# A 5.3 nm giant Metal-organic cage and its Supramolecular Gel for the Formation of Dye Molecular Ionic Pairs 

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## 1. General procedures

NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker ADVANCE 400 or 500 NMR Spectrometer. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR chemical shifts are reported in ppm downfield from tetramethylsilane (TMS) reference using the residual protonated solvent as an internal standard.

Mass spectra of complexes and ligands were determined on Waters Synapt G2 Mass Spectrometer with traveling wave ion mobility (TWIM) under the following conditions: ESI capillary voltage, 3.5 kV ; cone voltage, 35 V ; desolvation gas flow, $800 \mathrm{~L} / \mathrm{h}$. TWIM-MS was measured with IM traveling wave height, 25 V ; and IM traveling wave velocity, $1000 \mathrm{~m} / \mathrm{s}$.

Atomic force microscopy (AFM) was conducted on a Bruker Dimension Icon AFM system with ScanAsyst and the data were processed by NanoScope Analysis version 1.5 (Bruker Software, Inc.). AFM samples were prepared by casting a sample solution $\left(1 \times 10^{-7} \mathrm{M}\right)$ on a freshly cleaved mica surface.

The transmission electron microscope (TEM) images were recorded on a JEM 2100 transmission electron microscope operated at an accelerating voltage of 200 KV . TEM samples were prepared by drop-casting a sample solution $\left(1 \times 10^{-7} \mathrm{M}\right)$ onto a carbon-coated copper grid and dried in vacuo for 24 h .

Absorption spectra were measured with Hitachi (model U-3010) UV-vis spectrophotometer in a $1-\mathrm{cm}$ quartz cell. Emission spectra were measured with Hitachi (F-7000) fluorescence spectrophotometer in a $1-\mathrm{cm}$ quartz cell.

All chemicals were purchased from commercial suppliers and used without further purification unless otherwise specified. The $4^{\prime}-\left(4\right.$-boronatophenyl) $\left[2,2^{\prime}: 6^{\prime}, 2^{\prime \prime}\right]$ terpyridine ${ }^{[1]}$ were synthesized according to the literature procedures.

## 2. Synthesis and characterization.



Scheme S1 Synthesis of ligands L. Reagents and conditions: (I) 4'-(4boronatophenyl)[2, $\left.2^{\prime}: 6^{\prime}, 2^{\prime \prime}\right]$ terpyridine, $\quad \mathrm{Pd}\left(\mathrm{PPh}_{3}\right)_{4}, \quad \mathrm{~K}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}, \quad \mathrm{THF}, \quad \mathrm{N}_{2}, \quad$ reflux; (II) 4'(4boronatophenyl)[2, $\left.2^{\prime}: 6^{\prime}, 2^{\prime \prime}\right]$ terpyridine, $\mathrm{Pd}\left(\mathrm{PPh}_{3}\right)_{4}, \mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}, \mathrm{~N}_{2}, \mathrm{PhMe} / \mathrm{H} 2 \mathrm{O} / \mathrm{t}-\mathrm{BuOH}$ (3:3:1, $\mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v}$ ), reflux; (III) $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3} / \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}(1: 1, \quad \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v})$, N -ethyl morpholine, reflux; (IV) 4'-(4boronatophenyl)[2, $\left.2^{\prime}: 6^{\prime}, 2^{\prime \prime}\right]$ terpyridine, $\mathrm{Pd}\left(\mathrm{PPh}_{3}\right)_{4}, \mathrm{~K}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}, \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}(2: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v}), \mathrm{N}_{2}$, reflux;

