

A phosphine oxide route to formamidinium lead tribromide nanoparticles

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Abstract We present the synthesis of formamidinium lead tribromide (FAPbBr₃) perovskite nanocrystals through a phosphine oxide route, where, in comparison to more traditional syntheses, oleylamine is replaced with trioctylphosphine oxide (TOPO). This route has previously been shown to be successful for the inorganic cesium lead tribromide perovskite nanocrystals. We examine the interactions between the precursors via nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (NMR). We confirm the existence of an interaction between FA-oleate and TOPO and use this to guide the optimisation of our synthesis. When the reaction is conducted at room temperature, we observe the formation of nanoparticles with high photoluminescence quantum yield (PLQY, ~70 %) at 2.39 eV (518 nm) with little ripening or size defocusing over time. Although we obtain narrow emission peaks, the crystals are irregular in shape, testament to the impact of the FA-oleate:TOPO interaction. Despite a drop in PLQY in the washed solutions, films made maintain a high PLQY of ~ 50 % at 2.33 eV (532 nm), which is fortuitously the ideal wavelength for the green emission channel in displays, and we demonstrate 532 nm electroluminescence in light emitting diodes with an EQE of 3.7 %.

20 Introduction

21 There are two popular routes to synthesize lead halide perovskite nanocrystals: ligand assisted
22 reprecipitation¹⁻⁹ (LARP) and hot injection.¹⁰⁻¹⁵ The most common ligands used in both methods are
23 oleic acid (OA) and oleylamine (OLAm), which form a complex ligand shell of oleylammonium and
24 oleate in equilibrium with one another and other species in solution.¹⁶ Hot injection is generally
25 favoured in semiconductor nanocrystal synthesis for controlling the size of the nanocrystals and
26 achieving narrow size distributions,¹⁷⁻²¹ which has been demonstrated for cesium lead halide, CsPbX₃,
27 nanocrystals.^{10,22} It is a two-precursor approach, with Cs-oleate being injected into a solution of lead
28 halide with OA and OLAm in 1-octadecene (ODE).

29 Formamidinium (CH(NH₂)₂⁺, FA) is an organic cation, which is currently used in most high efficiency
30 perovskite thin film photovoltaic devices. To date, FAPbX₃ nanocrystals have been synthesised both
31 via LARP or hot injection.^{11,12,23,24} For the hot injection route, a modified three-precursor approach was
32 required to form monodisperse nanocrystals, employing lead acetate, formamidinium acetate and
33 oleylammonium halide,¹¹ as opposed to the two-precursor approach using lead halide and
34 formamidinium oleate (FA-oleate). In the latter case when FA-oleate was used, polydisperse
35 nanoparticles with inferior optical properties, such as larger full width half maxima in their
36 photoluminescence or multiple photoluminescence peaks, were obtained. This was speculatively
37 attributed to an unfavourable interaction of FA and OLAm, which had to be regulated by introducing
38 oleylammonium bromide.^{11,12}

39 Instead of trying to control the interaction between FA and OLAm during the synthesis, an
40 alternative route is to remove the amine/ammonium ligand system altogether. CsPbBr₃ nanocrystals
41 have been synthesised via an injection route with trioctylphosphine oxide (TOPO), without employing
42 amine/ammonium molecules,²⁵ which produced oleate-only capped perovskite nanocrystals. This
43 previous work, aimed at simplifying the dynamic oleate-oleylammonium ligand shell, also investigated

44 the relationship between TOPO and oleic acid (OA), and produced highly luminescent, monodisperse
 45 nanocrystals in record yields.

46 The success of the phosphine oxide route in the synthesis of CsPbBr₃ nanocrystals is attributed to
 47 the manipulation of the acid-base interaction of OA and TOPO.²⁵ In CsPbBr₃ synthesis, the reaction
 48 mixture consists of PbBr₂ dissolved by TOPO in 1-octadecene with some OA present. Upon the
 49 injection of Cs-oleate in OA, TOPO preferentially interacts with the excess OA, thus releasing PbBr₂
 50 which reacts with Cs-oleate. This forms monodisperse CsPbBr₃ nanocrystals in reaction yields close to
 51 the theoretical limit.

52 Proton (¹H) nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (NMR) has been used extensively to examine
 53 the ligand shell surrounding lead halide perovskite nanocrystals and the ligand-ligand interactions in
 54 solution,^{16,25–27} but these studies are usually restricted to CsPbX₃ nanocrystals. The ¹H NMR signal of
 55 hydrogen atoms bound to amines shift drastically as a function of concentration and solvent polarity
 56 due to hydrogen bonding. Mixing amidinium and ammonium moieties makes it difficult to distinguish
 57 and interpret the signals from these moieties, due to their similar peak shifts and hydrogen bonding
 58 in solution.

59 Here, we investigate the impact of the A-site cation (FA⁺) on the acid-base equilibrium of the ligands
 60 (OA and TOPO) using ¹H and ³¹P NMR and then apply the phosphine oxide synthesis route to FAPbBr₃
 61 nanocrystals. This synthesis has the potential to produce high quality FAPBr₃ nanocrystals in high
 62 yields, at low temperatures, with an oleate-only ligand shell by completely removing the
 63 amine/ammonium ligand species from the reaction; mitigating any FA/ligand interactions.

Table 1 NMR solutions with given concentrations in d-toluene

Sample	[TOPO] M	[OA] M	[A-oleate] M
TOPO	0.43	0.00	0.00
OA	0.00	0.53	0.00
OA:TOPO	0.43	0.53	0.00
FA-oleate	0.00	0.46	0.07

FA-oleate:TOPO	0.43	0.46	0.07
Cs-oleate	0.00	0.48	0.05
Cs-oleate:TOPO	0.43	0.48	0.05

