

A self-powered hydrogel electronic skin with decoupled multimodal sensing for closed-loop human-machine interactions

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Supplementary Note 1: Molecular dynamics simulation methods

Classical molecular dynamics (MD) simulations were performed to investigate the microscopic structures of Fe^{3+} and Fe^{2+} in water and PVA solutions at the atomic level. The components and their quantities of the two simulated systems are listed in Supplementary Table 5 and 6. Initial configurations of two solvent systems were constructed using PACKMOL software^[1], with all molecules randomly inserted in a cubic simulation box. The SPC/E model, which had been validated for accurate water simulation, was used as the force field of H_2O . The OPLS-AA force field^[2] was employed to describe PVA, Fe^{2+} , Fe^{3+} , and Cl^- molecules. The molecular force field consisted of both bonded and nonbonded interactions. The nonbonded interactions included van der Waals (vdW) and electrostatic interactions, as described by the following equations, respectively:

$$E_{LJ}(r_{ij}) = 4\varepsilon_{ij} \left(\left(\frac{\varepsilon_{ij}}{r_{ij}} \right)^{12} - \left(\frac{\varepsilon_{ij}}{r_{ij}} \right)^6 \right) \quad (1)$$

$$E_c(r_{ij}) = \frac{q_i q_j}{4\pi\varepsilon_0\varepsilon_r r_{ij}} \quad (2)$$

For different atom types, the Lorentz-Berthelot mixing rules were applied for vdW interactions, as given in the equation below:

$$\sigma_{ij} = \frac{1}{2}(\sigma_{ii} + \sigma_{jj}); \varepsilon_{ij} = (\varepsilon_{ii} * \varepsilon_{jj})^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (3)$$

The cutoff distance for vdW and electronic interactions was set to 1.2 nm, and the particle mesh Ewald (PME) method was employed to calculate long-range electrostatic interactions.

For each simulation, energy minimization was first performed to relax the simulation box. This was followed by an isothermal–isobaric (NPT) ensemble simulation with a 1.0 fs time step, where the temperature was maintained at 300 K and the pressure at 1.0 atm using the Nosé–Hoover thermostat and Parrinello–Rahman barostat, respectively.

The NPT optimization was run for 400 ps, which was sufficient to obtain a stable box size. Subsequently, a canonical (NVT) ensemble simulation was conducted for 300 ps with a 1.0 fs time step to further optimize the system. The optimized simulation boxes are shown in Figure 2. In all MD simulation, atomic motion was described by classical Newton's equations of motion, solved by the velocity-Verlet algorithm. All simulations were performed using the LAMMPS package⁵.

Supplementary Note 2: Finite element analysis methods

Finite element analysis (FEA) of coupled poroelastic solvent flow, ion transport, and electrostatic calculations were conducted using COMSOL. A prismatic hydrogel with a rectangular base was modeled (Figure 3i). A stainless-steel plate was placed on top to compress the hydrogel in the z-direction, while the bottom surface was fixed in all directions (x, y, and z displacements were constrained to zero). All other surfaces were free to deform. The simulation geometry is shown in Supplementary Figure 22.

When the liquid phase was set to water, an elastic polymer matrix was modeled in the poroelasticity module as a solvent-containing medium, where fluid convection occurs upon applied pressure. Flow continues until the applied pressure is balanced by the elastic restoring force generated by expansion of the polymer at the base. Darcy's law was used to simulate liquid flow within the polymer matrix in a transient analysis, as described by the equations below:

$$\nabla \sigma_e \cdot \Omega = \mu_c \quad (4)$$

$$V_i = \frac{-\kappa}{\eta} \nabla P \quad (5)$$

where σ_e is the total elastic stress of the polymer (N m^{-2}), Ω is the molar volume of a solvent molecule (mol m^{-3}), μ_c is the chemical potential of electrolyte molecules inside the gel (J mol^{-1}), V_i is the Darcy's velocity, κ is the permeability of the gel (m^2), η is the fluid viscosity ($\text{Pa}\cdot\text{s}$), and ∇P is the pressure gradient within a gel (Pa m^{-1}). The polymer matrix and fluid property parameters used are summarized in Supplementary Table 5.

The output voltage depends on the balance between the rate of charge diffusion and the amount of charge, as solvent flow carries charge and creates a voltage gradient. By substituting V_i into the transport eigen equations yields the convection, diffusion, and migration relation:

$$N_i = v_i c_i - D_i \nabla c_i - z_i c_i \mu_i \nabla V \quad (6)$$

where N_i is the molar flux of species i in the solvent ($\text{mol m}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$), v_i is the convection velocity (m s^{-1}) of a given electrolyte species, c_i is the concentration (M), D_i is the diffusion coefficient ($\text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$), z_i is the valence charge, and μ_i is the electrophoretic mobility.

When compressive strain is applied to the hydrogel, the concentrations of both anions and cations increase, where convection-driven concentration differences become the dominant factor. The advection equation defines the molar flux of ions due to the concentration gradient:

$$J = v_i c_i \quad (7)$$

The total current density can be expressed as:

$$J = \sum n_i z_i e v_i \quad (8)$$

where n_i is the ion concentration. Therefore, the compression-induced current density can be regarded as a net ionic current:

$$J = ev(n_+ Z_+ - n_- Z_-) \quad (9)$$

where $n_{+/-}$ are the concentrations of cations ($\text{Fe}^{2+/3+}$) and anions (Cl^-), respectively, and $Z_{+/-}$ are their corresponding charges.

A schematic side view of the prism structure is shown in Supplementary Figure 21, where p is the side length at the bottom of the prism, q is the side length at the top, h is the prism height, a is a variable ranging from 0 to b , and b represents the proportion at which the two forces reach equilibrium. The area of the surface of the top deformed region is

$$S = \left(q + (p - q) \frac{a}{h} \right)^2 \quad (10)$$

Given E as the effective Young's modulus of the prismatic hydrogel, the elastic force generated on the deformed region can be described as:

$$f = \int_0^b df = \int_0^b E \cdot \frac{a}{h} dS = \frac{E(p-q)b^2}{h^2} \left(q + \frac{2(p-q)b}{3h} \right) \quad (11)$$

The total elastic force is:

$$F_e = N \cdot f \quad (12)$$

where N is the number of prisms.

However, considering mechanical loss, the applied force can be expressed as $k \cdot F$, where k is the mechanical transfer efficiency and F_e is the external elastic force. At equilibrium,

$$F = k \cdot F_e = k \cdot N \cdot E \cdot \frac{(p-q)b^2}{h^2} \left(q + \frac{2(p-q)b}{3h} \right) \quad (13)$$

The ion velocity v is determined by Darcy's law:

$$v = \frac{\kappa}{\eta} \nabla P = \frac{\kappa}{\eta} \cdot \frac{F}{hS} \quad (14)$$

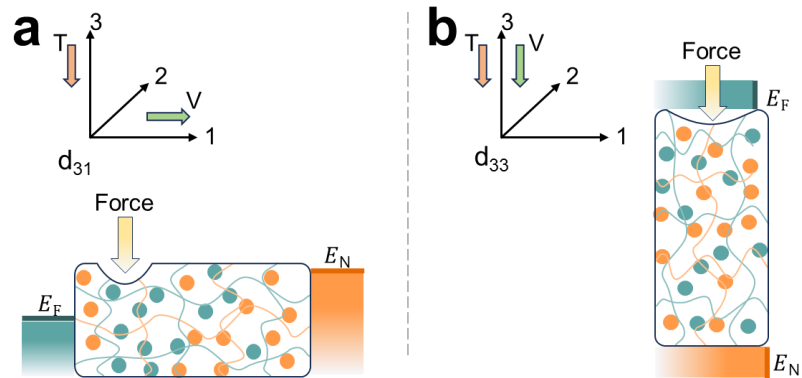
where κ is the permeability, η is the viscosity, and S is the cross-sectional area.

