

# Supporting Information

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Immune Profiling and Multiplexed Label-Free Detection of 2D MXenes by Mass Cytometry and High-Dimensional Imaging

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Supplementary Information for

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**The supplementary information includes:**

- **1. Supplementary Figures S1-S18 and Tables S1-S4**
- **2. Materials and methods**
- **3. Supplementary references**

### **1. Supplementary Figures**



**Figure S1. Material chemical characterization. a-d,** Dynamic light scattering (DLS) of  $\text{Ti}_3\text{C}_2\text{T}_x$ (a),  $Nb_4C_3T_x$  (b),  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3T_x$  (c), and  $Ta_4C_3T_x$  (d) indicating their hydrodynamic radius. e-h, Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images of  $Ti_3C_2T_x$  (e),  $Nb_4C_3T_x$  (f),  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3T_x$  (g), and  $Ta_4C_3T_x(h)$  showing the flake size and morphology after delamination.



**Figure S2. Study workflow.** Study workflow showing synthesis and physical-chemical and basic biological characterization of MXenes (i); *ex vivo* assessment of MXene detection on 16 human immune cell types by single-cell mass cytometry and imaging mass cytometry, impact of lateral size and as a cocktail of MXenes (ii); evaluation of MXene effects on cell viability, cell functionality, and dynamics of cell-cell interactions by means of single-cell mass spectrometry and LIPSTIC approach<sup>1</sup> (iii); and *in vivo* MXene testing from biodistribution to *in vivo* cell tracking by single-cell mass cytometry and multiplexed ion beam imaging (iv) .



Figure S3. Impact of  $Ti_3C_2$ ,  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ , and  $Ta_4C_3$  on human PBMC viability. a, PBMCs were treated with different concentrations (12.5, 25, 50, and 100  $\mu$ g/mL) of Ti<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>, Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>,  $Mo_{2}Ti_{2}C_{3}$  or  $Ta_{4}C_{3}$  for 24 h and cell viability was analysed using the LIVE/DEAD® Viability/Cytotoxicity Kit discriminating live from dead cells by simultaneously staining with green-fluorescent calcein-AM to indicate intracellular esterase activity and red-fluorescent ethidium homodimer-1 to indicate loss of plasma membrane integrity. Plasma membrane integrity and esterase activity were measured by using TECAN fluorescence microplate reader. **b**, PBMCs were treated with different concentrations (25, 50, and 100  $\mu$ g/mL) of Ti<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>, Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, Mo<sub>2</sub>Ti<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub> or  $Ta_4C_3$  for 24 h and cell viability was analysed by flow cytometry using Fixable Viability Dye 780 staining. All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as means±SD (Two-way ANOVA, followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test).



**Figure S4. Immune cell subpopulations gating strategy**. Dot plots showing the gating strategy used for the identification of the different immune cell subpopulations by CyTOF.



**Figure S5. Single-cell tracking analysis of MXenes on human PBMC subpopulations. a-l**, viSNE distribution of CD4+ Th. cells, CD8+ CT. cells (**a-d**), B cells (**e-h**) and CD3- CD19- cells (**i-l**). Plots representing the use of viSNE to obtain a comprehensive single-cell view of the PBMC subpopulations treated with  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$  or  $Ta_4C_3$ . showing the median intensity of Niobium  $(181)$ <sup>93</sup>Nb), Molybdenum  $(181)$  and Tantalum  $(181)$  Ta) signal in CD4+ Th. cells, CD8+ CT. cells, B cells, monocytes, mDCs, and NKs. A representative viSNE graph is shown out of three biological replicates.



**Figure S6. TEM Imaging.** Representative TEM images of  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ , and  $Ta_4C_3$ interactions with PBMCs. Cells were incubated with  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$  or  $Ta_4C_3(50 \mu g/mL)$  for 24 h. Arrows in higher magnification micrographs indicate internalized  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ , and  $Ta_4C_3$ . As shown in panel the representative images depict large aggregation and giant vacuoles inside the cells. Scale bars:  $0.5$ , 1, and 2  $\mu$ m.



Figure S7. Single-cell impact of  $Ti_3C_2$ ,  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ , and  $Ta_4C_3$  on PBMC viability. Histograms showing Cis median intensity in the different immune cell subpopulations after treatment with  $Ti_3C_2$ ,  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$  or  $Ta_4C_3$  and analysed by CyTOF. All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as means±SD (Two-Way ANOVA and student T Test).



**Figure S8. Analysis by t-SNE of cell viability upon MXene treatment on human PBMC**  subpopulations. PBMCs were treated with 50  $\mu$ g/mL of Ti<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>, Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, Mo<sub>2</sub>Ti<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub> or Ta<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub> for 24 h.



