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# CuPd Mixed-Metal HKUST-1 as Catalyst for Aerobic Alcohol Oxidation

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**ABSTRACT**

Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) featuring isolated coordinatively unsaturated metal sites (CUS) have enormous potential as single-site catalysts. In particular, mixed-metal MOFs may exhibit unique catalytic properties compared to their monometallic counterparts. Herein, we report a thorough fundamental study on the mixed-metal CuPd-HKUST-1 ( $[\text{Cu}_{3-x}\text{Pd}_x(\text{BTC})_2]_n$ , BTC = 1,3,5-benzenetricarboxylate) including the two-step synthesis, characterization and catalytic performance evaluation. The combined results from a multi-technique approach provide solid evidence that the chemical properties of HKUST-1 can be tuned via successful incorporation of Pd-CUS into the framework leading to the formation of new Cu-Pd and/or Pd-Pd dimers. The introduction of Pd occurs exclusively at the metal nodes in a controlled manner while retaining the structural integrity. All the incorporated Pd ions have an oxidation state of +2 whereas no PdO or metallic Pd nanoparticles embedded inside MOFs are detected. These mixed-metal CuPd-MOFs exhibit superior catalytic activity and selectivity for the aerobic oxidation of benzyl alcohol to benzaldehyde, and the doped Pd<sup>2+</sup>-CUS species are identified as isolated single active sites.

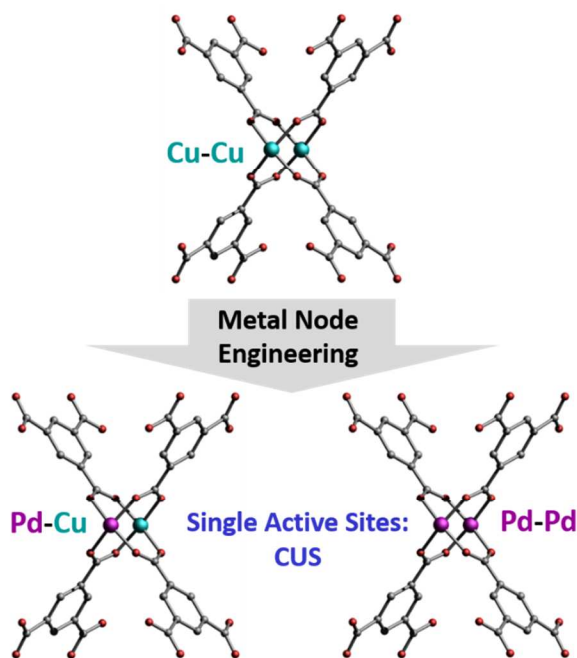
## 1 INTRODUCTION

Metal-organic-frameworks (MOFs) featuring novel physical and chemical properties have opened up new perspectives in numerous application fields ranging from gas/liquid storage and separation, chemical sensing, drug release to electronic devices and catalysis.<sup>1-6</sup> Their high structural and compositional design flexibility, which can be implemented by guest inclusion, solvent-assisted linker exchange, varying organic linker with different structure and coordination modes as well as by defect-engineering, allows to precisely tailor MOF materials for specific targeted applications.<sup>7-30</sup> In heterogeneous catalysis, the special interest in MOFs results from the presence of coordinatively unsaturated metal sites (CUS) at the framework nodes which act as isolated single active sites.<sup>31,32</sup>

The Cu-based HKUST-1 ( $[\text{Cu}_3(\text{BTC})_2]$ ; BTC = 1,3,5-benzenetricarboxylate) is a prototypical MOF and contains copper-carboxylate paddle-wheel building units exposing intrinsic undercoordinated  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  sites (Cu-CUS, see Figure 1),<sup>33</sup> which show catalytic activity for a variety of reactions, such as  $\alpha$ -pinene oxide rearrangement, acetalization of aldehydes with methanol and quinoline synthesis.<sup>34-38</sup> Recently, it has been reported that the chemical and physical properties of MOF materials can be tuned by modification of both organic linkers and metal nodes.<sup>15-30</sup> The defect-engineered MOFs (DEMOFs) formed via the incorporation of defect linkers or different metal ions are expected to show improved catalytic activity with respect to the pristine MOFs. However, a thorough atomic-level understanding of DEMOFs remains still a major challenge due to the great structural complexity. In particular, there is little information available on mixed-metal MOFs produced by the strategy of metal node engineering.<sup>39-45</sup>

The controlled integration of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  cations into the metal nodes of HKUST-1 yielding CuPd mixed-metal single-sites is of great interest with regard to the unique catalytic performance of

