Oxidative Trimerization of indoles via Water-Assisted Visible-Light Photoredox Catalysis and the Study of Their Anti-Cancer Activities.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

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General Procedure. All solvents were reagent grade. Reactions were normally carried out in pearshaped flasks or glass vials with screw cap. Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on Merck silica gel 60 F₂₅₄ glass plates. ¹H NMR spectra were obtained in CDCl₃ unless otherwise noted at 400 MHz (Bruker DPX-400, Bruker AscendTM 400) or 500 MHz (Varian-Unity INOVA-500). ¹³C NMR spectra were obtained at 125 MHz or 100 MHz. IR spectra were recorded on Bruker Alpha FT-IR spectrometer or PerkinElmer Spectrum Two FT-IR Spectrometer L160000A with Universal ATR (UATR) sampling accessory. The melting point was recorded on a melting point apparatus (MPA100-Automated melting point system, Stanford Research Systems, Inc.) and is uncorrected. ESI ionization time-of-flight mass (ESI-TOF MS) spectral data were obtained on a JMS-T100LP 4G(JEOL) mass spectrometer equipped with the ESI source, detecting positive and negative ions. Typical measurement conditions are as follows: needle voltage: 2000 kV, orifice 1 voltage: 40 V, ring lens voltage: 10 V, spray temperature: 250°C. LEDs were purchased from shop.cpu.com.tw. 12V DC, 180 mA, LED type: SMD5050 (5x5 mm), 18 LED in each trip, size of a trip: 300 (L) x 10 (W) x 3.3 (D) mm. For blue LED, product no: 4105-18B ($\lambda_{max} = 465-467.5$ nm); for green LED, product no: 4105-18G ($\lambda_{max} = 514.7$ nm); for white LED, product no: 4105-18W. For CFL: 24 W Philips Tornado daylight compact fluorescence light.

Cell culture

Human breast carcinoma MDA-MB-231 cell, lung carcinoma A549 cell, and cervical epithelioid carcinoma HELA cell were purchased from Bioresource Collection and Research Center (BCRC 60425, 60074, and 60005 respectively). Cells maintained in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM; HyClone) with 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS; Biological industries), 2 mM L-glutamine and antibiotics (containing 100 mg/L Streptomycin and 100 U/mL Penicillin G). All of cancer cell lines were maintained in a humidified incubator with 5% CO₂ at 37 °C.

MTT assay

Cancer cells were seeded at a density of 1.5×10^4 per well in 96-well culture dishes. After 24 h incubation, the cells were treated with different concentration of 3-indolones **1a–1j** or DMSO as vehicle control for 48 h. Following cells were incubated with 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (1 mg/mL, Sigma) at 37 °C for 4 h and then with DMSO at room temperature for 30 min. The spectrophotometric absorbance of the samples was determined by Molecular Devices SPECTRAmax PLUS384 at 540 nm.



Fig. S1 Growth inhibition activity of doxorubicin (reference drug) against three cultured human tumor cell lines. Concentration of doxorubicin necessary to inhibit the growth of a panel of human cancer cells by 50% after 48 h exposure. Data are representative of three individual experiments, performed in three replicates (IC₅₀, mean \pm SEM, n = 3).

Preparation of [3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1a)



A magnetic stirring bar and indole (46.8 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of $Ru(bpy)_3Cl_2\bullet 6H_2O$ (6.0 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.4 mL) and H₂O (1.6 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. With careful sealing, a single balloon of oxygen can last for the duration of the reaction without the need to refill

the oxygen gas. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 7 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford **1a** (R_f = 0.39 in 50% EtOAc–hexane; 36.8 mg, 76% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for **1a**:¹ m.p 234–235 °C (decomp.); IR (KBr): 3346, 3059, 2924, 1663, 1614, 1489, 1457, 1329, 1149, 1105, 743 cm⁻¹;¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 10.97 (brs, 2 H), 8.13 (s, 1 H), 7.52 – 7.45 (m, 2 H), 7.35 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.32 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H) 7.09 (d, J = 2.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.03 (dd, J = 8.0, 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.94 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.83 (dd, J = 8.0, 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.72 (dd, J = 8.0, 8.0 Hz, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 200.8 (C), 160.5 (C), 137.4 (CH), 136.9 (two C), 125.6 (two C), 124.4 (CH), 124.0 (two CH), 121.0 (two CH), 120.5 (two CH), 118.3 (two CH), 117.7 (C), 117.0 (CH), 114.0 (two C), 111.8 (CH), 111.6 (two CH), 67.6 (C);² EI-MS (m/z, relative intensity): 364 (M⁺+1, 7), 363 (M⁺, 28), 335 (26), 334 (100), 332 (6), 219 (6), 218 (7), 217 (7), 190 (8), 166 (4), 117 (3); exact mass calculated for C_{24H17}N₃O (M⁺): 363.1372; found: 363.1365.



Thermal ellipsoids draw at the 50% probability level

Figure S2. ORTEP and Stereo plots for X-ray crystal structures of 1a (ic19115).

CCDC 2005723 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for **1a** (**ic19115**). These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk

¹ (a) Kothandapani, J.; Reddy, S. M. K.; Thamotharan, S.; Kumar, S. M.; Byrappa, K.; Ganesan, S. S. *Eur. J. Org. Chem.* **2018**, 2762–2767. (b) Azimi, M.; Nafissi-Varcheh, N.; Mogharabi, M.; Faramarzi, M. Ali; Aboofazeli, R. *J. Mol. Catal. B: Enzym.* **2016**, *126*, 69 – 75. (c) Qin, W.-B.; Chang, Q.; Bao, Y.-H.; Wang, N.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. Org. Biomol. Chem. **2012**, *10*, 8814 – 8821.

² (a) Kothandapani, J.; Reddy, S. M. K.; Thamotharan, S.; Kumar, S. M.; Byrappa, K.; Ganesan, S. S. *Eur. J. Org. Chem.* **2018**, 2762–2767. (b) Azimi, M.; Nafissi-Varcheh, N.; Mogharabi, M.; Faramarzi, M. Ali; Aboofazeli, R. *J. Mol. Catal. B: Enzym.* **2016**, *126*, 69 – 75. (c) Qin, W.-B.; Chang, Q.; Bao, Y.-H.; Wang, N.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. Org. Biomol. Chem. **2012**, *10*, 8814 – 8821.

Table S1.Crystal data and structure refinement for 1a (ic19115).

