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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An aqueous composition comprising polymer particles of one or more multistage aqueous emulsion, at least one of which is a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising polymerized units derived from monomer X in at least one stage, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. Also disclosed are methods of making and using the compositions.

**ORIGINAL COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
STANDARD PATENT**

Invention Title

Aqueous emulsion copolymer compositions

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to me/us:-

[0001] The present invention relates to a coating composition, more particularly, an aqueous coating composition comprising copolymer particles of one or more aqueous emulsion copolymer, at least one of which is a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising polymerized units derived from monomer X in at least one stage, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. The present invention also relates to methods of using the coating composition.

[0002] Waterborne paints are preferred over solvent-borne paints for environmental reasons. However, these coatings, such as exterior paints, have to satisfy an appropriate balance of properties. Harder coatings often satisfy the requirements of dirt pickup resistance and resistance to block (the tendency of painted surfaces to stick together, i.e. block, when stacked or placed with each other under pressure). However, high Tg polymers that would yield hard coatings fail to film form properly at ambient temperatures, which compromises other critical requirements such as durability and resistance properties. The latter problem has been circumvented to some extent by the use of additives, particularly coalescents, which have the effect of lowering the minimum film forming temperature of the polymer compositions. However, this solution still has some drawbacks: the coalescent diffuses and evaporates from the coating slowly over time, and as such contributes to undesirable organic compounds released into the atmosphere; and moreover, the coalescent contributes to the problem of block until an appreciable amount of the coalescent has left the coating. Further regulations to limit / eliminate the use of volatile organic compounds (VOC) in paints and coatings only shifts the balance toward the use of softer polymer compositions, focusing more attention on the issue of block resistance. The most widely used additives for block resistance are surfactants. However, some of these chemicals are alkyl phenol ethoxylates (APE) and are also targeted to be phased out in the near future due to toxicity concerns. Consequently, there is a need for new environmentally acceptable, cost-effective solutions to the problem of block.

[0003] One method for preparing aqueous polymer dispersions based on unsaturated heterocyclic monomers is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,469,097 to Bett et al. Bett et al. disclose aqueous dispersions of water-insoluble polymers obtained from the polymerization of a mixture of monomers comprising: (1) at least one unsaturated heterocyclic monomer (A): (i) comprising at least one nucleophilic hetero atom, and (ii) containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation, and (iii) whose heterocycle comprises at least one ethylenic

unsaturation; and (2) optionally at least one ethylenically unsaturated functionalized monomer (B) and/or an aromatic monomer containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation. However, Bett et al. fails to disclose the use of multistage aqueous emulsion copolymers.

[0004] U.S. Patent No. 7,195,820 to Hong et al. relates to core-shell polymers having a hydrophilic copolymer shell, and a high level of core material of from 75 to 95 weight percent. The hydrophilic shell provides better coverage of the core resulting in better powder properties of impact modifiers for plastic materials such as anti-blocking. Vinyl imidazole is disclosed as one of many examples of hydrophilic monomers, although no polymerizations are described using this monomer. Hong et al. fails to disclose the use of multistage aqueous emulsion copolymers in coatings.

[0005] Despite such disclosures concerning water-insoluble polymers comprising unsaturated heterocyclic monomers, the desire to find an environmentally friendly, cost-effective route to improved block resistance for low VOC coatings persists.

[0006] The present invention provides a coating composition comprising a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising polymerized units of monomer X, which provides improved block resistance for the coating. Monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. In a preferred embodiment, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises polymerized units derived from 1-vinylimidazole.

[0007] This invention provides an aqueous coating composition comprising: i) copolymer particles of one or more aqueous emulsion copolymer, at least one of which is a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising polymerized units derived from monomer X in at least one stage; wherein the level of monomer X in the at least one stage is greater than 5 weight % based on the total weight of monomers in that stage; and wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. In a preferred embodiment, monomer X is 1-vinylimidazole or 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone.

[0008] In one embodiment of this invention, the coating composition further comprises from 0.05 to 20 weight % of a homopolymer of monomer X, where the weight % is based on weight of homopolymer solids to weight of copolymer particle solids; wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. In a preferred embodiment, monomer X is 1-vinylimidazole or 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone.

[0009] In one embodiment, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer of these compositions comprises, in at least one stage, >5 to 50 wt% of units derived from monomer X.

[0010] In one embodiment, the composition further comprises a polymerization initiator or the degradation products of the polymerization initiator, wherein the polymerization initiator is selected from 2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile);

2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile); 2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile;

2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyronitrile); 1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile);

2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane);

2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride;

2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleriic acid) and combinations thereof.

[0011] The term "**copolymer**" as used herein and in the appended claims refers to polymers polymerized from at least two different monomers.

[0012] The term "**homopolymer**" as used herein and in the appended claims refers to polymers polymerized from a single monomer.

[0013] The term "**aqueous**" as used herein and in the appended claims means water and mixtures composed substantially of water and water miscible solvents.

[0014] The use of the term "**(meth)**" followed by another term such as acrylic, acrylate, acrylamide, etc., as used herein and in the appended claims, refers to, for example, both acrylic and methacrylic; acrylate and methacrylate; acrylamide and methacrylamide; etc.

[0015] The glass transition temperature ("**Tg**") for the copolymers of the present invention may be measured by differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) taking the mid-point in the heat flow versus temperature transition as the Tg value.

[0016] The term "**residual monomer X**" as used herein and in the appended claims means unpolymerized monomer based on the total aqueous emulsion. The residual monomer concentration is determined using well known gas chromatography methods.

[0017] The composition of this invention is an aqueous coating composition comprising copolymer particles of one or more aqueous emulsion copolymer, at least one of which is a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising polymerized units derived from monomer X in at least one stage, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof.

[0018] Thus the composition of this invention may comprise, as one or more components of the composition, conventional aqueous emulsion copolymers whose polymerized units may comprise one or more monoethylenically unsaturated monomers, in polymerized form. Suitable monoethylenically unsaturated monomers include, for example, (meth)acrylic esters including C₁ to C₄₀ esters of (meth)acrylic acid such as methyl (meth)acrylate, ethyl (meth)acrylate, butyl (meth)acrylate, 2-ethylhexyl (meth)acrylate, decyl (meth)acrylate, lauryl (meth)acrylate, stearyl (meth)acrylate, isobornyl (meth)acrylate; hydroxyalkyl esters of (meth)acrylic acid such as hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylate and hydroxypropyl (meth)acrylate; (meth)acrylamide, propenamide, and dimethylacrylamide; (meth)acrylonitrile; amino-functional and ureido-functional monomers; acid-functional or anionic monomers; monomers bearing acetoacetate-functional groups; α -olefins such as 1-decene; styrene or substituted styrenes; vinyl acetate, vinyl butyrate and other vinyl esters; vinyl monomers such as vinyl chloride, vinyl toluene, and vinyl benzophenone; vinylidene chloride; ethylene, propylene, and butadiene. Preferred are all-acrylic, predominantly acrylic, styrene/acrylic, and vinyl acetate/acrylic copolymers.

[0019] "Acid-functional or anionic monomer" refers to ethylenically unsaturated monomers containing acid groups or their salts. Suitable acid groups include monomers containing carboxylic acid groups, sulfur acid groups or their respective anions, and phosphorus-containing acid groups (or their salts). Examples of unsaturated carboxylic acid monomers (or their respective anions) include acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, crotonic acid, itaconic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, and mono-ester derivatives of diacids, such as monomethyl itaconate, monomethyl fumarate, and monobutyl fumarate. Also included is maleic anhydride, that is able to function similarly. Examples of monomers containing sulfur acid groups include 2-acrylamido-2-methyl-1-propanesulfonic acid, sulfoethyl (meth)acrylate, sodium styrene sulfonate, and vinyl sulfonic acid. Examples of suitable phosphorus-containing monomers include dihydrogen phosphate esters of an alcohol in which the alcohol also contains a polymerizable vinyl or olefinic group, such as allyl phosphate; mono- or diphosphate of bis(hydroxymethyl) fumarate or itaconate; derivatives of (meth)acrylic acid esters, such as, for example, phosphates of hydroxyalkyl-(meth)acrylate including 2-hydroxyethyl-(meth)acrylate, 3-hydroxypropyl-(meth)acrylates, and the like. Thus, dihydrogen phosphate ester monomers include phosphoalkyl (meth)acrylates, such as 2-phosphoethyl (meth)acrylate, 2-phosphopropyl (meth)acrylate. Phosphoalkyl crotonates, phosphoalkyl maleates, phosphoalkyl fumarates, phosphodialkyl (meth)acrylates,

phosphodialkyl crotonates, and allyl phosphate can all be used. Other suitable phosphorus-containing monomers are phosphonate-functional monomers, such as those disclosed in WO 99/25780 A1, and include vinyl phosphonic acid, allyl phosphonic acid, 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropanephosphinic acid, α -phosphonostyrene, and 2-methylacrylamido-2-methylpropanephosphinic acid. Still other suitable phosphorus-containing monomers are 1,2-ethylenically unsaturated (hydroxy)phosphinylalkyl (meth)acrylate monomers, and include (hydroxy)phosphinylmethyl methacrylate. Preferred phosphorus-containing monomers are phosphates of hydroxyalkyl methacrylates, with 2-phosphoethyl (meth)acrylate (PEM) being the most preferred.