**Figure S9. Single-cell cytokine analysis on human PBMC subpopulations.** Heat maps showing median marker intensity of INFy, IL2, IL4, IL5, IL17a, IL17f, IL6, MP1β, TNFα, Perforin, and Granzyme B (GrB) for gated immune cell subpopulations after treatment of PBMCs with 50  $\mu$ g/mL of Ti<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>, Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, Mo<sub>2</sub>Ti<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub> or Ta<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub> for 24 h. Upregulated (red squares) or downregulated (blue squares) proteins are indicated. Significantly modulated values are marked as bold squares. All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as  $Log_2$  Fold Change as compared to the negative control (Two-way ANOVA and Bonferroni post-test).



**Figure S10. Gene expression analysis (RNA-seq on PBMCs). a**, Principal component analysis based on the PBMC full normalized RNA-seq gene expression matrix. **b**, VennDiagram of differentially expressed genes using FDR < 0.01. **c**, Heatmap of differentially expressed genes (n

 $=$  21) common to Ta<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, Mo<sub>2</sub>T<sub>1<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, and Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub> using FDR < 0.01, as represented in panel b. **c,d,**</sub> Enriched pathways associated with DEGs common to Ta<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, Mo<sub>2</sub>Ti<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, and Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub> using FDR < 0.05 (**d**) and FDR < 0.01 (**e**). Experiments are performed in triplicates. Genes raw count data was normalized with EDAseq followed by quantile normalization and log2 transformation. Differentially expression analysis was performed using LIMMA. Enriched IPA canonical pathways using deferentially expressed genes coherently modulated by  $Ta_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ , and Nb4C<sup>3</sup> vs controls with FDR < 0.05 (d) and FDR < 0.01 (e); enrichment *p* value is represented by the orange line, dotted lines represent two *p* values cut-offs ( $p = 0.05 = -\text{Log}_{10}(p) = 1.3$ , and 0.005, -Log<sub>10</sub>  $(p)$  = 2.3). Histograms represent the proportion  $(\%)$  of DEG upregulated (red) or downregulated (green) between MXenes and controls. The circles represent the inferred activation state. The bases of this inferred activation state are literature-derived relationships between genes and the corresponding biological function. Pathways that are activated in MXenes vs controls are marked with a red circle, indicating a positive activation score, whereas pathways inhibited in MXenes vs controls are marked with a blue circle, indicating a negative activation score. For canonical pathways with a gray circle, no sufficient literature-derived information exists to estimate the activation state.



**Figure S11. Analysis of PBMC activation. a**, Histogram plots showing the percentage of positive cells for CD25-PE and CD69-FITC staining evaluated by flow cytometry in PBMCs treated with 50 µg/mL of  $Ti_3C_2$ ,  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$  or  $Ta_4C_3$  for 24 h. LPS (2 µg/mL) was used as positive control. **b**, Representative flow cytometry analysis for CD25-PE and CD69-FITC staining of PBMCs and monocytes treated with 50  $\mu$ g/mL of Ti<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>, Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>, Mo<sub>2</sub>Ti<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub> or Ta<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>. All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as means±SD (One-way ANOVA, followed by Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison).



**Figure S12. Characterization of MXenes with similar lateral size. a**,**b**, X-ray diffraction (XRD) of precursor MAX phases (**a**) and MXenes (**b**) after topochemical synthesis. The (002) peak shifts to the left, and only (00*l*) peaks remain, indicating successful synthesis and delamination. **c**-**f**, Dynamic light scattering (DLS) of  $Ti_3C_2T_x$  (c),  $Nb_4C_3T_x$  (d),  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3T_x$  (e), and  $Ta_4C_3T_x$ (**f**) indicating their hydrodynamic radius. **g-j**, Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images of  $Ta_4C_3T_x(g)$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3T_x(h)$ ,  $Nb_4C_3T_x(i)$ , and  $Ti_3C_2T_x(j)$  showing the flake size and morphology after delamination.



**Figure S13. CyTOF detection of MXenes with similar lateral size in human immune cells. a,**  Table showing the main physicochemical characteristics of MXenes with similar lateral size  $(Nb_4C_3 - 260$  nm,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3 - 240$  nm, and  $Ta_4C_3 - 160$  nm). **b-g**, PBMCs were incubated with 50  $\mu$ g/mL of Nb<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>-260 nm, Mo<sub>2</sub>Ti<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub>-240 nm or Ta<sub>4</sub>C<sub>3</sub>-160 nm and stained for mass cytometry analysis. Cell viability after 24 h was analysed using Cisplatin (Cis) reagent by CyTOF (**b**). Percentage of cells positive to  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$  or  $Ta_4C_3$  is reported as bar graphs for total PBMCs (**c**) and all PBMC subpopulations identified (**d**). Time course of MXenes uptake in PBMCs treated for 1, 6, and 24 h (e). **f,g**, Median intensity of  $Nb_4C_3$ -260 nm,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ -240 nm, and  $Ta_4C_3$ -160 nm signals after 24 h is also reported as histogram for total PBMCs (**f**) and all populations **(g)**. All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as means±SD. Statistical significance: \*\*\*\* *p*<0.0001 (One-way ANOVA, followed by Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison).