Identification code	ic19115	ic19115			
Empirical formula	C24 H17.19 N3 O1.10	C24 H17.19 N3 O1.10			
Formula weight	365.12	365.12			
Temperature	200(2) K	200(2) K			
Wavelength	1.54178 Å	1.54178 Å			
Crystal system	Monoclinic				
Space group	P21/n				
Unit cell dimensions	a = 10.5627(3) Å	$\alpha = 90^{\circ}$.			
	b = 8.8564(3) Å	$\beta = 98.7088(9)^{\circ}.$			
	c = 19.8868(7) Å	$\gamma = 90^{\circ}$.			
Volume	1838.91(10) Å ³				
Z	4				
Density (calculated)	1.319 Mg/m ³	1.319 Mg/m ³			
Absorption coefficient	0.657 mm ⁻¹	0.657 mm ⁻¹			
F(000)	764	764			
Crystal size	0.232 x 0.162 x 0.048 r	0.232 x 0.162 x 0.048 mm ³			
Theta range for data collection	4.484 to 74.982°.	4.484 to 74.982°.			
Index ranges	-12<=h<=13, -11<=k<=	-12<=h<=13, -11<=k<=11, -24<=l<=24			
Reflections collected	12050	12050			
Independent reflections	3770 [R(int) = 0.0169]	3770 [R(int) = 0.0169]			
Completeness to theta = 67.679°	99.7 %	99.7 %			
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from ec	Semi-empirical from equivalents			
Max. and min. transmission	0.7539 and 0.6813	0.7539 and 0.6813			
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-square	Full-matrix least-squares on F ²			
Data / restraints / parameters	3770 / 0 / 275	3770 / 0 / 275			
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.018				
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0365, wR2 = 0.03655, wR2 = 0.036555, wR2 = 0.0365555, wR2 = 0.03655555, wR2 = 0.03655555555555555555555555555555555555	0919			
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0399, wR2 = 0.	R1 = 0.0399, $wR2 = 0.0964$			
Extinction coefficient	n/a	n/a			
Largest diff. peak and hole	0.251 and -0.187 e.Å $^{\text{-3}}$	0.251 and -0.187 e.Å ⁻³			

Preparation of 1a and tryptanthrin



A magnetic stirring bar and indole (46.8 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.0 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (3.6 mL) and H₂O (0.4 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. With careful sealing, a single balloon of oxygen can last for the duration of the reaction without the need to refill the oxygen gas. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 30 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc-hexane to afford 1a (R_f = 0.37 in 40% EtOAc-hexane; 11.1 mg, 23% yield) as pale yellow solids and tryptanthrin ($R_f = 0.65$ in 40% EtOAc-hexane; 13.4 mg, 27% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for tryptanthrin:³ m.p. 265–266 °C (decomp); lit 261–262 °C.⁴ lit. 266–267 °C;⁵ lit. 265–267 °C;⁶ ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.62 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 8.43 (d, J = 8.0, 1 H), 8.02 (d, J = 8.0, 1.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.90 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.84 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.77 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 7.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.66 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.41 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 182.6 (C), 158.1 (C), 146.6 (C), 146.4 (C), 138.3 (CH), 135.1 (CH), 130.7 (CH), 130.3 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 127.2 (CH), 125.4 (CH), 123.8 (C), 121.9 (C), 118.0 (CH).

Preparation of 5,5',5''-trifluoro-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1b), method 1.



³ (a) Liu, M.; Shu, M.; Yao, C.; Yin, G.; Wang, D.; Huang, J. *Org. Lett.* **2016**, *18*, 824–827. (b) Cai, Z. J.; Wang, S. Y.; Ji, S.-J. Org. Lett. **2013**, *15*, 5226–5229.

⁴ Lygin, A. V.; De Meijere, A. Org. Lett. **2009**, *11*, 389 – 392.

⁵ Jahng, K. C.; Kim, Seung I.; Kim, D. H.; Seo, C. S.; Son, J.-K.; Lee, S. H.; Lee, E. S.; Jahng, Y. *Chem. Pharm. Bull.* **2008**, *56*, 607 – 609.

⁶ Al-Jalal, N.; Al-Awadi, N. A.; Ibrahim, M. R.; Elnagdi, M. H. ARKIVOC, 2011, 288 – 297.

A magnetic stirring bar and 5-fluoro-1*H*-indole (54.0 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.3 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.4 mL) and H₂O (1.6 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 17 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated in vacuo to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc-hexane to afford 1b ($R_f = 0.58$ in 50%) EtOAc-hexane; 30.6 mg, 55% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1b:⁷ m.p 154-155°C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3463, 3399, 3345, 1684, 1482, 1454, 1253, 1175, 801, 775 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.19 (brs, 2 H), 7.35 (dd, J = 7.0, 2.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.28 (ddd, J = 8.5, 8.5, 2.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.22 (dd, J = 8.5, 4.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.14 (d, J = 2.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.00 (dd, J = 10.0, 2.5 Hz, 2 H), 6.92 -6.84 (m, 3 H), 5.25 (s, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 200.8 (d, J = 3.1 Hz, C), 157.7 (d, J = 234.8 Hz, two C), 157.0 (d, J = 240.3 Hz, C), 156.9 (C), 133.5 (two C), 125.9 (d, J = 25.4 Hz, CH), 125.8 (d, J = 10.0 Hz, two C), 125.5 (two CH), 120.4 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, C), 114.7 (d, J = 4.5 Hz, two C), 114.3 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, CH), 112.2 (d, J = 9.5 Hz, two CH), 110.9 (d, J = 26.6 Hz, two CH), 110.2 (d, J = 22.2, CH), 105.3 (d, J = 24.5 Hz, two CH), 69.0 (C); MS (m/z, relative intensity): 419 (M⁺+2, 0.5), 418 (M⁺1, 7), 417 (M⁺, 28), 416 (5), 401 (7), 389 (27), 388 (100), 282 (4), 271 (4), 255 (9), 254 (13), 253 (7), 226 (8), 135 (9), 86 (9), 84 (16); exact mass calculated for C₂₄H₁₄F₃N₃O(M⁺): 417.1089; found: 417.1085.

Preparation of 5,5',5''-trifluoro-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1b), method 2.



