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Letter of Motivation Cumulus Executive Board VII 2019-2022.

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As an African designer and design educator, I have come to realise what poor ties we have with other design education institutions in Africa. I believe that an opportunity for dialogue between African design institutions, and conversations between African and non-African institutions is often somewhat missed. When I started my first leg as a Cumulus Executive Board member, I spent much time trying to find other art and design schools on our continent. This exercise proved tough and unfruitful. I also spent much time sourcing African art and design networks, but these either failed to exist, or those that did, had ceased to function.

While serving on the current Cumulus Board, I was tasked to help diversify the Cumulus global footprint, which, as a result, led to the formation of the first Pan-African Design Institute. This organisation has grown to some 60-odd members across the continent, which continues to grow rapidly. Cumulus, and my role in it I believe, played a significant role in achieving this. My vision for this Institute, is to be able to market Cumulus, and therefore to increase the African footprint of Cumulus, thereby achieving my two primary aims: diversifying Cumulus, and creating opportunities for more Africans to contribute to global dialog.

Cumulus has supported this initiative so much already. A number of African art and design schools have attended Cumulus conferences, through the Cumulus Plus programme. I feel that my work is not yet complete, and that another term on the Cumulus Executive Board will see the aims through to their completion.

As stated in my previous motivation letter, I believe that open dialogue and networking will be beneficial, not only for the future of our African design industry, but more immediately, for our institutions - and more importantly - our respective communities. I also believe that the inclusion of an African network in the Cumulus sphere is important because:

1. We get to better understand and support our neighbours – in a macro (or global) as well as a micro (African) context.

We also get to better understand the role that design/design education plays, as well as the value that it adds (or could add) to the communities in our neighbouring countries, especially developing countries, and the role that design/design education offers in these contexts.

2. We get to share our resources, such as curriculum planning, resolved assessment platforms, projects, and learning guides and materials, networks etc, - to better understand the needs of our neighbours, as well as how our neighbours may be able to benefit us.

3. We get to share our research (and contribute to, as well as learn from an Afro-centric research platform)

4. Dialogue helps us to better understand the problems and issues that we face as a continent and in the world.

5. International dialogue also helps us to share experiences and insights into geographically and culturally specific problems, and exchanges allow us to provide contextually relevant insights into those problems, and to kick-start solutions.

8. We can use a united African design mentality (we are a resourceful and innovative people) to discuss and address larger world issues.

9. We can improve lecturer and student exchange programmes between continents – to cross pollinate and promote current, relevant and healthy design attitudes.

In conclusion, I believe that it is important that design education in Africa has representation in organisations such as Cumulus, and that Africa has access to reputable design educator forums such as Cumulus so that fair dialogue between Africa and the rest of the world can take place.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude – to say thank you for having me on the 2016-2019 board. The support of Cumulus has helped me to achieve so much over the last two years.

Yours Sincerely

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