supply chain management, assembly, weight, and maintenance. AM is seen as an enabling technology for many applications, such as embedded and smart integrated electronics (Internet of things, smart conformal and personalized electronics [22]), complex high-tech (sub)modules made of ceramic or metal with multimaterial or grading material properties [23], and human-centric products (e.g., dentures, prostheses, implants [6, 24]). While new materials and manufacturing technologies are introduced in the market, we see that for

many applications the technology is still immature: product quality is inferior to that obtained with conventional methods, the choice of available materials is limited, yield is low by process-induced defects, manufacturing costs are high, and production speeds are typically low [25].

3D printing comes in various embodiments. Selective deposition techniques, such as viscous jetting, fused deposition modeling, cladding, or wire feed are well-known technologies based on the consecutive deposition of a printable/processable (nano)material to build layer-by-layer the 3D product. The product definition is determined by the spatial deposition and the dimensional stability of the deposited material (the material needs to have fluidic properties during the release from the reservoir or nozzle to print but should have (rigid and) superior material properties in the final product), and the patterning resolution of the deposition heads. The other class of AM technologies is based on pattern definition with an external source (e.g., laser beam or E-beam) in a homogeneous layer of material. During each print step, a homogeneous layer of material is deposited, but only the fraction that constitutes the final product is fused to the part via a sintering process (selective laser sintering (SLS)), melting process (selective laser melting (SLM)), binder jetting process, or photopolymerization process (stereolithography (SLA), vat photopolymerization). This family of AM technologies comes often with a higher spatial resolution but frequently suffers from inferior material properties (porosity in SLS, defects in SLM, uncured monomers and inferior material properties in vat). Emerging technologies are combinations of these: two-photon, reactive jetting, conformal printing, and so on.

The current focus for metal AM is on monomaterial technology improvement to enable lightweight parts for space, aerospace, and automotive applications and customized parts for medical and high-tech. The currently utilized processes are mainly based on cladding or selective melting (with laser or e-beam) to make metallic parts from powder. Challenges include the avoidance of thermally induced stresses that give rise to warpage and mechanical deformation, homogeneity and purity of the printed part, and defectivity control (e.g., small defects might result in fatigue challenges).

The currently utilized technology for ceramics parts is selective sintering: the fusion of ceramics particles under the influence of heat or photopolymerization based on a polymer binder system, in which a ceramics powder is dispersed. In both cases, the final ceramic product is preferably 100% pure and does not comprise contaminants of the binder.

Nanomaterials are typically used in both 2D and 3D printing to add functionality to the polymer or multimaterial systems. Nanomaterials can be added to a polymer system to improve material properties (e.g., mechanical strength, color, flame-retardation ability, biocompatibility), or to create anisotropy (via fibers, filaments, nanotubes, etc.). Examples include the addition of clay particles to photoresins to improve the mechanical properties such as impact strength and biocompatibility for use in high-tech engineering. Another example is the addition of metal compounds, such as metal nanoparticles, to make conductive tracks in free-form electronics applications.

## 1.2 Ink Formulation Strategies

The core ingredient of an electronic or biomedical ink is the functional nanomaterial to be deposited. Since a detailed overview is presented in Chapters 7–14, here only a brief summary is given. A wide variety of nanomaterials with all kinds of properties and shapes have been formulated into inks and pastes. Examples include conductive [26], semiconductive (e.g., electroluminescent or photovoltaic [27]), or piezoelectric [28] as well as catalytically and biologically active materials [29]. Also the dimensions of the materials used cover the entire range defined for nanotechnology from the sub-nanometer regime up to fractions of a micrometer. “Zero-dimensional” objects such as nanoparticles of spherical, but also other shapes have been processed [26], as well as more complex shapes such as rods and wires [27], sheets [30, 31], and complex three-dimensional architectures [32, 33]. Apart from functional nanomaterials consisting of a single component, more complex nano-objects have also been reported as functional ink ingredients [34]. In accordance with this wide variety of materials and functionalities, the technical applications also represent the entire range of devices such as sensing, energy conversion, communication and logic, lighting, and catalysis. For specific examples, the reader is referred to Chapters 15–16 of this book.