[0020] In some embodiments of the present invention, one or more of the emulsion copolymers of the present invention further comprise polymerized units derived from a crosslinker. Crosslinkers suitable for use with the present invention include multi-ethylenically unsaturated monomers. In some aspects of these embodiments, the crosslinker derived units are derived from crosslinker selected from 1,2-ethylene glycol dimethacrylate, 1,4-butanediol diacrylate; 1,4-butanediol dimethacrylate; 1,6-hexanediol diacrylate; 1,1,1-trimethylol propane triacrylate; 1,1,1-trimethylol propane trimethacrylate; allyl methacrylate; diallyl phthalate; divinylbenzene; and N-allyl acrylamide and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, the crosslinker derived units are derived from crosslinker selected from 1,1,1-trimethylol propane trimethacrylate. In some aspects of these embodiments, the composition comprises 0.01 to 10 wt% (based on solids) crosslinker. In some aspects of these embodiments, the composition comprises 0.01 to 5 wt% (based on solids) crosslinker, or, alternatively, 0.01 to 1 wt% (based on solids) crosslinker, or, alternatively, 0.01 to 0.1 wt% (based on solids) crosslinker. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multi-ethylenically unsaturated monomers are selected from allyl methacrylate; diallyl phthalate; 1,4-butylene glycol dimethacrylate; 1,2-ethylene glycol dimethacrylate, 1,6-hexanediol diacrylate; divinyl benzene and combinations thereof.

[0021] All of the above monomers, other than monomers X, may be termed monomers Y herein.

[0022] The "glass transition temperature" or " T_g " of the copolymer is preferably from -50 to 60° C, more preferably -10 to 40° C, most preferably 0 to 30° C. It is measured by differential scanning calorimetry (DSC). " T_g " is the temperature at or above which a glassy polymer will undergo segmental motion of the polymer chain. To measure the glass transition temperature of a polymer by DSC, the polymer sample is dried, preheated to 120°C, rapidly

cooled to -100°C , and then heated to 150°C , at a rate of $20^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{minute}$ while DSC data are collected. The glass transition temperature for the sample is measured at the midpoint of the inflection using the half-height method.

[0023] Preferably, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising monomer X and any other emulsion copolymers in the composition are prepared separately; and, preferably, both are prepared by emulsion polymerization. For ease of reference, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising monomer X is labeled as (ii). The other emulsion copolymers, which may include multistage emulsion copolymers not comprising monomer X, are labeled (i).

[0024] The practice of emulsion polymerization is discussed in detail in D.C. Blackley, *Emulsion Polymerization* (Wiley, 1975). The practice of emulsion polymerization is also discussed in H. Warson, *The Applications of Synthetic Resin Emulsions*, Chapter 2 (Ernest Benn Ltd., London 1972). With the exceptions noted below regarding incorporation of monomer X, conventional emulsion polymerization techniques may be used to prepare the emulsion copolymer of this invention as an aqueous dispersion of polymer particles.

[0025] Thus, the ethylenically unsaturated monomers used to form the emulsion copolymer may be emulsified as known in the art with a stabilizing reagent such as an anionic or nonionic dispersing agent, also referred to as a surfactant. Emulsification of the unsaturated monomers is not required, however. Combinations of anionic and nonionic dispersing agents may also be used. High molecular weight polymers such as hydroxy ethyl cellulose, methyl cellulose, and vinyl alcohol may be used as emulsion stabilizers and protective colloids, as may polyelectrolytes such as polyacrylic acid. Acidic monomers particularly those of low molecular weight, such as acrylic acid and methacrylic acid, are water soluble, and thus may serve as dispersing agents which aid in emulsifying the other monomers used.

[0026] Suitable anionic dispersing agents include, but are not limited to, for example, the higher fatty alcohol sulfates, such as sodium lauryl sulfate; alkylaryl sulfonates such as sodium or potassium isopropylbenzene sulfonates; and alkali metal higher alkyl sulfosuccinates, such as sodium octyl sulfosuccinate.

[0027] Suitable nonionic dispersing agents include, but are not limited to, alkylphenoxy-polyethoxyethanols having alkyl groups of from about 7 to 18 carbon atoms and from about 6 to about 60 oxyethylene units, such as heptylphenoxy-polyethoxyethanols, and methyloctyl phenoxy-polyethoxyethanols; ethylene oxide derivatives of long chained carboxylic acids; and analogous ethylene oxide condensates of long chained alcohols.

[0028] The polymerization process to prepare the emulsion copolymer may be a thermal or redox type; that is, free radicals may be generated solely by the thermal dissociation of an initiator species, or a redox system may be used. Except as noted below, regarding incorporation of monomer X, conventional (thermal) free radical initiators may be used such as, for example, azo compounds, hydrogen peroxide, t-butyl or t-amyl hydroperoxide, and ammonium and/or alkali metal persulfates, typically at a level of 0.01% to 3.0% by weight, based on the weight of total monomer. Alternatively, redox systems using the same initiators (alternatively referred to as "oxidants") coupled with a suitable reductant such as, for example, sodium sulfoxylate formaldehyde, ascorbic acid, or isoascorbic acid, may be used. Redox reactions catalyzing metal salts of iron, copper, manganese, silver, platinum, vanadium, nickel, chromium, palladium, or cobalt may be used.

[0029] The polymerization temperature may be from 10°C to 90°C, or more, and may be optimized for the catalyst system employed, as is conventional; preferably, the polymerization temperature is from 80°C to 90°C. Emulsion polymerization may be seeded or unseeded.

[0030] A monomer emulsion containing all or some portion of the monomers to be copolymerized may be prepared using the monomers, water, and surfactants. A catalyst solution containing catalyst in water may be separately prepared. The monomer emulsion and catalyst solution may be cofed into the polymerization vessel over the course of the emulsion polymerization. The reaction vessel itself may initially contain water. The reaction vessel may also additionally contain seed emulsion and further may additionally contain an initial charge of the polymerization catalyst. The temperature of the reaction vessel during the emulsion polymerization may be controlled by either cooling to remove heat generated by the polymerization reaction, or by heating the reaction vessel, or a combination as required. Several monomer emulsions may be simultaneously cofed into the reaction vessel. When multiple monomer emulsions are cofed, they may be of different monomer compositions. The sequence and rates at which the different monomer emulsions are cofed may be altered during the emulsion polymerization process. The pH of the contents of the reaction vessel may also be altered during the course of the emulsion polymerization process.

[0031] Chain transfer agents such as mercaptans, polymercaptan, polyhalogen, and allyl compounds in the polymerization mixture may be used to moderate the molecular weight of the copolymer. Examples of chain transfer agents which may be used include long chain C₄-C₂₂ linear or branched alkyl mercaptans such as n-dodecyl mercaptan, t-dodecyl mercaptans,

alkyl thioglycolates, alkyl mercaptoalkanoates, alcohols such as isopropanol, isobutanol, lauryl alcohol, or t-octyl alcohol, carbon tetrachloride, tetrachloroethylene, tetrabromoethane, and trichlorobromoethane. Generally from 0.05 to 2 weight %, based on the weight of total monomer in the copolymer, may be used. Alternatively, suitable molecular weights may be obtained by increasing the initiator level, or by a combination of increased initiator level and a chain transfer agent.