64 Results

65 First, we examine the interaction of formamidinium oleate (FA-oleate) and cesium oleate (Cs-
66 oleate), with OA and TOPO using proton (^1H) and phosphorous (^{31}P) NMR. The impact of (Cs, FA)-oleate
67 on TOPO is investigated by examining ^{31}P NMR spectra. All NMR solutions are in d-toluene and their
68 components and concentrations indicated in Table 1. In all cases, the (Cs, FA)-oleate solutions are in
69 OA, so there is an excess of OA when either oleate precursor is present. We observe a downfield shift
70 in the ^{31}P TOPO signal upon addition of OA, the extent of which is dictated by the concentration of OA
71 (Figure S1), indicating a reduction in electron density shielding the probe nuclei, known as deshielding.
72 In Figure 1a, we show that on replacement of neat OA with either 0.3 M Cs-oleate or 0.4 M FA-oleate
73 in OA, there is a reduction in the extent of this shift. For Cs-oleate this is significant, with a difference
74 of 1.63 ppm and is distinctly similar to a lower concentration of OA being present (Figure 1a, top
75 panel). When FA-oleate is introduced, the difference in shift is less pronounced, clearly shown in
76 Figure 1a (bottom panel), and only 0.43 ppm. This could indicate that less excess OA is interacting with
77 the FA-oleate in comparison to Cs-oleate, or that there is a contribution from the FA-oleate that
78 mimics the OA-TOPO interaction either from the amidinium ion or any residual acetic acid. In all cases,
79 it is clear that the OA:TOPO interaction is influenced by the (Cs, FA)-oleate solution, albeit it to
80 different extents.

81 To further probe the nature of the influence of (Cs, FA)-oleate on the OA:TOPO interaction, we
82 consider the acidic proton of OA. Due to the lability of acidic protons in solution, their NMR signal is
83 downfield shifted (deshielded) and broad, and for neat OA in d-toluene such a peak at 12.2 ppm is
84 observed (Figure S2). We observe in Figure 1b (top panel) that this proton signal in Cs-oleate in OA is
85 shifted further downfield and considerably sharper. The opposite is true for FA-oleate in OA, which
86 we show in Figure 1b (bottom panel), where we observe an upfield shift and broadening of the peak.
87 The addition of TOPO to OA causes a downfield shift in the acidic proton (Figure S2), due to the acid-

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3 88 base equilibrium, which has been investigated previously.²⁵ We observe the same impact for the (Cs,
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5 89 FA)-oleate solutions; in Figure 1b the arrows denote the shift from neat (Cs, FA)-oleate in OA (black
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8 90 line), to the (Cs, FA)-oleate:TOPO mixtures (blue or green line), which is larger for Cs-oleate than FA-
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10 91 oleate, at 0.15 ppm and 0.09 ppm respectively. The broadening of the peaks is clearer in normalised
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12 92 spectra, which we present in Figure S3.

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15 93 Two conclusions can be drawn from this data. Firstly, FA and Cs have opposite effects on the acidic
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17 94 proton of OA, shown clearly in Figure 1b & S2. This is largely attributable to the introduction of labile
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19 95 protons on FA which are not present for Cs. Secondly, TOPO interacts with the acidic proton on OA in
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21 96 the same way for each sample (neat OA, Cs-oleate and FA-oleate). The extent or strength of this
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23 97 interaction may be influenced by the (Cs, FA)-oleate as seen by the extent of the peak shift and
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25 98 broadening.

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29 **Figure 1** a) ³¹P NMR of Cs-oleate:TOPO, OA:TOPO (top) and FA-oleate:TOPO, OA:TOPO (bottom) at
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31 specified concentrations of OA. b) Normalised ¹H NMR spectra of acidic proton region of OA, with
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33 the top panel showing Cs-oleate, Cs-oleate:TOPO, OA:TOPO ([OA] = 0.48M) and OA ([OA] = 0.53 M)
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35 and the bottom panel showing FA-oleate, FA-oleate:TOPO, OA:TOPO ([OA] = 0.46 M) and OA ([OA] =
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37 0.53 M). c) ¹H NMR spectra of methine proton region of FA for FA-oleate:TOPO (green, top) and FA-
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39 oleate (black, bottom). The broad peak marked with an asterisk (*) in the bottom panel is assigned
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41 to the labile amine protons. d) ¹H NMR spectra of methine proton region of FA for FA-oleate (black)
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43 and FA-oleate:TOPO (green) over temperature range 15 - 75 °C

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48 99 We note that TOPO also induces a downfield shift in the methine proton of FA (CH(NH₂)₂⁺). In Figure
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50 100 1c the labile amine protons on FA (CH(NH₂)₂⁺) are observable in neat FA-oleate as the broad peak
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52 101 centred around 8.3 ppm (marked with *, bottom panel), which is lost to baseline noise on the addition
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54 102 of TOPO (top panel). Given that the amine protons are observable without TOPO, it indicates that
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56 103 there is a possible interaction between these protons with TOPO, such as hydrogen bonding, resulting
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58 104 in a severe broadening of the peak.

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3 105 Thus far, it is clear that the labile protons of FA cause a disruption in the OA:TOPO interaction, which
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5 106 is necessary for the formation of nanoparticles. In order to confirm the nature of this interaction, we
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7 107 undertook temperature dependent NMR experiments. We see in Figure 1d (left panel) that for FA-
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9 108 oleate in OA, the methine hydrogen undergoes only marginal changes over the temperature range of
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11 109 15 to 75°C. When TOPO is present there is a significant upfield shift, Figure 1d (right panel). As the
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13 110 temperature is increased, the peak shifts back towards the position of the peak for neat FA-oleate.
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17 **Scheme 1** Representation of the equilibrium
18 between OA:TOPO and FA-oleate:TOPO
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20 111 As OA:TOPO are in an acid-base equilibrium,²⁵ higher temperatures correspond to more neutral
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22 112 TOPO being present. We propose that FA and TOPO are in a similar equilibrium, and that the methine
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24 113 shifts correlate to a release of FA from TOPO at higher temperatures, while the equilibrium is pushed
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26 114 towards the neutral forms of FA and TOPO. The temperature effects on the acidic proton of OA and
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28 115 the phosphorus in TOPO are shown in Figure S4 where the change in the shift and width of the peaks
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30 116 corroborate the existence of an interaction equilibrium between FA and TOPO.^{25,28} We include further
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32 117 discussion of these results in the Supporting Information.
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36 118 From this data, we can establish that there are two competing interactions in the FA-oleate:TOPO
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38 119 solutions. There is an equilibrium between the FA-oleate:TOPO alongside the equilibrium of OA:TOPO,
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40 120 as compared to them being free in solution. The coexistence of these two interactions leads to an
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42 121 overall exchange of OA:TOPO with FA-oleate:TOPO, which we depict in Scheme 1, and we have alluded
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44 122 to the nature of these interactions further in the Supporting Information, Figure S5.
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48 123 **Nanocrystal Synthesis** We now proceed to examine the synthesis of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles, with
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50 124 consideration of the NMR results that we have discussed above. For the standard synthesis we
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52 125 dissolve lead bromide in TOPO and OA in ODE at 75 °C and then set the reaction mixture to the desired
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54 126 temperature (23 °C to 75 °C). We inject FA-oleate (in OA) and after 30 seconds, we quench the reaction
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56 127 in an ice bath. The nanoparticles are separated by centrifugation at 5,000 rpm for 10 minutes, and the
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58 128 crude product consisting of a solid pellet, and an oily residue is redispersed in hexane. From ICP-OES,
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3 129 we determine that the yield of lead bromide converted to perovskite is 15.3 atom % in lead. We depict
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5 130 the process in Figure 2a, and present comprehensive experimental details in the Experimental section
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8 131 at the end of this manuscript.

