



UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



**NRG**  
NOËL RESEARCH GROUP

## From Batch to Flow: Advancing Synthetic Organic Chemistry through Technological Innovation

Prof. Dr. ing. Timothy Noël

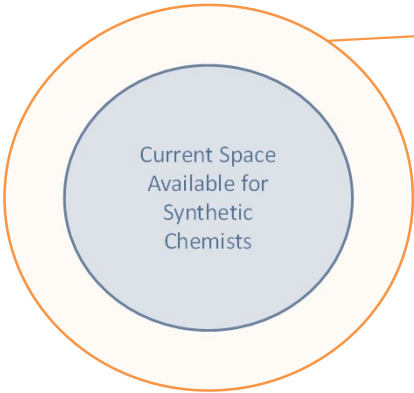
*Van 't Hoff Institute for Molecular Sciences*  
University of Amsterdam  
The Netherlands

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@NoelGroupUvA, @tnoel82

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## Reimagining Synthetic Chemistry




**Our mission:**  
*Expanding the available chemical space by embracing technology to the fullest extent*

by

- 1) *Developing new synthetic transformations using reagents or conditions that are difficult to handle*
- 2) *Developing new tools to make synthesis easier*
- 3) *Showing unique selectivity and reactivity*

**How?**

*by merging organic chemistry and chemical engineering*



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## How can flow make an impact?

### Inherent advantages of microscale flow reactors:

Enhanced mass transfer	Gas-liquid reactions
Enhanced heat transfer	Taming exothermic reactions
High reproducibility	Reaction kinetics
Multistep flow sequences	Time-gain, labor reduction
Automation	Minimizing human error
Safety	New processing windows
Scalability	From mg to kg in same device



**Selected reviews:** (i) Capaldo, Wen, Noel, *Chem. Sci.* **2023**, *14*, 4230-4247. (ii) Laybourn, Robertson, Slater, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2023**, *145*, 4355-4365. (iii) Plutschack, Pieber, Gilmore, Seeberger, *Chem. Rev.* **2017**, *117*, 11796-11893.

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**Problem:** In general, people resist change.

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## Education is Key!

OPINION

### Flow into the chemistry curriculum

BY TIMOTHY NOËL | 27 SEPTEMBER 2019

There's more to chemistry than the round-bottomed flask

It's ironic that chemists are experts at change, except when it comes to their own practice. Mark Gilligan recently wrote about chemists' reluctance to adopt flow chemistry as an example of this innate resistance to change. I have seen that same resistance, and I understand it. Why would you suddenly change your habits and embrace an expensive new technology?



***"Put flow chemistry in your curriculum and give students the broadest experience of making molecules. Let them decide which ideas have a future."***

For an opinion article: Noël, *Chemistry World* 2019, <https://www.chemistryworld.com/opinion/flow-into-the-chemistry-curriculum/4010382.article>.

For our undergrad flow experiments: Kuijpers, Weggemans, Verwijlen, Noël, *J. Flow Chem.* 2021, 11, 7-12.

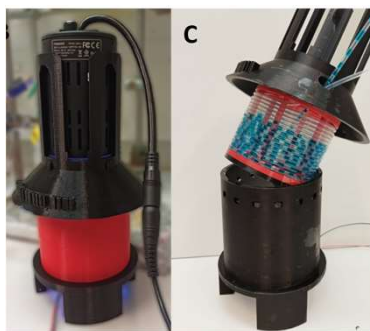
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## Democratization of Flow Chemistry

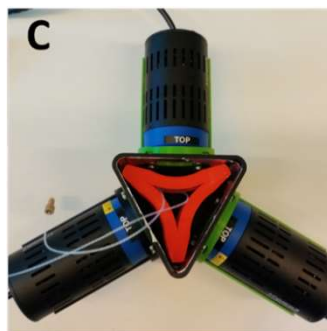
UFO – Batch



UFlow



Flow – Fidget Reactor



***Fully characterized, standardized batch and flow setups that are affordable.***

Designs available via: Masson, Zondag, Schuurmans, Noël, *React. Chem. Eng.* 2024, 9, 2218-2225.

For characterization procedure: Zondag, Schuurmans, Chaudhuri, Visser, Soares, Padoin, Kuijpers, Dorbec, van der Schaaf, Noël, *Nature Chemical Engineering* 2024, 1, 462-471.

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# Photocatalysis

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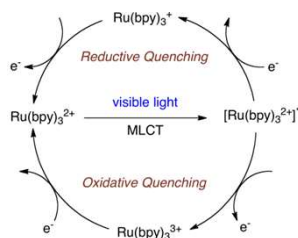
## Photoredox Catalysis

photocatalysis allows for absorption of wavelengths of the UV-A and VIS

Advantages:

- cheap, energy-efficient and high intensity energy light sources (LEDs)
- mild reaction conditions (room temperature, functional group tolerance)
- new opportunities in organic synthesis

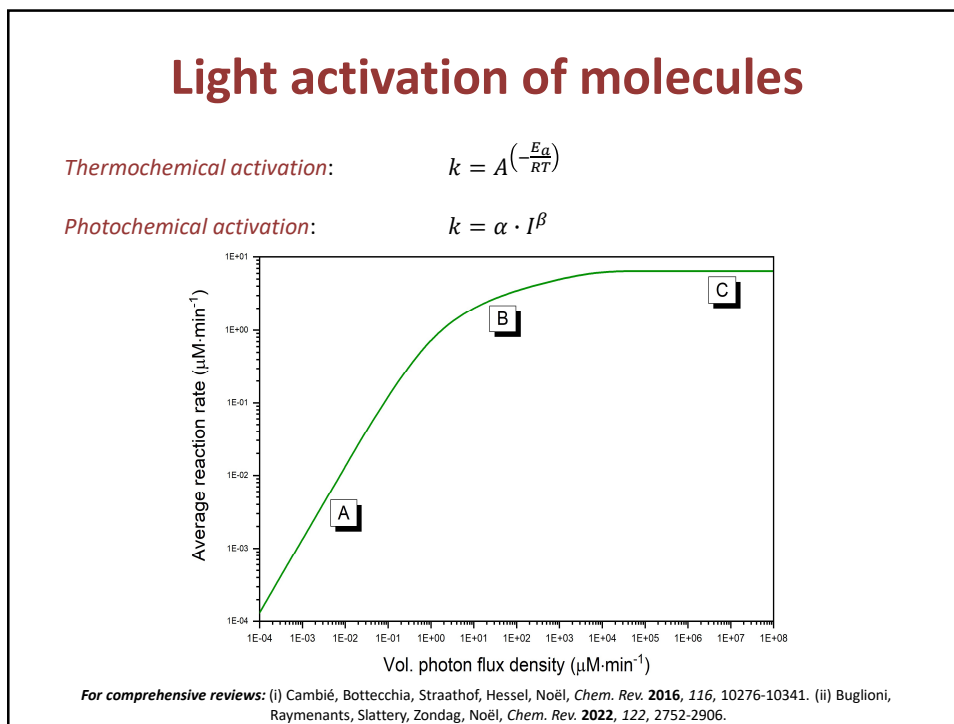
$\text{Ru}(\text{bpy})_3\text{Cl}_2$  is the most studied one-electron photoredox catalyst.



Special issue in *Chemical Reviews* on **Photochemical Catalytic Processes** (Paolo Melchiorre, Guest Editor), **2022**, *122*, 1483-2980.

For a perspective on PC: Noel, Zysman-Colman, *Chem Catalysis* **2022**, *2*, 468-476.

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## Industrial Importance of Photoredox Catalysis

*Every single pharma- and agro-chemical company has initiated programs to implement Photoredox catalysis.*

Noel, Zysman-Colman, *Chem Catalysis* **2022**, *2*, 468-476.

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## Industrial Importance of Photoredox Catalysis

*Every single pharma- and agro-chemical company has initiated programs to implement Photoredox catalysis.*

### Medicinal Chemistry:

- Goal: identify new chemical structures ASAP.
- Small amounts for bio-assays and ADME studies
- Well implemented

Noel, Zysman-Colman, *Chem Catalysis* **2022**, 2, 468-476.

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### Process Chemistry:

- Goal: clean, cost-effective manufacturing process for new medicines
- Scalable process for clinical trials and commercialization
- Challenging!

Noel, Zysman-Colman, *Chem Catalysis* **2022**, 2, 468-476.

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- Scalable process for clinical trials and commercialization
- Challenging!

**Scale up: 50 kg product/day is a good estimate for what is required in pharma!**

*This requires about 1000 W of optical power per day.*

Noel, Zysman-Colman, *Chem Catalysis* 2022, 2, 468-476.

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## Industrial Importance of Photoredox Catalysis

*1000 W of optical power per day to produce 50kg/day*

***To put it in perspective:***

*This amounts to the light delivered by 5000 CFL light bulbs !!!*

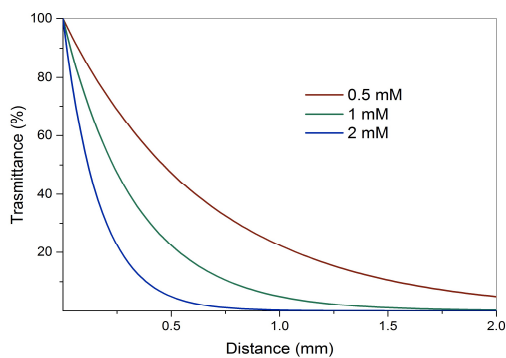


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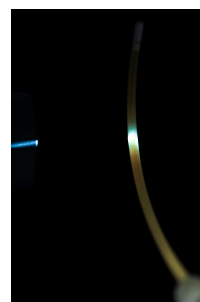
## Photocatalysis scale up problems

**Batch** : limited penetration depth of irradiation because of absorption results in longer reaction times, higher catalyst loadings and difficult scale-up

$$\log(T) = \log(I_0/I) = \epsilon \cdot l \cdot c \quad (\text{Bouguer-Lambert-Beer})$$



**Batch**



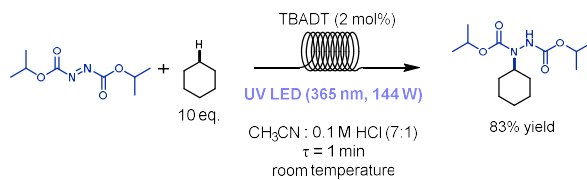
**Flow**

For comprehensive reviews: (i) Cambié, Bottecchia, Straathof, Hessel, Noël, *Chem. Rev.* **2016**, *116*, 10276-10341. (ii) Buglioni, Raymenants, Slattery, Zondag, Noël, *Chem. Rev.* **2022**, *122*, 2752-2906.