[0032] In one embodiment of the present invention the emulsion copolymer may be prepared by a multistage emulsion polymerization process, in which at least two stages differing in composition are polymerized in sequential fashion. Such a process usually results in the formation of at least two mutually incompatible polymer compositions, thereby resulting in the formation of at least two phases within the polymer particles. Such particles are composed of two or more phases of various geometries or morphologies such as, for example, core/shell or core/sheath particles, core/shell particles with shell phases incompletely encapsulating the core, core/shell particles with a multiplicity of cores, and interpenetrating network particles. In all of these cases the majority of the surface area of the particle will be occupied by at least one outer phase and the interior of the particle will be occupied by at least one inner phase. Each of the stages of the multi-staged emulsion polymer may contain the same monomers, surfactants, chain transfer agents, etc. as disclosed herein-above for the emulsion polymer. The polymerization techniques used to prepare conventional multistage emulsion polymers are well known in the art such as, for example, US Patents No. 4,325,856; 4,654,397; and 4,814,373.

[0033] The polymer particles of the emulsion copolymer may have a particle size of from 20 to 500nm, preferably 20 to 250nm, most preferably 50 to 150nm. The particle size distribution may be unimodal, bimodal, multimodal, or broad. The average particle diameter may be measured by a quasi-elastic light scattering technique, using an instrument such as a Brookhaven Model BI-90 Particle Sizer, supplied by Brookhaven Instruments Corporation, Holtsville, N.Y. Alternatively, for colloids with multi-mode particle size distributions, a particle size analysis method known as capillary hydrodynamic fractionation (CHDF) may be used with an instrument such as the Matec CHDF 2000 (from Matec Applied Sciences, Northborough, MA).

[0034] The polymers may have a weight average molecular weight, M_w , in the range 5,000 - 5,000,000 (preferably 10,000 - 1,000,000, and more preferably 20,000 - 500,000) as measured by GPC. (Molecular weights are usually represented as unit-less in the art, although these same numbers may be referred to in units of Daltons). If the M_w becomes too low, durability

upon exterior exposure is compromised. If the M_w becomes too high, the abrasive scrub performance is compromised. Chain transfer agents are not essential in the practice of this invention. However, in a preferred embodiment, the copolymer of the invention has a molecular weight of approximately 20,000-200,000, which molecular weight is more readily accessed using a chain transfer agent, such as n-dodecyl mercaptan (n-DDM).

[0035] In a preferred embodiment, the polymerization of the copolymer particles is accomplished using a gradual addition feed process. In this process, a seed polymer is added or formed in situ, and then grown out through the gradual addition of monomer(s). In the case where the seed is formed in situ, a small charge of monomer emulsion to the reactor, typically 3% of the whole monomer emulsion mix, is made and the polymerization is initiated to form a seed. In other cases a fully polymerized particle is added to the reactor of a composition compatible with the monomers to be charged. These are standard emulsion polymerization techniques well known to those skilled in the art. In the art, a seed polymer is not considered to be the first stage polymer. Herein, we follow that convention in that the term "multistage" does not include the seed polymer as one of the stages.

[0036] A photoinitiator may optionally be used in the composition of this invention to enhance dirt resistance, for example, a substituted acetophenone or benzophenone derivative as is taught in U.S. Patent No. 5,162,415.

[0037] The aqueous coating composition of the present invention comprises a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) which comprises polymerized units of monomer X, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. Examples of monomer X include 1-vinylimidazole, vinyl imidazoline, vinyl amidine, 2-vinylpyridine, 4-vinylpyridine, vinyl pyrrole, vinyl pyrrolidine, 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone, vinyl caprolactam. The same monomers Y detailed above may be copolymerized with monomer X in forming the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer. For the most part, the emulsion polymerization techniques described above with respect to conventional emulsion copolymers (i) may be employed. However, the monomer X is polymerized with difficulty using conventional emulsion polymerization techniques, and results in monomer levels that are typically, and undesirably, >1500 ppm. Additionally, using conventional techniques, it is difficult to access useful solids content (e.g. > 30% solids) in the emulsion copolymer products comprising monomer X. Conventional persulfate initiated polymerizations of monomer X suffer from unstable emulsions and problems from excessive gel. The method of initiation is important in reducing the residual monomer levels and achieving useful solids

content, with azo initiators being especially preferred. Also, the use of a chain transfer agent, such as n-DDM is preferable for polymerizations with monomer X.

[0038] Thus, in some embodiments of the present invention, the composition of the present invention further comprises a polymerization initiator and/or the degradation products of a polymerization initiator. In some aspects of these embodiments, the polymerization initiator is selected from 2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile);

2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile); 2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile;

2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyronitrile); 1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile);

2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane);

2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride;

2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid) and

combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, the polymerization initiator is selected from 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid) which is commercially available from DuPont under the name VAZO[®] 68.

[0039] In some embodiments of the present invention, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprises $\leq 1,000$ ppm of residual monomer X. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises ≤ 900 ppm of residual monomer X, or, alternatively, ≤ 800 ppm of residual monomer X, or ≤ 700 ppm of residual monomer X. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises ≤ 600 ppm of residual monomer X, or ≤ 500 ppm of residual monomer X, or ≤ 400 ppm of residual monomer X.

[0040] In some embodiments of the present invention, there is provided a composition comprising a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) of the present invention, which emulsion comprises ≥ 20 wt% solids, or ≥ 25 wt% solids. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprises ≥ 30 wt% solids, or, alternatively, ≥ 40 wt% solids.

[0041] In some embodiments of the present invention, at least one stage of the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprises > 5 wt% of monomer X derived units. In some aspects of these embodiments, at least one stage of the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprises ≥ 10 wt% of monomer X derived units, or, alternatively, ≥ 15 wt% of monomer X derived units, or, alternatively, ≥ 20 wt% of monomer X derived units, or ≥ 25 wt% of monomer X derived units. In some aspects of these embodiments, at least one stage of the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprises ≥ 27 wt% of monomer X derived units, or ≥ 28 wt% of monomer X derived units, or ≥ 29 wt% of monomer X derived

units, or ≥ 30 wt% of monomer X derived units. Preferably, monomer X is present in only one stage. Preferably, monomer X is copolymerized in the first stage polymerization.

[0042] In some embodiments of the present invention, there is provided a composition comprising a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprising > 5 to 50 wt% of polymerized units derived from monomer X and 95 to 50 wt% of polymerized units derived from monomer Y in at least one stage. In some aspects of these embodiments, there is provided a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprising >5 to 30 wt% of polymerized units derived from monomer X and 95 to 70 wt% of polymerized units derived from monomer Y in at least one stage.

[0043] In some embodiments of the present invention, there is provided an aqueous coating composition comprising an emulsion copolymer comprising ≤ 5 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function. In some aspects of these embodiments, the emulsion copolymer comprises ≤ 1 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function, or, alternatively, ≤ 0.5 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function, or ≤ 0.1 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function, or ≤ 0.05 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function. In some aspects of these embodiments, the aqueous coating composition does not comprise an emulsion copolymer comprising units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function.

[0044] In a preferred embodiment, the aqueous coating composition comprises one or more emulsion copolymer (i) and a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprising monomer X. Preferably, monomer X is present in only one stage. Preferably, monomer X is copolymerized in the first stage polymerization. In one embodiment, the multistage emulsion copolymer (ii) comprises monomer X in the first (non-seed) stage at a level of 5 wt% to 40 wt%, preferably 20-30 wt%, and most preferably approximately 30 wt %, based on the weight of solids of the monomers in that stage. The relative proportion of the first stage polymer to the second stage polymer (or further stages) may vary, and may be used to control and optimize the overall level of monomer X in the coating composition.

[0045] The multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprising polymerized units of monomer X may be a minor additive accompanying emulsion copolymer (i), the latter acting as the binder in the coating composition. This approach allows for a more cost effective use of monomer X. Moreover, it expands the options for monomer combinations with monomer X, since not all monomers Y are readily polymerizable with monomers X. Instead, difficult

to polymerize or incompatible monomers Y may be polymerized in a polymer stage that does not comprise monomer X.

