## **Supplementary Figures**



**Supplementary Figure 1. Force free reactivity of DCTCU.** Free energy diagram for isomerization of DCTCU in the absence of force at the uMPW1K/6- 311+G(d) level in toluene-parameterized CPCM model of the reaction solvent. The minimum-energy path (black) has the apparent activation free energy 1.6 and 1.9 kcal/mol lower than the alternatives (blue and red, respectively) under standard conditions. We were unable to locate a transition state corresponding to the dissociation of the inner scissile C-C bond of the cyclobutane moiety in DCTCU.



**Supplementary Figure 2. Free energies of the** *EE***,** *EZ* **and** *ZZ* **conformers of TS2f**. Energies calculated as a function of applied force. The *EE* conformer dominates at < 0.13 nN and the *EZ* analog dominates at higher force.



**Supplementary Figure 3. NMR spectra of the synthetic intermediates and final products.**





**Supplementary Figure 3 (cont'd). NMR spectra of the synthetic intermediates and final products.**



Book11-48\_epaxy-CB-gDCC\_dried<br>Std proton



**Supplementary Figure 3 (cont'd). NMR spectra of the synthetic intermediates and final products.**



**Supplementary Figure 3 (cont'd). NMR spectra of the synthetic intermediates and final products.**



**Supplementary Figure 4. Complete force curves of 6\_1 (12% DCTCU).**



**Supplementary Figure 5. Complete force curves of 6\_2 (23% DCTCU).**



**Supplementary Figure 6. Sonication of 6\_3 (47% DCTCU).** <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra obtained after sonicating polymer **6\_3** for 4 min, 8 min, 15 min and 30 min, respectively. The peaks at 6.9 ppm and 6.2 ppm correspond to the *β*-H of the *E*-alkene and *Z*-alkene of the unsaturated esters, respectively; the peak at 5.8 ppm corresponds to the *α*-H of both *E*-alkene and *Z*-alkene of the unsaturated ester as well as the alkene-H of the 2,3-dichloroalkene; the peak at 4.5 ppm corresponds to the allylic-H of the 2,3-dichloroalkene. Integration of the peaks shows that 1) during sonication, the content of *E*-alkene ester is identical to that the *Z*-alkene ester; 2) the content of 2,3-dichloroalkene is identical to that of either *E*- or *Z*- alkene ester. The ring opening fraction for *cis*-*g*DCC is therefore identical to that of cyclobutane.



**Supplementary Figure 7. Sonication of 8 (53%** *cis***-***g***DCC on the backbone, 47% DCTCU).** <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra obtained after sonicating polymer **8** for 4 min, 8 min, 15 min and 30 min, respectively. The corresponding ring opening percentages were calculated based on the integrations and shown on the spectra. The ring opening of gated *g*DCC, as shown in Figure 4, is equivalent to the scission of the cyclobutane. The ring opening of the ungated *g*DCC was derived by subtracting the ring opening of the gated *g*DCC from the total ring opening of *g*DCC.



**Supplementary Figure 8. Gel-permeation chromatographs of a solution of polymer 6\_3**. With increasing sonication time, increased retention time is detected using a refractive index detector.



**Supplementary Figure 9**. **Gel-permeation chromatographs of a solution of polymer 8.** Longer retention times with increasing sonication time indicates molecular mass degradation.

### **Supplementary Tables**

**Supplementary Table 1. Computational methods benchmarks.** Comparison of the activation energies (in kcal/mol) of *cis*-2,3-dimethyl-1,1-dichlorodimethylcyclopropane isomerization in vacuum, diphenyl ether and DMF from experiment or ab initio calculations with those calculated at the uMPW1K/6-311+G(d) and uB3LYP/6- 311+G(d) level of DFT.



1. uCCSD/6-311+G(d)//uCCSD(T)/jun-cc-pVTZ

2. electronic energy

3. Experimental  $\Delta G^{\ddagger}$  at 152 °C obtained from the Eyring equation.

4. in CPCM parameterized for the corresponding solvent; the thermodynamic correction at the ideal gas/rigid rotor/pseudo-harmonic oscillator as per Kim Y., Mohrig J. R., Truhlar D. G. Free-energy surfaces for liquid-phase reactions and their use to study the border between concerted and nonconcerted  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ -elimination reactions of esters and thioesters. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2010, 132, 11071 and Cramer, C. J. Essentials of computational chemistry. 2nd ed. edn, p. 355 (Wiley, 2004).



