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Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Escuela de Diseño

Santiago de Chile, November 30th, 2015

CUMULUS EXECUTIVE BOARD VI 2016-2019 CANDIDACY PROPOSAL

Letter of motivation

Professor José Allard

I have had the opportunity to study Design in important schools, both in America and Europe. I obtained my undergraduate and master's degree in the United States (BFA The Corcoran School of Art, Washington, DC / MFA California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA) and later my PhD in Industrial Design and Multimedia Communication at the Politecnico di Milano, Italy. At the Politecnico, I also participated in the Visual Communication Unit as lecturer and researcher. My educational background has certainly modeled my understanding of the methods, competencies and tools of the discipline. However, the most important part of my academic and professional views on Design have been defined confronting and adapting my academic background with the challenges I face working in a developing country such as Chile.

Since 1998 I am a professor and researcher at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC) - a leading institution in Latin America (and #29 in the worldwide Ranking QS 2015). I have led applied research and consultancy projects in information design, wayfinding and visual identity for public and private institutions. My work has been published in national and international journals such as Information Design Journal (IDJ), Linea Graphica (Italy), ARQ (Chile), Fractal (Brazil). After three years as Director of the School of Design at PUC, I believe I'm in a strong position to present my candidacy for the Cumulus Executive Board.

Design can be understood as what connects creativity with innovation. However, these concepts lose value if they are not given direction and meaning. During the past decade, I have noted how public and private organizations have become familiar with methods and techniques used in the design process. This has raised awareness of the transformative value Design can have in a wide range of social, economic, and cultural issues. I think the value of "Design Thinking" is placing the user at the center of the project's decisions; a commitment I have maintained throughout my professional and academic work. I think this commitment should guide the way we talk, think and teach design today. However, I also believe Design Thinking constitutes only the first step towards innovation. Without the design project, this trend threatens to be limited to good intentions and countless sessions of brainstorming with bright colored post-its on the wall.

I also understand design as a creative and productive activity at the service of others. Focusing on the interaction between humans and their environment, it seeks to contribute to a sustainable development of nations and to improve the quality of life of people. I believe design schools should contribute to society with professionals who have a complex understanding of the world they participate in, capable of intervening at the strategic level of organizations. It is important designers dive into the challenges they are faced with a humanist and holistic approach.

I truly believe Design can improve the quality of life, particularly of those living in developing countries. Design can have a significant impact in the development of emergent countries. Thus, one of my first commitments as part of the Board will be to encourage the participation of more design schools in emerging economies to become part of Cumulus.

Design can also greatly impact the quality of public services. Through interventions at the government level, it is possible to affect an important part of the population, particularly more underprivileged groups within countries. Actively participating in the public sector has not only changed the way I practice design, but most important, how I teach the discipline at school. The constraints and considerations that a designer must consider in the public sector differ from a private sector logic, and therefore should be part of an evolving conversation in how we prepare designers for this expanding field. I believe Cumulus should play an active role in these conversations.

As part of the Cumulus Board, I aim to represent a positive outlook of design; a view that comes from the periphery but conscious of the global challenges of our discipline.

José Allard

Director
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