Compound $1^{[2]}$ : To a mixture of 1,5 -dibromo-2,3,4-trimethoxybenzene ( $3.00 \mathrm{~g}, 8.77 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and $4^{\prime}$ -(4-boronatophenyl)[2,2':6',2"]terpyridine ( $3.10 \mathrm{~g}, 8.77 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) in THF ( 100 mL ), $\mathrm{K}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}(3.03 \mathrm{~g}$, $21.93 \mathrm{mmol})$ was added. The system was pumped and backfilled with nitrogen; then $\mathrm{Pd}\left(\mathrm{PPh}_{3}\right)_{4}(600$ mg ) was added. After refluxing for 24 h under nitrogen, the mixture was cooled to $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and evaporated under reduced pressure, then the residue was purified by flash column chromatography $\left(\mathrm{Al}_{2} \mathrm{O}_{3}\right)$, eluting with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2} / \mathrm{PE}(1: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v})$ to give a white solid $2.90 \mathrm{~g}(60 \%) .{ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}(500 \mathrm{MHz}$, $\left.298 \mathrm{~K}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}, \mathrm{ppm}\right) \delta 8.81(\mathrm{~s}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 8.77-8.76(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 8.72-8.71(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 8.00-7.98(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 7.94-$ $7.90(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 7.67-7.65(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 7.41-7.38(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 4.02(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 3.99(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 3.69(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}) .{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR (126 MHz, CDCl3) $\delta 156.22,155.98,151.13,150.75,149.85,149.17,147.95,137.58,137.51$, $136.95,132.07$, 129.61, 128.02, 127.28, 123.91, 121.41, 118.82, 111.85, 61.37, 61.18, 61.11.

Compound 2: Compound $1(1.00 \mathrm{~g}, 1.82 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $\mathrm{RuCl}_{3} \cdot 3 \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}(565.9 \mathrm{mg}, 2.16 \mathrm{mmol})$ was suspended in $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3} / \mathrm{MeOH}(1: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v})(80 \mathrm{~mL})$; After stirred for 8 h at room temperature, The mixture were heated up to $75^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and stirred for 1 d , then cooled to $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and filtered to obtain a brown powder. The solid was washed with MeOH repeatedly until the filtrate get clean and colorless, the solid was collected and dried in vacuum for 12 h to get the desired compound, it was used directly for the next step without further purification: $1.26 \mathrm{~g}, 91 \%$.

Compound $3{ }^{[3]}$ : To a flask containing perbromobenzene ( $500 \mathrm{mg}, 0.91 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), 4'-(4boronatophenyl)[2, $\left.2^{\prime}: 6^{\prime}, 2^{\prime \prime}\right]$ terpyridine $(2.31 \mathrm{~g}, 6.53 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}(1.16 \mathrm{~g}, 10.88 \mathrm{mmol})$, a mixed solvent $(84 \mathrm{~mL})$ of $\mathrm{PhMe} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O} / \mathrm{t}-\mathrm{BuOH}(3: 3: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v})$ was added. After $\mathrm{Pd}\left(\mathrm{PPh}_{3}\right)_{4}(387 \mathrm{mg}$, $327 \mu \mathrm{~mol})$ was added, the system was pumped and backfilled with nitrogen. Then the mixture was refluxed for six days under $\mathrm{N}_{2}$. After cooled to $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, the mixture was extracted with $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}$ and the combined organic extract was evaporated to dryness in vacuo to give a reside that was washed
with MeOH , then subjected to column chromatography $\left(\mathrm{Al}_{2} \mathrm{O}_{3}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2} / \mathrm{MeOH}=100: 1\right)$ and then recrystallized from a mixture of $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3} / \mathrm{MeOH}$ to give compound 3, as a white solid: $1.10 \mathrm{~g}(63 \%)$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\left.500 \mathrm{MHz}, 298 \mathrm{~K}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}, \mathrm{ppm}\right) \delta 8.59-8.57(\mathrm{~m}, 24 \mathrm{H}), 8.53-8.51(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.78-7.74(\mathrm{~d}$, $12 \mathrm{H}), 7.60-7.58(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.25-7.21(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.17-7.15(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}) .{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $101 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta$ $156.36,155.59,149.62,148.95,141.27,140.28,136.56,135.26,131.89,126.03,123.47,121.18$, 118.75 .

