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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

### Dragon fruit-inspired quantum scale-designed photocathodes

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#### Abstract

The development of environment-friendly, high-performance, and low-cost photoelectrocatalysts is hindered by the low separation efficiency of electron-hole pairs, corrosion from light illumination, and harsh environments. In this study, we propose a hierarchical structured nanocomposite that addresses all the aforementioned problems. Our design is inspired by the structure of a dragon fruit, in which CuInS<sub>2</sub>/CdS quantum dots (QDs) are encapsulated with TiO<sub>2</sub> nanofilms. CuInS<sub>2</sub>/CdS QDs possess effective charge separation capability but suffer from photocorrosion, whereas TiO<sub>2</sub> exhibits the opposite behavior. As a result of this hierarchical arrangement, the complementary system exhibits outstanding durability (lasting longer than 240 h without decay) and high-performance photoelectrocatalysis activity (potentials of approximately -0.219 V to obtain current densities of 100 mA cm<sup>-2</sup>) under light illumination.

**Keywords:** Dragon fruit-inspired; quantum scale; CuInS<sub>2</sub>/CdS quantum dots; TiO<sub>2</sub> nanofilms; photoelectrocatalysis

#### 1. Introduction

The development of renewable and clean resources has inspired a huge amount of research on utilizing

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