

Article

## Binary and Ternary Superlattices Self-Assembled from Colloidal Nanodisks and Nanorods

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**ABSTRACT** Self-assembly of multi-component anisotropic nanocrystals with controlled orientation and spatial distribution allows the design of novel metamaterials with unique shape- and orientation-dependent collective properties. Although many phases of binary structures are theoretically proposed, the examples of multi-component assemblies, which are experimentally realized with colloidal anisotropic nanocrystals, are still limited. In this report, we demonstrate the formation of binary and ternary superlattices from colloidal two-dimensional  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and one-dimensional  $\text{CdSe/CdS}$  nanorods *via* liquid interfacial assembly. The colloidal nanodisks and nanorods are co-assembled into  $\text{AB-}$ ,  $\text{AB}_2\text{-}$ , and  $\text{AB}_6\text{-}$ type binary arrays determined by their relative size ratio and concentration to maximize their packing density. The position and orientation of anisotropic nanocrystal building blocks are tightly controlled in the self-assembled binary and ternary lattices. The macroscopic orientation of the superlattices is further tuned by changing the liquid sub-phase used for self-assembly, resulting in the formation of lamellar-type binary liquid crystalline superlattices. In addition, we demonstrate a novel ternary superlattice self-assembled from two different sizes of nanodisks and a nanorod, which offers the unique opportunity to design multi-functional metamaterials.

## INTRODUCTION

Colloidal self-assembly of nanocrystals has tremendous potential to fabricate complex functional metamaterials structured at the nanoscale through a bottom-up approach.<sup>1-4</sup> When nanocrystals of various size, shape, and composition are self-assembled into ordered arrays, novel collective properties arise from the controlled coupling between the nanocrystals in the superlattices, which are governed by symmetry, coordination, inter-particle spacing, order, and macroscopic orientation of the self-assembled structures.<sup>5-7</sup> Among various types of nanocrystal building blocks, anisotropic nanocrystals are particularly interesting due to their shape- and orientation-dependent properties.<sup>8, 9</sup> For example, semiconducting CdSe nanorods<sup>10</sup> and nanoplatelets<sup>11</sup> exhibit shape-dependent polarized luminescence properties. In addition, Au nanorods<sup>12</sup> and Cu<sub>2-x</sub>S nanodisks<sup>13</sup> show orientation-dependent transverse and longitudinal plasmonic responses. For the design of optical and electrical devices, assembling anisotropic building blocks with controlled orientation, symmetry, periodicity, and valency is crucial to exploit their unique shape-dependent properties in devices.<sup>14-18</sup>

Many colloidal assembly approaches are employed to control the position and orientation of anisotropic nanocrystals, for example, templated assembly,<sup>19-22</sup> self-assembly in block copolymers,<sup>23-25</sup> Langmuir-Blodgett assembly,<sup>26</sup> electric-field assisted assembly,<sup>27, 28</sup> and drying-mediated self-assembly.<sup>29, 30</sup> Self-assembly of anisotropic colloidal nanocrystals into liquid crystalline structures is a promising route to control the spatial configuration as well as the orientation of nanocrystal building blocks over large areas.<sup>31-33</sup> Colloidal anisotropic nanocrystals, such as nanodisks and nanorods, are easily aligned to form self-assembled liquid crystalline superlattices with controllable orientation.<sup>34-37</sup> Liquid crystalline superlattices can also be assembled from different types of nanocrystal building blocks to form multi-component