Complex 4: The compound $\mathbf{3}(25 \mathrm{mg}, 0.013 \mathrm{mmol})$ and compound $2(80 \mathrm{mg}, 0.11 \mathrm{mmol})$ was added to a 100 mL flask, then $60 \mathrm{ml} \mathrm{CHCl}_{3} / \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}(1: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v})$ was added as solvent. After adding 4 drops N-ethyl morpholine, the suspension was stirred at $80^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for six days. After cooled to ambient temperature. The solution was evaporated under reduced pressure, then the residue was purified by flash column chromatography $\left(\mathrm{Al}_{2} \mathrm{O}_{3}\right)$, eluting with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2} / \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}$ to give a red solid, which was dissolved in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}$ and precipitated with $\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}$ to afford complex 4, as a dark red solid ( 78 mg , $80 \%$ ); ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $500 \mathrm{MHz}, 298 \mathrm{~K}, \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}, \mathrm{ppm}$ ) $\delta=9.03(\mathrm{~s}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.98(\mathrm{~s}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.67-8.65(\mathrm{~d}$, $12 \mathrm{H}), 8.62-8.60(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.26-8.24(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.12-8.10(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.87-7.71(\mathrm{~m}, 36 \mathrm{H}), 7.68(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H})$, $7.49(\mathrm{~s}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 7.38-7.36(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.34(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.06(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 6.90(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 3.99(\mathrm{~s}, 18 \mathrm{H}), 3.95(\mathrm{~s}$, $18 \mathrm{H}), 3.76(\mathrm{~s}, 18 \mathrm{H}) ; \mathrm{ESI} / \mathrm{MS}(\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{z}): 2386.63$ [M-3PF $\left._{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{3+}($ calcd. $m / z=2386.81), 1753.98$ [M$\left.4 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{4+}($ calcd. $m / z=1753.87), 1374.21\left[\mathbf{M}-5 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{5+}($ calcd. $m / z=1374.10), 1120.89\left[\mathbf{M}-6 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{6+}$

 small amount of $\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}$ salt): Calcd. $4+2 \mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}\left(\mathrm{C}_{312} \mathrm{H}_{236} \mathrm{Br}_{6} \mathrm{~F}_{84} \mathrm{~N}_{38} \mathrm{O}_{18} \mathrm{P}_{14} \mathrm{Ru}_{6}\right): \mathrm{C}, 48.51 \%$; H , $3.08 \%$; N, $6.89 \%$. Found: C, $48.81 \%$; H, $3.45 \%$; N, $6.41 \%$.

L: To a mixture of complex $4(42 \mathrm{mg}, 0.0055 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $4^{\prime}$-(4-boronatophenyl)[2, $\left.2^{\prime}: 6^{\prime}, 2^{\prime \prime}\right]$ terpyridine $(14 \mathrm{mg}, 0.040 \mathrm{mmol})$ in $60 \mathrm{ml} \mathrm{CH}{ }_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}(2: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v}), \mathrm{K}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}(13.8 \mathrm{mg}, 0.10 \mathrm{mmol})$ was added. The system was pumped and backfilled with nitrogen; then $\operatorname{Pd}\left(\mathrm{PPh}_{3}\right)_{4}(10 \mathrm{mg})$ was added. After refluxing for six days under nitrogen, the mixture was cooled to $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and evaporated under reduced pressure. The solid was washed with $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}$, then excess $\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}$ was added to afford an red precipitate, which was thoroughly washed by $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}$ and water to give the desired $\mathbf{L}$ as a red solid $(22 \mathrm{mg}, 45 \%) .{ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $500 \mathrm{MHz}, 298 \mathrm{~K}, \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}, \mathrm{ppm}$ ) $\delta=9.07(\mathrm{~s}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.97(\mathrm{~s}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.84(\mathrm{~s}$, $12 \mathrm{H}), 8.72(\mathrm{~m}, 24 \mathrm{H}), 8.65-8.63(\mathrm{~m}, 24 \mathrm{H}), 8.29(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.11(\mathrm{~d}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 8.01(\mathrm{~m}, 36 \mathrm{H}), 7.85(\mathrm{~m}$, $36 \mathrm{H}), 7.68(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.48(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 7.37(\mathrm{~m}, 30 \mathrm{H}), 7.08(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 6.91(\mathrm{t}, 12 \mathrm{H}), 4.07(\mathrm{~s}, 18 \mathrm{H}), 3.87(\mathrm{~s}$, 18H), 3.84(s, 18 H ); ESI/MS ( $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{z}$ ): 2096.49 $\left[\mathbf{M}-4 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{4+}$ (calcd. $m / z=2096.42$ ), 1648.41 [M$\left.5 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{5+}($ calcd. $m / z=1648.14), 1349.37\left[\mathbf{M}-6 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{6+}($ calcd. $m / z=1349.29), 1135.92\left[\mathbf{M}-7 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{7+}$ (calcd. $m / z=1135.83$ ), $975.83\left[\mathbf{M}-8 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{8+}($ calcd. $m / z=975.73), 851.18\left[\mathbf{M}-9 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{9+}$ (calcd. $m / z$ $=851.21)$. Elemental Analysis $\left(\mathbf{L}+\mathrm{nNH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}\right.$, contains a small amount of $\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}$ salt $)$ : Calcd. $\mathbf{L}+\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}\left(\mathrm{C}_{438} \mathrm{H}_{316} \mathrm{~F}_{78} \mathrm{~N}_{55} \mathrm{O}_{18} \mathrm{P}_{13} \mathrm{Ru}_{6}\right)$ : C, $57.63 \%$; H, $3.49 \%$; N, 8.44\%. Found: C, $57.68 \%$; H, $3.71 \%$; N, 7.91\%.