Ink formulation requires a delicate balance between the desired functional properties in the device after deposition and postprocessing, and printability. To achieve good printability, precise control over a number of ink properties is necessary, such as viscosity, stability, wettability, and drying behavior.

In all ink formulations, the functional nanomaterials are dispersed in some kind of fluid carrier, which can be a pure solvent or a mixture and has the function to allow processing from the liquid state. The choice for a particular solvent system depends on a variety of considerations, such as compatibility with the nanomaterials and the intended substrate, envisioned processing conditions, and intended application. For large-scale production, cost, environmental, and health issues also need to be taken into account.

Pure dispersions of nanomaterials in liquids usually are not stable and thus cannot be properly deposited by printing technologies. For example, nanoparticles strongly tend to cluster, agglomerate, and precipitate, due to their high surface energies, which in turn leads to altered rheological properties, an uneven distribution of the material, or an increased surface roughness after printing. Dispersants are, therefore, typically used to stabilize the nanoparticles (see [35] for a theoretical study and [36–38] for practical examples). These compounds are typically neutral or electrically charged organic molecules or polymers. They cause reciprocal repulsion when adsorbed on the particle surfaces, thereby preventing the formation of larger aggregates. Also, pH and electrolyte concentration can influence the dispersion stability of the nanoparticles because of their influence on the zeta-potentials. pH can be controlled by the addition of a buffer system. For biological functional components, pH control is especially important, since proteins tend to denature upon pH changes, thereby losing their functionality [39].

Ink stability during storage is another demanding requirement. In addition to agglomeration and settling of particles, as described earlier, evaporation of

solvents may lead to a change in ink composition and an increasing concentration of nanomaterials, which in turn impacts printability. Lifetime stability can be increased by high-boiling-point solvents. Another possibility is the addition of humectants, which bind the solvent components, thereby lowering their tendency to evaporate [40]. Typical examples are polymers with polar side groups, which attract polar solvents, especially water.

Ink rheology (e.g., viscosity or shear thinning behavior) impacts printability and needs to be adapted for each deposition technology. Ink viscosity can, for instance, vary from 2 mPa s (water-like inks typical for IJP) to above 300 Pa s (very thick pastes for screen printing). Ink viscosity can be controlled by concentration of the functional nanomaterials, viscosity of the carrier liquid, and additional ink ingredients. The optimum amount of dispersed particles is typically determined by the printing method. Viscosity modifiers such as high-molecular-weight polymers, gelators, or lower viscosity solvents can be added to achieve the desired viscosity, and some of them are also useful to induce shear thinning behavior by chain alignment or reversible network collapse under shear stress.

Controlling an ink's surface tension is another crucial step when formulating an ink. During the printing processes, the material will become deformed. This degree of deformation and the force necessary to achieve it are determined by several factors, one of which is surface tension. Lowering an ink's surface tension is usually rather easily achieved by the addition of small amounts of surface-active molecules, which tend to accumulate at the interfaces. A more extensive reformulation such as replacement of the main solvent is usually necessary if an ink's surface tension is too low.