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10 **Figure 2** a) Scheme of phosphine oxide injection

11 route to FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles and b) PL (black dash)

12 and absorption (green solid) spectra for

13 nanoparticles made at 23, 55 and 75 °C

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19 132 We performed the synthesis at temperatures ranging from room temperature (19-23 °C) to 75 °C.
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21 133 These temperatures are significantly lower than previous reports of FAPbBr₃ nanocrystals synthesised
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23 134 by the hot-injection method, which were conducted between 80 and 130 °C.¹¹ We show in Figure 2b
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25 135 the blue shift in photoluminescence (PL) peak with decreasing reaction temperature, from 2.31 eV to
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27 136 2.40 eV. This is a small shift in PL peak for a 50 °C range with only a 0.10 eV difference in peak maxima
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29 137 from 75 to 23 °C. In contrast, the hot-injection synthesis of FAPbBr₃ results in a 0.35 eV shift for a 50
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31 138 °C range (80 - 130 °C).¹¹ Here, we also observe an increase in full-width at half-maximum (FWHM) and
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33 139 photoluminescence quantum yield (PLQY) with decreasing temperature, and measure PLQE values of
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35 140 approximately 70 % in solution, for the room temperature synthesis (Figure S6). For the room
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37 141 temperature growth, we observe a negligible effect on the optical properties of the nanoparticles with
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39 142 reaction time, as we show in Figure S7. This is most likely due to a lack of ripening and size defocusing
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42 143 over time, in a similar way to that of CsPbBr₃ made through the TOPO route.²⁵

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47 144 We investigate the effect of OA:TOPO molar ratio on the FAPbBr₃ nanoparticle synthesis by varying
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49 145 both the OA and TOPO content. In all cases, the OA concentration is the sum of the OA in the lead
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51 146 halide solution and in the injection of the FA-oleate in OA. We carried out the reactions at three
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53 147 temperatures: room temperature (19-23 °C), 40 °C and 55 °C.

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56 148 We show the PL peak, FWHM, and the PLQY in Figure 3a-c, and observe a distinct decrease in peak
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58 149 energy, or red shift, in the PL emission for an increasing ratio of OA:TOPO. We also observe reduction

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3 150 of the FWHM as the OA:TOPO ratio is increased from 0.8:1 to 2:1. The PLQY increases with an
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5 151 increasing OA:TOPO ratio, but in this case, it also goes through a maximum. The shaded region of
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7 152 Figure 3c, between 1.2:1 and 1.6:1 OA:TOPO, is where we determine the highest PLQY values for each
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9 153 temperature. Outside of this shaded region, the PLQY is significantly lower and increasing the
10 154 temperature also induces a further decrease, dropping from 70 % at room temperature to 30 % at
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12 155 55 °C.
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16 **Figure 3** Optical properties of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles

17 synthesised at room temperature (rT, black), 40
18 (green), and 55 °C (red) with varying molar ratio of
19 OA:TOPO. a) PL peak position, b) FWHM, c) PLQY,
20 with the regions of interest highlighted by the grey
21 box, and d) absorption spectra (solid line) with
22 associated PL overlaid (dashed line)
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32 156 The OA:TOPO ratio can be finely tuned by changing the concentration of FA-oleate in the injection
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34 157 solution. Varying the FA-oleate concentration between 0.1 and 0.4 M, tunes the OA:TOPO ratio
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36 158 between 1.68:1 and 1.56:1. We see the effect of this tuning in Figure S8, with a general blue shift in
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38 159 PL peak alongside an increase in FWHM and PLQY. The concentration of FA could have an influence
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40 160 on the nanoparticles but decoupling this from the larger influence of the OA:TOPO ratio is complex,
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42 161 and thus we evaluate it as part of the OA:TOPO ratio instead. The PL is similarly impacted by
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44 162 temperature, where we observe more extreme changes in the PL peak position, FWHM and PLQY at
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46 163 room temperature, as compared to 55 °C. For CsPbBr₃ nanocubes, the concentration of Cs-oleate
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48 164 could be directly correlated to the ligand coverage since it only influenced the PLQY as opposed to the
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50 165 peak position and FWHM.²⁵ The changes in PL peak and FWHM observed here for FAPbBr₃
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52 166 nanoparticles, alongside the NMR data discussed previously, indicate that there is a more complex
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54 167 picture for the FAPbBr₃ system. Similarly, due to the small change in OA:TOPO ratio coupled with the
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3 168 impact on optical properties, it is clear that the FA-oleate:TOPO interaction is interfering with the
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5 169 metathesis reaction of PbBr_2 and FA.
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8 170 In Figure 3d we present the absorption spectra of nanoparticles made at varying OA:TOPO ratios
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10 171 and temperature. Features in the absorption spectra above 2.75 eV are observed, and as the OA:TOPO
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12 172 ratio decreases these peaks are more prominent and we lose the sharp absorption onset, which is
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14 173 amplified at lower reaction temperatures. We assume these features in the UV-Vis absorption spectra
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16 174 arise from a certain fraction of lower dimensional phases being present but discuss the potential origin
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18 175 in more detail in the Supporting Information. Despite a shallow absorption onset at 2.3 eV for the low
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20 176 temperature and low ratio samples, the PL profile is similar for all samples.
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25 **Figure 4** TEM of FAPbBr_3 nanoparticles synthesised at varying ratios of OA: TOPO, with reaction
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27 temperatures of a) room temperature (rT) and b) 55 °C. c) XRD of FAPbBr_3 nanoparticles synthesised
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29 at room temperature (rT) with varying molar ratio of OA:TOPO. The XRD is measured under air-free
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31 conditions using a dome holder, with reference pattern for the dome shown in green and a
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33 simulated XRD pattern for FAPbBr_3 shown in red
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36 177 We observe a change in the shape of the nanocrystals, with a deviation from nanocubes, as shown
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38 178 in the TEM images presented in Figure 4a & b. FAPbBr_3 nanoparticles synthesised at room temperature
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40 179 are large, rounded particles, with a lack of shape homogeneity at low OA:TOPO ratios. More cubic or
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42 180 rectangular particles are formed at an OA:TOPO ratio of 1.56:1, but there is little uniformity across the
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44 181 sample. At 55 °C, smaller particles are formed that are more spherical in shape, and an increase in
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46 182 ratio from 1.19:1 to 1.81:1 does not yield distinct differences.
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50 183 An explanation for the unusual optical and structural properties of our FAPbBr_3 nanocrystals, is the
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52 184 intercalation of TOPO between layers of FAPbBr_3 . Since previous studies have shown that dimethyl
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54 185 sulfoxide (DMSO) can intercalate into polycrystalline FAPbBr_3 ²⁹, and that there are similarities in the
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56 186 binding groups of TOPO and DMSO, the mechanism for intercalation here is plausible.
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3 187 However, the XRD of the crude solid pellet presented in Figure 4c suggests that a 3D perovskite
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5 188 structure has formed; the peaks match a simulated pattern for 3D cubic FAPbBr₃. In all cases, the XRD
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8 189 signal is very weak and there is a clear decrease in intensity with an increasing OA:TOPO ratio. No
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10 190 shifts or additional peaks appear with the changing ratio, as would be expected with the presence of
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12 191 TOPO intercalation, and the corresponding absorption data for these samples do not display any
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14 192 features above 2.5 eV (Figure S9). See Supporting Information for further discussion.

