

Published in final edited form as:

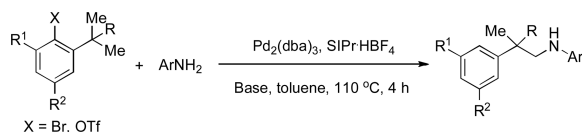
*Angew Chem Int Ed Engl.* 2011 September 5; 50(37): 8647–8651. doi:10.1002/anie.201102880.

## Pd(0)-Catalyzed Intermolecular Amination of Unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H Bonds\*\*

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### Abstract

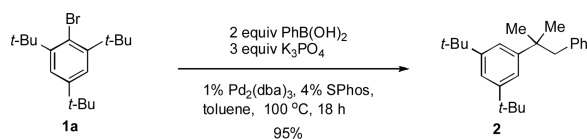


The Pd(0)-catalyzed intermolecular C–H amination of unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H bonds using aryl amines as the nitrogen source is disclosed. Either the C–N cross-coupling product or the C–H amination product could be accessed selectively by adjusting the steric environment of the substrate.

### Keywords

 C–H amination; unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H bonds; palladium; catalysis

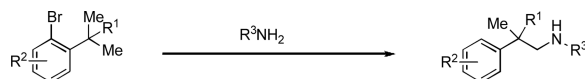
Nitrogen-containing compounds are ubiquitous among biologically active molecules.<sup>[1]</sup> Consequently, the development of efficient methods to form carbon-nitrogen bonds is of great importance. From a synthetic standpoint, a strategy involving transition metal-catalyzed C–H bond activation followed by C–N bond formation represents an extremely attractive approach for installing nitrogen functional groups.<sup>[2]</sup> In fact, great achievements have been made based on amination of C(sp<sup>2</sup>)-H bonds,<sup>[3]</sup> as well as activated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H bonds.<sup>[3h, 4]</sup> However, the activation of a simple C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H bond followed by C–N bond formation remains a challenge, especially in an intermolecular fashion.<sup>[5]</sup> To the best of our knowledge, the intermolecular C–H amination of unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H bonds has only been reported using *in situ*-generated, highly reactive nitrene intermediates.<sup>[6]</sup> Thus, the development of complementary methods is strongly desired. Herein, we report on the Pd(0)-catalyzed intermolecular C–H amination of unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H bonds using aryl amines as the nitrogen source.



\*\* Generous financial support from the National Institutes of Health (GM-46059) is gratefully acknowledged. The Bruker 400 MHz instrument used in this work was purchased with funding from the National Institutes of Health (GM 1S10RR13886-01). We are grateful to Georgiy Teverovskiy (MIT) for initial studies on DFT calculations and to Sophie Rousseaux (MIT) for helpful discussions. Fax: (+1) 617-253-3297, sbuchwal@mit.edu.

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During our investigation of Suzuki-Miyaura cross-coupling processes,<sup>[7]</sup> we disclosed that the reaction of 1-bromo-2,4,6-tri-*tert*-butylbenzene (**1a**) with phenylboronic acid produced the  $\alpha,\alpha$ -dimethyl- $\beta$ -phenyl hydrostyrene, **2**, in 95% yield, instead of the desired biaryl [Eq. (1)]. This transformation likely proceeds *via* a pathway involving a tandem C–H activation/Suzuki-Miyaura cross-coupling reaction. On the basis of these results, we postulated that a related transformation involving an intermolecular tandem C(sp<sup>3</sup>)–H activation/C–N coupling might be feasible [Eq. (2)].



(2)

Our study commenced by examining the C–H amination of **1a** to afford the corresponding *N*-(2-methyl-2-phenylpropyl)aniline, **3a**, using Pd catalysts based on different ligands. While the biarylphosphane ligands developed in our laboratory led to catalysts that exhibited modest activities (Table 1, entries 1 to 7),<sup>[8]</sup> an examination of alternative ligand classes revealed that the utilization of a *N*-heterocyclic carbene ligand (SIPr-HBF<sub>4</sub>) provided a significantly improved reaction efficiency to afford **3a** in 80% yield (Table 1, entry 13).<sup>[9]</sup> Further optimization of the solvent system led to an 83% isolated yield of **3a** (Table 1, entry 14).

