

THE  
NEW  
SCHOOL

**PARSONS**

January 4, 2019.

Dear Colleagues and Cumulus Members,

I am pleased to put forth my candidacy for the role of President of Cumulus with this letter and accompanying vitae. As a current Board Member about to conclude two consecutive terms of service, I am fully aware of the high stakes and great responsibility that this leadership position signifies for our association, for all of our member institutions and for the field of art, design and media internationally. I thus step forward with a genuine sense of excitement, urgency and purpose.

I bring to the role a set of lived experiences and expertise that I consider foundational to the service of President of our association. These are:

1. A global outlook defined by a personal upbringing growing up around the world in Europe, Latin-America and the United States as the daughter of an Ambassador from Argentina. Professionally, this trajectory of frequent relocations has taught me to be open, adaptable and entrepreneurial with handling situations of great complexity and cultural diversity.
2. A privileged formal education in the visual arts, humanities, design and management that has translated into a significant set of accomplishments as an educator, researcher and university administrator with a particularly strong performance in public speaking, fundraising and establishing innovative partnerships with a diversity of institutions ranging from peer universities, government agencies, multi-lateral bodies, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and industry.

3. An award-winning portfolio of design for social innovation curricular and co-curricular initiatives including the conception of publications, lectures series and symposia more recently at Parsons, The New School in New York, and for sixteen years at ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California, through the Designmatters department I co-founded in 2001.

To advance the work of Cumulus as its President, I would be drawing from a broad set of communication and analytical skills, as well as an inclusive and evidence-based approach to decision-making that have made my work to date successful and incredibly rewarding for the many doors it has opened to faculty and students in the initiatives I have overseen. My approach has always been to work with a bias for collective participation and action which I believe will be critical for our next President to serve effectively. In this regard, I believe there is ample evidence in my record as a Cumulus board member of an exemplary capacity to move original ideas from concept to implementation. For example, I have played a key leadership role in shaping *The Cumulus Student Ambassador Program* and the upcoming iteration of the *Cumulus Green Competition* that aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agenda. These are just two examples of long-term programmatic activities of our Secretariat and board that hold a transformative impact for our students and epitomize one of the key mandates of our association: constructing a web of connections and linkages that foster international dialogue for our members and for the next generation of globally aware artists and design leaders that we educate in our universities.

The complexity of today's world requires multifaceted partnerships, these can be tremendously enriching when they move beyond the confines of any single institution. As the only international association of universities and colleges dedicated to art, design and media education and research, with over 280 members worldwide and a growing network of diverse collaborators ranging from multi-lateral agencies, professional organizations and think tanks, Cumulus is uniquely poised to play a significant role both as a catalytic convener as well as an exemplary locus to learn of, and communicate about, global citizenship through art and design education in ways that we have yet to fully harness.

With 2020 upon us, the next Board and President of Cumulus will have the task of exploring how to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the association's founding and to support the Cumulus Secretariat in operationalizing possibilities for new ventures. Given the association's growth and stage of maturity—one could say that as a nearly thirty-year old organization Cumulus is entering in its full "adulthood"—this will be an unparalleled opportunity to celebrate

accomplishments, reaffirm our core values, but also set our sights far and wide into the next thirty years. How might we commit to re-energizing our value proposition and *raison d'être* for an increasingly diverse membership of institutions in the Global North, Global South, East and West? In an increasingly networked and borderless world when it comes to technological advances and the fluidity of how we can translate and transfer knowledge, the role of criticality and imagination through the arts and through our *designerly* ways of knowing are more necessary than ever—and only bound to continue mounting in significance. What are the opportunities for us to make substantive contributions as a network that is composed of institutions that have those unique capabilities? In the context of rising vulnerability and scarcity of planetary resources, how might Cumulus become more fully implicated in the social and political context of the Anthropocene era? How might we take on a bolder position, within and outside art and design forums of influence, as an advocate for the pluralism of pedagogical and transdisciplinary research approaches that our member institutions excel at? How might Cumulus create new distributed avenues for knowledge sharing and programmatic priority areas to communicate more effectively, come together and continue celebrating—to borrow from Herbert Simon—the capacity of human beings to devise preferred courses of action to transform existing situations into preferred ones? These are just a few of the critical questions that I see looming large upon us as an association. I look forward to addressing each of these strategically with our next board and devising an agenda for the next three years that will leverage the gains of our work to date and put us in a position of renewed strength and relevance.

I would truly be honored to serve as a steward of our community of members and institutions and, with your vote of confidence, continue to set standards of excellence and creativity worldwide for our Cumulus family. I thank you for your consideration of my candidacy.

Sincerely,



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