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Supporting information for:

# Markovnikov-selective double hydrosilylation of challenging terminal aryl alkynes under cobalt and iron catalysis

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#### 1. General remarks

All manipulations, except work-up and purification of final products, were conducted under argon atmosphere using standard Schlenk techniques. Catalytic tests and syntheses of geminal bis(silanes) were carried out in Schlenk-bomb flask reaction vessels. THF, THF*d*<sub>8</sub>, dioxane and toluene were purified by distillation from potassium or sodium with benzophenone as indicator. Methylene chloride and acetonitrile were distilled from calcium hydride. Other solvents and all reagents were used as received from commercial suppliers. Geminal bis(silanes) were purified by column chromatography using silica stationary phase (230-240 mesh size). 2-Chloro-1-methyl-1*H*-benzimidazole (**A**) and 2-(1-methylhydrazinyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole (**B**) intermediates for ligands L4 and L5 were synthesized according to literature procedures.<sup>[1, 2]</sup> Complexes: **Co-L1**, **Fe-L2** and **Fe-L5** were prepared as reported previously.<sup>[3, 4]</sup>



Figure S1. Cobalt(II) and iron(III) complexes used in this study.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra for determination of the yield catalytic tests in optimisation process were recorded on Bruker UltraShield 300 MHz operating at 300 MHz for <sup>1</sup>H NMR measurements. GC-MS analyses of samples from catalytic test runs were conducted using Bruker Scion 436-GC with a Bruker Scion SQ mass detector. NMR spectra of synthesised compounds and for monitoring of modifications of ligand L1 and Fe-L1 and Co-L1 complexes upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> were recorded on Bruker Avance 600 MHz operating at 600 MHz for <sup>11</sup>B NMR, at 150 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR and at 119 MHz for <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR. NMR spectra of synthesised compounds were recorded on: Bruker Ascend<sup>™</sup> 400 MHz operating at 400 MHz <sup>1</sup>H NMR, at 377 MHz for <sup>19</sup>F NMR, at 101 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR and at 79 MHz for <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR; NMR Varian VNMR-S 400 MHz operating at 79 MHz for <sup>29</sup>Si NMR. HRMS-ESI were recorded on Impact HD QTOF Bruker spectrometer. ESI-MS analyses were performed using Mas ZQ Water spectrometer. EI-MS analysis was performed using 320 MS/450 GC Bruker apparatus. Elemental analyses for C, H, and N were carried out using an Elementar Analyser Vario EL III. Infrared spectra were recorded on a FT-IR IFS 66/s. SEM analysis of postreaction samples was performed on QUANTA 250 FEG apparatus.

#### 2. General procedures for catalytic double hydrosilylation

All solutions and mixtures were prepared in a Schlenk-bomb flask equipped with magnetic stirring bar which, prior to putting any material inside, was evacuated and, when under vacuum, its walls were heated thoroughly with a heat gun. After cooling down, the vessel was backfilled with argon, what was followed with two more cycles of gas evacuation and backfilling with argon. Addition of any material was conducted under the protective flow of argon.

#### Method A - when silane and alkyne are both liquids.

**Co-L1** (1.8 mg, 5 µmol) and THF (0.5 ml) were added to the Schlenk-bomb flask placed over a working magnetic stirrer. To such obtained mixture a solution of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> in toluene was added and stirring was continued at ambient temperature for 15 min. Next, alkyne (0.5 mmol) and silane (1.0 mmol) were added and the reaction vessel was placed in preheated oil bath (100 °C) to continue stirring for 3 h. After that time heating was removed and the reaction mixture was allowed to cool down to ambient temperature, followed by filtration through silica pad which was washed with a mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL). Combined filtrates were evaporated *in vacuo* leaving an oil residue to which a mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL) was added. Resulting suspension was filtrated through silica pad, which was washed with a mixture of hexane (6 mL) and ethyl acetate (3 mL). Combined filtrates were evaporated *in vacuo* giving a crude product in a form of an oil, which was further purified by column chromatography on silica (230-240 mesh size) using hexane as eluent. Fractions containing the pure product were combined and volatiles were removed *in vacuo* yielding the desired compound.

#### Method B – when at least one substrate (silane or alkyne) is solid.

A solution of alkyne (0.5 mmol) and silane (1.0 mmol) in THF (0.3 mL) was prepared. In a separate Schlenk-bomb flask a mixture of **Co-L1** (1.8 mg, 5  $\mu$ mol) in THF (0.4 ml) was activated by adding a solution of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> in toluene (35  $\mu$ L, 1 M, 35  $\mu$ mol), followed by stirring at ambient temperature for 15 min. Next, the solution of activated complex was added to the mixture of substrates and the reaction vessel was placed in preheated oil bath (100 °C) to continue stirring for 3 h. After that time heating was removed and the reaction mixture was allowed to cool down to ambient temperature, followed by filtration through silica pad which was washed with a mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL). Combined filtrated were evaporated *in vacuo* leaving an oil residue to which a

mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL) was added. Resulting suspension was filtrated through silica pad, which was washed with a mixture of hexane (6 mL) and ethyl acetate (3 mL). Combined filtrated were evaporated *in vacuo* giving a crude product in a form of an oil, which was further purified by column chromatography on silica (230-240 mesh size) using hexane as eluent. Fractions containing the pure product were combined and volatiles were removed *in vacuo* yielding the desired compound.