A magnetic stirring bar and 5-fluoro-1*H*-indole (54.0 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of rose bengal (7.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.4 mL) and H₂O (1.6 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 green LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 17 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was

⁷ Qin, W.-B.; Chang, Q.; Bao, Y.-H.; Wang, N.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. Org. Biomol. Chem. **2012**, 10, 8814 – 8821.

purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford **1b** ($R_f = 0.58$ in 50% EtOAc–hexane; 44.5 mg, 80% yield) as pale yellow solids.

Preparation of 6,6',6''-trifluoro-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1c), method 1.



A magnetic stirring bar and 6-fluoro-1*H*-indole (58.3 mg, 0.43 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.5 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 17 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford 1c ($R_f = 0.32$ in 40%) EtOAc-hexane; 19.8 mg, 33% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1c:⁸ m.p. 180-181°C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3402, 3334, 1684, 1622, 1591, 1453, 1297, 1142, 1090, 951, 835, 801 cm⁻ ¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 11.09 (brs, 2 H), 8.51 (s, 1 H), 7.55 (dd, J = 8.5, 6.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.24 (dd, *J* = 8.5, 6.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.14 (dd, *J* = 10.0, 2.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 2.5 Hz, 2 H), 6.76 – 6.71 (m, 2 H), 6.64 (dd, $J = 10.5 \ 2.5 \ Hz$, 1 H), 6.57 – 6.51 (m, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 198.6 (C), 168.9 (d, J = 251.4 Hz, C), 161.8 (d, J = 14.8 Hz, C), 158.7 (d, J = 234.3 Hz, two C), 136.8 (d, J = 12.4 Hz, two C), 127.4 (d, J = 12.7 Hz, CH), 124.6 (d, J = 2.9 Hz, two CH), 122.2 (two C),121.3 (d, J = 10.0 Hz, two CH), 114.4 (C), 113.8 (two C), 107.1 (d, J = 24.2 Hz, two CH), 105.7 (d, J = 25.0 Hz, CH), 97.5 (d, J = 25.7 Hz, two CH), 97.3 (d, J = 26.1 Hz, CH), 68.0 (C); MS (m/z, relative intensity): 419 (M⁺+2, 1), 418 (M⁺+1, 5), 417 (M⁺, 20), 389 (19), 388 (72), 254 (14), 226 (14), 223 (13), 181 (14), 167 (17), 165 (60), 149 (100), 147 (21), 137 (19), 135 (14), 121 (23), 105 (99), 91 (29), 84 (34), 77 (70); exact mass calculated for C₂₄H₁₄F₃N₃O (M⁺): 417.1089; found: 417.1092.

⁸ Qin, W.-B.; Chang, Q.; Bao, Y.-H.; Wang, N.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. Org. Biomol. Chem. 2012, 10, 8814 - 8821.

Preparation of 6,6',6''-trifluoro-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1c), method 2.



A magnetic stirring bar and 6-fluoro-1*H*-indole (58.3 mg, 0.43 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of erythrosine B (7.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.4 mL) and H₂O (1.6 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 green LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 17 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford **1c** (R_f = 0.32 in 40% EtOAc–hexane; 40.1 mg, 72% yield) as pale yellow solids.

Preparation of 5,5',5"-trichloro-[3,2':2',3"-terindolin]-3'-one (1d)



A magnetic stirring bar and 5-chloro-1*H*-indole (61.5 mg, 0.406 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (7.4 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 21 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford **1d** (R_f = 0.30 in 40% EtOAc–hexane; 48.6 mg, 77% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for **1d**:⁹ m.p. 214–216 °C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max} : 3407, 3337, 1689, 1614, 1464, 1254, 1170, 1103, 894, 799, 685 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 11.29 (brs, 1 H), 11.28 (brs, 1 H), 8.51 (s, 1 H), 7.55 (dd, J = 8.6, 2.3

⁹ Liao, H.; Peng, X.; Hu, D.; Xu, X.; Huang, P.; Liu, Q.; Liu, L. Org. Biomol. Chem. 2018, 16, 5699 - 5706.

Hz, 1 H), 7.50 (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1 H), 7.40 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 2 H), 7.25 – 7.21 (m, 4 H), 7.05 (dd, J = 8.6, 2.3 Hz, 2 H), 7.00 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 199.3 (C), 159.0 (C), 137.6 (CH), 135.5 (two C), 126.5 (two C), 125.6 (two CH), 123.6 (CH), 123.2 (two C), 121.3 (two CH), 121.2 (C), 119.3 (two CH), 118.3 (C), 113.7 (CH), 113.5 (two CH), 113.0 (two C), 67.9 (C);¹⁰ MS (*m*/*z*, relative intensity): 468 (M⁺+3, 10), 467 (M⁺+2, 32), 466 (M⁺+1, 14), 465 (M⁺, 34), 451 (14), 441 (9), 440 (34), 439 (29), 438 (98), 437 (31), 436 (100), 402 (11), 401 (11), 400 (11), 365 (9), 316 (13), 314 (12), 288 (18), 287 (20), 286 (23), 252 (11), 251 (10), 216 (10), 176 (10), 151 (33), 89 (11); exact mass calculated for C₂₄H₁₄³⁵Cl₃N₃O (M⁺): 465.0202; found: 465.0212.

Preparation of 6,6',6''-trichloro-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1e)



A magnetic stirring bar and 6-chloro-1*H*-indole (61.7 mg, 0.407 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 21 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford 1e ($R_f = 0.32$ in 40%) EtOAc-hexane; 39.9 mg, 63% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1e:¹¹ m.p. 219–220 °C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max} : 3458, 3329, 3267, 1665, 1601, 1451, 1291, 1064, 848, 809, 799 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 11.18 (brs, 2 H), 8.47 (s, 1 H), 7.49 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1 H), 7.41 (d, J =2.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.21 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 2 H), 7.17 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.95 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.89 (dd, J = 8.6, 2.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.75 (dd, J = 8.2, 2.0 Hz, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 199.0 (C), 160.6 (C), 142.4 (C), 137.3 (C), 126.4 (CH), 126.0 (two C), 125.1 (two CH), 124.2 (two C), 121.5 (two CH), 119.0 (two CH and C), 117.7 (CH), 116.3 (C), 113.6 (two C), 111.3 (two CH), 111.0 (CH), 67.7 (C);¹² MS (*m/z*, relative intensity): 469 (M⁺+4, 11), 468 (M⁺+3, 10), 467 (M⁺+2, 31), 466 (M⁺+1,

¹⁰ Gohain, S. B.; Basumatary, M.; Boruah, P. K.; Das, M. R.; Thakur, A. J. Green Chem. **2020**, 22, 170 – 179.

