



## APPLICATION FOR A 2<sup>ND</sup> TERM ON THE CUMULUS BOARD

The South African flag was designed by Frederick Gordon Brownell and it contains elements from all the different eras and cultures of South Africa, good and bad. The idea behind the design is for everyone to feel included. This is very much in Nelson Mandela's spirit and very much in accordance with the potential of good design: to inspire a future which enables people of different backgrounds and convictions to live together in peace.

Indeed the story behind the South African flag formed the basis for part of the 2014 Cumulus Conference in Johannesburg where I had the pleasure of co-hosting a workshop with Desmond Laubscher that focused on leadership in relation to Nelson Mandela's values. A workshop that became quite an eye-opener in terms of Cumulus' vast potential as a melting pot that brings together schools/universities and their employees across cultures and continents and enables them to understand and speak each other's languages. Based on the encounter we succeeded in creating a manifesto that characterises good leadership in education within design, art and media. A manifesto that travelled from Johannesburg to Milan where it was completed in the Leadership working group (please see attachment).

Considering the climate issues, lack of water and other basic resources, and the massively increasing flow of refugees, it is obvious that schools and universities that teach design, art and media must help lead the way. Must help political decision-makers, civil society and the business community understand that our students, staff and alumni can address the challenges that face the world. Not just through critical analyses but by introducing specific and practical changes that pave the way for meaningful solutions.

At the same time, we must always continue to improve our educational programmes, so that we are not only able to match but continuously stay one step ahead of the challenges that keep presenting themselves.



### **Application**

With this letter I respectfully ask the Cumulus members to support my 2nd term as member of the Board. I have a great desire to help make Cumulus an organisation that ensures design and designers, art and media an even greater impact on international, national and local issues. I find it profoundly frustrating that we are not further along in making our profession and our disciplines heard among private and public decision-makers. Design (and culture) remains something that societies invest in if they can afford it. Instead, design should be an obvious tool to ensure continuous economic growth and prosperity. This has to change, and Cumulus should play a significant role in driving this change.

As Vice President of Cumulus for three years, I have worked closely with the Board and its management, President Luisa Collina and Vice President Yongqi Lou. We have developed a new strategy with a set of goals to turn Cumulus into an even better member organisation.

An organisation which – thanks not least to the Secretariat and Aalto University – is characterised by a friendly and informal atmosphere balancing the fact that our size calls for more transparent decisions and procedures. In addition, we have worked strategically with our communication, including our homepage and conference streaming. Moreover, we have set up simple and clear procedures for publishing papers in connection with conferences, publications, etc. The students as well, have been the focus of our attention, and have participated in our conferences. Finally, we have been concerned with recruiting new members, not least from those continents where we are not already heavily represented. We have achieved a great deal, but there is still a lot to do.

If I become re-elected, I will focus on:

- Impact. Let us share our positive experiences of how to influence the business community and political decision-makers. What does it require of our leadership, individually and collectively? Let Cumulus be our common voice in global political decision processes about for instance sustainability, health, social inclusion, etc. An effort that of course requires us to work with other important international design organisations, including AIGA, BEDA, DESIS, ELIA, IASDR, UNESCO, DRS, EIDD.
- The private sector; based on the notion that market forces play a huge role in determining where the world is going and thus the significance that design may or may not have.
- Research. Cumulus should be a platform that supports the members in expanding their research capacity.
- Recruiting more members from Asia, Africa, USA and South America.
- Knowledge sharing to develop new teaching methods that bridge the gap between cultures and between our educations and the wider community.



### **My Competences and Background**

I hold a Master's Degree in Social Sciences and was a member of the Danish Parliament for 13 years, nearly four of these as Minister of Culture.

Since 2008, I have been Rector of Design School Kolding. We are not a large school but we offer a number of design programmes on BA, MA and PhD levels.

Our three strategic focus areas are Design and Play (among others together with LEGO), Design and Well-being (together with many public institutions), and Design and Sustainability (together with different private companies). The school has an extensive portfolio of business collaborations, and within the last four years, we have trained almost 600 small and medium-sized companies in how to apply design methods to their business. Internationalisation is another focus area for us. We require all of our students to complete part of their training outside Denmark, which is why we have set up outposts in Shanghai and São Paulo, and before that in Kumasi, Ghana.

Along with the other Danish design schools and design institutions, Design School Kolding has a great deal of experience in engaging in political decision-making processes, because different Danish governments have wanted to integrate design further in the development of society (but in Denmark too, this integration is happening at a slow pace). Design School Kolding has been one of the main drivers in a regional and local venture that makes design the focal point of growth and development.

We look forward to telling you more about this when the school celebrates its 50th anniversary together with Cumulus in Kolding in 2017 where we will be hosting the general assembly and conference.

The theme will be 'Rethink'.

How do we rethink civil society, industry and the public sector based on design?

How do we in the design world – with reference to Nelson Mandela – learn to speak the languages of others to a degree that will make design have a much greater impact?

Moreover, how do we cultivate a language that others can understand?

During my time in Cumulus, I have learned so much. Thank you to the Board and to everyone who have shared their knowledge and their experiences. I hope that others can learn from the Danish approach to education and design as well. An approach that is embedded in the notion that every human being has potential and that all human beings have a right to make their voices heard.

Yours sincerely,

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Rector

Design School Kolding

Denmark