#### Method C – for synthesis of mixed geminal-bis(silanes).

A mixture of **Co-L1** (0.9 mg, 2.5 µmol), phenylacetylene (55 µL, 0.5 mmol) and silane 1 (0.5 mmol) in THF (0.5 ml) was prepared in the Schlenk-bomb flask and stirred at ambient temperature for 15 min. Next, a solution of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> in toluene (5 µL, 1 M, 5 µL) was added and the reaction vessel was placed in preheated oil bath (40 °C if silane 1 was primary/secondary or 60 °C if silane 1 was tertiary) to continue stirring for 20 h. After that time the flask was removed from the heating bath and allowed to cool down for 5 min. Next, a solution, prepared 15 min. prior in inert conditions, from **Co-L1** (1.8 mg, 5 µmol), THF (0.5 ml) and NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (35 µL, 1 M in toluene, 35 µmol) was added to the original reaction vessel, followed by addition of silane 2 (0.5 mmol). The flask was subsequently put in preheated oil bath (100 °C) and reaction mixture was stirred for 20 h. After that time heating was removed and the reaction mixture was allowed to cool down to ambient temperature, followed by filtration through silica pad which was washed with a mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL). Combined filtrates were evaporated *in vacuo* leaving an oil residue to which a mixture of hexane (6 mL) and ethyl acetate (3 mL). Combined filtrates were evaporated *in vacuo* giving a crude product in a form of an oil, which was further purified by column chromatography on silica (230-240 mesh size) using hexane as eluent. Fractions containing the pure product were combined and volatiles were removed *in vacuo* yielding the desired compound.

### 3. Optimization of phenylacetylene double hydrosilylation using phenylsilane

Table S1. Solvent screening

Initial reaction optimisation experiments were aiming for improving the yield of *gem*-bis(silane) **3a**, which was determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR using 1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane as internal standard. Reactions were carried analogously to the *Method A* from the section above, using initially 3 mol% of **Fe-L1** as a precatalyst. Solvent screening showed that THF was better reaction medium than dioxane, acetonitrile, methylene chloride and toluene (Table S1).

la 1a	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>2a</b> , 2 eq.) <b>Fe-L1</b> (3 %mol) NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (20 %mol) solvent, 100 °C (oil bath) 20 h	SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me 3a
Entry	Solvent	NMR yield of 3a (%)
1	THF	28
2	Dioxane	15
3	Toluene	0
4 <sup>[a]</sup>	Dichloromethane	0
5	Acetonitrile	0

[a] Reaction carried at 60 °C.

A set of potential activators was tested, among which triethylborohydrides served best, giving comparable results between sodium, potassium and lithium salts (Table S2). Lowering the loading of **Fe-L1** from 3 %mol to 1 %mol was beneficial for **3a** formation while further decrease in the amount of the iron complex resulted in worse yield of **3a** (Table S3). In case of **Co-L1** decrease in loading from 3 %mol to 1 %mol did not exert significant change (Table S3). Experiments carried out with 1 %mol of **Fe-L1** confirmed that lowering the temperature causes decrease in the yield of **3a** formation (Table S4). Control experiments confirmed that neither FeCl<sub>3</sub> or CoCl<sub>2</sub> without **L1**, nor **L1** without these halides or NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> on its own are capable of enabling double hydrosilylation of phenylacetylene (Table S5). Catalytic system composed of FeCl<sub>3</sub> and **L1** allowed for formation of **3a**, however with somewhat lower yield than in case of **Fe-L1** (Table S5). Using **Co-L1** and **Fe-L1** together gave better results than for any of them used on their own (Table S6). Two-stage one-pot procedure involving 1 %mol of **Co-L1** and 0.5 %mol of **Fe-L1** in the first stage and another 0.5 %mol of **Fe-L1** in the second stage with only **Fe-L1** to enable second hydrosilylation process. Changing of the order of use of precatalyst, *i.e.* 0.5 %mol of **Fe-L1** in the first stage and 1 %mol of **Co-L1** with 0.5 %mol of **Fe-L1** in the second stage, worked less efficient (Table S6). Shortening of the reaction time from 20 h to 12 h resulted in slight yield decrease for **3a**.

Table S2. Activator screening.

la la	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> (2a, 2 eq.) Fe-L1 (3 %mol) activator (20 %mol) THF, 100 °C (oil bath) 20 h	SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me <b>3a</b>
Entry	Activator	NMR yield of 3a (%)
1	NaHBEt <sub>3</sub>	28
2	LiHBEt <sub>3</sub>	27
3	KHBEt <sub>3</sub>	21
4	EtMgBr	0
5	<i>t</i> -BuONa	0

#### Table S3. Studies on precatalyst loading.

la la	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> (2a, 2 eq.) complex (x %mol) NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (7x %mol) THF, 100 °C (oil bath) 20 h	SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me <b>3a</b>
Entry	Complex/x	NMR yield of <b>3a</b> (%)
1	Fe-L1/3	28
2	Fe-L1/2	36
3	Fe-L1/1	43
4	Fe-L1/0.5	34

#### Table S4. Investigations on reaction temperature.

la 1a	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>2a</b> , 2 eq.) <b>Fe-L1</b> (1 %mol) NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (7 %mol) ► THF, temp. (oil bath) 20 h	SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me <b>3a</b>
Entry Te	emperature (°C)	NMR yield of 3a (%)
1	100	43
2	80	29
3	60	9

Table S5. Control experiments.

