

1124-57-267

Thomas E. Mark*, PO Box 400137, Kerchof Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904, and **Bulent Tosun**. *Obstructing Stein structures on contractible 4-manifolds*.

A Stein manifold is a complex manifold with particularly nice convexity properties. In real dimensions above 4, existence of a Stein structure is essentially a homotopical question, but for 4-manifolds the situation is more subtle. We will show that there exist homotopically trivial smooth 4-manifolds that do not admit Stein structures, answering a question that has circulated among contact and symplectic topologists recently. Along the way we will provide new evidence for a conjecture of Gompf, which asserts that a nontrivial Brieskorn homology sphere cannot be embedded in complex 2-space as the boundary of a Stein submanifold. (Received September 11, 2016)