¹¹ (a) Kothandapani, J.; Reddy, S. M. K.; Thamotharan, S.; Kumar, S. M.; Byrappa, K.; Ganesan, S. S. Eur. J. Org.

Chem. 2018, 2762 - 2767. (b) Kong, Y.-B.; Zhu, J.-Y.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. Can. J. Chem. 2014, 92, 269 - 273. (c)

Xue, J.; Bao, Y.; Qin, W.; Zhu, J.; Kong, Y.; Qu, H.; Chen, Z.; Liu, L. Synth. Commun. 2014, 44, 2215 – 2221.

¹² Kothandapani, J.; Reddy, S. M. K.; Thamotharan, S.; Kumar, S. M.; Byrappa, K.; Ganesan, S. S. Eur. J. Org. Chem.

13), 465 (M⁺, 32), 440 (33), 439 (28), 438 (98), 437 (30), 436 (100), 402 (12), 401 (12), 400 (14), 365 (9), 286 (12), 149 (39), 105 (18), 77 (7); exact mass calculated for $C_{24}H_{14}{}^{35}Cl_3N_3O$ (M⁺): 465.0202; found: 465.0194.

Preparation of 6,6',6''-tribromo-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1f)



A magnetic stirring bar and 6-bromo-1H-indole (82.7 mg, 0.422 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 21 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford 1f ($R_f = 0.29$ in 40%) EtOAc-hexane; 57.3 mg, 68% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1f: m.p 212-213 °C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3445, 3319, 3278, 2924, 1663, 1596, 1451, 1291, 1101, 1054, 915, 850, 796 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 11.19 (brs, 2 H), 8.44 (s, 1 H), 7.56 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.42 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.18-7.14 (m, 4 H), 7.12 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.00 (dd, J = 8.5, 1.5 Hz, 2 H), 6.88 (dd, J = 8.5, 1.5 Hz, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 199.2 (C), 160.7 (C), 137.8 (two C), 131.8 (C), 126.4 (CH), 125.0 (two CH), 124.4 (two C), 121.9 (two CH), 121.5 (two CH), 120.4 (CH), 116.5 (C), 114.3 (two CH) ,114.1 (CH), 114.0 (two C), 113.6 (two C), 67.6 (C); MS (*m/z*, relative intensity): 603 (M⁺+6, 13), 602 (M⁺+5, 11), 601 (M⁺+4, 36), 600 (M⁺+3, 14), 599 (M⁺+2, 36), 598 (M⁺+1, 8), 597 (M⁺, 15), 575 (10), 574 (36), 573 (29), 572 (100), 571 (30), 570 (100), 569 (11), 568 (35), 493 (11), 492 (17), 491 (21), 490 (22), 489 (11), 488 (10), 411 (10), 404 (13), 377 (9), 376 (11), 330 (10), 296 (9), 216 (20), 197 (16), 195 (16), 116 (13); exact mass calculated for C₂₄H₁₄⁷⁹Br₃N₃O (M⁺): 596.8687; found: 596.8690.

2018, 2762–2767.



Figure S3. ORTEP and Stereo plots for X-ray crystal structures of 1f (ic19379).

CCDC 2005724 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for **1f** (**ic19379**). These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk

Table S2.Crystal data and structure refinement for 1f (ic19379).

Identification code	ic19379			
Empirical formula	C24.25 H14.50 Br3 Cl0.50 N3 O			
Formula weight	621.34			
Temperature	200(2) K			
Wavelength	1.54178 Å			
Crystal system	Monoclinic			
Space group	C2/c			
Unit cell dimensions	a = 26.7209(6) Å	<i>α</i> = 90°.		
	b = 15.6427(3) Å	β=104.3612(4)°.		
	c = 11.8698(3) Å	$\gamma = 90^{\circ}$.		
Volume	4806.38(19) Å ³			
Z	8			
Density (calculated)	1.717 Mg/m ³			
Absorption coefficient	6.913 mm ⁻¹			
F(000)	2420			
Crystal size	0.170 x 0.109 x 0.075 mm ³			
Theta range for data collection	3.301 to 74.999°.			
Index ranges	-33<=h<=33, -18<=k<=19, -14<=l<=14			
Reflections collected	17387			
Independent reflections	4951 [R(int) = 0.0191]			
Completeness to theta = 67.679°	99.7 %			
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents			
Max. and min. transmission	0.7539 and 0.5857			
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F ²			
Data / restraints / parameters	4951 / 5 / 304			
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.050			
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0628, $wR2 = 0.1673$			
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0655, $wR2 = 0.1701$			
Extinction coefficient	n/a			
Largest diff. peak and hole	2.114 and -2.347 e.Å ⁻³			

Preparation of 7,7',7''-tribromo-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1g), method 1.



A magnetic stirring bar and 7-bromo-1H-indole (84.2 mg, 0.429 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 21 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 20% EtOAc–hexane to afford 1g ($R_f = 0.59$ in 40%) EtOAc-hexane; 45.5 mg, 53% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1g: m.p 247-249 °C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3409, 3378, 1699, 1606, 1482, 1431, 1116, 1090, 881, 816, 778, 742, 729 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.29 (brs, 2 H), 7.70 (d, J = 7.5, 1 H), 7.66 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.32 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 4 H), 7.25 - 7.23 (m, 2 H), 6.87 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 6.81 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5, 7.5 (dd, J = 7.5,7.5 Hz, 1 H), 5.51 (s, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 199.7 (C), 157.5 (C), 139.6 (CH), 135.7 (two C), 126.6 (two C), 124.9 (two CH), 124.6 (CH), 124.4 (two CH), 121.4 (two CH), 121.1 (C), 120.6 (CH), 119.8 (two CH), 115.8 (two C), 106.4 (C), 105.0 (two C), 68.6 (C); MS (m/z, relative intensity): 603 (M⁺+6, 10), 602 (M⁺+5, 8), 601 (M⁺+4, 28), 600 (M⁺+3, 10), 599 (M⁺+2, 29), 598 (M⁺+1, 6), 597 (M⁺, 10), 574 (32), 573 (25), 572 (98), 571 (26), 570 (100), 568 (32), 492 (12), 491 (15), 490 (16), 330 (8), 206 (9), 165 (10); exact mass calculated for $C_{24}H_{14}^{79}Br_3N_3O$ (M⁺): 596.8687; found: 596.8683.

Preparation of 7,7',7''-tribromo-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1g), method 2.



