

May 2022

Dear Cumulus Member Community,

currently, I am Professor for Interface / Interaction Design, co-directing the MA Integrated Design Research program and chairing the Internationalisation Committee at KISD (Köln International School of Design, TH Köln University of Technology, Arts, and Sciences). I served as Head of School for 4 years and as Dean of our Faculty for 12 years. KISD is a Cumulus member for nearly 20 years and we both benefited and contributed from the opportunities of our global association (see my CV).

For the last three years, I have been serving at the Cumulus Executive Board and as Vice President. Today, it is my pleasure to share with you my motivation for my candidacy as a member of the next Cumulus Executive Board 2022-2025. My key motivation is to proceed what I have started in the last three years - and of course as all of us, I haven't expected those last three years being so different from everything I could imagine caused by the disruptions of the pandemics. After serving as Board Member and Vice-President for the last three years with an incredible team of colleagues that became friends, I experienced the needs of our growing and diverse member community - especially in times of pandemic, where just very few of us were able to meet for the two conferences in Bogota and Rome.

Nearly 80 new members joining us in the last 3 years never had the chance to meet in person and benefit from the values Cumulus can give as the only global association of Art and Design Education and Research. Based on the [Strategic Plan](#) our Board developed, I had the opportunity to lead a project and work together with colleagues to create [Cumulus Connects](#), a platform that should support communication and collaboration for our community as an immediate and timely response to the needs emerging in the pandemic. It served as a platform to convene Global Conversations and meetings by the Cumulus Working Groups - and I appreciated the incredible work especially [x-Files](#) is doing to serve our members. Across the [Working Groups](#), nearly 20 sessions of working groups took place, most of them documented at the platform with enthusiastic member engagements. This would not have been possible with our Editorial Board - with colleagues from Chile, Ireland, France, Finland, and the strong support of the Cumulus Secretariat. Additionally, I was engaged (and I am still) in the group to draft and work to make our new [Cumulus website](#) happen - another big step forward for our community (where we still have ambitious plans)

Writing this letter of motivation, I am in process with a team of my Board colleagues and the Secretary General to find the best possible solution to [legally register](#) our association in Finland and negotiate the long-awaited Hosting Agreement with Aalto leaders.

For the next three years, I would like to dedicate my work for Cumulus at the Executive Board in the following activities:

- **Proceed to prepare Cumulus Association for the next important step in its history:** Designing a participatory process with engaged members to shape the transition for a Cumulus beyond Aalto - as Aalto will not host us beyond 2025. This needs to be carefully designed, and with the next Hosting Agreement I had the honor to co-design we will have maximum continuity for the next three years, but enough flexibility to make this step smooth and with the support of and benefit for all members.
- **Opening up for diverse voices and engagements in our community:** I experienced many members not being able to engage in the last three years. Acknowledging the roots and legacy of Cumulus a European association, I would proceed to support underrepresented countries and regions and make Cumulus less Eurocentric and more Global. Initiatives like the New European Bauhaus are an excellent opportunity to unite forces amongst Europeans and integrate many other diverse perspectives to address global challenges like climate crisis, migration, hunger, equal rights (all of them summed up in the SDGs).

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Design needs to contribute to those planetary challenges and Cumulus has the unique opportunity to build alliances between the more than 10.000 faculty members and more than one million students – including the growing network of our [partners](#). 40% of our [members](#) are from outside of Europe, and in a growing association it should and will be more.

I want to contribute in creating new ways of participation in Cumulus beyond the two annual conferences – in **Cumulus Working Groups**, that will be more inclusive and open; in joint projects supported by Cumulus; in creating opportunities with our partners (from competitions through new formats of global collaborations).

Additionally, I want to contribute to encourage our more than one million students to engage - they are an asset we have not yet used. With our **new website**, we want to encourage colleagues (and students) of our member institutions to engage (and benefit) from all the incredible work we are doing. Last, but not least, I want to proceed to collaborate with the Secretariat to ease the online contacts to our members - through a proper database that enables us to reach all our members in our member institutions.

Last, but not least, collaborations are about the opportunity to **enjoy the otherness and to enjoy the conviviality of the discourse**. Thus, members and participants need to enjoy working with the different platforms Cumulus is offering. In the open atmospheres of conferences and workshops there must be enough free space to let new ideas emerge in order to face both nowadays and future challenges.

- **Keeping the community united:** In the last 6 months, Cumulus faced stormy times of uncertainty. We had to deal with complex questions and we tried hard to reach out to all members and engage with them. I am aware that change is seen as a threat for some while it is embraced and encouraged by others.

Communication is key in this process, and I want to contribute to be in all forms of dialogues to keep our strong global community united by transparent and democratic processes, clear governance (based on the [handbook](#) we developed), open dialogues and respect for individual concerns and voices. I strongly believe our spirit of creative linking, of sharing ideas and concerns and creating collaborations is a key benefit and will help us a lot to design the next steps of our association.

In a nutshell: The next years will be important for Cumulus to *discuss and communicate the changing role of design amongst our broad variety of perspectives globally* and improve the *opportunities for members to engage beyond on-site conferences*, and to invite our community in the process of *designing the next steps of our association* beyond 2025. Those will be the last years with Aalto generously hosting us for more than 30 years – the future starts now.

As I mentioned the importance of continuity, I recommend my eligible colleagues Adam De Eyto, Michael Krohn, Anne Pikkov, Teemu Leinonen and Mariana Amatullo as President to be also re-elected. I am looking forward to have the opportunity to share my motivation and perspectives with you in the next General Assembly on June 16.

Attached you find my three reference letters from **RMIT Melbourne** (by Prof. Tim Marshal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice President), from **Musashino Art University Tokyo** (by Prof. Tadanori Nagasawa, President) and from **GSA Glasgow School of Art** (by Prof. Irene McAra-McWilliam MA FRSA OBE, Deputy Director for Research and Innovation GSA), their trust and support means a lot to me and will amplify my passion to engage for Cumulus.

Yours sincerely,



Philipp Heidkamp

Declared candidate Cumulus Executive Board VIII 2022-2025