In addition, the wetting behavior of an ink on a substrate after deposition is also influenced by its surface tension. A variety of substrate materials are used in functional printing, from glasses and semiconductor wafers to plastic foils, papers, and textiles. Accordingly, a wide range of varying surface properties is encountered, defined by the material and its surface chemistry and topology (e.g., roughness, porosity, possible anisotropy, prepatterning). In addition, surface chemistries can be tuned by the application of coatings and other surface treatment methods, such as exposure to reactive plasmas or ozone [41]. This wide range of surface properties needs to be taken into account during ink formulation, since only an appropriate combination of substrate and ink characteristics will result in the formation of well-defined printed patterns [42]: very strong repulsive interactions generally give rise to the formation of isolated droplets instead of continuous structures, whereas very strong attractive interactions will result in wide spreading, thereby limiting feature resolution. In order to print well-defined, fine, and continuous functional structures, usually a regime of intermediate wetting is preferred. Good or even complete wetting, however, can be useful when large areas need to be coated with a homogeneous continuous film of functional materials. Chemical compatibility with the substrate or coating material is also an important factor for the selection of ink ingredients, since chemical reactions between substrate and ink or the dissolution of the surface coating are usually undesired.

Postprocessing steps are typically applied to improve the functional performance of the deposited nanomaterials, for instance, exposure to heat to remove

the solvents and additives. These steps can also be controlled by adjusting the ink composition. Especially, inks with low nanomaterial loads, high solvent contents, and low viscosities exhibit complex flow patterns during solvent evaporation, which tend to accumulate the solid functional nanomaterials at the edges of the structures, giving rise to the so-called “coffee ring effect”. These irregular height profiles can aggravate further processing and compromise device performance, for example, when very thin continuous films need to be deposited on top. This can be avoided by designing complex solvent mixtures composed of ingredients with different boiling points (and thus sequential evaporation), thereby causing continuous compositional changes in the ink, or by choosing appropriate drying conditions [43, 44].

Evaporation of the solvent may also lead to deterioration of the wetting properties of an ink. Although under special circumstances, this effect can be exploited to create well-defined, extremely thin lines with high aspect ratios [45], it is usually detrimental and therefore unwanted. The drying process can obviously be influenced by the choice of volatile components in the ink, but in addition, specific interactions between the various solvents and other ink ingredients need to be taken into account. Nonvolatile compounds with high affinity to one or several of the solvents, for example, added as humectants or dispersants, can retard evaporation, giving rise to different transient ink compositions during the drying process.

After treatment, proper functionality of an ink deposit is frequently closely related to its topology and internal structure. Solvent loss and the decomposition of organic components such as stabilizers usually result in a significant volume shrinkage, which can result in crack formation and a rough surface profile. Similar damage can also occur from mechanical stress when flexible or stretchable devices are prepared. These phenomena can cause partial material disintegration, structural defects, and incomplete adhesion of possible consecutive layers. Achieving good cohesion within a dried ink structure is, therefore, crucial for the ultimate device performance and can be achieved by the addition of binders, which keep the structures together. In the specific case of electrically conductive inks based on metal nanoparticles, special “sintering agents” have been added, promoting nanoparticle merging during the drying process [46].

Another aspect of ink functionality is its adhesion to the underlying surface, since delamination can seriously affect final device performances. Typically, nanomaterials do not exhibit good adhesion to common substrate materials such as glass or plastic foils. To improve binding properties, polymeric binders and specific bifunctional adhesion promoters can be added with high affinities to both substrate and functional ink components. Typical examples include molecules containing silane groups, which can easily bind to glass, and thiol groups, which have a strong affinity toward certain types of metals, which by themselves do not adhere well on glass [47, 48].

### 1.3 Printing Technologies

Noncontact printing technologies typically deposit the ink in the form of free flying droplets formed at some distance from the substrate. The two most important



noncontact printing technologies are IJP [42] and LIFT [49]. Whereas IJP is a well-established technology, LIFT is a rather new development specifically aimed at high-resolution printing of high-viscous and solid materials. Aerosol patterning is another type of noncontact printing [50]. Heat is used to create airborne nanoparticles that are directed to a substrate via a confined jet. An annulus of air is used to control the dimensions of the deposited material.