	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> (2a, 2 eq.) conditions THF, 100 °C, 20 h	SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me <b>3a</b>
Entry	Conditions	NMR yield of <b>3a</b> (%)
1	FeCl₃ (3 %mol), NaHBEt₃ (20 %mol)	0
2	CoCl <sub>2</sub> (3 %mol), NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (20 %mol)	0
3	L1 (3 %mol), NaHBEt₃ (20 %mol)	0
4	FeCl₃ (3 %mol), L1 (3 %mol), NaHBEt₃ (20 %mol)	21
5	NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (20 %mol)	0

## 4. Kinetic experiments

In order to gain better insight regarding the nature of the two consecutive hydrosilylation reactions taking place in double hydrosilylation of phenylacetylene as well to compare **Fe-L1** and **Co-L1** we have conducted a series of kinetic experiments that have showed us that **Co-L1** is more active than **Fe-L1** in the first hydrosilylation step, while for the second one activity of these two complexes are similar (Tables 6 to 9).

	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> ( Fe-L1 ( NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> 100 °C ( tir	2a, 2 eq.) 1 %mol) SiH <sub>2</sub> (7 %mol) IF oil bath) ne	Ph SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph + SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me 3a
Entry	Time (min)	NMR yield of 4a (%)	NMR yield of 3a (%)
1	5	13	0
2	15	18	0
3	30	24	0
4	60	38	0
5	120	39	0
6	300	21	19
7	480	13	24
8	720	0	39

 Table S6.
 Kinetic experiments on double hydrosilylation of phenylacetylene using Fe-L1.

 Table S7.
 Kinetic experiments on double hydrosilylation of phenylacetylene using Co-L1.



Entry	Time (min)	NMR yield of 4a (%)	NMR yield of 3a (%)
1	5	39	26
2	15	24	38
3	30	2	58
4	60	2	59
5	300	0	64
6	480	0	60
7	720	0	62

Table S8. Kinetic experiments on catalytic hydrosilylation of  ${\it 4a}$  using  ${\it Fe-L1}.$ 

SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>2a</b> , 1 <b>Fe-L1</b> (1 %n NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (7 % THF 100 °C (oil ba time	eq.) hol) SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph mol) SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph Me 3a
Entry	Time (min)	NMR yield of <b>3a</b> (%)
1	5	52
2	15	59
3	360	64
4	480	64
5	720	65

Table	S9.	Kinetic	experiments	on	catalytic	hydrosilylation	of	4a
using (	Co-L	.1.						

SiH <sub>2</sub> Ph	PhSiH <sub>3</sub> (2a, 1 ec Co-L1 (1 %mol NaHBEt <sub>3</sub> (7 %mo THF 100 °C (oil bath) time	$ \begin{array}{c} \text{SiH}_2\text{Ph} \\ \text{Ol} \\ \hline \\ \hline \\ \hline \\ \hline \\ \hline \\ \\ \hline \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ $
Entry	Time (min)	NMR yield of 3a (%)
1	5	57
2	15	66
3	360	69
4	480	62
5	720	66

#### 5. NMR experiments

Our precatalyst screening revealed that presence of NH units in the structure of the metal complex is an important factor regarding catalytic activity. We came out with hypothesis that this is the case due to reactions with NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> that may take place at these sites (Schemes S1 and S2). First NH might serve as proton source to react with [HBEt<sub>3</sub>]<sup>-</sup> what would lead to liberation of H<sub>2</sub> and BEt<sub>3</sub> (Scheme S2). Nitrogen atom, after deprotonation, could then bind BEt<sub>3</sub> Lewis acid produced in previous reaction what should lead to change in overall electron properties of the ligand and probably also the conformational dynamics within the ligand framework.



Scheme S1. Illustration of possible reactions between the imidazole containing ligand and NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> - imidazole side of L1.

Moreover, such hypothesis agrees with the results obtained for **Fe-L5** with differently oriented imidazole ring. In case of this complex after NH deprotonation and binding of BEt<sub>3</sub> to the nitrogen atom should lead to increase acidity of C-H being between nitrogen atoms – resembling imidazolium salts serving as *N*-heterocyclic carbene precursors (Scheme S2). Hence C-H deportonation at this position should be possible that could be followed by binding of liberated BEt<sub>3</sub> to the carbon atom. As a consequence a strong steric crowding would be build up around metal centre making it much more difficult to operate as a catalyst in hydrosilylation process (Scheme S3).



Scheme S2. Illustration of possible reactions between the imidazole containing ligand and NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> – imidazole side of L5.

In order to verify this hypothesis about reactions between NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> and the ligand we have conducted a series of NMR experiments – all of which were carried at ambient temperature with samples prepared in protective atmosphere of argon using dry THF- $d_8$ .

First, we have investigated the process of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> addition to ligand L1. Monitoring of this process by <sup>1</sup>H NMR showed that NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> acts as a base and deprotonates NH groups (Figure S2).

Another thing we sought to confirm along the way was formation of B-N bond. In order to do that we have measured the <sup>11</sup>B NMR spectrum of a L1 sample after addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (Figure S3). This allowed us to observe a sharp signal at -0.13 ppm that we assign to the BEt<sub>3</sub> bonded to the nitrogen atom (Figure S3).<sup>5</sup>

