



A simple and stereoselective synthesis of (Z)-1,2-bis-arylselanyl alkenes from alkynes using $\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$

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ABSTRACT

The title compounds were synthesized by a one-pot reaction of diaryl diselenides with terminal alkynes avoiding the previous preparation of arylselanyl alkynes. The reactions were performed under mild conditions with a range of terminal alkynes using $\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ and PEG-400 as solvent. The addition of diaryl diselenides to alkynes occurred stereoselectively to give exclusively (Z)-1,2-bis-arylselanyl alkenes in good yields. The reaction time was reduced to a few minutes using microwave irradiation and the $\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{PEG-400}$ system can be reused one time without previous treatment with comparable activity.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, organoselenium compounds were received great attention in chemical science because they are attractive as key intermediate in organic synthesis^{1,2} and because their interesting fluorescent properties³ and biological activities.⁴ Beside, the versatility and applicability of organoselenium compounds in chemical sciences are well described in a great number of reviews¹ and books.² Between the organoselenium compounds, 1,2-bis-chalcogenyl alkenes are of special interest, because they can be used as a versatile precursor to enediynes and other functionalized olefins.⁵

1,2-Bis-organylselanyl alkenes have been obtained by the Se–Se bond addition to alkynes catalyzed by palladium,⁶ palladium and microwave irradiation,⁷ platinum,^{6c} rhodium complex,⁸ under photochemical⁹ or using $\text{Ti}(\text{i-PrO})_4/\text{i-PrMgCl}$ and electrophilic selenium species.¹⁰ These protocols afford selectively (Z)-1,2-bis-organylselanyl alkenes or, in some cases, a mixture of Z and E isomers and other side products. On the other hand, (E)-1,2-bis-arylselanyl styrenes were selectively prepared starting from phenylacetylene and diaryl diselenides under solvent-free,¹¹ glycerol¹² or in ionic liquid¹³ using NaBH_4 to generate the nucleophilic

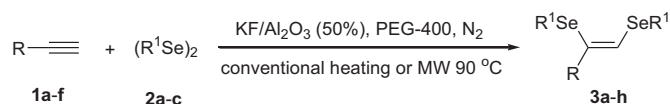
selenium species. Recently, the in situ addition of diorganyl diselenides to propargylic alcohols using *n*-BuLi to afford bis-phenylselanyl alkenes in good yields and high stereoselectivity was described.¹⁴ The authors observed that the presence of the acidic hydrogen from hydroxyl group is crucial for the selectivity control in the addition. However, to our knowledge, reaction under basic conditions of terminal alkynes with diorganyl diselenide, avoiding the previous preparation of organylselanyl alkynes to afford (Z)-bis-organylselanyl alkenes remains a challenge in organic chemistry.¹⁵

The development of environmentally benign and clean synthetic protocols using solvents alternative to Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's), such as water, ionic liquids (ILs) and polyethylene glycol (PEG) has increased.¹⁶ Despite several advantages, the use of water is limited due the low solubility of most of organic substrates, while ILs are expensive and can release hazardous inorganic residues during recycling. To resolve these inconvenients, PEG has been proved a promising media for organic synthesis,¹⁷ including Heck^{17a} and Mannich^{17b} reactions, cross-coupling,^{17c,f} N-arylation^{17g} and cycloaddition reactions.^{17h}

On other hand, the use of potassium fluoride supported on alumina ($\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$) as a green catalytic system for a number of transformations has been increased.¹⁸ By using $\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$, the products can be easily isolated by filtration and the generation of large amounts of salts at the end of the synthesis, as well as the use

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of stoichiometric strong bases, can be avoided. In this sense, KF/Al₂O₃ has been employed by our group¹⁹ and others²⁰ in various organic transformations. In this way, as a continuation of our studies, we report herein the results of the addition of the diorganyl diselenides to alkynes using KF/Al₂O₃ for the selective synthesis of (Z)-1,2-bis-organylselanyl alkenes (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1. General scheme of the reaction.