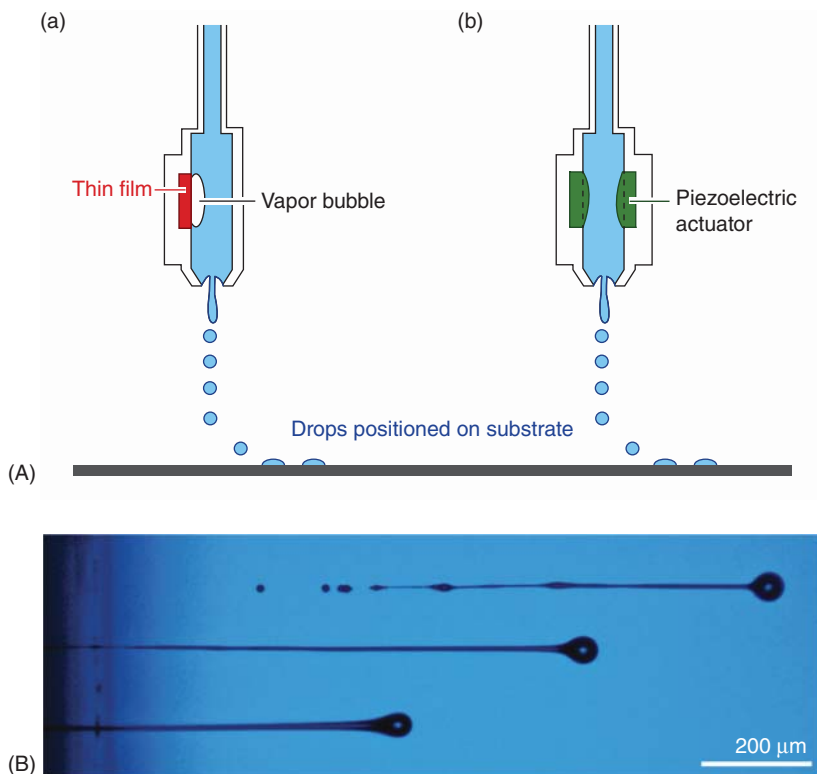
As outlined earlier, noncontact printing combines the key advantages of being compatible with mechanically sensitive substrates and digital patterning. This means that both technologies offer a high flexibility of design, since an adjustment in the digital printing pattern will directly be reflected in a different printed structure. As a consequence, a freedom of design is achieved that is not easily equaled by other approaches and can be especially advantageous when batches of limited numbers of identical functional devices are produced.

### 1.3.1 Inkjet Printing

IJP is characterized by the formation of droplets by a sudden pressure pulse in the nozzle chamber. In order to leave the nozzle in a reliable manner and to allow fast droplet generation (high printing frequencies), inkjet inks generally have low viscosities (in the order of 2–50 mPa s) and rather low solid contents. At least two types of IJP are distinguished, depending on the manner of droplet formation and ejection, which can be achieved either by a heat pulse, inducing solvent boiling and thus a pressure pulse (thermal IJP), or by the shape change of a piezoelement integrated in the nozzle chamber walls (piezoelectric IJP) (Figure 1.1). In both cases, the pressure pulse is eventually the result of an electric voltage pulse, which can be modulated in terms of intensity, time duration, and voltage ramp in order to optimize the ejection process. Since the exact pulse shape will influence printing parameters such as reliability, droplet size, and speed and printing stability, this so-called waveform tuning is of crucial importance during printing parameter optimization [51–53].

Due to the surface tension of the ink, during flight, the formed jet will contract into a single spherical droplet or will break up into a number of individual droplets, some of which might merge into one main droplet, while others will remain as so-called satellite droplets (Figure 1.1) [54]. The latter ones are unwanted, because they tend to diminish the definition of the printed pattern by landing outside the designated area. An important part of waveform optimization is, therefore, to avoid satellite droplet formation.