**Supplementary Table 2.** Key parameters of the measured force-extension curves for polymer 6.

1. averaged over 2420-2470 pN

**Supplementary Table 3.** Calculated force-extension curves of DCTCU-containing polymer **6** and poly(*cis*-*g*DCC). The data tabulated here is plotted in Fig. 4 of the main text.





**Supplementary Table 4.** Comparison of electronic energies (in kcal/mol) of conformers of the 1<sup>st</sup> (TS1) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (TS2) transition states of thermal dissociation of cis-cyclobutane-1,2-dicarboxylic acid at uCCSD/6- 31G(d)//uCCSD/jun-cc-pVTZ, uMPW1K/6-311+G(d) and uB3LYP/6-311+G(d) levels of theory. The blue arrows in the structures show the atomic motion comprising the reactive mode.



# **Supplementary Methods**

Unless otherwise mentioned, all starting materials and reagents were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich and used as received. Dry solvents were purchased from VWR.  $^{1}$ H NMR and  $^{13}$ C NMR analysis were conducted on a 400 MHz Varian Spectrophotometer and the residual solvent peaks (CDCl<sub>3</sub> 7.26 [ $^1$ H], 77.16 ppm  $\binom{13}{1}$  were used as internal chemical shift references. All chemical shifts are given in ppm ( $\delta$ ) and coupling constants (*J*) in Hz as singlet (s), doublet (d), triplet, quartet (q), multiplet (m), or broad (br). Column chromatography was performed using Silicycle F60 (230-400 mesh) silica gel.

Gel permeation chromatography (GPC) was performed on an in-line two columns (Agilent Technology PL gel,  $10^4$  and  $10^3$  Å) using THF (HPLC grade, 99.7+%, stabilized with 250 ppm BHT) as eluent at a flow rate of 1 mL min<sup>-1</sup> under ambient condition. Molecular weights were calculated using a Wyatt Dawn EOS multi-angle light scattering (MALS) detector and Wyatt Optilab DSP Interferometric Refractometer (RI). The refractive index increment (dn/dc) values were determined by online calculation using injections of known concentration and mass.

Single-molecule force spectroscopy (SMFS) measurements were conducted using the same procedure as described previously.<sup>[1-3](#page-16-0)</sup> All of the SMFS studies were conducted at ambient temperature ( $\sim$ 23 °C) using a homemade AFM, which was constructed using a Digital Instruments scanning head mounted on top of a piezoelectric positioner, similar to the one described in detail previously[.](#page-16-1)<sup>4</sup> The AFM pulling experiments were conducted in solutions of toluene or methyl benzoate, and no significant difference was observed between the results in the two solvents. The force curves used for analysis were obtained with rectangular-shaped cantilevers (205 μm  $\times$  15 μm, nominal tip radius  $\sim$ 2 nm, nominal spring constant k  $\sim$  $0.02$  N/m, frequency  $\sim$  15 kHz). The spring constant of each cantilever was calibrated in air, using the MFP-3D system (Asylum Research Group Inc., Santa Barbara, CA), applying the thermal noise method, based on the energy equipartition theorem as described previously[.](#page-16-2)<sup>5</sup> Measurements were carried out in a closed fluid cell with scanning set for a series of approaching/retracting cycles.

The sonication experiment was performed on a Vibracell Model VCX 500 operating at 20 kHz with a 12.8 mm titanium tip probe from Sonics and Materials (http:www.sonics.biz/). Each sonication was performed on 1 mg/mL polymer solution of THF, which was purified with a Pure Solv<sup>TM</sup> solvent purification system. Prior to sonication, the solution was transferred to a 3-neck Suslick cell in an ice bath and deoxygenated by bubbling through nitrogen for 30 min. Irradiations were performed at 11.9 W/cm<sup>2</sup> with a pulse sequence of 1s on/1s off while maintaining a temperature of 6-9 °C under a nitrogen atmosphere.

## **Synthesis**

## **Compound 3: Di(pent-4-en-1-yl) (10R,11S)-5,5-dichlorotricyclo[7.2.0.04,6]undecane-10,11-**

**dicarboxylate**



**1** (*gem*-dichlorocyclopropane cyclooctene) was made by following previously reported procedure[.](#page-16-3)<sup>6</sup> The [2+2] cycloaddition reaction was performed using similar procedure as the synthesis of Bicyclo<sup>[4[.](#page-17-0)2.0]</sup>octane.<sup>7</sup> Benzophenone (2.7 g, 15 mmol), maleic anhydride (10.0 g, 102 mmol), and **1** (19.1 g, 100 mmol) were dissolved in 300 mL acetone in a photochemical reactor fitted with a watercooled quartz emersion well. The solution was sparged with argon for 30 min and then irradiated with a 450 W medium pressure mercury arc lamp through a Pyrex filter for 12 h under argon. Acetone was removed under rotary evaporation and maleic anhydride was removed via vacuum distillation. The residue solid was washed with hexane, dried and used without further purification.

