



# Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

London, 10 May 2022

To Whom It May Concern.

## **Letter of Support for Dr Mariana Amatullo as Cumulus President Candidate**

I am writing today as Vice-Chancellor of the Royal College of Art in London – the co-founder of the Cumulus Association – to express the support for the candidacy of Dr Mariana Amatullo to the Presidency of Cumulus for the 2022-2025 term, to be voted on at the 16 June 2022 Board Elections for CEB VIII.

Dr Amatullo is recognized across the world for her exceptional academic career and two decades of leadership experience in a wide range of roles and functions. We know her as an award-winning scholar and professor of design for social innovation, with an outstanding record in our field. This is attested by her publications, her memberships of juries and her services on many institutional boards, most recently the Vera List Center for Art and Politics in New York. She has spearheaded globally relevant evaluation committees such as the UNESCO Creative Cities Evaluator, and made a real impact as panelist evaluator at the UK Office of Students 2022. Honors have been bestowed upon her as a Salzburg Global Fellow, and of course as a RCA Global Fellow.

Dr Amatullo is respected as an innovative and forward-looking leader who has an understanding of what is required to future-proof organisations in our field as we face unprecedented challenges ahead. She has proven this in her current role leading the Global Executive Education division as well as the online strategic initiatives at Parsons School of Design, The New School – the world's #1-ranked institution of art and design in the US.

**Dr Paul Thompson**, Vice-Chancellor

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PROVOST, SIR JONY IVE OBE; PRO-PROVOST AND CHAIR OF COUNCIL, SIR PETER BAZALGETTE; DEPUTY CHAIR OF COUNCIL, FIELDS WICKER-MIURIN

COUNCIL MEMBERS: MICHAEL BIRSHAN, PROFESSOR RACHEL COOPER OBE, JENNIFER DUVALIER, MIKE FORSTER, DR TRISTRAM HUNT,

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We as university leaders have to constantly evaluate and adjust our institutions' place and purpose in a changing world. The same counts for our professional associations, above all Cumulus. During her first presidency, Dr Amatullo has brought together a brilliant leadership team. Under her stewardship, she and her board formulated a clear vision in the 'Cumulus at 30' strategy plan for change. She has shown a steady hand to implement what is necessary to secure Cumulus' relevance, security, and accountability. As President, Dr Amatullo has led the association through the global COVID-19 pandemic with a clear communication plan, excellent community-building campaigns, and kept Cumulus on a path of sustainable growth with an emphasis on diversity and new visibility, particularly in the Global South.

Many initiatives that emerged under her oversight are things we now take for granted: the new digital convenings for members via global conversations; the Cumulus Connects platform; the launch of Cumulus' new website that raised our association's visibility and influence; and of course the new emphasis on making the association more student-centric with the Cumulus Green competitions in line with the UN's SDGs. After all, many current students are likely to become future academics at Cumulus members.

The recent participatory and complex registration process that the association has undertaken is indicative of Dr Amatullo's commitment to the relevance, functioning, and future of Cumulus. To have her at the helm for the next 3 years will be critical to future-proof Cumulus as a globally relevant institution that can successfully execute critical change to remain the world's leading professional body in our field.

The RCA is proud to be one of the Cumulus founding members, and supports Dr Mariana Amatullo's candidacy for next President.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Paul Thompson**, Vice-Chancellor

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