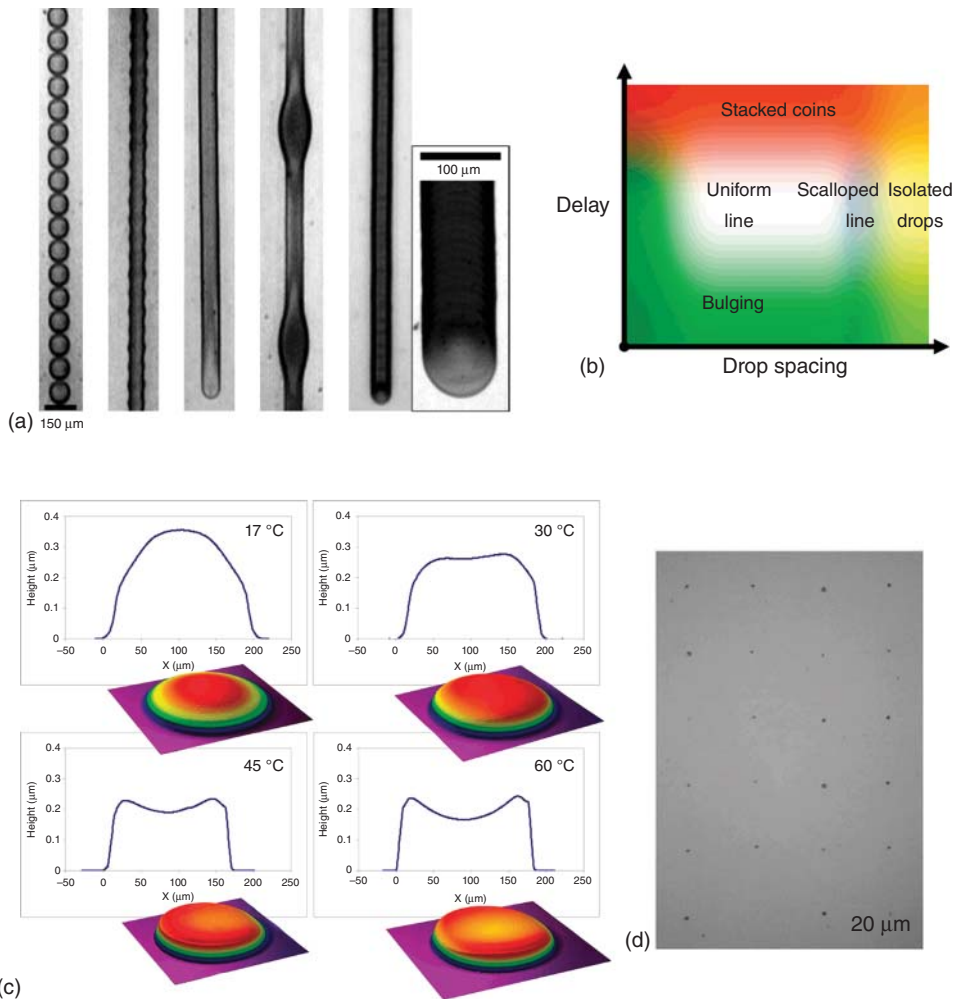
A number of phenomena can occur when droplets hit the surface. First of all, the physical interactions between the substrate surface and the ink are important, which are governed by the ink composition, the physical properties of the substrate, and the impact velocity. An ink droplet hitting the surface at too high speed will splash and create a very ill-defined pattern. Waveform tuning can control impact velocity and avoid the occurrence of splashing. After deposition, the shape of ink droplets on a substrate is determined by the former's surface tension and the latter's surface free energy. A measure for this interaction is the contact angle, that is, the angle formed between the substrate and the ink droplet. Very high contact angles indicate unfavorable interactions and a high degree of repulsion. Under these conditions, it is usually difficult to obtain



**Figure 1.1** Operational principles of thermal and piezoelectric inkjet printing (A) and jet break up and satellite formation during the inkjet process (B). (Derby (2010) [42]. Reproduced with permission of Annual Reviews.)

