Gaps and Pseudogaps across the inhomogeneous superconductor to paired insulator transition

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The mechanism for the disorder-tuned superconductor to insulator transition (SIT) in thin films and the nature of the resulting insulator are still debated, despite decades of research. We use quantum Monte Carlo simulations [1] that treat, on an equal footing, inhomogeneous amplitude variations and phase fluctuations, and go beyond our earlier Bogoliubov-deGennes analysis [2]. We gain new microscopic insights into the SIT, compare our theory with experiments [3] and make testable predictions for local spectroscopic probes. The energy gap in the single-particle density of states survives across the transition, but coherence peaks exist only in the superconducting state. A characteristic pseudogap persists above the critical disorder and critical temperature, in contrast to conventional theories. Surprisingly, the insulator has signatures of pairing with a two-particle gap scale that vanishes at the superconductor–insulator transition, despite a robust single-particle gap. The impact of rare regions on the gaps will also be discussed. In collaboration with K. Bouadim, Y.L. Loh and N. Trivedi.


1Supported by NSF DMR-0907275 (K.B.), DOE BES DE-FG02-07ER46423 (N.T., Y.L.L.), and NSF DMR-1006532 (M.R.).