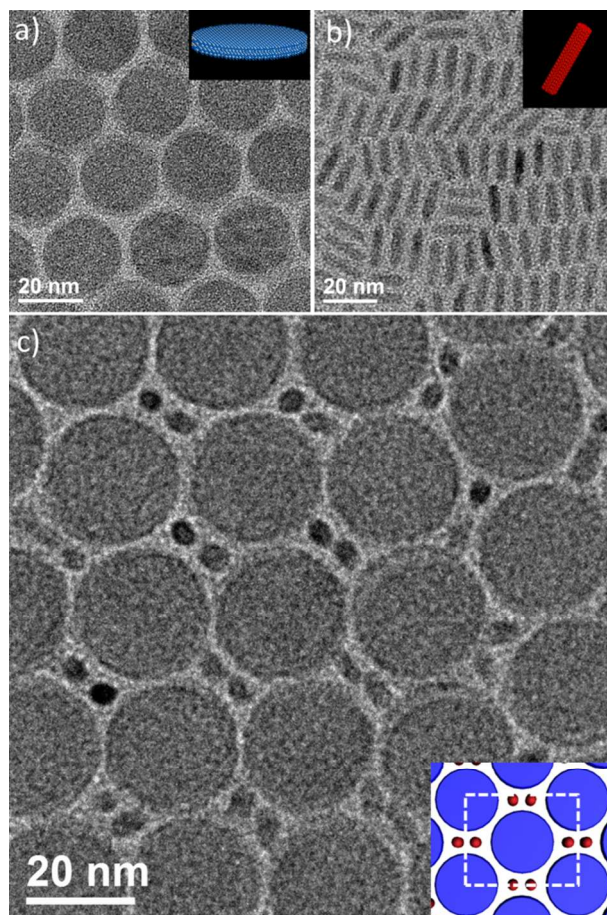
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3 systems, in which the position of one component can be directed by the anisotropic liquid  
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5 crystalline superstructure.<sup>2, 38-43</sup> The position and orientation of multi-component anisotropic  
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7 nanocrystals can be further tailored by designing different types of binary phases possessing  
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9 unique symmetry, stoichiometry, and spatial coordination of the components in ordered arrays.  
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11 Rich phase diagrams are theoretically proposed and understood by hard particle models,<sup>44, 45</sup> or  
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13 by the combination of particle-particle interactions driven by electrostatic force,<sup>46, 47</sup> magnetic  
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15 interaction,<sup>48, 49</sup> and dipole-dipole or van der Waals interaction between particles or ligands on  
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17 the particle surface.<sup>50-53</sup> In addition, the introduction of multiple anisotropic building blocks  
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19 greatly expands the possible phase diagrams accessible for assembled structures.<sup>54-57</sup> Therefore,  
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21 complex new materials with emergent or collective properties and tailored superlattice structures  
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23 can be designed *de novo* by the selection of appropriate building blocks.  
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31 Here, we report novel binary and ternary superlattices self-assembled from two colloidal  
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33 anisotropic nanocrystals: two-dimensional nanodisks and one-dimensional nanorods. The  
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35 nanorods and nanodisks are deposited to form superlattice thin films on glycol-type polar sub-  
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37 phases *via* the liquid interfacial assembly technique.<sup>6</sup> We employ lanthanum trifluoride (LaF<sub>3</sub>)  
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39 nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods as building blocks. By changing the relative size ratio and  
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41 concentration of the nanodisks and nanorods and the sub-phases upon which the nanocrystals  
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43 self-assemble, AB-, AB<sub>2</sub>-, and AB<sub>6</sub>-type columnar binary lattices and lamellar-type liquid  
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45 crystalline superlattices are fabricated. Structural analysis shows these systems to be very densely  
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47 packed. We speculate that the self-assembled structures maximize the packing density of the  
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49 building blocks, hence increasing the free-volume entropy and minimizing the Helmholtz free  
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51 energy. The position and orientation of colloidal nanodisks and nanorods are precisely controlled  
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53 in the binary lattices preserving long-range orientational and positional order. In addition, we  
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observe a novel ABC-type ternary superlattice self-assembled from two nanodisks and one nanorod, which is to our knowledge, the first example of an ordered assembly formed from three anisotropic nanocrystals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Colloidal  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks are used as transparent dielectric nanocrystal building blocks for self-assembly.  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks are synthesized by a method previously reported in the literature with slight modification.<sup>39</sup> Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) (Figure 1a) shows nearly monodisperse  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks lying parallel to the substrate surface self-assemble into columnar hexagonal arrays. Wide-angle X-ray diffractions (XRD) of these nanodisks shows sharp (100) and (300) diffraction peaks with trigonal crystal structures (JCPDS No. 32-0483), indicating that the nanodisks are truncated by the (001) plane and grow preferentially along the  $\text{LaF}_3$  (100)-plane (Figure S1a, b). Wide-angle selected-area electron diffraction (SAED) of self-assembled nanodisks shows relatively intense hexagonal electron diffraction spots representing the slight hexagonal faceting of the nanodisks (Figure S2).



**Figure 1.** TEM images of anisotropic nanocrystal building blocks. a)  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks (22.3 nm diameter with 1.6 nm thickness), b) CdSe/CdS dot-in-rods (15.1 nm in length and 3.8 nm in diameter). c)  $\text{AB}_2$ -type binary self-assembly of  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods. Inset represents the schematic model of  $\text{AB}_2$ -type superlattice and unit cell.

The size, shape, and size distribution of nanodisks are confirmed by wide-angle and small-angle X-ray measurement and simulation. Experimentally measured X-ray diffraction patterns match simulation results for  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks that are 13.2 nm in diameter and 1.6 nm in thickness (Figure S1a). The size of nanodisks is further tunable by the controlled over-coating of additional layers on the core nanodisks by a seeded-growth reaction. After the over-coating, the size

increases to about 22.3 nm in diameter with no noticeable change in thickness (Figure 1a, S1b), as corroborated by SAXS patterns and simulations.

