

Office of the Secretariat
Montreal (Canada)

9 November 2009

Board 2009-2011

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Dear Colleagues,

Re: Icograda General Assembly 23, 24-25 October 2009

It is an honour for me to take up the position as your President for the 2009-2011 term. In fulfilling the vision I presented at the General Assembly, this will be the first regular letter to share with you the activities of your Executive Board and to engage with you as Members in Icograda's evolution as the voice of communication design internationally.

I want to thank the more than 125 delegates who joined us for this year's meeting in Beijing and to acknowledge both the Central Academy of Fine Arts and Shandong University who collaborated to host the General Assembly. Over the course of our two days together, we made several key decisions that reflect the future direction of our Council. The following is a summary of those decisions and other key items discussed during the meeting.

The strength of our international network

Icograda's credibility as an international organisation is powered by the strength of our membership. Our diversity ranges to include emerging and well-established professional organisations both trans-disciplinary and communication design focussed; the breadth of design education institutions offering certificate through graduate programmes; a global network design promotion organisations; and affiliate international bodies such as our IDA partners Icsid and IFI, along with regional organisations like BEDA.

As President Elect Leimei Julia Chiu noted to the delegates, Icograda must be conscious of balance even in spite of this diversity. We must strive to represent both our professional organisations that have been the foundation of Icograda's voice since the 1960s, while encouraging the emergence and engagement of associations from parts of the world where communication design is still in its formative stages as a professional practice.

This term we will investigate ways to engage with regions around the world where some countries have found it difficult to establish membership-based associations. We will devote particular attention to Africa and continue to develop opportunities in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Indian subcontinent. INDIGO will also provide ways for designers from non-member countries to engage with Icograda.

An inclusive and future-focussed approach to governance and advocacy

Past board member Richard Grefé (AIGA, United States) addressed the General Assembly on the fundamental changes that are taking place within our Council and commended the leadership for recognising the context of the shifts and evolution in design practice. He described the challenge facing Icograda as, "the opportunity to pursue a future that deals with relevance, leadership and opportunity", drawing on design thinking and trans-disciplinarity

in order for communication designers to thrive and for Icograda to ensure its relevance as a leading advocate for the value of design.

This thinking underpins the Bylaw revisions that were adopted by the General Assembly, opening up the qualification for President of Icograda's Executive Board to be led by an individual from any of our membership sectors. Our values and stewardship of the professional practice of communication design remain firm, but we have expanded the opportunity for design leaders, irrespective of their training or professional background, to champion our vision and strategic goals.

Active engagement in setting Icograda's agenda

Vice President Iva Babaja (Croatia) outlined a revitalised approach to our regional meeting format for the term ahead. Over the course of the next months, we will implement a standardised membership survey to gather data on regional trends in our design economy and identify emerging priorities. This input will inform Icograda's agenda and allow us to better represent the interests of our Members to our international partners, as well as forming the basis for dialogue when we gather stakeholders together at our 2010 Icograda Design Weeks in Vancouver (April), Madrid (June) and Brisbane (October).

Building international collaboration and alliances

The Icograda membership accepted the IDA Report as recommended by the Icograda Board with one amendment, removing that future IDA Congresses be fixed in one location for six years with an option for renewal for four years.

Icograda Members were clear in noting that the amendment should not prevent the planning for future IDA Congresses, meetings or events but rather that the amendment addressed a deeply held belief that by fixing the Congress in one location it would deny Icograda members in emerging economies an equal opportunity to bid for and potentially host an IDA Congress, and that this was inconsistent with Icograda's values.

Of the three scenarios presented by the Icograda IDA Taskforce, Members supported the third resolution as best expressing Icograda's aspirations. The General Assembly recognised that a detailed business plan would be required to fully evaluate the implications of a unified IDA structure before selecting a model to pursue.

As an outcome of this motion, the members gave the Executive Board the authority to appoint a five person working group of Icograda members who will be mandated to develop detailed plans, through consultation and collaboration with the Icograda board, the Icograda membership and our IDA partners. These plans will be brought forward to the 2011 Icograda General Assembly for consideration.

In my vision for the 2009-2011 term, I outlined a new initiative of the World Design Survey™ (WDS). In the 2009-2011 term, we will create a multi-sectoral stakeholders forum with the working title 'SolveD' to form opinions, policy recommendations and other actions arising from the information gathered through the WDS. SolveD will engage a broad group of design stakeholders made up of organisations and groups who are driving the international agenda. Icograda will continue to champion key items such as intellectual property, design education, professional ethics and sustainable practice. However, we must extend our reach by creating links with a variety of like-minded organisations that share a belief in design's potential to affect positive change.

Advocating best practice

Two new best practice documents were ratified at the General Assembly: *Regulations and best practices for organising design exhibitions* along with *Regulations and best practices for serving as a juror of a design award competition*. In addition, the document *Guidelines for organising design conferences* was added to our toolkit.

A significant new initiative that was adopted is Icograda's first comprehensive statement on social, environmental, financial and cultural sustainability. The framework will be the basis on which we build a sustainability policy for adoption by 31 October 2010. At the first board meeting of the new term, we established a standing committee chaired by David Berman to steward this policy development.

Design education and research

This term marks the 10 anniversary of the Icograda Education Manifesto. Over the course of this term, Omar Vulpinari and Ahn Sang-soo will establish a working group to redevelop this core document. During our time together in Beijing, Shandong University has generously offered to host a forum to mark the Manifesto's anniversary and we look forward to finalising the details with them.

The papers presented at the Education Conference in Beijing will be collected to form the first edition of *Iridescent: the Icograda Journal of Design Research*. *Iridescent* will be an online journal with a printed edition published on a biennial basis.

A commitment to continuous improvement

We are committed to making the next Icograda General Assembly a benchmark for sustainable meeting governance. To this end, the Secretariat is developing a survey of General Assembly delegates to solicit your input on how we can continuously improve the meeting format and process. I encourage each of you to share your opinions.

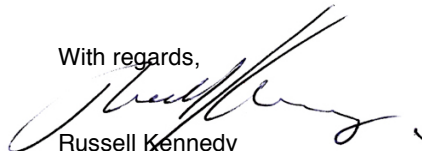
I am honoured by the trust you have placed in me as your President for the next term and look forward to working with the Executive Board you elected in Beijing. We will build on the work begun in the 2007-2009 term and measure our success against Icograda's long-term strategic goals established in 2005-2007.

Thank you to our retiring board members

I have been fortunate to serve under Presidents and Past Presidents like Robert L. Peters, Mervyn Kurlansky, Jacques Lange and Don Ryun Chang, who joined the Icograda board with me six years ago. Lise Vejse Klint has also been invaluable as a mentor. Each of these people had different approaches and all of them have been and are great leaders.

In closing I want to acknowledge Jacques Lange, Lise Vejse Klint, Halim Choueiry, Mohammed Jogie and Min Wang who retire as board members following the General Assembly. We are indebted to their leadership, insights and friendship over their terms and I know that you will join me in thanking them for their commitment to Icograda and design advocacy.

With regards,



Russell Kennedy
Icograda President 2009-2011
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