Scheme S2 Representative energy-minimized structures from molecular modeling of metallosupramolecular $\mathbf{S}$ (The molecular structure simulation of $\mathbf{S}$ was completed in Material Studio-Calculation-Geometry Optimization).

Table S1. The parameters of $\mathbf{S}$ structure optimization and the results of energy optimization.

| Geometry optimization parameters | Energy parameters | Final structure |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Algorithm: Smart <br> Convergence tolerance: <br> Energy: $0.001 \mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol}$ <br> Force: $0.5 \mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol} / \mathrm{A}$ <br> Maximum number of iterations: 5000 <br> Motion groups rigid: NO | Forcefield: Universal <br> Charges: Use current <br> Electrostatic terms: <br> Summation method: Atom based <br> Truncation method: Cubic spline <br> Cutoff distance: 12.5 A <br> Spline width: 1 A <br> Buffer width: 0.5 A <br> van der Waals terms: <br> Summation method: Atom based <br> Truncation method: Cubic spline <br> Cutoff distance: 12.5 A <br> Spline width: 1 A <br> Buffer width: 0.5 A |  |

S: $\mathbf{L}(20 \mathrm{mg}, 0.00223 \mathrm{mmol})$ with $\mathrm{Zn}\left(\mathrm{NO}_{3}\right)_{2} \cdot 4 \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}(2 \mathrm{mg}, 0.00669 \mathrm{mmol})$ in a precise $1: 3$ molar ratio in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}(2: 1, \mathrm{v} / \mathrm{v})(21 \mathrm{~mL})$ and stirring at $75^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 12 h . Followed by cooling to $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, the water $(20 \mathrm{~mL})$ and the excess $\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}$. There will be red suspended solids in the solvent, then, after suction filtration, clean the excess $\mathrm{NH}_{4} \mathrm{PF}_{6}$ with water and methanol to obtain red solid $\mathbf{S}$. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$