[0046] In another preferred embodiment, the aqueous coating composition comprises one or more aqueous emulsion copolymers of which at least one is a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprising, in the first (non-seed) stage, monomer X at a level of 5 wt% to 40 wt%, preferably 20-30 wt%, and most preferably approximately 30 wt%, based on the weight of monomers in that stage, together with from 0.1 wt% to 5 wt%, preferably approximately 0.2-0.6 wt%, based on the combined weight of solids of the one or more aqueous emulsion copolymers, of a homopolymer comprising polymerized units derived from monomer X, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof. In a preferred embodiment, monomer X is 1-vinylimidazole or 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone. In some preferred embodiments, this multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer (ii) comprising monomer X is used as a minor additive in conjunction with another emulsion copolymer (i), the latter acting as the binder in the coating composition. The multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer may be present at a level of 1-50 wt%, preferably 1-30 wt%, more preferably 1-15 wt%, based on the combined weight of solids of the emulsion copolymers.

[0047] The coating composition may therefore also comprise a homopolymer. In some embodiments of the present invention, the homopolymer is made up of polymerized units of a single monomer X, where monomer X is selected from imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is selected from imidazole, pyridine, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is selected from 1-vinylimidazole, 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone, 2-vinylpyridine, 4-vinylpyridine and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is 1-vinylimidazole. The homopolymer can be added to the coating composition at levels of from 0.05 wt% to 20 wt%, preferably from 0.1 wt% to 10 wt%, and more preferably from 0.1 wt% to 5 wt%, based on the weight of the homopolymer solids in relation to the copolymer solids.

[0048] In forming the homopolymer of monomer X, it is not necessary to emulsify the monomer X, since it is a water soluble monomer. In this case, the polymerization proceeds as a solution polymerization in water or aqueous solution. Alternatively, a solution polymerization in organic solvent, such as toluene, can be effected, in which case the

homopolymer is precipitated out of solution, since it is not soluble in the organic solvent. In either case, preferably, the initiator used is an azo initiator. Preferably, the polymerization of the homopolymer includes a chain transfer agent, such as n-DDM. The latter can be used in levels of 0.1 wt% to 5 wt%, preferably from 1 wt% to 2 wt%, based on the weight of solids of the homopolymer.

[0049] Other components may be added to the polymer composition of this invention, including without limitation, other polymers such as vinyl acetate polymers, styrene butadiene polymers, acrylic copolymers, and vinyl chloride copolymers; pigments or fillers; surfactants; plasticizers; buffers; neutralizers; humectants; waxes; dyes; pearlescents; adhesion promoters; tackifiers; dispersants; defoamers; leveling agents; optical brighteners; ultraviolet stabilizers such as hindered amine light stabilizers; cosolvents; coalescents; rheology modifiers or thickeners; preservatives; biocides; and antioxidants.

[0050] In some embodiments of the present invention, the coating composition has a pH \geq 6.0. In some aspects of these embodiments, the coating composition has a pH \geq 7.0, alternatively \geq 8.0; alternatively \geq 9.0.

[0051] The coating composition of this invention may be applied onto substrates using conventional coating application methods, such as, for example, brushing, rolling, dipping, and spraying methods. Substrates to which the coating composition of this invention may be applied include, for example, timber including but not limited to cedar, pine, teak, oak, maple, and walnut; processed timber including but not limited to medium density fiber board, chip board, laminates, plastic/wood composites; mineral substrates including but not limited to masonry, concrete, stucco, fiber, mortar, cement, cement asbestos, plaster, plasterboard, glazed and unglazed ceramic; metal including but not limited to galvanized iron, galvanized steel, cold rolled steel, ZinalumTM metal, ZinalumTM II metal, aluminum, wrought iron, drop forged steel, and stainless steel; previously painted or primed surfaces (fresh, aged or weathered) including but not limited to acrylic coatings, vinyl acrylic coatings, styrene acrylic coatings, powder coated surfaces, solvent acrylic coatings, alkyd resin coatings, solvent urethane coatings, and epoxy coatings; synthetic substrates including but not limited to polyvinyl chloride, polyvinylidene chloride, polyethylene, and polypropylene; asphalt; cellulosic substrates such as paper, paperboard, wallpaper, and wallboard; glass; leather; and woven and nonwoven material such as cloth, wool, synthetic and natural fiber, and textiles. The coating composition may be used, for example, as a wood coating, maintenance coating, interior or exterior wall coating, metal primer or coating, traffic paint, leather coating, coil coating, architectural coating, mastic sealant, caulk, board coating, paper coating, ink,

flooring coating, and adhesive. Coatings prepared from the polymer composition may be flat coatings, satin coatings, semi-gloss coatings, gloss coatings, primers, textured coatings, and the like. In particular, these coating compositions can be advantageously used in various interior or exterior coatings, including functional, protective, or decorative coatings, since the homopolymer confers much improved block resistance to the coating.

[0052] After the coating composition has been applied to a substrate, the coating composition is dried or is allowed to dry to form a film. Heat may be applied to dry the coating composition.

[0053] In some embodiments of the present invention, there is provided a method for making a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer and a coating composition comprising said multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer, the method comprising: providing an aqueous solvent; providing a monomer X; providing a monomer Y; providing a polymerization initiator selected from 2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile); 2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile; 2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyronitrile); 1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane); 2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride; 2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid) and combinations thereof; combining the monomer X, the monomer Y, the polymerization initiator and the aqueous solvent forming a reaction mixture; maintaining the pH of the reaction mixture at ≥ 7 ; reacting the mixture forming the first stage copolymer; and performing a second stage polymerization in the presence of the first stage polymer; wherein the first stage copolymer comprises > 5 wt% of monomer X derived units; wherein monomer X is selected from imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidone, caprolactam, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof; wherein monomer Y is selected from carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid salts, carboxylic acid esters, organosulphuric acids, organosulphuric acid salts, sulphonic acids, sulphonic acid salts, phosphonic acids, phosphonic acid salts, vinyl esters, (meth)acrylamides, C₈-C₂₀ aromatic monomers containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation and combinations thereof; and combining the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer with an aqueous solution of a homopolymer of said monomer X. In some aspects of these embodiments, the polymerization initiator is 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid). In some aspects of these embodiments, the pH of the reaction mixture is maintained at 7-10, alternatively at ≥ 8 , alternatively at 8-10, alternatively at ≥ 9 , alternatively at 9-10. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous

emulsion copolymer comprises ≥ 10 wt%, alternatively ≥ 15 wt%, alternatively ≥ 20 wt%, alternatively ≥ 25 wt%, alternatively ≥ 27 wt%, alternatively ≥ 28 wt%, alternatively ≥ 29 wt%, alternatively ≥ 30 wt% of monomer X derived units. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is selected from imidazole, pyridine, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof; alternatively monomer X is selected from 1-vinylimidazole, 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone, 2-vinylpyridine, 4-vinylpyridine and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is 1-vinylimidazole. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer Y is selected from carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid esters, (meth)acrylamides, C₈-C₂₀ aromatic monomers containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer Y is selected from acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, maleic acid, fumaric acid, methyl (meth)acrylate, ethyl (meth)acrylate, propyl (meth)acrylate, isopropyl acrylate, n-butyl (meth)acrylate, isobutyl (meth)acrylate, 2-ethylhexyl (meth)acrylate, decyl (meth)acrylate, lauryl (meth)acrylate, stearyl (meth)acrylate, styrene, vinyltoluene, α -methylstyrene and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer Y is n-butyl (meth)acrylate.