That solid, taken to be intermediate **2** (0.5 g), 4-penten-1-ol (0.387 g, 4.50 mmol), 4- Dimethylaminopyridine (DMAP) (0.211 g, 1.73 mmol) were added to a 100 mL round-bottom flask, and 50 mL dichloromethane (DCM) was added to dissolve the starting materials. The solution was cooled in an ice/water bath before N-(3-Dimethylaminopropyl)-N'-ethylcarbodiimide hydrochloride (EDC) (1.33 g, 6.92 mmol) was added. The resulting solution was left to warm to room temperature and stir overnight. Upon completion of the reaction, the solution was washed 2 times with deionized water and 2 times with brine and dried with  $Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>(s)$ . The crude product was purified by silica gel column chromatography using 20:1 hexane:ethyl acetate, yielding **3** as a white solid. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 5.90-5.70 (m, 2H), 5.18 – 4.86 (m, 4H), 4.24 – 3.89 (m, 4H), 3.59 – 3.31 (m, 1H), 2.92 – 2.79 (m, 1H), 2.79 – 2.60 ( m, 1H), 2.55 – 2.28 (m, 1H), 2.25 – 1.91 (m, 9H), 1.80 – 1.64 (m, 5H), 1.43 – 1.30 (m, 2H), 1.25 – 0.99 (m, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 137.67, 137.47, 115.56, 115.36, 65.04, 64.10, 63.95, 44.67, 44.31, 43.95, 42.93, 41.77, 41.31, 39.14, 39.02, 33.92, 33.22, 32.92, 32.20, 31.61, 31.56, 30.18, 30.16, 28.46, 27.98, 27.95, 27.92, 26.79, 23.49, 23.33, 20.83, 20.47. HRMS (ESI-TOF): calcd for  $C_{23}H_{33}Cl_{2}O_{4}$  ([MH]+) 443.1750, found 443.1740.

**Compound 4: 15,15-dichloro-3,4,5,8,9,10,12b,13,14,14a,15,15a,16,17,17a,17b-hexadecahydro-1Hcyclopropa[5',6']cycloocta[1',2':3,4]cyclobuta[1,2-c][1,6]dioxacyclotetradecine-1,12(12aH)-dione**



A flame-dried 250 mL 2-neck round bottom flask was fit with a magnetic stir bar and a condenser. In the flask, **3** (0.47 g, 1.06 mmol) was dissolved in 100 mL DCM. The solution was degassed by bubbling through N<sub>2</sub> for 30 min at room temperature. Grubbs second generation catalyst (0.045 g, 0.053 mmol) was added to the solution under  $N_2$ . The reaction was refluxed for 18 h. Upon completion of the reaction, 1 mL ethyl vinyl ether was added to quench the reaction and the mixture was stirred for 30 min. The reaction was cooled to room temperature and concentrated under reduced pressure. The product was purified through column chromatography on silica gel using DCM as the eluent to yield the pure product of **4** (0.3 g, 68%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3) δ 5.52 – 5.30 (m, 2H), 4.40 – 4.13 (m, 2H), 4.02 - 3.78 (m, 2H), 3.58 – 3.30 (m, 1H), 3.04 – 2.83 (m, 1H), 2.82 – 2.64 (m, 1H ) 2.64 - 2.45 (m, 1H), 2.44 - 2.25 (m, 2H), 2.24 – 1.89 (m, 6H), 1.85 – 1.55 (m, 5H), 1.38 – 1.25 (m, 2H), 1.25-1.01 (m, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (101) MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 131.70, 130.22, 130.08, 129.35, 129.25, 64.82, 64.39, 62.68, 62.47, 62.27, 44.80, 44.50, 44.39, 44.05, 43.77, 43.09, 42.66, 41.73, 41.57, 41.15, 41.06, 38.90, 33.87, 33.16, 32.88, 32.10, 31.55, 31.36, 29.24, 28.56, 28.50, 28.19, 28.11, 28.02, 27.95, 26.69, 26.55, 26.42, 23.58, 23.53, 23.45, 23.27, 22.99, 22.89, 20.75, 20.45. HRMS (ESI-TOF): calcd for  $C_{21}H_{28}Cl_2O_4$  ([MH]+) 415.1437, found 415.1435.