NMR ( $\left.500 \mathrm{MHz}, 298 \mathrm{~K}, \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}, \mathrm{ppm}\right) \delta=9.10-8.98(\mathrm{~m}, 72 \mathrm{H}), 8.75(\mathrm{~d}, 24 \mathrm{H}), 8.65(\mathrm{~d}, 48 \mathrm{H}), 8.31$ ( $\mathrm{s}, 48 \mathrm{H}$ ), $8.18(\mathrm{~s}, 72 \mathrm{H}), 8.00(\mathrm{~d}, 48 \mathrm{H}), 7.80(\mathrm{~d}, 96 \mathrm{H}), 7.37(\mathrm{dd}, 84 \mathrm{H}), 7.10(\mathrm{~s}, 24 \mathrm{H}), 6.87(\mathrm{~s}, 24 \mathrm{H})$, $4.10(\mathrm{~s}, 36 \mathrm{H}), 3.92(\mathrm{~d}, 72 \mathrm{H})$. ESI-MS $(\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{z}): 1679.164\left[\mathrm{M}-11 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{11+}$ (calcd. $\left.m / z=1678.920\right)$, $1526.991\left[\mathbf{M}-12 \mathrm{PF}_{6}\right]^{12+}($ calcd. $m / z=1526.930), 1398.223\left[\mathbf{M}-13 \mathrm{PF}_{6}-\right]^{13+}($ calcd. $m / z=1398.320)$, $1288.357\left[\mathbf{M}-14 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{14+}($ calcd. $m / z=1288.080), 1192.664\left[\mathbf{M}-15 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{15+}($ calcd. $m / z=1192.540)$, $1109.197\left[\mathrm{M}-16 \mathrm{PF}_{6}^{-}\right]^{16+}($ calcd. $m / z=1108.950), 1035.306\left[\mathrm{M}-17 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{17+}($ calcd. $m / z=1035.180)$, $969.728\left[\mathbf{M}-18 \mathrm{PF}_{6}\right]^{18+}($ calcd. $m / z=969.619), 911.160\left[\mathbf{M}-19 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{19+}($ calcd. $m / z=910.955)$, $858.266\left[\mathbf{M}-20 \mathrm{PF}_{6}\right]^{20+}($ calcd. $m / z=858.158), 810.542\left[\mathbf{M}-21 \mathrm{PF}_{6}{ }^{-}\right]^{21+}($ calcd. $m / z=810.388)$.
3. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR, ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR, 2D COSY NMR, 2D NOESY NMR.
$1 L 8$
$2 L 8$
$9 L 8$
$\angle 28$
18.8

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$\stackrel{\circ}{\circ}$




Figure S1. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum of compound $\mathbf{1}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.

|  |  |  | $\stackrel{\infty}{\infty}$ | ल- |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
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Figure $\mathbf{S 2}$. ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR spectrum of compound $\mathbf{1}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.
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へべ



8.7



8.5
8.3
8.1

Chemical
Shift（ppm）

Figure S3．${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum of compound $\mathbf{3}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ．

| ¢0\％ | No\％ | $\sim_{N}^{\sim}$ | ¢\％ | ® | O才，¢ ¢ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ¢ ¢ ¢ | $\stackrel{\circ}{\text { ¢ }}$ | ¢ | －¢ | $\stackrel{-}{m}$ | ヘัN |
| $\bigcirc$ | － | TT | TT | $\bigcirc$ |  |



Figure S4．${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR spectrum of compound $\mathbf{3}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ．


Figure S5. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum of compound 4 in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S6. COSY spectrum of compound $\mathbf{4}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S7. NOESY spectrum of compound $\mathbf{4}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S8. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum of compound $\mathbf{L}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure $\mathbf{S 9}$. COSY spectrum of compound $\mathbf{L}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S10. NOESY spectrum of compound $\mathbf{L}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S11. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum of $\mathbf{S}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S12. NOESY spectrum of $\mathbf{S}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S13: ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR spectrum $(600 \mathrm{MHz})$ of ligand $\mathbf{S}$ in $\mathrm{DMSO}-\mathrm{d}_{6}$.


Figure S14: 2D HSQC spectrum $(600 \mathrm{MHz})$ of $\mathbf{S}$ in $\mathrm{DMSO}-\mathrm{d}_{6}$.


Figure S15: 2D HMBC spectrum $(600 \mathrm{MHz})$ of $\mathbf{L}$ in $\mathrm{DMSO}-\mathrm{d}_{6}$.
4. ESI-MS spectra of ligands and complexes.


Figure S16. Isotope patterns and ESI-MS spectrum of compound 4.


