

## Supporting information

### A $\text{Ga}_2\text{O}_3$ underlayer as an isomorphic template for ultrathin hematite films toward efficient photoelectrochemical water splitting

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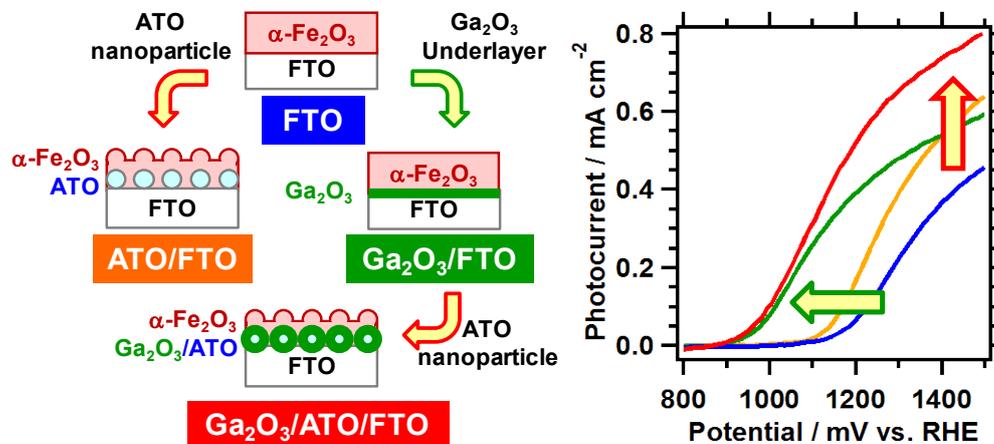