Next, we have conducted a set of similar experiments on **Fe-L1** and **Co-L1**. As complexes **Fe-L1** and **Co-L1** is are paramagnetic their <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra are illegible and no information about the fate of NH upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> can be derived. However, <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy allowed us to observe appearance of broad signals in the high field region that we tentatively assign to [Fe-H] and [Co-H] species (Figures S4 and S5). In order to verify if formation of B-N bond takes place upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> to **Fe-L1** and **Co-L1** we have measured <sup>11</sup>B NMR spectra (Figures S6 and S7). After adding of 1 equivalent of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> to **Fe-L1** full consumption of [HBEt<sub>3</sub>]<sup>-</sup> could be seen and a signal at 53.53 ppm appeared, which remained present when more NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> was added, only slightly changing its position. Based on literature data we tentatively interpret this signal as resulting from N-BEt<sub>2</sub> unit.<sup>5</sup> <sup>11</sup>B NMR spectrum after addition of 3 equivalents of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> displayed one more signal at 71.94 ppm that we interpret as a result of equilibrium between [HBEt<sub>3</sub>]<sup>-</sup>, BEt<sub>3</sub> and [Et<sub>3</sub>B-H-BEt<sub>3</sub>].<sup>6</sup> After addition of 7 equivalents of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> this signal migrated, as expected, towards higher field region. Along with that two more signals appeared at 1.19 ppm and –0.41 ppm that we interpret as resulting from N-B units from BEt<sub>3</sub> binding to nitrogen atoms after their deprotonation (Figure S6). Addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> to **Co-L1** also led to species giving signals at 1.19 ppm and –0.41 ppm in <sup>11</sup>B NMR (Figure S7).



Figure S2. <sup>1</sup>H NMR studies on L1 (dissolved in THF-*d*<sub>8</sub>) upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (1M solution in toluene).



Figure S3. <sup>11</sup>B NMR studies on L1 (dissolved in THF-*d*<sub>8</sub>) upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (1M solution in toluene).



Figure S4. <sup>1</sup>H NMR studies on Fe-L1 (dissolved in THF-d<sub>8</sub>) upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (1M solution in THF).



Figure S5. <sup>1</sup>H NMR studies on Co-L1 upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (1M solution in THF).



Figure S6. <sup>11</sup>B NMR studies on Fe-L1 (dissolved in THF-*d*<sub>8</sub>) upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (1M solution in THF).



Figure S7. <sup>11</sup>B NMR studies on Co-L1 (dissolved in THF-d<sub>8</sub>) upon addition of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> (1M solution in THF).

### 6. SEM analysis of postreaction mixtures

In order to verify if **Fe-L1** or **Co-L1** could be a source of nanoparticles that could have influence the hydrosilylation processes respective postreaction mixtures were analyzed using SEM technique. This confirmed that **Fe-L1** and **Co-L1** are not being transformed into nanoparticles (Figures S8 and S9).



Figure S9. SEM image of a sample from postreaction mixture of phenylacetylene double hydrosilylation using Fe-L1.



Figure S9. SEM image of a sample from postreaction mixture of phenylacetylene double hydrosilylation using Co-L1.

#### 7. Synthesis of hydrazone ligands L3 and L4

Ligand L3



Ligand L3 was prepared in two-steps *via* substitution of 2-chloro-1*H*-benzimidazole A' with excess of 1-methylhydrazine<sup>4</sup> followed by condensation of obtained arylhydrazine B with quinoline-2-carboxaldehyde.

Arylhydrazine **B** (0.80 g, 4.93 mmol) was dissolved in 10 mL of anhydrous EtOH and obtained solution was added to the round-bottom flask with a magnetic stirring bar which was previously evacuated and filled with argon. While stirring the quinoline-2-carboxaldehyde (0.78 g, 4.97 mmol) was added and the reaction was continued for 2 h at 80°C. Next, the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and concentrated under vacuum. The mixture was left in the freezer until the precipitate appeared. The resulting precipitate of ligand L3 was filtered on a Büchner funnel, washed with EtOH (2x5 mL) and dried under vacuum (1.12 g, yield = 75%).

<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR ((CD<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>SO, 600 MHz): δ 12.08 (s, 1H), 8.54 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 8.41 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 8.02 – 7.97 (m, 2H), 7.95 (s, 1H), 7.77 (ddd, J = 8.2, 6.7, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.63 – 7.57 (m, 1H), 7.42 – 7.33 (m, 2H), 7.10 – 7.03 (m, 2H), 3.72 (s separating into two s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (151 MHz, DMSO- $d_6$ ) δ 154.7, 153.6, 147.6, 142.6, 137.3, 136.8, 134.3, 130.4, 128.7, 128.3, 127.8, 127.1, 121.3, 120.8, 118.6, 116.8, 110.3, 32.2; IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 3418 (N-H); 3062 (C-H); 2899 (N-CH<sub>3</sub>), 2848; 1513 (C=C), 1504, 1483; 1385 (C-N), 1362; 1142 (C-H), 1122, 1069, 1055; 798 (C-H), 786; ESI-MS(+) *m/z* (%): 302 (100) [*M*+H]<sup>+</sup>; Elemental analysis, calc. for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N<sub>5</sub>: C, 71.74; H, 5.02; N, 23.24; found: C, 72.15; H, 5.10; N, 23.13%.

#### Ligand L4



Ligand L4 was prepared in two-steps, *via* substitution of 2-chloro-1-methyl-1*H*-benzimidazole A with excess of 1-methylhydrazine followed by condensation of the obtained arylhydrazine C with 1-methyl-2-imidazolecarboxaldehyde.

A 100 mL two-necked flask with a magnetic stirring bar was evacuated and backfilled with argon (three cycles). Substrate 2-chloro-1methyl-1*H*-benzimidazole (300 mg, 1.80 mmol) and 8 ml of anhydrous EtOH was added to the flask. The mixture was stirred and heated at 60°C. Next, the fivefold surplus of 1-methylhydrazine (0.47 mL, 8.93 mmol) was added dropwise to the mixture. After 24 h heating was removed and reaction mixture was allowed to cool down to ambient temperature. Next, the reaction mixture was concentrated and the product was extracted into the dichloromethane (3x100 mL). Organic layers were combined, washed with brine and dried with anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. After filtration, the organic solvent was evaporated *in vacuo*. The product was subjected to further purification by flash column chromatography on alumina with dichloromethane:methanol (9:1 v:v) solvent system to obtain the anticipated product (268 mg, 1.52 mmol, yield = 85%).