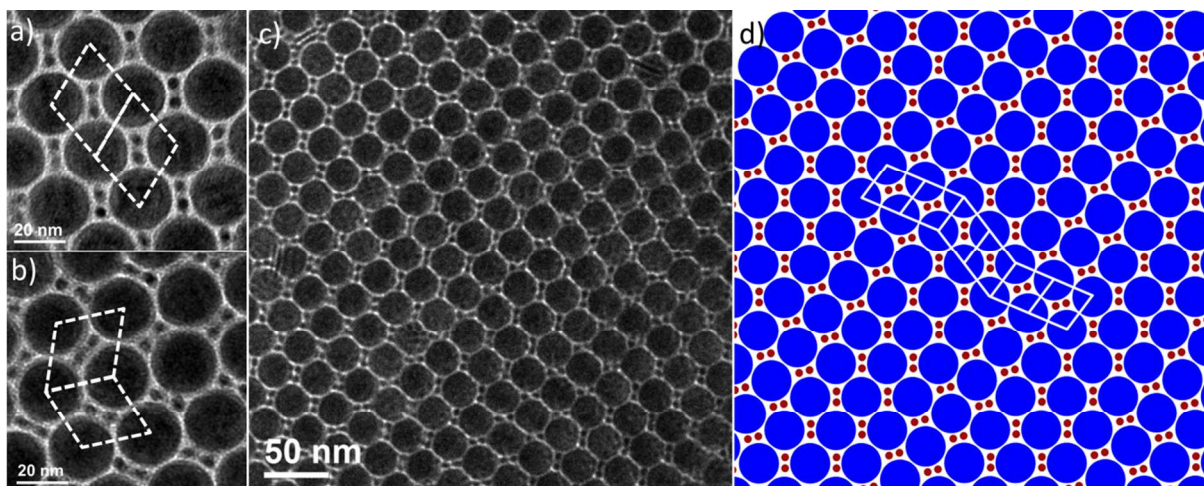
Colloidal CdSe/CdS nanorods are used as a model one-dimensional building block because of their unique optical properties and shape uniformity. CdSe/CdS dot-in-rods are synthesized by a seeded growth method reported previously.<sup>58</sup> Figure 1b show a representative TEM image of the synthesized CdSe/CdS nanorods used in this study. The length and diameter of the nanorods, which are characterized by X-ray measurement and simulation, is 15.1 nm and 3.8 nm, respectively (Figure S1c). Highly uniform nanorods self-assemble into smectic B liquid crystalline structures using the liquid interfacial assembly method on a diethylene glycol sub-phase. In some regions, the nanorods are vertically aligned in close-packed hexagonal arrays (homeotropic alignment, Figure S3a) and in other regions, the nanorods are horizontally-aligned with respect to the substrate forming smectic liquid crystalline structures (heterogeneous alignment, Figure S3b and S3c).

To assemble binary superlattices from these shape-engineered building blocks, the mixed solution of LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks and CdSe/CdS dot-in-rods are similarly self-assembled *via* the liquid interfacial assembly technique using diethylene glycol as a sub-phase. The co-assembly of nanodisks and nanorods into the binary lattices are observed with a small fraction of the single component arrays of nanodisks or nanorods. Figure 1c displays a TEM image of AB<sub>2</sub>-type binary superlattices of large LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks (22.3 nm diameter × 1.6 nm thickness) and CdSe/CdS nanorods (15.1 nm length × 3.8 nm diameter). In the binary superlattices, nanodisks form columnar liquid crystalline structures by stacking out of the plane and two vertically-aligned nanorods fill each interstitial site between the stacked columns of nanodisks. Four sets of two



vertically aligned nanorods (dimers) are included in binary lattices with four-fold symmetric positions around the columns. To accommodate the inclusion of the nanorods in the interstitial sites of the 2-dimensional triangular Bravais lattice of the columns (Figure S2), the symmetry of self-assembled  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks is deformed to a centered rectangular lattice (Figure 1c, S4). Although the lattice structures formed by the binary mixture of nanodisks and nanorods are analyzed as two-dimensional lattice structures, the actual structures exhibit three-dimensional features with a stacking of nanodisks in each column. We observed that the number of nanodisks in the columns can be varied, as seen by the difference in contrast between the columns in TEM images (Figure S4a, b and S4c, d). The height of the columns can match the length of the vertically aligned nanorods (Figure S5b), consistent with as many as approximately 5 to 6 disks stacked in each single column in the binary assemblies.