Figure S17. Isotope patterns and ESI-MS spectrum of compound $\mathbf{L}$.
(A)


Figure S18. (A) Isotope patterns of $\left[\mathbf{S}-15 \mathrm{PF}^{-}{ }_{6}\right]^{15+},\left[\mathbf{S}+\mathrm{NaNO}_{3}-15 \mathrm{PF}^{-}{ }_{6}\right]^{15+}$ and $\left[\mathbf{S}+2 \mathrm{NaNO}_{3}-15 \mathrm{PF}^{-}\right.$ $\left.{ }_{6}\right]^{15+}$. (B) Enlarged ESI-MS spectrum of $[\mathbf{S}]^{15+}$. (C) ESI-MS spectrum of $\mathbf{S}$.



Figure S19. Enlarged view of each charge from $9+$ to $21+$ and the attribution.



Figure S20. The experimental and theoretical isotope patterns of $\mathbf{S}$ each charge from $11+$ to $20+$.

## 5. TEM and AFM images of $S$.



Figure S21. TEM micrograph and statistical size distribution of S.


Figure S22. AFM micrograph and statistical size distribution of $\mathbf{S}$.

## 6. Gelation of $S$ and Adsorption of dye molecules by S-G.

The preparation process of $\mathbf{S - G}$ :
After dissolving $\mathbf{L}(10.0 \mathrm{mg})$ in 1.0 mL of $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ in a 2.0 mL vial, $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{OH}$ solution of $\mathrm{Zn}\left(\mathrm{NO}_{3}\right)_{2}$ $(1.0 \mathrm{mg})$ was added. The vial was heated at $75^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 12 h , then 0.25 mL water was added to the vial. After one day, the solution of $\mathbf{S}$ will become a S-G (Figure S23 A).

The samples of mixture of dyes and complex $\mathbf{S}$ for NMR experiments:
For four guest molecules with good solubility in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ (Crystal Violet, Rhodamine B, pphenylenediamine and resorcinol), our operation was to add 0.1 mL of $4.0 \mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL} \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution of guest molecules into $0.5 \mathrm{~mL} 4.0 \mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL} \mathrm{S} \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution; For the other three guest molecules with general solubility in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ (Sulforhodamine B , Metanil Yellow and Methylene Blue), our operation was to add $0.1 \mathrm{~mL} 2.0 \mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL} \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution of guest molecules into $0.5 \mathrm{~mL} 4.0 \mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL}$ S $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution; After shook and heated for 30 min , these solution were characterized by ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectroscopy.

The dye adsorption experiments of powder $\mathbf{S}$ :
First, adding 1.5 mL Sulforhodamine B aqueous solution ( $11.0 \mathrm{mg} / 15 \mathrm{~mL}$ ) and $6.5 \mathrm{~mL} \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}$. into a 15 mL vial produced the dyes solution. Then 10.0 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ powder was added to dyes solution. The mixture was shaken for 5 minutes and placed for 2 days, then afforded to next tests.

The general process of dye adsorption experiments of S-G:
The S-G ( 10.0 mg complex $\mathbf{S}$ ) was added into 8.0 mL dye solution ( $\mathrm{c}=1.1 \mathrm{mg} / 8.0 \mathrm{~mL}$ ). 50.0 uL sample was taken out at different points in time for Uv-vis and Fluorescence tests to monitor the adsorption process.

The saturated adsorption capacity was calculated by determining the dye concentration before and after adsorption. The $\mathbf{S - G}(10.0 \mathrm{mg}$ complex $\mathbf{S})$ was added into excess dye solution. After placed for $12 \mathrm{~h}, 50.0 \mathrm{uL}$ sample was taken out to determine the concentration by Uv-vis spectroscopy



Crystal Violet


Methylene Blue


Rhodamine B


Resorcinol

$P$-phenylenediamine


Melamine

Scheme S3 Structure of seven dye molecules and three organic molecules.


