## Electronic Supplementary Information

## Strapping a benzaldehyde-appended 2,2'-bis-dipyrrin Zn(II) doublestranded helicate using imine bond formation

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## Synthesis



$$
\mathrm{Zn}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}
$$

4



3

$\mathrm{NaBH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}$

2


5-(4-formylphenyl)dipyrrin was synthesized as described. ${ }^{1}{ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ and ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR spectra were recorded at $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ on a Bruker AV500 (500 MHz) or AV400 ( 400 MHz ) with the deuterated solvent as the internal reference. NMR chemical shifts and $J$ values are given in parts per million (ppm) and in Hertz, respectively. Mass spectrometry was performed by the Service commun d'analyse (University of Strasbourg).

Complex 2: To a $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(50 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of 5-(4-formylphenyl)dipyrrin ( 0.83 g ; 3.34 mmol ), a $\mathrm{MeOH}(50 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of $\mathrm{Ni}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2} .4 \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}(0.42 \mathrm{~g} ; 1.67 \mathrm{mmol})$ was added. The mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. It was then evaporated under reduced pressure and the residue was washed with MeOH affording complex 2 as a dark red solid $(0.76 \mathrm{~g}, 82 \%) . \delta_{\mathrm{H}}$ ( $400 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 10.96 ( $\mathrm{s}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $10.10(\mathrm{~s}, 2 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CHO}$ ), $8.30(\mathrm{~d}, J=2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), 7.91 (d, 4H, $J=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 7.52 (d, 4H, $J=7.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 6.67 (s, $J=3.8 \mathrm{~Hz}$ 4 H , pyrroleH). $\delta_{\mathrm{C}}\left(125 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right.$ ) 191.8, 175.7, 149.2, 142.8, 141.6, 139.4, 136.9, 136.6, 131.2, 128.8. Single crystals were obtained by $n$-pentane vapor diffusion into a THF solution of the complex.


Fig. ESI1 ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$-NMR spectrum of complex $\mathbf{2}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.


Fig. ESI2 ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}-$ NMR spectrum of complex $\mathbf{2}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.

Complex 3: A toluene ( 150 mL ) solution of $\operatorname{DDQ}(0.34 \mathrm{~g} ; 1.49 \mathrm{mmol})$ was added dropwise to a toluene ( 200 mL ) solution of complex $2(0.75 \mathrm{~g} ; 1.36 \mathrm{mmol})$. The color of the mixture turned from red to brown, upon heating at reflux for 24 hours. After evaporation under reduced pressure, the residue was purified by column chromatography $\left(\mathrm{SiO}_{2}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2} / \mathrm{Cyclohexane}\right.$ : 9/1) affording the desired compound 3 as a red solid ( $0.6 \mathrm{~g}, 80 \%$ ). $\delta_{\mathrm{H}}\left(500 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right.$ ) 10.14 (s, 2H, CHO), 8.00 (d, 4H, $J=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 7.73 (d, 4H, $J=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 6.73 (d, $2 \mathrm{H}, J=4.7 \mathrm{~Hz}$, pyrroleH), $6.68(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}, J=4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}$, pyrroleH), $6.65(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}, J=4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}$, pyrroleH), $6.46\left(\mathrm{~d}, 2 \mathrm{H}, J=4.7 \mathrm{~Hz}\right.$, pyrroleH), $5.94(\mathrm{~s}, 2 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH $) . \delta_{\mathrm{C}}\left(125 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right)$ $191.9,161.9,154.1,142.9,141.7,138.6,136.7,135.5,134.7,131.6,130.0,129.1,117.8$, 116.0. $\lambda_{\max }\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right) / \mathrm{nm}\left(\varepsilon / \mathrm{mol}^{-1} . \mathrm{L}^{2} \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}\right) 302$ (22700), 355 (24200), 418 (35400), 573 (12900), 775 (5600).: HRMS (ESI), $m / z:[M]^{+}$calcd. for $\mathrm{C}_{32} \mathrm{H}_{20} \mathrm{~N}_{4} \mathrm{NiO}_{2}: 550.0934$, Found 550.0947.


Fig. ESI3 ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}-\mathrm{NMR}$ spectrum of complex $\mathbf{3}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.


Fig. ESI4 ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}-$ NMR spectrum of complex $\mathbf{3}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.