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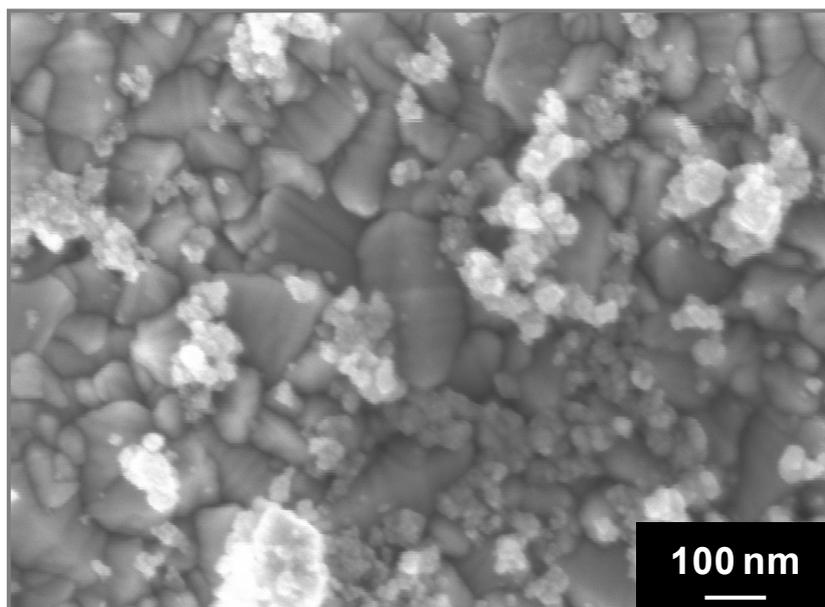
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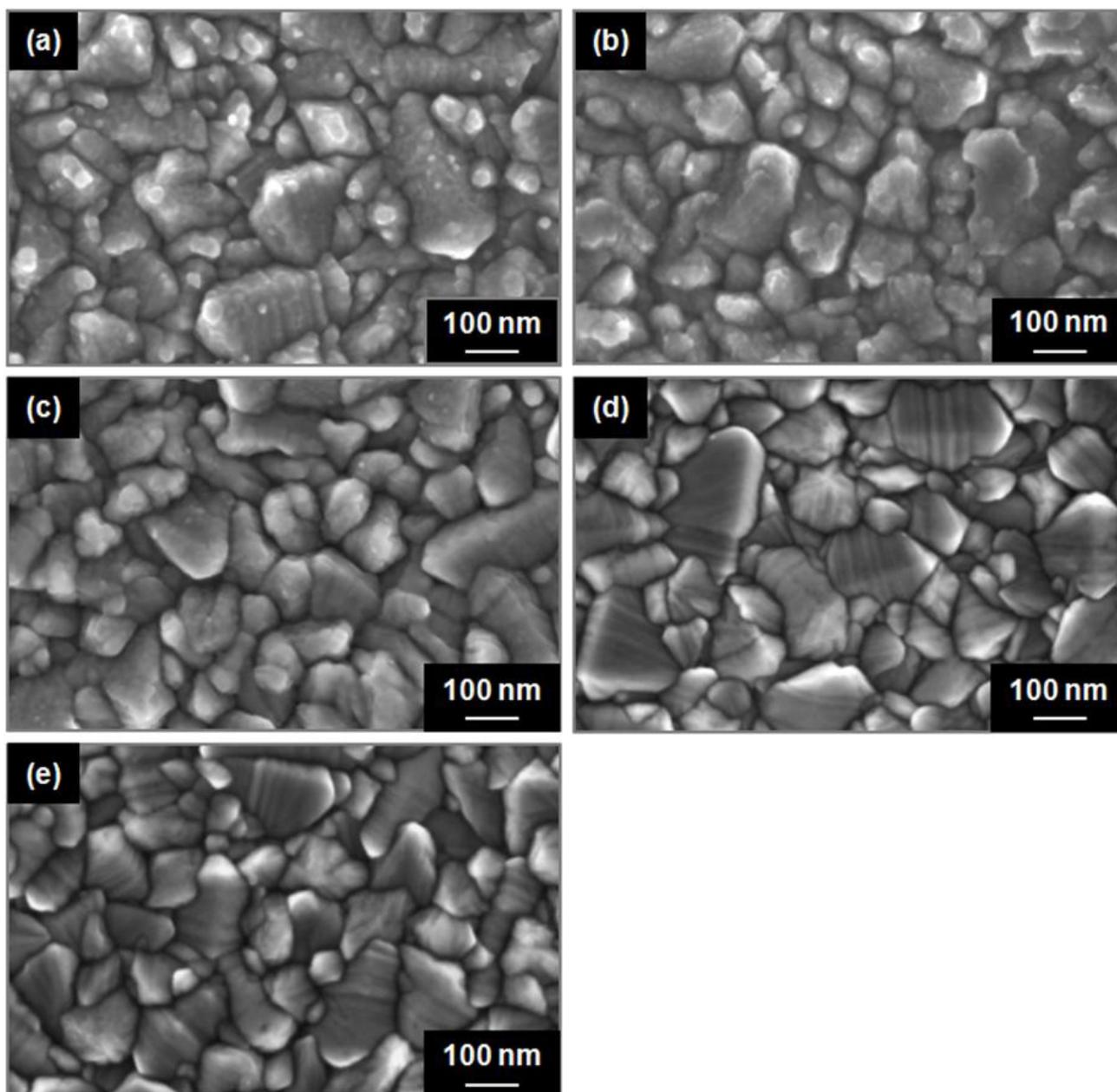
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#### Graphic Abstract