[0054] In some embodiments of the present invention, there is provided a method for making a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer and a coating composition comprising said multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer, the method comprising: providing an aqueous solvent; providing a monomer X; providing a monomer Y; providing a polymerization initiator selected from 2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile); 2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile; 2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyronitrile); 1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane); 2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride; 2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid) and combinations thereof; combining the monomer X, the monomer Y, the polymerization initiator and the aqueous solvent forming a reaction mixture; maintaining the pH of the reaction mixture at ≥ 7 ; reacting the mixture forming the first stage copolymer; and performing a second stage polymerization in the presence of the first stage polymer; wherein the first stage copolymer comprises > 5 wt% of monomer X derived units; wherein the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises $\leq 1,000$ ppm of residual monomer X; wherein monomer X is selected from imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidone, caprolactam, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof; wherein monomer Y

is selected from carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid salts, carboxylic acid esters, organosulphuric acids, organosulphuric acid salts, sulphonic acids, sulphonic acid salts, phosphonic acids, phosphonic acid salts, vinyl esters, (meth)acrylamides, C₈-C₂₀ aromatic monomers containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation and combinations thereof; and combining the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer with an aqueous solution of a homopolymer of said monomer X; with the proviso that the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises ≤ 5 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function. In some aspects of these embodiments, the polymerization initiator is 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid)). In some aspects of these embodiments, the pH of the reaction mixture is maintained at 7-10, alternatively at ≥ 8 , alternatively at 8-10, alternatively at ≥ 9 , alternatively at 9-10. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises ≥ 10 wt%, alternatively ≥ 15 wt%, alternatively ≥ 20 wt%, alternatively ≥ 25 wt%, alternatively ≥ 27 wt%, alternatively ≥ 28 wt%, alternatively ≥ 29 wt%, alternatively ≥ 30 wt% of monomer X derived units. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises ≤ 900 ppm, alternatively ≤ 800 ppm, alternatively ≤ 700 ppm, alternatively ≤ 600 ppm, alternatively ≤ 500 ppm, alternatively ≤ 400 ppm of residual monomer X. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is selected from imidazole, pyridine, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof; alternatively monomer X is selected from 1-vinylimidazole, 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone, 2-vinylpyridine, 4-vinylpyridine and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer X is 1-vinylimidazole. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer Y is selected from carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid esters, (meth)acrylamides, C₈-C₂₀ aromatic monomers containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer Y is selected from acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, maleic acid, fumaric acid, methyl (meth)acrylate, ethyl (meth)acrylate, propyl (meth)acrylate, isopropyl acrylate, n-butyl (meth)acrylate, isobutyl (meth)acrylate, 2-ethylhexyl (meth)acrylate, decyl (meth)acrylate, lauryl (meth)acrylate, stearyl (meth)acrylate, styrene, vinyltoluene, α -methylstyrene and combinations thereof. In some aspects of these embodiments, monomer Y is n-butyl (meth)acrylate. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises ≤ 1 wt%, alternatively ≤ 0.5 wt%, alternatively ≤ 0.1 wt%, alternatively ≤ 0.05 wt% of units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function. In some aspects of these embodiments, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer

does not comprise units derived from ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing an epoxide function.

[0055] In some embodiments of the present invention, the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer described in the above method is a multistage multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising monomers X and Y.

[0056] In some embodiments of the present invention, the method of making a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer further comprises adding a chain transfer agent to the reaction mixture.

[0057] In some embodiments of the present invention, the method of making a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer and a coating composition comprising said multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer further comprises combining the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer with an aqueous solution of a homopolymer comprising polymerized units of monomer X, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof.

[0058] Some embodiments of the present invention will now be described in detail in the following Examples. All fractions and percentages set forth below in the Examples are by weight unless otherwise specified. The following abbreviations are used in the Examples:

[0059] Nomenclature

BA	butyl acrylate
DI	deionized
MMA	methyl methacrylate
NaPS	sodium persulfate
n-DDM	n-dodecyl mercaptan
SLS	sodium lauryl sulfate
Vazo™ 68	4,4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid)
VI	1-vinylimidazole
p-VI	Poly(vinylimidazole)
AIBN	2,2'-azobis[isobutyronitrile]

Vazo is a trademark of the DuPont Company, Wilmington, DE, USA)

Example 1. Preparation of seed emulsion

BA/n-DDM = 100/2, (all ratios by weight)

[0060] 1839.22 g of DI water, 0.63 g of anhydrous sodium sulfate, 0.25 g of acetic acid and 66.04 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS were charged to a 5 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 83 °C.

Separately, the initiator solution was prepared by dissolving 4.82 g of NaPS in 83.33 g of DI water. An emulsified monomer mix was prepared with 513.70 g of DI water, 22.01 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS, 1225.00 g of BA and 25.00 g of n-DDM using a mechanical mixer. With the reaction mixture at 83 °C the NaPS solution was added all at once and then the emulsified monomer mix was fed in over 2 hrs (14.88 g per minute). The temperature was maintained at 83 °C for the entire feed. At the end of the monomer mix feed the reaction was held at 83 °C for 1 hr. The reaction mixture was cooled to 25 °C and then filtered through cheesecloth. No coagulum was retained on the cheesecloth. Residual BA monomer was <50 ppm as determined by gas chromatography. The emulsion particle size was determined by light scattering to be 55 nm. The polymer content of the emulsion was 32.7% by gravimetry.

Example 2. Preparation of first stage emulsion polymer

Seed//Stage I = 10//90

BA/n-DDM//BA/VI/n-DDM = 100/2//70/30/2

[0061] 424.45 g of DI water and 507.95 g of the seed emulsion from Example 1 were charged to a 5 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C. Separately, the initiator solution was prepared by mixing 27.50 g of Vazo™ 68 and 215.86 g of 1 N NaOH with 789.05 g of DI water. The Vazo™ 68 initiator solution was divided into two halves. To one half, 412.50 g of VI was added. An emulsified monomer mix was prepared with 589.29 of DI water, 98.21 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS, 962.50 g of BA and 27.50 g of *n*-DDM using a mechanical mixer. With the reaction being held constant at 85 °C, the emulsified monomer mix was fed (18.64 g/min) simultaneously with the Vazo™ 68/VI solution (10.32 g/min) over a period of 90 minutes. At the end of the feeds, the rest of the Vazo™ 68 solution was added over 120 minutes (4.30 g/min) with the reaction mixture at 85 °C. The reaction was then held at 85 °C for 2 more hrs. The reaction mixture was then cooled to 25 °C and then filtered through cheesecloth. No coagulum was retained on the cheesecloth. Residual BA and VI monomers were 396 and 258 ppm respectively as determined by gas chromatography. The emulsion particle size was determined by light scattering to be 151 nm. The polymer content of the emulsion was 39.7% by gravimetry.

Example 3. Preparation of two stage emulsion polymer

Seed//Stage I//Stage II = 5//45//50

BA/*n*-DDM//BA/VI/*n*-DDM//BA/MMA/*n*-DDM

100/2//70/30/2//50/50/2

[0062] 382.50 g of the first stage emulsion from Example 2 was charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C. Separately, the initiator solution was prepared by mixing 3.00 g of Vazo™ 68 and 23.55 g of 1 N NaOH with 86.08 g of DI water. The Vazo™ 68 initiator solution was divided into two halves. An emulsified monomer mix was prepared with 125.12 of DI water, 5.36 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS, 75 g of BA, 75 g of MMA and 3.00 g of *n*-DDM using a mechanical mixer. With the reaction being held constant at 85 °C the emulsified monomer mix was fed (3.12 g/min) simultaneously with the first Vazo™ 68 solution (0.63 g/min) over a period of 90 minutes. At the end of the feeds the other Vazo™ 68 solution was added over 120 minutes (0.47 g/min) with the reaction mixture at 85 °C. The reaction was then held at 85 °C for 2 more hrs. The reaction mixture was then cooled to 25 °C and then filtered through

cheesecloth. No coagulum was retained on the cheesecloth. Residual BA and MMA monomers were 1375 and 14 ppm respectively as determined by gas chromatography. The emulsion particle size was determined by light scattering to be 221 nm. The polymer content of the emulsion was 39.9% by gravimetry.

Example 4. Preparation of two stage emulsion polymer

Seed//Stage I//Stage II=5//45//50

BA/*n*-DDM//BA/VI/*n*-DDM//BA/MMA/*n*-DDM

100/2//70/30/2//20/80/2

[0063] 382.50 g of the first stage emulsion from Example 2 was charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C.

Separately, the initiator solution was prepared by mixing 3.00 g of Vazo™ 68 and 23.55 g of 1 N NaOH with 86.08 g of DI water. The Vazo™ 68 initiator solution was divided into two halves. An emulsified monomer mix was prepared with 125.12 of DI water, 5.36 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS, 30 g of BA, 120 g of MMA and 3.00 g of *n*-DDM using a mechanical mixer. With the reaction being held constant at 85 °C the emulsified monomer mix was fed (3.12 g/min) simultaneously with the first Vazo™ 68 solution (0.63 g/min) over a period of 90 minutes. At the end of the feeds the other Vazo™ 68 solution was added over 120 minutes (0.47 g/min) with the reaction mixture at 85 °C. The reaction was then held at 85 °C for 2 more hrs. The reaction mixture was then cooled to 25 °C and then filtered through cheesecloth. No coagulum was retained on the cheesecloth. Residual BA and MMA monomers were 619 and 87 ppm respectively as determined by gas chromatography. The emulsion particle size was determined by light scattering to be 191 nm. The polymer content of the multistage aqueous emulsion was 39.8% by gravimetry.