2,2'-bisdipyrrin 4: A 12 M solution of $\mathrm{HCl}(20 \mathrm{~mL})$ was added to a $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(80 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of complex $3(0.56 \mathrm{~g} ; 1.02 \mathrm{mmol})$ and the mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. Upon addition of a saturated $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{CO}_{3}$ solution, the organic layer turned from green to dark blue. The mixture was extracted with $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(3 \times 100 \mathrm{~mL})$ and the combined organic layers were dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$, filtered and evaporated affording 2,2'-bisdipyrrin 4 as a dark blue solid ( $0.5 \mathrm{~g}, 99 \%$ ). Single crystals were obtained by slow evaporation of a solution of the complex in $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3} . \delta_{\mathrm{H}}\left(500 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 10.14(\mathrm{~s}, 2 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CHO}), 8.01(\mathrm{~d}, J=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH})$, 7.72 (d, $J=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.64$ (s, 2H, pyrroleH), $7.02(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), 6.68 (d, $J=4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), 6.52 (d, $J=4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $6.44(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH). $\delta_{\mathrm{C}}\left(125 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right.$ ) 191.9, 153.1, 145.2, 143.5, 139.6, 139.0, 138.8, 136.6, 131.8, 131.7, 129.2, 126.5, 120.8, 116.7. $\lambda_{\max }\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right) / \mathrm{nm}\left(\varepsilon / \mathrm{mol}^{-1} . \mathrm{L}^{2} \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}\right): 258$ (31300), 280 (26000), 332 (24300), 413 (22700), 591 (37600). HRMS (ESI), $m / z:[M]^{+}$calcd. for $\mathrm{C}_{32} \mathrm{H}_{23} \mathrm{~N}_{4} \mathrm{O}_{2}: 495.1816$, Found 495.1775 .


Fig. ESI5 ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$-NMR spectrum of 2,2'-bis-dipyrrin $\mathbf{4}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.


Fig. ESI6 ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$-NMR spectrum of 2,2'-bis-dipyrrin 4 in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.

Helicate 1: A MeOH $(60 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of $\mathrm{Zn}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2} \cdot 2 \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}(78 \mathrm{mg} ; 0.36 \mathrm{mmol})$ was added to a $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(60 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of ligand $4(0.16 \mathrm{~g} ; 0.32 \mathrm{mmol})$. Upon stirring for 24 hours at room temperature, the solution turned from dark blue to dark green. After evaporation under reduced pressure, the residue was washed with $\mathrm{MeOH}(3 \times 50 \mathrm{~mL})$ affording helicate $1(0.17$ $\mathrm{g}, 94 \%) . \delta_{\mathrm{H}}\left(500 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 10.13(\mathrm{~s}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CHO}), 7.95(\mathrm{~d}, 4 \mathrm{H}, J=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.75(\mathrm{~d}$, $4 \mathrm{H}, J=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 7.66 (d, 4H, $J=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 7.22 (d, 4H, $J=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 6.98 (s, 4 H, pyrroleH), $6.51(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $6.44(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $6.35(\mathrm{~d}$, $J=4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), 6.31 (d, $J=4.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH). $\delta_{\mathrm{C}}\left(125 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 191.9$, $154.9,150.4,145.4,144.8,141.6,140.9,136.5,132.9,132.2,132.2,131.7,128.7,128.4$, 118.4, 117.3. $\lambda_{\max }\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right) / \mathrm{nm}\left(\varepsilon / \mathrm{mol}^{-1} \mathrm{~L} \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}\right): 257$ (71700), 284 (60800), 345 (60000), 432 (110200), 646 (66000) . HRMS (ESI), $m / z:[M]^{+}$calcd. for $\mathrm{C}_{64} \mathrm{H}_{40} \mathrm{~N}_{8} \mathrm{O}_{4} \mathrm{Zn}_{2}: 1112.1750$, Found 1112.1804.


Fig. ESI7 ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$-NMR spectrum of helicate $\mathbf{1}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.


Fig. ESI8 ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$-NMR spectrum of helicate $\mathbf{1}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.



Fig. ESI 9 HSQC (top) and HMBC (bottom) correlation experiments of helicate $\mathbf{1}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ( 500 MHz ). The numbering scheme used for the assignment of the proton and carbon atoms of a quarter of the helicate is shown as an insert.


Fig. ESI10 HRMS spectrum of helicate 1.