continuous functional (e.g., electrically conductive) structures, since any printed line will have a high tendency to break up into individual, unconnected droplets (dewetting). On the contrary, very low contact angles lead to complete wetting, that is, there are strong attractive interactions between ink and substrate, and thus a high contact area between both is thermodynamically favored. Too strong wetting can lead to extreme spreading of the ink, thus preventing any fine details to be formed. For high-resolution functional patterns, an intermediate wetting regime is usually optimal. It can be achieved by either modifications to the ink formulation, for example, by lowering its surface tension, or by changing the surface chemistry of the substrates, for example, by coatings or plasma treatments [55, 56]. Furthermore, for a given ink–substrate combination, the quality of the printed features can be additionally controlled by adjusting the printing parameters such as substrate temperature, droplet spacing, and jetting frequency (Figure 1.2) [57].

The drying process has also a major influence on the final properties of an ink-jetted pattern. Because of the low viscosities and high solvent contents of inkjet inks, transport phenomena occur on a larger scale than in more paste-like functional inks.



**Figure 1.2** Effect of drop spacing and deposition delay on definition of inkjet-printed lines (a,b) and effect of drying temperature on surface profiles of inkjet-printed droplets (c). (Soltman and Subramanian (2008) [57]. Reproduced with permission of American Chemical Society.) Array of micrometer-sized droplets of a nickel nanoparticle ink deposited by electrostatic IJP (d). (Ishida *et al.* (2007) [58]. Reproduced with permission of Japan Society of Applied Physics.)

Due to wetting, line widths achievable by IJP are usually limited to a minimum of 20 μm, unless specific measures are taken such as pre patterning of the substrate surface. Also, it is possible to reduce the droplet sizes, but a reduced process speed is usually the consequence. The typically low solid contents of inkjet inks result in high volume shrinkage during drying, which means that (average) line thicknesses after processing are in the order of a few micrometers at most. Multiple layer printing offers a solution but has its own specific challenges, such as interlayer alignment, instabilities of multiple wet-stacked ink layers, or different

wetting behavior of the ink on a predried layer than on the substrate. Another possibility is to increase the resolution, which means to increase the droplet density to be deposited, but this can also lead to a collapse of the high wet lines. In addition, both approaches to higher structures are directly related to a lower printing speed.

Electrostatic IJP is a variety of “classic” IJP, where the droplet is not produced by a pressure pulse but by an electric field between the nozzle tip and the substrate [59]. Very small droplet volumes can be achieved with this technology, allowing extremely fine structures to be deposited. Drop sizes on the substrate of below 1  $\mu\text{m}$  have been demonstrated (Figure 1.2) [58]. In addition, the electric field also serves to guide the droplet toward the substrate, thereby limiting deviations and increasing positioning accuracy. This is especially important for small droplets, which tend to stray away more strongly from a straight trajectory than do larger droplets. In contrast to classic IJP, electrostatic IJP is also compatible with inks of higher viscosities. A major drawback for industrial mass production at current state is its incompatibility with high production speeds and large-area fabrication.