Figure S23. (A) Photographs illustration of $\mathbf{S - G}$ from $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution; (B) The images of SulforhodamineB solution has added $\mathbf{S}$ powder (left), sulforhodamine B solution (middle) and $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ adsorbed sulforhodamine B solution (right).


Figure S24. Comparison diagram of ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum of Ungelled $\mathbf{S}$ and Baked $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$.


Figure S25. (A) Comparison of ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum before and after adding P-phenylenediamine, Resorcinol, Sulforhodamine B, Metanil Yellow, Methylene Blue $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solutions to $\mathrm{S}^{\prime} \mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution; (B) Comparison of ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR spectrum before and after adding Crystal Violet, Rhodamine B $\mathrm{CD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solutions to $\mathrm{S}^{\prime} \mathrm{SD}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$ solution.


Figure S26. (A) Comparison of 1H NMR spectrum before and after adding Crystal Violet and Rhodamine B to L in CD 3 CN , respectively.


Figure S27. G' and G''values of S-G on frequency sweep.


Figure S28. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of sulforhodamine B at 298 K ; (B) Fluorescence spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of sulforhodamine B ( $\lambda_{\text {ex }}=563 \mathrm{~nm}$ ).


Figure S29. (A) UV spectra of after $\mathbf{S}$ powder adsorption of sulforhodamine B for 48 h ; (B) Fluorescence spectra of after $\mathbf{S}$ powder adsorption of sulforhodamine B for 48 h .


Figure S30. (A) Standard curve of sulforhodamine B concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess sulforhodamine B solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S31. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Brilliant Blue G at 298 K ; (B) UV-vis absorption spectrum of Brilliant Blue G solute before and after adding S-G (inset, photographs before and after adsorption).


Figure S32. (A) Standard curve of Brilliant Blue G concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Brilliant Blue G solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S33. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Metanil Yellow at 298K; (B) UV-vis absorption spectrum of Metanil Yellow solute before and after adding S-G (inset, photographs before and after adsorption).



$$
\begin{aligned}
& X=0.00001036 \mathrm{mmol} / \mathrm{ml} \\
& \text { Get the concentration after absorption : } \\
& 0.00001036 \mathrm{mmol} / \mathrm{ml} \\
& \text { Molecular weight : } 375.48 \\
& \text { Volume : } 15 \mathrm{ml} \\
& \text { Amout of Metanil yellow added : } 2.523 \mathrm{mg} \\
& \text { Saturation adsorption : } \\
& 2.523-0.00001036 \times 15 \times 375.48=2.465 \mathrm{mg}
\end{aligned}
$$

Figure S34. (A) Standard curve of Metanil Yellow concentration and UV absorbance; (B) UV spectrum of excess Metanil Yellow solution adsorbed by 110 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S35. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Light Green SF Yellowish at 298K; (B) UV-vis absorption spectrum of Light Green SF Yellowish solute before and after adding $\mathbf{S - G}$ (inset, photographs before and after adsorption).


- Corrected absorbance
........ Linear (corrected absorbance)


$$
X=0.000005590 \mathrm{mmol} / \mathrm{ml}
$$

Get the concentration after absorption :
$0.000005590 \mathrm{mmol} / \mathrm{ml}$
Molecular weight: 792.85
Volume : 15 ml
Amout of Light Green SF Yellowish added : 3.422 mg
Saturation adsorption :
$3.422-0.000005590 \times 15 \times 792.85=3.356 \mathrm{mg}$

Figure S36. (A) Standard curve of Light Green SF Yellowish concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Light Green SF Yellowish solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced S-G and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S37. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Crystal Violet at 298K; (B) UV-vis absorption spectrum of Crystal Violet solute before and after adding S-G (inset, photographs before and after adsorption)


Figure S38. (A) Standard curve of Crystal Violet concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Crystal Violet solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S39. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Methylene Blue at 298 K ; (B) UV-vis absorption spectrum of Methylene Blue solute before and after adding S-G (inset, photographs before and after adsorption).