The output current I is defined as the integral of the current density J over the cross-sectional area S as:

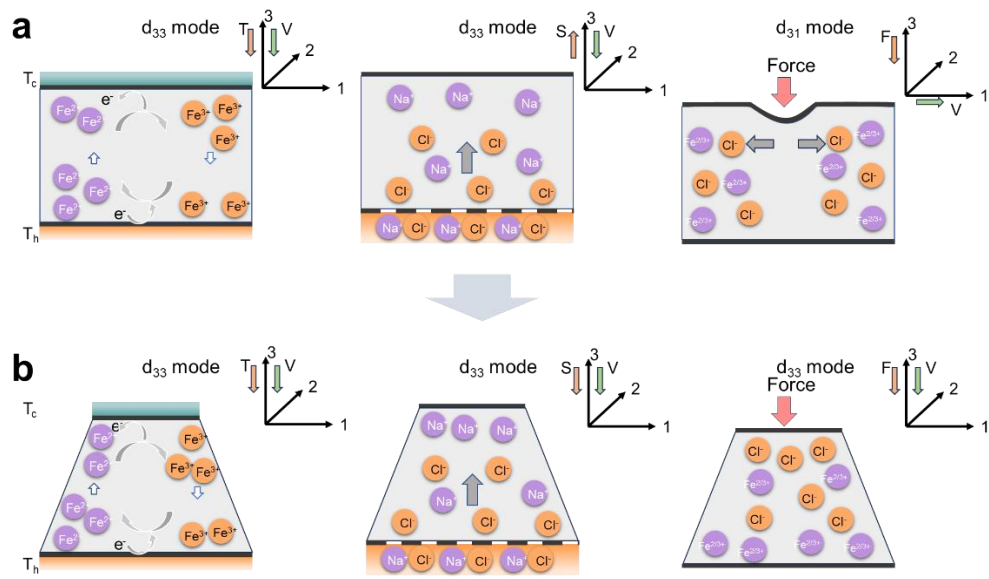
$$\begin{aligned} I &= \int J dS = \frac{e\kappa(n_+Z_+ - n_-Z_-)}{\eta h} \cdot F \\ &= \frac{e\kappa(n_+Z_+ - n_-Z_-)}{\eta h} \cdot k \cdot N \cdot E \cdot \frac{(p-q)b^2}{h^2} \left(q + \frac{2(p-q)b}{3h} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

According to this formula, the output current is linearly proportional to the applied pressure. In addition, the sensitivity depends on the Young's modulus of the hyperplastic PVA hydrogel.

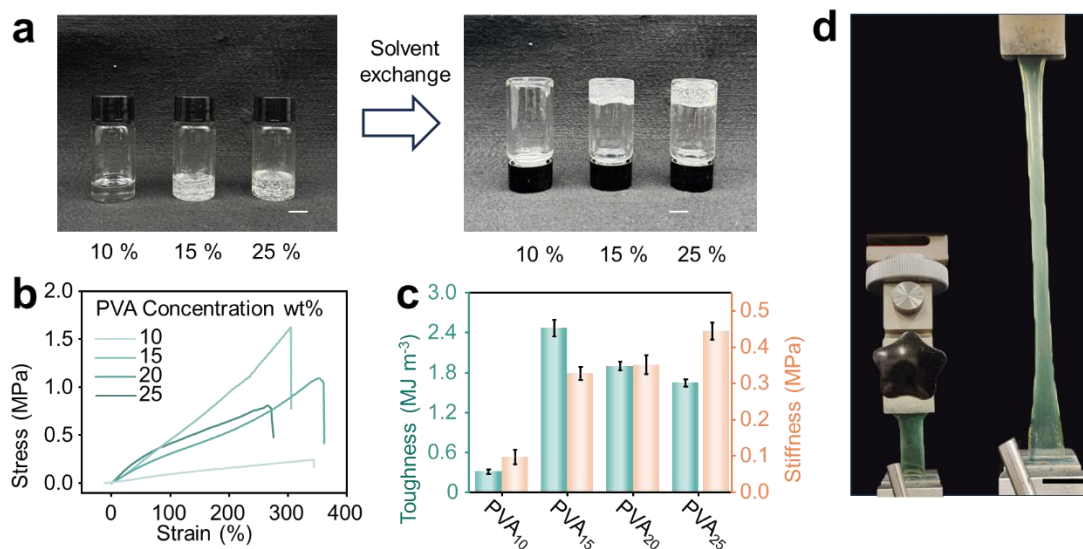
Supplementary Figure



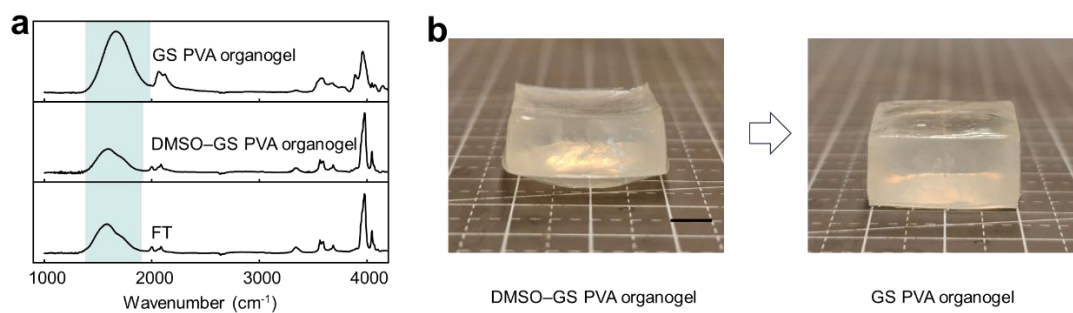
Supplementary Figure 1. The (a) d_{31} and (b) d_{33} modes of the piezoionic effect.