Intermediate hydrazine derivative **C** (86.3 mg, 0.49 mmol) was dissolved in 4 mL of an anhydrous EtOH in the protective atmosphere of argon. While stirring the 1-methyl-2-imidazolecarboxaldehyde (53.9 mg, 0.49 mmol) was added. After 24 h at 60°C, the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and concentrated under vacuum. The obtained ligand **L4** was extracted with dichloromethane (3x100 mL), washed with brine and dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Organic solvent was removed *in vacuo* and final product was purified *via* flash column chromatography on alumina with ethyl acetate:hexane (1:1 v:v) solvent system (89.6 mg, yield = 68.2%).

<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR ((CD<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>SO, 600 MHz): δ 7.83 (s separating into two s, 1H), 7.46 – 7.37 (m, 2H), 7.26 (s separating into two s, 1H), 7.16 – 7.11 (m, 2H), 7.01 (d, J = 1.1 Hz, 1H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 3.61 (s separating into two s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR ((CD<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>SO, 151 MHz) δ 153.6, 142.3, 140.5, 136.3, 130.2, 128.6, 124.4, 121.6, 120.9, 117.2, 109.3, 34.7, 34.4, 32.4; IR (KBr, cm<sup>-1</sup>): 3056 (C-H); 1490 (C=C); 1417 (C-N); 1317 (C=N), 1289; 1137 (C-H), 1080; 713 (C-H); **ESI-MS**(+) *m/z* (%): 269 (100) [*M*+H]<sup>+</sup>, 291 (30) [*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>; **Elemental analysis**, calc. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>6</sub>: C, 62.67; H, 6.01; N, 31.32; found: C, 62.15; H, 6.10; N, 31.13%.

#### 8. Synthesis of precatalysts

Complex Fe-L3 [Fe(L3)Cl<sub>3</sub>]:



Ligand L3 (40.0 mg, 0.13 mmol) and FeCl<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O (35.9 mg, 0.133 mmol) were dissolved in 15 mL CH<sub>3</sub>OH. The reaction mixture was magnetically stirred for 24h at room temperature to give a brown solution. The reaction mixture was concentrated and Et<sub>2</sub>O was added. The precipitate was obtained, filtered *via* suction filtration, washed with Et<sub>2</sub>O (2x5 mL) and dried under vacuum (46.4 mg, yield = 88.9%).

**IR** (KBr cm<sup>-1</sup>): 3617 (N-H), 3421; 3041 (C-H); 1614 (C=C), 1596, 1548; 1474 (C-N), 1461; 1143 (C-H), 1056; 788 (C-H), 764; **ESI-MS**(+) *m*/*z* (%): 303 (100) [**L3**+H]<sup>+</sup>, 427 (20) [Fe(**L3**)Cl<sub>2</sub>]<sup>+</sup>; **Elemental analysis**, calc. for [Fe(C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N<sub>5</sub>)Cl<sub>3</sub>]: C, 46.64; H, 3.26; N, 15.11; found: C, 46.88; H, 3.32; N, 15.23%.

Complex Fe-L4 [Fe(L4)Cl<sub>3</sub>]:



Ligand L4 (26.8 mg, 0.10 mmol) and FeCl<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O (27.3 mg, 0.10 mmol) were dissolved in 15 mL of CH<sub>3</sub>OH/CH<sub>3</sub>CN mixture (1:1, v:v). The reaction mixture was stirred for 48 h at room temperature to give dark-green solution. The reaction mixture was concentrated and 10 mL of Et<sub>2</sub>O was added. The precipitate was obtained, filtered, washed with Et<sub>2</sub>O (2x5 mL) and dried under vacuum (42.3 mg, yield = 98.2%).

**IR** (KBr, cm<sup>-1</sup>): 3164 (C-H), 3013; 2898 (CH<sub>3</sub>); 1612 (C=C), 1533, 1496; 1475 (C-N), 1411; 1281 (C=N); 1166 (C-H), 1131; 993 (C-H), 871, 829, 735; **ESI-MS**(+) *m*/*z* (%): 269 (100) [**L**4+H]+, 359 (30) [Fe(**L**4)CI]<sup>+</sup>; **Elemental analysis**, calc. for [Fe(C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>6</sub>)Cl<sub>3</sub>]: C, 39.06; H, 3.75; N, 19.52; found: C, 38.98; H, 3.68; N, 19.63%.

Complex Co-L4 [Co(L4)Cl<sub>2</sub>]:



Ligand L4 (30.0 mg, 0.11 mmol) and CoCl<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O (26.6 mg, 0.11 mmol) were dissolved in 15 mL of CH<sub>3</sub>OH/CH<sub>3</sub>CN mixture (1:1, v:v). The reaction mixture was magnetically stirred for 48h at room temperature to give green solution. The reaction mixture was concentrated and Et<sub>2</sub>O was added. The precipitate was obtained, filtered *via* suction filtration and washed with Et<sub>2</sub>O (2x5 mL) and dried under vacuum (38.7 mg, yield = 88.4%).