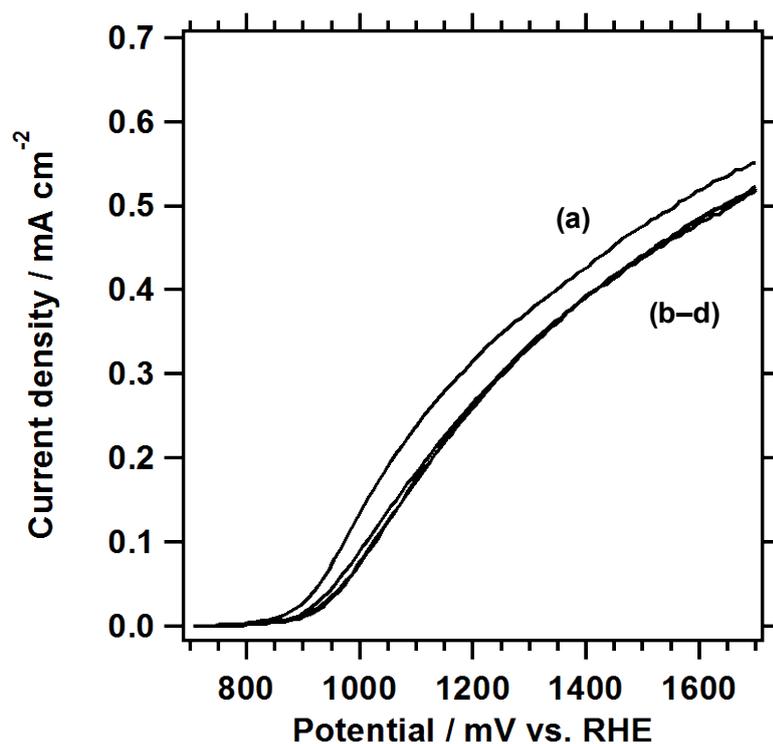




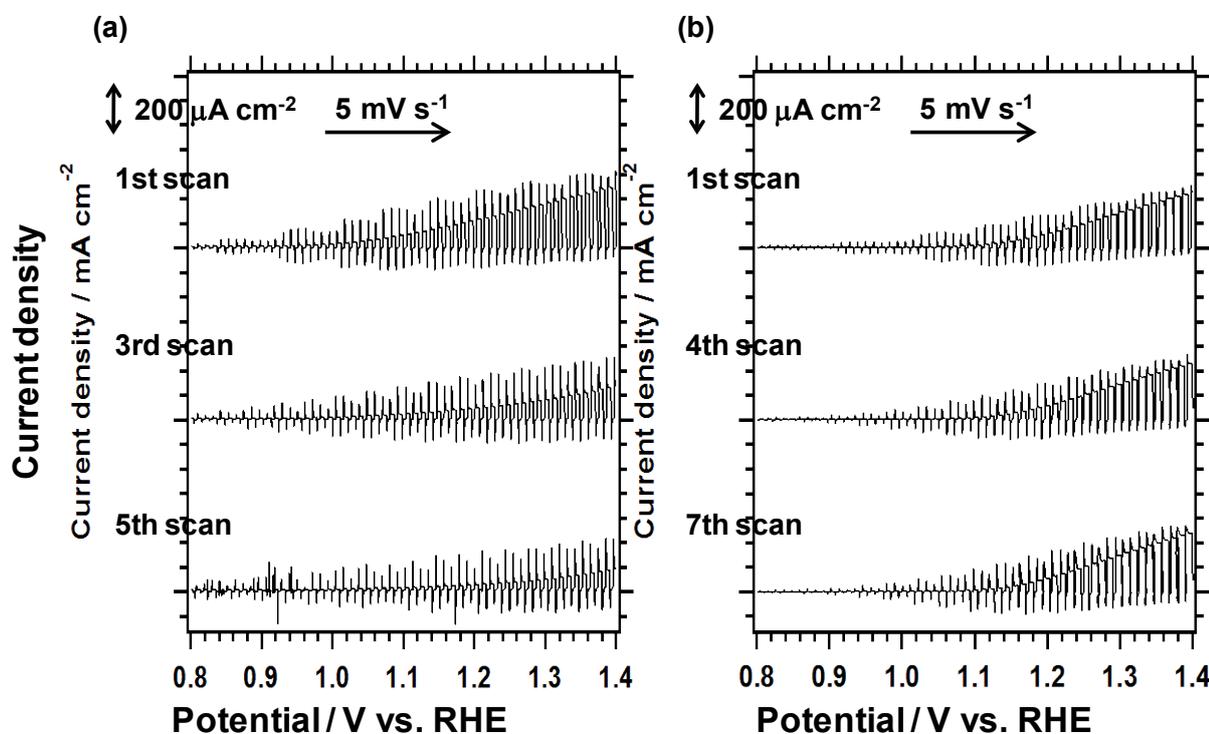
**Figure S1.** A SEM image of a FTO substrate covered with ATO nanoparticles.