**Figure S14. MXene cocktail on human PBMCs: viability and detection. a,b,** PBMCs were incubated with a cocktail of  $Nb_4C_3$ -260 nm,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ -240 nm, and  $Ta_4C_3$ -160 nm (50  $\mu$ g/mL each) for 24 h and stained for mass cytometry analysis. Histograms representing the mean intensity of MXenes in total PBMCs after treatment for 24 h with the cocktail of MXenes with different size

( $Nb_4C_3$ -150 nm,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ -370 nm, and  $Ta_4C_3$ -810 nm; 50  $\mu$ g/mL each) or similar size ( $Nb_4C_3$ -260 nm,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ -240 nm, and  $Ta_4C_3$ -160 nm; 50  $\mu$ g/mL each) (**a**). Detection on immune cell types was analysed by CyTOF. Spider chart represents the impact on viability (orange), expressed as LD median intensity for dead cells vs the MXene detection in fifteen immune cell types expressed as  $log_2$  fold change of mean intensity (**b**). All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as means±SD (One-way ANOVA, followed by Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison).



**Figure S15. MXene quantification determined by CyTOF. a,** Number of 93 Nb, 95 Mo, and 181 Ta atoms per cell determined from direct atom analysis in all PBMC subpopulations after the 24 h treatment of PBMCs with a cocktail of  $Nb_4C_3$ -260 nm,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$ -240 nm, and  $Ta_4C_3$ -160 nm (50 µg/mL each). **b,** Dynamic range of <sup>93</sup>Nb, <sup>95</sup>Mo, and <sup>181</sup>Ta determined by CyTOF solution mode. **c,** mass spectrum of  $Nb_4C_3$ ,  $Mo_2Ti_2C_3$  or  $Ta_4C_3$  determined by CyTOF solution mode, lanthanide element calibration beads were applied as controls. All the experiments were performed in triplicate and shown as means±SD (One-way ANOVA, followed by Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison).



**Figure S16.** After singlets' and live/dead discrimination, T cells were identified as MHCII, CD4<sup>+</sup> cells, while DCs as MHCII<sup>+</sup>, CD4, CD11c<sup>+</sup>, B220. CD69 was implemented as a marker of T cell activation. LIPSTIC labeling was then assessed in both cell populations.



**Figure S17.** *In vivo* **biodistribution of MXene cocktail at the tissue and single-cell level. a**, Percentage of positive cells subtracted to control for all immune cell subpopulations identified per organ reported as bar graphs. **b,** MXene mean intensity for all immune cell subpopulations identified per organ reported as histograms. Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  SEM among the replicates.



**Figure S18.** *In vivo* **biodistribution of MXene cocktail.** Representative contour plot of gated CD45+ cells, isolated from liver of MXene-treated mice.







**Figure S19.** *In vivo* **effects of MXene cocktail on mice blood.** Changes in human whole blood after treatment with Ctrl (Saline) or MXene cocktail and housed for 24 h. After 24 h, complete blood counts were performed. **a,** Changes in the number of total white blood cells (WBC), divided into neutrophils, lymphocytes, monocytes, eosinophils, and basophils, were analyzed. **b,** Changes in red blood cells (RBC), amount of hemoglobin (Hb), platelets (PLT), hematocrit (HCT), mean corpuscular hemoglobin (MCH) and its concentration (MCHC), red blood cell distribution width (RDW) mean corpuscular volume (MCV), mean platelet volume (MPV) and glycemia were also monitored. Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  SD. Values of MXene-treated samples were compared to the corresponding untreated control using unpaired t-test.





**Table S1.** Antibody conjugation for CyTOF analysis. A summary of antibodies, staining and conjugated metals used for CyTOF analysis.

<b>Target</b>	<b>Metal</b>	<b>Clone</b>	Catalog $#$	Company
$I-A/I-E$	209Bi	M5/114.15.2	3209006B	Fluidigm
CD45R/B220	176Yb	<b>RA36B2</b>	3176002B	Fluidigm
CD <sub>11</sub> c	$162$ Dy	N418	3162017B	Fluidigm
CD69	143Nd	H1.2F3	3143004B	Fluidigm
CD4	172Yb	RM4-5	3172003B	Fluidigm
biotin	150Nd	1D4-C5	3150008B	Fluidigm

**Table S2**. Antibody conjugation for LIPSTIC analysis. A summary of antibodies, staining and conjugated metals used for LIPSTIC analysis.



**Table S3**. **Antibody conjugation for** *in vivo* **biodistribution analysis.** A summary of antibodies, staining and conjugated metals used for *in vivo* biodistribution analysis.



**Table S4. Antibody conjugation for MIBI-TOF analysis.** A summary of antibodies, staining concentrations and conjugated metals used for MIBI-TOF analysis.