## **Supporting Information**

# Bismuth nanoparticles: an efficient catalyst for reductive coupling of nitroarenes to azo-compounds Kishore Pothula, Lin Tang, Zhenggen Zha, Zhiyong Wang\*

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#### **General Remarks**

All substrates were purchased commercially and used without further purification. BiCl<sub>3</sub> and Zinc dust were purchased from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd. The morphology and size of the nanoparticles were characterized by Transmission electron microscope (TEM) (JEOL–2010 and Hitachi H7650). The assynthesized BiNPs were dispersed in ethanol and dried on the carbon-coated Cu grids. The accurate metal loading was directly determined by ICP-OES (Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectrometer) using Perkin Elmer Optima 7300 DV. X-ray powder diffraction patterns (XRD) of the product were obtained on a Panalytical X'pert PRO X-ray diffractometer with Cu K $\alpha$  radiation. GC-MS samples were recorded on a Shimadzu QP-5050 GC-MS system. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AC-300 FT spectrometer at 400 MHz and 100 MHz, respectively, with tetramethylsilane as an internal reference. Chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ) and coupling constants (J) were expressed in ppm and Hz, respectively. Infrared Spectra of samples were recorded on a Bruker EQUINOX 55 spectrometer. HRMass were recorded on a Micro Mass UK LTD GCT TOF-MS. GC-MS samples were recorded on a Shimadzu QP-5050 GC-MS system.

#### General procedure for the preparation of Bismuth Nano particles

0.5 mmol BiCl<sub>3</sub> was suspended in demineralized water 30 ml. After stirring for about 15 min at room temperature (RT, ~25-30 °C), the white precipitation was observed. Then 0.75 mmol of zinc dust was added in portions and the reaction mixture was further stirred for 1 hours. Black particles were observed in the reaction. PH was adjusted to 3 with aqueous hydrochloric acid. The reaction mixture was filtered and washed with water followed by ethanol then dried under vaccum for 12 hours at 50 °C to obtain BiNPs yield 92 %. The reported procedure for BiNPs were Bamboo raft nano tubes, here we got Nano bismuth Particles at PH 3.

The overall reaction can be simply formulated as shown in below equation (1).

$$2BiCl_3 + 3Zn \longrightarrow 2Bi + 3ZnCl_2$$
 (1)

The above reaction includes two following steps as equations (2) and (3).

 $BiCl_3 + H_2O \longrightarrow BiOCI + 2HCI \qquad (2)$  $BiOCI + 3Zn + 4HCI \longrightarrow 2Bi + 2H_2O + 3ZnCl_2 \qquad (3)$ 

First,  $BiCl_3$  hydrolyzed in water to form BiOCl, a white precipitate equation (2), which is then reduced by Zinc dust to form bismuth nanoparticles.

### General procedure for the synthesis of aromatic azo compounds

1 mmol Nitrobenzene was taken in a schlenk tube then added 20.8 mg (10 mol %) of Bismuth nanoparticles. Reaction mixture was degassed and slowly added NaBH<sub>4</sub> in Ethanol (37.83 mg NaBH<sub>4</sub> dissolved in 4 ml Ethanol) followed by stirring the reaction mass for 24 hours. Progress of the reaction mass was monitered by TLC (Mobile phase petether/ethyl acetate : 9/1). Catalyst was filtered and filtrate was evaporated under reduced pressure to dryness. The product dissolved in water and extracted with ethylacetate. The organic phase was dried on MgSO<sub>4</sub> and distilled to get crude product which was subjected to flash column chromatography (Petether/Ethyl acetate : 98/2 ) to afford pure azobenzene.

**X-Ray Diffraction Analysis (XRD)** : The phase purity of the Bismuth was examined by Panalytical X'pert PRO Xray diffractometer with Cu Kα radiation. The detection range was 20° to 70°. Figure **1** shows the typical XRD pattern of the As-synthesized bismuth nanoparticles, all the diffraction peaks were consistent with the literature values<sup>9</sup>. Undetection of any impurity in this pattern, indicating the formation of pure bismuth under current synthetic condition. Sharp and strong diffraction peaks in Figure **1** also confirm the well crystallization of the products.



Figure 1 Powder XRD pattern of the bismuth nano particles.

**Transmission electron microscope (TEM) :** The morphologies and structures of the as-prepared bismuth nanoparticles were investigated by TEM images. Figure **2** shows the representative TEM images of the prepared bismuth nanoparticles with 30 and 10 nm magnifications. Diameters of these nanoparticles varied from 3 to 8 nm and most of them were about 5 nm. Figure **3** shows the representative TEM images of the recovered bismuth nanoparticles with 30 nm magnifications. Diameters of these nanoparticles varied from 15 to 30 nm.



Figure 2 TEM images of Bismuth nanoparticles.



Figure 3 TEM images of Bismuth nanoparticles after 5<sup>th</sup> run.