A magnetic stirring bar and 7-bromo-1H-indole (78.4 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk

tube vial, followed by sequential addition of erythrosine B (7.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.4 mL) and H₂O (1.6 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 green LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 21 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 20% EtOAc–hexane to afford **1g** (R_f = 0.59 in 40% EtOAc–hexane; 63.2 mg, 79% yield) as pale yellow solids.

Preparation of 5,5',5''-triiodo-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1h)



A magnetic stirring bar and 5-iodo-1H-indole (98.8 mg, 0.406 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.1 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 8 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane to afford 1h ($R_f = 0.30$ in 40%) EtOAc-hexane; 84.4 mg, 84% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1h: m.p. 249-250 °C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3456, 3409, 3386, 1699, 1601, 1464, 1098, 799 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 11.25 (brs, 2 H), 8.50 (s, 1 H), 7.77 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.75 (s, 1 H), 7.59 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.30 (dd, J = 8.5, 1.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.24 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.13 (d, J = 2.5 Hz, 2 H), 6.84 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 1 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 198.7 (C), 159.4 (C), 145.3 (CH), 136.0 (two C), 132.7 (CH), 129.2 (two CH), 128.6 (two CH), 128.0 (two C), 125.0 (two CH), 119.9 (C), 114.5 (CH), 114.3 (two CH), 112.6 (two C), 82.8 (two C), 78.3 (C), 67.5 (C); MS (*m/z*, relative intensity): 743 (M⁺+2, 2), 742 (M⁺+1, 18), 741 (M⁺, 65), 725 (13), 713 (36), 712 (100), 586 (19), 585 (27), 498 (66), 470 (15), 343 (57), 330 (21), 243 (85), 216 (23), 141 (18), 128 (34), 116 (55), 89 (24), 75 (20); exact mass calculated for C₂₄H₁₄I₃N₃O (M⁺): 740.8271; found: 740.8279.

Preparation of 3'-oxo-[3,2':2',3"-terindoline]-5,5',5"-tricarbonitrile (1i)



A magnetic stirring bar and 1H-indole-5-carbonitrile (60.7 mg, 0.43 mmol) was placed in a 10mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (7.0 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 72 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% acetone–hexane to afford 1i (R_f = 0.31 in 50% acetone-hexane; 18.7 mg, 30% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1i:¹³ m.p. 175–177 °C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3309, 2223, 1709, 1619, 1487 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 11.76 (brs, 2 H), 9.41 (s, 1 H), 8.03 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.87 (dd, J = 8.5, 1.5 Hz, 1 H), 7.63 (s, 2 H), 7.57 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.47 (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.42 (dd, J = 8.5, 1.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.08 $(d, J = 8.5 \text{ Hz}, 1 \text{ H}); {}^{13}\text{C} \text{ NMR} (125 \text{ MHz}, \text{DMSO-}d_6): \delta 198.0 (C), 161.2 (C), 140.6 (CH), 138.8 (two$ C), 130.8 (CH), 126.6 (two CH), 125.3 (two CH), 124.9 (two C), 124.1 (two CH), 120.5 (two C), 119.3 (C), 117.0 (C), 113.5 (two C), 113.4 (two CH), 112.6 (CH), 101.0 (two C), 99.0 (C), 67.5 (C); MS (*m/z*, relative intensity): 439 (M⁺+1, 2), 438 (M⁺, 10), 410 (20), 409 (63), 298 (29), 296 (16), 269 (31), 268 (46), 240 (15), 167 (21), 142 (100), 115 (58), 114 (31), 105 (18), 91 (22), 77 (27); exact mass calculated for C₂₇H₁₄N₆O (M⁺): 438.1229; found: 438.1227.

Preparation of 5,5',5''-trimethyl-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1j), method 1.



 ¹³ (a) Kong, Y.-B.; Zhu, J.-Y.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. *Can. J. Chem.* 2014, *92*, 269 – 273. (b) Xue, J.; Bao, Y.; Qin, W.; Zhu, J.; Kong, Y.; Qu, H.; Chen, Z.; Liu, L. *Synth. Commun.* 2014, *44*, 2215 – 2221.

A magnetic stirring bar and 1*H*-indole-5-carbonitrile (52.5 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.8 mg, 0.01 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.4 mL) and H₂O (1.6 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 24 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated in vacuo to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 20% EtOAc-hexane to afford 1 (R_f = 0.26 in 40% EtOAc-hexane; 27.4 mg, 51% yield) as pale yellow solids. Selected data for 1j:¹⁴ m.p. 254–256°C (decomp); IR (ATR) v_{max}: 3363, 1722, 1653, 1622, 1498, 1420, 1253, 1041, 796, 765, 703 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 10.79 (brs, 2 H), 7.81 (s, 1 H), 7.34 (dd, J = 8.4, 2.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.26 (s, 1 H), 7.23 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2 H), 7.11 (s, 2 H), 7.01 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.91 – 6.82 (m, 3 H), 2.24 (s, 3 H), 2.21 (s, 6 H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 200.8 (C), 159.1 (C), 138.6 (CH), 135.3 (two C), 126.4 (two C), 125.9 (two C), 125.8 (C), 124.0 (two CH), 123.6 (CH), 122.6 (two CH), 120.2 (two CH), 118.0 (C), 113.7 (two C), 111.9 (CH), 111.2 (two CH), 68.0 (C), 21.4 (two CH₃), 20.1 (CH₃);2° MS (*m*/*z*, relative intensity): 406 (M⁺+1, 4), 405 (M⁺, 18), 377 (16), 376 (52), 359 (12), 330 (11), 274 (15), 246 (32), 165 (46), 149 (19), 130 (21), 105 (49), 84 (77), 66 (100); exact mass calculated for C₂₇H₂₃N₃O (M⁺): 405.1841; found: 405.1846.

Preparation of 5,5',5''-trimethyl-[3,2':2',3''-terindolin]-3'-one (1j), method 2.



A magnetic stirring bar and 1*H*-indole-5-carbonitrile (53.2 mg, 0.41 mmol) was placed in a 10mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of rose bengal (23.0 mg, 0.02 mmol, 0.06 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 green LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 24 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 20% EtOAc–hexane to afford **1j** (R_f = 0.26 in 40% EtOAc–hexane; 46.4 mg, 85% yield) as pale yellow solids.

¹⁴ Qin, W.-B.; Chang, Q.; Bao, Y.-H.; Wang, N.; Chen, Z.-W.; Liu, L.-X. Org. Biomol. Chem. 2012, 10, 8814 - 8821.



