

For immediate release

Tang Museum Announces Publication of *Culture as Catalyst*

New book brings campus conversations on urgent issues to new audiences

*Whiteness, migration, mass incarceration, feminism, and monuments
among topics addressed by artists, scholars, and activists*

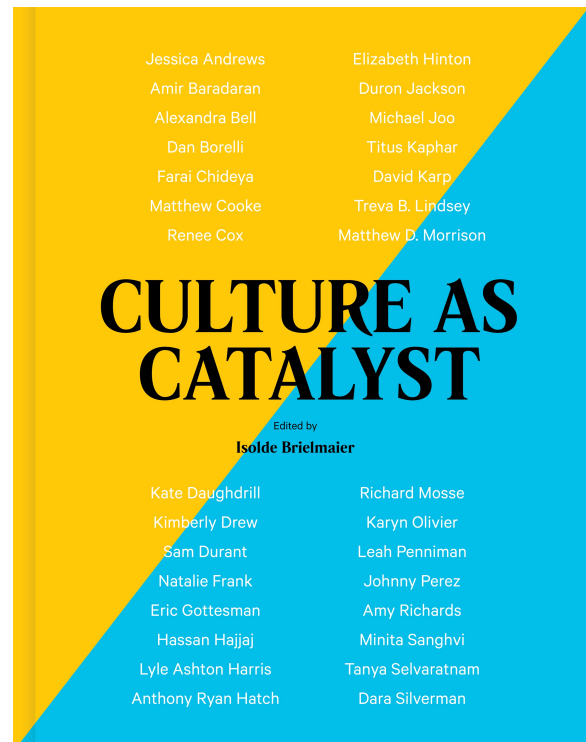
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY (January 19, 2021)
— The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College announces a new publication on the most urgent issues of the day. *Culture as Catalyst* is a collection of compelling dialogues and new writings by artists, scholars, activists, and influential thinkers who present new perspectives that disrupt the status quo by encouraging a “getting comfortable with discomfort” attitude to work through big ideas to drive change.

Edited by Isolde Brielmaier, the first Curator at Large at the Tang Teaching Museum, *Culture as Catalyst* accompanies the 2017–2019 Accelerator Series of public conversations she organized at the Museum to shed new light on the topics of whiteness, migration, mass incarceration, feminism, monuments, citizenship, cultural appropriation, forgiveness, and food justice.

These dialogues were part of a three-year project called Accelerate: Access & Inclusion at The Tang Teaching Museum, which was supported in part by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

“The topics of our conversations and in the book are ones that dominate our economic, political, and, above all, social psyche—beginning with whiteness and ‘default culture’ and ending with food justice,” Brielmaier said. “Our goal is to forge a way forward, often through complex historical and contemporary terrain. And especially to urge each of us, honestly and openly, to do the difficult work of interrogating how we see and interact with those around us.”

“We are incredibly thankful for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which supported our three-year Accelerate: Access and Inclusion at the Tang Teaching Museum project, which included the Accelerator Series,” said Dayton Director Ian Berry. “The project’s impact continues to reverberate through *Culture as Catalyst*, which is a vital component of Skidmore’s new Racial



Justice Initiative, the College's highest strategic priority, and will be a prominent part of numerous Skidmore course syllabi and public events in the coming semesters."

Culture as Catalyst gathers the ideas of innovative thinkers who remind us of the power of civil discourse and how genuine listening, critical thinking, and honest speaking are key to building empathy and knowledge. The book continues their conversations and acts a catalyst to find diverse ways to make new connections, to craft pathways to understanding, and to spark radical transformations.

In that spirit, a series of public programs and online initiatives offer multiple opportunities for new dialogue:

- *Culture as Catalyst* at ICP: The International Center of Photography celebrates the publication of the book with an online dialogue with Isolde Brielmaier and two contributors: *Our Body Politic* radio show host and author Farai Chideya who is in the chapter "Technology, Visual Culture, and the Politics of Representation"; and producer and writer Tanya Selvaratnam, who is in the chapter "Migration and Borders: Visible and Invisible Walls." The talk, which is free and open to the public, will be online on Thursday, January 21, at 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit <https://www.icp.org/events>.
- *Culture as Catalyst* at NYU: The Institute of African American Affairs and Center for Black Visual Culture at New York University celebrates the publication of the book with an online dialogue with Isolde Brielmaier and two contributors: photographer and mixed-media artist Renee Cox, in the chapter "Culture Now: Appreciate / Appropriate"; and multidisciplinary artist Duron Jackson, in the chapter "Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex." The talk, which is free and open to the public, will be online on Thursday, February 4, with the time to be announced later. For updates and more information, visit <https://nyuiaaa.org>.
- *Culture as Catalyst* online: Beginning January 21, and continuing every other Thursday through May 27, the Tang Teaching Museum will launch a video trailer on social media for each chapter of the book and make that chapter available as a downloadable PDF on the Museum's website at <http://tang.skidmore.edu>. The release schedule is:
 - January 21: Introduction and Chapter 1: "Whiteness and 'Default Culture'"
 - February 4: Chapter 2: "Migration and Borders: Visible and Invisible Walls"
 - February 18: Chapter 3: "Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex"
 - March 4: Chapter 4: "Technology, Visual Culture, and the Politics of Representation"
 - March 18: Chapter 5: "#feminism?: Activism and Agitation in the Digital Age"
 - April 1: Chapter 6: "Memory and Monuments: (Re)Claiming Public Space"
 - April 15: Chapter 7: "Get Up, Stand Up: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship"
 - April 29: Chapter 8: "Culture Now: Appreciate / Appropriate"
 - May 13: Chapter 9: "On Navigating Forgiveness, Redemption, and Rejection"
 - May 27: Chapter 10: "Food Futures: Food Justice, Sustainability, and Well-Being"

The contributors to *Culture as Catalyst* include Jessica Andrews, Amir Baradaran, Alexandra Bell, Dan Borelli, Farai Chideya, Matthew Cooke, Renee Cox, Kate Daughdrill, Kimberly Drew, Sam Durant, Natalie Frank, Eric Gottesman, Hassan Hajjaj, Lyle Ashton Harris, Anthony Ryan Hatch, Elizabeth Hinton, Michael Joo, Titus Kaphar, David Karp, Treva B. Lindsey, Matthew D. Morrison, Richard Mosse, Karyn Olivier, Leah Penniman, Johnny Perez, Amy Richards, Minita Sanghvi, and Dara Silverman.

Culture as Catalyst (276 pages; \$30) is edited by Isolde Brielmaier, designed by Beverly Joel / pulp, ink., and includes an introduction by Brielmaier and a welcome by Ian Berry, Dayton Director of the Tang Teaching Museum. It is now available from the Tang website at <https://tang.skidmore.edu/shop>.

Culture as Catalyst is the latest Tang publication and joins a program that has been recognized with numerous national awards, including from the American Alliance for Museums, for exhibition catalogues of artists such as Nancy Grossman, Fred Tomaselli, and Kara Walker, as well as for two of the three volumes of *Accelerate: Access & Inclusion at The Tang Teaching Museum*, annual journals that documented each year of the three-year Accelerate project.

About Isolde Brielmaier

Isolde Brielmaier was the Tang Teaching Museum's Curator-at-Large from 2016 to 2019, when she developed and moderated the Accelerator Series, a conversation series on big ideas and big issues. Currently, she is Curator-at-Large at the International Center of Photography and Assistant Professor of Critical Studies in the Department of Photography, Imaging and Emerging Media at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Her practice areas include contemporary art, global visual culture, and examining media and immersive technology as platforms within which to rethink storytelling and the politics of representation. Brielmaier is the former Executive Director and Curator of Arts and Culture at the Oculus at Westfield World Trade Center and continues to advise on cultural strategy for a range of organizations. She has written extensively on contemporary art and culture and has received fellowships from the Mellon and Ford Foundations as well as the Social Science Research Council. She serves on the board of trustees of the New Museum and on the board of the Women's Prison Association.

About the Tang Teaching Museum

The Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College is a pioneer of interdisciplinary exploration and learning. A cultural anchor of New York's Capital Region, the Tang's approach has become a model for university art museums across the country—with exhibition programs that bring together visual and performing arts with interdisciplinary ideas from history, economics, biology, dance, and physics to name just a few. The Tang has one of the most rigorous faculty-engagement initiatives in the nation, and a robust publication and touring exhibition program that extends the museum's reach far beyond its walls. The Tang Teaching Museum's award-winning building, designed by architect Antoine Predock, serves as a visual metaphor for the convergence of art and ideas. The Tang building is closed to the public, due to the coronavirus, but is open online. For updates, please visit <http://tang.skidmore.edu>.