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3 palladium compounds for many reactions such as alcohol oxidation, allylic  
4 oxidation/rearrangements, olefin hydrogenation and cycloisomerization.<sup>46-52</sup> Llabrés i Xamena et  
5 al.<sup>53</sup> have reported that the monometallic Pd-MOF with the molecular formula  $[\text{Pd}(\text{2-pymo})_2]_n$   
6 (2-pymo = 2-hydroxypyrimidinolate) is active for typical Pd-catalyzed reactions. Although  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$   
7 possesses a similar effective ionic radius as  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ , the synthesis of CuPd mixed-metal HKUST-1  
8 is a challenging task due to the difficulties in crystallizing 3D structures caused by kinetic  
9 reasons.<sup>54</sup> Recently,  $\text{Pd}^0@[(\text{Cu}_{3-x}\text{Pd}_x(\text{BTC}))_2]_n$  was synthesized via one-pot hydrothermal method,  
10 leading to the coexistence of both  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$ -CUS at the framework nodes and  $\text{Pd}^0$  NPs embedded  
11 inside MOFs.<sup>54</sup> However, the exclusive introduction of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  as framework nodes has not yet been  
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51 **Figure 1.** CuPd mixed-metal HKUST-1 synthesized using the strategy of metal node  
52 engineering.  
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3 Here, we report a novel two-step synthesis that enables to produce mixed-metal  $[\text{Cu}_{3-x}\text{Pd}_x(\text{BTC})_2]_n$  (CuPd-HKUST-1) with controllable modification exclusively at the metal nodes,  
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7 giving rise to Cu-Pd and/or Pd-Pd paddlewheels (Figure 1). The successful homogeneous  
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9 incorporation of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  is confirmed by a comprehensive multi-technique study. Our results reveal  
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11 that the mixed-metal CuPd-MOF exhibits superior catalytic performance compared to the  
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13 pristine HKUST-1 for the selective aerobic oxidation of benzyl alcohol to benzaldehyde. The  
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15 improved reactivity and selectivity are attributed to the presence of doped  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  CUS, acting as  
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17 isolated single active sites.  
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## 22 2. Experimental