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## Scaling Photochemistry

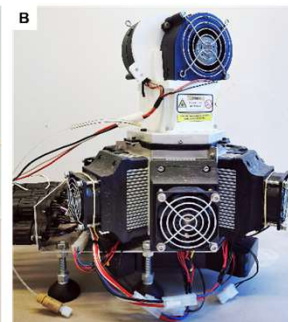
Longer operation times + intensified reaction conditions:



Reactor : 11 mL volume, ID 750  $\mu$ m  
 Productivity : 314 mol/h (2.15 kg/day)



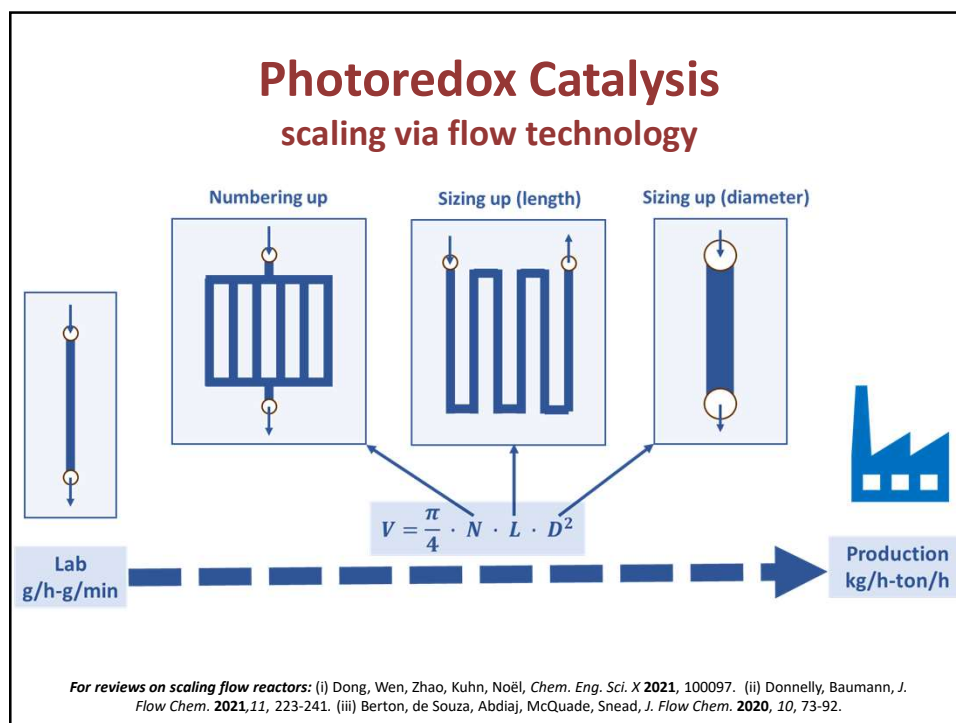
**Chip-on-Board LEDs**  
(24 W optical power/unit)



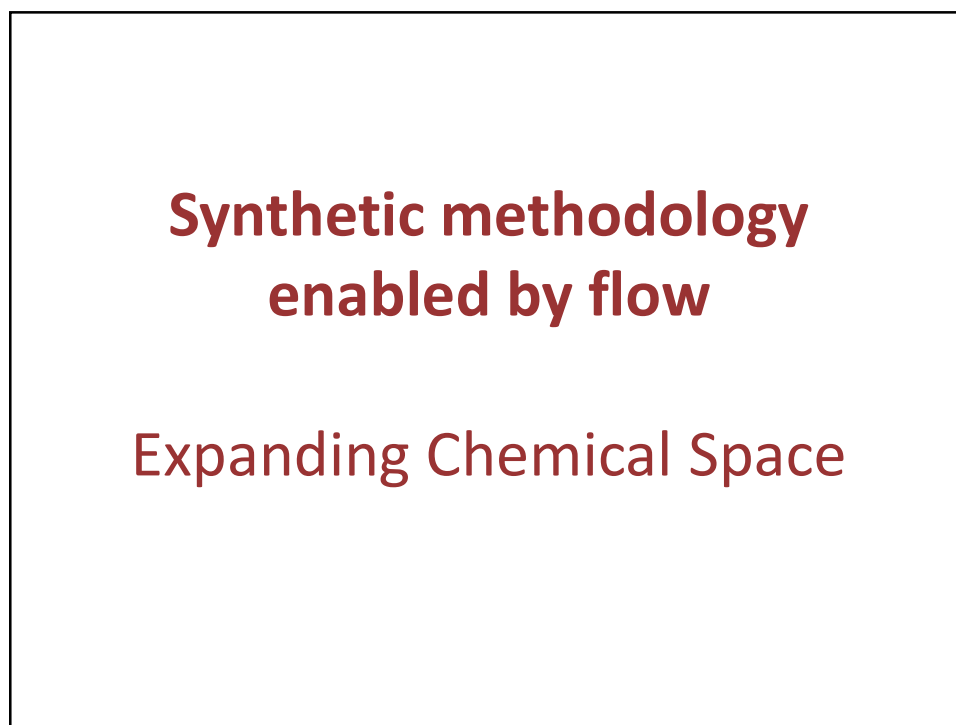
Wan, Wen, Laudadio, Capaldo, Lammers, Rincon, Garcia-Losada, Mateos, O'Frederick, Broersma, Noel, *ACS Central Sci.* **2022**, *8*, 51-56.

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## Photocatalytic $sp^3$ C–H functionalization via HAT

- $R-H$
- generally unreactive bond
  - activated and non-activated C–H bonds
  - untapped synthetic potential

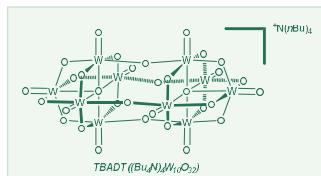
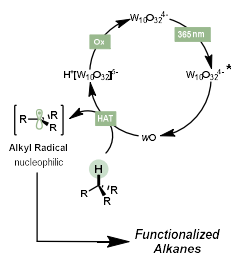
For a review: (a) Capaldo, Ravelli, Fagnoni, *Chem. Rev.* **2022**, *122*, 1875–1924. (b) Capaldo, Quadri, Ravelli, *Green Chem.* **2020**, *22*, 3376–3396.

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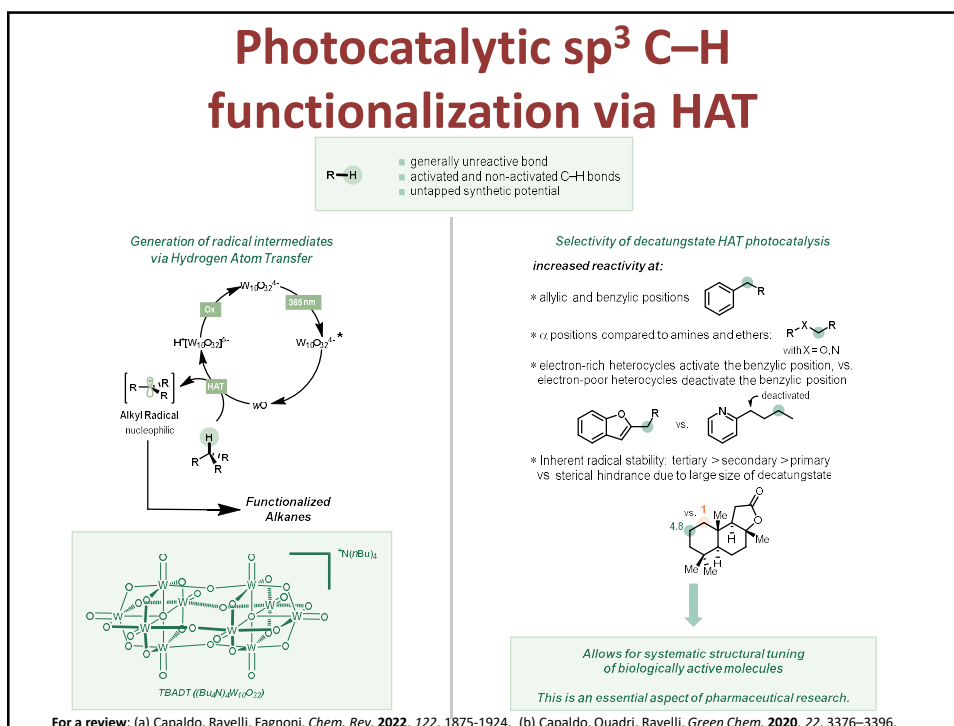
- $R-H$
- generally unreactive bond
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  - untapped synthetic potential

Generation of radical intermediates  
via Hydrogen Atom Transfer

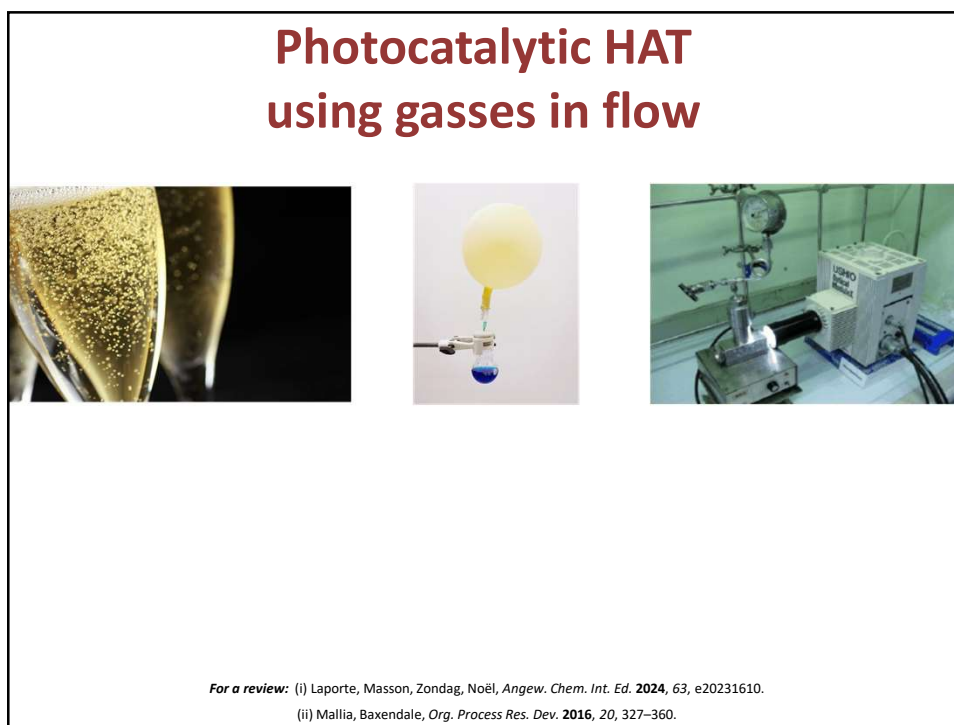


For a review: (a) Capaldo, Ravelli, Fagnoni, *Chem. Rev.* **2022**, *122*, 1875–1924. (b) Capaldo, Quadri, Ravelli, *Green Chem.* **2020**, *22*, 3376–3396.

