Materials adopting the diamond structure possess useful properties in atomic and colloidal systems, and are a popular target for synthesis in colloids where a photonic band gap is possible. The desirable photonic properties of the diamond structure pose an interesting opportunity for reconfigurable matter: can we create a crystal able to switch reversibly to and from the diamond structure with a photonic band gap in the visible light range? Drawing inspiration from high-pressure transitions of diamond-forming atomic systems, we design a system of polyhedrally-shaped colloidal particles with spherical cores that transitions from diamond to a tetragonal diamond derivative upon a small pressure change. The transition can alternatively be triggered by changing the shape of the particle in situ. We propose that the transition provides a reversible reconfiguration process for a new target for self-assembly within the colloids community.

The unique properties of diamond-structured materials provide an interesting target for reconfigurable photonic materials; that is, a material designed to switch to and from a diamond-like structure with its concomitant properties. There is precedent for reconfigurable diamond-structured materials in elemental structures: Si, Ge, and Sn each form the diamond structure at ambient pressure and transition to a tetragonal metallic phase, \( \beta \)-Sn, at higher pressures \([7,8]\). This inspires the question: can we design a photonic crystal that reflects wave-lengths in the visible range of the electromagnetic spectrum, and whose structure and thus band gap are reconfigurable? Such target criteria lead us to consider colloidal crystals, where reconfigurability has been demonstrated \([9,10]\) and where the self-assembly of the diamond structure is possible \([11,17]\). Core-shell colloidal crystals offer the further possibility of operating on two separate length scales, that of the high dielectric core and that of the shell. Because the size and shape of the core is independent of the size and shape of the particle in which it is imbedded, the photonic properties are independently tunable from the length scale that is relevant for assembly.

Particle shape adds anisotropy dimensions \([18]\) that allow one to assemble and transition between a diversity of crystal structures not easily achievable with spherical particles \([19]\) and colloidal polyhedra have now been realized for a variety of materials \([18,20,25]\). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that directional entropic forces \([13,26]\) arising from the statistical tendency for particle facets to align are more than sufficient to produce crystal structures of extraordinary complexity and diversity \([27,29]\), including diamond \([13]\). Polyhedral nanoparticles have been synthesized with spherical and non-spherical cores \([30,33]\), comprised of materials such as silica, silver, gold, or palladium.

Here we report a reversible structural phase transition with photonic implications for a simulated system of hard core-shell polyhedra with tetrahedral symmetry ordering via directional entropic forces into a diamond structure. The transition is driven by pressure, and leads from the well-known cubic diamond structure to a tetragonal diamond derivative (TDD) distinct from the aforementioned \( \beta \)-Sn. The transition provides a reversible reconfiguration process for a new target for synthesis: a photonic colloidal material that can be switched among as many as four possible photonic states, each of which permits a different frequency range of light in the infrared or visible regimes. Additionally, by noting that all three phases — cubic diamond, TDD, and \( \beta \)-Sn — are related through scaling along a major axis, we gain insight into the mechanism driving high-pressure transitions between diamond and \( \beta \)-Sn in atomic systems.

To represent the particle shells, we simulated a family of convex shapes with tetrahedral symmetry (here denoted \( \Delta_{323} \)) \([33]\) using the Digital Alchemy (DA) framework \([35]\). In DA, a design parameter is introduced as a thermodynamic state...
variable, which defines an extended alchemical ensemble in which either the design parameter, the alchemical variable, or its conjugate, the alchemical potential can fluctuate while the other remains fixed.

The $\Delta_{323}$ family is constructed through the intersection of planes arranged tetrahedrally around the particle center, parametrized by $\alpha_3$, which can be viewed as the truncation along a set of three-fold axes, in the following called $\alpha$ for brevity. The shape family is shown in Fig. 1 all shapes are scaled to unit volume. Hard shapes with $\alpha = 0.3$–0.5 assemble into diamond at packing fraction (synonymous with filling fraction) $\phi = 0.5$–0.6 [13]. When these assembled crystals are compressed to higher packing fractions, we observe a transition to a tetragonal diamond derivative (TDD) structure. Because this transition occurs via local particle rearrangement only, it is easily achievable at higher densities, where self-assembly from a fluid may be thwarted by an intervening glass transition.