**IR** (KBr, cm<sup>-1</sup>): 3106 (C-H), 3027; 2769 (CH<sub>3</sub>); 1619 (C=C), 1533, 1490; 1454 (C-N), 1425; 1281 (C=N); 1188 (C-H), 1109; 999 (C-H), 965, 821, 756; **ESI-MS**(+) m/z (%): 362 (100) [Co(L4)Cl]<sup>+</sup>; **Elemental analysis**, calc. for [Co(C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>6</sub>)Cl<sub>2</sub>]: C, 42.23; H, 4.05; N, 21.11; found: C, 42.38; H, 3.98; N, 21.06%.

### 9. Synthesis of geminal bis(silanes)





355.1309, found: 355.1314.





found: 355.1317.







(1-Phenylethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3a) was synthesized according to *Method A* and obtained as colourless oil (91 mg, yield = 58%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.42 – 7.36 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.35 – 7.26 (m, 10H, Ar-*H*), 7.25 – 7.20 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.19 – 7.12 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 4.67 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.56 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 1.54 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  143.5, 136.3, 130.5, 130.0, 128.6, 127.8, 126.8, 124.4, 17.4, 17.3; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  –20.19; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calc. for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>22</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 341.1153, found: 341.1154.

**(1-(4-Methylphenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3b)** was synthesized according to *Method A* and obtained as colourless oil (109 mg, yield = 66%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.42 – 7.37 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.36 – 7.32 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.32 – 7.26 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.15 – 7.09 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 4.63 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.53 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 2.36 (s, 3H, ArC*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.52 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 140.3, 136.3, 133.8, 130.8, 130.7, 129.9, 129.3, 127.8, 126.7, 21.0, 17.4, 16.7; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –20.30; HRMS (ESI) *m*/*z*: calc. for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>):

**(1-(3-Methylphenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3c)** was synthesized according to *Method A* and obtained as colourless oil (89 mg, yield = 54%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.42 – 7.37 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.36 – 7.26 (m, 8H, Ar-*H*), 7.22 – 7.16 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 7.06 – 7.00 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 6.99 – 6.95 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 4.65 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.54 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 2.32 (s, 3H, ArC*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.53 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C**{**<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 143.4, 137.9, 136.3, 130.7, 129.9, 128.4, 127.8, 127.6, 125.2, 123.8, 21.8, 17.4, 17.1; <sup>29</sup>Si**{**<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –20.19; HRMS (ESI) *m*/*z*: calc. for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 355.1309, found: 355.1325.

**(1-(2-Methylphenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3d)** was synthesized according to *Method A* and obtained as colourless oil (66 mg, yield = 40%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.41 – 7.35 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.35 – 7.31 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.30 – 7.25 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.18 – 7.14 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 7.13 – 7.06 (m, 3H, Ar-*H*), 4.76 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.8 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.61 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.8 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 2.61 (s, 3H, ArC*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.68 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); 1<sup>3</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 141.9, 136.1, 132.1, 131.2, 129.9, 127.9, 126.9, 126.3, 125.0, 23.8, 22.1, 16.3; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –22.43; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calc. for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 355.1309,

**(1-(4-***tert***-butylethylphenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3e)** was synthesized according to *Method A* and obtained as colourless oil (116 mg, yield = 62%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.35 – 7.31 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.27 – 7.26 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.26 – 7.24 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.24 – 7.20 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.12 – 7.09 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 4.58 (d separating into two d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.50 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 1.47 (s, 3H, C(SiH<sub>2</sub>Ph)<sub>2</sub>C*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.31 (s, 9H, C(C*H*<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (150 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 147.3, 140.2, 136.3, 130.8, 129.9, 127.8, 126.4, 125.4, 34.4, 31.6, 17.4, 16.6; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –20.54. HRMS (ESI) *m*/*z*: calc. for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>30</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 397.1778, found: 397.1786.

(1-([1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3f) was synthesized according to *Method B* and obtained as colourless oil that solidified overtime (86 mg, yield = 44%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.70 – 7.64 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.60 – 7.55 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.51 – 7.46 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.43 – 7.35 (m, 7H, Ar-*H*), 7.33 – 7.27 (m, 6H, Ar-*H*), 4.71 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.59 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 1.58 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 142.9, 140.9, 137.0, 136.3, 130.5, 128.9, 127.9, 127.2, 127.1, 126.9, 17.4, 17.3; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –20.23; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calc. for C<sub>26</sub>H<sub>26</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 417.1465, found: 417.1479.

**(1-(4-Metoxyphenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3g)** was synthesized according to *Method A* and obtained as colourless oil (112 mg, yield = 67%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.42 – 7.37 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.36 – 7.26 (m, 8H, Ar-*H*), 7.17 – 7.11 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 6.89 – 6.83 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 4.64 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.53 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 3.83 (s, 3H, OC*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.51 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  156.8, 136.3, 135.3, 130.6, 129.9, 127.8, 127.7, 111.1, 55.4, 17.6, 16.1; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  –20.50; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calc. for

C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NaOSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 371.1258, found: 355.1258.



(1-(4-[Dimethylamino]phenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3h) was synthesized according to Method B and obtained as colourless oil (58 mg, yield = 32%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.42 -7.32 (m, 6H, Ar-H), 7.31 - 7.25 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.11 (appd, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 8.8 Hz, Ar-H), 6.73 (appd, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 8.8 Hz, Ar-H), 4.60 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.6 Hz, 2H, 2xSiHH), 4.51 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.6 Hz, 2H, 2xSiHH), 2.96 (s, 6H, N(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.50 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 148.0, 136.3, 131.2, 131.1, 129.8, 127.8, 127.4, 113.4, 41.0, 17.5, 15.5; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -20.91; HRMS (ESI) *m*/*z*: calc. for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>28</sub>Si<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+H]<sup>+</sup>): 362.1755, found: 362.1764.