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17 193 On balance, the data presented suggests that the crude nanoparticles, consisting of a solid pellet
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19 194 and oily residue, need to be purified. Furthermore, by introducing an anti-solvent into the initial
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22 195 separation step, followed by additional washing steps, there is also the opportunity to alleviate the
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24 196 polydispersity and shape irregularity of the particles.

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27 197 **The influence of Washing** FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles were synthesised at room temperature with a
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29 198 OA:TOPO ratio of 1.56:1, and were subsequently precipitated with acetonitrile and toluene, affording
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31 199 the samples **Sep** (separated from reaction mixture), **Wash** (separated and then washed), and **Wash +**
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33 200 **OA** (separated, OA added, and then washed). Full details of washing procedures can be found in the
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35 201 Experimental section. Films of these nanoparticles were made by drop casting from hexane:octane
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37 202 (9:1) and left to dry without annealing.

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41 203 As expected, in Figure 5a we observe no features in the absorption spectra above 2.75 eV with the
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43 204 chosen OA:TOPO ratio of 1.56:1, and additional separation and washing steps induce a steepening of
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45 205 the absorption onset. When the nanoparticle solutions are coated into films, we observe small
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47 206 differences in the PL spectra. In solution, washing the nanoparticles induces a red shift and narrowing
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49 207 of the PL peak which is further enhanced with the addition of OA. This is consistent with a reduction
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51 208 of size distribution after washing, with the red shift indicating that the nanoparticles are on average
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53 209 larger, either as small particles are removed or merged with larger ones. However, in the films there
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55 210 is little difference in the FWHM across all three samples, and only the addition of OA causes the PL of
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57 211 the film to be red shifted (Figure 5a and S9).

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3 212 We find that the PLQY of the nanoparticle solution suffers greatly through the separation and
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5 213 washing steps, where we observe a drop of 30 % absolute, which we show in Figure 5b. Previously,
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7 214 the addition of OA maintained a high PLQY for CsPbBr₃ nanocrystals,²⁵ whereas we see here that it
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9 215 causes a decrease in the PLQY. However, when deposited as films there is very little difference in the
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11 216 PLQY between different samples. Surprisingly, a solution with a PLQY lower than 20 % can still yield a
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13 217 film with approximately 50 % PLQY. This may be a result of the merging of the nanoparticles during
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15 218 film formation, with a consistent FWHM suggesting an averaging of the sizes of particles present
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17 219 (Figure S10), whilst also improving the ligand surface coverage. This is encouraging behaviour for LED
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19 220 device applications, since when washed there are fewer ligands around to disrupt the charge transfer,
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21 221 but a high PLQY is maintained.

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25 **Figure 5** Optical properties of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles

26 washed in three different ways in solution (Sep,
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28 Wash, Wash + OA). a) PL and absorption spectra and
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30 b) PLQY of solutions and drop cast films on glass. c)
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32 champion external quantum efficiency (EQE) of LED
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34 made from washed FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles and d) the
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36 electroluminescence of the device, centred at 2.32
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38 eV with a FWHM of 90 meV
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43 222 We conducted TEM imaging to assess if the washing processes affects the structure of the
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45 223 nanoparticles and the micrographs are presented in Figure S13. When the nanoparticles are washed,
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47 224 they have a more defined hexagonal shape as opposed to rounded, as seen in Figure 4 & b. As seen
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49 225 above, the optical properties of the FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles appear to converge when made into a film.
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51 226 This questions whether what is seen in the TEM for these materials is a true reflection of what is in
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53 227 the solution. Regardless, there is no dramatic difference in the TEM when the nanoparticles are
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55 228 washed or not, and no nanocubes are observed.
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3 229 In order to assess the functionality of these nanoparticles in an optoelectronic devices, we
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5 230 fabricated light emitting diodes (LEDs) using the architecture of indium-doped tin oxide (ITO)/Poly(4-
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7 231 butylphenyldiphenylamine) (Poly-TPD)/FAPbBr₃/ 2,2',2''-(1,3,5-Benzinetriyl)-tris(1-phenyl-1-H-
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9 232 benzimidazole) (TPBi)/Lithium fluoride (LiF)/Aluminium (Al). FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles were spin-coated
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11 233 from octane in a glovebox, and the devices were measured in a nitrogen-filled sample holder.
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15 234 We compare the champion EQE of each device set in Figure S11 and, as expected, the most efficient
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17 235 device has the least amount of ligand, named "sample **Wash**". When not enough ligands are washed
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19 236 away (**Sep**) then the device does not turn on, and where additional OA is added (**Wash + OA**) the
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21 237 device performance is low, likely due to an excess of long ligands in the film impeding charge injection
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23 238 or transport. Through device stack optimisation, we are able to obtain LEDs with a maximum EQE of
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25 239 3.7 % at 2.32 eV (534 nm), presented in Figure 5c & d, which are in line with the state of the art for
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27 240 FAPbBr₃ colloidal nanoparticle based LEDs.³⁰⁻³³ Further device characterisation and device statistics
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29 241 can be found in Figure S12. Given the high PLQY of the nanoparticle films, the device properties
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31 242 reported are far from the limit that this route has to offer. We expect that with further refinement of
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33 243 the device stack, balancing of charges, and ligand manipulation that significant improvements in LEDs
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35 244 with these nanoparticles will be achieved.
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40 245 **Discussion** From our understanding we can develop a schematic representation of the reaction
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42 246 pathway for the synthesis of FAPbBr₃ nanocrystal via the TOPO route, which we depict in Scheme 2.
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44 247 From the work of Almeida et al, we learn that the TOPO:PbBr₂ complex is disrupted by the addition of
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46 248 OA in the Cs-oleate injection step,²⁵ and this is represented in reaction 1. In this work, we have shown
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48 249 the existence of another equilibrium (2), where the FA-oleate:TOPO is competing with the OA:TOPO
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50 250 complex. The mediation of this equilibrium to release FA-oleate, is required for the formation of
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52 251 FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles through reaction with lead bromide, reaction 3.
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56 252 This interaction (2) has two main impacts on the synthesis of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles. Firstly, the
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58 253 proportion of FA available to readily react with the lead halide to form the perovskite will be impeded.
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3 254 The phosphine oxide synthesis gave record yields for CsPbBr₃ nanocrystals, but this is not replicated
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5 255 here with only 15.3 atom % in Pb yielded of the crude product, determined by ICP-OES. Secondly, the
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7 256 ligand coverage on the surface of the nanoparticles will be impacted, and the interaction may promote
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10 257 TOPO to be on the surface of FAPbBr₃. Having such a large molecule on the surface could easily disrupt
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12 258 ligand packing and the shape of the nanoparticles, which can explain the absence of nanocubes.

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15 259 In Scheme 2 we depict oleate-only capping of the nanoparticles, but the optical and structural data
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17 260 for the washed FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles support the hypothesis of a more complex ligand shell being
18
19 261 present. Adding back OA would have increased the PLQY of oleate-only capped nanoparticles through
20
21 262 manipulation of the ligand equilibrium between the surface and solution, as seen for CsPbBr₃
22
23 263 nanocrystals²⁵. Since the addition of OA in the washing steps induces a further decrease in PLQY
24
25
26 264 instead, there is a disruption in the surface coverage of the ligand shell. This is potentially due to OA
27
28 265 interacting with any TOPO on the surface of the nanoparticles in a competing pathway. This would
29
30 266 draw TOPO away from the surface, leaving dangling bonds to act as trap-states for charge carriers and
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32
33 267 quenching the PLQY. For future improvement of LED devices, optimizing a ligand exchange would be
34
35 268 an important step to maintain the high PLQY of the nanoparticles and improve the charge transport
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37 269 capabilities.

38
39 **Scheme 2** Representation of the reaction pathway for
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41 the phosphine oxide route to FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles

42
43 270 We have shown that the OA:TOPO ratio plays a pivotal role in the optical and structural properties
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45 271 of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles. Ratios between 1.2 and 1.6 result in higher PLQYs and less pronounced
46
47 272 features above 2.75 eV in the absorption spectra. At higher amounts of OA there is less neutral TOPO
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49 273 available to interact with FA, due to the OA:TOPO interaction dominating. Conversely, lower
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51 274 temperatures enhance these properties further, with a PLQY up to 70 %, which is the highest reported
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53 275 so far for a room temperature synthesis of FAPbBr₃. Since we have shown that FA and TOPO engage
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55
56 276 in an equilibrium, lower temperatures will promote their interaction. Therefore, it would appear that
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3 277 the FA-oleate:TOPO interaction is not wholly detrimental to the formation of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles
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5 278 of some form. This relationship must be balanced in order to form highly luminescent material.
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8 279 In comparisons to nanoparticles synthesized via the standard Hot Injection or LARP
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10 280 syntheses,^{11,12,23,24} our route is less energy intensive, with reactions conducted at low temperatures
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12 281 and in air. However, the tunability of the band gap via size control, and narrow FWHM of the PL spectra
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14 282 are lacking in the colloidal nanoparticles formed by our new synthetic route. Nevertheless, when
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16 283 processed into a solid thin-film, we obtain very high PLQYs, with a narrow PL FWHM of 90 meV (< 25
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18 284 nm), and at an industrially ideal wavelength from green emission in displays. Importantly, our
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20 285 nanoparticles perform comparably well as compared with LARP synthesised nanoparticles, when
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22 286 incorporated into LEDs.³⁰⁻³³
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24

25 26 287 **Conclusion**

27
28 288 In this work, we have demonstrated that the labile amine protons on FA are engaged in an
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30 289 equilibrium with TOPO, which consequently impedes the metathesis reaction of PbBr₂ and FA. This
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32 290 shows the need to control any basic molecule in a synthesis with FA, not just ammonium based
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34 291 molecules such as OLAm. As a result, the phosphine oxide synthesis of FAPbBr₃ does not result in the
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36 292 desired monodisperse nanocubes, as obtained for CsPbBr₃. Despite this, we have shown that this
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38 293 synthesis of FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles can be conducted at room temperature, and we have presented
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40 294 solutions with 70% PLQY, films with PLQY of over 50% and LED devices with over 3% EL-EQE, operating
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42 295 at the desired green-channel wavelength of 2.34 eV (530 nm).
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46 296 Overall, we have demonstrated highly luminescent FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles formed through a
47
48 297 phosphine oxide synthesis at room temperature, which is free from rapid size defocusing or ripening.
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50 298 The time independence and low temperature make this synthesis a potential for continuous flow
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52 299 processes, which are more feasibly scalable.
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54

