Physikalisches Kolloquium





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Critical Casimir Forces

Long-ranged correlations in a fluid near its critical point lead to clearly identifiable effective forces acting on confining walls. The corresponding universal scaling functions are discussed for various boundary conditions and geometries. The theoretical predictions are compared with high precision experimental data for He⁴ and He³/He⁴ wetting films near the superfluid phase transition as well as with synchrotron scattering data from classical binary liquid mixtures. Direct measurements and applications for colloidal suspensions are discussed in detail.