Entry	Catalyst	Temperature (°C)	Yield (%) <sup>ь</sup>	
1	0.1	30	Traces	
2	0.1	50	9	
3	0.1	80	12	
4	1	80	16	

Table S1: Comparative studies of the reaction (aryl nitro to aryl azo) at different temperatures .ª

(a) Reaction conditions: Nitro benzene (1 mmol), Catalyst bismuth nanoparticles, NaBH4 (1.0 mmol), solvent 4 ml of water, 24 h. (b) Determined by GC-MS.

## Characterization data of products



**Azobenzene (2a).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 92% yield; mp = 68 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.52 (m, 6H), 7.96 (d, J = 7 Hz, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  122.8, 129.0, 130.9, 152.6. This compound was known<sup>1</sup>.



**1,2-di-p-tolyldiazene (2b).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a yellow crystal: 87% yield; mp = 143 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.43 (s,6H), 7.30 (d, J=8.0 Hz, 4H)), 7.81 (d, J=8.4 Hz, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  21.4, 122.7, 129.7, 141.2, 150.8; This compound was known<sup>1</sup>.



**1,2-Di-o-tolyldiazene (2c).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a red crystal: 85% yield; mp = 53-54 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.73 (s, 6H), 7.28 (m, 2H), 7.35 (m, 4H), 7.61 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  17.6, 115.8, 126.3, 130.6, 131.0, 138.0, 151.0; This compound was known<sup>2</sup>.



**1,2-Bis(2-ethylphenyl)diazene (2d).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a red crystal: 82% yield; mp = 47 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  1.45 (m, 6H), 3.33 (q, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H), 7.36 - 7.4 (m, 2H), 7.46 -7.51 (m, 2H), 7-78 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H); 13C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  16.6, 24.9, 115.7, 126.5, 129.9, 131, 144.2, 150.6; This compound was known<sup>3</sup>.



**Bis-(4-butyl-phenyl)-diazene (2e).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a red crystal: 80% yield; mp = 33 - 34 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  1.0 (t, 6H), 1.44 (m, 4H), 1.71 (m, 4H), 2.74 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H), 7.37 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 4H), 7.92 (dd, J = 1.9, 8.4 Hz, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  13.9, 22.1, 33.2, 35.5, 122.7, 128.7, 146.0, 151.3; This compound was known<sup>4</sup>.



**Bis-(2-chloro-phenyl)-diazene) (2f).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 95% yield; mp = 137-138 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.39 (m, 4H), 7.58 (dd, J = 1.1, 7.9 Hz, 2H), 7.78 (dd, J = 1.5, 7.9 Hz, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  118.1, 127.4, 130.7, 132.2, 135.8, 148.7; This compound was known<sup>2</sup>.



**Bis-(4-chloro-phenyl)-diazene (2g).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 94% yield; mp = 184 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.47 – 7-5 (m, 4H), 7.84 – 7.88 (m, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  124.2, 129.4, 137.2, 150.8; This compound was known<sup>1</sup>.



**Bis-(2-bromo-phenyl)-diazene (2h).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a yellow crystal: 94% yield; mp = 144 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.32 – 7.36 (m,2H) 7.39 – 7-43 (m, 2H) 7.75 – 7.78 (m,4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  118.4,126.3,128.1,132.4,133.8,149.5 ; This compound was known<sup>5</sup>.



**Bis-(3-bromo-phenyl)-diazene (2i).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a yellow crystal: 96% yield; mp = 140 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.4 (t, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H) 7.62(d, J = 2.3 Hz, 2H) 7.89 (dd, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H) 8.0 (s, 2H);<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  123.2, 124.7, 130.5, 134.1, 153.1; This compound was known<sup>1</sup>.



**Bis-(4-bromo-phenyl)-diazene (2j).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a yellow crystal: 93% yield; mp = 204 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.65 (m, 4H), 7.78 (m, 4H) ; <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  124.4, 125.7, 132.4, 151.1; This compound was known<sup>2</sup>.



**Bis-(4-fluro-phenyl)-diazene (2k).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 89% yield; mp = 101-102 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.2 (m, 4H), 7.9 (m, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  116.1 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 22.8 Hz), 124.8.8 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>=8.9 Hz), 148.9 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 2.3 Hz), 165.6 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 250.7 Hz),; This compound was known<sup>1</sup>.



**Bis-(2-methoxy-phenyl)-diazene (2I).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 62% yield; mp = 154-156 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  4.01(s, 6H), 7.0 (M, 2H), 7.08 (dd, J = 1.1, 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.41 (m, 2H), 7.63 (dd, J = 1.8, 8.0 Hz, 2H), <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  56.5, 112.7, 117.1, 117.7, 120.9, 132.3, 143.1, 156.9; This compound was known<sup>6</sup>.