Thermal ellipsoids draw at the 50% probability level



Figure S4. ORTEP and Stereo plots for X-ray crystal structures of 1j (ic19387).

CCDC 2005725 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for **1j** (**ic19387**). These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk

Table S3. Crystal data and structure refinement for 1j (ic19387).

Identification code	ic19387			
Empirical formula	C27 H23 N3 O			
Formula weight	405.48			
Temperature	200(2) K			
Wavelength	1.54178 Å			
Crystal system	Triclinic			
Space group	P-1			
Unit cell dimensions	a = 10.4157(2) Å	$\alpha = 112.5285(8)^{\circ}.$		
	b = 10.5063(2) Å	$\beta = 108.7529(8)^{\circ}.$		
	c = 11.3815(2) Å	$\gamma = 99.9684(8)^{\circ}.$		
Volume	1024.96(3) Å ³			
Z	2			
Density (calculated)	1.314 Mg/m ³			
Absorption coefficient	0.637 mm ⁻¹			
F(000)	428			
Crystal size	0.119 x 0.070 x 0.041 mm ³			
Theta range for data collection	4.650 to 74.991°.			
Index ranges	-13<=h<=12, -13<=k<=13, -14<=l<=14			
Reflections collected	8034			
Independent reflections	4193 [R(int) = 0.0127]			
Completeness to theta = 67.679°	99.9 %			
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents			
Max. and min. transmission	0.7539 and 0.7086			
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F ²			
Data / restraints / parameters	4193 / 0 / 295			
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.040			
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0382, wR2 = 0.0935			
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0437, $wR2 = 0.1013$			
Extinction coefficient	n/a			
Largest diff. peak and hole	0.225 and -0.205 e.Å ⁻³			

Preparation of 3 and N-(2-acetylphenyl)formamide (4).



A magnetic stirring bar and 3-methyl-1*H*-indole (53.1 mg, 0.405 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (6.0 mg, 0.008 mmol, 0.02 equiv), CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial, for 14 h until the completion of the reaction, as monitored by TLC. Upon completion, the reaction solution was diluted with EtOAc and extracted with water and brine. The organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by flash column chromatography with 20% EtOAc–hexane to afford **3** (R_f = 0.65 in 40% EtOAc–hexane; 8.8 mg, 17% yield) as white solids, and **4** (R_f = 0.52 in 40% EtOAc–hexane; 13.2 mg, 20% yield) as white solids.

Selected data for **3**:¹⁵ m.p. 205-206 °C; IR (neat): 3368, 2925, 1606, 1500, 1309, 1248, 1143, 742 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.83 – 6.68 (m, 7 H), 6.63 (dd, *J* = 7.8, 1.4 Hz, 1 H), 5.06 (d, *J* = 3.9 Hz, 1 H), 4.88 (brs, 1 H), 4.64 (brs, 1 H), 1.52 (s, 3 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 141.8 (C), 141.5 (C), 129.3 (C), 127. 6 (C), 121.8 (CH), 121.5 (CH), 120.8 (CH), 120.3 (CH), 117.3 (CH), 116.7 (CH), 115.1 (CH), 114.5 (CH), 79.3 (C), 79.0 (CH), 22.8 (CH₃); MS (*m*/*z*, relative intensity): 255 (M⁺+H, 18), 254 (M⁺, 100), 225 (3), 147 (53), 146 (52), 134 (56), 120 (37); exact mass calculated for C₁₅H₁₄N₂O₂ (M⁺): 254.1055; found: 254.1047.

Selected data for 4:¹⁶ m.p. 76-77 °C; lit. 75– 76 °C;¹⁷ 77 °C.¹⁸ IR (neat): 3252, 1700, 1654, 1578, 1508, 1452, 1358, 1309, 1251, 755 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 11.59 (brs, 1 H), 8.73 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 8.48 (s, 1 H), 7.90 (dd, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.55 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.15 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 2.66 (s, 3 H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 202.7 (C), 159.9 (CH), 139.9 (C), 135.2 (CH), 131.6 (CH), 123.1 (CH), 122.0 (C), 121.6 (CH), 28.5 (CH₃).

¹⁵ (1) Tauer, E.; Grellmann, K.-H. *Chem. Ber.* **1990**, *123*, 1149 – 1154. (2) Barluenga, J.; Aznar, F.; Liz, R.; Cabal, M.-P.; Cano, F. H.; Foces-Foces, C. *Chem. Ber.* **1986**, *119*, 887 – 899.

¹⁶ Yang, S.; Li, P.; Wang, Z.; Wang, L. Org. Lett. 2017, 19, 3386 – 3389. (2) Li, X.; Huang, H.; Yu, C.; Zhang, Y.; Li, H.; Wang, W. Org. Lett. 2016, 18, 5744 – 5747. (3) He, J.; Dong, J.; Su, L.; Wu, S.; Liu, L.; Yin, S.-F.; Zhou, Y. Org. Lett. 2020, 22, 2522–2526.

¹⁷ Fuerstner, A.; Jumbam, D. N. *Tetrahedron* **1992**, *48*, 5991 – 6010.

¹⁸ Chatterjee, A.; Biswas, K. M. J. Org. Chem., **1973**, 38, 23, 4002 – 4004.



Thermal ellipsoids draw at the 50% probability level



Figure S5. ORTEP and Stereo plots for X-ray crystal structures of 3 (ic19495).

CCDC 2005726 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for **3** (**ic19495**). These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk

Table S4. Crystal data and structure refinement for **3** (**ic19495**).