55 300 **Experimental**

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3 301 **Materials** All chemicals were used as purchased without further purification. 1-octadecene (ODE,
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5 302 90 %, Sigma Aldrich), 2,2',2''-(1,3,5-Benzinetriyl)-tris(1-phenyl-1-H-benzimidazole) (TPBi, Ossila),
6
7 303 acetonitrile (99.8 %, Sigma Aldrich), cesium carbonate (Cs_2CO_3 , 99.9 %, Sigma Aldrich), chlorobenzene
8
9 304 (99.8 %, Sigma Aldrich), formamidine acetate salt (99 %, Sigma Aldrich), lead bromide (PbBr_2 , >98
10
11 305 %, Sigma Aldrich), lithium fluoride (LiF , >99.99 %, Lumtec), n-hexane (95 %, Sigma Aldrich), octane
12
13 306 (>99 %, Sigma Aldrich), oleic acid (OA, 90 %, Sigma Aldrich), poly[N,N'-bis(4-butylphenyl)-N,N'-
14
15 307 bisphenylbenzidine] (Poly-TPD, Ossila) toluene (99.8 %, Sigma Aldrich) and trioctylphosphine oxide
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17 308 (TOPO, 99%, Sigma Aldrich).

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21 309 **0.3 M Cs-oleate in OA** Cs_2CO_3 (0.244 g, 0.76 mmol) and OA (5.0 mL, 15.8 mmol) are degassed in a
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23 310 3-neck round-bottomed flask under vacuum at 100 °C for 1 hour followed by reacting under nitrogen
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25 311 at 140 °C. The colourless Cs-oleate solution is stored in a nitrogen filled vial for further use.

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27
28 312 **0.4 M FA-oleate in OA** OA (40 mL) is dried at 120 °C for 1 hour. Formamidine acetate (1.66 g, 15.9
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30 313 mmol) is added and the mixture is degassed at 50 °C for 15 minutes. The temperature is raised to 130
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32 314 °C under nitrogen until all the formamidine acetate has dissolved. The FA-oleate solution is then
33
34 315 cooled and stored under nitrogen until further use.

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36
37 316 **FAPbBr₃ Nanocrystals** The synthetic procedures are carried out in air, unless otherwise stated. All
38
39 317 reactions are performed in vials on a hot plate equipped with a thermocouple and a magnetic stirrer
40
41 318 at 800 rpm. In a typical synthesis, PbBr_2 (60 mg, 0.16 mmol), TOPO (1.0 g, 0.88 g/mL, 2.59 mmol) and
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43 319 OA (400 μL , 1.27 mmol) are heated to 75 °C in ODE (5.0 mL), providing a clear solution. The
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45 320 temperature is set to the desired reaction temperature (between room temperature and 75 °C) and
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47 321 FA-oleate is injected (0.4 M, 1.0 mL), which has been pre-heated to the desired temperature.
48
49 322 Depending on the chosen temperature, the injection of FA-oleate immediately turns the initially
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51 323 colourless Pb-solution green or yellow, indicating the formation of FAPbBr₃. After 30 seconds of
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53 324 growth, the vial is plunged into an ice bath to quench the reaction. In the absence of an anti-solvent
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55 325 the nanocrystals are separated by centrifugation at 5,000 rpm for 10 minutes and redispersed in
56
57 326 hexane.
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3 **327 Washing**
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5 **328 Sep** The nanoparticles are separated from the reaction mixture by adding an equal volume of
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7
8 **329** toluene and half volume of acetonitrile with respect to the reaction mixture volume. The nanoparticles
9
10 **330** are then centrifuged at 5,000 rpm for 10 minutes. The supernatant is discarded, and the nanoparticles
11
12 **331** are redispersed in octane or a hexane:octane mix. Using this procedure, no oily residue is obtained –
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14 **332** only a solid pellet of nanocrystals.

15
16 **333 Wash** The nanoparticles are separated from the solution as before, using toluene and acetonitrile.
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19 **334** The nanoparticles are redispersed in toluene, and acetonitrile is added at a 2:1 volume ratio. The
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21 **335** mixture is then centrifuged at 3,000 rpm for 5 minutes. The supernatant is discarded, and the
22
23 **336** nanoparticles are redispersed in octane or a hexane:octane mix.

24
25 **337 Wash + OA** The nanoparticles are washed as for the previous case, but upon redispersal in toluene
26
27
28 **338** after the initial separation, a small amount of oleic acid is added back to the nanoparticles. Acetonitrile
29
30 **339** is then added before centrifuging and redispersing again.

31
32 **340 Film Fabrication** Films for characterisation are made from nanocrystal solutions drop cast from
33
34
35 **341** concentrated solutions in a mixed solvent system: hexane and octane in a 9:1 ratio.

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37 **342 Device Fabrication** ITO/Poly-TPD/FAPbBr₃/TPBi/LiF/Al ITO substrates are cleaned with acetone and
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39 **343** isopropanol prior to device fabrication. 50 μL of a 10 mg/mL Poly[N,N'-bis(4-butylphenyl)-N,N'-
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41 **344** bisphenylbenzidine] (Poly-TPD) solution in chlorobenzene is spincoated at 4000 rpm for 30 seconds,
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43 **345** followed by a 10 minute anneal at 130 °C. Then, FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles which have been washed
44
45 **346** (either Sep, Wash, or Wash + OA) and have been redispersed in 2.4 mL octane and 75 μL of this
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47 **347** solution are dynamically spin coated under inert atmosphere, at 750 rpm for 30 seconds followed by
48
49 **348** 6000 rpm for 10 seconds. The samples are then moved to a glovebox evaporator where 50 nm of
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51 **349** 2,2',2''-(1,3,5-Benzinetriyl)-tris(1-phenyl-1-H-benzimidazole) (TPBi) is evaporated, followed by a 3 nm
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53 **350** layer of lithium fluoride (LiF) and aluminium (Al) electrodes. Devices are further modified by introducing
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55 **351** a 2 nm thick layer of LiF on top of the poly-TPD before the FAPbBr₃ nanoparticles are spun on top.
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3 352 **Optical Characterisation** Measurements are either recorded on colloidal solutions or on thin films.
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5 353 Measurements in solution have been carried out in 1 cm quartz cuvettes. Steady-State
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7 354 Photoluminescence (PL) Spectroscopy is conducted on a Horiba Scientific Fluorolog. Ultraviolet-Visible
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10 355 Absorption Spectroscopy (UV-vis) is conducted on an Agilent Technologies Cary 60 UV Vis.
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12 356 Photoluminescence Quantum Yield (PLQY) is measured with a CNI Low Noise Violet Blue 405 nm 200
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14 357 mW laser with an integrating sphere and Ocean Optics Maya2000 Pro spectrometer. The integrating
15
16 358 sphere allows for redistribution of light isotropically, regardless of angular dependence of emission.
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18 359 The system, including the sphere, fibre and spectrometer, was calibrated using a calibration halogen
19
20
21 360 lamp. The PLQY is calculated according to De Mello et al, taking reabsorption into account.³⁴
22

