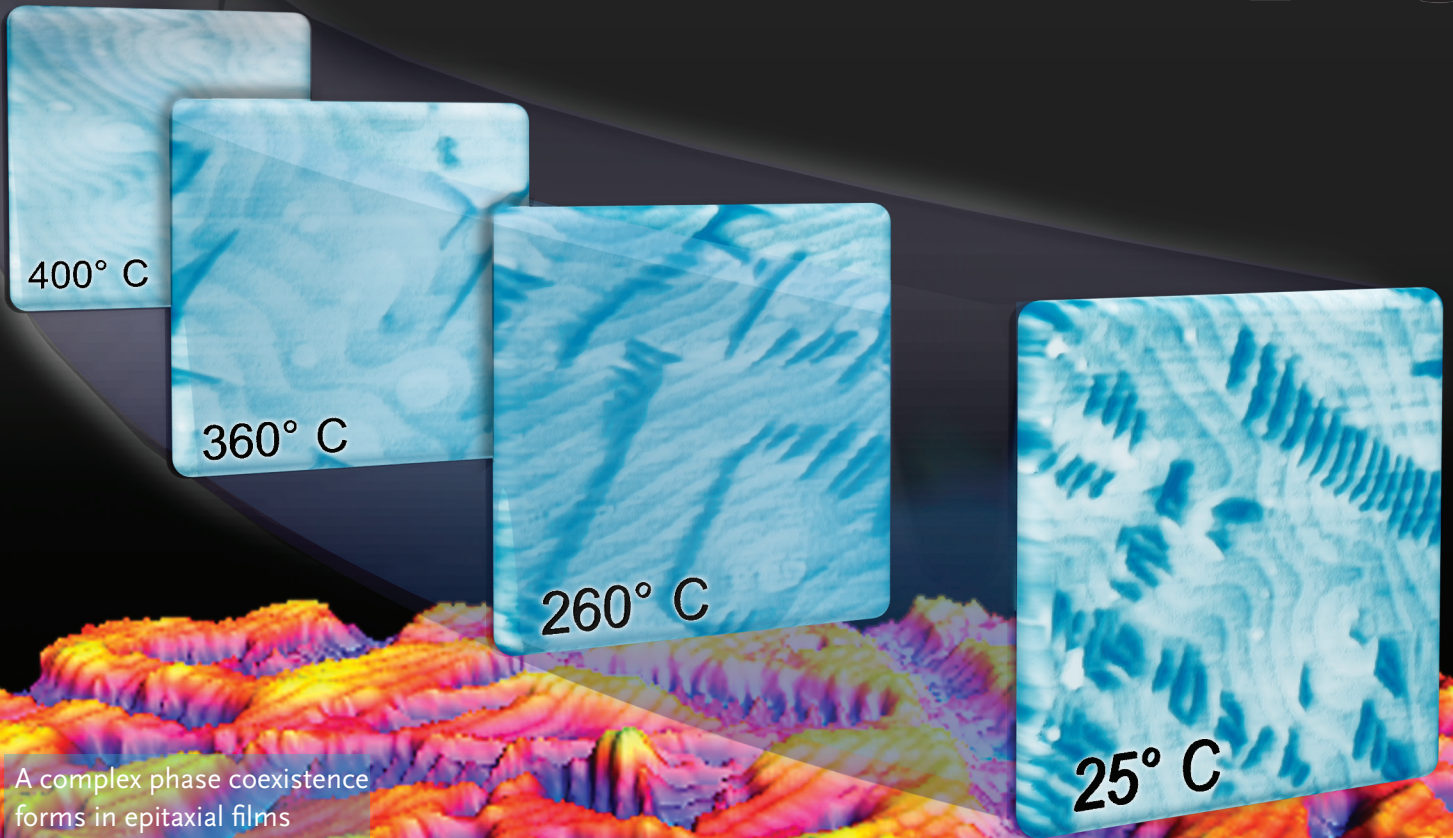


ADVANCED MATERIALS



A complex phase coexistence forms in epitaxial films of BiFeO_3 due to the effects of epitaxial strain and temperature-induced stresses. The work by H. M. Christen and co-workers on page 5561 shows that the stripe patterns that form upon cooling of these atomically flat layers are a prerequisite for piezoelectric switching, i.e., the phase coexistence enables the functionality of the material.