**Bis-(3-methoxy-phenyl)-diazene (2m).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 64% yield; mp = 75 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 3.9 (s, 6H), 7.05 (dd, J = 1.9,8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.41-7.47 (m, 4H), 7.57 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  55.4, 105.6, 117.1, 117.8, 129.7, 153.7, 160.2; This compound was known<sup>6</sup>.



**Bis-(3-methoxy-phenyl)-diazene (2n).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 68% yield; mp = 172 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  3.88 (s, 6H), 7.0 (dd, J = 2.2,6.9 Hz, 4H), 7.88 (dd, J = 2.1,6.9 Hz, 4H); 13C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  55.5, 114.1, 124.3, 147, 161.5; This compound was known<sup>7</sup>.



**Bis-(3-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-diazene (20).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 88% yield; mp = 85 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.69 (t, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 7.77 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 8.1 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 8.22 (s, 2H); 13C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  119.9, 126.6, 128, 129.9, 152.3; IR (KBr): v = 2962, 1581, 1492, 1309, 1251, 1197, 1099, 892, 825 cm<sup>-1</sup>; IR spectral data not reported previously. This compound was known<sup>1</sup>.



**Bis-(4-Bromo-3-methyl-phenyl)-diazene (2p).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 86% yield; mp = 146 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.49 (s, 6H), 7.59 (m, 2H), 7.67 (d, J= 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.78 (d, J= 2.0 Hz, 2H) ; <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  23.0, 121.6, 124.9, 128.0, 133.0, 139, 151.5; IR (KBr): v = 2919, 1743, 1652, 1558, 1409, 1295, 1195, 1029, 946, 821 cm<sup>-1</sup> ; IR spectral data not reported previously. This compound was known<sup>8</sup>.



**Bis-(4-fluoro-3-methyl-phenyl)-diazene (2q).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a shiny yellow crystal: 82% yield; mp =112 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.37 (s, 6H), 7.13 (t, J=8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.76 (m, 4H,); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  14.8 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>=3.1 Hz), 115.7 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>=23.9 Hz), 122.6 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>=8.9 Hz), 125.5 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 6.2 Hz), 125.9 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 18.8 Hz), 148.8 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>=2.7 Hz), 163.0 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 249.4.7 Hz), IR (KBr): v = 2962, 1581, 1492, 1450, 1251, 1197, 1099, 892, 825 cm<sup>-1</sup> ; HRMS-ESI: m/z (calculated for [M+H]<sup>+</sup> C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>F<sub>2</sub> 247.1047, found 247.1048 . This compound was known<sup>2</sup>.



**Bis-(2-fluoro-4-methyl-phenyl)-diazene (2r).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a yellow crystal: 85% yield; mp = 139 - 140 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.4 (s, 6H), 7.0 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 4H), 7.05 – 7.08 (m, 2H), 7.7 (t, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  21.7, 117.6 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 9.0 Hz), 125.3 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.0 Hz), 139.0 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 7.1 Hz), 144.2 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.1 Hz), 159, 161.6; IR (KBr): v=2923, 1583, 1492, 1421, 1267, 1124, 939, 850, 823 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS-ESI: m/z (calculated for [M + H]<sup>+</sup> C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>F<sub>2</sub> 247.1047, found 247.1049. This compound was not reported.



**Bis-(4-fluoro-2-methyl-phenyl)-diazene (2s).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a yellow crystal: 82% yield; mp = 110 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.37 (s, 6H), 7.13 (t, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.74 (m, Hz, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  14.8 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 3.1 Hz), 115.6 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 23.8 Hz), 122.6 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 9.0 Hz), 125.6 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 6.2 Hz), 126 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 18.8 Hz), 148.9 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 2.6 Hz), 164 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 249.3 Hz), IR (KBr): v=2921, 1581, 1490, 1436, 1251, 1197, 1101, 892, 825 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS-ESI: m/z (calculated for [M + H]<sup>+</sup> C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>F<sub>2</sub> 247.1047, found 247.1053 . This compound identification data was not reported.



**Bis-(5-fluoro-2-methyl-phenyl)-diazene (2t).** The title compound was prepared according to the general working procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the product as a orange crystal: 86% yield; mp = 121 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  2.7 (s, 6H), 7.1 (m, 2H), 7.3 (m, 2H), 7.38 (dd, J = 2.8, 9.9 Hz, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  16.8, 102.3 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 22.6 Hz), 117.9 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 22.1 Hz), 132.3 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 7.9 Hz), 134.5 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 2.9 Hz), 151.2 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 5.2 Hz), 161 (d, J<sub>C-F</sub>= 244.1 Hz), IR (KBr): v=2931, 1591, 1496, 1378, 1245, 1132, 1037, 962, 806 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS-ESI: m/z (calculated for [M + H]<sup>+</sup> C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>F<sub>2</sub> 247.1047, found 247.1053 . This compound identification data was not reported.

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