Example 5. Preparation of two stage emulsion polymer

Seed//Stage I//Stage II = 2//18//80

BA/*n*-DDM//BA/VI/*n*-DDM//BA/MMA/*n*-DDM

100/2//70/30/2//50/50/2

[0064] 159.38 g of the first stage emulsion from Example 2 was charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C.

Separately, the initiator solution was prepared by mixing 5.00 g of Vazo™ 68 and 39.25 g of

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1 N NaOH with 143.47 g of DI water. The Vazo™ 68 initiator solution was divided into two halves. An emulsified monomer mix was prepared with 208.54 of DI water, 8.93 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS, 125 g of BA, 125 g of MMA and 5.00 g of *n*-DDM using a mechanical mixer. With the reaction being held constant at 85 °C the emulsified monomer mix was fed (5.16 g/min) simultaneously with the first Vazo™ 68 solution (1.04 g/min) over a period of 90 minutes. At the end of the feeds the other Vazo™ 68 solution was added over 120 minutes (0.78 g/min) with the reaction mixture at 85 °C. The reaction was then held at 85 °C for 2 more hrs. The reaction mixture was then cooled to 25 °C and then filtered through cheesecloth. No coagulum was retained on the cheesecloth. Residual BA and MMA monomers were 1606 and 3 ppm respectively as determined by gas chromatography. The emulsion particle size was determined by light scattering to be 504 nm. The polymer content of the multistage aqueous emulsion was 39.4% by gravimetry.

Example 6. Preparation of two stage emulsion polymer

Seed//Stage I//Stage II = 2//18//80

BA/*n*-DDM//BA/VI/*n*-DDM//MMA/*n*-DDM

100/2//70/30/2//100/2

[0065] 159.38 g of the first stage emulsion from Example 2 was charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C.

Separately, the initiator solution was prepared by mixing 5.00 g of Vazo™ 68 and 39.25 g of 1 N NaOH with 143.47 g of DI water. The Vazo™ 68 initiator solution was divided into two halves. An emulsified monomer mix was prepared with 208.54 of DI water, 8.93 g of a 28% aqueous solution of SLS, 250 g of MMA and 5.00 g of *n*-DDM using a mechanical mixer. With the reaction being held constant at 85 °C the emulsified monomer mix was fed (5.16 g/min) simultaneously with the first Vazo™ 68 solution (1.04 g/min) over a period of 90 minutes. At the end of the feeds the other Vazo™ 68 solution was added over 120 minutes (0.78 g/min) with the reaction mixture at 85 °C. The reaction was then held at 85 °C for 2 more hrs. The reaction mixture was then cooled to 25 °C and then filtered through cheesecloth. No coagulum was retained on the cheesecloth. Residual MMA monomer was 291 ppm as determined by gas chromatography. The emulsion particle size was determined by light scattering to be 230 nm. The polymer content of the multistage aqueous emulsion was 39.8% by gravimetry.

Example 7. Preparation of poly(vinyl imidazole)**VI = 100**

[0066] 612.00 g of toluene, 150.00 g of vinyl imidazole and 3.00 g of AIBN were charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C and held for 4 hours. During the reaction the polymer product precipitated out of solution since it is insoluble in toluene. The final reaction mixture was filtered through filter paper. The filter cake was reslurried in 1000 mL of acetone and then refiltered. Poly(VI) is insoluble in acetone - this step is to remove residual VI monomer. The acetone washing step was repeated 2 more times. The filter cake was then dried at 60 °C in a vacuum oven overnight. The resulting polymer product weight was 132 g and contained 1802 ppm of residual VI monomer.

Example 8. Preparation of poly(vinyl imidazole)**VI/*n*-DDM= 100/2**

[0067] 624.00 g of toluene, 150.00 g of vinyl imidazole, 3.00 g of *n*-DDM and 3.00 g of AIBN were charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C and held for 4 hours. During the reaction the polymer product precipitated out of solution since it is insoluble in toluene. The final reaction mixture was filtered through filter paper. The filter cake was reslurried in 1000 mL of acetone and then refiltered. Poly(VI) is insoluble in acetone - this step is to remove residual VI monomer. The acetone washing step was repeated 2 more times. The filter cake was then dried at 60 °C in a vacuum oven overnight. The resulting polymer product weight was 127 g and contained 1112 ppm of residual VI monomer.

Example 9. Preparation of poly(vinyl imidazole-co-BA)**VI/BA/*n*-DDM= 97/3/2**

[0068] 624.00 g of toluene, 145.5 g of vinyl imidazole, 4.50 g of BA, 3.00 g of *n*-DDM and 3.00 g of AIBN were charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C and held for 4 hours. During the reaction the polymer product precipitated out of solution since it is insoluble in toluene. The final reaction mixture was filtered through filter paper. The filter cake was reslurried in 1000

mL of acetone and then refiltered. Poly(VI) is insoluble in acetone - this step is to remove residual VI monomer. The acetone washing step was repeated 2 more times. The filter cake was then dried at 60 °C in a vacuum oven overnight. The resulting polymer product weight was 136 g and contained 787 ppm of residual VI monomer.

Example 10. Preparation of poly(vinyl imidazole-co-BA)

VI/BA/*n*-DDM= 90/10/2

[0069] 624.00 g of toluene, 135.00 g of vinyl imidazole, 15.00 g of BA, 3.00 g of *n*-DDM and 3.00 g of AIBN were charged to a 1 liter, 4-necked round bottomed flask equipped with a heating mantel, thermocouple, temperature controller, mechanical stirrer and reflux condenser. The reaction mixture was heated to 85 °C and held for 4 hours. During the reaction the polymer product precipitated out of solution since it is insoluble in toluene. The final reaction mixture was filtered through filter paper. The filter cake was reslurried in 1000 mL of acetone and then refiltered. Poly(VI) is insoluble in acetone - this step is to remove residual VI monomer. The acetone washing step was repeated 2 more times. The filter cake was then dried at 60 °C in a vacuum oven overnight. The resulting polymer product weight was 134 g and contained 672 ppm of residual VI monomer.

Examples for making paints containing vinylimidazole additives

Example 11. Preparation of master batch of paint (AC-261 based paint with Texanol)

[0070] 2895.76 g of Ti-pure™ R-746 (DuPont) was charged to a 3 gallons container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 3548.70 g of Rhoplex™ AC-261 was added to the container with constant stirring. 484.84 g of propylene glycol, 52.96 g of Tamol™ 165A, 190.38 g of Texanol™-145, and 16.80 g of Triton™ GR-7M were mixed together and the mixture was added to the container followed by 17.84 g of Foamaster™ VL, 16.0 g of 28% ammonium hydroxide, 155.19 g of Acrysol™ RM-2020NPR, 13.60 Acrysol™ RM-8W, and 647.90 g of water. Mixing was continued until the mixture became consistent.

Ti-Pure™ is a trademark of Dupont Corporation (Wilmington, DE, USA)
 Rhoplex™, Tamol™, Triton™, and Acrysol™ are trademarks of Rohm and Haas Co. (Philadelphia, PA, USA)
 Texanol™ is a trademark of Eastman Chemical Company (Kingsport, TN, USA)
 Foamaster™ and Foamstar™ are trademarks of Fitz Chemical Corporation (Itasca, IL, USA)

Example 12. Preparation of non-vinylimidazole containing control sample

[0071] 502.51 g of master paint from example 11 was placed in a 1 quart container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 16.70 g of Rhoplex™ AC-261 was added to the container followed by 17.50 g of water. The mixture was stirred until it became consistent.

Example 13. Preparation of Paint with 2% VI emulsion polymer from Example 2

[0072] 502.51 g of master paint from example 11 was placed in a 1 quart container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 11.93 g of Rhoplex™ AC-261 was added to the container followed by 7.97 g of Example 2, and 14.30 g of water. The mixture was stirred until it became consistent.

Example 14. Preparation of Paint with 7% VI emulsion polymer from Example 2

[0073] 502.51 g of master paint from example 11 was placed in a 1 quart container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 27.83 g of Example 2 and 6.47 g of water were added to the container and the resulting mixture was stirred until it became consistent.