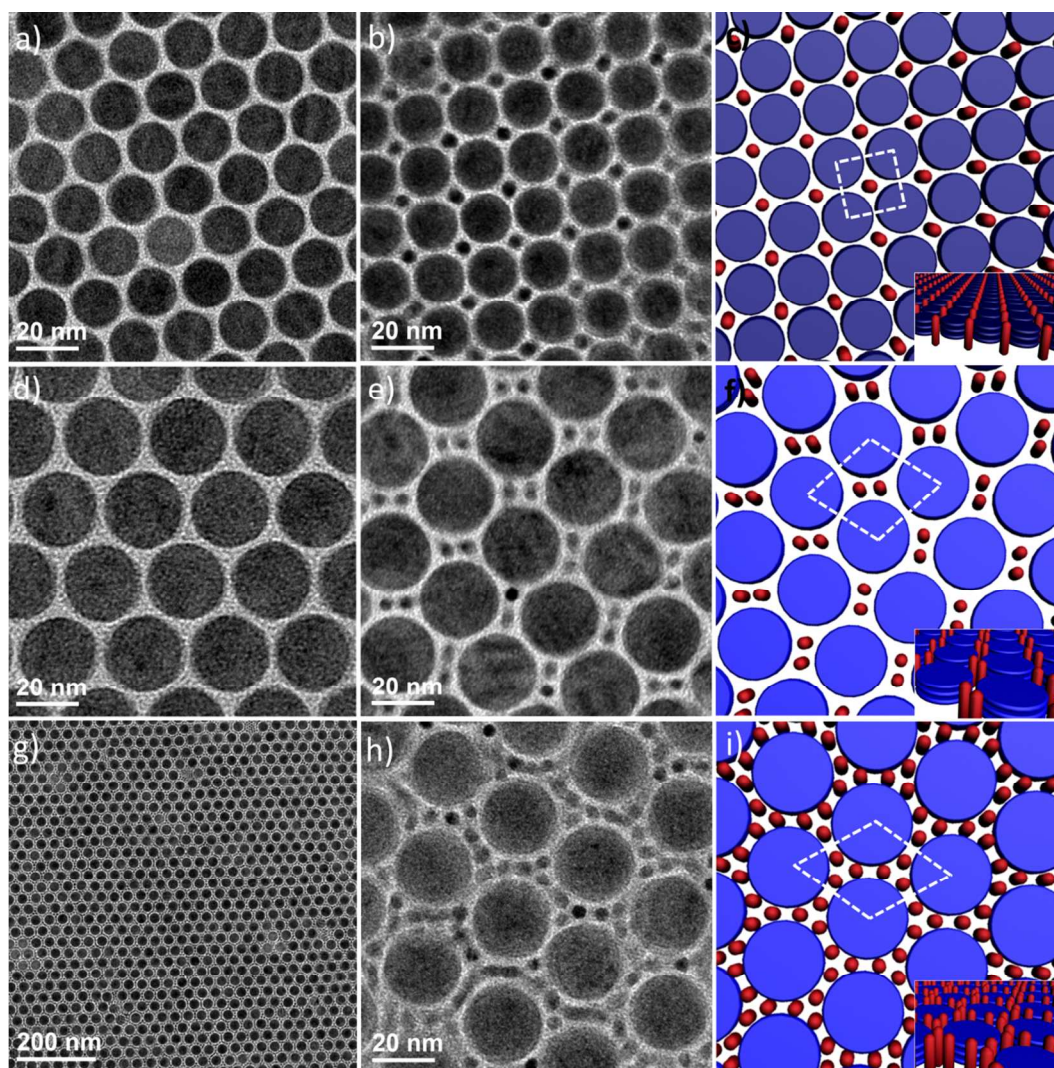
Two possible configurations of the nanorod inclusion are observed in binary superlattices. One variant is that four sets of vertically aligned nanorod dimers around the columns are oriented into the same direction with  $D_{2h}$  point group symmetry, as depicted in Figure 2a. The second variant occurs when two sets of nanorod dimers are aligned at a  $90^\circ$  angle in the interstitial sites of nanodisk arrays with  $C_{2v}$  point group symmetry, as shown in Figure 2b, which has a mirror plane that intersects the center of the nanodisks. The simultaneous occurrence of both configurations during the self-assembly induces twin boundaries in the superlattice structures, as described in Figure 2c and 2d. This suggests that the energy barriers to formation for  $D_{2h}$  and  $C_{2v}$  symmetry arrays are comparable or within  $kT$  such that thermal fluctuations provide enough energy to produce both configurations.<sup>59</sup>



**Figure 2.** TEM images of AB<sub>2</sub>-type binary superlattices. Colloidal LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods are self-assembled with a) D<sub>2h</sub> point group symmetry and b) C<sub>2v</sub> point group symmetry. c) Low magnification TEM image and d) the structural model visualizing the twin boundary in the self-assembled AB<sub>2</sub>-type superlattices.

To understand the phase behavior of our binary superlattices, co-assembly of nanorods with different sizes of LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks is performed. When the diameter of nanodisks used for self-assembly is decreased from 22.3 nm to 13.2 nm without changing the size of the nanorods, AB-type binary superlattices with P4mm symmetry<sup>60</sup> are observed predominantly where the nanorods are vertically aligned and doped into the interstices of LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisk arrays, by deforming the triangular lattices into square lattices (Figure 3a-c). For nanodisks with the larger 22.3 nm diameter, as described previously, AB<sub>2</sub>-type binary superlattices with C2mm symmetry<sup>60</sup> are predominantly formed where the two vertically aligned nanorods are placed at the interstices of the centered rectangular lattices (Figure 3d-f). By increasing the concentration of nanorods and using the same 22.3 nm diameter nanodisks and the nanorods, AB<sub>6</sub>-type binary