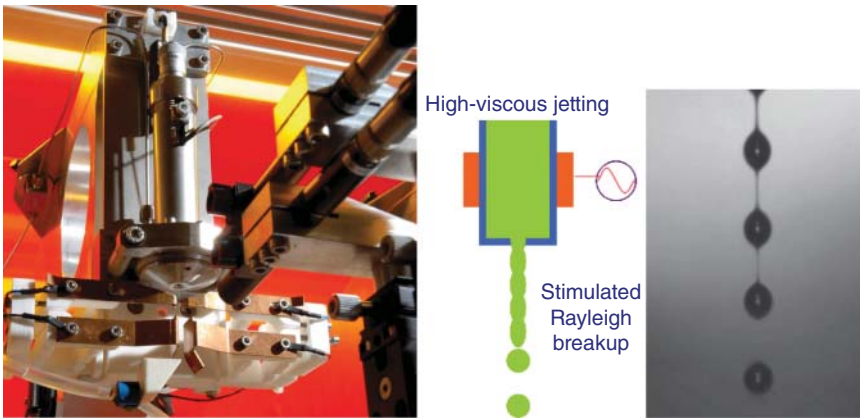
#### 1.3.1.1 Toward 3D Printing

Viscous jetting technologies come in different embodiments. Material can be liquefied by heating it up to above the melting temperature to squeeze it through nozzles and to form voxels on the target substrate. Examples include thermal wax, polymer, and metal. Polymer systems can go to 300–400  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ , while metal printing can go well above the 1000–1500  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  range. The jetted materials reach the substrate in a molten or fluidic state, causing, in combination with the wetting properties of the surface and previously built layers/parts, the voxel to spread out, thereby limiting the resolution and pattern definition. A key advantage is the recovery of the material properties after solidification.

Different nozzle systems have been developed. TNO has developed a jetting system for high-viscous material systems. The technology is based on the Plateau–Rayleigh instability to create a steady stream of well-defined droplets. The instability is induced by the design of the nozzle in combination with a piezo perturbation [60]. The system showed the capability to create 40–50  $\mu\text{m}$  voxels in the case of metal (Sn, Au, and Ag) and polymer systems. Several methods have been introduced for droplet on demand applications, for instance, by mechanical or electrical removal of the redundant droplets/voxels.

An image of the high-viscosity jetting head of TNO is given in Figure 1.3. Jetting systems are ideal for multimaterial applications, where different nozzles can feed different materials to the build. Challenges include material interface instability, material compatibility, and unwanted mixing.

A related application is the formation of monodisperse particles (powders) via well-defined cooling or drying of the dispersed droplets. The technology was successfully applied to the formation of metal powder (via immersion in a cooling liquid) and to the formation of milk powder and fine chemistry products (via conditioned cooling in air) [61]. A proof-of-concept study of a multinozzle system with internal filtration was executed by TNO. IJP was also applied for low-temperature 3D metal microstructure fabrication of metal nanoparticles [62]. Metal nanoparticle inks were successfully deposited via IJP to create



**Figure 1.3** Image of a high-viscous inkjet system, schematic, and the resulting droplet shape.

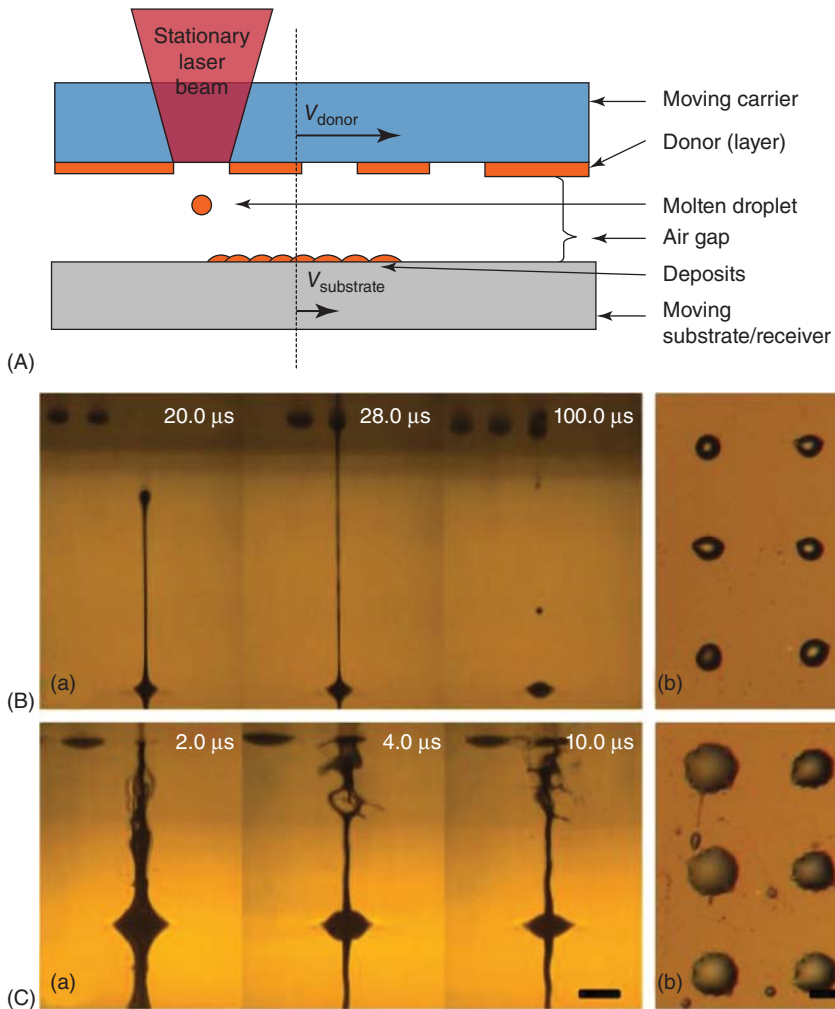
3D metal microstructures, such as micro metal pillar arrays, helices, zigzag, and microbridges.

