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Title: Hg(ii) and Pd(ii) complexes with a new selenoether bridged biscarbene ligand: efficient mono- and

bis-arylation of methyl acrylate with a pincer biscarbene Pd(ii) precatalyst†

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Na2Se Equivalents Produce

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Abstract: Two equivalents of 1-benzyl-3-bromoethylbenzimidazolium bromide couple with Na2Se to produce

the first selenoether bridged bis-benzimidazolium salt (LH2)Br2. The nitrate (LH2)(NO3)2 and tetrafluoroborate (LH2)(BF4)2 salts were also synthesized from (LH2)Br2. The reaction of Hg(OAc)2 with (LH2)Br2 gave the first pseudo pincer carbene mercury complex, [Hg(L-k2C)] [HgBr4] (C1). Different complexes of Pd(II) with selenoether bridged carbene were obtained using (LH2)Br2 and (LH2)(NO3)2. Syntheses of these complexes were dependent on the counter anion and the temperature. Thus, the pincer type ionic complex [PdBr(L-k3CSeC)]Br (C2) was isolated at 80 °C and the pseudo pincer type neutral complex cis-[PdBr2(L-k2C)] (C3) was isolated at room temperature from (LH2)Br2 and Pd(OAc)2 in DMSO. The nitrate precursor (LH2)(NO3)2 on palladation with Pd(OAc)2 afforded [Pd(L-k4CBzCSeC)]NO3 (C4) showing an unprecedented intramolecular metallation at the ortho position of the benzyl wingtip of the benzimidazole moiety. The ligand salts and metal complexes have been characterized using HRMS, heteronuclear NMR and IR spectroscopy. Single crystal X-ray structures of the ligand salts (LH2)Br2 and (LH2)(BF4)2 and complexes C1–C4 have also been elucidated. Complex C2 showed good activity for C–C coupling in the mono-Heck reaction of methyl acrylate and arylbromides. Interestingly, the less common bis-arylation was also observed with deactivated arylbromides as the result of double-

Heck coupling.

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