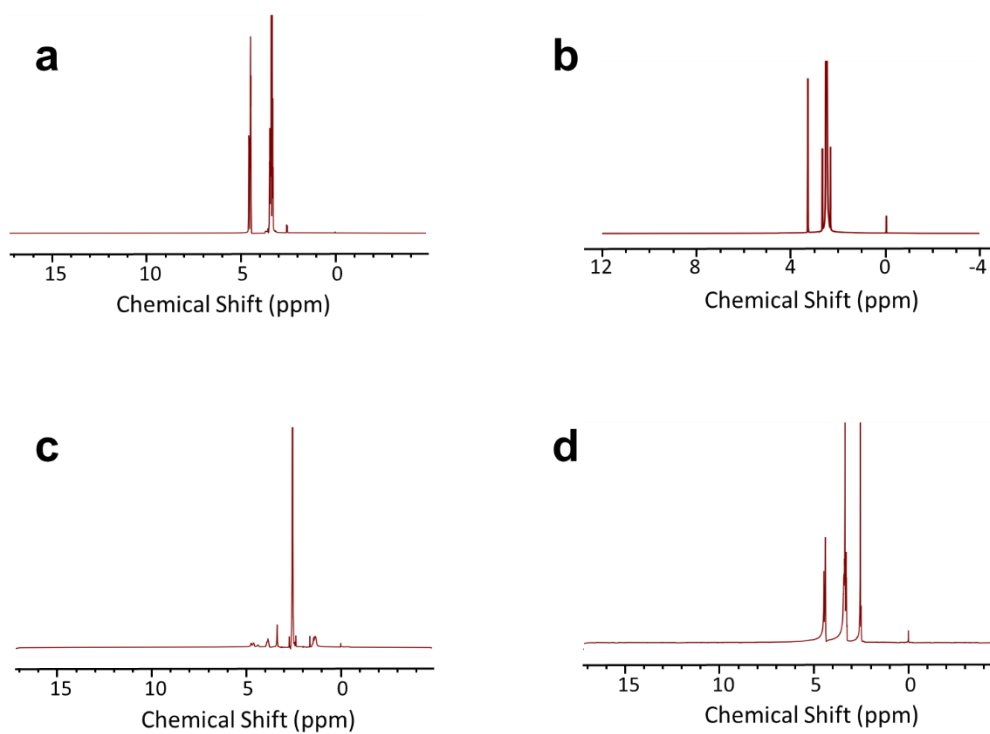
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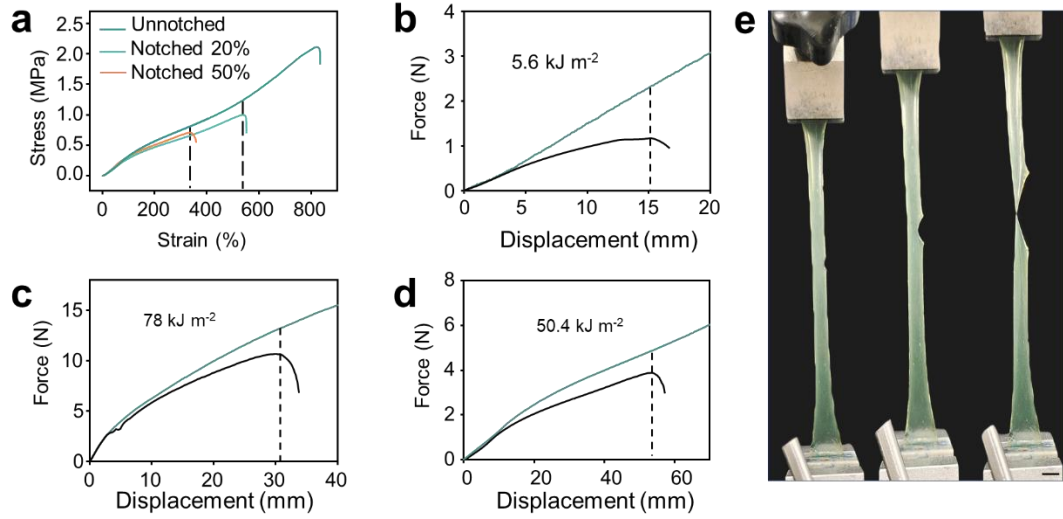
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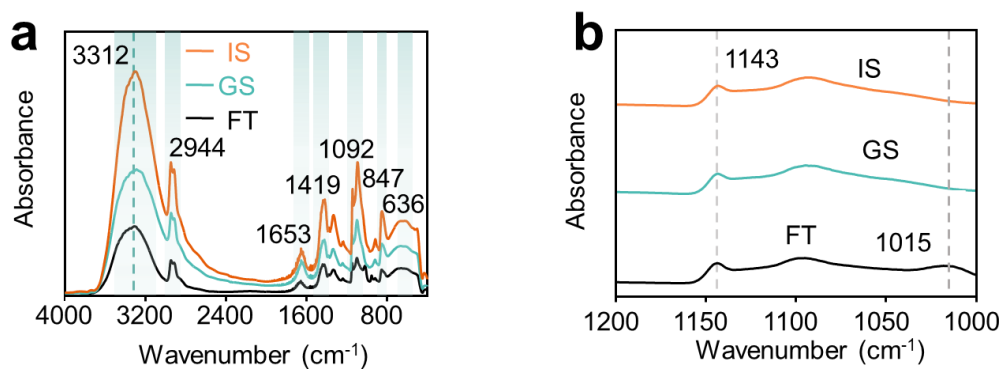
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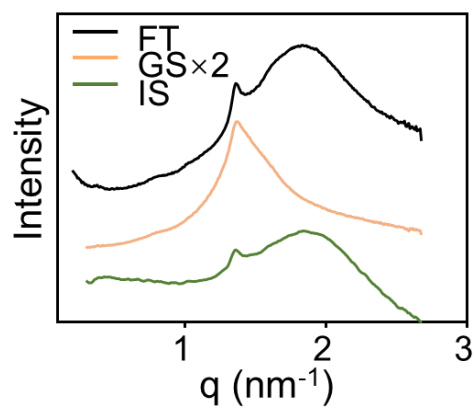
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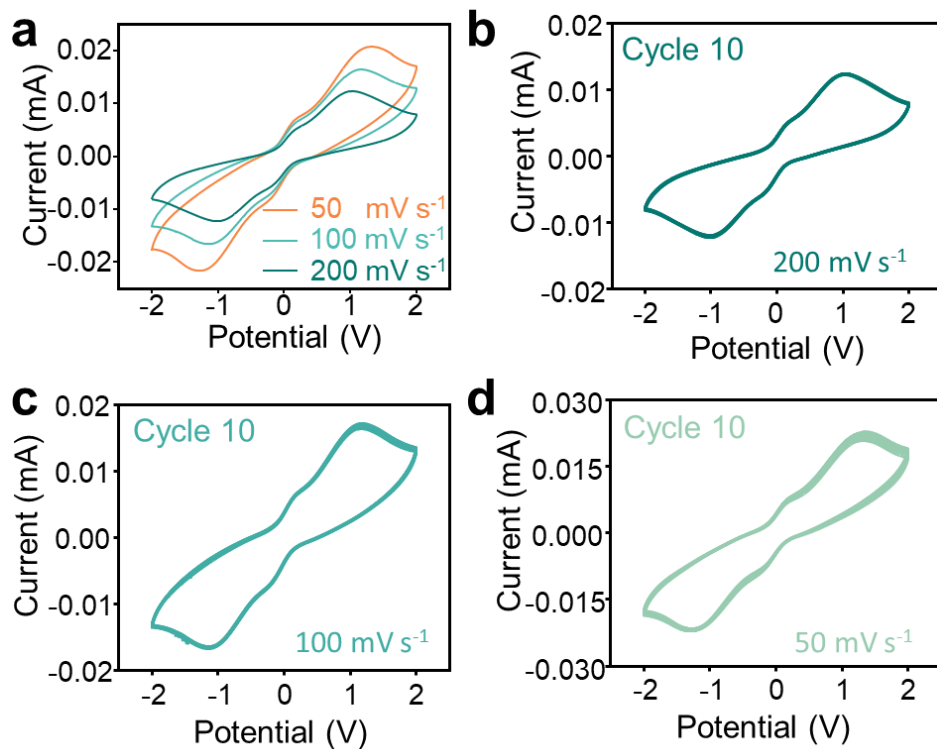
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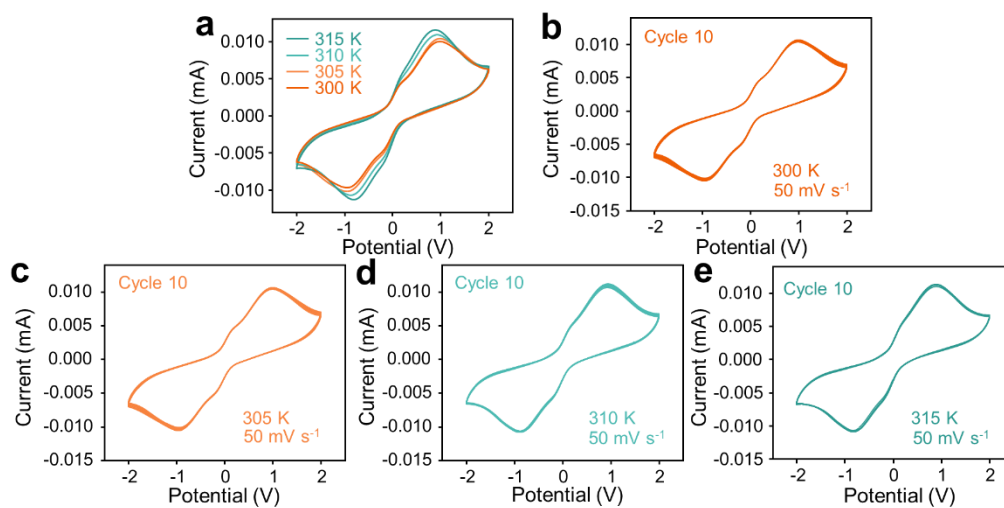
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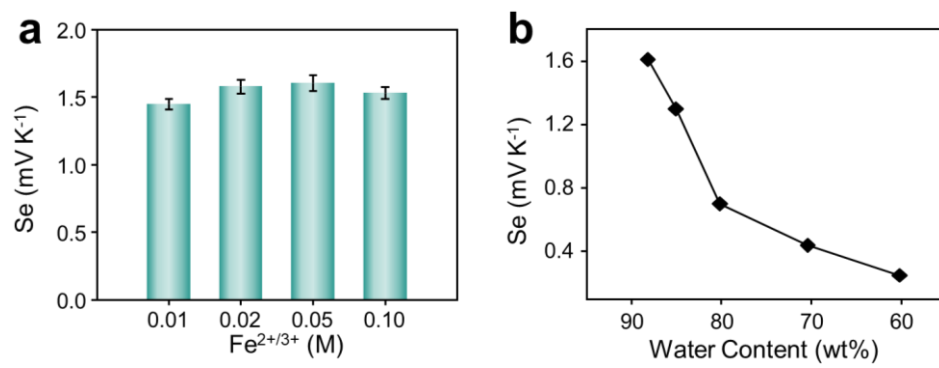
Supplementary Figure 8. 1D small-angle X-ray scattering (SAXS) profiles of FT, GS, and IS.



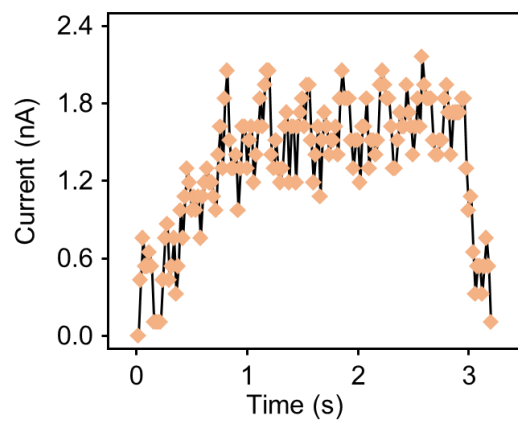
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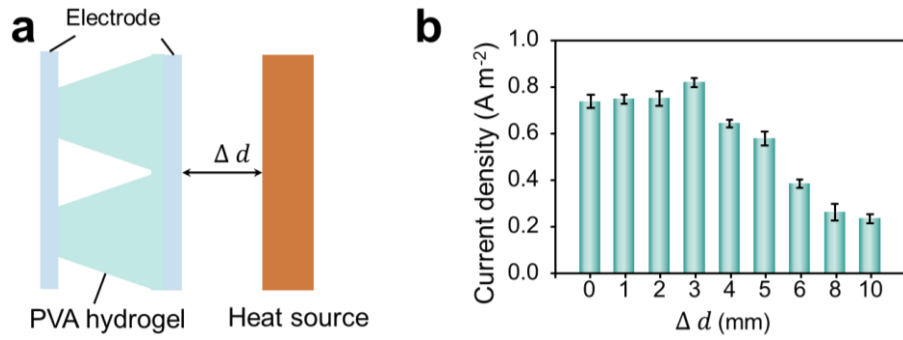
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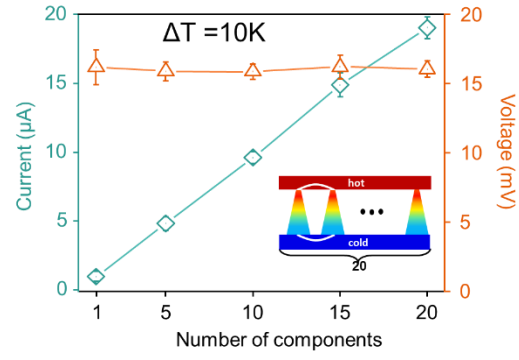
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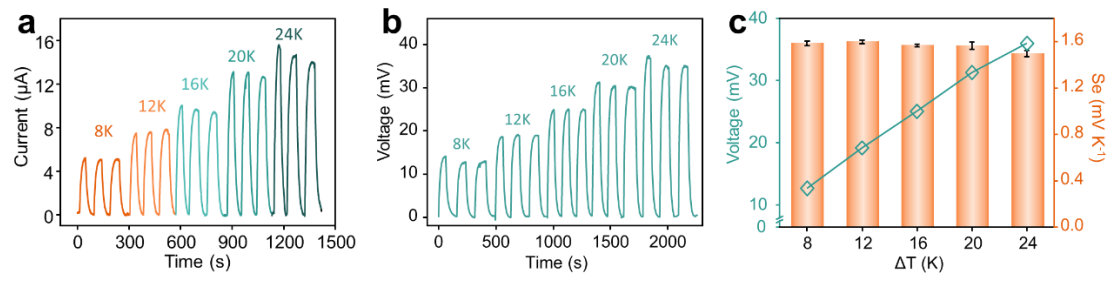
Supplementary Figure 12. Temperature detection limit. An infrared laser module was used to irradiate a section of the PVA gel to produce a temperature difference of 0.1°C .