With optimized conditions in hand, we then evaluated the scope of the C–H amination of **1a** with respect to the aryl amine component (Table 2). Both electron-rich and electron-deficient anilines gave the expected products in good to excellent yield (**3a–3f**), as well as anilines containing an *ortho* alkyl substituent (**3e**). We were pleased to find that heteroaryl amines such as 3-aminopyridine and 3-aminoquinoline also provided the corresponding products in good yields (**3g, 3h**). Unfortunately, *N*-substituted anilines and alkyl amines do not work under current reaction conditions. It is worth noting that, for reactions of **1a** with aryl amines, no diaryl amines were observed despite the fact that SIPr-HBF<sub>4</sub> is an efficient ligand for Pd-catalyzed C–N cross-coupling reactions.<sup>[10]</sup> We reasoned that this was likely due to the steric effects of the two *ortho tert*-butyl groups of **1a**.

We next examined the reactivity of less sterically hindered substrates (Table 3). The reaction of **4a** with aniline produced the diaryl amine **4b** as the sole product (Table 3, entry 1). It is likely that the *ortho* methyl group does not possess the steric bulk necessary to suppress the direct C–N cross-coupling. Replacing the methyl group with a bulkier isopropyl, cyclopentyl or cyclohexyl group led to a complete suppression of the C–N cross-coupling pathway, affording the desired C–H amination products exclusively in 75–81% yields (Table 3, entries 2–4). No C–H amination of the isopropyl, cyclopentyl or cyclohexyl group was observed, indicating the amination is highly selective for only the methyl groups of the *tert*-butyl group. The steric influence on the outcome of this reaction could be further illustrated when using the diol-protected benzaldehyde substrates **8a, 9a** and **10a**. In the reaction of ethylene glycol-protected substrate **8a** with aniline, only the direct C–N cross-coupling product **8b** was observed (Table 3, entry 5). However, using a more sterically hindered pinacol-protecting group led to the formation of a 1:1 ratio of the C–N cross-coupling product **9b** and the C–H amination product **9c** (Table 3, entry 6). A further increase in size of the diol-protecting group resulted in exclusive formation of the C–H amination product **10b** (Table 3, entry 7). Thus, a simple switch of diol from ethylene glycol to 2,4-dimethyl-2,4-pentanediol allows access to both the C–N cross-coupling product and the C–H amination product selectively. In addition, substrate **11a** bearing an *ortho* OTIPS group underwent the C–H amination smoothly giving the desired product **11b** in 80% yield (Table

3, entry 8). It should be noted that the reaction was not restricted to aryl bromide substrates. Starting from aryl triflate **12a**, the corresponding C–H amination product **12b** was also produced in good yield when LiO<sup>t</sup>Bu was employed as base instead of NaO<sup>t</sup>Bu (Table 3, entry 9). C–H amination of the TMS group was not observed. Employing **13a** under the optimized reaction conditions provided the desired product **13b** along with the olefin product **13c** (Table 3, entry 10). By-product **13c** possibly arose from the C–H activation of the ethyl group followed by  $\beta$ -H elimination.<sup>[11]</sup> Interestingly, the *tert*-amyl group in the *para* position plays a crucial role in producing the desired product, as **14a** failed to yield any C–H amination product under the same reaction conditions. Instead, a mixture of olefin **14b** and benzocyclobutene **14c**<sup>[12]</sup> was obtained in a ratio of 1:1.4 and in an 81% combined yield (Scheme 1). It is worth noting that the reactive benzylic and ethereal hydrogens are tolerated in the reaction (Table 3, entries 1 to 7). Therefore, it provides an orthogonal approach to the existing nitrene methods.<sup>[2]</sup>

Based on the results described above, we propose a reaction mechanism as shown in Scheme 2. The oxidative addition of Pd<sup>0</sup> to aryl bromide **15** gives intermediate **16**, which would undergo C–H activation of one of the C(sp<sup>3</sup>)–H bonds to form palladacycle **17**. Protonation of the C(sp<sup>2</sup>)–Pd bond of **17** affords the alkyl Pd<sup>II</sup> species **18**, which then undergoes transmetalation with aniline to give **19**. Finally, reductive elimination occurs to yield the product **20** with concomitant regeneration of LPd(0). A sterically hindered R<sup>1</sup> group helps to suppress the direct C–N cross-coupling (side reaction **A**), as well as the benzocyclobutene formation (side reaction **B**).<sup>[12]</sup> Therefore, it diminishes the formation of undesired by-products **21** and **22**. In addition, as suggested by the results of the reaction of **14a** with aniline, a bulky R<sup>2</sup> group seems critical to minimize the formation of by-product **24** that most likely arises from the intramolecular C(sp<sup>2</sup>)–H activation of **18** followed by reductive elimination (side reaction **C**).<sup>[12]</sup>