2. Results and discussion

Initially, we chose phenylacetylene **1a** (1.0 mmol) and diphenyl diselenide **2a** (1.0 mmol) as standard starting materials to establish the best reaction conditions for the synthesis of Z-1,2-bis-organylselanyl alkenes **3** under N₂ atmosphere (Table 1). We examined the influence of solvent, temperature, amount of KF/Al₂O₃ (50% m/m), as well as the heating source (oil bath and the use of focused microwave irradiation). It was found that using 0.04 g of KF/Al₂O₃ and PEG-400 (2.0 mL) at room temperature, unsatisfactory yield of the product **3a** was obtained and a great amount of diphenyl diselenide was recovered (Table 1, entry 1). When the reaction was performed at 60 °C, a mixture of (Z)- and (E)-1,2-bis-phenylselanylstyrene **3a** and 1-phenylselanyl-2-phenylethyne **4a** was obtained (Table 1, entry 2). Increasing the temperature to 90 °C, the reaction proceeds smoothly and the desired product **3a** was obtained exclusively in 60% yield (Table 1, entry 3). To our satisfaction, increasing the amount of KF/Al₂O₃ to 0.08 g, the desired product **3a** was obtained in 83% yield (Table 1, entry 4).

Table 1
Investigation of the best conditions to synthesis of **3a**^a

$\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{—C}\equiv\text{C—H} + (\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{Se})_2 \xrightarrow{\text{conditions}} \text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{Se—C}=\text{C—SeC}_6\text{H}_5 + \text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{—C}\equiv\text{C—SeC}_6\text{H}_5$					
Entry	KF/Al ₂ O ₃ 50% (g)	Solvent	Temperature (°C)	Yield of 3a (%)	Ratio (Z- 3a /E- 3a)
1	0.04	PEG-400	25	Traces	—
2	0.04	PEG-400	60	61	— ^b
3	0.04	PEG-400	90	60	97:3
4	0.08	PEG-400	90	83	97:3
5	0.08	Glycerol	90	62	15:85
6	0.08	None	25	80	12:88
7	0.08	THF	Reflux	n.d.	—
8	None	PEG-400	90	n.d.	—

^a Reactions performed using **1a** (1 mmol), **2a** (1 mmol), and solvent (2.0 mL) under N₂ atmosphere for 6 h.

^b It was observed a mixture of the products **3a/4a** in a 57:43 ratio.

In other experiment, we studied the influence of the solvent. Thus, it was observed that using glycerol instead PEG-400 (Table 1, entry 5) or under solvent-free conditions (Table 1, entry 6) good yields of **3a** were obtained, but with the preferential formation of the (E)-isomer. When THF was used as solvent (Table 1, entry 7), formation of desired product **3a** was not detected and the starting materials were recovered. Similarly, the reaction failed completely in the absence of KF/Al₂O₃ (Table 1, entry 8).

Since the best conditions were established, we explored our method extending the reaction to other terminal alkynes and diaryl diselenides (Scheme 1, Table 2, Method A). As can be seen

in Table 2, a range of terminal alkynes worked well and with high stereoselectivity giving exclusively the (Z)-alkenes. Beside, differently to the observed when *n*-BuLi was employed,¹⁴ under our conditions the presence of a hydroxyl group at the terminal alkyne is not essential to the formation exclusively of 1,2-bis-arylselanyl alkenes, which were obtained even starting from aromatic and aliphatic alkynes. Thus, propargylic alcohol **1b** reacted under our conditions with diphenyl diselenide **2a** to afford exclusively (Z)-1,2-bis-(phenylselanyl)prop-2-en-1-ol **3b** in 72% yield (Table 2, entry 3). Similarly, hex-1-yne **1f** gave 1,2-bis(phenylselanyl)hex-1-ene **3h**, in 32% yield (Table 2, entry 15). In general, our results showed that the reactions between diaryl diselenides and alkynes gave the respective vinyl selenides in good yields. Thus, diaryl diselenides containing electron-withdrawing (–Cl) or electron-donating groups (–CH₃) at the aromatic ring gave good yields of products **3c,d** (Table 2, entries 5–8).

