

## **Supporting Information**

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Uniform  $\pi$ -System Alignment in Thin Films of Template-Grown Dicarbonitrile-Oligophenyls

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**Figure SI1.** Theoretic curves (red lines) for NEXAFS intensities for a  $\pi^*$ -resonance with an adsorption angle  $\alpha$  as defined in Scheme 3 and given in the legend. Due to the three-fold (or higher) symmetry all curves cross at a single point defining the magic angle. With the present polarization (P = 0.82) of the X-ray beam the magic angle amounts to ~ 50°. The line expected for the situation in which half of the phenyl rings feature  $\alpha_1 = 0^\circ$  and the other half features  $\alpha_2 = 50^\circ$  indicates  $\alpha_{aver} = 33^\circ$ . It was obtained by averaging the corresponding intensities  $I_{aver}(\theta) = 0.5 [I_1(\theta) + I_2(\theta)]$ .

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**Figure SI2.** a) Atomic labeling and displacement ellipsoids of NC-Ph<sub>3</sub>-CN (Compound 1) as obtained by X-ray structure analysis. b) Atomic labeling and displacement ellipsoids of NC-Ph<sub>4</sub>-CN (Compound 2) as obtained by X-ray structure analysis.



**Table SI1.** Overview of bulk properties of NC-Ph<sub>3</sub>-CN (Compound 1) measured at T = 180 K and NC-Ph<sub>4</sub>-CN (Compound 2) measured at T = 180 K and T = 293 K and parameters of X-ray crystal structure analysis.

Data	Compound 1	Compound 2 (low temp)	Compound 2 (room temp)
empirical formula	$C_{20}H_{12}N_2$	$C_{26}H_{16}N_2$	$C_{26}H_{16}N_2$
formula weight	280.32 g/mol	356.41 g/mol	356.41 g/mol
Temperature	180 K	180 K	293 K
crystal system	monoclinic	monoclinic	monoclinic
space group	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> / <i>n</i> (14)	C2/c (15)	C2/c (15)
unit cell dimensions	a=389.3(1) pm b=1195.5(2) pm c=1497.5(3) pm β=97.02(3)°	a=1628.9(3) pm b=1674.9(3) pm c=743.9 (2) pm β=113.20(3)°	a=1633.7(3) pm b=1685.5(3) pm c=748.45 (15) pm β=112.20(3)°
Volume	691.7(2) · 10 <sup>6</sup> pm <sup>3</sup>	1865.4(6) · 10 <sup>6</sup> pm <sup>3</sup>	$1901.5(7) \cdot 10^{6} \text{ pm}^{3}$
number of molecules per unit cell Z	2	4	4
calculated density	1.346 g/cm <sup>3</sup>	1.269 g/cm <sup>3</sup>	1.245 g/cm <sup>3</sup>
μ	0.080 mm <sup>-1</sup>	0.075 mm <sup>-1</sup>	0.073 mm^-1
<i>F</i> (000)	292	744	744
crystal size	0.28 × 0.03 × 0.02 mm <sup>3</sup>	0.29 × 0.04 × 0.03 mm <sup>3</sup>	0.15 × 0.03 × 0.02 mm <sup>3</sup>
heta range for data collection	2.19° – 25.70°	2.43° – 25.79°	1.81° – 25.61°
reflections collected/unique	2827 / 1287 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0745]	3307 / 1671 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.1169]	3679 / 1768 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0649]
restraints/parameters	0 / 101	0 / 128	0 / 128
reflections with $I > 2\sigma(I)$	702	800	1117
Extinction coefficient	0.027(5)	0.0043(14)	0.012(2)
largest diff. peak and hole	0.210/–0.179 e Å <sup>-3</sup>	0.179/–0.179 e Å <sup>-3</sup>	0.137/–0.134 e Å <sup>-3</sup>
goodness-of-fit on <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.991	0.999	0.916
final R indices $[l > 2\sigma(l)]$	R1 = 0.0637, wR2 = 0.1071	R1 = 0.0830, wR2 = 0.1539	R1 = 0.0436, wR2 = 0.1085
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.1311, wR2 = 0.1274	R1 = 0.1696, wR2 = 0.1892	R1 = 0.0769, wR2 = 0.1214
CCDC number	752434	752435	



**Figure SI3.** STM image of the saturated monolayer of **2** grown at RT and imaged at 8 K. Molecules appear as bright stick-like features of approximately 2.1 nm. The tentative epitaxy model is shown with the unit cell (red) and the atoms (yellow) of the underlying Ag(111) substrate.



Figure SI4. Color version of Scheme 2.



Figure SI5. Color version of Figure 11.