23 361 **X-ray diffraction (XRD)** The pellet of the crude nanoparticle product is smeared onto a quartz disc
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25 362 in a nitrogen filled glovebox. The samples are loaded into air-free XRD holders with a dome (green
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27 363 trace, Figure 4) over the top of the sample to maintain an inert atmosphere during measurement.
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29 364 PANalytical X'Pert Pro powder diffractometer is used, with a Cu-K α radiation operating at 40 kV and
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31 365 40 mA.
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34 366 **Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM)** A Jeol JEM-2100 microscope with LaB₆ source, operating
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36 367 at an accelerating voltage of 200 kV is used. It has a Gatan Orius CCD camera. TEM is carried out in the
37
38 368 David Cockayne Centre for Electron Microscopy, Department of Materials, University of Oxford.
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40 369 Nanocrystal dispersions are drop cast onto holey-carbon coated 300 mesh copper grids.
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43 370 **Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy (NMR)** A 2-channel Bruker Avance III HD 400 MHz
44
45 371 nanobay instrument running TOPSPIN 3 equipped with a 5 mm z-gradient Broad Band Fluorine
46
47 372 Observation probe is used. For ¹H NMR residual d-toluene peaks are used for reference. For ³¹P NMR,
48
49 373 an external standard of triethylphosphate is used. The temperature dependents measurements on
50
51 374 FA-oleate and FA-oleate:TOPO were conducted on a four-channel Bruker AVIII HD 500 running
52
53 375 TOPSPIN 3 equipped with a SampleCase 24 sample robot and a 5 mm triple-resonance TBO probe with
54
55 376 multinuclear capability and a BCU-II temperature regulation unit. Spectra were taken at 10 °C intervals
56
57 377 from 15 to 75 °C.
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378 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

379 **Supporting Information.** The following files is available free of charge. Additional NMR, synthetic
380 optimization, and device characterization data can be found in the Supporting Information PDF.

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385 **Author Contributions**

386 The manuscript was written through contributions of all authors. All authors have given approval to
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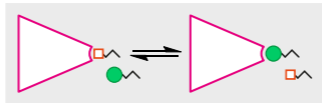
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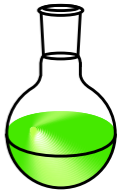
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TOPO PbBr₂ OA FA-oleate

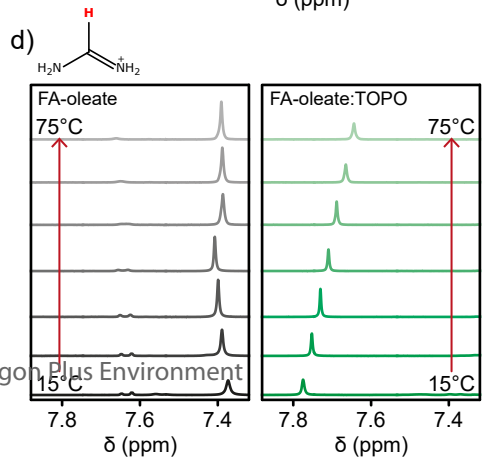
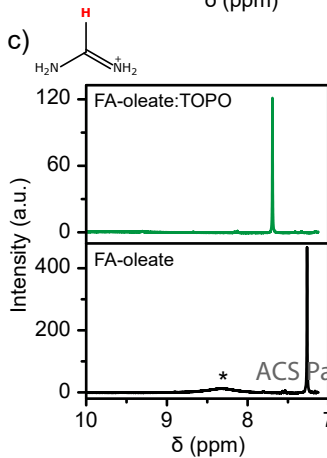
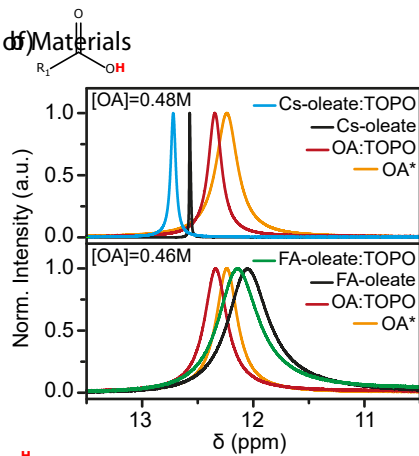
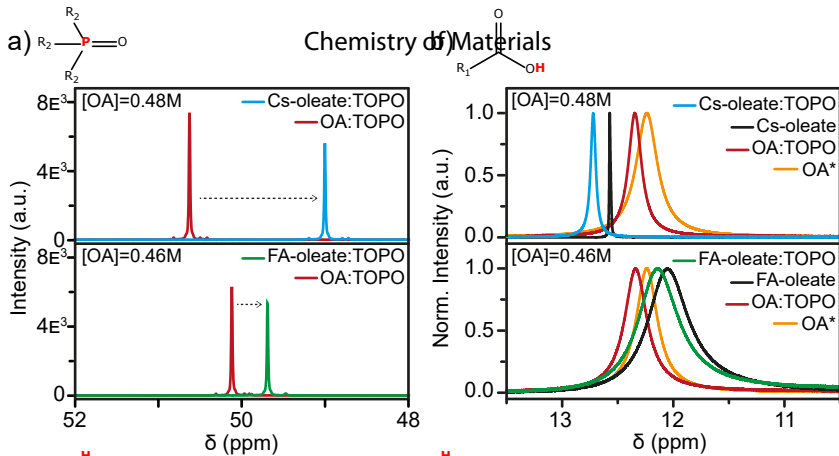
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FAPbBr₃