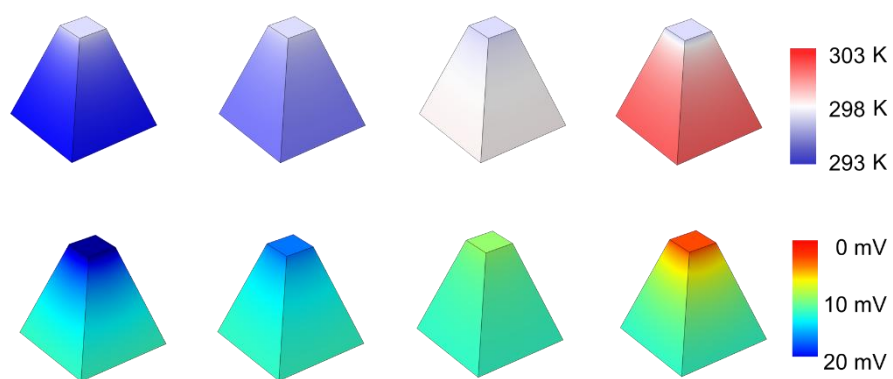
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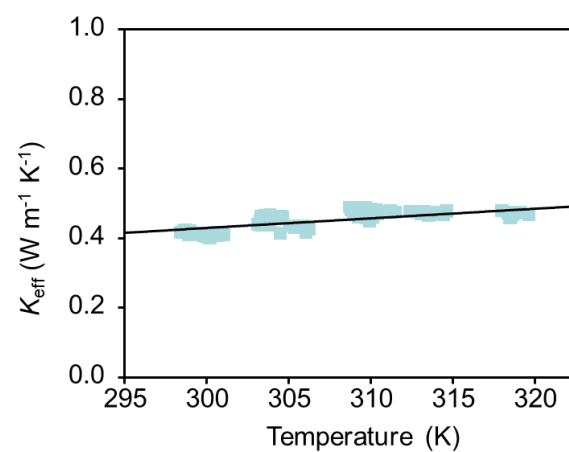
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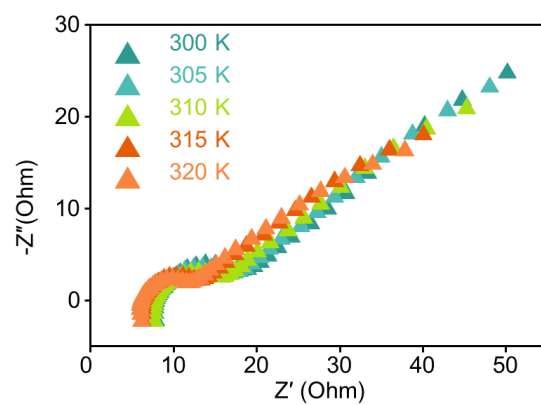
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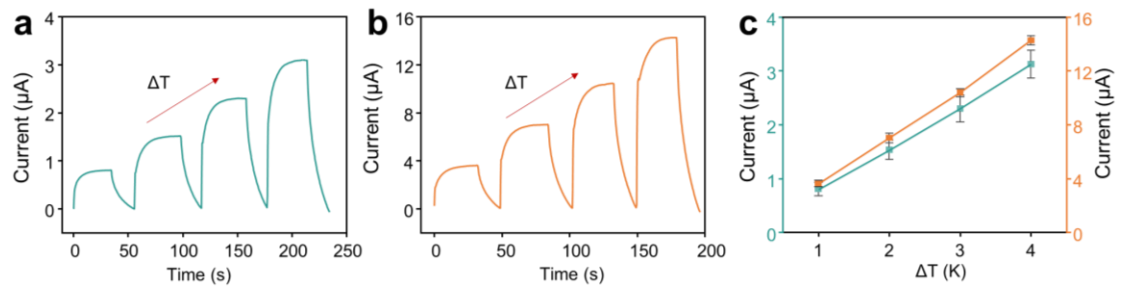
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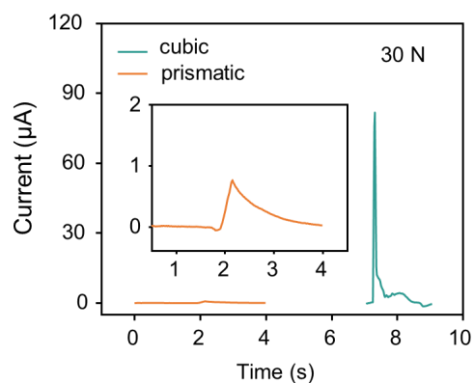
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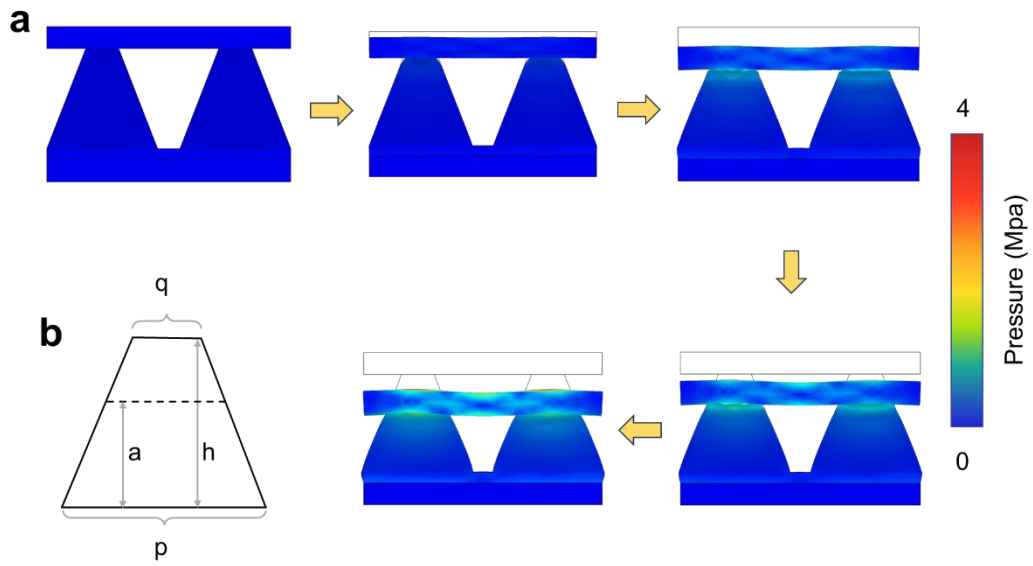
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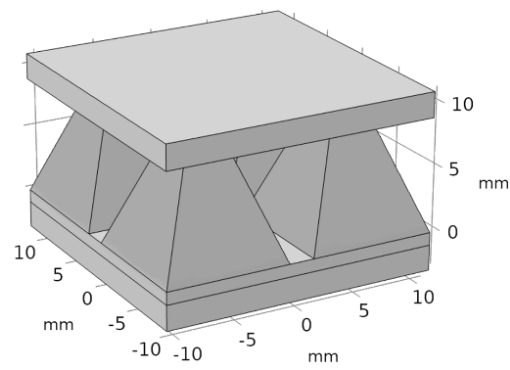
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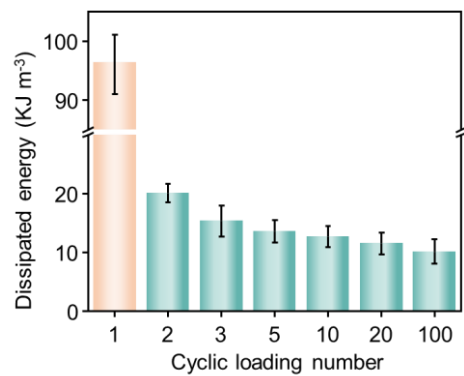
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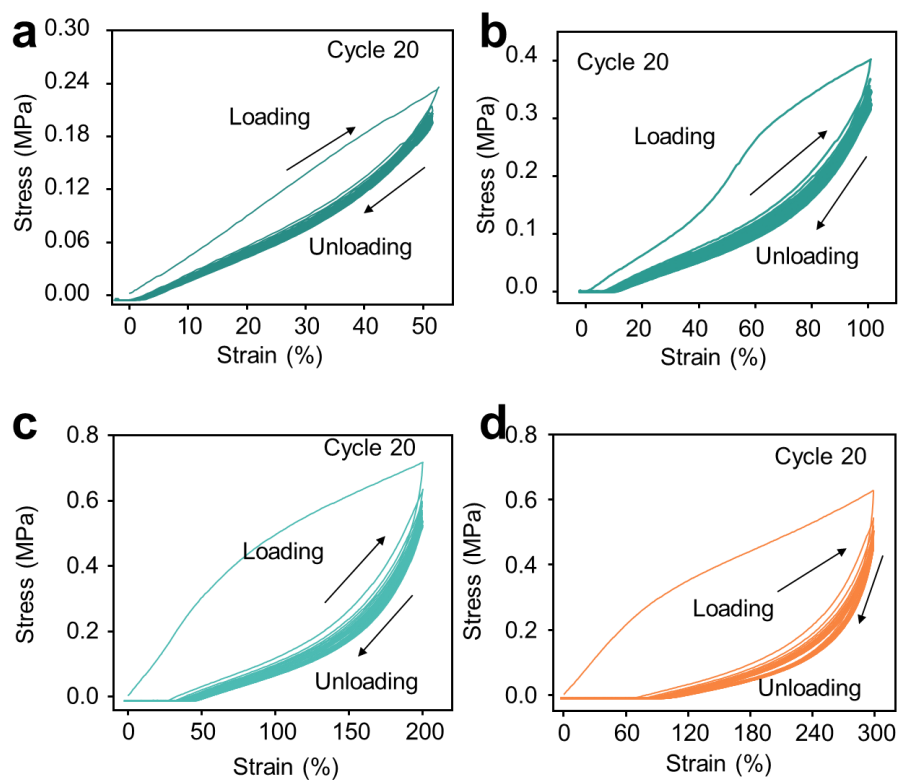
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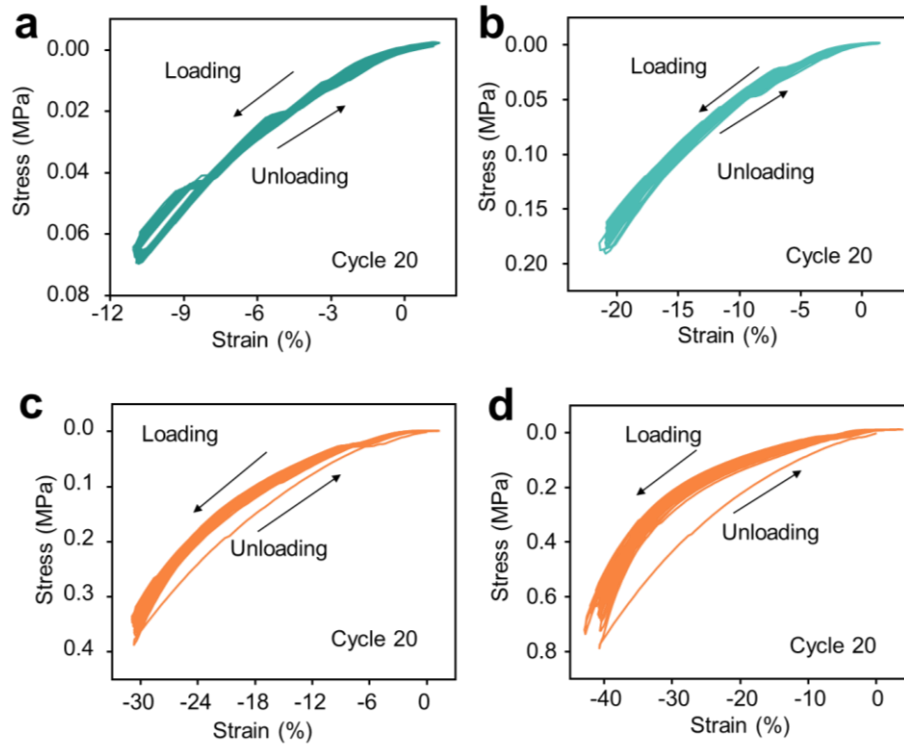
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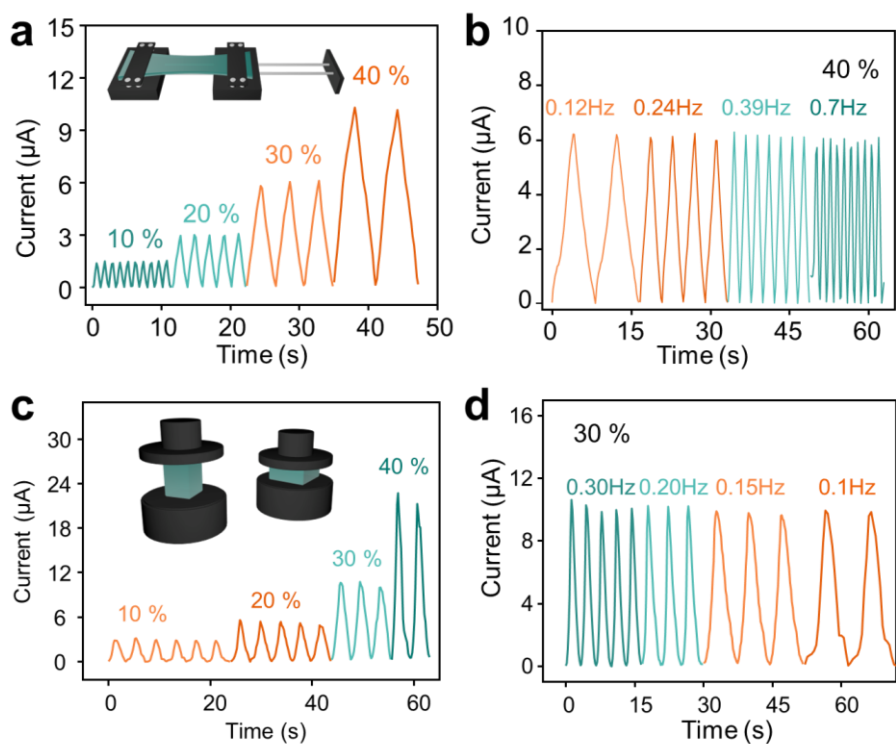
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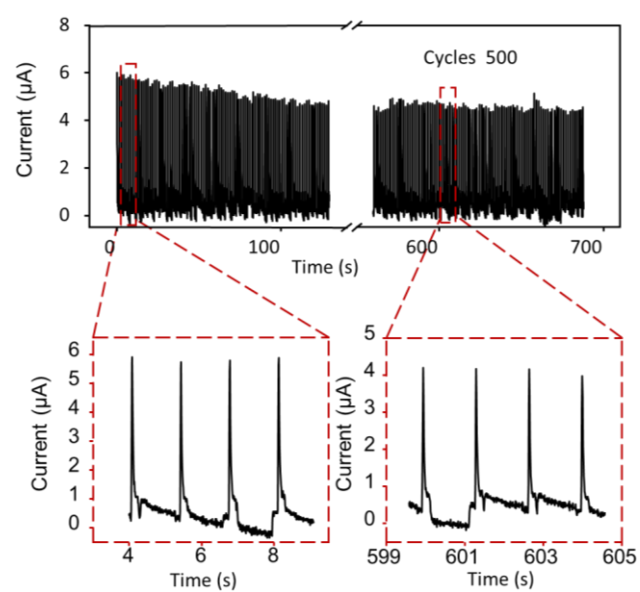
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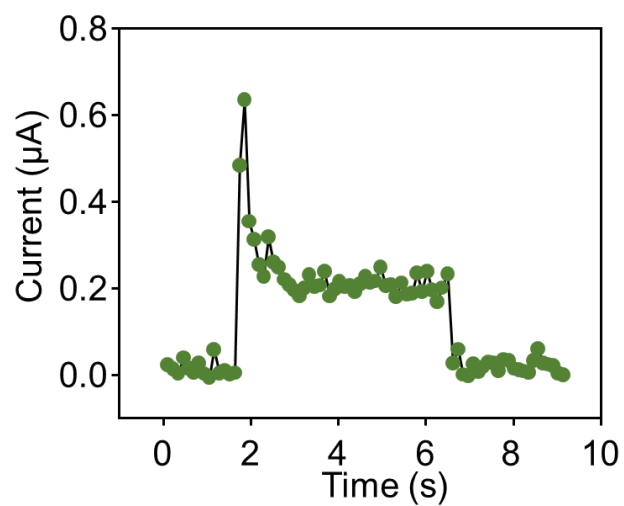
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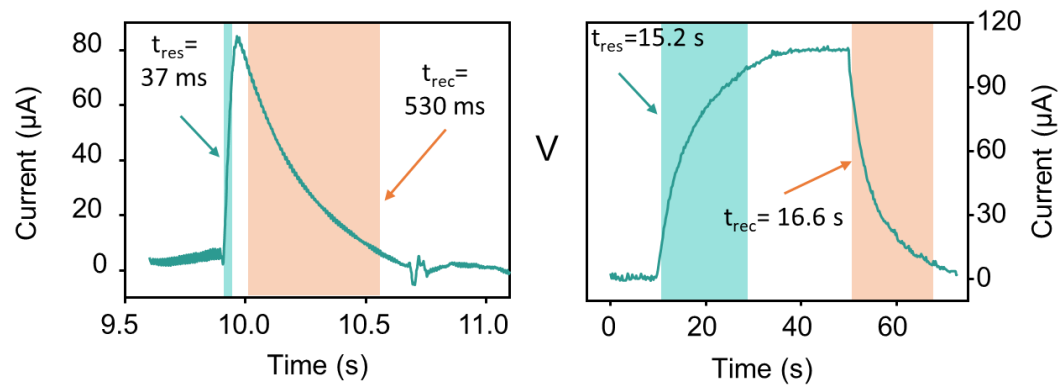
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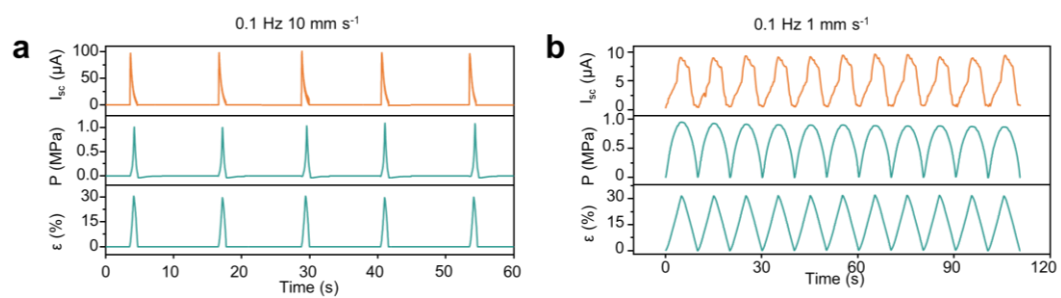
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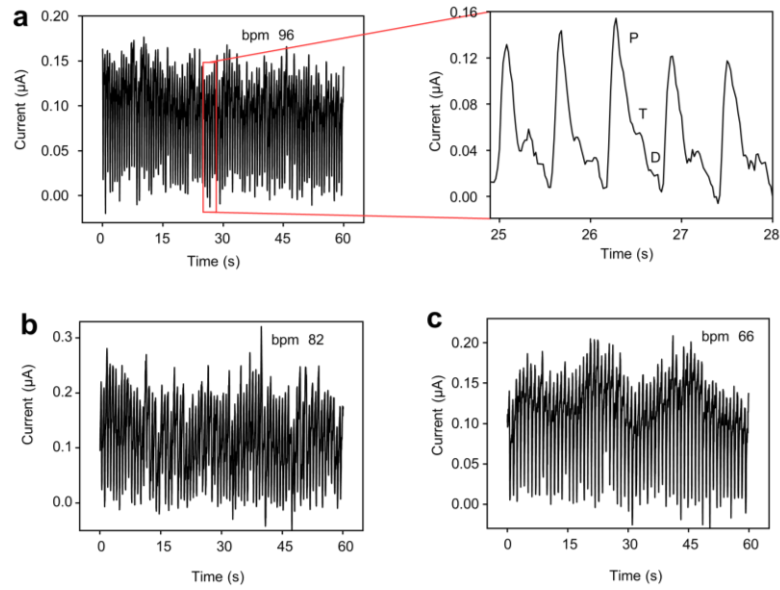
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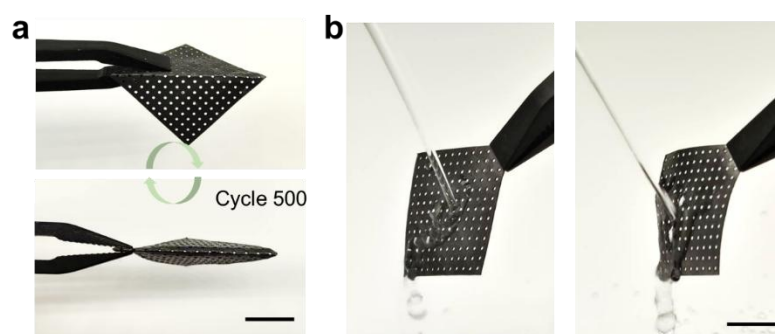
Supplementary Figure 29. Current responses and recovery times upon pressure (left) and temperature (right) stimuli, respectively.