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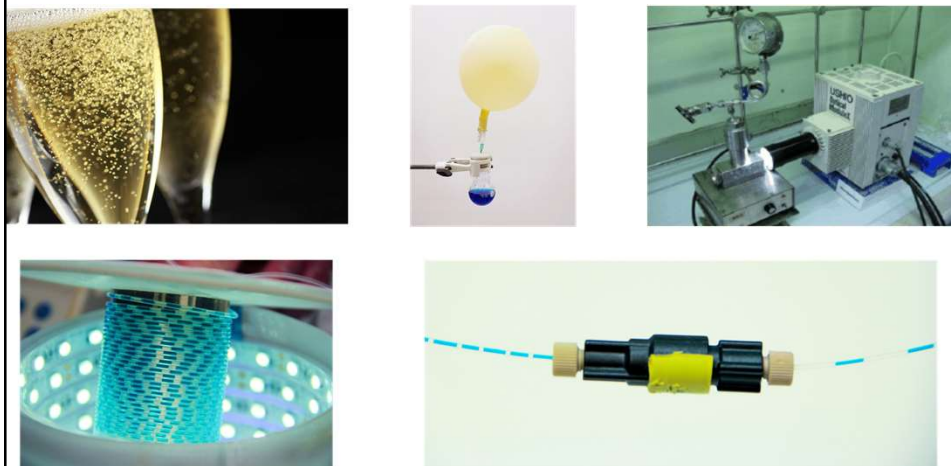


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## Photocatalytic HAT using gasses in flow

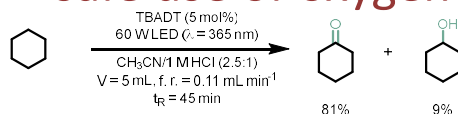


For a review: (i) Laporte, Masson, Zondag, Noël, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2024**, *63*, e20231610.

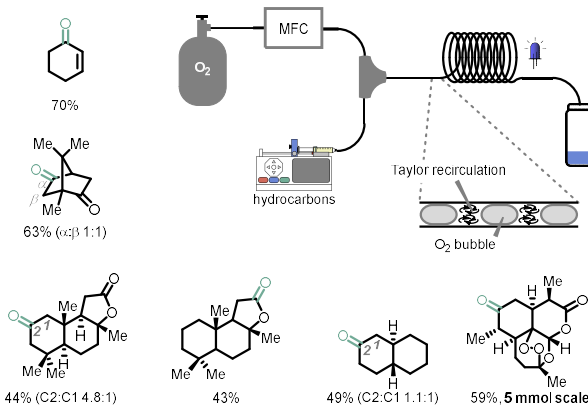
(ii) Mallia, Baxendale, *Org. Process Res. Dev.* **2016**, *20*, 327–360.

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## Photocatalytic $sp^3$ C–H oxidation safe use of oxygen

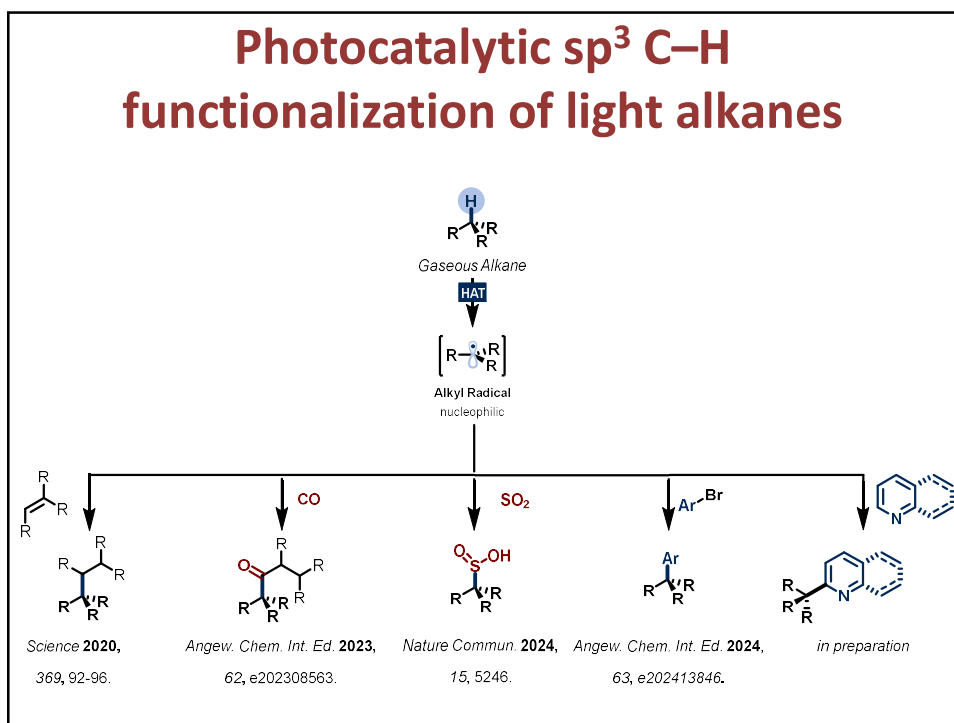


Selected Examples

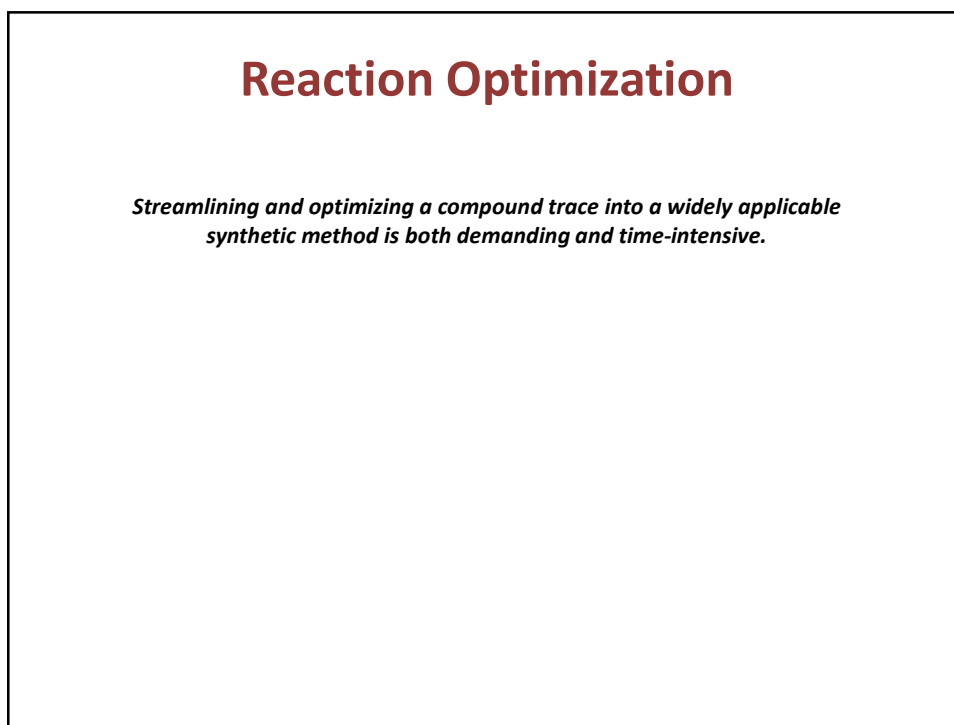


Laudadio, Govaerts, Wang, Ravelli, Koolman, Fagnoni, Djuric, Noël, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2018**, *57*, 4078–4082.

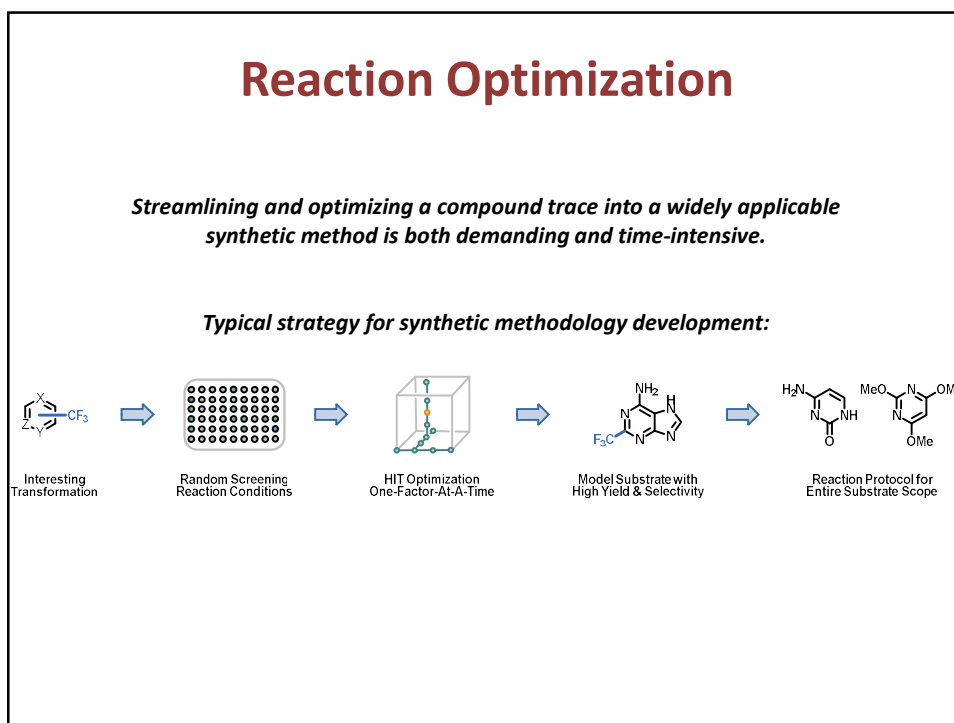
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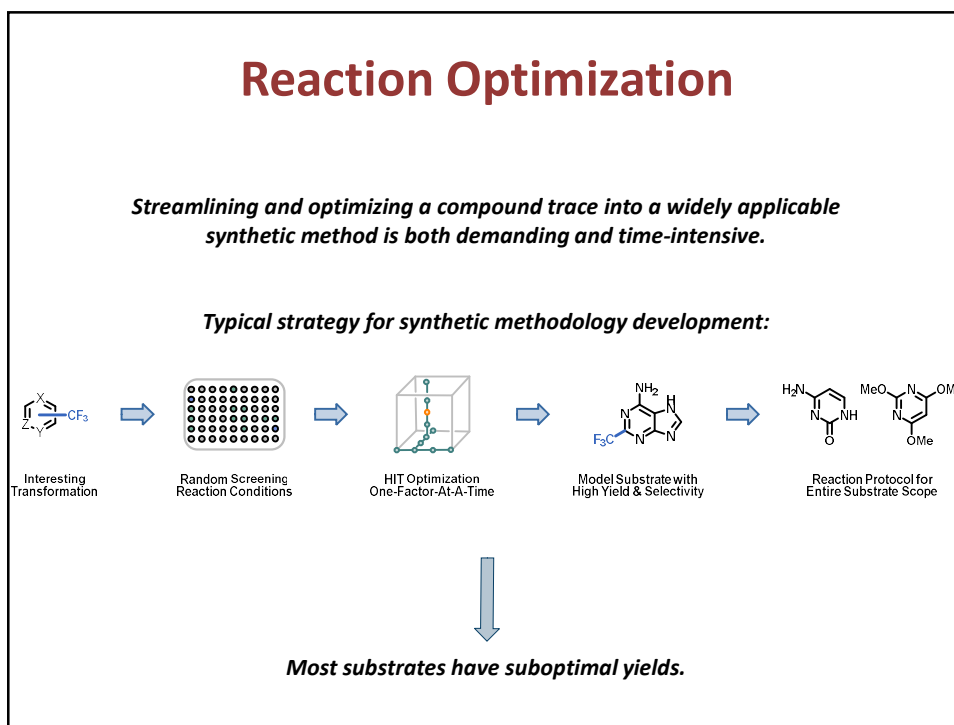
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## Reaction Optimization