**6: copolymer of DCTCU and epoxide**



**6\_1 (12% DCTCU)**

0.04 g **4** (0.097 mmol) and 0.08 g **[5](#page-17-1)** 8 (0.645mmol) were dissolved in 0.1 mL DCM. 1.64 mg (0.00194 mmol) Grubbs second generation catalyst was dissolved in 1 mL DCM. 0.1 mL of the Grubbs catalyst solution was transferred to the monomer solution via a syringe. The viscosity of the solution increased after 30 min and stirring ceased quickly. 0.1 mL of DCM was added to the solution to allow the stirring to continue and the reaction was allowed to proceed overnight. The reaction was quenched with 1 mL of ethyl vinyl ether and stirred for 1 h. The reaction was then precipitated in methanol, redissolved in DCM

and reprecipitated in methanol and dried on a vacuum line.  ${}^{1}H\text{-NMR}$  (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  5.88 – 5.00 (m, 2H), 4.25 – 3.81 (m, 0.47H), 3.57 – 3.31 (m, 0.1H), 3.11 – 2.77 (m, 1.77H), 2.77 -2.57 (m, 0.1H), 2.55- 2.31 (m, 0.1H), 2.47 – 1.82 (m, 4.5H), 1.77 – 1.41 (m, 4.5H), 1.30 -1.02 (m, 0.67H). Copolymer composition: 11.5% DCTCU, 88.5% epoxides.  $M_n = 102,000$ , PDI = 1.66, dn/dc = 0.10 mL/g.

### **6\_2 (23% DCTCU)**

Similar procedure was used as **6\_1**, and the content of DCTCU was controlled by changing the feed ratio.  $^{1}$ H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  5.57 – 5.38 (m, 2H), 4.18 – 3.92 (m, 0.9H), 3.08 – 2.82 (m, 1.5H), 2.78 – 2.56 (m, 0.3H), 2.54 – 2.31 (m, 0.2H), 2.33 – 1.86 (m, 5H), 1.80 – 1.44 (m, 6H), 1.40 – 1.03 (m, 3H). Copolymer composition: 23.0% DCTCU, 77.0% epoxides.  $M_n = 113,100$ , PDI = 1.43, dn/dc = 0.09 mL/g.

#### **6\_3 (47% DCTCU)**

Similar procedure was used as **6\_1**, and the content of DCTCU was controlled by changing the feed ratio.  $1_H$ -NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  5.69 – 5.24 (m, 2H), 4.24 – 3.87 (m, 1.9H), 3.60 – 3.27 (m, 0.4H), 3.03 – 2.85 (m, 1H), 2.81 – 2.58 (m, 0.7H), 2.55 – 2.31 (m, 0.4H), 2.28 – 1.88 (m, 5.7H), 1.79 – 1.46 (m, 5.6H), 1.44 – 1.31 (m, 0.8H), 1.29 – 0.97 (m, 2.5H). Copolymer composition: 47.0% DCTCU, 53.0% epoxides.  $M_n = 97,300$ ,  $PDI = 1.69$ ,  $dn/dc = 0.07$   $mL/g$ .

# **8: copolymer of DCTCU and** *cis***-***g***DCC**



0.08 g **4** (0.18 mmol) and 0.03 g **1** (0.18 mmol) were dissolved in 0.1 mL DCM. 1.7 mg (0.002 mmol) Grubbs second generation catalyst was dissolved in 1 mL DCM. 0.1 mL of the Grubbs catalyst solution was transferred to the monomer solution via a syringe. The viscosity of the solution increased after 30 min and stirring ceased quickly. 0.1 mL of DCM was added to the solution to allow the stirring to continue and the reaction was allowed to proceed overnight. The reaction was quenched with 1 mL of ethyl vinyl ether and stirred for 1 h. The reaction was then precipitated in methanol, redissolved in DCM and reprecipitated in methanol and dried on a vacuum line.  ${}^{1}H\text{-NMR}$  (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  5.60 – 5.35 (m, 2H), 4.34 – 3.75 (m, 1.9H), 3.60 – 3.27 (m, 0.9H), 2.94 – 2.60 (m, 0.7H), 2.54 – 2.31 (m, 0.5H), 2.27 – 1.87 (m, 5.7H), 1.78 – 1.02 (m, 10.4H). Copolymer composition: 47.0% DCTCU, 53.0% *cis*-*g*DCC (backbone).  $M_n = 97,200$ , PDI = 1.60, dn/dc = 0.07 mL/g.

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