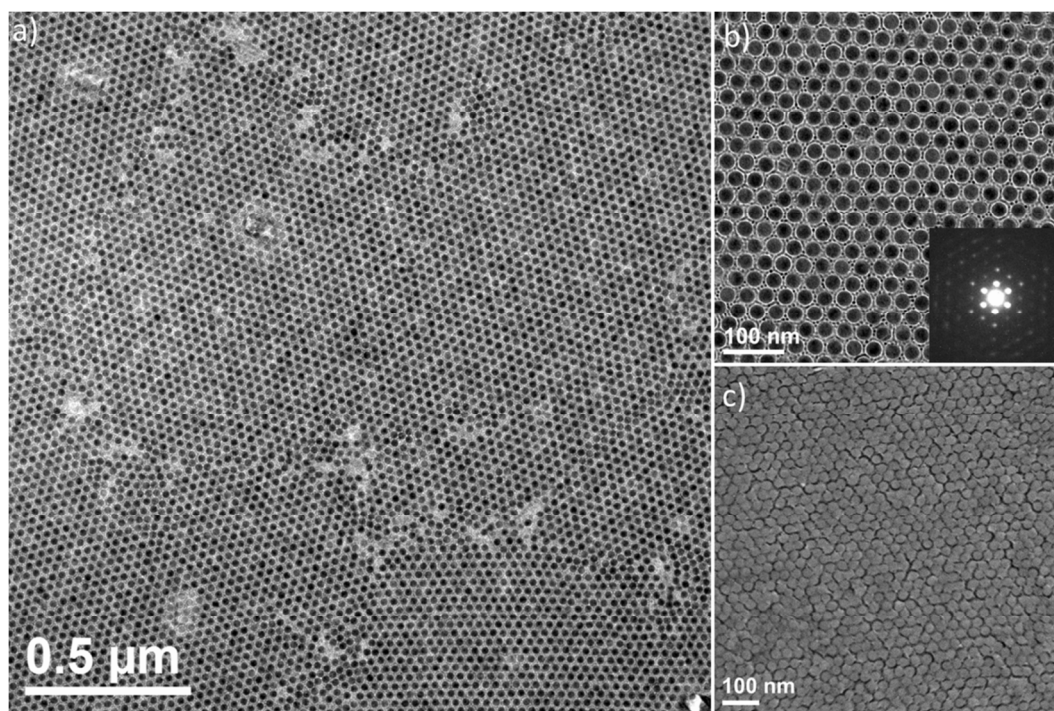
lattices with P6mm symmetry is observed, where the stacked nanodisks are assembled into hexagonal lattices while the vertically aligned nanorods are dodecagonally arrayed along the edge of nanodisk columns, as displayed in Figure 3g-i. The grain sizes of these AB<sub>6</sub>-type binary structures extend over larger than 10  $\mu\text{m}^2$ , as displayed in Figure 4, while maintaining their long-range orientational and positional orders.



**Figure 3.** Self-assembled superlattices of nanodisks and nanorods depending on the relative size ratio and concentrations. TEM images of a) a single component superlattice self-assembled from 13.2 nm  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and b) AB-type binary superlattice self-assembled from 13.2 nm  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods and c) the structural model of AB-type binary superlattice. d) Single component superlattice self-assembled from 22.3 nm  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and e)  $\text{AB}_2$ -type superlattice self-assembled from 22.3 nm  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods and f) the structural model of  $\text{AB}_2$ -type binary superlattice. g) Low magnification and h) high magnification



TEM images and i) the structural model of AB<sub>6</sub>-type superlattices self-assembled from 22.3 nm LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods.



**Figure 4.** a) Low- b) high- magnification TEM images and c) SEM image of AB<sub>6</sub>-type binary superlattices self-assembled from large LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods. Inset in b) represents the small-angle SAED pattern of AB<sub>6</sub>-type binary superlattice.

The phase diagram of binary mixtures of hard disks has been investigated theoretically,<sup>50, 61, 62</sup> motivated by Fejes Tóth<sup>63</sup> and Liko *et. al.*<sup>64</sup> The binary structures are expected from a theoretical model of space-filling, in which the two disk components are self-assembled into the two-dimensional binary lattices that maximize the packing density of the system. In our binary superlattices, all nanodisks and nanorods are aligned in the same crystallographic direction. Therefore, a top-view of AB-, AB<sub>2</sub>-, and AB<sub>6</sub>-type superlattices represents the binary disk arrays

by treating the vertically aligned nanorods as second disks with small diameter. This provides guidance to explain the phase behaviors of our binary nanodisk-nanorod systems. Indeed, the experimental results represent the theoretical models where the two components are self-assembled into binary lattices maximizing space filling efficiency. AB-type binary arrangement is predicted to be stable in the range of  $0.155 < \rho < 0.414$ , where  $\rho = r_{\text{small}}/r_{\text{large}}$ , to maximize the packing density.<sup>64</sup> The diameter of small nanodisks and nanorods used for AB-type assembly, which are calculated by X-ray measurement and simulation, are 13.2 nm and 3.8 nm, respectively. Since our colloidal nanocrystals are coated with the long alkyl chain ligands, the effective size can be estimated by adding the thickness of the soft ligand shell, which is measured as the center-to-center distance of nanocrystals in the hexagonally-ordered, single-component monolayer. The relative size ratio calculated by the effective sizes of nanocrystal building blocks is about 0.40, which falls into the range where AB-type structures with square lattices are favorably formed to maximize their space filling efficiency. Increasing size of the nanodisks to 22.3 nm, results in a relative size ratio of about 0.25, which is in the range where AB<sub>2</sub>-type binary disk mixtures are expected to be stable and form centered rectangular lattices. ( $0.155 < \rho < 0.281$ , Table 1).<sup>64</sup> This is confirmed by experimental observations showing predominant AB<sub>2</sub>-type binary superlattices (Figure 4d-f). Increasing the concentration of nanorods but maintaining the relative size ratio results in the formation of AB<sub>6</sub>-type binary superlattices to accommodate the building blocks and maximize the packing density, which is predicted be stable in the range of  $0.101 < \rho < 0.349$ .<sup>64</sup> Table 1 summarizes the ranges of stability for different binary lattices. Although space-filling models of binary disk arrays can explain the observed binary superlattices, the formation of these structures may involve contributions from many additional interactions such as free volume entropy and the enthalpic

interactions including dipole-dipole<sup>65</sup>, van der Waals<sup>66</sup>, an interaction between the ligands on the surfaces<sup>52</sup>, and depletion attraction interactions.<sup>67</sup> The understanding of these interactions may enable a variety of novel binary structures with different types of anisotropic nanocrystals to be precisely designed.