To gain additional insight into the steric influence of the substrates **8a**, **9a**, and **10a** on direct C–N cross-coupling vs. C–H amination, we performed a computational study at the density functional theory (DFT) level with the hybrid functionals B3LYP.<sup>[13]</sup> The oxidative addition intermediates of **8a**, **9a** and **10a** were evaluated (Table 4). The intermediates (**OA1a**, **OA2a** and **OA3a**) with the carbene ligand *trans* to the aromatic ring are found to be more stable. The calculated distances between the Pd<sup>II</sup> atom and the C–H  $\sigma$  bond of the *tert*-butyl group and the bond angles, Pd–C1–C2, are listed in Table 4. It is worth noting that the distance decreases as the size of diol-protecting group increases; the Pd is being “pushed” toward the *tert*-butyl group as indicated by the decrease in the bond angle. In addition, the calculated distances are consistent with a three-center two-electron, agostic interaction between the Pd<sup>II</sup> atom and the C–H  $\sigma$  bond in **OA2a** and **OA3a**.<sup>[12, 14]</sup> As recently demonstrated,<sup>[14c, 15]</sup> an agostic interaction increases the acidity of the C–H bond that is geminal to the agostic C–H bond. This is supported by the computed natural atomic charges. For **OA3a**, the agostic hydrogen atom has a less positive charge (+0.203) than either of the geminal hydrogen atoms (+0.227 and +0.225). Similar results were found for **OA2a** (agostic H: +0.150; geminal H: +0.209, 0.211). The shorter distance in **OA3a** suggests that the agostic interaction is likely stronger than that in **OA2a**. This stronger agostic interaction in **OA3** confers a more acidic character on the geminal hydrogen atom to be deprotonated. Consequently, the tendency for the subsequent C–H activation rises from **OA1a** to **OA3a** (**OA1a** < **OA2a** < **OA3a**), which is indeed consistent with our experimental observations.

In summary, we have developed a conceptually novel Pd(0)-catalyzed intermolecular C–H amination of unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)–H bonds using aryl amines as the nitrogen source. We have also demonstrated a selective access to both the C–N cross-coupling product and the C–H amination product by adjusting the steric environment of the substrate. To the best of our knowledge, this reaction is the first intermolecular unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)–H bond activation/C–

N bond-forming process that does not involve nitrenes. Further investigations to increase the generality of this process and to better understand its mechanism are currently underway in our laboratory.

## Experimental Section

Typical procedure: In a nitrogen-filled glovebox, to an oven-dried test tube containing a magnetic stir bar, was added aryl bromide (1.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv), Pd<sub>2</sub>(dba)<sub>3</sub> (46 mg, 5 mol %), SIPr-HBF<sub>4</sub> (53 mg, 11 mol %), NaOtBu (144 mg, 1.5 mmol, 1.5 equiv), aryl amine (1.2 mmol, 1.2 equiv) and toluene (10 mL). The test tube was sealed with a Teflon-lined septum, removed from the glovebox, and heated at 110 °C in a pre-heated oil bath for 4 h. After the reaction was complete, the reaction mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature, filtered through a plug of silica gel and eluted with diethyl ether. The filtrate was concentrated in vacuo and the crude product was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel.