However, when dimesityl diselenide **2c** was used, the desired 1,2-bis-(mesitylselanyl)alkene was obtained in reaction just with propargylic alcohol **1b**, which afforded **3d** in 90% yield (Table 2; entry 7). Surprisingly, phenylacetylene **1a** reacted smoothly with **2c** to afford the corresponding 1-mesitylselanyl alkynes **4b** in 72% yield (Scheme 2).

In order to obtain an efficient protocol in terms of energy efficiency, we performed these reactions under focused microwave irradiation (MW) at the same temperature (90 °C). Thus, the mixture of phenylacetylene **1a** (1.0 mmol), diphenyl diselenide **2a** (1.0 mmol), KF/Al₂O₃ (0.08 g) and PEG-400 (2.0 mL) was irradiated under stirring and fortunately, after 30 min, the product **3a** was selectively obtained in 77% yield (Table 2, entry 2, Method B). To extend the scope of Method B, other terminal alkynes and diaryl diselenides were irradiated with MW and the corresponding products **3b–h** were obtained in comparable yields after 30 min. As can be seen in Table 2, Method A (conventional heating in an oil bath) is most suitable for phenylacetylene **1a** and hex-1-yne **1f**. When alkynyl alcohols **1b–e** were used, however, Method B (MW heating) provided better yields.

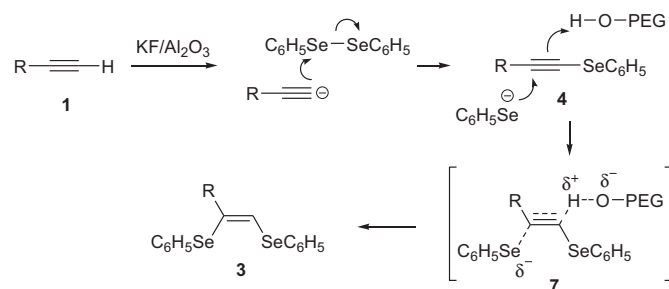
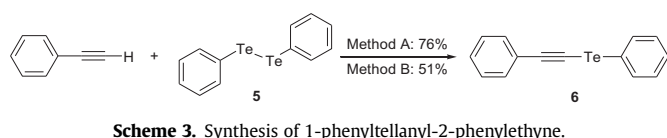
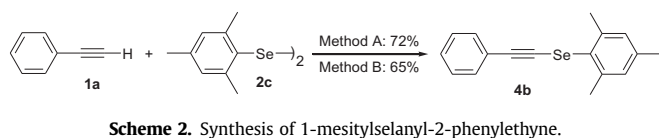
A reuse study of the KF/Al₂O₃/PEG-400 system was carried out for the reaction of **1a** with **2a** to obtain **3a** using MW at 90 °C during 30 min (Method B). After this time, the reaction mixture was diluted with hexane/ethyl acetate (90:10). The upper organic phase was removed and the product was isolated. The remaining KF/Al₂O₃/PEG-400 mixture was directly reused for further reactions. It was observed that a good level of efficiency was maintained in the second reaction (68% yield of **3a**). However, the yield dropped drastically in the third cycle, with **3a** being isolated in only 26% yield.

Following, we study the reaction of diphenyl ditelluride **5** with terminal alkynes under our conditions (Scheme 3). Similarly to the observed with dimesityl diselenide **2c**, the reaction of **5** with phenylacetylene **1a** gave the corresponding 1-phenyltellanyl alkyne **6** in good yield (Scheme 3). When alkynyl alcohols were used, the starting alkynes and ditelluride were recovered.

