

## **X-ray Free Electron Laser Studies of Surfaces and Catalysis**

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In heterogeneous catalysis, reactants adsorbed on surfaces are converted to products, which eventually desorb via various intermediates. The transition state separates reactants and intermediates from products and the free energy required to reach it determines the kinetics of an elementary chemical reaction. Many surface reaction intermediates are, however, transient species with a short residence time and the population of species in the transition state region is near-zero making their observation a challenge during steady state conditions. Ultrafast pump-probe techniques have, however, opened up opportunities by promoting a sufficient population of molecules in transient states to allow detection on short time scales. Here recent results on probing chemical reactions on surfaces using X-ray free-electron lasers LCLS (Linac Coherent Light Source) at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory) will be presented. Four examples will be shown CO desorption, Oxygen activation, CO oxidation and CO hydrogenation on Ru(0001). We demonstrate that both transient intermediates and the transition state region can be detected in surface chemical reactions.