Helicate 5: To a dry $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(250 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of helicate $\mathbf{1}\left(50 \mathrm{mg} ; 4.48 \times 10^{-2} \mathrm{mmol}\right)$, a dry $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(250 \mathrm{~mL})$ solution of $m$-xylylenediamine ( $12.4 \mu \mathrm{~L} ; 9.41 \times 10^{-2} \mathrm{mmol}, 2$ equiv.) and TFA ( 0.01 equiv) were added under argon. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 24 hours. It was then evaporated under reduced pressure affording 5 as a dark solid ( 58 mg , $98 \%) . \delta_{\mathrm{H}}\left(500 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 8.53(\mathrm{~s}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CH}=\mathrm{N}), 7.92(\mathrm{~d}, J=7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.59(\mathrm{~d}, J=$ $7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.54(\mathrm{~d}, J=7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.44(\mathrm{~s}, 2 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.39-7.35(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}$, PhH/pyrroleH), 7.23 (d, $J=7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}$ ), 7.1 (d, $J=7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 6.61(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.3$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH $), 6.47(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH $), 6.38(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), 6.31 (d, $J=4.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), 5.08 (d, $J=15.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CH}_{2}$ ), $4.92(\mathrm{~d}, J=15.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, $\left.\mathrm{CH}_{2}\right) . \delta_{\mathrm{C}}\left(125 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 162.1,155.5,150.1,146.3,142.0,141.7,141.0,140.5,136.7$, 133.8, 132.9, 132.4, 131.1, 129.1, 128.2, 125.2, 124.7, 117.7, 117.3, 63.6. $\lambda_{\max }\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right) / \mathrm{nm}$ ( $\varepsilon / \mathrm{mol}^{-1} \mathrm{~L} \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ ): 257 (43600), 349 (44400), 431 (56300), 473 (22500), 577 (50200). HRMS (ESI), $m / z:[\mathrm{M}]^{+}$calcd. for $\mathrm{C}_{80} \mathrm{H}_{56} \mathrm{~N}_{12} \mathrm{Zn}_{2}: 1312.3328$, Found 1312.3338.


Fig. ESI11 ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}-\mathrm{NMR}$ spectrum of helicate 5 in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.


Fig. ESI12 ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$-NMR spectrum of helicate $\mathbf{5}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$.


Fig. ESI 13 HSQC (top) and HMBC (bottom) correlation experiments of helicate $\mathbf{5}$ in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ $(500 \mathrm{MHz}$ ). The numbering scheme used for the assignment of the proton and carbon atoms of a quarter of the helicate is shown as an insert.


Fig. ESI14 HRMS spectrum of helicate 5.

Helicate 6: A solution of $\mathrm{NaBH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}(8 \mathrm{mg}, 0.12 \mathrm{mmol}$, 8 eq.$)$ in $\mathrm{MeOH}(4 \mathrm{~mL})$ was added to a solution of $5(20 \mathrm{mg}, 0.015 \mathrm{mmol}, 1 \mathrm{eq})$ in $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}(15 \mathrm{ml})$. Then 0.75 ml of TFA solution ( 1.75 $\mu \mathrm{L}$ in $50 \mathrm{~mL} \mathrm{CHCl}_{3}$ ) was added and the mixture was stirred at room temperature and monitored by H NMR. After 64 hours, $\mathrm{NaBH}_{3} \mathrm{CN}(8 \mathrm{mg}, 0.12 \mathrm{mmol}, 8 \mathrm{eq})$ were added, then after 18 additional hours, 0.75 mL of TFA solution ( $1.75 \mu \mathrm{~L}$ in 50 mLCHCl$)_{3}$ ) was added and stirring was continued for 5 days. The reaction mixture was diluted with $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}$ and washed with water 3 times. The organic layer was dried on $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$, filtered and evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by two successive column chromatographies $\left(\mathrm{SiO}_{2}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2} / \mathrm{MeOH} / \mathrm{TEA}: 90 / 10 / 4\right)$ then $\left(\mathrm{SiO}_{2}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2} / \mathrm{MeOH} / \mathrm{TEA}: 95 / 5 / 1\right)$ to give 13 mg of $\mathbf{6}$ as a mixture with TEA. $\delta_{\mathrm{H}}\left(300 \mathrm{MHz}, \mathrm{CD}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right) 7.62(\mathrm{~s}, 2 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH}), 7.46(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{PhH})$, 7.38 (m, 4H, PhH), 7.33 (m, 6H, PhH), 7.44 (m 4H, PhH), 7.07 (m, 8H, PhH/pyrroleH), 6.66 (dd, $J=1.0$ and $4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $6.35(\mathrm{~d}, J=4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $6.30(\mathrm{dd}, J=1.0$ and $4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}$, pyrroleH), $3.95\left(\mathrm{~d}, J=15.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 4 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CH}_{2}\right), 3.79\left(\mathrm{~m}, 12 \mathrm{H}, \mathrm{CH}_{2}\right)$. MS (ESI), $m / z:[M]^{2+}$ calcd. for $\mathrm{C}_{80} \mathrm{H}_{64} \mathrm{~N}_{12} \mathrm{Zn}_{2}$ : 660.19, Found 660.20.