A plausible mechanism for the reactions of alkynes with diaryl diselenides using PEG-400 as solvent for formation of (Z)-1,2-bis-organylselanyl alkenes is depicted on Scheme 4. Initially, the experimental evidence supports that occurs the formation of the 1-organylselanyl-2-organylethyne **4** and selenolate anion.²¹ In a second step, the mechanism is similar to the reaction using ethanol and the intermediate **7** could be involved in the formation of **3**. When the reaction was performed using internal diphenyl alkyne, no product was observed, being recovered the starting materials. Besides, in contrast with our findings, under radical conditions, the preferential formation of adducts with E-configuration is observed.^{9c}

Table 2Scope of the synthesis of 1,2-bis(arylselanyl)alkenes **3** using $\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ and PEG-400^a

Entry	Alkyne 1	Diselenide 2	Product 3	Method ^a	Yield (%) ^b
1				A	83
2	1a	2a	3a	B	77
3		2a		A	72
4	1b	2a	3b	B	70
5	1b			A	59
6	1b	2b	3c	B	67
7	1b			A	90
8	1b	2c	3d	B	86
9		2a		A	69
10	1c	2a	3e	B	77
11		2a		A	62
12	1d	2a	3f	B	67
13		2a		A	81
14	1e	2a	3g	B	98
15		2a		A	32
16	1f	2a	3h	B	22

^a Method A: the experiments were performed at 90 °C during 6 h; Method B: the experiments were performed using MW at 90 °C during 30 min.^b Yield after purification by column chromatography.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, we presented here a new, one-pot methodology for the preparation of (Z)-1,2-bis(organylselanyl) alkenes starting from terminal alkynes and diaryl diselenides using $\text{KF}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ and PEG-400 as solvent. The method is straightforward and highly

stereoselective, avoiding the previous preparation of phenylselanyl alkynes. The selectivity is extensive to aromatic, aliphatic and propargyl derivative alkynes. In addition, by this procedure, 1-mesitylselanyl and 1-phenyltellanyl alkynes were exclusively obtained starting from phenylacetylene. This protocol minimizes the energy demands and the reaction time could be reduced from

several hours to few minutes using MW irradiation. The KF/Al₂O₃/PEG-400 system was directly re-used one time with a slight declining in yields.

4. Experimental section

4.1. General remarks

Hydrogen nuclear magnetic resonance spectra (¹H NMR) were obtained at 200, 300, 400 and 500 MHz on Bruker DPX spectrometers. Spectra were recorded in CDCl₃ solutions. Chemical shifts are reported in parts per million, referenced to tetramethylsilane (TMS) as the external reference. Data are reported as follows: chemical shift (δ), multiplicity, coupling constant (*J*) in hertz and integrated intensity. Carbon-13 nuclear magnetic resonance spectra (¹³C NMR) were obtained at 75 and 125 MHz on Bruker DPX spectrometers. Spectra were recorded in CDCl₃ solutions. Chemical shifts are reported in ppm, referenced to the solvent peak of CDCl₃. Mass spectra (MS) were measured on a Shimadzu GC–MS–QP2010 mass spectrometer. Column chromatography was performed using Merck Silica Gel (230–400 mesh). Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed using Merck Silica Gel GF₂₅₄, 0.25 mm thickness. For visualization, TLC plates were either placed under ultraviolet light, or stained with iodine vapor, or acidic vanillin. All solvents were used as purchased unless otherwise noted. Terminal alkynes and PEG-400 were obtained from Aldrich and used without further purification. Microwave reactions were conducted using a CEM Discover, mode operating systems working at 2.45 GHz, with a power programmable from 1 to 300 W.

4.2. General procedure for the preparation of alumina-supported potassium fluoride²²

To a 50 mL beaker was added alumina (3.0 g of Al₂O₃ 90, 0.063–0.200 mm, Merck), KF·2H₂O (3.0 g) and water (5 mL). The suspension was stirred for 1 h at 65 °C, dried at 80 °C for 1 h and for an additional 4 h at 300 °C in an oven and then cooled in a desiccator. The content of KF is about 50% (m/m).

4.3. General procedure for the preparation of compounds 3a–h through Method A

To a mixture of terminal alkyne **1** (1 mmol) and diaryl diselenide **2** (1 mmol) in PEG-400 (2.0 mL) under N₂ atmosphere, KF/Al₂O₃ 50% (0.08 g) was added at room temperature under stirring. Then, the mixture was heated slowly to 90 °C and the reaction progress was followed by TLC. After 6 h water (3 mL) was added and the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (3×5 mL). The organic layers were combined, washed with brine solution (3 mL) and dried with MgSO₄. The solvent was removed under vacuum and the product was isolated by column chromatography using hexane/ethyl acetate as eluent. Spectral data of the products prepared are listed below.

