### **Supporting Information**

# pH-Dependent morphology and photoresponse of azopyridine-terminated Poly(N-isopropylacrylamide) nanoparticles in water

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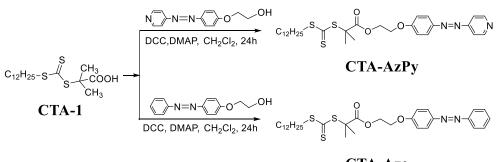
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### 1. Synthesis and characterization of CTA-Azo and CTA-AzPy



CTA-Azo

Scheme S1. Synthesis route of RAFT agent CTA-Azo and CTA-AzPy.

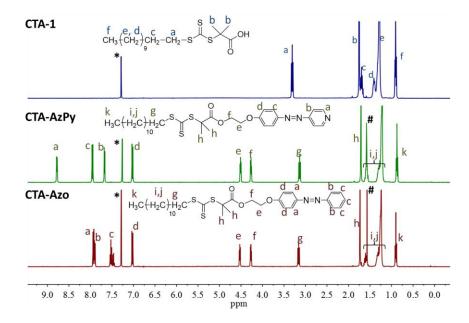


Figure S1.<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of CTA-1, CTA-Azo and CTA-AzPy, solvent CDCl<sub>3</sub>.(\* solvent

peak, # H<sub>2</sub>O peak)

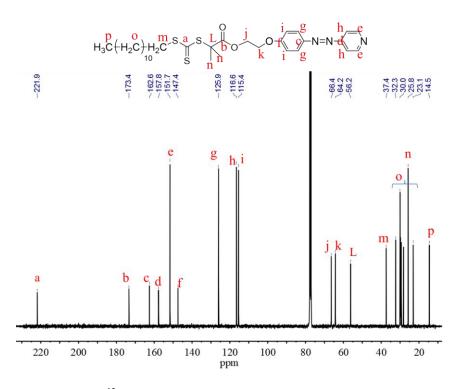


Figure S2. <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of CTA-AzPy, solvent CDCl<sub>3</sub>.

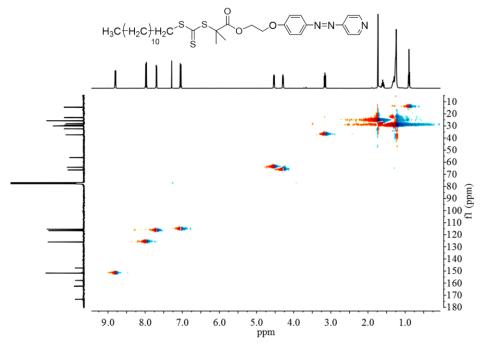


Figure S3. 2D-HMQC spectrum of CTA-AzPy, solvent CDCl<sub>3</sub>.

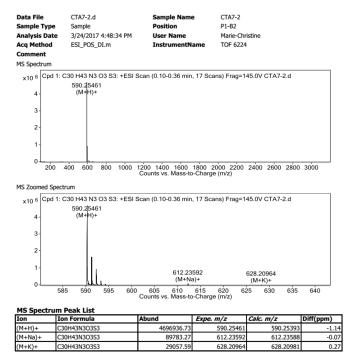
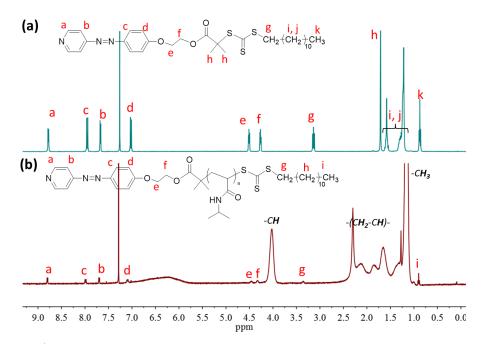


Figure S4. MS spectrum of CTA-AzPy

### 2. Characterization of end functional PNIPAMs



**Figure S5.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum and the peak assignment of (a), CTA-AzPy and C12-PN-AzPy 12K. (solvent CDCl<sub>3</sub>)