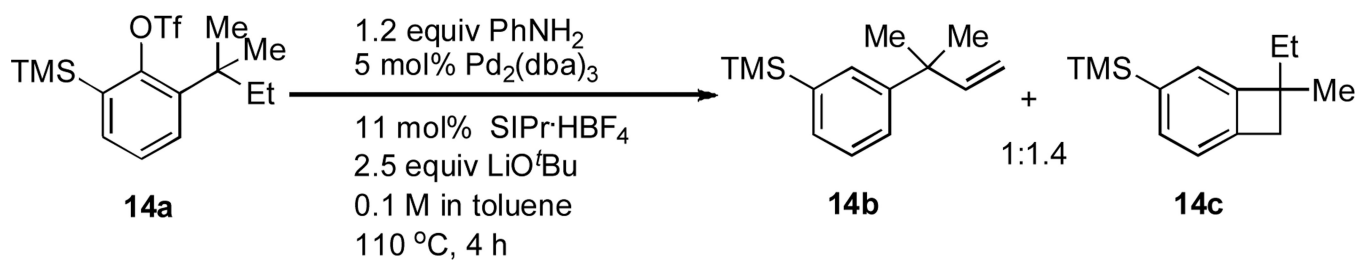
## Supplementary Material

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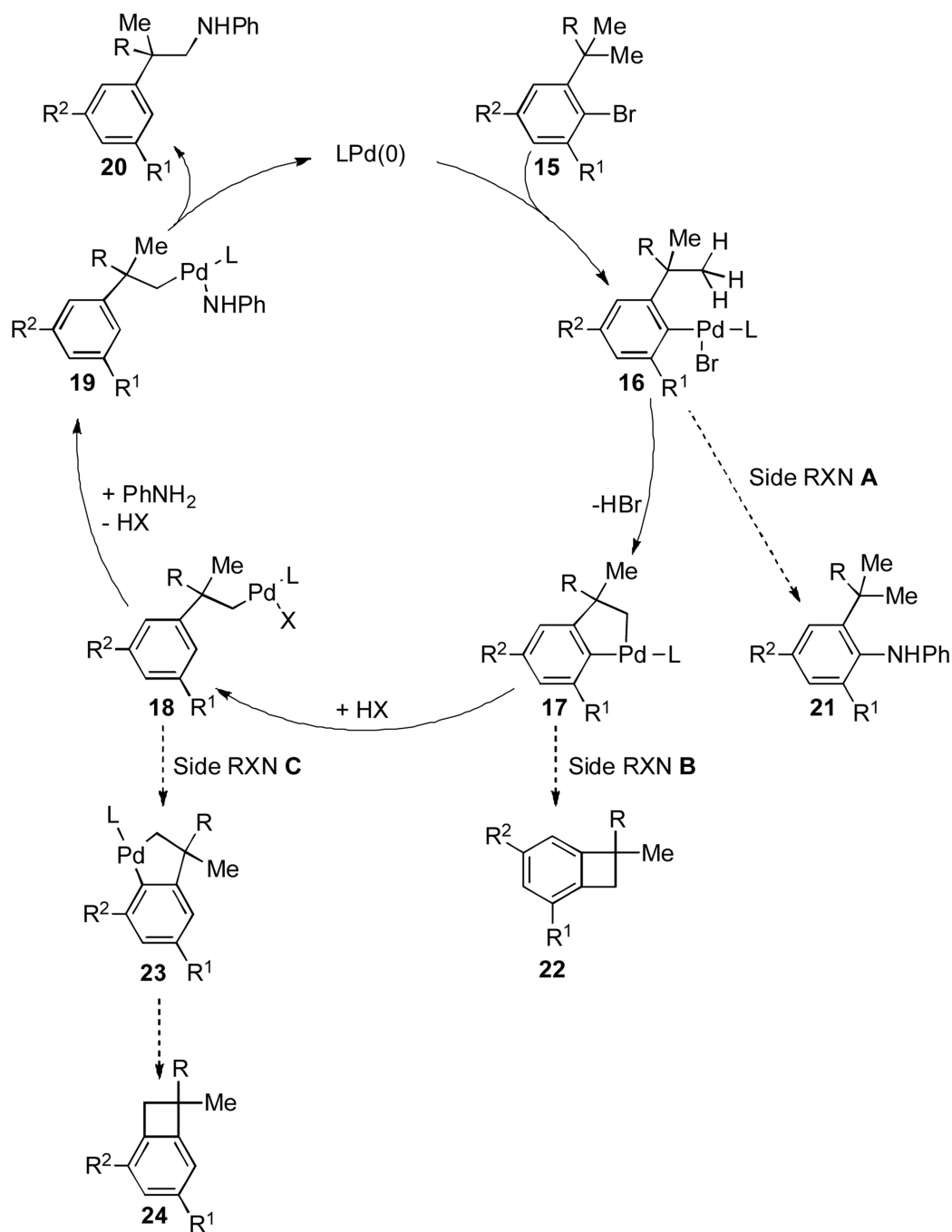
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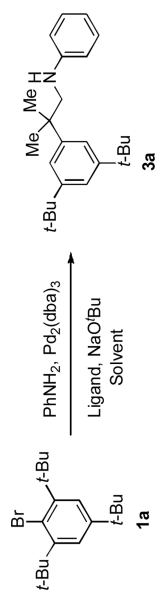