4.3.1. (*Z*)-1,2-Bis(phenylselanyl) styrene (**3a**).²³ Yield: 0.345 g (83%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.59–7.65 (m, 2H); 7.60 (s, 1H); 7.48–7.52 (m, 2H); 7.36–7.40 (m, 2H); 7.30–7.34 (m, 3H); 7.12–7.24 (m, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ =140.5, 136.1, 133.2, 131.4, 131.0, 130.8, 130.3, 129.4, 129.1, 128.3, 127.8, 127.5, 127.3, 126.6. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) *Z* isomer: 416 (M⁺, 14.1), 259 (43.1), 179 (100.0), 77 (72.6); *E* isomer: 416 (M⁺, 17.1), 259 (45.1), 178 (100.0), 77 (64.1).

4.3.2. (*Z*)-2,3-Bis(phenylselanyl)prop-2-en-1-ol (**3b**).^{6c} Yield: 0.266 g (72%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.44–7.52 (m, 4H); 7.31 (s, 1H); 7.17–7.24 (m, 6H); 4.06 (s, 2H); 1.91 (br s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ =133.5, 133.1, 132.3, 132.0, 130.2, 129.4, 129.3,

128.5, 127.8, 127.5, 67.5. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 370 (M⁺, 17.1), 212 (19.2), 195 (27.2), 157 (43.8), 77 (100.0).

4.3.3. (*Z*)-2,3-Bis(4-chlorophenylselanyl)prop-2-ene-1-ol (**3c**).¹⁴ Yield: 0.258 g (59%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.43–7.52 (m, 4H), 7.34 (t, *J*=1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.24–7.31 (m, 4H), 4.15 (s, 2H), 1.87 (br s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ =134.5, 134.3, 133.9, 133.6, 133.5, 132.2, 129.6, 129.5, 128.2, 126.7, 67.5.

4.3.4. (*Z*)-2,3-Bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenylselanyl)prop-2-ene-1-ol (**3d**).²⁴ Yield: 0.409 g (90%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz) δ =6.93 (s, 2H), 6.91 (s, 2H), 6.68 (t, *J*=1.1 Hz, 1H), 3.73 (s, 2H), 2.51 (s, 6H), 2.48 (s, 6H), 2.26 (s, 3H), 2.25 (s, 3H), 1.67 (br s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz) δ =143.2, 142.6, 138.6, 138.5, 132.5, 128.7, 128.6, 128.1, 126.7, 125.4, 66.5, 24.4, 24.2, 20.9. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 452 (M⁺, 9.3), 223 (12.6), 198 (20.4), 119 (100.0).

4.3.5. (*Z*)-2-Methyl-3,4-bis(phenylselanyl)but-3-ene-2-ol (**3e**).¹⁴ Yield: 0.275 g (69%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.62 (s, 1H), 7.48–7.57 (m, 4H), 7.21–7.32 (m, 6H), 2.18 (br s, 1H), 1.45 (s, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ =139.0, 136.8, 133.2, 130.7, 130.3, 129.9, 129.3, 129.3, 127.7, 126.5, 75.8, 29.4. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 398 (M⁺, 13.0), 380 (10.3), 157 (50.0), 77 (100.0).

4.3.6. (*Z*)-3-Methyl-1,2-bis(phenylselanyl)pent-1-ene-3-ol (**3f**). Yield: 0.255 g (62%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.57 (s, 1H), 7.49–7.58 (m, 4H), 7.18–7.32 (m, 6H), 2.08 (br s, 1H), 1.60–1.83 (m, 2H), 1.39 (s, 3H), 0.85 (t, *J*=7.5 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz) δ =138.1, 137.2, 133.1, 130.8, 130.3, 130.2, 129.3, 129.2, 127.7, 126.6, 78.4, 34.2, 26.4, 8.4. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 412 (M⁺, 7.7), 182 (10.7), 157 (42.4), 77 (74.4), 43 (100.0). HRMS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C₁₈H₂₀OSe₂ [M+Na]⁺: 434.9742; found: 434.9739.