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25 **2.1 Materials.** All reagents used in the experiment were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich and  
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27 used as received without further purification.  
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31 **2.1.1 Synthesis of Compound 1.**  $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (0.288 g, 1.19 mmol) and  $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$   
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33 (0.047 g, 0.21 mmol) were loaded into a 25 mL glass bottle followed by adding 6 mL DMF  
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35 (HPLC grade) immediately, and then the mixture was stirred vigorously to completely dissolve  
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37 all metal salts at room temperature for 1 hour obtaining solution A. Ligand  $\text{H}_3\text{BTC}$  (0.198 g, 0.94  
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39 mmol) was dissolved in 6 mL DMF in another 25 mL glass bottle to obtain solution B, which  
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41 was then added to the solution A under continuous stirring condition for 1 hour. Subsequently,  
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43 the mixed solution in the glass bottle was sealed and placed into a preheated oven at 343 K for  
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45 **12 h**. Afterwards, the bottle was taken out and cooled down to room temperature naturally. The  
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47 raw product was collected by centrifugation and then washed by DMF several times to remove  
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49 the unreacted precursors. This raw product was then soaked in DMF and kept in oven at 323 K  
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51 for 3 hours. Finally, the raw product was obtained by centrifugation followed by solvent  
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3 exchange with acetone (HPLC grade) every 6 h for 6 times (7 mL each time). The yield is  
4 around 45% for compound 1. Before further measurements, the sample was activated by heating  
5 at certain temperature for 4 h under dynamic vacuum (around  $10^{-2}$  mbar).  
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10 **2.1.2. Synthesis of Compound 2.** All procedures are similar with the synthesis of compound  
11 1 except the amount of metal precursors, that is,  $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (0.184 g, 0.98 mmol) and  
12  $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$  (0.094 g, 0.42 mmol). The yield for compound 2 is slightly higher, around 50%.  
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18 **2.1.3 Synthesis of Pristine HKUST-1.**  $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (0.338 g, 1.4 mmol) and  $\text{H}_3\text{BTC}$   
19 (0.200 g, 0.94 mmol) were loaded into a 25 mL glass bottle and then 12 mL DMF (HPLC grade)  
20 was added. After vigorously stirring for 1 h, the glass bottle was sealed and placed into a  
21 preheated oven at 343 K for 24 h. Afterwards, the bottle was taken out from oven and cooled  
22 down naturally to room temperature. The resulting solid was collected by centrifugation  
23 followed by solvent washing with ethanol,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  and acetone. The yield is around 55%.  
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33 **2.2. Characterization.** The samples were identified by powder XRD over the  $2\theta$  range 4 -  
34  $60^\circ$  with Cu  $K\alpha$  radiation and scan step  $0.01313^\circ$ . HR-XPS was performed using an ultra-high  
35 vacuum setup equipped with a high resolution Gammatdata Scienta SES 2002 analyser. The  
36 spectra were obtained at pass energy 200 eV with a base pressure around  $3 \times 10^{-10}$  mbar and an  
37 analyzer slit width of 0.3 mm. Monochromatic Al  $K\alpha$  (1486.6 eV) was used as incident  
38 radiation. Energy resolution is better than 0.5 eV and flood gun is used to compensate for  
39 charging effects. All spectra were calibrated to C1s binding energy at 284.5 eV. The analysis of  
40 the spectra was performed using CasaXPS software with mixed Gaussian-Lorentzian function  
41 and Shirley background subtraction. For UHV-FTIR spectra, samples were pressed into a  
42 stainless steel grid covered by gold and then was mounted on the sample holder, which was  
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3 specially designed for the UHV-FTIR transmission measurement.<sup>55,56</sup> Base pressure in the  
4 measurement chamber was  $8 \times 10^{-10}$  mbar. Before measurement, sample was heated at 393 K to  
5 remove all adsorbed chemical species. CO dosing was carried out by backfilling the  
6 measurement chamber through a leak valve. Spectra were collected with 512 scans and  $4 \text{ cm}^{-1}$   
7 resolution. TEM and EDS elemental mapping measurement were conducted by JEM-2800,  
8 JEOL setup with beam energy 200 kV. The effective area of detector is  $200 \text{ mm}^2$ . Resolution is  
9 0.09 nm and 123 eV for TEM and EDS, respectively. BET surface area and pore size distribution  
10 were measured by  $\text{N}_2$  physisorption at 77 K using BelMax sorption machine from BelJapan.  
11 Samples were activated at 393 K for 4 h before measurement. TG measurements were carried out  
12 on a thermo balance with a coupled QMS under helium condition. Heating ramp was  $2 \text{ K min}^{-1}$   
13 until final temperature 723 K.  
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29 **2.3. Catalytic Oxidation.** The aerobic oxidation of benzyl alcohol was conducted in a 100  
30 mL Parr autoclave. The catalysts were pre-activated at indicated temperatures (393 K, 423 K,  
31 443 K, 473 K) for 6 h under dynamic vacuum conditions ( $\sim 10^{-2}$  mbar). The heating ramp was set  
32 to  $5 \text{ K min}^{-1}$ . In a typical run, 96  $\mu\text{L}$  benzyl alcohol, 20 mL toluene as solvent, and 100 mg pre-  
33 activated catalyst were loaded into the reactor followed by purging with oxygen for three times.  
34 The reactor was then pressurized with 5 bar oxygen and heated to 403 K with a stirring speed of  
35 700 rpm. During reaction, around 1 mL liquid sample was taken out from the reactor through  
36 sampling line at appropriate intervals. The solution was centrifuged and then analyzed by gas  
37 chromatography.  
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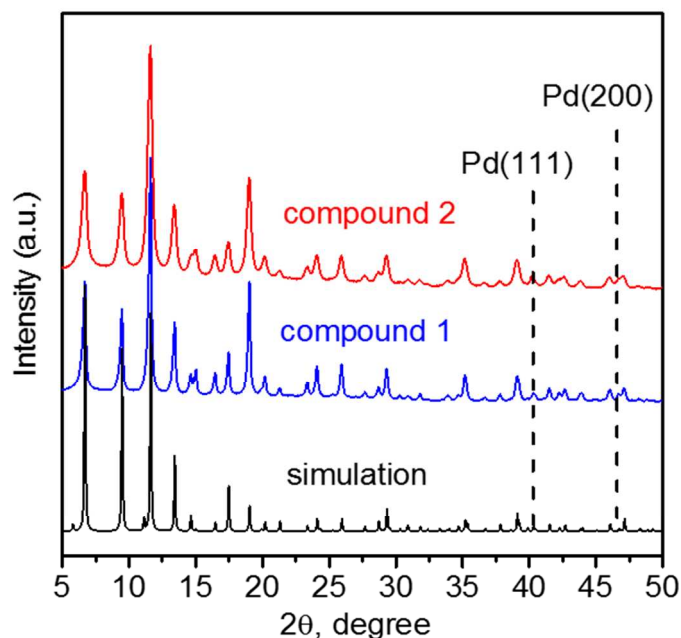
51 The samples were analyzed by an Agilent 7820A gas chromatography equipped with a capillary  
52 column (ZB-WAXplus,  $30 \text{ m} \times 0.32 \mu\text{m} \times 0.25 \mu\text{m}$ ), a flame ionization detector (FID), and an  
53 autosampler. The GC was calibrated using several mixed solution with different concentrations  
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to obtain response factor for each compound. The conversion of benzyl alcohol as well as the selectivity and yield of products were calculated based on normalization.