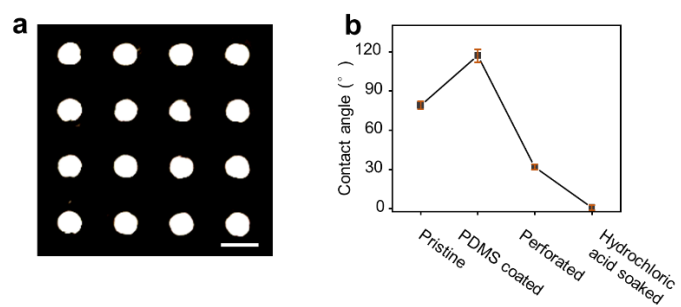
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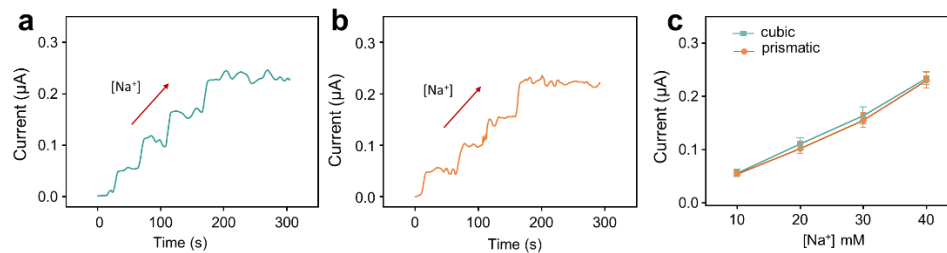
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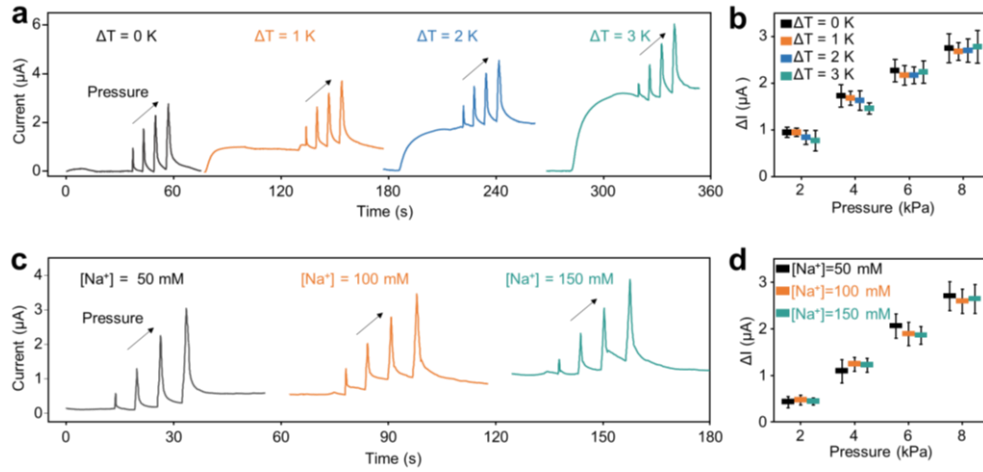
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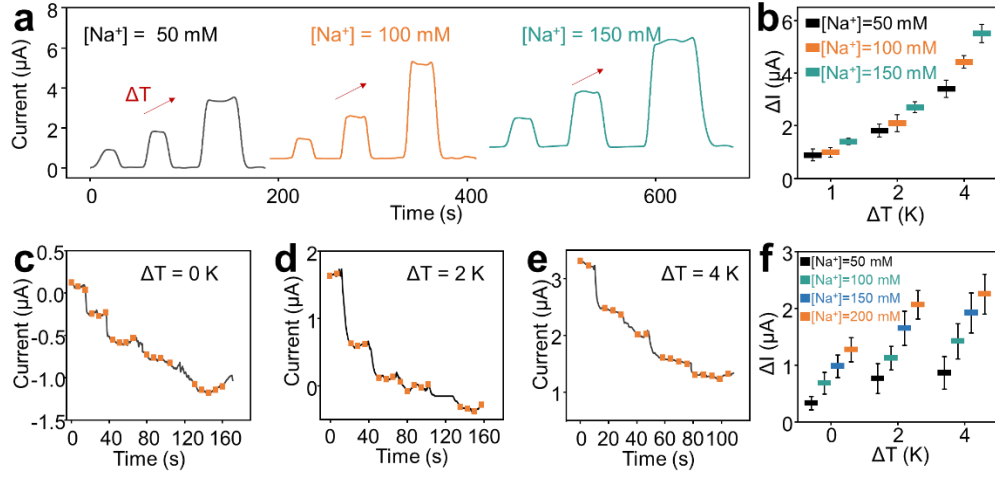
Supplementary Figure 33. (a) Microscopic image of the open electrode (scale bar: 1 mm). (b) Contact angle measurements of the electrode surface in different conditions.