Fig. ESI15 ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$-NMR spectrum of helicate $\mathbf{6}$ in $\mathrm{CD}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$. Traces of $\mathrm{NEt}_{3}$ are present.


Fig. ESI16 HRMS spectrum of helicate 6.

## X-Ray diffraction

Data (Table ESI1) were collected on a Bruker SMART CCD diffractometer with MoK $\alpha$ radiation. The structures were solved using SHELXS-97 and refined by full matrix least-squares on $F^{2}$ using SHELXL-2014 with anisotropic thermal parameters for all non-hydrogen atoms. ${ }^{2}$ Hydrogen atoms were introduced at calculated positions and not refined (riding model). In the structure of $\mathbf{4}\left(\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}\right)$, the chloroform molecule is disordered over two positions that have been modelled accordingly.
CCDC 1893175-1893178 contain the supplementary crystallographic data for compounds 1-4. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif.

Table ESI1. Crystallographic data for compounds 1-4.

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | $4\left(\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}\right)$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Formula | $\mathrm{C}_{64} \mathrm{H}_{40} \mathrm{~N}_{8} \mathrm{O}_{4} \mathrm{Zn}_{2}$ | $\mathrm{C}_{32} \mathrm{H}_{22} \mathrm{~N}_{4} \mathrm{NiO}_{2}$ | $\mathrm{C}_{32} \mathrm{H}_{20} \mathrm{~N}_{4} \mathrm{NiO}_{2}$ | $\mathrm{C}_{33} \mathrm{H}_{23} \mathrm{Cl}_{3} \mathrm{~N}_{4} \mathrm{O}_{2}$ |
| FW | 1115.78 | 553.24 | 551.23 | 613.90 |
| Crystal system | Tetragonal | Triclinic | Triclinic | Monoclinic |
| Space group | $P-4 n 2$ | $P-1$ | $P-1$ | $P 2_{1} / \mathrm{n}$ |
| $a / \AA$ | 11.9527(3) | 9.7819(2) | 9.8321(3) | 11.4063(4) |
| $b / \AA$ | 11.9527(3) | 11.6608(3) | 10.7832(3) | 9.7778(3) |
| $c / \AA$ | 17.7035(7) | 12.9613(3) | 13.3416(3) | 13.4576(4) |
| $\alpha /{ }^{\circ}$ |  | 110.8970(10) | 103.1690(10) |  |
| $\beta 1^{\circ}$ |  | 98.8930(10) | 102.6240(10) | 94.7850(10) |
| $\gamma 1^{\circ}$ |  | 111.0520(10) | 111.8220(10) |  |
| $V / \AA^{3}$ | 2529.25(16) | 1219.34(5) | 1204.51(6) | 1495.67(8) |
| Z | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| $T / \mathrm{K}$ | 173(2) | 173(2) | 173(2) | 173(2) |
| $\mu / \mathrm{mm}^{-1}$ | 1.010 | 0.836 | 0.846 | 0.344 |
| Refls. coll. | 40519 | 24117 | 23901 | 28945 |
| Ind. refls. ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{int}}$ ) | 3750 (0.0574) | 6572 (0.0251) | 6497 (0.0408) | 4084 (0.0233) |
| $R_{1}(\mathrm{I}>2 \sigma(\mathrm{I}))^{\mathrm{a}}$ | 0.0532 | 0.0326 | 0.0416 | 0.0701 |
| $w R_{2}(\mathrm{I}>2 \sigma(\mathrm{I}))^{\text {a }}$ | 0.1285 | 0.0768 | 0.0946 | 0.1929 |
| $R_{1}\left(\right.$ all data) ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | 0.0809 | 0.0396 | 0.0628 | 0.0802 |
| $w R_{2}\left(\right.$ all data) ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | 0.1443 | 0.0800 | 0.1051 | 0.2026 |
| GOF | 1.050 | 1.053 | 1.030 | 1.039 |

## References

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