### 3. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

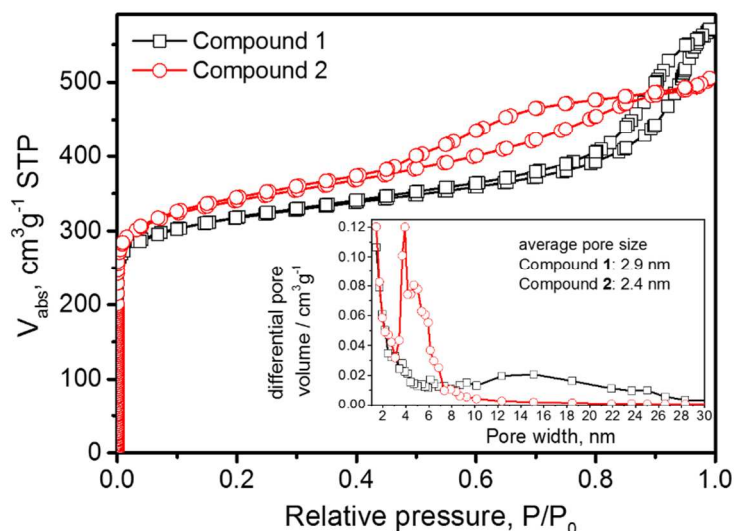
**3.1. Synthesis and Characterization of Mixed-Metal CuPd-MOFs.** We synthesized the mixed-metal CuPd-HKUST-1 ( $[\text{Cu}_{3-x}\text{Pd}_x(\text{BTC})_2]_n$ ) by using a novel two-step approach, in which a mixed-metal ion ( $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$ ) solution in dimethylformamide (DMF) was prepared first, and  $\text{H}_3\text{BTC}$  dissolved in DMF was then added under continuous stirring. The solution was kept in an oven at 343 K for 12 h and then cooled to room temperature to obtain the desired samples. During the synthesis, we utilized DMF instead of common aqueous alcohol solutions, thus avoiding the coexistence of metallic  $\text{Pd}^0$  nanoparticles (NPs) that could be formed via the reduction of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  ions by alcohols at elevated temperatures.



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3 **Figure 2.** Powder XRD patterns of CuPd mixed-metal MOFs (compounds **1** and **2**) and  
4 simulated pattern of pristine HKUST-1.  
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9 The phase purity of the synthesized samples,  $[\text{Cu}_{2.43}\text{Pd}_{0.57}(\text{BTC})_2]_n$  (**1**) and  
10  $[\text{Cu}_{1.77}\text{Pd}_{1.23}(\text{BTC})_2]_n$  (**2**), was demonstrated by powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) data. As shown  
11 in Figure 2, the XRD patterns match well with the simulated pristine HKUST-1, indicating the  
12 same framework and the preserved structural integrity after the introduction of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$ . The  
13 increasing  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  doping level leads to slight broadening of the reflections, which is probably  
14 attributed to a lower degree of crystallinity and the distortion of crystal lattice caused by the  
15 partial substitution of metal nodes. It should be noted that compared with the simulated pattern,  
16 no additional reflections at about  $40.2^\circ$  and  $46.7^\circ$  due to Pd(111) and Pd(200) were observed for  
17 compounds **1** and **2**, thus excluding the presence of metallic Pd in both samples.  
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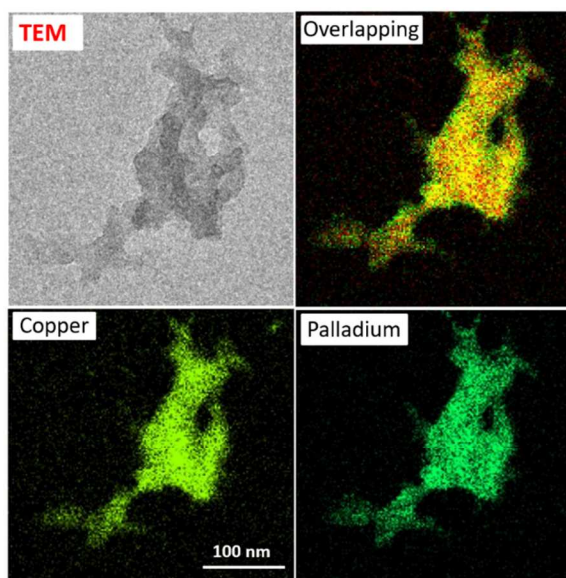
30 Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) revealed that the decomposition of both CuPd mixed-  
31 metal HKUST-1 samples occurs at  $\sim 523$  K (see Figure S1). The XRD patterns of compound **2**  
32 obtained before and after activation at 393 K as well as after catalytic reaction confirmed again  
33 the thermal stability of the framework (Figure S2).  
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**Figure 3.**  $\text{N}_2$  physisorption isotherms and pore size distributions (inset) for CuPd mixed-metal MOFs (compounds **1** and **2**). Both samples were activated at 393 K under vacuum to completely remove adsorbed species prior to the measurement.