These two crystal structures, diamond and TDD, differ in two major respects: the aspect ratio of the unit cell and the particle orientations. The TDD structure is defined by lattice vectors $\vec{a}_1 = [a, 0, 0]$, $\vec{a}_2 = [0, a, 0]$, $\vec{c} = [0, 0, c]$, with particles situated at positions $0,0,0$ and $\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}$ (in fractional coordinates) on a face-centered lattice (i.e., with centering vectors $[0, 0, 0]$, $[\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, 0]$, $[\frac{1}{2}, 0, \frac{1}{2}]$, and $[0, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}]$). For ease of comparison, tetragonal unit cells will be expressed in a non-standard face-centered setting $tF8$, such that all unit cells can be described in terms of $c/a$ for a face-centered unit cell (containing 8 particles), where $c/a = 1$ for the face-centered cubic unit cell of diamond ($cF8$-$C$). Shapes from the $\Delta_{323}$ family densely pack into TDD with $c/a = 0.4 \approx 0.6325$ (which is also $c/a_{\text{min}}$ for $\Delta_{323}$) and $\alpha = 0.5$.

The $\beta$-Sn structure (referred to by its Pearson symbol $tI4$-$Sn$) can be defined as a TDD structure at $c/a \approx 0.3859$ (given a $tF8$ unit cell). $tI4$-$Sn$ and TDD structures in $\Delta_{323}$ both have space group $I4_1/amd$ and Wyckoff position 4e 0, 0, 0, albeit at different ratios of $c/a$. TDD structures with $c/a$}
These phase diagrams reveal that, although all shapes with 0.3 ≤ α ≤ 0.5 assemble into diamond, they will transition to tetragonal unit cells at higher densities. The NVTα simulations generating this phase diagram and NPTα simulations for computing the equation of state were conducted by initializing both in the assembled and densely packed structures and equilibrating at the desired density or pressure.

In Fig. 3(a), the contour lines map the c/a value of the unit cell of the equilibrium structure for systems of constant shape at varying densities. The shades of red represent the c/a ratio of the unit cell lattice vectors, with the lighter red region showing where cubic diamond is the configuration with the lowest free energy (c/a = 1), and darker reds indicating TDD structures, where c/a < 1 is lower in free energy. The region marked as geometrically forbidden (grey) shows the densities and α values at which particles would be forced to overlap.

In this study, shape and structure are intrinsically interwined due to the shape-dependency of the transition from cubic diamond to its tetragonal derivative. Using Alchemical hard particle Monte Carlo (Alch-HPMC) (described in [49]) with constant alchemical potential μ = 0, we can find the shape that produces the lowest free energy structure at a given density or pressure, and determine where the crossover from the diamond to the TDD stability region occurs (⟨α⟩ shown in black on Fig. 3(a)). At low densities, the lowest free energy phase is diamond, but at densities ≥ 0.75 (or equivalently at unitless pressures p∗ ≥ 10–15) a TDD structure will have lower free energy in this shape space. Decompression of this high-density system showed full recovery of the diamond structure.

We investigated the nature of the phase transition and behavior of potentials of mean force and torque (PMFTs) for the phase transition corresponding to the largest change in c/a, at α = 0.50, in Fig. 3(b, c). In Fig. 3(b), the main plot represents the average for both initializations, with an inset representing the average and standard deviations around the transition pressure. The transition exhibits a small discontinuity in βP(φ) and no hysteresis, which implies that it is either a weak first-order or a second-order transition. PMFTs, the calculation of which is detailed in [26], provide a statistical landscape for entropic particle bonding—i.e., they show the probable locations for the neighboring particles of a given reference particle in units of free energy. PMFTs show that after the transition occurs, the bonding remains four-fold, with the coordination being that of a distorted tetrahedron.

Diamond exhibits a complete photonic band gap when the lattice sites are populated with dielectric spheres; thus the transition from the diamond structure to any form of TDD structure would result in a shift in the photonic properties due to the symmetry reduction of the lattice from cubic to tetragonal. We computed the photonic band structure of the equilibrated crystals found through simulation using MIT Photonic Bands (MPB) [40], replacing each polyhedral shell with its insphere core. Because the polyhedra are scaled to unit volume, there is a one-to-one mapping between shape parameter α and insphere radius.

![Figure 3: Simulation results for NVTα, NPTα, and NVTμ. (a) Composite “phase diagram” from all simulations. The putative densest packing in either diamond or TDD structure as a function of shape is the upper limit of the phase diagram, the geometrically forbidden region shown in grey. Shades of red represent the c/a ratio of the unit cell, with the lighter red region showing where diamond is the configuration with the lowest free energy (c/a = 1), and darker reds indicating TDD structures with lower c/a values. The black data set represents results from NVT/μ simulations, denoting where the crossover from the diamond to the TDD stability region occurs as a function of density and shape. (b) Equation of state for α = 0.5 evaluated in compression and expansion runs. The main plot shows the average values, with an inset showing the average and standard deviations around the transition pressure. (c) Potentials of mean force and torque for α = 0.5 at varying pressures. The PMFT wells shift from the center of the large face of each particle toward one edge. This shows that the coordination remains tetrahedral, but becomes distorted with increasing pressure.]

We report the photonic band frequencies in units of (speed of light)/a, where a is the lattice constant. Each complete photonic band gap is reported in unitless dimensions, defined as the width of the band gap over the mid-gap frequency, ω∗. The conversion from ω∗ to absolute wavelength is:

\[ \lambda = \frac{a}{\omega^*}. \]  

While we anticipated a change in photonic properties from an “on” to “off” state upon converting the diamond structure to TDD, we were surprised to find that the results suggest a potential multistate material with one of four possibilities with regards to a complete photonic band gap: i) no gap, ii) a complete gap between bands 2 and 3, and (iv) complete gaps between both bands 2 and 3, and 8 and 9. Examples of (ii) and (iii) are shown in Fig. 3(b) and (c), respectively. These findings suggest how to make a material that could switch between permitting all light and blocking one set of frequencies or another.
Taking the equilibrated structures (i.e., thermalized) from simulation and considering each core of the polyhedral particles as the high dielectric medium dielectric constant $\epsilon = 11.56$, we computed the photonic band structure for structures with packing fractions $\phi = 0.6-0.975$ and shape parameters $\alpha = 0.3-0.5$. The maximum band gap width is 9.2% and all bands were centered around mid-gap frequencies of approximately $0.260-0.298$ (between bands 2 and 3) or $0.384-0.459$ (between bands 8 and 9). Unitless band gap widths are shown for the $\Delta_{323}$ family of shapes as a function of packing fraction in Fig. 4(a).

In addition to computing the photonic band structure for $\epsilon = 11.56$, we also considered lower dielectric constants [39]. From these, we learn that complete photonic band gaps between bands 2 and 3 are possible with a minimum dielectric constant of 5.0, and between 8 and 9 with a minimum dielectric constant of 8.0. These values suggest that this type of photonic band structure would not be possible with crystals made of polymeric materials (which generally have $\epsilon < 4.0$, such as poly(methyl methacrylate) particles), but would require materials of higher dielectric constant.

We posit that this system could be synthesized via a variety of methods, including by assembling spherical core-polyhedral shell nanoparticles, as outlined earlier. The diamond structure has been stabilized with nanocages made of DNA that are functionalized to hybridize with coated nanoparticles [41]. This could potentially extend to the TDD structure by changing the length of the strands at the binding sites or the cage geometry. The transition may also be achievable through DNA-programmable assembly [42], for which the lengths and bonding strength of DNA may be gleaned by examination of the PMFTs [43].

These results represent the theoretical behavior of an ideal system, and will be affected by imperfections introduced during synthesis. Previous studies have discussed the sensitivity of high band-number gaps to disorder [44], which may cause the gap between bands 8 and 9 to disappear in most real-world systems. In this case the system would only demonstrate a gap between bands 2 and 3, and the material would exhibit two states (e.g., “on” in the TDD state and “off” in the diamond state). This, in addition to the fact that the 8-9 band gap requires a much higher dielectric constant than the 2-3 gap, would make a two-state material a more robust target.

The phase transition we report at the colloidal length scale may also reveal insights about the atomic transition on which it is based. Although other TDD structures have not been observed as an intermediary between atomic diamond and $\beta$-Sn phases, such a consideration could provide new perspective into the mechanism underlying the phase transition. In our simulations, all effects other than shape entropy are excluded [26], and we restrict the particle geometry to symmetric truncations of tetrahedra, i.e., the $\Delta_{323}$ shape family. Thus we prove that entropy alone suffices to explain the transition in colloidal systems from diamond to a lower $c/a$ tetragonal derivative. This correlation strengthens a supposition made by G. J. Ackland, who proposed that it was plausible that entropy is the driving force for diamond-to-$\beta$-Sn transitions, based on the absence of such a transition at 0 K [7].

Our colloidal system differs from atomic systems in several respects. At the higher $c/a$ ratio ($\approx 0.63$ vs. $\approx 0.39$), the co
ordination remains four-fold, while the neighboring particles form a distorted tetrahedron (as compared to a regular tetrahedron in perfect diamond). This retention of four-fold coordination may explain the reversibility in our system, compared to the irreversibility in atomic systems, which transition to octahedral coordination.

The same cannot be said for systems adopting the diatomic analog to diamond, zincblende, as these systems do not adopt a \( \beta \)-Sn-equivalent structure upon pressurization: the transition geometry would result in the nearing of like-charged, mutually repulsive atoms. Most III-V semiconducting zincblende-formers transition to wurtzite, a hexagonal diamond derivative under pressure. While \( \beta \)-Sn is topologically identical to diamond, wurtzite is to cubic diamond as cubic-close sphere packing is to its hexagonally-close packed relative: the local coordination is identical, but its network is topologically distinct, which would require a breaking of bonds and rearrangement of the constituent atoms in the transition.

We have predicted a new phase transition achievable in colloidal systems, induced by a slight change in pressure or in particle shape. This structural transition provides an exciting target for synthesis: a photonic material switchable between multiple photonic band gap states, either between two different gaps, or perhaps more practically—between “on”/“off” states. Given the placement of the two possible gaps, complete photonic band gaps would be achievable in colloidal crystals in visible or infrared wavelengths, and could potentially toggle between two colors or separate regimes in the electromagnetic spectrum. For example, by using spheres made of a high-dielectric material with \( \varepsilon \approx 8.0 - 9.0 \) (such as titania) that inscribe truncated tetrahedra with \( \alpha = 0.5 \) (see Fig. 4) and a lattice constant of \( a = 200 \) nm, a three-state material could be self-assembled with a violet (400 nm) band gap at low densities, no band gap at intermediate densities, and a red (685 nm) band gap at high densities. If a larger lattice constant of \( \alpha = 8.2 \) \( \mu \)m is used, which is achievable for colloidal systems, the lower band gap occurs at 28 \( \mu \)m, or about 11 THz, suitable for sub-millimeter photonic applications. If \( \alpha \) is a tunable design parameter, this system could exhibit bands gaps at target wavelengths whose ratios are approximately 5:3.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank P. F. Damasceno for helpful conversations toward calculating the photonic properties of our structures. We thank C. X. Du for valuable discussions. We thank E. S. Harper for help with visualizing the PMFTs. We thank S. C. Barterian and B. D. Dice for giving useful feedback during the writing process. We also thank K. A. Mengle, N. Sanders, and E. Kioupakis for guidance with calculations.

R. K. C. acknowledges support by the National Science Foundation, Division of Materials Research Award # DMR 1120923 and by the University of Michigan Rackham Merit Fellowship program. This material is based upon work supported by a Simons Investigator Award from the Simons Foundation to S. C. G. and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Grant No. DGE 1256260 to J. A. This work used the Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE), which is supported by National Science Foundation grant number ACI-1053575; XSEDE award # DMR 140129. Computational resources and services were also provided by Advanced Research Computing at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

[17] Wang, Y. et al. Colloids with valence and specific directional
[36] See Supplemental Material at [ ] for similar structure diagrams comparing diamond and TDD (c/a = √₈/₄) with η₁₄-Sn, a description of alchemical hard particle Monte Carlo (Alch-HPMC), plots of photonic band gap sizes at lower ε, and a diagram of the simulation protocol.

**Model and Methods**

We conduct our study in the alchemical thermodynamic ensemble, implemented through the Digital Alchemy framework. This ensemble is an extension of the canonical ensemble...
able that treats particle shape, parametrized by a set of values \( \alpha_i \), as a thermodynamic state variable. Each \( \alpha_i \) parameter has an associated conjugate alchemical potential \( \mu_i \). The \( NVT_\mu \) ensemble, in which each \( \alpha_i \) is allowed to fluctuate, is defined with the partition function

\[
Z = \sum_\sigma e^{-\beta(H - \sum_i \mu_i N \alpha_i)}.
\]  

(2)

Here, \( \sum_\sigma \) denotes a sum over all microstates \( \sigma \) and shape parameter values \( \alpha_i \). The variables \( \alpha_i \) and \( \mu_i \) are related to derivatives of \( F \), the thermodynamic potential for the ensemble:

\[
\mu_i = \frac{1}{N} \left( \frac{\partial F}{\partial \alpha_i} \right)_{N,\phi,T,\alpha_i \neq i},
\]

(3)

and

\[
\alpha_i = \frac{1}{N} \left( \frac{\partial F}{\partial \mu_i} \right)_{N,\phi,T,\mu_i \neq i},
\]

(4)

where

\[
F = -k_B T \log(Z).
\]

(5)

For all simulations, we used the hard-particle Monte Carlo sampling method of the HOOMD-blue simulation toolkit [47, 48]. We conducted alchemical hard particle Monte Carlo (Alch-HPMC) simulations within the \( NVT_\alpha \), \( NPT_\alpha \), and \( NVT_\mu \) ensembles. Further details on Alch-HPMC can be found in Refs. [35, 49]. All simulations were run so that each particle’s shape is specified by one \( \alpha \) and every particle in the system changes identically and simultaneously as \( \alpha \) changes.

Simulations in \( NVT_\alpha \)

In the \( NVT_\alpha \) ensemble, we simulated systems of 1728 particles with unit volume, with state points from \( \alpha \in [0.3, 0.5] \) with \( \Delta \alpha = 0.01 \) initialized in the diamond structure at \( \phi = 0.55 \), the known assembly structure for these shapes [13]. These simulations were then incrementally compressed to a target density of \( \phi = 0.55-0.95 \) with \( \Delta \phi = 0.05 \), allowing for the box aspect ratio to change as a separate MC move while maintaining constant box volume. For regions of interest, additional state points were run at \( \Delta \phi = 0.025 \). The box aspect ratio search radius was set to 0.01 per sweep. Simulations were then run for \( 1.1 \times 10^7-2.4 \times 10^7 \) MC sweeps, until equilibrated. A minimum of four replicates were run for each state point.

Similar simulations were run by initializing at the densest packing of the shape family in both diamond and its tetragonal derivative. The box was expanded isotropically to a target density, then simulated using MC with box moves for \( 1.1 \times 10^7-2.4 \times 10^7 \) sweeps. These simulations were run with the same parameters as systems initialized in the diamond assembly phase.

Analysis

Each frame of a simulation was separated into crystal grains using in-house environment-matching algorithms (E. G. Teich, private communication) analyzing the bond angles of each particle with its nearest neighbors and then separating the particles into groups based upon these arrangements. For some simulations, compression and the reduction in symmetry caused the formation of multiple grains within the assembly, and these state points were removed from the results to avoid distorting the influence of these simulation data. We used in-house software injavis to determine the 8-particle unit cells of all simulation runs. We used the signac framework for all data management [50].

Simulations in \( NPT_\alpha \)

We simulated systems of 512 particles with unit volume and constant shape in an \( NPT_\alpha \) ensemble to generate an equation of state for the given transformation at 35 unitless pressures \( (= \frac{PV}{k_B T} \text{ with unit volume}) \) between \( \beta P = 5-100 \) and \( \alpha = 0.4-0.5 \), with \( \Delta \alpha = 0.01 \). Additional state points were run for regions of interest and for \( \alpha = 0.5 \). Systems were initialized in the tetragonal diamond derivative \( (c/a = \sqrt{0.4}) \) at maximum density or in their assembled diamond phase at the assembly density, and held at target pressure to equilibrate over \( 1 \times 10^7-4 \times 10^7 \) MC sweeps. Simulations for shapes of interest \( (\alpha = 0.5, P = 9.8-10.0) \) were run with longer simulations and additional state points (up to 10). A minimum of three independent simulations were run for all other state points.

Potential of Mean Force and Torque (PMFT)

For the data shown, we averaged the PMFT values for 150 frames from earlier \( NVT_\mu \) simulations at a range of \( \phi \) values. The PMFT results were visualized using the Python package mayavi.

Simulations in \( NVT_\mu \)

Alch-HPMC simulations were run in the \( NVT_\mu \) ensemble to find the thermodynamically preferred structure and particle shape. Systems of 512 particles were initialized with \( \alpha = \frac{1}{3} \) and \( \phi = 0.6 \) and allowed to equilibrate in shape space. The particles were then compressed isotropically to a target \( \phi \in [0.70, 0.95] \) with \( \Delta \phi = 0.05 \), and allowed to equilibrate using MC box moves and subsequently within shape space. This step was repeated until both structure and shape were at equilibrium. Systems were then decompressed to \( \phi = 0.60 \) and allowed once again to equilibrate to check for reversibility [38].
Calculation of Photonic Band Structure

We computed the photonic band structure for different forms of tetragonal diamond using MIT Photonic Bands (MPB) [40]. This package computes the eigenmodes of Maxwell’s equations through conjugate-gradient minimization of the block Rayleigh quotient in a plane-wave basis [40].

We computed the size and location of all photonic band gaps for all structures computed in NVTα simulations in Fig. 3(b), including both c/a ratio and lattice vector magnitude (to reflect density). For radius we took the insphere of the respective polyhedra in Δ₃₂₃ and for the dielectric constant we chose 11.56, that of a theoretical silicon-type material and assume the material to be lossless, as has been done in similar studies [51–53]. Actual silicon would not make a good candidate material for photonic crystals in the visible range, as it has high absorbance in this range. We computed the irreducible Brillouin zone using the package SeeK-path [54], an open-source k-space path finder.

Resulting photonic band gaps were normalized by the mid-gap frequency, consistent with convention.