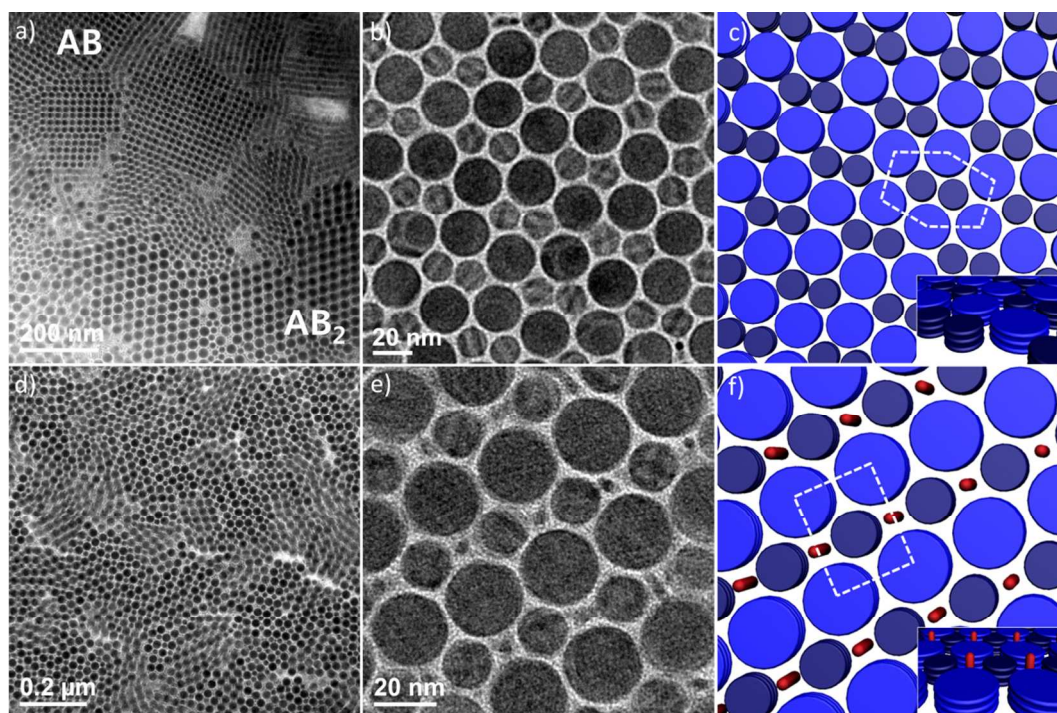
Stoichiometry	Range of stability	Experimental size ratio( $\rho$ )	Magic size ratio
AB	$0.155 < \rho < 0.414$	0.397	0.414
AB <sub>2</sub>	$0.155 < \rho < 0.281$	0.251	0.281
AB <sub>6</sub>	$0.101 < \rho < 0.349$	0.251	0.349

**Table 1.** Range of stability calculated as the two-dimensional binary lattices of hard disks.(adapted from references 51, 61, 62, 64)

The ternary nanocrystal superlattices formed from three spherical nanocrystals have been observed by Vanmaekelbergh *et, al.*<sup>68</sup> and Murray *et, al.*<sup>69</sup>, however, the example of the ternary superlattices composed of three different colloidal nanocrystals is still rare and from anisotropic building blocks is unprecedented. Here, we obtained new ternary superlattices by co-assembly of three different anisotropic nanocrystal building blocks, small and large LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks, and CdSe/CdS nanorods. To investigate the self-assembly behavior of three components, nanocrystal solutions used for AB-type superlattice (small nanodisks and nanorods) and AB<sub>2</sub>-type superlattice (large nanodisks and nanorods) are mixed together in a 1:1 volume ratio and dropped onto the surface of diethylene glycol. Locally, phase segregation to AB-type and AB<sub>2</sub>-type