To further support the incorporation of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  ions into the framework nodes, we carried out  $\text{N}_2$  adsorption-desorption experiments at 77 K. Both CuPd mixed metal MOFs (**1** and **2**) show the type IV  $\text{N}_2$  physisorption isotherms (see Figure 3), suggesting the presence of micropores and mesopores. Hierarchical porosity distribution is illustrated in the inset of Figure 3, and the average pore sizes are around 2.9 and 2.4 nm for compounds **1** and **2**, respectively. The mesopores presumably originate from defects (e.g. missing paddlewheels) created by the acetate modulator ( $\text{CH}_3\text{COO}^-$ ), and they are expected to facilitate diffusion of reactants and products (*i.e.*, benzyl alcohol, benzaldehyde and benzoic acid) to or from the metal-CUSs.<sup>12-15</sup> Total pore volumes were determined to amount to  $0.88 \text{ cm}^3 \text{g}^{-1}$  for **1** and  $0.78 \text{ cm}^3 \text{g}^{-1}$  for **2**. The specific surface areas of both CuPd-MOFs ( $1206$  and  $1284 \text{ m}^2 \text{g}^{-1}$  for **1** and **2**, respectively, derived by

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3 applying the BET equation) are still comparable to the pristine HKUST-1,<sup>57-60</sup> indicating that  
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5 Pd<sup>2+</sup> should be located at the metal nodes (*i.e.*, Cu<sup>2+</sup>-Pd<sup>2+</sup> and/or Pd<sup>2+</sup>-Pd<sup>2+</sup> PWs, see Figure 1),  
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7 instead of occupying the pores. In addition, the results from TEM-EDS elemental mapping  
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9 revealed a homogeneous distribution of Cu and Pd components in the framework for both  
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11 compounds **1** and **2** (Figure 4 and Figure S3), which indicates again the successful incorporation  
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13 of Pd<sup>2+</sup> ions into the framework of HKUST-1.  
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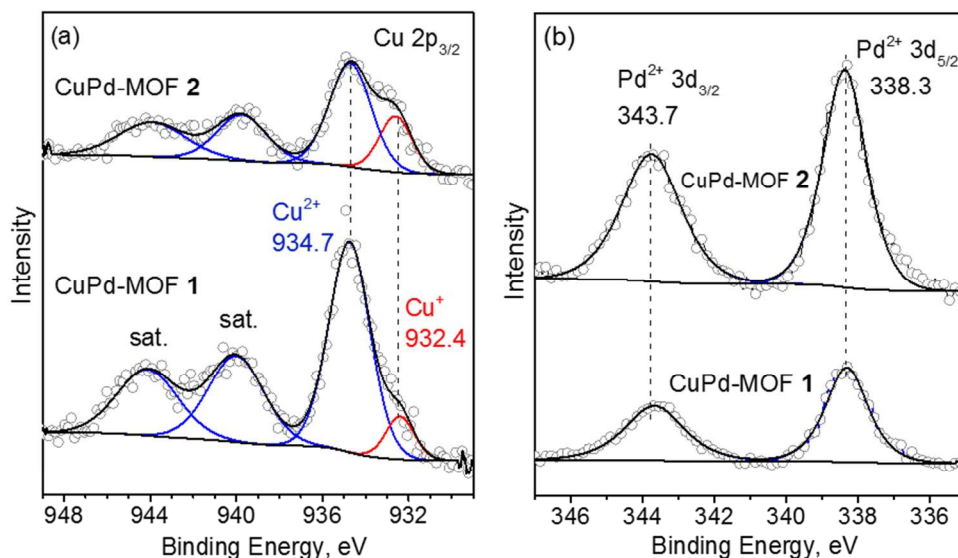