*If most substrates in a scope have suboptimal yields.*



*Why not let a machine do the work?*



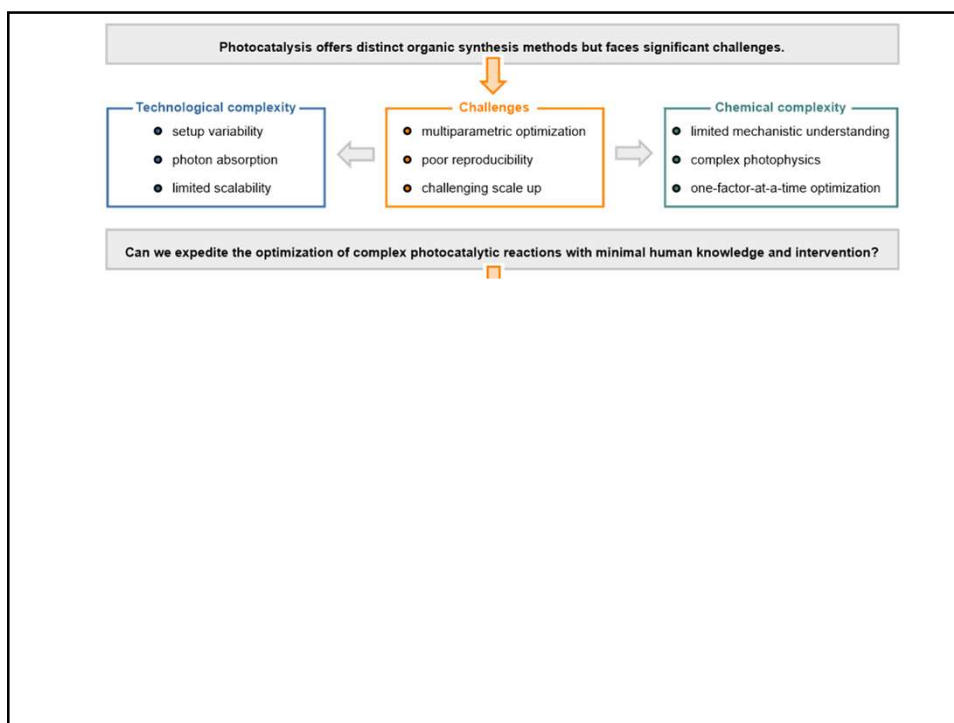
Slattery, Wen, Tenblad, Pintossi, Orduna, den Hartog, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 383, eadj1817.

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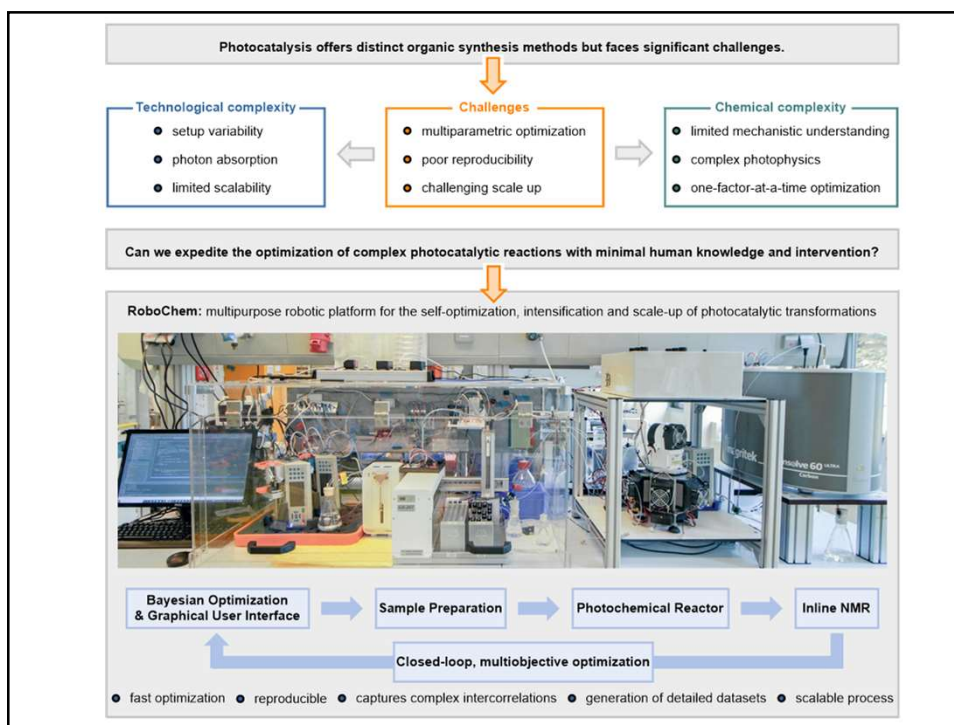
Photocatalysis offers distinct organic synthesis methods but faces significant challenges.



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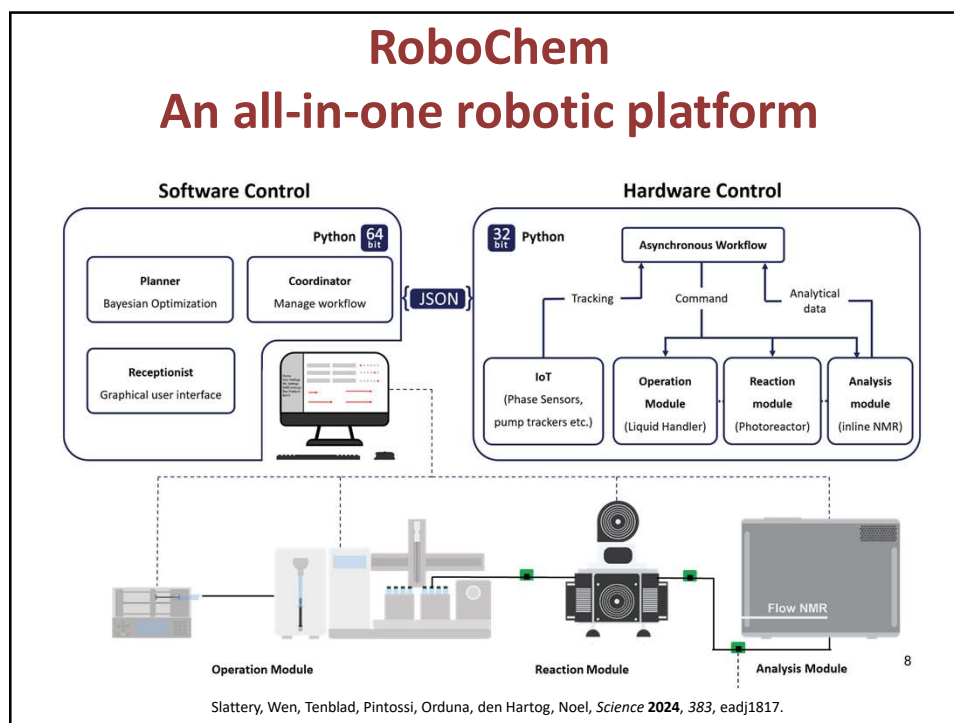


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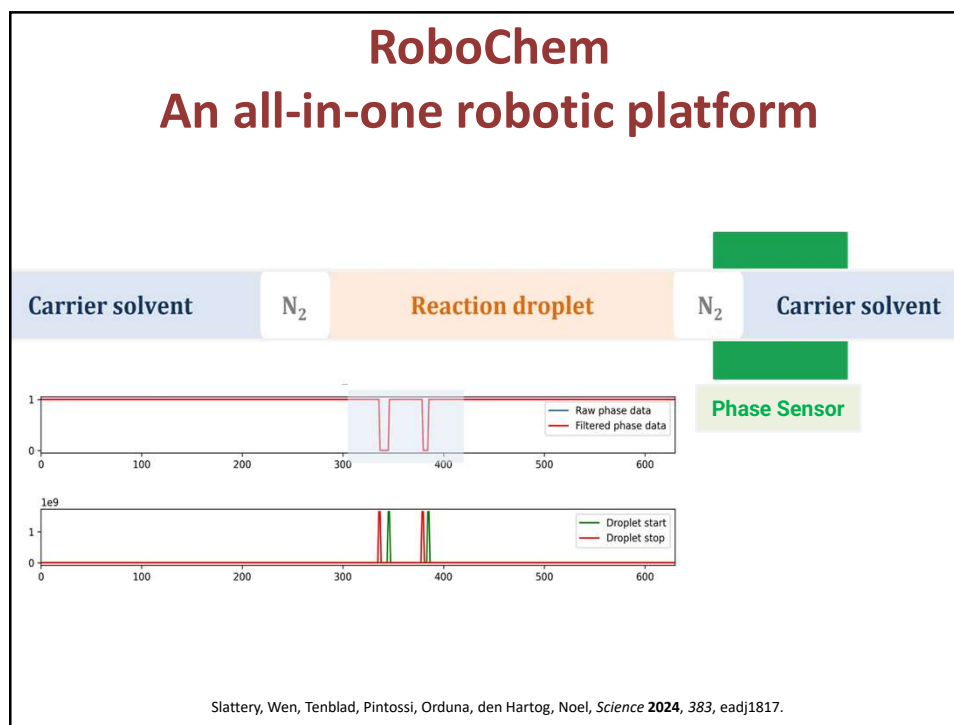


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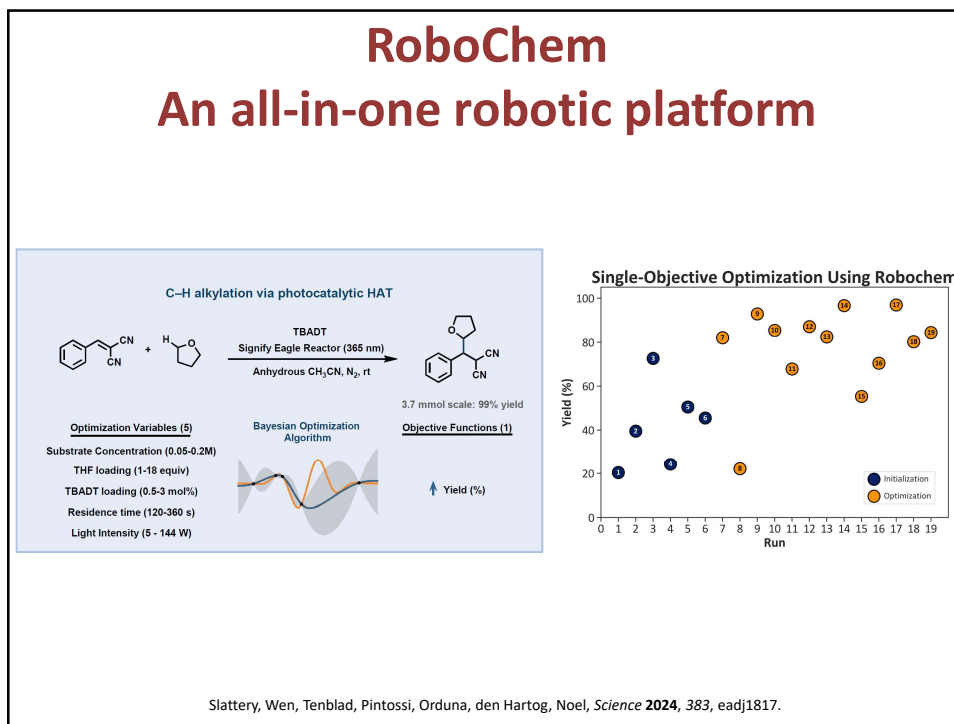




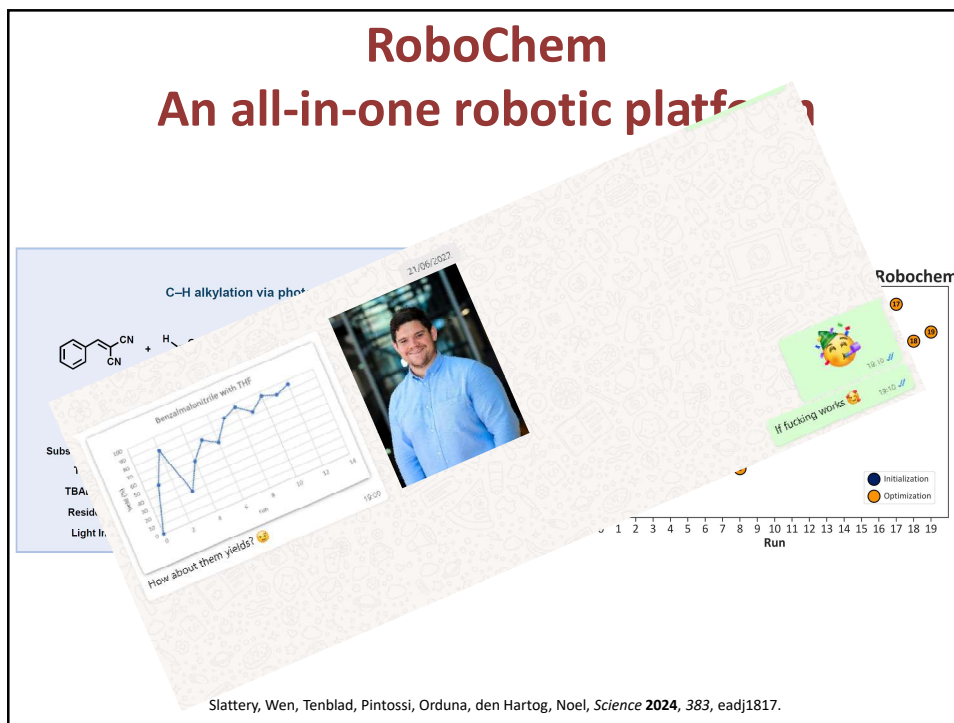
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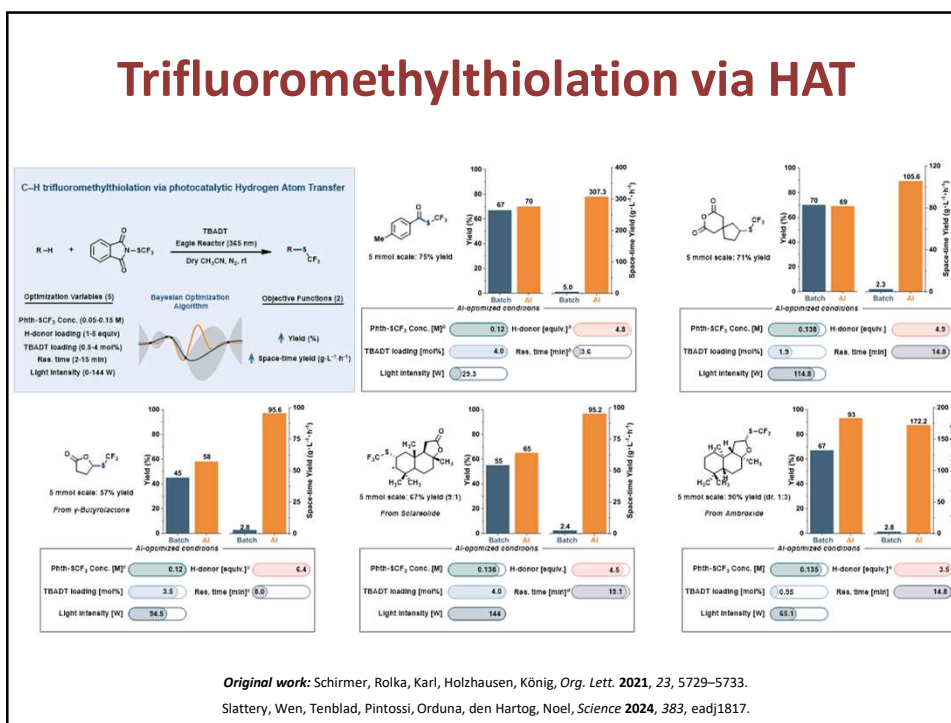


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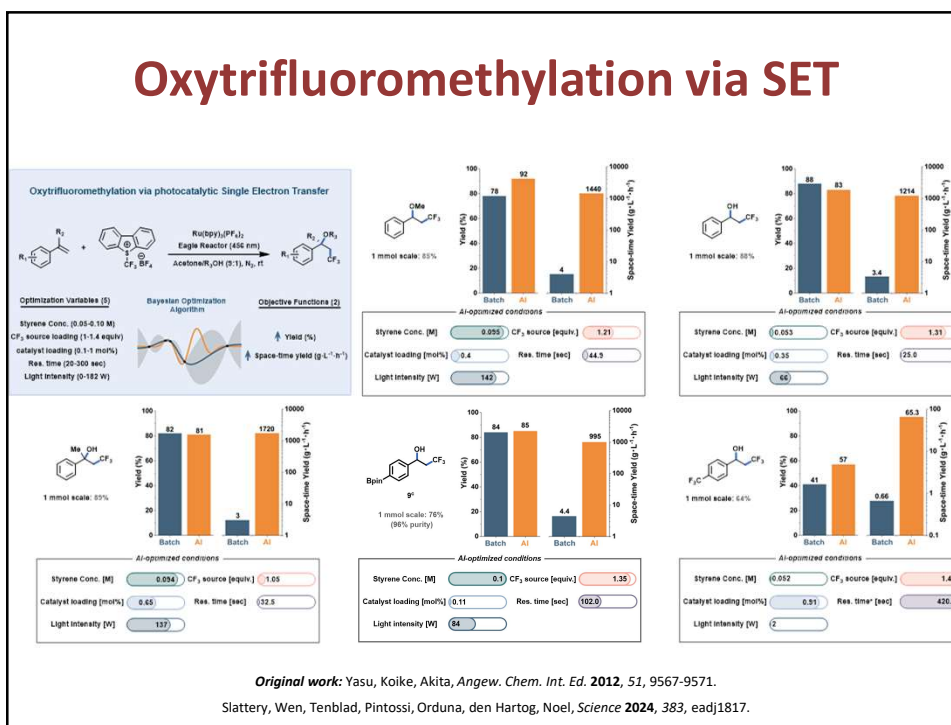
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## Trifluoromethylthiolation via HAT

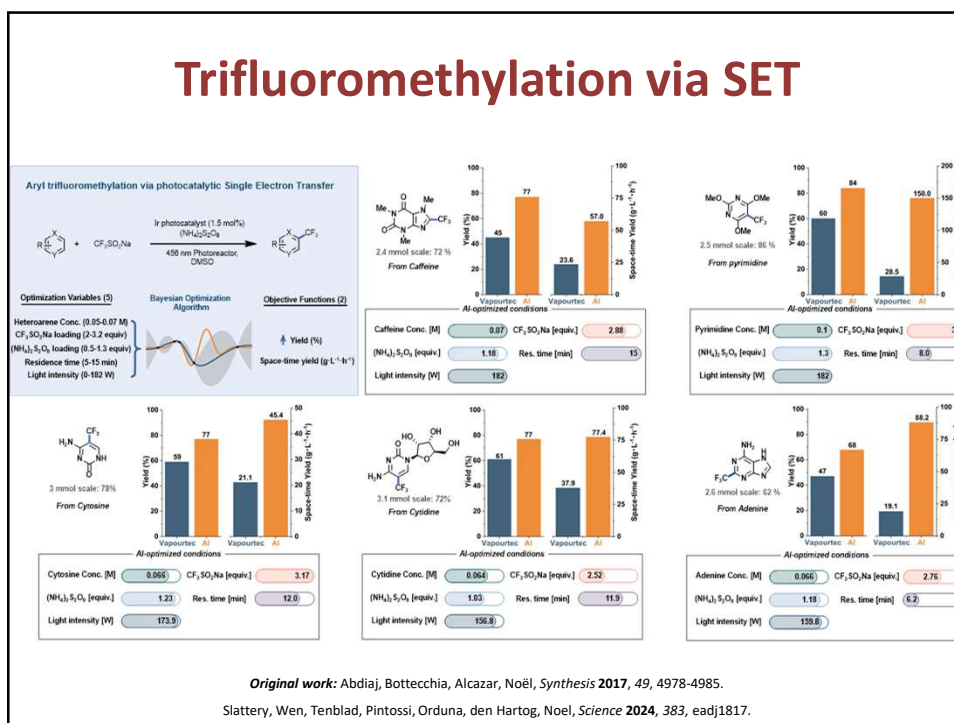


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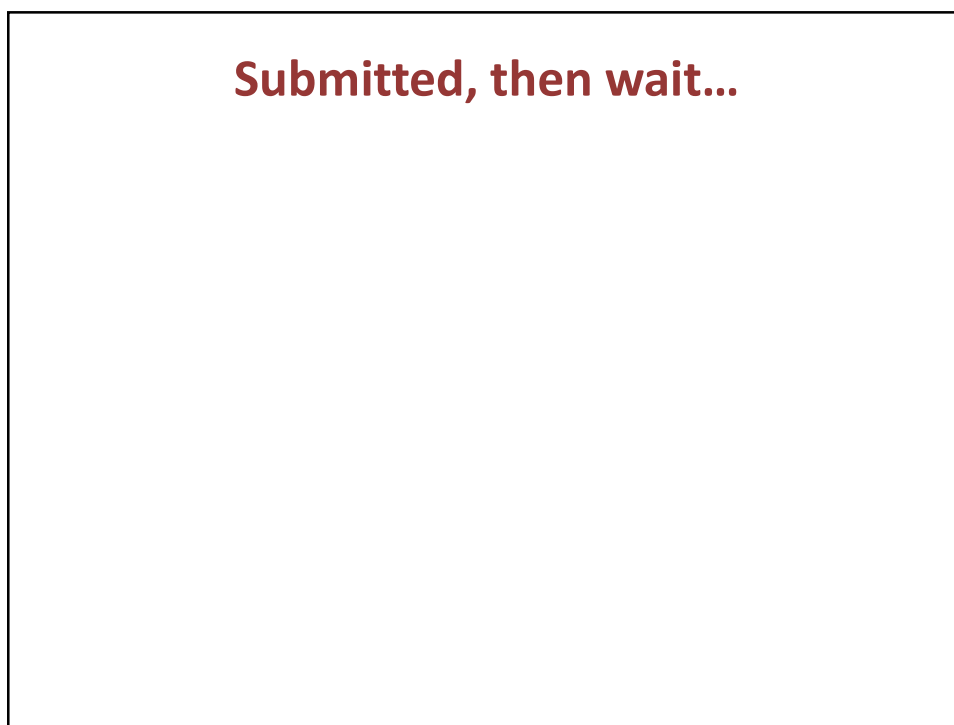
## Oxytrifluoromethylation via SET



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**News from referees...**

we just got feedback from Science 19:12 ✓  
 some work to do but i think this is a pretty good opportunity 19:12 ✓  
 [Redacted] 9:12 ✓  
 we get one year but i think we should be able to do this faster! 19:17 ✓  
 See new fwd email 19:23 ✓  
 Very supportive 19:23 ✓  
 Let's nail this buddy 19:24 ✓  
 Yep I agree 19:24 ✓  
 Pretty addressable actually 19:24 ✓  
 Man I just get an uptick in heart rate and body temp 🤔 19:25 ✓  
 And forgot that my hands were shaking 🤔 19:30 ✓  
 19:30 ✓

Read full account via: <https://www.noelresearchgroup.com/category/blog/>

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## Cross-Electrophile Coupling

C(sp<sup>2</sup>)-C(sp<sup>3</sup>) cross-electrophile coupling

**Reaction Scheme:**

Aryl-Br + Alkyl-Br → Product

**Conditions:** Benzophenones, NiBr<sub>2</sub> glyme/Ligand (5/6 mol%), 2,4-lutidine (TMS)<sub>2</sub>SiH (1.3 equiv.), Signify Eagle Reactor (370 atm), MeCN

**Optimization Variables (8)\*:** Aryl-Br Conc. (0.05-0.1 M), Alkyl-Br loading (1-3 equiv.), Ligand Type (L1-LV), Benzophenone Type (BPI, BPII), Benzophenone Loading (10-25 mol%), Lutidine Loading (1-1.5 eq.), Residence time (10-50 min), Light Intensity (5-144 W)

**Bayesian Optimization Algorithm**

**Objective Functions (2):** Yield (%), Throughput (mmol h<sup>-1</sup>)

**17<sup>a</sup>**

2.5 mmol scale: 80%

Condition	Yield (%)	Space-time Yield (g L <sup>-1</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )
Vapourtec AI	37	14.6
AI	74	58.6

**AI-optimized conditions:**

- Aryl-Br Conc. [M]: 0.10
- Alkyl-Br [equiv.]: 2.78
- Ligand Type: L1
- Benzophenone Type: BPI
- Benzophenone loading [mol %]: 21.2
- Lutidine loading [equiv.]: 1.30
- Residence Time [min]: 22.5
- Light Intensity [W]: 63.1

**18<sup>a</sup>**

2.5 mmol scale: 67%

Condition	Yield (%)	Space-time Yield (g L <sup>-1</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )
Vapourtec AI	61	13.9
AI	66	13.6

**AI-optimized conditions:**

- Aryl-Br Conc. [M]: 0.10
- Alkyl-Br [equiv.]: 3.0
- Ligand Type: L1
- Benzophenone Type: BPI
- Benzophenone loading [mol %]: 23.8
- Lutidine loading [equiv.]: 1.45
- Residence Time [min]: 50.6
- Light Intensity [W]: 126.7

**19<sup>a</sup>**

2.5 mmol scale: 80%

Condition	Yield (%)	Space-time Yield (g L <sup>-1</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )
Vapourtec AI	69	16.4
AI	81	21.1

**AI-optimized conditions:**

- Aryl-Br Conc. [M]: 0.098
- Alkyl-Br [equiv.]: 2.68
- Ligand Type: L1
- Benzophenone Type: BPI
- Benzophenone loading [mol %]: 16.1
- Lutidine loading [equiv.]: 1.45
- Residence Time [min]: 40.8
- Light Intensity [W]: 96.5

**Original work:** Luridiana, Mazzarella, Capaldo, Rincon, Garcia-Losada, Mateos, Frederick, Nuno, Buma, Noël, *ACS Catal.* **2022**, *12*, 11216–11225.  
 Slattery, Wen, Tenblad, Pintossi, Orduna, den Hartog, Noel, *Science* **2024**, *383*, ead1817.

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## Is chemistry ready for an AI revolution?

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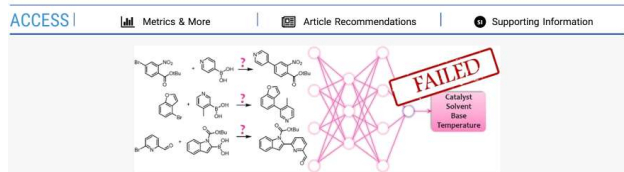
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Wiktor Beker, Rafal Roszak, Agnieszka Wolos, Nicholas H. Angello, Vandana Rathore, Martin D. Burke,<sup>\*</sup> and Bartosz A. Grzybowski<sup>†</sup>

[Cite This: J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2022, 144, 4819–4827](#)

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Grzybowski et al., *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2022**, *144*, 4819–4827.

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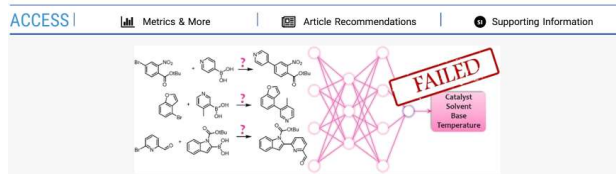
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#### Caused by

- Subjective preferences in selecting reaction conditions by chemists
- Lack of reliable and standardized data, including lack of negative data.

Grzybowski et al., *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 2022, 144, 4819–4827.

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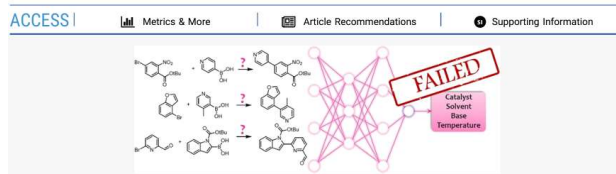
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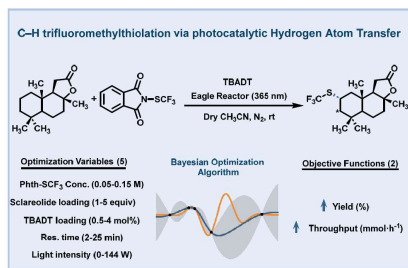


**Fundamental flaw in the current synthetic literature (!)**

Grzybowski et al., *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 2022, 144, 4819–4827.