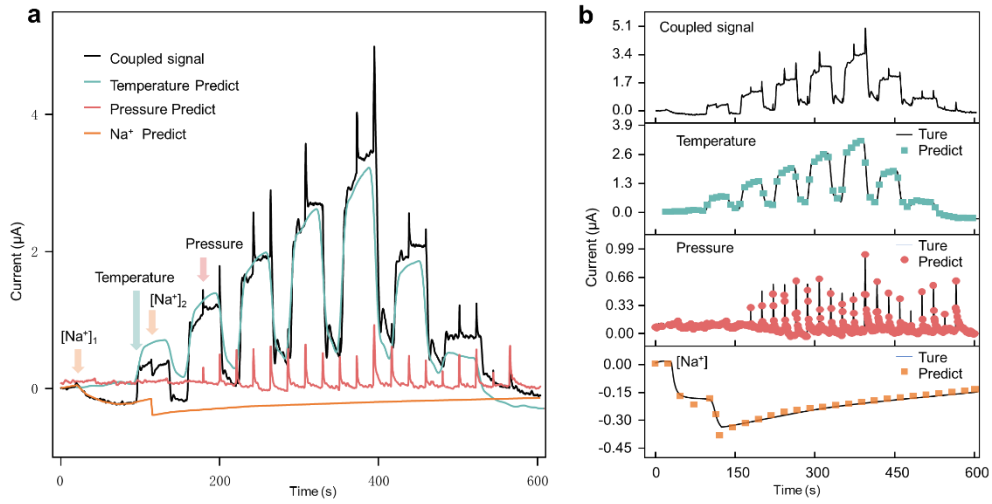
Supplementary Figure 34. Diffusion current comparison Between Prismatic (a) and Cubic (b) Structures. c Diffusion current against Na^+ concentration in prismatic and cubic structures. Hydrogel temperature maintained at 30 $^{\circ}\text{C}$.