Example 15. Preparation of Paint with 0.4% polyvinyl imidazole from Example 8

[0074] Dissolve 0.48 g of polyvinyl imidazole in 17.02 g of water. 502.51 g of master paint from example 11 was placed in a 1 quart container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 16.70 g of Rhoplex™ AC-261 was added to the container followed by the aqueous pVI solution (Example 8) under constant stirring.

Example 16. Preparation of Paint with 7% VI containing multistage aqueous emulsion polymer from Example 3

[0075] 502.51 g of master paint from example 11 was placed in a 1 quart container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 31.50 g of multistage aqueous emulsion from Example 3 and 2.70 g of water were added to the container and the resulting mixture was stirred until it became consistent.

Example 17. Preparation of Paint with 7% VI multistage aqueous emulsion polymer from Example 3 and 0.4% of polyvinylimidazole from Example 8

[0076] Dissolve 0.48 g of polyvinyl imidazole (Example 7) in 2.22 g of water. 502.51 g of master paint from Example 11 was placed in a 1 quart container equipped with mechanical stirrer. 31.50 g of VI multistage aqueous emulsion (Example 3) and the aqueous solution of pVI were added to the container. The resulting mixture was stirred until it became consistent.

Example 18. Preparing paint films.

[0077] 8 to 10 ml of the paint was transferred on to the test chart in front of the drawdown bar (3 Mil Bird Film Applicator). Immediately, grasping the drawdown bar with both hands, a smooth film was drawn over the test paint at a rate of about 0.2 ft per sec (5 sec per test chart). The film was allowed to dry overnight in a horizontal position at 25°C and 50%

Example 19. Measuring Peel Block Resistance.

[0078] Films were drawn down as described in Example 18. The films were cured in a constant temperature room (CTR) for a specified period of time depending on the test requirement. Four 1-1/2" x 1-1/2" sections (to run duplicates) of each type of paint film were prepared. The cut sections were placed with the paint surfaces face to face and then placed on a flat metal plate. Each individual specimen was topped with a number 8 rubber stopper, with narrow side down, and a 1000 g. weight was placed on each stopper. The block resistance of each paint was evaluated under 2 sets of conditions. These are for face-to-face contact for: (i) 24 hours at room temperature, and (ii) 30 minutes at 50°C. In all cases, the weights and stoppers were equilibrated under the test conditions prior to testing. After the test period, the stoppers and weights were removed and the sections separated with slow and steady force at an angle of approximately 180°. The samples were then rated for block resistance on a scale of 0 to 10 as described below:

- 10 = no tack, perfect
- 9 = trace tack, excellent
- 8 = slight tack, very good
- 7 = slight tack, good
- 6 = moderate tack, good
- 5 = moderate tack, fair
- 4 = severe tack, no seal, fair
- 3 = 5-25% seal, poor
- 2 = 25-50% seal, poor
- 1 = 50-75% seal, poor
- 0 = complete seal, very poor tack

Results

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Table 1: Block resistance of AC-261 based paints, with Texanol (10%)

ID	(with Texanol)			Peel Block Resistance			
		VI Copolymer (7%)	p-VI	RT/1 day		50C/30 min	
				No Heat ¹	Heat ²	No Heat ¹	Heat ²
A	AC261 w Texanol -145	None	None	0	5	0	0
A1	AC261 with Texanol -145	None	0.42% p-VI ³	0	9	0	0
B	AC261 with Texanol -145	70 BA/30 VI	None	0	9.2	0	0
B1	AC261 with Texanol -145	70 BA/30 VI	0.42% p-VI	6	9.6	0	1
C	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	50(70BA/30VI)// 50(50 BA/50MMA)	None	0	9.4	0	0
C1	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	50(70BA/30VI)// 50(50 BA/50MMA)	0.42% p-VI	0.5	9.8	0	0
D	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	20(70BA/30VI)// 80(50 BA/50MMA)	None	0.5	9.3	0	0
D1	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	20(70BA/30VI)// 80(50 BA/50MMA)	0.42% p-VI	5	9.3	0	0
E	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	50(70BA/30VI)// 50(20 BA/80MMA)	None	0.5	9.4	0	0
E1	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	50(70BA/30VI)// 50(20 BA/80MMA)	0.42% p-VI	1	9.5	0	0
F	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	20(70BA/30VI)// 80(100MMA)	None	0	9.4	0	0
F1	AC261 w/ Texanol -145	20(70BA/30VI)// 80(100MMA)	0.42% p-VI	7	9.6	0	0

¹Films cured at RT²Films cured at 60°C for 30 min³The addition of poly(vinyl imidazole) to AC-261-based paints without any added VI-containing latex results in hazy films with very poor gloss, in contrast to the other samples.

[0079] In Table 1 (and similarly in the following tables), the VI-containing emulsion copolymer is added at a level of 7 wt%, based on the weight of VI copolymer solids as a percentage of the combined weight of AC-261 and VI-containing copolymer solids.

[0080] The test conditions, particularly the hot block test which involves forced contact at 50 C for 30 minutes, are severe compared to every day usage encountered by paints. It should be noted that the commercial binder, Rhoplex™ AC-261, in a typical paint formulation with Texanol™ suffers moderate tack even in the room temperature block test after the paint has been heat cured to aid in removal of the coalescent (Texanol™-145). In contrast, the inventive compositions comprising the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer show good block resistance under the same conditions. Although Sample A1 shows that some advantage

can be obtained by straight addition of poly(vinyl imidazole) into an existing commercial paint, greater improvement in block resistance and paint quality are seen when a multistage VI-containing emulsion copolymer is added. The one-stage VI-containing emulsion (Sample B) also shows some advantage. However, the same level of performance can be obtained with the inventive multistage emulsion copolymers, even though these use half or even less than half of the expensive VI monomer as compared to Sample B. The data additionally show that, in every case, addition of the homopolymer, poly(vinyl imidazole), improves the block resistance properties for the room temperature block test.

Table 2: Block resistance of AC-261 based paints without Texanol

	(Without Texanol)		p-VI	Peel Block Resistance			
	ID	VI Copolymer (7%)		RT/1 day		50C/30 min	
				No Heat ¹	Heat ²	No Heat ¹	Heat ²
A	AC-261 w/o Texanol	None	None	1	7	0	2.5
A1	AC-261 w/o Texanol	None	0.42% p-VI* ³	8.0	9.8	0	0
B	AC-261 w/o Texanol	70 BA/30 VI	None	9	9.5	0.5	7
B1	AC-261 w/o Texanol	70 BA/30 VI	0.42% p-VI	9.5	9.8	1	9
C	AC-261 w/o Texanol	50(70/30)// 50(50 BA/50MMA)	None	6	9.6	0	2
C1	AC-261 w/o Texanol	50(70/30)// 50(50 BA/50MMA)	0.42% p-VI	9.5	9.8	0	8
D	AC-261 w/o Texanol	20(70/30)// 80(50 BA/50MMA)	None	3	9.5	0	0
D1	AC-261 w/o Texanol	20(70/30)// 80(50 BA/50MMA)	0.42% p-VI	9.5	9.8	1	7
E	AC-261 w/o Texanol	50(70/30)// 50(20 BA/80MMA)	None	3	9.5	0	0
E1	AC-261 w/o Texanol	50(70/30)// 50(20 BA/80MMA)	0.42% p-VI	4	9.8	0	7
F	AC-261 w/o Texanol	20(70/30)// 80(100MMA)		2	9.5	0	1
F1	AC-261 wo Texanol	20(70/30)// 80(100MMA)	0.42% p-VI	9.5	9.8	1	3

¹Films cured at RT

²Films cured at 60°C for 30 min

*3 The addition of poly(vinyl imidazole) to AC-261-based paints without any added VI-containing latex results in hazy films with very poor gloss, in contrast to the other samples.

[0081] The test paints without Texanol™-145 perform better in the block resistance tests.

The inventive compositions with multistage emulsion copolymer comprising VI again show significant advantage over the current commercial product. Again, an even greater improvement in performance can be attained by the combination of the multistage emulsion

copolymer and the homopolymer (p-VI), and this can be achieved at low levels of the expensive VI monomer as compared to Sample B.

[0082] A similar study was conducted in the context of a low VOC paint composition. This uses a softer base polymer, PolymerA.