(1-(4-Fluorophenyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3i) was synthesized according to Method A and obtained as colourless oil (96 mg, yield = 57%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.42 - 7.37 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.33 – 7.26 (m, 8H, Ar-*H*), 7.17 – 7.12 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.02 – 6.96 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 4.65 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.53 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 1.52 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 160.4 (d,  ${}^{1}J_{CF}$  = 244.1 Hz), 139.1 (d,  ${}^{4}J_{CF}$  = 3.1 Hz), 130.2, 130.1, 128.1 (d,  ${}^{3}J_{CF}$  = 7.6 Hz,  ${}^{Ar}C$ ), 127.9, 115.3 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{CF}$  = 21.2 Hz), 17.7, 16.7;  ${}^{19}F$  NMR (377 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  – 119.43 (m);  ${}^{29}Si{}^{1}H$  NMR (79 MHz, 79 MHz,

 $\text{CDCI}_{3}) \ \delta - 20.03 \ (\text{d}, \ ^{6}J_{\text{SiF}} = 1.6 \ \text{Hz}); \ \text{HRMS} \ (\text{ESI}) \ \textit{m/z}: \text{ calc. for } C_{20}\text{H}_{21}\text{FNaSi}_{2}^{+} \ ([\textit{M+Na}]^{+}): 359.1058, \ \text{found: } 359.1073.$ 



(1-(6-Methoxynaphth-2-yl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3j) was synthesized according to Method B and obtained as colourless oil that solidified overtime (132 mg, yield = 66%).  $^{1}$ H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.72 – 7.77 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 7.64 – 7.60 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 7.51 – 7.47 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.47 – 7.40 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.39 – 7.34 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.33 – 7.28 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.26 - 7.22 (m, 3H, Ar-*H*), 7.16 - 7.12 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 4.72 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.6 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.59 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.6 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 3.96 (s, 3H, OC*H*<sub>3</sub>),1.64 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz,

CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 157.2, 138.8, 136.3, 132.0, 130.5, 130.0, 129.5, 129.2, 127.9, 126.9, 126.8, 124.2, 118.8, 105.6, 55.4, 17.6, 17.5; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –20.66; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: calc. for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>26</sub>NaOSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 421.1414, found: 421.1424.



(1-(2-Thienyl)ethane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (3k) was synthesized according to Method A and obtained as colourless oil (54 mg, yield = 37%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.45 - 7.37 (m, 6H, Ar-H), 7.34 - 7.28 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.10 – 7.07 (m, 1H, Ar<sup>s</sup>-H), 7.00 – 6.96 (m, 1H, Ar<sup>s</sup>-H), 6.75 – 6.70 (m, 1H, Ar<sup>s</sup>-H), 4.63 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 4.55 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 1.58 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 149.5, 136.3, 130.2, 130.1, 127.9, 127.3, 122.5, 121.8, 19.5, 15.8; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –20.40; **HRMS** (ESI) *m/z*: calc. for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>21</sub>SSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+H]<sup>+</sup>): 325.0897, found: 325.0897.





31 was synthesized according to Method A and obtained as colourless oil (62 mg, yield = 28% - due to contamination, please see Figure S10 below). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.30 - 7.25 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.25 - 7.18 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.10 - 7.05 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 3.95 - 3.90 (m, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 3.86 – 3.83 (m, 2H, 2xSiH*H*), 1.84 (tt, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 5.0 Hz, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 3.2 Hz, 0.25 H, PhC*H*(SiH<sub>2</sub>Hex)<sub>2</sub> – contam.), 1.56 (s, 3H, C(SiH<sub>2</sub>Hex)<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.35 - 1.16 (m, 16H, 2x(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>4</sub>), 0.85 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 6H, 2xCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>), 0.72 - 0.55 (m, 4H, 2xSiH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (150 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 145.4, 142.0 (contam.), 128.8 (contam.), 128.5, 128.2 (contam.), 126.2, 124.2 (contam.), 124.0, 32.6, 32.5 (contam.) 31.6, 25.3, 25.1 (contam.) 22.6, 18.2, 16.0, 14.9 (contam.), 14.2, 9.4 (contam.), 7.7; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (119 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ – 16.51, -25.27 (contam.); HRMS (ESI) m/z: calc. for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>38</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub>+ ([M+Na]+): 357.2404, found: 357.2420; calc. for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>36</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub>+ (contam., [M+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 343.2248, found: 343.2255.



1-(hexylsilyl)-1-phenyl-1-(phenylsilyl)ethane (9a) was synthesized according to Method C and obtained as colourless oil (33 mg, yield = 20%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.42 - 7.35 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.35 - 7.30 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.30 – 7.24 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.24 – 7.20 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.15 – 7.09 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 4.56 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 1H, SiH*H*Ph), 4.50 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 6.7 Hz, 1H, SiH*H*Ph), 4.01 (m, 1H, SiH*H*Hex), 3.90 (m, 1H, SiH*H*Hex), 1.55 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.34 - 1.13 (m, 8H, (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>4</sub>), 0.87 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>), 0.69 - 0.52 (m, 2H, SiH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 144.5, 136.2, 130.9, 129.9, 128.6, 127.8, 126.5, 124.2, 32.6,

31.6, 25.3, 22.6, 17.7, 16.7, 14.2, 7.5; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –17.40, –19.23; HRMS (ESI) m/z. calc. for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>30</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([M+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 349.1778, found: 349.1783.