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38 **Figure 4.** TEM image and EDS metal mapping for CuPd mixed-metal HKUST-1 (compound **2**).  
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42 **3.2. XPS and UHV-FTIRS Analysis.** The CuPd mixed-metal MOFs (compounds **1** and **2**)  
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44 were further characterized by high-resolution X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (HR-XPS) to  
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46 identify the oxidation states of metal components. The coexistence of palladium and copper in  
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48 compounds **1** and **2** was verified by the survey scan (Figure S4). Figure 5 presents the  
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50 deconvoluted Cu 2p and Pd 3d XPS data. The Cu 2p spectra are dominated by the 2p<sub>3/2</sub> peak at  
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52 934.7 eV, which is ascribed to the intrinsic Cu<sup>2+</sup> ions in HKUST-1 as further confirmed by the  
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54 typical shake-up satellites centered at about 940 and 944 eV. Importantly, the Pd 3d XPS data for  
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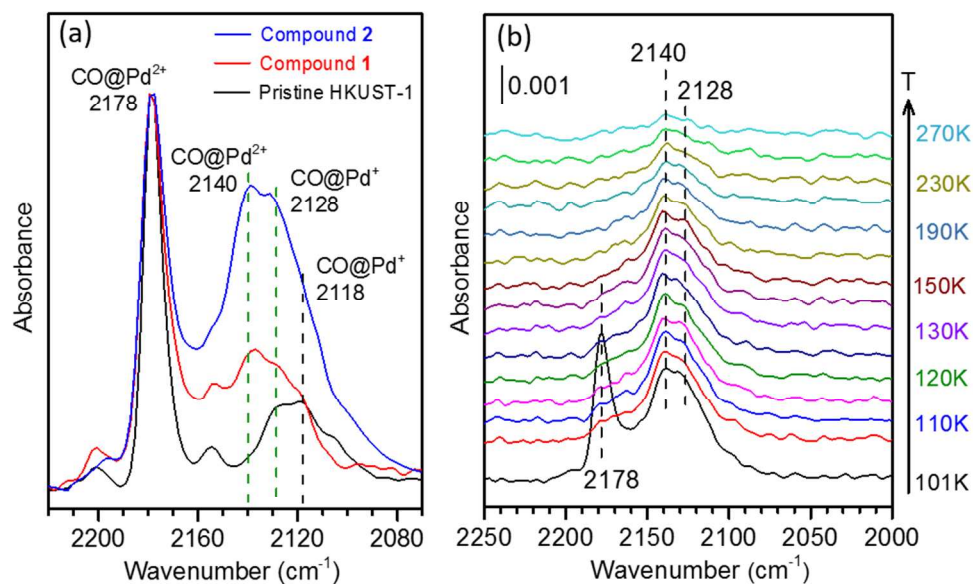
both CuPd-MOFs show only one doublet at 338.3 eV (Pd 3d<sub>5/2</sub>) and 343.7 eV (Pd 3d<sub>3/2</sub>), matching very well with the characteristic binding energies of Pd<sup>2+</sup> species,<sup>54,61</sup> demonstrating that all palladium species in the CuPd mixed-metal HKUST-1 are in the oxidation state of +2. This result further supports the conjecture that all Pd<sup>2+</sup> ions serve as framework nodes (Cu<sup>2+</sup>-Pd<sup>2+</sup> and/or Pd<sup>2+</sup>-Pd<sup>2+</sup> PWs). A quantitative analysis reveals that the Pd/Cu ratio also increases with increasing Pd<sup>2+</sup> doping level. The corresponding O 1s spectra showed only one peak at 531.8 eV originating from carboxylate groups in the framework (data not shown), while no indication of the formation of any oxide species was detected. Thus, we can definitely rule out an assignment of the Pd<sup>2+</sup> species to PdO NPs.

In addition, the deconvolution of the Cu 2p regions reveals the existence of Cu<sup>+</sup> as minor species in both CuPd-MOFs (Figure 5a), and around 6% and 15% of Cu<sup>2+</sup> (934.7 eV) are reduced to Cu<sup>+</sup> (932.4 eV) once activated at 393 K under UHV conditions for compounds **1** and **2**, respectively. For comparison, the XP Cu 2p spectrum of pristine HKUST-1 synthesized by copper nitrate and activated at 393 K was presented in Figure S5, and only around 4% Cu<sup>+</sup> was observed. These results suggest that the modification of the Cu<sup>2+</sup> nodes via doping with Pd<sup>2+</sup> is accompanied by the formation of a small amount of Cu<sup>+</sup>.