**Scheme 1.**  
Reaction of **14a** with aniline.



**Scheme 2.**  
Proposed mechanism of the tandem C-H activation/C-N cross-coupling.

Table 1

Ligand Evaluation.<sup>[a], [b]</sup>

Entry	Ligand	Yield [%] <sup>[c]</sup>	Entry	Ligand	Yield [%] <sup>[c]</sup>
1	XPhos	30	8 <sup>[c]</sup>	PCy <sub>3</sub> -HBF <sub>4</sub>	0
2	SPhos	23	9 <sup>[c]</sup>	P <sup>t</sup> Bu <sub>3</sub> -HBF <sub>4</sub>	59
3	RuPhos	32	10 <sup>[c]</sup>	IMes-HCl	0
4	DavePhos	7	11 <sup>[c]</sup>	IPr-HCl	30 <sup>[f]</sup>
5	CPhos	23	12 <sup>[c]</sup>	SIPr-HCl	72
6	BrettPhos	0	13 <sup>[c]</sup>	SIPr-HBF <sub>4</sub>	86 (80)
7	Cy-JohnPhos	0	14 <sup>[d]</sup>	SIPr-HBF <sub>4</sub>	88 (83)

XPhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=H, R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=R<sup>5</sup>=Pr

SPhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=H, R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>5</sup>=OMe

RuPhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=H, R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>5</sup>=O<sup>t</sup>Pr

DavePhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=H, R<sup>5</sup>=NMe<sub>2</sub>

CPhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=H, R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>5</sup>=NMe<sub>2</sub>

BrettPhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=OMe, R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=R<sup>5</sup>=Pr

Cy-JohnPhos: R<sup>1</sup>=R<sup>2</sup>=R<sup>3</sup>=R<sup>4</sup>=R<sup>5</sup>=H

IMes-HCl: R=R=Me

IPr-HCl: R=Pr, R'=H

SIPr-HCl: X=Cl

SIPr-HBF<sub>4</sub>: X=BF<sub>4</sub>

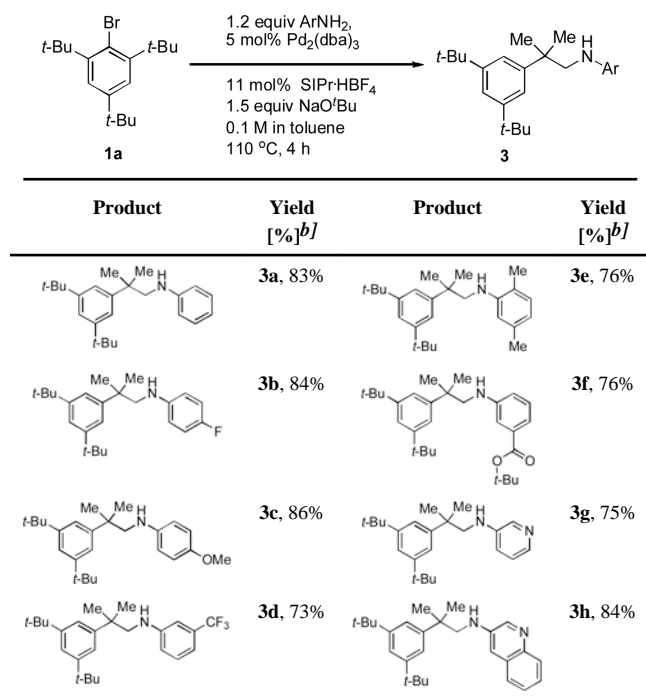
<sup>[a]</sup>Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.5 mmol), PhNH<sub>2</sub> (0.6 mmol), NaO<sup>t</sup>Bu (0.75 mmol), Pd<sub>2</sub>(dba)<sub>3</sub> (5 mol %), ligand (20 mol %), dioxane (5 mL), 120 °C, 40 h.<sup>[b]</sup>The reaction reached 100 % conversion, unless otherwise noted. The mass balance consists of product, reduced starting material and benzocyclobutene byproduct.<sup>[c]</sup>Reaction was run at 110 °C for 12 h.<sup>[d]</sup>Reaction was performed in toluene with 11 mol % ligand at 110 °C for 4 h.