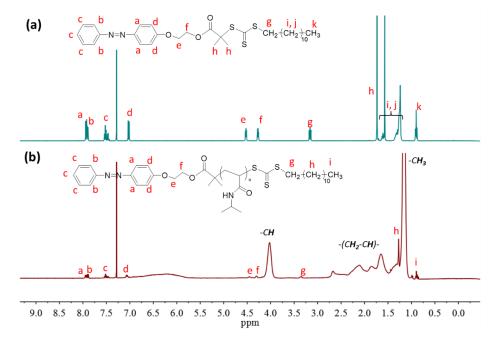


Figure S6 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum and the peak assignment of (a), CTA-Azo and (b) C12-PN-Azo (solvent CDCl<sub>3</sub>)

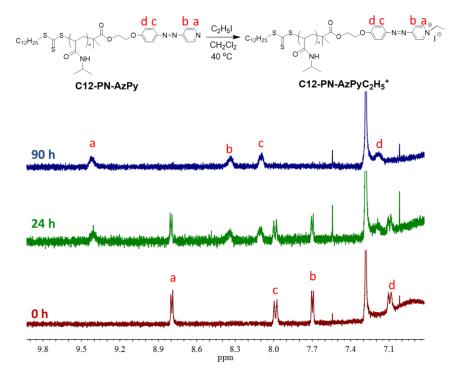


Figure S7 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum and the peak assignment of C12-PN-AzPy 12K and C12-PN-AzPyC<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub><sup>+</sup> (solvent CDCl<sub>3</sub>)

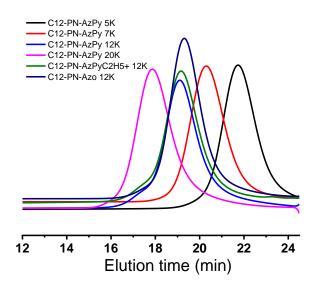


Figure S8. GPC analysis of C12-PN-AzPy, C12-PN-AzPyC $_2H_5^+$  and C12-PN-Azo. (DMF as eluent)

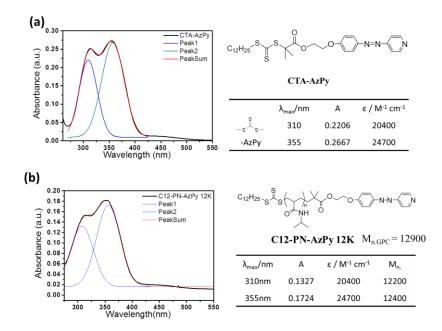


Figure S9. (a), UV-vis spectrum of CTA-AzPy and the determination of molar extinction coefficient (ε); (b), determination of molecular weight of C12-PN-AzPy 12K by UV-vis spectrum. (peak separation function, Gauss, fitting from 270nm to 450nm )

### 3. Characterization of self-assembly structure

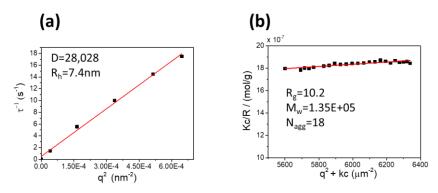
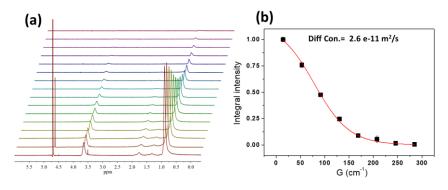


Figure S10. (a). Example of DLS plot and (b) Zimm plot of polymer micelles for C12-PN-AzPy 7K at 10 °C (k is constant for 5600 in this case.)



**Figure S11.** Diffusion NMR measurements of C12-PN-AzPy at 10 °C in D<sub>2</sub>O. (a), Diffusion spectrum of C12-PN-AzPy 12K in D<sub>2</sub>O.(b), Fitting curve of the diffusion constant (D) of C12-PN-AzPy 12K.

Sample name	$M_n$ (g/mol)	D (m2/s)	R <sub>h</sub> (nm)
C12-PNIPAM-AzPy 5K	5800	3.5e-11	5.9
C12-PNIPAM-AzPy 7K	7800	2.6e-11	7.9
C12-PNIPAM-AzPy 12K	12900	2.6e-11	8.0
C12-PNIPAM-AzPy 20K	19700	1.9e-11	10.9
C12-PNIPAM-AzPyC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> <sup>+</sup> 12K	12900	2.4e-11	8.62

Table S1. Summary of the fitted diffusion constants and corresponding R<sub>h</sub> values.

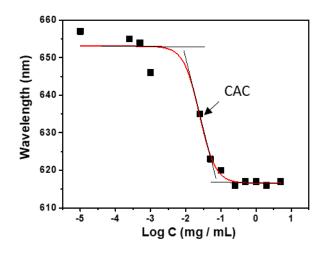
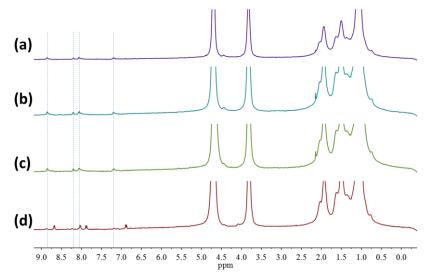
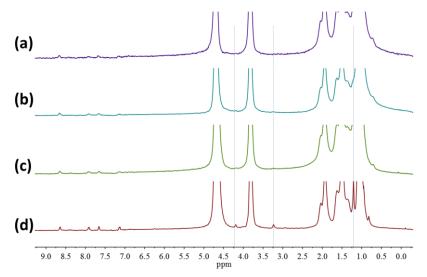


Figure S12. The plot of the maximum wavelength of the NR emission versus the C12-PN-AzPy 12K concentration.

### 4. Hydrolysis test

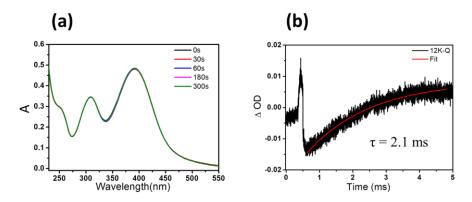


**Figure. S13**. Hydrolysis testing of C12-PN-AzPy 12K under acid condition (a), pH=3 after 25 hours; (b), pH=3 after 5 days; (c) pH=3 after 5 days and 24 hours under 70 °C; (d), pH=1 after 5 days. (Signal of ionized azopyridine at aromatic part shift to high field when hydrolysis occurs)



**Figure. S14.** Hydrolysis testing of C12-PN-AzPy 12K under base condition (a), pH=10 after 25 hours; (b), pH=10 after 5 days and 1.5 hours under 70 °C; (c) pH=10 after 5 days and 24 hours under 70 °C; (d), pH=14 after 5 days 24 hours and under 70 °C. (Signal of azopyridine at aromatic part, CH<sub>2</sub> groups on C12 and HO-C2-AzPy becomes sharper when hydrolysis occurs)

#### 5. UV-responsive properties.



**Figure S15.** (a) UV-Vis spectra under different irradiation time (365 nm) and (b)Transient absorption spectra of C12-PN-AzPyC<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub><sup>+</sup> 12K aqueous solution (0.5 mg/mL).

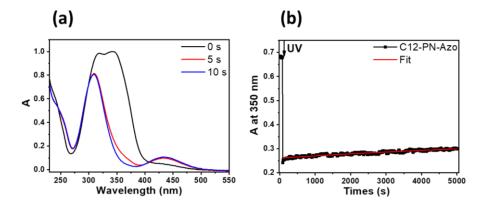


Figure S16. (a) UV-Vis spectra under different irradiation time (365 nm) and (b)Transient absorption spectra of C12-PN-Azo 12K aqueous solution (0.5 mg/mL, 10 °C).