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5 **Figure 5.** (a) Cu 2p and (b) Pd 3d regions of the deconvoluted XPS data for CuPd mixed-metal  
6 MOFs (compounds **1** and **2**) after activation at 393 K.  
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11 The chemical nature of Cu- and Pd-CUS sites was further investigated by ultrahigh vacuum  
12 Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (UHV-FTIRS) using CO as a probe molecule (Figure 6).  
13 After CO adsorption at 100 K, all three samples (pristine HKUST-1, CuPd-MOFs **1** and **2**)  
14 exhibit one sharp dominating band at 2178  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  due to  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ -CO species. For the pristine Cu-  
15 MOF, there are two weak bands at 2118 and 2128  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  in the lower-frequency range originating  
16 from  $\text{Cu}^+$ -CO species. The redshift in frequency is attributed to the enhanced  $\pi$  back-donation.  
17 Given that the extinction coefficient of  $\text{Cu}^+$ -CO is much higher than that of  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ -CO,<sup>62</sup> the IR  
18 results indicate a very low concentration of intrinsic  $\text{Cu}^+$  defects (a few percent) in the pristine  
19 HKUST-1, in line with the XPS results (Figure S5). For CuPd-MOFs **1** and **2**, one new band  
20 appears at about 2140  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , and its intensity increases with increasing  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$  doping level. This  
21 band is assigned to  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$ -CO species, which is consistent with literature.<sup>63</sup> It is known that CO  
22 bound to metallic  $\text{Pd}^0$  sites is characterized by vibrational frequencies typically lower than 2100  
23  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . As shown in Figure 6, no any IR bands were observed in the low-frequency region,  
24 confirming the absence of additional  $\text{Pd}^0$  NPs embedded in the pore. In addition, the relative  
25 concentration of  $\text{Cu}^+$  species increases along with the introduction of  $\text{Pd}^{2+}$ . These UHV-FTIRS  
26 results provide solid evidence for the formation of CuPd mixed-metal HKUST-1 in a controlled  
27 manner, in excellent agreement with the XPS observation.  
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**Figure 6.** (a) The UHV-FTIR spectra obtained after exposing the pristine HKUST-1 and CuPd mixed-metal MOFs (compounds **1** and **2**) to CO at 100 K. (b) Thermal stability of various CO species adsorbed on CuPd-MOF **2** monitored by temperature-dependent IR spectroscopy. Prior to the measurements, all samples were activated at 393 K to remove adsorbed impurities.

During CO adsorption over CuPd-MOFs **1** and **2** at 100 K, the bands at  $2140\text{ cm}^{-1}$  ( $\text{Pd}^{2+}\text{-CO}$ ) and  $2128\text{ cm}^{-1}$  ( $\text{Cu}^{+}\text{-CO}$ ) appear first followed by the main peak at  $2178\text{ cm}^{-1}$  ( $\text{Cu}^{2+}\text{-CO}$ ) as shown in Figure S6. Furthermore, the thermal desorption of different CO species was investigated by temperature-dependent UHV-FTIRS that allows to gain deeper insight into the interaction between CO and various metal-CUS sites. The major band at  $2178\text{ cm}^{-1}$  ( $\text{Cu}^{2+}\text{-CO}$ ) disappears first at 115 K followed by the  $2128\text{ cm}^{-1}$  band ( $\text{Cu}^{+}\text{-CO}$ ) at  $\sim 230\text{ K}$ . The band at  $2140\text{ cm}^{-1}$  ( $\text{Pd}^{2+}\text{-CO}$ ) finally vanishes at about 270 K (Figure 6b). Overall, based on the temperature-dependent FTIR results, the binding energies of CO at different metal-CUS sites follow the sequence  $\text{Pd}^{2+} > \text{Cu}^{+} > \text{Cu}^{2+}$ .

**3.3. Selective Oxidation of Benzyl Alcohol to Benzaldehyde.** The aerobic oxidation of alcohols to their corresponding aldehydes or ketones in the liquid phase is an important and promising reaction in organic synthesis. The selective oxidation of benzyl alcohol to benzaldehyde is often used as a probe reaction to assess the catalytic activity of catalysts, and benzaldehyde is the second most important aromatic compound in the cosmetic and flavor industry. Pristine and CO<sub>2</sub>-expanded HKUST-1 samples with large mesopores (13–23 nm) have been reported to be highly active and selective for benzyl alcohol oxidation to benzaldehyde under mild reaction conditions.<sup>64,65</sup> However, the addition of a co-catalyst such as TEMPO (2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidine-1-oxyl) and a base like sodium carbonate is indispensable for both studies. In the present work, the synthesized CuPd mixed-metal MOFs are employed to catalyze this reaction in the absence of these additives.