<sup>(e)</sup> Determined by GC, with dodecane as an internal standard. Yield of isolated **3a** (1 mmol scale reaction) in parentheses.

<sup>(f)</sup> The reaction reached 58 % conversion.

Table 2

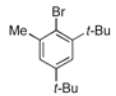
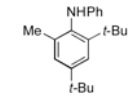
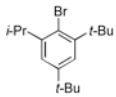
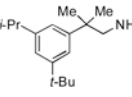
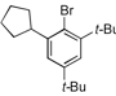
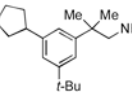
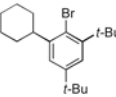
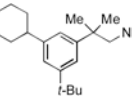
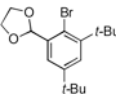
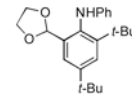
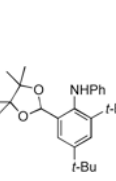
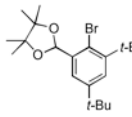
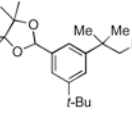
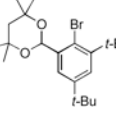
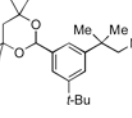
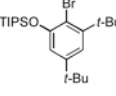
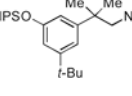
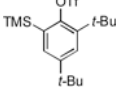
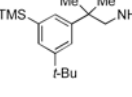
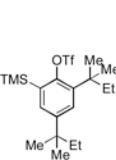
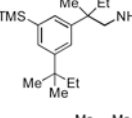
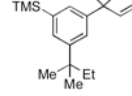
C–H Amination of **1a** with Aryl Amines.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup> Reaction conditions: **1a** (1.0 mmol), ArNH<sub>2</sub> (1.2 mmol), NaO<sup>t</sup>Bu (1.5 mmol), Pd<sub>2</sub>(dba)<sub>3</sub> (5 mol %), SIPr-HBF<sub>4</sub> (11 mol %), toluene (10 mL), 110 °C, 4 h.

<sup>[b]</sup> Isolated yield based on an average of two runs.

Table 3

Amination of Unactivated C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-H Bonds with Aniline.<sup>[a]</sup>

Entry	Substrate	Product	Yield [%] <sup>[b]</sup>
1			<b>4b</b> , 94%
2			<b>5b</b> , 75%
3			<b>6b</b> , 77%
4			<b>7b</b> , 81%
5			<b>8b</b> , 82%
6			<b>9b</b> , 40%
			<b>9c</b> , 41%
7			<b>10b</b> , 70%
8			<b>11b</b> , 80%
9 <sup>[c]</sup>			<b>12b</b> , 70%
10 <sup>[c]</sup>			<b>13b</b> , 37%
			<b>13c</b> , 35%

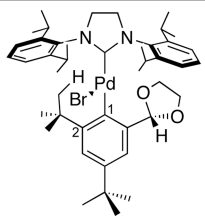
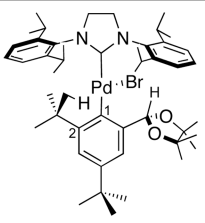
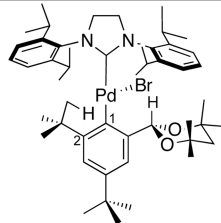
<sup>[a]</sup> Reaction conditions: substrate (1.0 mmol), PhNH<sub>2</sub> (1.2 mmol), NaO<sup>t</sup>Bu (1.5 mmol), Pd<sub>2</sub>(dba)<sub>3</sub> (5 mol %), SiPr-HBF<sub>4</sub> (11 mol %), toluene (10 mL), 110 °C, 4 h.

<sup>[b]</sup> Isolated yield based on an average of two runs.

$^6\text{LiO}^t\text{Bu}$  (2.5 mmol) was used.

**Table 4**

DFT Calculations of the Oxidative Addition Intermediates

	 <b>OA1a</b>	 <b>OA2a</b>	 <b>OA3a</b>
Pd---C H (Å)	2.962	2.480	2.277
Pd-C1-C2 (°)	134.7	119.4	116.9