

Cumulus International Association of Universities and
Colleges of Art, Design and Media

General Secretary Eija Salmi

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Bucine, February 3, 2025

To Whom it may concern

I am writing to endorse Professor Lorenzo Imbesi for his second term as President of Cumulus.

As the founder of DESIS Network and having been involved in design education and social innovation for several decades, I have observed Lorenzo's evolution as an academic, researcher, and leader throughout his career.

I have known Lorenzo since his early academic days and have watched him grow into a thoughtful and innovative leader in design education. His journey from Italy to Canada and back, including his time as Professor and Chair at Carleton University and his current role at Sapienza University of Rome, demonstrates not just geographic mobility but an ever-expanding vision of what design education can achieve.

What particularly impresses me about Lorenzo's leadership style is his commitment to co-design and participatory approaches. During his first term as Cumulus President, he has shown how democratic and inclusive leadership can be applied to an international organization. This is why I think his approach aligns perfectly with the contemporary challenges of design education, where we must bridge diverse perspectives and cultural contexts.

I would like to add to this first general consideration two other points that seem important to me.

In these times of global conflict, Lorenzo's commitment to peace through design education has been, I think, very important showing how international organizations like Cumulus could have a crucial role in maintaining dialogue and fostering understanding across political and cultural divides. His leadership has indicated that design education can serve as a bridge between communities, creating spaces for peaceful dialogue even when traditional diplomatic channels may be strained. This work to unite diverse perspectives while respecting individual differences has been particularly valuable in maintaining our global design community's cohesion during challenging times.

In parallel to that, Lorenzo's dedication to opening design education to the Global South is especially noteworthy. He understands that true international collaboration requires not just formal partnerships but genuine engagement with different cultural perspectives and local contexts. His initiatives to make Cumulus more accessible to institutions from

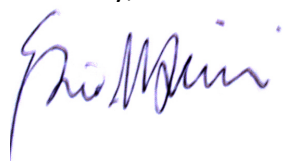
underserved regions reflect a deep understanding of design's role in social innovation and sustainable development.

Having been invited by Lorenzo to various initiatives over the years, including his time at Carleton University, I have witnessed firsthand his ability to create meaningful dialogue across cultural and institutional boundaries. His approach to leadership mirrors what we strive for in social innovation: creating platforms for collaboration that respect and amplify diverse voices.

Based on his successful first term and my long observation of his career, I am convinced that Lorenzo can be a very good President to guide Cumulus through its next phase of development. His combination of international experience, commitment to democratic values, and understanding of design's social role makes him uniquely qualified to lead our community in addressing the complex challenges ahead.

I therefore strongly endorse Lorenzo Imbesi for a second term as Cumulus President, confident that under his continued leadership, Cumulus will further strengthen its position as a truly global and inclusive network for design education.

Sincerely,



Ezio Manzini
3.02.2025