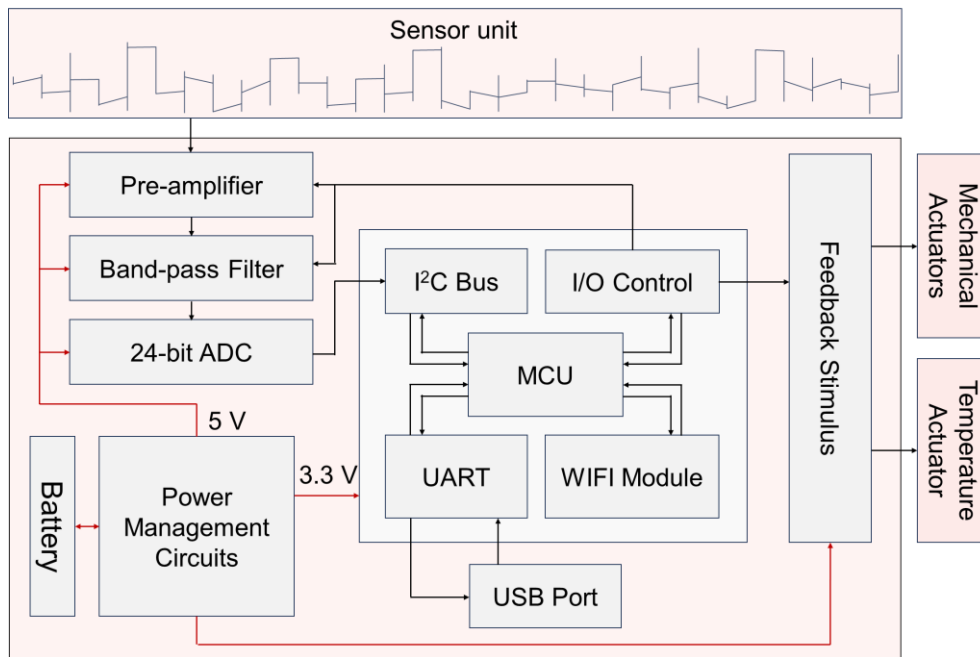
Supplementary Figure 35. (a) Piezoionic current at different temperature levels, where the cold end temperature is set to 30 °C, while the hot end temperatures are set to 30, 31, 32, and 33 °C, respectively. The applied pressures are 2, 4, 6, and 8 kPa, respectively. (b) Relationship between pressure and current variation (ΔI) at different temperature levels (ΔT). (c) Piezoionic current under different Na^+ concentrations, with applied pressures of 2, 4, 6, and 8 kPa, respectively. (d) Relationship between pressure and current variation (ΔI) under different Na^+ concentrations.



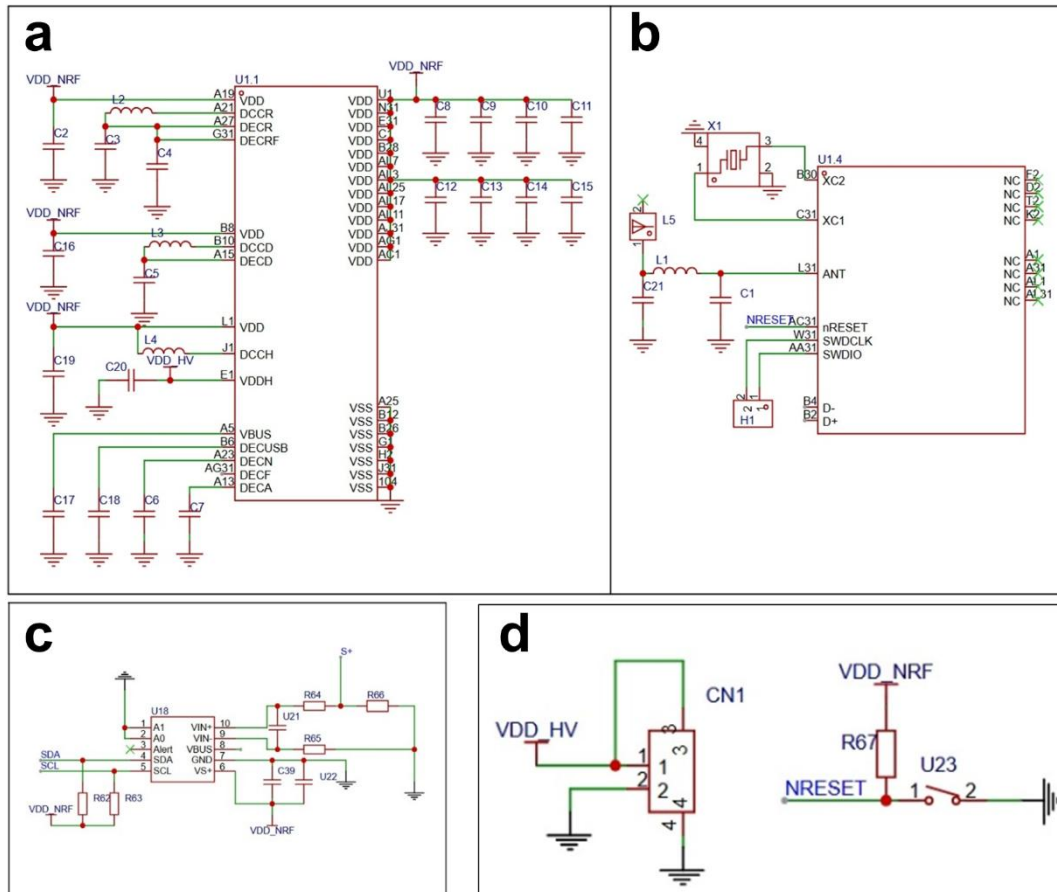
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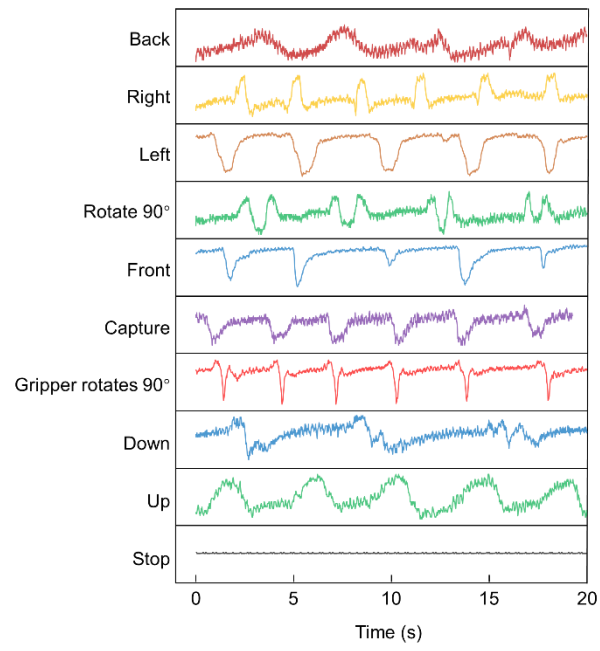


Supplementary Figure 37. (a) Coaxial plots of coupled signals and prediction curves for small variations in electrolyte, temperature, and pressure. Temperature was fixed at 30°C at the cold end, while the hot end varied from 30°C to 35°C. Pressure ranged from 0 to 3 N, and Na⁺ concentration varied from 0 to 100 mM in two permeation steps. (b) Comparison of coupled signals and LSTM prediction results for electrolyte, temperature, and pressure on the same x-axis.