Identification code	ic19495	ic19495			
Empirical formula	C15 H14 N2 O2	C15 H14 N2 O2			
Formula weight	254.28	254.28			
Temperature	200(2) K	200(2) K			
Wavelength	1.54178 Å	1.54178 Å			
Crystal system	Monoclinic	Monoclinic			
Space group	P21/c				
Unit cell dimensions	a = 19.1254(4) Å	$\alpha = 90^{\circ}$.			
	b = 5.49360(10) Å	$\beta = 98.8783(9)^{\circ}$			
	c = 11.5714(3) Å	$\gamma = 90^{\circ}$.			
Volume	1201.21(5) Å ³				
Z	4	4			
Density (calculated)	$1.406 \ Mg/m^3$	1.406 Mg/m ³			
Absorption coefficient	0.770 mm ⁻¹	0.770 mm ⁻¹			
F(000)	536	536			
Crystal size	0.376 x 0.049 x 0.035 mm	0.376 x 0.049 x 0.035 mm ³			
Theta range for data collection	2.338 to 74.885°.	2.338 to 74.885°.			
Index ranges	-23<=h<=23, -6<=k<=6,	-23<=h<=23, -6<=k<=6, -14<=l<=14			
Reflections collected	8444	8444			
Independent reflections	2456 [R(int) = 0.0218]	2456 [R(int) = 0.0218]			
Completeness to theta = 67.679°	99.8 %	99.8 %			
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equi	Semi-empirical from equivalents			
Max. and min. transmission	0.7539 and 0.6179	0.7539 and 0.6179			
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares	Full-matrix least-squares on F ²			
Data / restraints / parameters	2456 / 0 / 181	2456 / 0 / 181			
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.063	1.063			
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0444, wR2 = 0.11	R1 = 0.0444, wR2 = 0.1113			
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0473, wR2 = 0.11	R1 = 0.0473, $wR2 = 0.1148$			
Extinction coefficient	n/a	n/a			
Largest diff. peak and hole	0.308 and -0.246 e.Å $^{\rm -3}$	0.308 and -0.246 e.Å ⁻³			



Thermal ellipsoids draw at the 50% probability level



Figure S6. ORTEP and Stereo plots for X-ray crystal structures of 4 (ic19457).

CCDC 2005727 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for **4** (**ic19457**). These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk

Table S5. Crystal data and structure refinement for 4 (ic19457).

Identification code	ic19457			
Empirical formula	C9 H9 N O2			
Formula weight	163.17			
Temperature	200(2) K			
Wavelength	1.54178 Å			
Crystal system	Monoclinic			
Space group	Pn			
Unit cell dimensions	a = 14.1319(5) Å	<i>α</i> = 90°.		
	b = 3.86820(10) Å	$\beta = 110.9456(10)^{\circ}$.		
	c = 15.5153(5) Å	$\gamma = 90^{\circ}$.		
Volume	792.10(4) Å ³			
Z	4			
Density (calculated)	1.368 Mg/m ³			
Absorption coefficient	0.806 mm ⁻¹			
F(000)	344			
Crystal size	0.471 x 0.059 x 0.029 mm ³			
Theta range for data collection	3.635 to 74.974°.			
Index ranges	-17<=h<=17, -4<=k<=4, -19<=l<=18			
Reflections collected	5152			
Independent reflections	2954 [R(int) = 0.0182]			
Completeness to theta = 67.679°	99.7 %			
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents			
Max. and min. transmission	0.7539 and 0.6339			
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F ²			
Data / restraints / parameters	2954 / 2 / 235			
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.049			
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0260, wR2 = 0.0687			
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0270, $wR2 = 0.0704$			
Absolute structure parameter	0.22(9)			
Extinction coefficient	n/a			
Largest diff. peak and hole	0.132 and -0.112 e.Å ⁻³			

Homemade photoredox flow reactor device for circular flow experiments.

A 1000-mL glass graduated cylinder with approximately 39 cm in height and 7.3 cm in diameter was used for the construction of the circular photoreactor device, as shown in the following photos. The cylinder was coiled with a 7.5 meter PFA tube (ID: 2 mm and OD: 3 mm, total volume ca. 24 mL). The coiled PFA tube covered the 10.2-cm height of the cylinder and resulted in an area of 11 cm x 7.3 cm x 3.14 = 234 cm² exposure to the LED light. In the external surface of the PFA tube coiled cylinder, nine blue LED strips (each with 18 LED beads) are secured with insulating tape and placed in the center. A peristaltic pump (LongerPump, BT100-2J, YZ1515x) was used for delivering the solution of indole (2a, 2.0 g, 17.1 mmol) and 40% H₂O/CH₃CN (170 mL) at a certain flow rate stream to the photoredox flow reactor. At the speed of 100 rpm, a flow rate of 20 mL/min, the first drop of the reaction solution took only 72 seconds for traveling through the photoredox flow reactor device and back to the round bottle flask. The flask was equipped with a balloon of oxygen atmosphere and the inlet PFA tube was adjusted to just below the liquid level so that a small amount of gas will enter the tube when pumping liquid. In addition, the outlet tube was introduced into the reaction mixtures (Note: An oxygen environment is critical to the completion of the reaction; therefore, the solution must be repeatedly exposed to oxygen and then subjected to blue light irradiation. With careful sealing, a single balloon of oxygen can last for the duration of the circular flow reaction without the need to refill the oxygen gas).

A magnetic stirring bar and indole (2.00 g, 17.1 mmol) were placed in a 250-mL round bottle flask, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (384 mg, 0.05 mmol, 0.03 equiv), CH₃CN (102 mL) and H₂O (68 mL). The flask was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and connected with a set of PFA tube and flow reaction device as described above. The reaction mixture was stirred and irradiated for 24 h, and the reaction solution was extracted with EtOAc and brine. The organic solution was filtered through a pad of Celite, silica gel, and MgSO₄, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by recrystallization from EtOAc and hexane, and the mother liquor was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc–hexane. The combined yellow solid product **1a** was obtained in 1.52 g (73% yield).



irradiation device





layout of the inlet and outlet PFA tube bubbles in the PFA tube (For clarity, solvent only, no catalysts and indole in the above two photos)

Circular flow Experiments for the reaction of 2h

A magnetic stirring bar and indole 2h (2.00 g, 8.23 mmol) was placed in a 250-mL round bottle flask, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (182 mg, 0.02 mmol, 0.03 equiv), CH₃CN (49 mL) and H₂O (33 mL). The flask was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. With careful sealing, a single balloon of oxygen can last for the duration of the circular flow reaction without the need to refill the oxygen gas). The solution was stirred and connected with a set of PFA tubes and flow reaction device as described above. The reaction mixture was stirred and irradiated for 12 h, followed by slow addition of water to precipitate the product 2h as a mustard-color solid. The precipitate was filter through a filter paper and collected, and the product was pure enough for spectroscopic analysis. The mother liquor filtrate was extracted with EtOAc and brine. The organic solution was filter through a pad of Celite, silica gel and MgSO4, and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a crude residue. The crude product was purified by recrystallization from EtOAc and hexane, and the mother liquor was purified by flash column chromatography with 30% EtOAc– hexane. The combined mustard color solid product 1h was obtained in 1.73 g (85% yield).