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3 binary superlattices is observed as displayed in Figure 5a, which reflects the energetic preference  
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5 of both binary lattices over single component arrays. In addition to the AB- and AB<sub>2</sub>-type  
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7 superlattices described above, we observed the binary assembly of two different nanodisks, in  
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9 which nanodisks of each diameter are stacked to form columns and self-assembled into an AB-  
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11 type binary superlattice having an oblique 2-D Bravis lattice (Figure 5b, 5c). We also observe  
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13 ABC-type ternary superlattices with a centered rectangular lattice (Figure 5d-f), in which stacked  
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15 columns of small and large nanodisks are self-assembled into centered rectangular lattices and  
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17 vertically aligned CdSe nanorods are located in the interstices between stacked nanodisk  
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19 columns of small LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks, as displayed in figure 5d-f.  
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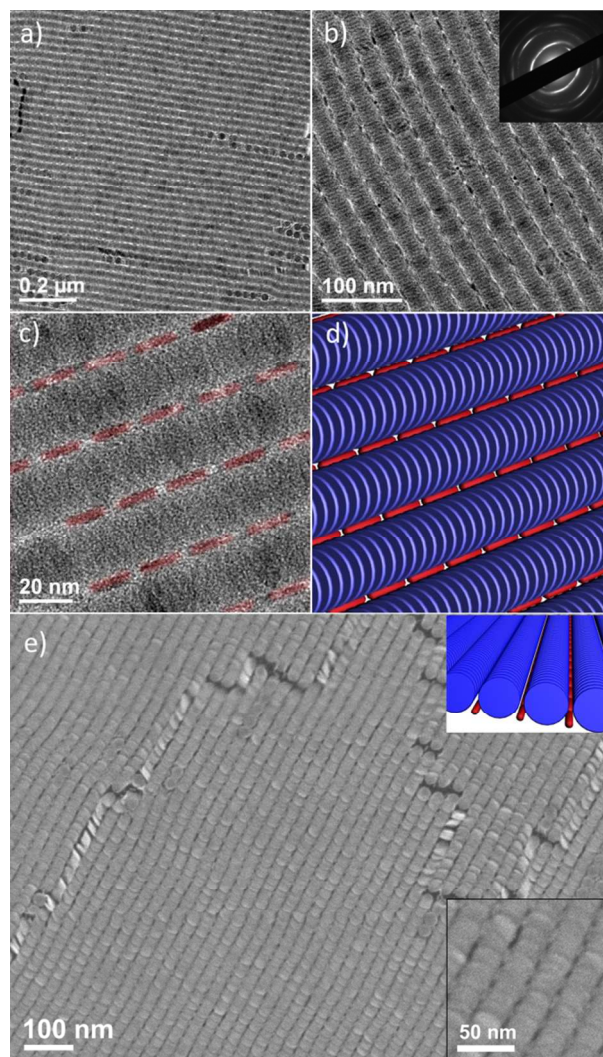




**Figure 5.** a) TEM images of self-assembled structures from small and large LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks, and CdSe/CdS nanorods. Phase-segregation to AB-type and AB<sub>2</sub>-type superlattices is observed. b) TEM image and c) the structural model of an AB-type superlattice self-assembled from small LaF<sub>3</sub> and large LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks. d) Low magnification, e) high magnification TEM images and f) the structural model of ABC-type superlattices self-assembled from small and large LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods.

The orientation of binary liquid crystalline structures is further tuned by changing the sub-phase upon self-assembly. When ethylene glycol is used as a sub-phase for self-assembly instead of a diethylene glycol sub-phase, lamellar-type liquid crystalline structures are predominantly formed with a small area of AB<sub>2</sub>-type binary lattice formation (Figure 6, S5, S6). In the lamellar-type superlattices, nanodisks stand edge-on on the substrates and stack to form one-dimensional

strings by face-to-face interactions. These strings are simultaneously self-assembled into extended smectic liquid crystalline arrays. In the presence of colloidal nanorods, building blocks are co-assembled into liquid crystalline binary lattices where nanorods lie parallel to the substrates and are placed between two strings of  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisk arrays. The tip-to-tip distances between the nanorods is close to the length of the inter-digitated ligands bound on the surface. The nanorods are close-packed into one-dimensional arrays leaving a minimal space except for the surface ligands. The trench formed between the arrays of nanodisk strings provides free space to incorporate the nanorod building blocks, similar to the examples of nanoplate/nanosphere<sup>39</sup> and nanorod/nanosphere<sup>41</sup> binary systems. This trench allows for the alignment of nanorods along the orientation of lamellar liquid crystalline structures. At the edge of superlattice, it is observed that the nanorods nearby a nanodisk arrays are already aligned without the presence of the neighboring columns (Figure S6) indicating that the presence of the nanodisk assemblies induces preferential alignment of the nanorods along the direction of the nanodisk lamellar. Since dielectric  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks are used as building blocks, liquid crystalline binary structures may be utilized as a template directing one-dimensional building blocks into long-range ordered, close-packed periodic arrays.



**Figure 6.** a-c) TEM images and d) the structural model of lamella-type binary superlattices self-assembled from large  $\text{LaF}_3$  and CdSe/CdS nanorods. Inset in b) is the wide-angle selected area electron diffraction pattern. The red colors in c) mark the position of the CdSe/CdS nanorods. e) SEM image of lamella-type binary superlattices. Inset is high-magnification SEM image and the structural model.

## CONCLUSION

We demonstrate that mixtures of two and three different anisotropically-shaped colloidal nanocrystals co-assembly into binary and ternary superlattices respectively with long-range orientational and positional order. By changing the relative size and concentration of  $\text{LaF}_3$  nanodisks and  $\text{CdSe/CdS}$  nanorods, we synthesized  $\text{AB}_2$ -type,  $\text{AB}_6$ -type, and two  $\text{AB}$ -type binary superlattices as well as an  $\text{ABC}$ -type ternary superlattice, which are driven to maximize the packing density. The orientation of superlattice structures is tunable by changing the sub-phases upon which self-assembly occurs resulting in the formation of lamellar-type binary liquid crystalline superlattices. In this structure, the pitch size of one-dimensionally aligned nanorods would be further tuned in the binary lattices by changing the diameter of synthesized nanodisks. The demonstration of binary and ternary superlattices constructed from anisotropic building blocks shows shape-engineering of nanocrystals can be used to access new phases/structures, which allows for the design of novel functional metamaterials by tailoring superlattice structures.

## EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

**Materials.** All chemicals are used as purchased without any further purification. Lanthanum(III) oxide (99.9%), lithium fluoride (99.99%), cadmium oxide (99.99%), oleic acid (technical grade, 90%), and 1-octadecene (technical grade, 90%) are all purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol are purchased from Fisher scientific. Trifluoroacetic acid(99.5+%) is purchased from Alfa Aesa. Lanthanum trifluoroacetate ( $\text{LaTFA}_3$ ) precursors are synthesized by refluxing 10 g of lanthanum oxide in 100ml of trifluoroacetic acid and water mixture.(50/50 vol%)

**Synthesis of LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks.** Colloidal LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks are synthesized according to the procedure previously reported with slight modification.<sup>39</sup> Briefly, LiF (6 mmol) and LaTFA<sub>3</sub> (2 mmol) are added oleic acid and 1-octadecene mixture (50/50 vol%) in a 125 mL three-neck flask. The reaction mixture is degassed at 125°C for 2 h and then the solution is heated to 290°C under N<sub>2</sub> environment at a rate of 15°C/min and maintained at this temperature for 4 hours. Next, the reaction solution is purified by precipitating nanocrystals in excess ethanol and centrifugation at 4000 rpm for 2 min. Purification process is conducted 2 times. After purification, hexane is added into the precipitates to dissolve nanocrystals. Residual lithium fluoride, which is not dissolved in nonpolar solvents, is simply removed by centrifugation at 3000 rpm for 2 min.

**Seed-growth overcoating of LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks.** Mixture of nanocrystal solution, 3 mmol of LiF, and 1 mmol of LaTFA<sub>3</sub> are added into a 125 mL three-neck flask filled with oleic acid and 1-octadecene mixture (50/50 vol%) and degassed at 125°C for 2 hr. and then the reaction mixture is heated to 280°C at a rate of 15°C/min under N<sub>2</sub> environment and maintained at this temperature for 2 hours. The purification is conducted with the same method described earlier.

**Synthesis of CdSe/CdS dot-in-rods.** Synthesis of CdSe/CdS dot-in-rod samples followed literature procedures.<sup>23, 54</sup>

**Binary assembly of LaF<sub>3</sub> nanodisks and CdSe/CdS nanorods** The liquid interfacial assembly is performed by following the procedure reported in literature.<sup>6</sup> Briefly, a Teflon well is filled with diethylene glycol or ethylene glycol sub-phases. And then, 30 μL of the nanocrystal mixtures in hexane is dropped onto the surface of sub-phases in the Teflon well and slowly dried by covering a glass slide on the interface. Once nanocrystal solution on the interface is fully dried to form the membrane, resulting films are transferred to carbon-coated TEM grids for microscopic analysis. The TEM grids are further dried in the vacuum chamber to remove

residual sub-phases. Concentration of nanocrystals used for self-assemblies is (1.6 mg + 8 mg)/ml hexane (small LaF<sub>3</sub> and CdSe/CdS nanorods) for AB-type superlattices, (1.1 mg + 8 mg)/ml hexane (large LaF<sub>3</sub> and CdSe/CdS nanorods) for AB<sub>2</sub>-type superlattices, (1.1 mg + 16mg)/ml (large LaF<sub>3</sub> and CdSe/CdS nanorods) for AB<sub>6</sub>-type superlattices, and (1.6 mg + 1.1 mg + 8mg)/ml (small LaF<sub>3</sub>, large LaF<sub>3</sub>, and CdSe/CdS nanorods) for ABC-type superlattices.

**Characterization.** TEM images and electron diffraction patterns are collected using a JEM-2100 microscope equipped operating at 200 kV. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images are collected on a JEOL 7500F HRSEM. Powder X-ray diffraction measurements are conducted using a Rigaku Smartlab high-resolution diffractometer equipped with a 2.2 kW sealed tube generator. X-ray diffraction patterns are collected using concentrated nanocrystal solutions filled in a glass capillary enabling the diffraction patterns to be measured for randomly oriented nanodisks. Small-angle X-ray scattering measurement are performed at the Multi-Angle X-ray Scattering Facility at the University of Pennsylvania. The size and shape information are extracted from X-ray simulation of wide-angle X-ray diffraction patterns and small-angle X-ray scattering (SAXS) results.<sup>39, 70</sup> The atomic coordinates and shape information of the nanodisks, which are constructed from the monoclinic LaF<sub>3</sub> unit cell (JCPDS no. 72-6288) and the statistical size analysis from TEM images, are entered into the Debye formula to generate the simulated X-ray patterns.

## ASSOCIATED CONTENT

**Supporting Information.** SAXS and WAXS patterns, additional TEM and SEM images. This material is available free of charge *via* the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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