**Table 1: Comparison of Catalytic Activities of Pristine HKUST-1 and CuPd Mixed-Metal MOFs for Benzyl Alcohol Oxidation after 7 h.**

Catalyst	Activation Temperature (K)	Conversion (%)	Selectivity (%)
Pristine HKUST-1	423	5	99
CuPd-MOF (1)	423	42	95
CuPd-MOF (2)	no activation	51	94
	393	67	93
	423	71	92
	443	54	90
	473	49	86

The results of the catalysis test are summarized in Table 1. Pristine HKUST-1 activated at 423 K leads to only 5 % conversion at 403 K and 5 bar O<sub>2</sub> after 7 h, indicating the low activity of Cu<sup>2+</sup>-CUS for this reaction. In comparison, CuPd-MOFs **1** and **2** activated at the same





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3 Figure 7. Conversion of benzyl alcohol and selectivity to benzaldehyde as a function of time for  
4 CuPd mixed-metal MOFs: compounds **1** (blue) and **2** (red).  
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7 As shown in Figure 7, CuPd-MOF **2** with higher Pd<sup>2+</sup> doping level is the most active catalyst,  
8 leading to 93% conversion and 89% selectivity to benzaldehyde after 22 h. The oxidation of  
9 benzyl alcohol is derived to be a first-order reaction with compounds **1** and **2** (Figure S7). The  
10 reaction rate constants are calculated to amount to 0.073 and 0.140 h<sup>-1</sup> for CuPd-MOFs **1** and **2**,  
11 respectively. They are proportional to the metal weight ratio of Pd<sup>2+</sup> (*i.e.*, 5% and 9.73% of Pd<sup>2+</sup>  
12 for compounds **1** and **2** based on EA), demonstrating again the crucial role of Pd<sup>2+</sup>-CUS in this  
13 reaction.  
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24 It is worth mentioning that various Pd<sup>II</sup> complexes were applied in aerobic alcohol oxidation in  
25 homogeneous catalysis,<sup>66-68</sup> and a catalytic cycle including the formation of a Pd<sup>II</sup>alcoholate  
26 species followed by β-elimination leading to a Pd<sup>II</sup>H species and the formation of a Pd<sup>II</sup>OOH  
27 species was proposed.<sup>66</sup> The same reaction mechanism may also apply to the CuPd mixed-metal  
28 HKUST-1 containing highly dispersed Pd<sup>2+</sup>-CUS as isolated, single active sites. Importantly, no  
29 notable difference is observed for the XRD patterns before and after reaction (see Figure S2),  
30 indicating the well-preserved structural integrity during the reaction. Overall, these results  
31 suggest a strategy to bridge homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis.  
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#### 44 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

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46 In summary, we successfully synthesized CuPd mixed-metal HKUST-1 featuring Cu-Pd and/or  
47 Pd-Pd dimers via incorporation of Pd<sup>2+</sup> into the pristine Cu-MOF by using a novel two-step  
48 synthesis. The CuPd-MOFs were characterized by a multi-technique approach including XRD,  
49 TEM-EDS, HR-XPS, and UHV-FTIRS. The results demonstrate consistently that the metal node  
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3 engineering occurs via introduction of Pd in a controlled fashion yielding mixed-metal HKUST-  
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5 1 with a homogeneous distribution of Pd and Cu cations while retaining the structural integrity.  
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7 These CuPd-MOFs exhibit superior activity and selectivity for the aerobic oxidation of benzyl  
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9 alcohol to benzaldehyde, and the highly dispersed Pd<sup>2+</sup>-CUS sites are identified as isolated single  
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11 active sites. The CuPd-MOFs are also expected to be active for a variety of other aerobic  
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13 oxidation reactions, in analogy to Pd<sup>II</sup> complexes in numerous homogeneously catalyzed  
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15 oxidation reactions. More generally, our work provides a new path to rationally design  
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17 catalytically active mixed-metal MOFs in a controllable manner based on the incorporation of a  
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19 second metal component exclusively at framework-nodes acting as single active sites.  
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## 27 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

28 **Supporting Information.** Additional TG, XRD, TEM-EDS, XPS and UHV-FTIRS analysis  
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## TOC Graphic:

