Introduction

Focused Ion Beam Scanning Electron Microscopy (FIB SEM) is a block face serial section tomography technique capable of providing sophisticated 3D analysis of higher order topology such as tortuosity, connectivity, and bottleneck dimensions [1, 2]. Emerging Xe Plasma FIB (PFIB) technology allows imaging of previously infeasible volumes. A rocking mill technique is used to mitigate “curtaining” artifacts caused by differences in phase density and milling rates, creating the straight-line artifact at two discrete angles [2] (see fig. 1). Previous works, such as those described in [3] & [4], correct only single-direction, often vertical, curtaining artifacts. Correcting these artifacts is crucial for further qualitative analysis, which often requires accurate segmentation.

Figure 1: PFIB SEM with rocking mill introduces curtaining artifacts along two discrete angles, seen here in a concrete dataset with curtains in the approximately 7° and -1° directions.

Fourier Basis

In order to correct artifacts along a specific angle, we construct a Fourier basis as follows:

$$F(x, y) = a_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{N} a_i \cos \left( \frac{2\pi i}{N} (u_i x + u_i y) \right) + b_i \sin \left( \frac{2\pi i}{N} (u_i x + u_i y) \right)$$

where $u_i$ are unit vectors along the curvature directions, $a_i$ and $b_i$ are coefficients, and $N$ is the size of the dataset.

Figure 2: Visualization of Fourier basis used to correct curtains in specific directions without affecting other structures.

Linear Optimization Model

Multiplicatively construct a corrected image, $J$, from the original image $I$:

$$J(x, y) = I(x, y) \cdot F(x, y)$$

by solving for $a_0, b_1, \ldots, a_N, b_N$:

$$\min \sum_{x, y} |J(x + 1, y) - J(x, y)| + \lambda \sum_{x, y} |1 - F(x, y)|$$

subject to $|1 - F(x, y)| \leq \alpha$, if $I(x, y) > a$,

$$\beta \leq \alpha$$, if $I(x, y) \leq a$

- $\beta$ defines a unit vector perpendicular to the curtain
- (A) penalizes the horizontal L1 difference norm (total variation) of the image
- (B) penalizes the overall change of the image
- $\lambda$ controls the strength of the filter (higher = less change)
- $\alpha$ and $\beta$ limit the amount of change depending on a given threshold, $a$, preserving dark voids
- multiple angles are corrected together in the same optimization problem

Figure 3: Curtains along -1° (approximated by 0° in calculations) and 7° angles are effectively removed from homogenous and non-homogenous areas of the concrete PFIB image (left: original image, right: corrected image).

Conclusions & Future Work

Our optimization method effectively removes curtains along the two given angles, without introducing incorrect structure into the image or reducing the contrast of voids.

Figure 4: Log FFT of images in figure 3 show the absence of bright frequencies corresponding to curtaining directions.

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References