Key:  TOPO  OA  FA-olate

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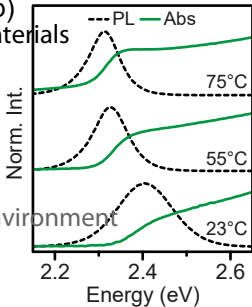


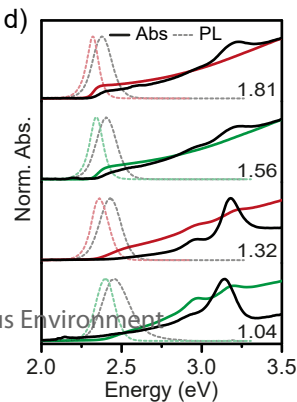
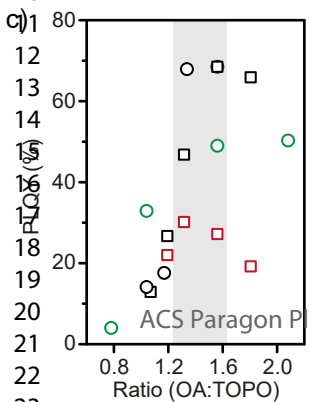
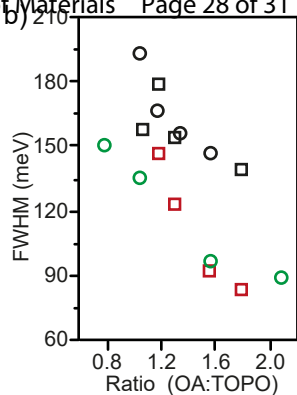
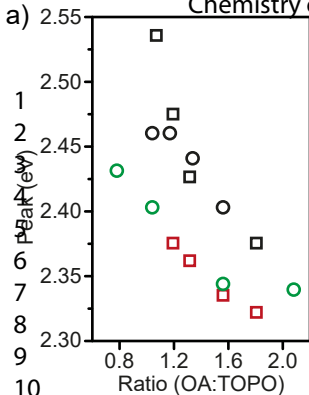
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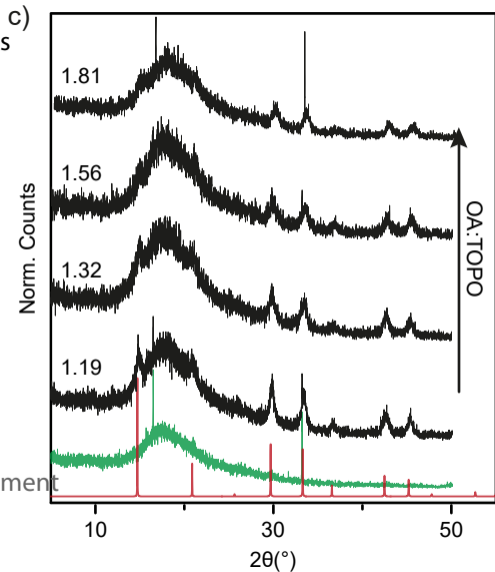
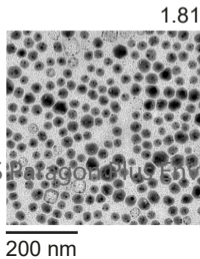
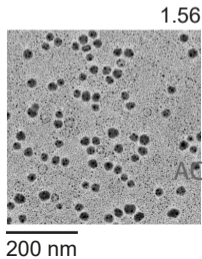
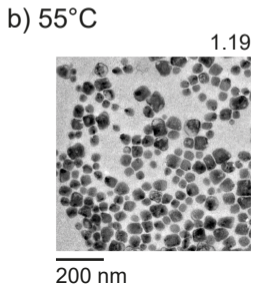
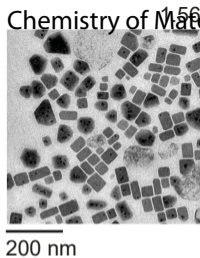
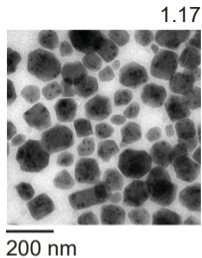
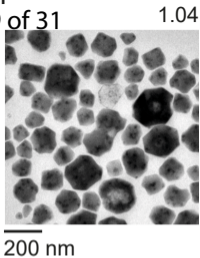


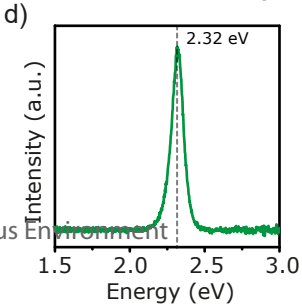
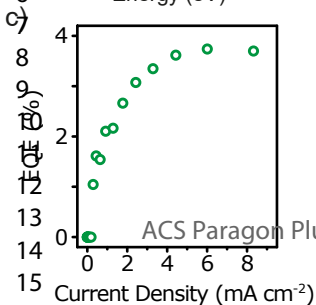
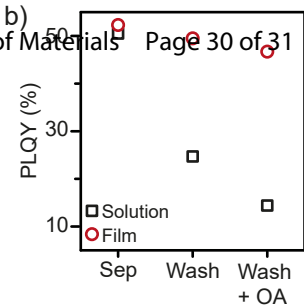
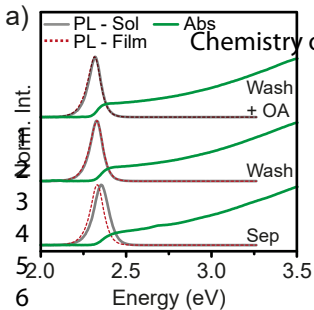
Chemistry of Materials

b)

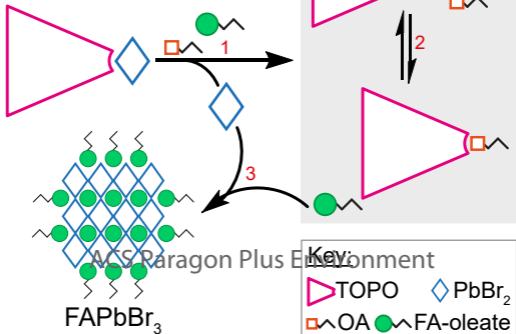








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FAPbBr₃

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