Figure S40. (A) Standard curve of Methylene Blue concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Methylene Blue solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S41. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Rhodamine B at 298 K ; (B) UV-vis absorption spectrum of Rhodamine B solute before and after adding S-G (inset, photographs before and after adsorption).


Figure S42. (A) Standard curve of Rhodamine B concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Rhodamine B solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S43. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Resorcinol at 298K.


Figure S44. (A) Standard curve of Resorcinol concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Resorcinol solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S45. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of P-phenylenediamine at 298K.


Figure S46. (A) Standard curve of P-phenylenediamine concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess P-phenylenediamine solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.


Figure S47. (A) UV spectra of dynamic experiments on S-G adsorption of Melamine at 298K.


Figure S48. (A) Standard curve of Melamine concentration and UV absorbance. (B) UV spectrum of excess Melamine solution adsorbed by 10 mg of $\mathbf{S}$ produced $\mathbf{S}-\mathbf{G}$ and calculation of saturated adsorption capacity.



Figure S49. In the adsorption experiment of S-G on dye molecules, trend line fitted with model Exponential-Asymptotic-1 and Logarithm-Log3P1 of the proportion of dye residues in the solution with time. (A) Sulforhodamine B; (B) Brilliant Blue G; (C) Metanil Yellow; (D) Light Green SF Yellowish; (E) Crystal Violet; (F) Methylene Blue; (G) Rhodamine B.


Figure S50. (A) UV spectra of $\mathrm{L}\left(\mathrm{c}=9.70 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{M}\right)$, Sulforhodamine $\mathrm{B}\left(\mathrm{c}=2.50 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}\right)$ and Sulforhodamine B with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K ; (B) Fluorescence spectra of Sulforhodamine B and Sulforhodamine B with L mixed solution ( $\lambda_{\mathrm{ex}}=563 \mathrm{~nm}$ ).


Figure S51. (A) UV spectra of $\mathrm{L}\left(\mathrm{c}=9.70 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{M}\right)$, Brilliant Blue $\mathrm{G}\left(\mathrm{c}=2.27 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}\right)$ and Brilliant Blue G with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K ; (B) UV spectra of L ( $\mathrm{c}=$ $9.70 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{M}$ ), Metanil Yellow ( $\mathrm{c}=7.94 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}$ ) and Metanil Yellow with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K .


Figure S52. UV spectra of $\mathrm{L}\left(\mathrm{c}=9.70 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{M}\right)$, Light Green SF Yellowish $\left(\mathrm{c}=3.22 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}\right)$ and Light Green SF Yellowish with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K .


Figure S53. (A) UV spectra of $\mathrm{L}\left(\mathrm{c}=9.70 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{M}\right)$, Crystal Violet $\left(\mathrm{c}=1.90 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}\right)$ and Crystal Violet with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K ; (B) UV spectra of L ( $\mathrm{c}=9.70 \times 10^{-6}$ M), Methylene Blue ( $\mathrm{c}=6.95 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}$ ) and Methylene Blue with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K .


Figure S54. (A) UV spectra of $\mathrm{L}\left(\mathrm{c}=9.70 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{M}\right)$, Rhodamine $\mathrm{B}\left(\mathrm{c}=2.91 \times 10^{-5} \mathrm{M}\right)$ and Rhodamine B with L mixed in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN} / \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}=1: 60$ solvent at 298 K ; (B) Fluorescence spectra of Rhodamine B and Rhodamine B with L mixed solution ( $\lambda_{\mathrm{ex}}=554 \mathrm{~nm}$ ).


Figure S55. (A,C) TEM images of S-G in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}: \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}$ (V:V=4: 1) ; (B,D) TEM images of $\mathbf{S}$ $\mathbf{G}$ has adsorbed sulforhodamine B in $\mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}$.


Figure S56. (A,C) SEM images of S-G in $\mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}: \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}$ (V:V=4: 1) ; (B,D) SEM images of S-G has adsorbed Sulforhodamine B in $\mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}$.


Figure S57. EDS of S-G.


Figure S58. EDS of corresponding S-G after adsorbed Sulforhodamine B.

## 7. Reference.

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