

***New Exhibition Affinity Atlas Opens
at Tang Teaching Museum***

***Museum Continues 15th Anniversary Year with Experimental Display
of its Collection and International Artists***

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY (Sept. 15, 2015) — The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College announces the opening of a major exhibition, *Affinity Atlas*, which continues the museum's celebration of its 15th anniversary.

The exhibition, which opened on September 5 and will be on view through January 3, 2016, greets visitors with a cabinet of curiosities-like display of work spanning history and geography. Idiosyncratic treasures from the Tang Teaching Museum collection, together with recent works by contemporary artists, chart an exploratory path across disciplines.

Objects such as African pottery and Southwestern textiles are interspersed with contemporary ceramics, painting, sculpture, photography, and video by artists including Nick Cave, Michelle Grabner, Camille Henrot, Hew Locke, Vik Muniz, Toshiko Takaezu, Sara VanDerBeek, and Fred Wilson. Artworks, images, and objects spanning centuries and continents collide and coalesce in *Affinity Atlas*, forging fresh connections and revealing unexpected affinities through inventive visual juxtapositions.

"*Affinity Atlas* invites viewers to explore connections among works created across time and in different contexts," said Ian Berry, Dayton Director of the Tang Teaching Museum and exhibition curator. "This type of exploration — challenging accepted ideas and revealing new meanings, as one would experiment in a laboratory — is a driving force of everything we do at the Tang."

The exhibition draws inspiration from the pioneering cultural theorist and art historian Aby Warburg's final work, the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. From 1925 until the year of his death in 1929, Warburg theorized about a collective psychology that connects humans across time and space. Forgoing the customary art historical narrative, Warburg instead chose to express his scholarly research through a constellation of some 2,000 images — a visual compendium of his life's research. Warburg named his "picture atlas" after Mnemosyne, the mother of nine Muses and the

Greek goddess of the art of remembrance. At the heart of Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* lay an imaginative view of scholarly research that ushered in a new era in the study of images, and offered an innovative approach to visual knowledge.

Affinity Atlas will present work by artists who create their own "picture atlases" in a single work. Hew Locke's monumental wall hanging *Chariots of the Gods*, for example, draws on Locke's memories of London's Museum of Mankind, which from 1970 to 1997 displayed changing exhibitions from the British Museum's Department of Ethnography. The piece incorporates key images from the Museum, including the famous Moai figure from Easter Island known as Hoa Hakananai'a, along with Benin bronzes, Buddhist masks, Inca mummies, and Aztec serpents.

Other contemporary artists featured in the exhibition include: Bale Creek Allen, Ilit Azoulay, Sebastiaan Bremer, Brian Bress, Nicole Cherubini, David Diao, Michelle Grabner and Brad Killam, Camille Henrot, Charles Long, John McQueen, Joanna Milanowska, Vik Muniz, Michael Oatman, Richard Pettibone, Allison Schulnik, Toshiko Takaezu, Lenore Tawney, Paul Thek, Ken Tisa, Sara VanDerBeek, William Villalongo, and Fred Wilson, among others.

The show will also include works curated by a roster of Skidmore faculty. Former participants in the Tang's Mellon Faculty Seminar were invited to propose a selection of objects that represent their discipline or personal interest, and to write a label explaining their choices. The works selected are installed on a rotating basis on a special shelf within the exhibition. Faculty were asked to consider the following questions: What story would you like to tell? How do your chosen objects allow you to tell it? And, what does it mean to tell a story with only the space of a single shelf? Using these parameters the faculty members created personal cabinets of curiosity, or wunderkammer, which will be presented over the course of the exhibition.

Affinity Atlas is organized by Dayton Director Ian Berry and is supported by the Friends of the Tang.

ABOUT THE TANG TEACHING MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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 institution's approach has become a model for university art museums across the country —with exhibition programs and series that bring together the visual and performing arts with fields of study as disparate as history, astronomy, and physics; one of the most rigorous faculty-engagement initiatives in the nation, the Mellon Seminar; and robust publication and touring exhibition initiatives that extend the institution's reach far beyond its walls. The Tang Teaching Museum's building, designed by architect Antoine Predock, serves as a visual metaphor for the convergence of ideas and exchange the institution catalyzes. More information at <http://tang.skidmore.edu>.

Facebook/TangMuseum

Twitter/@TangMuseum

Instagram/TangTeachingMuseum