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## **Supporting Information**

#### Performance analysis of photo-liquefiable azobenzene derivatives for

### improving the responsive ability of their functional devices

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## 1. Supplementary Figures



**Fig. S1** (a) Black Area Pixel Statistical (BAPS) method was used to analyze the phase transition recovery phase, and the starting time was aligned with the moment when UV light was turned off; (b) Comprehensive analysis results of the two thickness of compound C2 samples by BAPS and RFDA methods (Thick sample ~5  $\mu$ m, Thin sample ~3  $\mu$ m).



**Fig. S2** Demonstration of RFDA method. (a) Photos of the original condition of C1 sample; (b) Screenshot of the status when UV illumination time was 25.6 s; (c-f) Compare figure a and b pixel by pixel to calculate the difference under different thresholds.



**Fig. S3** Fig. S2 Demonstration of RFDA method. (a) Photos of the original condition of C1 sample; (b) Screenshot of the status when UV illumination time was 43.4 s; (c-f) Compare figure a and b pixel by pixel to calculate the difference under different thresholds.



Fig. S4 The fitting results of the photoinduced solid-to-liquid phase transition process<br/>of sample sample C1 (~5  $\mu$ m) with BAPS method (Params: L=1078280.324599939,<br/>k=0.15579666396440964, t<sub>0</sub>=39.556737048544605; R\_squared:<br/>0.9951554081230224; RSS: 106983246858.81955; MSE: 427932987.4352782)



**Fig. S5** The fitting results of the photoinduced solid-to-liquid phase transition process of sample C2 (~5  $\mu$ m) with BAPS method (Params: L=983907.9002463985, k=0.5362605575306957, t<sub>0</sub>=18.167349655519264; R\_squared: 0.9956452097687404; RSS: 62906835628.20877; MSE: 757913682.2675755)



**Fig. S6** The fitting results of the photoinduced solid-to-liquid phase transition process of sample C2 (~3  $\mu$ m) with BAPS method (Params: L=1260429.8380949865, k=1.522408866301831, t<sub>0</sub>=3.9853568026612662; R\_squared: 0.9958390161400614; RSS: 43779283531.93706; MSE: 951723555.04211)



**Fig. S7** The fitting results of the photoinduced solid-to-liquid phase transition process of sample C3 (~5  $\mu$ m) with BAPS method (Params: L=1328121.493633524, k=0.22289647508031482, t<sub>0</sub>=21.41315879284214; R\_squared: 0.9956802114539569; RSS: 141447989279.39124; MSE: 836970350.7656286)



**Fig. S8** The fitting results of the liquid-to-solid recovery process of sample C2 (~3  $\mu$ m) with BAPS method. Different from the solid-to-liquid phase change stage, parameter d is added to indicating the delay time of the slow recovery stage (Params: L=1186849.5821699908, k=0.07030364089491738, t<sub>0</sub>=125.93047404668755, d= 37.81221449976451; R\_squared: 0.9995103120550874; RSS: 61338848531.35004; MSE: 60973010.468538806).



**Fig. S9** Melting point results with DSC. (a) Compound C1 trans state; (b) Compound C2 trans state; (c) Compound C3 trans state. (d) C1, C2 and C3 trans/cis mixture at PSS.



**Fig. S10** UV-vis absorption spectra of compound C1. (a) Light intensity of  $20 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  in chloroform solution; (b) Light intensity of  $120 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  in chloroform solution; (c) UV and then visible light irradiation results in chloroform solution; (d) Spectra of film state.



**Fig. S11** UV-vis absorption spectra of compound C2. (a) Light intensity of  $20 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  in chloroform solution; (b) Light intensity of  $120 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  in chloroform solution; (c) UV and then visible light irradiation results in chloroform solution; (d) Spectra of film state.



**Fig. S12** UV-vis absorption spectra of compound C3. (a) Light intensity of  $20 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  in chloroform solution; (b) Light intensity of  $120 \text{ mW/cm}^2$  in chloroform solution; (c) UV and then visible light irradiation results in chloroform solution; (d) Spectra of film state.



**Fig. S13** Fitting results of absorption peak attenuation at UV intensity of 20 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for compound C1, corresponding to Fig. S10a. (Params: a=0.7555556726958079, b=0.012668539603072092, c=0.27917511443171267; I=20; R\_squared: 0.933411937639842; RSS: 0.03990126386975265; MSE: 0.00443347376330585)



**Fig. S14** Fitting results of absorption peak attenuation at UV intensity of 20 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for compound C2, corresponding to Fig. S11a. (Params: a=0.6436910088048615, b=0.009790948557609017, c=0.30895518820242085; I=20; R\_squared: 0.9618886266554613;RSS: 0.02071913494474867;MSE: 0.0020719134944748667)



