

ITQW 2019

Infrared Terahertz Quantum Workshop

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Program and Abstract Catalog

218	"Electrical-driven light emitting tunnel junction" Volker Sorger, Hasan Göktaş, Gökhan and Rishi Maiti	248	"Improved performance of InP-based 2.1 μm InGaAsSb quantum well lasers by direct Sb doping" Jinchuan Zhang, Dongbo Wang and Ning Zhuo
220	"Tunable Mid-infrared metasurfaces on III-V semiconductors" Laurent Boullay, Adil Bousseksou, Thomas Maroutian, Raffaele Colombelli, Andrey Babichev, Anton Egorov and Grigori Sokolovskii	250	"Optical tuning of terahertz quantum cascade random lasers" Sebastian Schoenhuber, Martin A. Kaiz, Benedikt Limbacher, Dominik Theiner, Michael Jaidl, Aaron Maxwell Andrews, Hermann Detz, Gottfried Strasser, Juerg Darmo and Karl Unterrainer
222	"Dispersion measurements of terahertz quantum cascade Fabry-Perot cavities and VECSELS" Tudor Olariu, Mattias Beck, Jerome Faist and Giacomo Scialari	252	"Superradiant meta-atoms strongly coupled to intersubband transitions" Moritz Wenclawiak, Benedikt Limbacher, Christian Georg Dermi, Aaron Maxwell Andrews, Gottfried Strasser, Karl Unterrainer and Juraj Darmo
224	"THz sub-wavelength detectors and lasers based on LC resonators" Claire Abadie, Stefano Pirota, Lianhe Li, Xavier Lafosse, Bruno Paulillo, Edmund Linfield, Alexander Giles Davies and Raffaele Colombelli	254	"Detecting and unraveling THz fields with graphene and deep learning" Jacob Khurgin and Velat Kilic
226	"Oscillating E-field domains in quantum cascade lasers with chaotic bias output" Denizhan Ekin Önder, Alex Arash Sand Kalae, Andreas Wacker, Emmanuel Dupont and David O. Winge	256	"Coulomb induced nonlinear response of intersubband transitions" Heinrich A.M. Leymann, Jacopo Nespolo and Iacopo Carusotto
228	"Experimental and theoretical study of piezoelectric polarization in GaN/AlGaIn terahertz quantum cascade lasers" Li Wang, Tsung-Tse Lin, Ke Wang, Thomas Grange and Hideki Hirayama	258	"Dual single-frequency far infrared (17.5 and 19.5 μm) emission from InAs-based distributed feedback double metal waveguide quantum cascade laser" Zeineb Loughmari, Roland Teissier, Michael Bahriz and Baranov Alexei
230	"Novel 4-well THz QCL with hybrid injection/extraction channels" Boyuu Wen, Chao Xu, Siyi Wang, Sm Shazzad Rassel, Manasa Kamiselvan, Chris Deinert, Zbigniew Wasilewski and Dayan Ban	260	"Integrated ultrasensitive broadband terahertz field detectors in silicon photonics" Ilcana-Cristina Benea-Chelmeu, Yannick Salamin, Francesca Fabiana Settembrini, Yuriy Fedoryshyn, Wolfgang Heni, Delwin L. Elder, Larry Dalton, Juerg Leuthold and Jerome Faist
232	"Long-wave infrared ($\lambda \sim 14\text{--}20\mu\text{m}$) GaAs/Al _{0.3} Ga _{0.7} As quantum cascade lasers" Ming Lyu, Loren Pfeiffer, Ken West and Claire Gmachl	262	"Level broadening by dipole scattering in AlGaIn/AlGaIn superlattice structures" Joosun Yun and Hideki Hirayama
234	"Low inversion active region design for quantum cascade superluminescent emitters" Sara Kacmoli, Yezhezi Zhang, Mei Chai Zheng, Abanti Basak, Deborah Sivco and Claire Gmachl	264	"Integrated silicon horn used in a THz-QCL amplifier" Andrew Paulsen and Qing Hu
236	"Highly sensitive a compact THz heterodyne receiver based on HEB and QCL at 2.7 THz" F Joint, G Gay, Pierre-Baptiste Vigneron, T Vacelet, Stefano Pirota, R Lefevre, Y Jin, Lianhe Li, Ag Davies, Eh Linfield, Y Delorme and Raffaele Colombelli	266	"Broadband and continuous spectrum generation in quantum dot cascade lasers" Zenghui Gu, Jinchuan Zhang and Fengqi Liu
238	"QCL-pumped terahertz gas laser at 66 μm " Alsu Zubairova, Martin Wienold and Heinz-Wilhelm Hübers	268	"Influence of electron-phonon scattering in quantum dot cascade lasers" Kai Xi Wang, Stephen Hughes and Dayan Ban
240	"High-quality factor bound-states-in-the-continuum modes of THz biosensing" Natalie Rozman, Nicholas Cairn, Kevin Fan and Willie Padilla	270	"Infrared scanning near-field optical microscopy for thermal profiling of quantum cascade" B. J. Pandey, K. P. Clark, F. Abbas, E. Fuchs, K. Lascola, D. Hinojos, K. Hodges, D. I. Robbins, J.-F. Veyan, Q. Gu and K. Roodenko
242	"Terahertz polarization imaging using quantum cascade laser" Anthony Kim, Christopher Curwen, Luyao Xu, John Reno and Benjamin Williams	272	"Frequency comb dynamics of ultrafast quantum dot lasers" Johannes Hillbrand, Dominik Auth, Marco Piccardo, Federico Capasso, Gottfried Strasser, Stefan Breuer and Benedikt Schwarz
244	"Simulative investigation of graphene intersubband polaritons" Francesco Pisani		
246	"Optical heterodyne detection of quasi-CW terahertz-wave from THz-QCL" Hayashi, Saito and Sekine		