1-(diphenylsilyl)-1-phenyl-1-(phenylsilyl)ethane (9b) was synthesized according to Method C and obtained as colourless oil (113 mg, yield = 58%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.57 - 7.50 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.48 - 7.41 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.40 - 7.34 (m, 5H, Ar-H), 7.30 - 7.22 (m, 5H, Ar-H), 7.20 - 7.16 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.15 – 7.10 (m, 3H, Ar-H), 5.21 (s, 1H, SiHPh<sub>2</sub>), 4.67 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 1H, SiHHPh), 4.46 (d separating into two d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.8 Hz, 1H, SiH*H*Ph), 1.58 (s, 3H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); {}^{13}C{}^{1}H NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  143.3, 136.4, 136.3, 136.2, 133.0, 132.9, 130.4, 130.0, 129.8, 129.8, 129.7, 128.4, 128.0, 127.8, 127.7, 127.4, 124.4, 19.2, 16.8; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –8.58, –21.20; HRMS (ESI) m/z: calc. for C<sub>26</sub>H<sub>26</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([*M*+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 417.1465, found: 417.1474.

Si(Me)<sub>2</sub>Ph SiH<sub>2</sub>Ph Me

1-(dimethylphenylsilyl)-1-phenyl-1-(phenylsilyl)ethane (9c) was synthesized according to Method C and obtained as colourless oil that solidified overtime (124 mg, yield = 72%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.42 – 7.36 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.35 – 7.28 (m, 5H, Ar-H), 7.26 – 7.18 (m, 6H, Ar-H), 7.14 – 7.08 (m, 3H, Ar-H), 4.78 (d separating into two d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.4 Hz, 1H, SiH*H*Ph), 4.49 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{HH}$  = 6.4 Hz, 1H, SiH*H*Ph), 1.46 (s separating into two s, 3H, CCH<sub>3</sub>), 0.40 (s, 3H, SiCH<sub>3</sub>), 0.38 (s, 3H, SiCH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 144.0, 136.9, 136.2, 135.0, 130.9, 129.6, 129.2, 128.1, 127.7, 127.4, 127.3, 124.0, 19.9, 17.2, -3.7, -4.4; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –0.25, –24.80; HRMS (ESI) m/z: calc. for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>26</sub>NaSi<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([M+Na]<sup>+</sup>): 369.1465, found: 369.1479.



(1-Phenylpropane-1,1-diyl)bis(phenylsilane) (10) A mixture of Co-L1 (0.9 mg, 2.5 µmol), 1-phenylpropyne (58 mg, 0.5 mmol) and phenylsilane (62 µL,0.5 mmol) in THF (0.5 ml) was prepared in the Schlenk-bomb flask and stirred at ambient temperature for 15 min. Next, a solution of NaHBEt<sub>3</sub> in toluene (10  $\mu$ L, 1 M, 10 µL) was added and the reaction vessel was placed in preheated oil bath (40 °C) to continue stirring for 20 h. After that time the flask was removed from the heating bath and allowed to cool down for 5 min. Next, a solution, prepared 15 min. prior in inert conditions, from Co-L1 (1.8 mg, 5 µmol), THF (0.5 ml) and NaHBEt<sub>3</sub>

(35 µL, 1 M in toluene, 35 µmol) was added to the original reaction vessel, followed by addition of phenylsilane (62 µL,0.5 mmol). The flask was subsequently put in preheated oil bath (100 °C) and reaction mixture was stirred for 20 h. After that time heating was removed and the reaction mixture was allowed to cool down to ambient temperature, followed by filtration through silica pad which was washed with a mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL). Combined filtrates were evaporated in vacuo leaving an oil residue to which a mixture of hexane (2 mL) and ethyl acetate (1 mL) was added. Resulting suspension was filtrated through silica pad, which was washed with a mixture of hexane (6 mL) and ethyl acetate (3 mL). Combined filtrates were evaporated in vacuo giving a crude product in a form of an oil, which was further purified by column chromatography on silica (230-240 mesh size) using hexane as eluent. Fractions containing the pure product were combined and volatiles were removed in vacuo yielding the desired compound as colourless oil (30 mg, yield = 18%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.41 – 7.37 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.36 – 7.32 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.31 – 7.26 (m, 6H, Ar-*H*), 7.24 – 7.21 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.18 – 7.13 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 4.64 (s, 4H, 2xSiH<sub>2</sub>), 2.08 (q, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 7.4 Hz, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 1.11 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 7.4 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 142.3, 136.4, 130.9, 129.9, 128.5, 127.8, 127.8, 124.5, 24.1, 24.1, 11.6; <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (79 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ –22.89; EI-MS(+) m/z (%): 332 (8) [M]<sup>+</sup>, 225 (22) [M-PhSiH<sub>2</sub>]<sup>+</sup>, ; Elemental analysis, calc. for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>24</sub>Si<sub>2</sub>: C, 75.84; H, 7.27; found: C, 75.42; H, 7.39%.



Figure S10. GC-MS data for 3I product, documenting inseparable contamination 3I'.

































S33

























# <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>1</sup>H COSY NMR . SiH<sub>2</sub>Hex SiH<sub>2</sub>Hex SiH<sub>2</sub>Hex `SiH<sub>2</sub>Hex ٠ Me Н 31 31' . .



S46

# <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>13</sup>C HSQC NMR



# <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>13</sup>C HMBC NMR

![](_page_47_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_48_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_49_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_50_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_51_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_52_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_53_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_54_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_55_Figure_0.jpeg)

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