Supplementary Figure 38. Architecture of the multimodal sensing and feedback system, including signal processing, transmission, and power management.





Supplementary Figure 40. Current responses of the AMSG during 10 gesture movements.

Supplementary Table 1. Comparison of flexible sensors

Refs	Self-powered	Multimodal sensing	Single-unit	Wearability	Response time
This work	√	√	√	Strain: 830% Modulus: 300 kPa	37 ms
[1] <i>Adv. Mater.</i> 34, 2205249 (2022)	×	√	√	Rigid	100 ms
[2] <i>Adv. Funct. Mater.</i> 34, 2314419 (2024)	√	×	√	Strain:530%	230 ms
[3] <i>Nat. Commun.</i> 16, 5689 (2025)	×	√	×	Rigid	N/A
[4] <i>Nat. Commun.</i> 16, 591 (2025).	×	×	×	Strain: 50% Modulus: 17 MPa	12 ms

Supplementary Table 2. Comparison of mechanical properties of IS with those of reported PVA gels.

Refs	Content (wt %)	Stretchability (100%)	Toughness (MJ m ⁻³)	Stiffness (MPa)	Fracture energy (KJ m ⁻²)	Method
This work	15% PVA	830	7.72	0.32	50.4	Freeze-thaw +Double Solvent- exchange
M. Hua, S. Wu, Y. Ma, Y. Zhao, Z. Chen, I. Frenkel, J. Strzalka, H. Zhou, X. Zhu, X. He, Nature 2021, 590, 594.	5%-20% PVA	2900	210	N/A	170	Directional freezing + Salting out
Y. Wu, Y. Zhang, H. Wu, J. Wen, S. Zhang, W. Xing, H. Zhang, H. Xue, J. Gao, Y. Mai, Adv. Mater. 2023, 35, 2210624.	15% PVA	1879	82.28	2.67	25.3	Solvent- exchange+ Wet-annealing
N. Li, Z. Wang, X. Yang, Z. Zhang, W. Zhang, S. Sang, H. Zhang, Adv. Funct. Mater. 2024, 34, 2314419.	15%PVA	535	~0.48	~0.027	N/A	3 freeze-thaw cycles
L. Liu, D. Zhang, P. Bai, Y. Mao, Q. Li, J. Guo, Y. Fang, R. Ma, Adv. Mater. 2023, 35, 2300696.	15%PVA	1300	163.4	~1.94	N/A	Stretch induction+ Freeze-thaw
C. Bai, X. Li, X. Cu, X. Yang, X. Zhang, K. Yang, T. Wang, H. Zhang, Nano Energy 2022, 100, 107449.	11%PVA+ 1% gelatin	240	0.72	~0.25	N/A	3 freeze-thaw cycles

C. Adu, S. Rahatekar, J. Filby,	2%PVA+2						Directional
D. Ayre, M. Jolly, Mater. Lett.	%CNF+0.5	40	N/A	N/A	N/A		freezing+
2019, 253, 242-245.	% borax						Freeze dry
X. Li, J. Li, T. Wang, S. Khan,							
Z. Yuan, Y. Yin, H. Zhang,	11%PVA+						3 freeze-thaw
ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces	1% gelatin	320	0.57	0.13	N/A		cycles
2022, 14, 48743–48751.							

Supplementary Table 3. Comparison of mechanical and strain sensing performance, including S_e , stretchability, pressure response time, and temperature response time of the hydrogel e-skin with those of reported quasi-solid stretchable thermogalvanic thermocells.

Refs	$ S_e (\text{mV K}^{-1})$	Strain	Pressure response time (s)	Temperature response time (s)
This work	1.61	830 %	0.037	15.2
J. Shen, C. Yang, Y. Ma, M. Cao, Z. Gao, S. Wang, J. Li, S. Liu, Z. Chen, S. Li, EcoMat. 2024, 6, e12428.	1.4	N/A	N/A	~180
P. Peng, Z. Li, D. Xie, K. Zhu, C. Du, L. Liang, Z. Liu, G. Chen, J. Mater. Chem. A, 2023, 11, 6986.	1.02-1.29	300	N/A	~300
N. Li, Z. Wang, X. Yang, Z. Zhang, W. Zhang, S. Sang, H. Zhang, Adv. Funct. Mater. 2024, 34, 2314419.	1.82	534.5	0.23	~35
L. Liu, D. Zhang, P. Bai, Y. Mao, Q. Li, J. Guo, Y. Fang, R. Ma, Adv. Mater. 2023, 35, 2300696.	6.5	1300	N/A	~210
C. Bai, X. Li, X. Cu, X. Yang, X. Zhang, K. Yang, T. Wang, H. Zhang, Nano Energy 2022, 100, 107449.	1.48	240	N/A	N/A
C. Han, X. Qian, Q. Li, B. Deng, Y. Zhu, Z. Han, W. Zhang, W. Wang, S. Feng, G. Chen, W. Liu, Science 2020, 368, 1091-1098.	17.0	200	N/A	2400

X. Li, J. Li, T. Wang, S. Khan, Z. Yuan, Y.

Yin, H. Zhang, ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces 1.29 320 N/A 170
2022, 14, 48743–48751.

Supplementary Table 4. Comparison of gauge factor (GF), sensing mechanism, self-powered capability, and contact/non-contact sensing capability between this work and the reported literature.

Refs	GF	Sensing mechanism	Self-powered	Contact/Non-contact Sensing
This work	18.70-175.30	Temperature+ strain+ electrolyte	Yes	Non-contact
Y. Ni, X. Zang, Y. Yang, Z. Gong, H. Li, J. Chen, C. Wu, J. Huang, Y. Lai, Adv. Funct. Mater. 2024, 2402853.	45.90-103.40	Humidity	No	Non-contact
T. Zhang, Y. Ding, C. Hu, M. Zhang, W. Zhu, C. Bowen, Y. Han, Y. Yang, Adv. Mater. 2022, 2203786.	N/A	Strain	Yes	Contact
N. Li, Z. Wang, X. Yang, Z. Zhang, W. Zhang, S. Sang, H. Zhang, Adv. Funct. Mater. 2024, 34, 2314419.	1.35-4.92	Strain	Yes	Contact
X. Li, J. Li, T. Wang, S. Khan, Z. Yuan, Y. Yin, H. Zhang, ACS Appl. Mater. Interfaces 2022, 14, 48743–48751.	N/A	Temperature	Yes	Contact
J. Zhang, S. Shen, R. Lin, J. Huang, C. Pu, P. Chen, Q. Duan, X. You, C. Xu, B. Yan, X. Gao, Z. Shen, L. Cai, X. Qiu, H. Hou, Adv. Mater. 2023, 35, 2209497.	0.90	Strain	No	Contact
L. Zhao, H. Xu, L. Liu, Y. Zheng, W. Han, L. Wang, Adv. Sci. 2023, 10, 2303922.	0.98	Strain	No	Contact

M. Pi, S. Qin, S. Wen, Z. Wang, X. Wang, M.

Li, H. Lu, Q. Meng, W. Cui, R. Ran, Adv. 1.24-1.92 Strain No Contact

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Supplementary Table 5. The initial configuration setup for simulation system.

	Number of H ₂ O	Number of Fe ²⁺	Number of Fe ³⁺	Number of Cl ⁻	Number of PVA
System	2800	5	5	25	5

Supplementary Table 6. Matrix property parameters used in the COMSOL numerical model for piezoionic simulation.

Parameter name	Value
Polymer matrix modulus	10^5 Pa
Polymer matrix permeability	$2 \cdot 10^{-13}$ m ²
Polymer matrix Poisson's ratio	0.499
Polymer matrix density	1.1 g cm ⁻³
Fluid density	1 g cm ⁻³
Fluid viscosity	$1.3 \cdot 10^{-3}$ Pa·s

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