Optical Tuning of Terahertz Quantum Cascade Random Lasers

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We demonstrate optical tunability of terahertz quantum cascade random lasers by illumination with an additional external 813 nm source. Due to the broadband nature of the multiple scattering feedback mechanism, the underlying mode structure can be modified. Our results pave the way towards a continuously tuneable terahertz light source.

1. Introduction

Since their initial demonstration, random lasers have attracted a lot of interest due to their complementary characteristics compared to conventional lasers [1]. In a random laser, the light is trapped by multiple scattering in the gain medium, which has been demonstrated in different kinds of materials, ranging from grinded laser crystals to polymer films and ceramics. Recently we demonstrated [2] random lasers at terahertz (THz) frequencies by making use of quantum cascade laser (QCL) active regions, resulting in broadband surface emission with a highly collimated output beam.

2. Surface Emitting THz Random Lasers

We realized random lasers by etching a random air hole pattern through the active region of a double-metal waveguide. Due to the frequency independent feedback mechanism, broadband surface emission is achieved, covering a bandwidth of more than 350 GHz. This is the distinctive feature compared to previously demonstrated concepts providing surface emission which are designed to support a single lasing mode only. Furthermore, the electrically pumped nature of the used quantum cascade active region allows for highly controllable experimental conditions and is also crucial for potential future applications.

3. Frequency Tuning by Surface Illumination

Here, we demonstrate a tuneable broadband terahertz source by optically modulating the random laser with an external illumination source [3] at 813 nm, as depicted in the scheme in Fig. 1 (a). The additional light allows spatially resolved, independent modulation of gain and loss properties. This modulation results in changes in the QCL spectrum. By further optimization of the modulation scheme, our results will pave the way towards a continuously tuneable broadband terahertz light source.

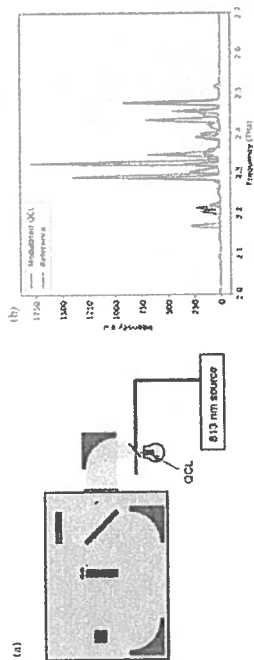


Figure 1: (a) Scheme of the experimental setup. (b) Comparison of spectra recorded with and without additional optical illumination. Occurring modes of the terahertz random laser are modified if an additional 813 nm beam is focussed onto the devices, introducing a spatial loss modulation which favours different modes. This is a caption for a figure.

References

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