### 1.3.2 Laser-Induced Forward Transfer

LIFT is another digital printing technology [49]. LIFT differs from IJP especially in the manner of droplet formation. The source of the functional material is a donor sheet coated with a layer of ink or an evaporated or sputter-deposited solid film. This material is locally heated with a high-power, short-pulsed laser, released and transferred as a droplet onto an acceptor substrate located at some distance from the donor sheet. The release is either accomplished by direct heating of the functional material or by thermal or photochemical decomposition of a dynamic release layer located underneath the functional material. A schematic picture of the LIFT process is given in Figure 1.4.

A wide range of inks (from inkjet formulations to screen printing pastes) and even solid materials can be transferred using the LIFT process. The droplet formation and thereby printed spot size and spot definition are controlled by both the donor layer characteristics (composition and thickness) and by the laser parameters (fluence, wavelength, pulse length, and spot size). Optimizing laser pulse conditions is somewhat equivalent to waveform tuning in IJP [63, 64]. The optimization process is, therefore, a complex interplay between ink properties, donor layer thickness, and laser pulse parameters. Very high fluences can induce spray formation instead of well-defined jet formation or result in splashing droplets upon impact on the substrate (Figure 1.4). Donor layer thickness impacts the amount of transferred material, but changes made to this parameter usually require pulse parameter adjustment as well to remain optimal printing results. A homogenous and uniform layer thickness is a crucial prerequisite for reliable printing quality over larger areas.

Under optimized conditions, LIFT can produce well-defined narrow functional features with line widths in the order of a few micrometers [65]. Especially when high-viscous materials are transferred, high aspect ratio structures can be prepared, since there is hardly any spreading in these cases. In addition, certain



**Figure 1.4** Principle of LIFT (A) and influence of laser fluence (100 (B) and 230 (C)  $\text{mJ cm}^{-2}$ ) on jet formation and droplet size and definition of a silver nanoparticle ink [63]. Scale bars correspond to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ . (Boutopoulos *et al.* (2014) [63]. Reproduced with permission of Springer.)

geometries such as very sharp turns with small radii can be difficult to prepare by IJP because they can easily break by unstable flow patterns aroused by the sharp kinks in the ink lines.

Although LIFT is a maturing technology, its potential for industrial application is still under development. Main challenges are the currently still limited processing speeds and process reliability, which is mainly due to the lack of reliable large-area coating mechanisms, which can supply donor substrates of extremely homogenous thickness.

If the laser is used in combination with a dynamic release layer, the donor material “only” undergoes a pressure wave lifting the material to the receiver