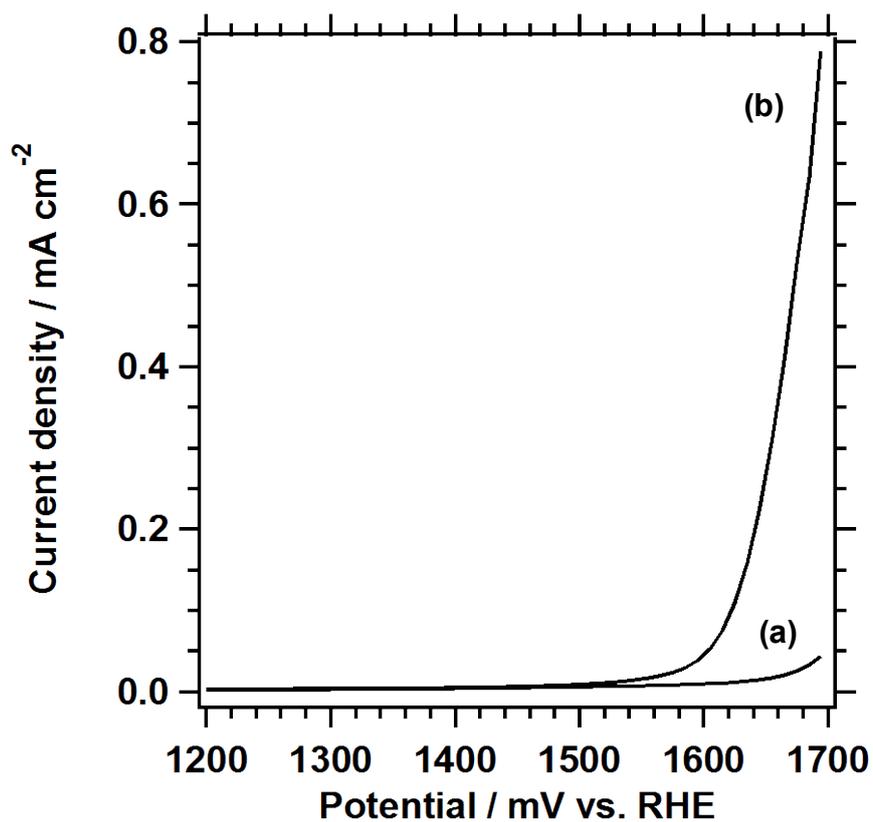
**Figure S2.** SEM images of hematite photoanodes 27 nm in thickness deposited on (a) bare, (b)  $\text{SiO}_x$ -modified, and (c)  $\text{Ga}_2\text{O}_3$ -modified FTO. (d) Bare FTO and (e)  $\text{Ga}_2\text{O}_3$ -modified FTO before the deposition of hematite layers are shown for comparison.



**Figure S3.** Photocurrent-potential curves of a hematite photoanode (27 nm in thickness) deposited on a Ga<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-modified FTO and annealed at 773 K for (a), 0, (b) 2, (c) 4, and (d) 6h.



**Figure S4.** Transient photo-responses of hematite photoanodes (11 nm in thickness) deposited on a Ga<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-modified FTO. Electrolyte solution: (a) 1 M NaOH (pH 13.6) and (b) 0.1 M borate buffer (pH 9). The measurements were performed approximately every 4 min.



**Figure S5.** Current-voltage curves of hematite prepared on FTO (a) unmodified and (b) modified with ATO nanoparticles recorded in the darkness.