Table 3: MLS-69139 recipe for master batch low VOC paint formulation

Material Name	Pounds
Grind	
Ti-pure™ R-746	1020.33
water	100
Tamol™ 165A	17.85
BYK-348	3
Foamstar™ A-34	3
Let Down	
PolymerA (45.6%)	1514.44
Propylene Glycol	22.50
Texanol™	22.23
BYK-348	3
Foamstar™ A-34	3
Ammonia (28%)	1.2
Acrysol™ RM-2020NPR/water	40/35.3
water	77.5
	2628.82
KU: 87	

Example 20. Preparation of master batch of paint (PolymerA based paint with Texanol)

[0083] 1020.33 g Ti-pure™ R-746 and water were added to a 1-gallon container equipped with a mechanical stirrer. 1514.44 g PolymerA was slowly added to the container with constant stirring and then the rest of the ingredients (Table 3) were added. The viscosity was adjusted to about 85-90 KU using Acrysol™ RM-2030NPR.

B. Preparation of VI polymer-containing paints with PolymerA master batch

Example 21. Preparation of PolymerA Based Paint with 7% VI Latexes

[0084] 238.6 g MLS-69139 was added to a 1-pint container equipped with an overhead mechanical stirrer. The VI polymers and water were added to the master paint with constant stirring. In the table below, the ratio of PolymerA to VI copolymer to VI homopolymer is 93 : 7 : 0.4 (if any).

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Table 4: Paint Compositions for PolymerA Based paint

Post-add to 238.6 g of master batch				
VI copolymer		VI homopolymer		water
	Composition	wt.	wt.	
44A	additional master batch- control	9.50	--	9.93
44B	70 BA/30 VI	10.82	--	8.61
44C	50(70/30)//50(50 BA/50MMA)	10.82	--	8.61
44D	20(70/30)//80(50 BA/50MMA)	10.82	--	8.61
44E	50(70/30)//50(20 BA/80MMA)	10.82	--	8.61
44F	20(70/30)//80(100MMA)	10.82	--	8.61
44A1	additional master batch- control	9.50	0.26	9.67
44B1	70 BA/30 VI	10.82	0.26	8.35
44C1	50(70/30)//50(50 BA/50MMA)	10.82	0.26	8.35
44D1	20(70/30)//80(50 BA/50MMA)	10.82	0.26	8.35
44E1	50(70/30)//50(20 BA/80MMA)	10.82	0.26	8.35
44F1	20(70/30)//80(100MMA)	10.82	0.26	8.35

Table 5: Block Resistance of PolymerA based paint, with Texanol (3%)**

(with Texanol)		Block Resistance			
		RT/1 day		50 C/1 day	
		No Heat ¹	No Heat ¹	No Heat ¹	Heat ²
44A	Control (PolymerA)	0	0	0	0
44A1	PolymerA * 0.42% p-VI	0	0	0	0
44B	93% PolymerA 7% 70 BA/30 VI	2	7	0	0
44B1	93% PolymerA 7% 70 BA/30 VI 0.42% p-VI	6	8	0	0
44E	93% PolymerA 7% 50(70/30)//50(20 BA/80MMA)	0	6	0	0
44E1	93% PolymerA 7% 50(70/30)//50(20 BA/80MMA) 0.42% p-VI	3.5	8	0	0

¹Films cured at RT²Films cured at 60°C for 30 min

* The addition of poly(vinyl imidazole) to PolymerA-based paints without any added VI-containing latex results in hazy films with very poor gloss, in contrast to the other samples.

** PolymerA: 22BA/47.25MMA/27EHA/2.5MAA/1.25ureido monomer (45.6% solids)

[0085] The data show that a similar advantage is seen for the inventive paints containing the multistage emulsion copolymer comprising VI, in the context of low VOC paints using binders with softer polymer compositions.

The reference in this specification to any prior publication (or information derived from it), or to any matter which is known, is not, and should not be taken as an acknowledgment or admission or any form of suggestion that that prior publication (or information derived from it) or known matter forms part of the common general knowledge in the field of endeavour to which this specification relates.

Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS :

1. An aqueous coating composition comprising:

copolymer particles of one or more aqueous emulsion copolymer, at least one of which is a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprising polymerized units derived from monomer X in at least one stage; wherein the level of monomer X in the at least one stage is greater than 5 weight % based on the total weight of monomers in that stage; and wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof.

2. The aqueous coating composition of claim 1, further comprising:

from 0.05 to 20 weight % of a homopolymer of monomer X, where the weight % is based on weight of homopolymer solids to weight of copolymer particle solids; wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof.

3. The composition of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein X is 1-vinylimidazole or 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidinone.

4. The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition has a pH \geq 7.

5. The composition of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer comprises, in at least one stage, >5 to 50 wt% of units derived from monomer X.

6. The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises a crosslinker.

7. The composition of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the composition further comprises a polymerization initiator or the degradation products of the polymerization initiator, wherein the polymerization initiator is selected from 2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile); 2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile; 2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyrionitrile); 1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane); 2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride; 2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid) and combinations thereof.

8. The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises a chain transfer agent or the degradation products of the chain transfer agent.

9. The composition of claim 1, wherein the copolymer comprises at least one polymerized ethylenically unsaturated monomer selected from methyl acrylate, ethyl acrylate, butyl acrylate, 2-ethylhexyl acrylate, decyl acrylate, lauryl acrylate, methyl methacrylate, butyl methacrylate, isodecyl methacrylate, lauryl methacrylate, hydroxyethyl methacrylate, hydroxypropyl methacrylate, aminoalkyl (meth)acrylates, and combinations thereof; wherein the copolymer has a Tg of -20 to 60°C and wherein the composition is suitable for use when dry as a coating.

10. A method for making a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer and a coating composition comprising said multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer, the method comprising:

providing an aqueous solvent;

providing a monomer X;

providing a monomer Y;

providing a polymerization initiator selected from

2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile);

2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile; 2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyronitrile);

1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane);

2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride;

2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleriic acid) and combinations thereof;

combining the monomer X, the monomer Y, the polymerization initiator and the aqueous solvent forming a reaction mixture;

maintaining the pH of the reaction mixture at ≥ 7 ;

reacting the mixture forming a first stage copolymer; and

performing a second stage polymerization in the presence of the first stage polymer;

wherein the multistage aqueous emulsion first stage copolymer comprises > 5 wt% of monomer X derived units;

wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof; and,

wherein monomer Y is selected from carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid salts, carboxylic acid esters, organosulphuric acids, organosulphuric acid salts, sulphonic acids, sulphonic acid salts, phosphonic acids, phosphonic acid salts, vinyl esters,

(meth)acrylamides, C₈-C₂₀ aromatic monomers containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation and combinations thereof.

11. A method for making a multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer and a coating composition comprising said multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer, the method comprising:

providing an aqueous solvent;

providing a monomer X;

providing a monomer Y;

providing a polymerization initiator selected from

2,2'-Azobis(4-methoxy-2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4-dimethyl-valeronitrile);

2,2'-Azobisisobutyronitrile; 2,2'-Azobis(2-methyl-butyrionitrile);

1,1'-Azobis(1-cyclo-hexanecarbonitrile); 2,2'-Azobis(2,4,4-trimethylpentane);

2,2'-Azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine)dihydrochloride;

2,2'-Azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride; 4,4'-Azobis(4-cyanovaleriic acid) and combinations thereof;

combining the monomer X, the monomer Y, the polymerization initiator and the aqueous solvent forming a reaction mixture;

maintaining the pH of the reaction mixture at ≥ 7 ;

reacting the mixture forming a first stage copolymer;

wherein the first stage copolymer comprises > 5 wt% of monomer X derived units;

wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, derivatives thereof and combinations thereof; and,

wherein monomer Y is selected from carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid salts, carboxylic acid esters, organosulphuric acids, organosulphuric acid salts, sulphonic acids, sulphonic acid salts, phosphonic acids, phosphonic acid salts, vinyl esters, (meth)acrylamides, C₈-C₂₀ aromatic monomers containing at least one exocyclic ethylenic unsaturation and combinations thereof; and

performing a second stage polymerization in the presence of the first stage polymer; and

combining the multistage aqueous emulsion copolymer with an aqueous solution of a homopolymer comprising polymerized units of monomer X, wherein monomer X is selected from polymerizable derivatives of imidazole, imidazoline, amidine, pyridine, pyrrole, pyrrolidine, pyrrolidinone, caprolactam, and combinations thereof.