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## Digitization of Chemistry



Clean, detailed and reproducible datasets

- No mass, heat or photon transfer issues
- No human error
- Positive and negative data available

Table S15. Experimental conditions and results for trifluoromethylthiolation campaign of sclareoide.

run	Phth-SCF <sub>3</sub> Conc. (M)	Sclareoide loading (equiv.)	TBADT loading (mol%)	Residence time (min)	Light intensity (W)	Yield (%)	Throughput (mmol/hr)
1	0.100	4.00	4.00	15.0	144	58.6	0.668
2	0.064	4.42	1.75	5.1	117	21.2	0.457
3	0.132	1.95	3.35	8.8	104	50.4	1.282
4	0.125	1.88	1.38	9.0	108	51.6	1.226
5	0.062	1.63	2.44	12.3	1	1.8	0.015
6	0.100	2.75	2.25	9.0	108	57.1	1.084
7	0.065	3.77	3.18	10.9	84	51.5	0.523
8	0.138	4.06	3.56	4.5	36	5.4	0.282
9	0.075	1.88	3.13	9.0	36	4.2	0.059
10	0.100	3.42	2.72	6.0	32	3.5	0.100
11	0.141	2.68	0.90	11.2	135	32.2	0.690
12	0.149	4.47	3.97	19.1	92	47.1	0.630
13	0.093	1.38	2.79	9.0	144	25.8	0.456
14	0.100	4.28	3.94	13.4	122	50.1	0.641
15	0.138	4.50	4.00	19.8	144	65.4	0.776
16	0.138	2.31	2.69	9.4	108	4.7	0.119
17	0.145	3.21	4.00	19.1	97	60.7	0.789
18	0.131	4.45	3.93	13.6	105	58.4	0.961
19	0.128	1.68	1.22	17.2	61	31.7	0.403
20	0.072	3.26	1.87	4.5	142	11.2	0.304
21	0.121	2.00	3.13	7.3	36	8.7	0.248
22	0.091	5.00	1.37	8.9	0	0.0	0.000
23	0.092	4.75	0.72	18.9	63	23.0	0.190
24	0.115	4.24	3.94	13.7	64	52.0	0.750
25	0.082	4.53	1.21	15.8	85	36.6	0.327
26	0.119	4.88	2.69	13.4	132	52.3	0.791

Slattery, Wen, Tenblad, Pintossi, Orduna, den Hartog, Noel, *Science* **2024**, *383*, eadj1817.

For a review on self-driving labs, see: Bailey, Slattery, Savino, Noel, *Matter* **2024**, *7*, 2382–2398.

47

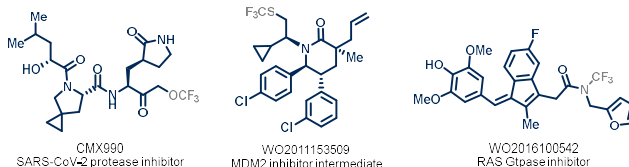
## On-demand Generation Fluorinated Reagents

48



## Emerging fluorinated moieties

Growing interest into trifluoromethyl groups attached to heteroatoms



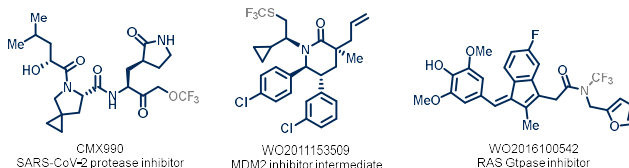
- New chemical space by the XCF<sub>3</sub> motifs
- Fine tuning of the molecular properties
- XCF<sub>3</sub> are gaining momentum as an alternative to C-CF<sub>3</sub> fragments

Emerging Fluorinated Motifs: Synthesis, Properties and Applications, Wiley-VCH 2020

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## Emerging fluorinated moieties

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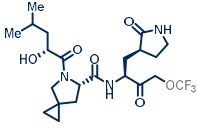
**But how to make them?**

Emerging Fluorinated Motifs: Synthesis, Properties and Applications, Wiley-VCH 2020

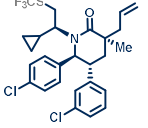
50

## Emerging fluorinated moieties

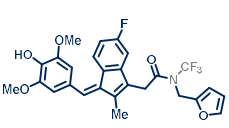
*Growing interest into trifluoromethyl groups attached to heteroatoms*



CMX990  
SARS-CoV-2 protease inhibitor



WO2011153509  
MDM2 inhibitor intermediate




WO2016100542  
RAS Gtpase inhibitor

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
### But how to make them?

Trifluoromethylthiolation



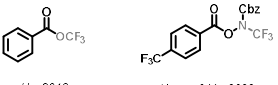
[Me<sub>4</sub>N][SCF<sub>3</sub>]  
Yagupolskii, 2003

Trifluoromethoxylation



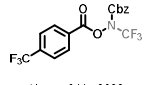
Togni, 2018

Trifluoromethylamination



Hu, 2018

Trifluoromethylamination




Huang & Xu, 2022

*Emerging Fluorinated Motifs: Synthesis, Properties and Applications, Wiley-VCH 2020*

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## Proposed change in EU law

*Potential ban on polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) in EU?*



**ANNEX XV RESTRICTION REPORT**

**PROPOSAL FOR A RESTRICTION**


**SUBSTANCE NAME(S): Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)**

Tyrrell, *Org. Process Res. Dev.* **2023**, 27, 1422-1426.

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*Exceptions are anticipated for pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals*

Tyrrell, *Org. Process Res. Dev.* **2023**, 27, 1422-1426.

53

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
*Potential ban on polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) in EU?*



ANNEX XV RESTRICTION REPORT

PROPOSAL FOR A RESTRICTION

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*Exceptions are anticipated for pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals*

**BUT**

*The ban could still involve reagents or even API intermediates...*

Tyrrell, *Org. Process Res. Dev.* **2023**, 27, 1422-1426.

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## Synthesis of CF<sub>3</sub>X moieties

**We need new synthetic methods that are:**

- Environmentally-friendly
- Starting from non-banned chemicals, e.g. alkali fluorides
- Enable Late-stage Functionalization

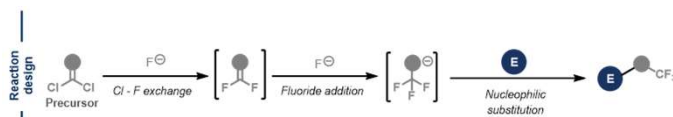
55

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**Our approach:**



Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

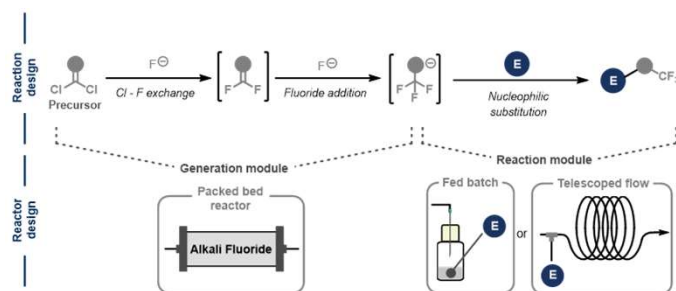
56

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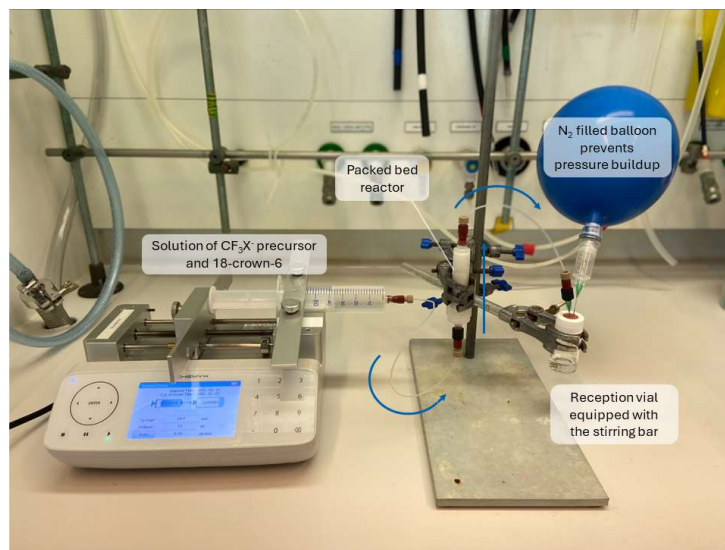
Our approach:



Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

57

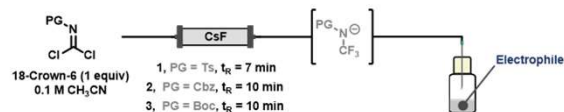
## Synthesis of $CF_3X$ moieties



Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

58

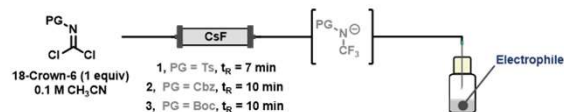
## Synthesis of $\text{CF}_3\text{N}$ anions on demand



Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

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## Synthesis of $\text{CF}_3\text{N}$ anions on demand

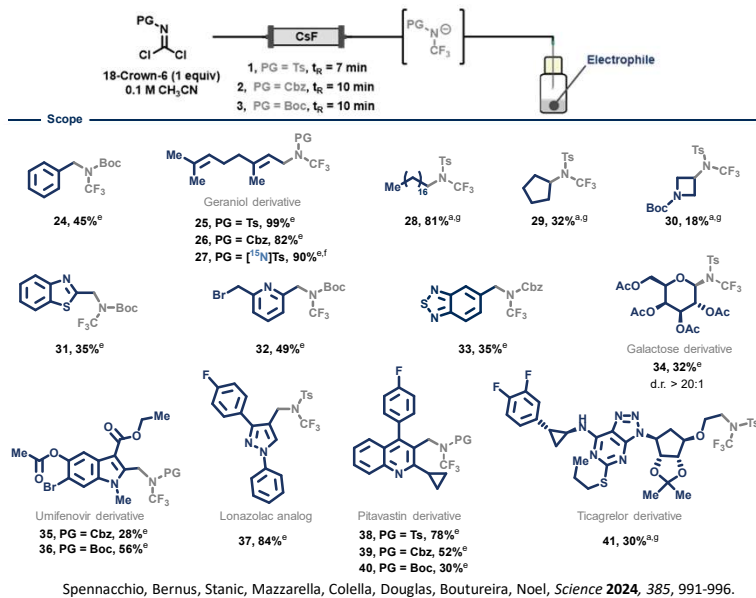


Leaving group assessment Using $[\text{CF}_3\text{TsN}]^-$	Functional group tolerability Using $[\text{CF}_3\text{TsN}]^-$											
<p>4</p> <p>Br 77% I 98% OMs 59% OTs 79%</p>	<p>6, 80%</p>	<p>7, 80%</p>	<p>8, 79%</p>	<p>9, 45%</p>	<p>10, 67%</p>	<p>11, 62%</p>	<p>12, 72%</p>	<p>13, 52%</p>	<p>14, 69%</p>	<p>15, 70%</p>	<p>16, 80%</p>	<p>17, 38%<sup>b</sup></p>
<p>5</p> <p>Br 20%<sup>a</sup> I 99%<sup>a</sup> OMs 7% OTs 19%</p> <p>Unsuccessful LGs: Cl, OAc, OTFA, OP(O)OEt, 2,4,6-triphenylpyridinium</p>	<p>&gt; 75%</p>	<p>18, 37%<sup>c</sup></p>	<p>19, 75%</p>	<p>20, 87%<sup>d</sup></p>	<p>21, 61%</p>	<p>22, 84%</p>	<p>23, 83%<sup>d</sup></p>					

Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

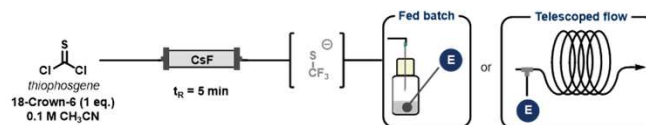
60

## Synthesis of $\text{CF}_3\text{N}$ anions on demand



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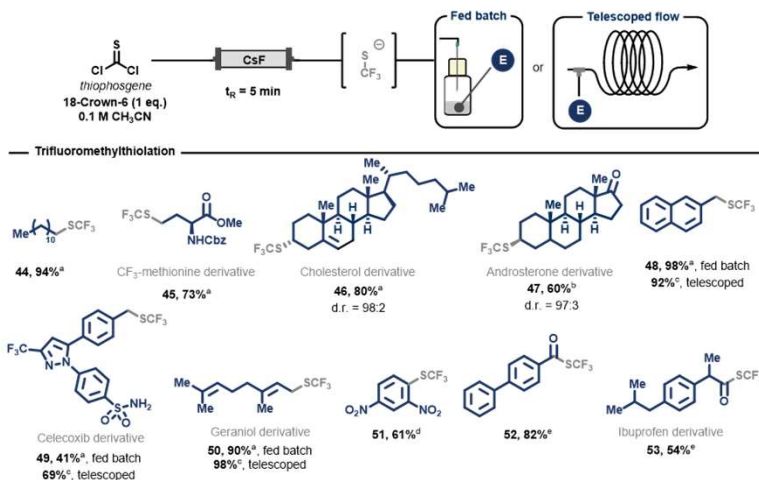
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Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

62

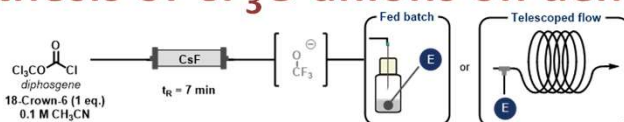
## Synthesis of CF<sub>3</sub>S anions on demand



Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

63

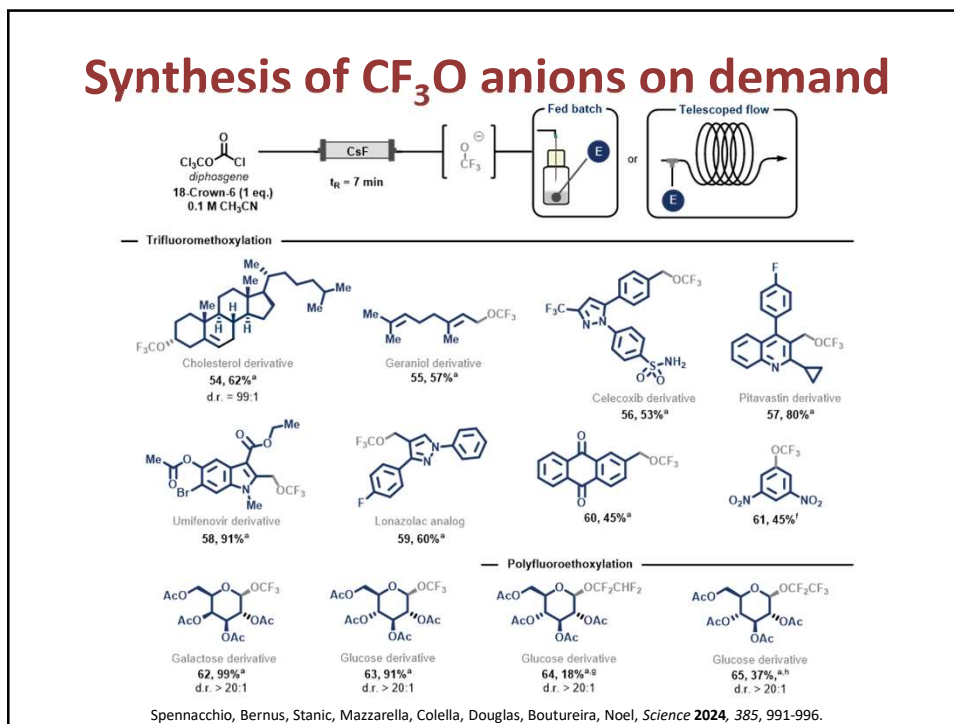
## Synthesis of CF<sub>3</sub>O anions on demand



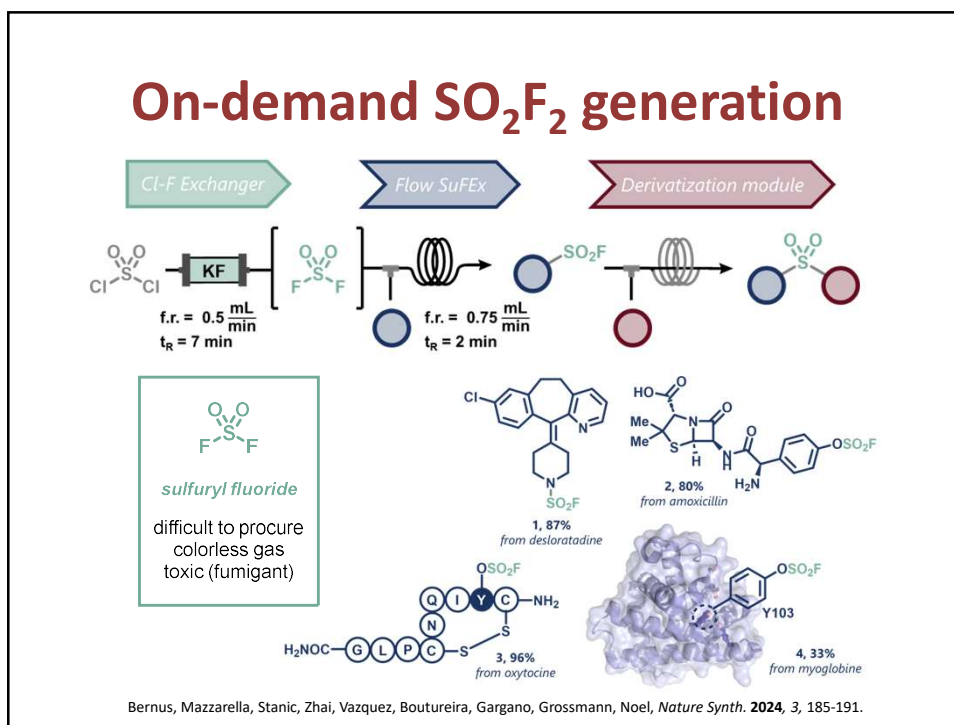
Spennacchio, Bernus, Stanic, Mazzarella, Colella, Douglas, Boutureira, Noel, *Science* **2024**, 385, 991-996.

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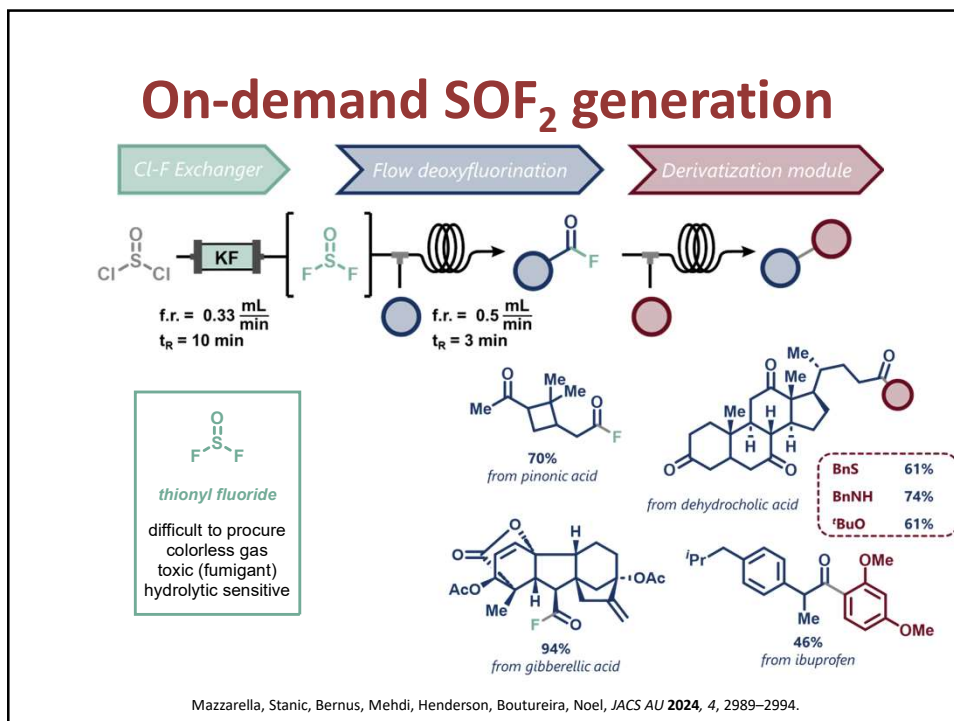




65



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## Conclusions

- **Use of microreactors for organic chemistry:**
  - Many advantages: intensified reaction conditions, scalability, safety, reduced reaction times, etc.

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## Conclusions

- **Use of microreactors for organic chemistry:**
  - Many advantages: intensified reaction conditions, scalability, safety, reduced reaction times, etc.
- **So what are you waiting for?**
  - But be careful, look for advantages of flow!
  - ... and carry out only those reactions in flow which are worth pursuing.

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## Conclusions

- **Use of microreactors for organic chemistry:**
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- **So what are you waiting for?**
  - But be careful, look for advantages of flow!
  - ... and carry out only those reactions in flow which are worth pursuing.
- **Go with the Flow!**

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## Acknowledgements



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