4.3.7. (*Z*)-1-[1,2-Bis(phenylselanyl)vinyl]cyclohexanol (**3g**).^{6c} Yield: 0.355 g (81%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.63 (s, 1H), 7.53–7.56 (m, 2H); 7.47–7.51 (m, 2H), 7.17–7.32 (m, 6H), 1.86 (br s, 1H), 1.51–1.76 (m, 10H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ =140.0, 137.2, 133.2, 130.9, 130.5, 129.8, 129.3, 129.2, 127.7, 126.4, 76.3, 36.7, 25.4, 22.0. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 438 (M⁺, 5.4), 263 (13.5), 182 (49.4), 157 (34.7), 77 (100.0).

4.3.8. (*Z*)-1,2-Bis(phenylselanyl)hex-1-ene (**3h**).²⁴ Yield: 0.127 g (32%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz) δ =7.51–7.57 (m, 4H), 7.25–7.32 (m, 6H), 6.93 (s, 1H), 2.28 (t, *J*=7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.47 (qui, *J*=7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.23 (sex, *J*=7.2 Hz, 2H), 0.82 (t, *J*=7.2 Hz, 3H). MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 396 (M⁺, 17.0), 239 (14.0), 183 (48.4), 157 (41.8), 81 (100.0).

4.4. General procedure for the preparation of compounds 3a–h through Method B

In a 10 mL glass vial equipped with a small magnetic stirring bar, containing a solution of terminal alkyne **1** (1 mmol) and diaryl diselenide **2** (1 mmol) in PEG-400 (2.0 mL) under N₂ atmosphere, KF/Al₂O₃ 50% (0.08 g) was added at room temperature. The mixture was then irradiated in a focused microwaves reactor (CEM) at 90 °C, using an irradiation power of 50 W and pressure of 50 psi. After stirring for 30 min (Table 2), the products were isolated as described above on Method A.

Reuse: After stirring for 30 min under MW as described above, the reaction mixture was washed with a mixture of hexane/ethyl acetate (90:10; 5×1 mL) and the upper organic phase was separated from KF/Al₂O₃/PEG-400. The product was isolated according procedure above. The mixture KF/Al₂O₃/PEG-400 was dried under vacuum and reused for further reactions.

4.5. General procedure for the preparation of chalcogeno alkynes **4b** and **6**

Method A: To a mixture of phenylacetylene **1a** (1 mmol) and diaryl dichalcogenide (1 mmol) in PEG-400 (2.0 mL) under N₂ atmosphere, KF/Al₂O₃ 50% (0.08 g) was added at room temperature. Then, the mixture was heated slowly to 90 °C and the reaction progress was followed by TLC. After stirring for 6 h the products were isolated as described above, for **3**. **Method B:** The mixture was irradiated in a focused microwaves reactor (CEM) at 90 °C, using an irradiation power of 50 W and pressure of 50 psi. After stirring for 30 min, the products were isolated as described above. Spectral data of the products prepared are listed below.

4.5.1. 1-Mesitylselanyl-2-phenylethyne (4b).²⁵ Yield: 0.216 g (72%); yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.35–7.37 (m, 2H), 7.24–7.26 (m, 3H), 6.95 (s, 2H), 2.62 (s, 6H), 2.27 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (125 MHz) δ =142.2, 139.1, 131.5, 129.0, 128.1, 128.0, 125.6, 123.6, 97.3, 71.3, 24.1, 20.9. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 300 (M⁺, 3.4), 219 (100.0), 77 (8.4).

4.5.2. 1-Phenyltellanyl-2-phenylethyne (6).²⁶ Yield: 0.234 g (76%); dark yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ =7.67–7.75 (m, 2H), 7.43–7.48 (m, 2H), 7.24–7.35 (m, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ =137.9, 135.1, 131.9, 129.7, 128.6, 128.2, 127.9, 123.3, 113.1, 47.4. MS *m/z* (rel int., %) 308 (M⁺, 4.7), 207 (12.4), 178 (100.0), 77 (23.8).

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