**Fig. S15** Fitting results of absorption peak attenuation at UV intensity of 20 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for compound C3, corresponding to Fig. S12a. (Params: a=0.8577107597178338, b=0.006791642113654158, c=0.151235645739271, I=20; R\_squared: 0.9943504600684157; RSS:0.0028545278561157342; MSE: 0.0004757546426859557)



**Fig. S16** Fitting results of absorption peak attenuation at UV intensity of 120 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for compound C1, corresponding to Fig. S10b. (Params: a=0.8042820579689904, b=0.010896205901298495, c=0.19776672615970708; I=120; R\_squared: 0.9943879975285479;RSS:0.0030820957574323035;MSE:0.0003852619696790379 4)



Fig. S17 Fitting results of absorption peak attenuation at UV intensity of 120 mW/cm²for compound C2, corresponding to Fig. S11b. (Params: a = 0.7921675000195147,b = 1.1686507258057264, c = 0.20783249999594133; I = 120; R\_squared:0.9991720919341727;RSS: 0.00041597367499999996;MSE: 8.3194734999999993e-05)



**Fig. S18** Fitting results of absorption peak attenuation at UV intensity of 120 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for compound C3, corresponding to Fig. S12b. (Params: a=0.8012622362846589, b=0.02057608432531268, c=0.16716856118745832, I=120; R\_squared: 0.9930786803360229;RSS: 0.0041470236439442795;MSE: 0.0006911706073240466)



Fig. S19 Compound C1, UV intensity 50 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, absorption peak attenuation prediction results. (Params: a=0.7658353180078011, b=0.011782372752185329, c=0.23416468199219895, I=50)



Fig. S20 Compound C2, UV intensity 50 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, absorption peak attenuation prediction results. (Params: a=0.7353398229611056, b=0.3679189320770872, c=0.2646601770388946, I=50)



Fig. S21 Compound C3, UV intensity 50 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, absorption peak attenuation prediction results. (Params: a=0.8389764955036513, b=0.013683863219480829, c=0.161023504496295, I=50)



**Fig. S22** TAS attenuation fitting results for C1, corresponding to Fig. 6c. (Half-life: 27.349283; R-squared: 0.925216; Residual Sum of Squares (RSS): 0.924661; Mean Squared Error (MSE): 0.004718)



**Fig. S23** TAS attenuation fitting results for C2, corresponding to Fig. 6c. (Half-life: 76.622619; R-squared: 0.972490; Residual Sum of Squares (RSS): 0.551172; Mean Squared Error (MSE): 0.002715)



**Fig. S24** TAS attenuation fitting results for C3, corresponding to Fig. 6c. (Half-life: 65.975082; R-squared: 0.955344; Residual Sum of Squares (RSS): 0.780887; Mean Squared Error (MSE): 0.003866)



Fig. S25 The Simulated results of the isomer combinations' intermolecular interaction energy.

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**Fig. S26** Kendall's tau coefficient was used to evaluate the correlation of performance parameters, corresponding to Table 1.



**Fig. S27** Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the correlation of performance parameters, corresponding to Table 1.



**Fig. S28** The deformation start-up time of C2-based composite film photo-actuator after UV light was turned on. (a) 1 cm illumination distance: 0.07 s; (b) Illumination distance of 2 cm: 0.03 s; (c) Light distance of 3 cm: 0.03 s; (d) Light distance of 4 cm: 0.06 s; (e) Light distance of 5 cm: 0.07 s; (f) Light distance of 6 cm: 0.04 s; No significant correlation between light intensity and start-up time was observed.



**Fig. S29** The recovery stage start-up time of C2-based composite film photo-actuator after UV light was turned off. (a) Light distance of 1cm: 0.04 s; (b) Light distance of 6cm: 0.03 s; There was no significant correlation between light intensity and start-up time.



**Fig. S30** POM was used to observe the phase transition behavior of C1-based composite film after UV light was turned on (Supplementary Video 3). (a) Video frames; (b) The start-up time of phase transition was determined by RFDA method.



Fig. S31 <sup>1</sup>H NMR of compound C1.



**Fig. S32** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of compound C1.



**Fig. S33** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of compound C2.



**Fig. S34** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of compound C2.



**Fig. S35** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of compound C3.



**Fig. S36** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of compound C3.



Fig. S37 Mass spectrum of compound C1.



Fig. S38 Mass spectrum of compound C2.



Fig. S39 Mass spectrum of compound C3.

# 2. Supplementary Video

**Video S1**. Photoinduced solid-to-liquid phase transition of pure compound observed in-situ by POM. (1) C1; (2) C2; (3) C3.

**Video S2**. Deformation of the composite film optical actuators. (1) C1 strip sample; (2) C2 strip sample; (3) C2 large block sample; (4) C3 large block sample.

**Video S3**. Photoinduced solid-to-liquid phase transition of C1 composite film observed in-situ by POM.