The light on/off experiment:

A magnetic stirring bar and indole (46.8 mg, 0.40 mmol) was placed in a 10-mL Schlenk tube vial, followed by sequential addition of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂•6H₂O (3.0 mg, 0.004 mmol, 0.01 equiv), a solution of CH₃CN (2.0 mL) and H₂O (1.3 mL), and 1,3,5-trimethylbenzene (18 μ L, 0.13 mmol, 0.32 equiv). The Schlenk tube was equipped with a balloon of oxygen. The solution was stirred and irradiated with a strip of 54 blue LEDs, located 2-5 cm away from the reaction vial. After the indicated reaction time, ~50 μ L of the reaction mixture aliquot was collected, diluted with acetone-d₆ and analyzed by ¹H NMR.¹⁹



Fig S7. Conversion of 2a to 1a with ruthenium catalyst in the light/dark sequence.

¹⁹ The transformation of indole **2a** to indolone **1a** does not solely depend on the visible-light catalysis, as a small portion of the product can be generated in the absence of light with oxygen and oxidant, *e.g.* H_2O_2 and other radical species, but with much slower reaction rate and lower yields. As shown in Figure S6. Under light irradiation, the reaction was significantly promoted, but the reaction was slow under dark conditions. Since some H_2O_2 and other radical species have been produced in the reaction mixture after initial light irradiation, a small amount of **1a** could be produced, but the rate is much lower and the contribution in the dark environment is also lower.

Cyclic voltammetry was measured with the following conditions:

Electro chemical measurements were performed with CHI 440 electrochemical work station (CH Instruments, Inc, Austin, TX, USA). Indoles **1** [0.1 M] TBABF₄ in 40%H₂O/MeCN (ν/ν). Sweep rate: 0.1 V/s. Platinum working electrode (CHI102, CH Instruments, Inc), Non-Aqueous Ag/Ag⁺ reference electrode ([0.01 M] AgNO₃/[0.1 M] TBAP, RE-7, BAS Inc, Japan), Platinum counter electrode (5 cm, Cat. No. 002233, BAS Inc, Japan) in a voltammetry cell (SVC3, BAS Inc, Japan)

Figure S8. Cyclic voltammetry (versus Ag/Ag^+ in $CH_3CN^{)}$ of indole 2a in MeCN and 40% $H_2O/MeCN+H_2O$



Figure S9. CV of indole **2a** in acetonitrile solutions with different proportions of water content $(H_2O/MeCN+H_2O, v/v)$





Figure S10. CV of triindole 1a 40% H₂O–MeCN (0.01 M), Enlarged at 1.0-0.5 V

Figure S11. CV of indoles 2 in 40% H₂O–MeCN (v/v, 0.01 M)



Figure S12. Visible light spectrum of **2a** in 40% H₂O/CH₃CN (0.01 M) and its spectrum after 8 hours of CFL irradiation.²⁰



 $^{^{20}}$ A marked marron color appeared after a few hours of CFL-irradiation of the colorless solution of indole **2a** under a balloon of oxygen. The absorption spectrum of the solution after 8-h irradiation showed a new broad absorption band around 400 nm.





13C NMR (DMSO-d6, 125 MHz) of 1a

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Data file /home/vnmr2/vnmrsys/data/511/LTC/LTC-1-167-f4/PROTON_03

Plot date 2018-11-12



13C NMR (CDCl3, 125 Hz) of **1b**









13C NMR (DMSO-d6, 125 Hz) of 1c



DEPT of 1c


1H NMR (DMSO-d6, 500 MHz) of **1d**





13C NMR (DMSO-d6, 125 MHz) of 1d

Plot date 2018-09-25







Date collected	2018-11-18	Puise sequence gCOSY Solvent dmso	Spectrometer Agilent-NMR-inova	Study owner vnmr2 500 Operator vnmr2	
_	l		lu	lu.	
(udd) a	-				
ы 7-	•				
8-			•		
10 ⁻	-				
11-				-	

F1 (ppm)

8

7

COSY of 1d

10

9

11





Data file /home/vnmr2/vnmrsys/data/511/LTC/LTC-1-138-3/PROTON_04

Plot date 2018-09-20



13C NMR (DMSO-d6, 125 MHz) of 1e







Data file /home/vnmr2/vnmrsys/data/511/LTC/LTC-1-140-f4/PROTON_04

Plot date 2018-11-13



13C NMR (DMSO-d6, 125 MHz) of 1f











Data file /home/vnmr2/vnmrsys/data/511/LTC/LTC-1-144-7Br/PROTON_03

10

1H NMR (CDCI3, 500 Hz) of **1g**

Plot date 2018-11-16



13C NMR (CDCI3, 125 MHz) of 1g







COSY of 1g



NOESY of 1g





13C NMR (DMSO-d6, 125 Hz) of 1h





HSQC of 1h



COSY of 1h



NOESY of 1h



Data file /home/vnmr2/vnmrsys/data/511/LTC/LTC-1-138-6/PROTON_06

1H NMR (DMSO-d6, 500 Hz) of 1i

Plot date 2018-09-29



1H NMR (DMSO-d6, 500 Hz) of 1i

S65



DEPT of **1i**



3.2501 5.8648

1.9953

Integral

ppm

m n n m



1.50000000 sec

F2 -	Processing	paramete	ers
SI		8192	
SF	400	.1300022	MHz
WDW		EM	
SSB		0	
LB		0.10	Ηz
GB		0	
PC		1.00	

D1

1D NMR	plot	parameters	
СХ		21.50	CM
F1P		12.000	ppm
F1		4801.56	Hz
F2P		-0.500	ppm
F2		-200.07	Hz
PPMCM		0.58140	ppm/cm
HZCM		232.63374	Hz/cm



1H NMR (DMSO-d6, 100 Hz) of 1j

S68

DEPT of **1j**



S69

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1H NMR (CDCI3, 500 Hz) of compound 3

S70



13C NMR (CDCI3, 125 Hz) of compound 3



DEPT of compound 3


HSQC of compound 3





COSY of compound 3, expanded



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Data file /home/vnmr2/vnmrsys/data/511/LTC/LTC-2-202-f2/PROTON_04

S77



13C NMR (CDCI3, 500 Hz) of compound 4











COSY of compound 4



NOESY of compound 4





13C NMR (CDCI3, 125 Hz) of tryptanthrin



DEPT of tryptanthrin



HSQC of tryptanthrin



COSY of tryptanthrin

