

Lenfest Center for the Arts Press Preview

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Speaker Bios

Lee C. Bollinger, President, Columbia University

Lee C. Bollinger became Columbia University's nineteenth president in 2002. Under his leadership, Columbia stands again at the very top rank of great research universities, distinguished by comprehensive academic excellence, historic institutional development, an innovative and sustainable approach to global engagement and unprecedented levels of alumni involvement and financial stability.

President Bollinger is Columbia's first Seth Low Professor of the University, a member of the Columbia Law School faculty and one of the country's foremost First Amendment scholars. His most recent book, *Uninhibited, Robust, and Wide-Open: A Free Press for a New Century*, has placed Bollinger at the center of public discussion about the importance of global free speech to continued social progress.

As Columbia's president, Bollinger conceived and led the University's most ambitious expansion in over a century with the creation of the Manhattanville campus in West Harlem, the first campus plan in the nation to receive the U.S. Green Building Council's highest certification for sustainable development. An historic community benefits agreement emerging from the city and state review process for the new campus provides Columbia's local neighborhoods with decades of investment in the community's health, education and economic growth.

Columbia's growth during Bollinger's tenure has reflected a commitment to excellence in architecture, from Renzo Piano's master plan for Manhattanville, to Rafael Moneo's design for the Northwest Corner Building on the historic Morningside campus, to the new Campbell Sports Center at Baker Field Athletics Complex designed by Steven Holl.

As president of the University of Michigan, Bollinger led the school's historic litigation in *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*. These Supreme Court decisions that upheld and clarified the importance of diversity as a compelling justification for affirmative action in higher education were reaffirmed in the Court's 2016 ruling in *Fisher v. University of Texas*. He speaks and writes frequently about the value of racial, cultural and socioeconomic diversity to American society through opinion columns, media interviews and public appearances around the country.

Renzo Piano, Chairman, Founding Partner, Renzo Piano Building Workshop

Renzo Piano was born in Genoa in 1937 into a family of builders.

While studying at Polytechnic University of Milan, he worked in the office of Franco Albini. In 1971, he set up the Piano & Rogers office in London together with Richard Rogers, with whom he won the competition for the Centre Pompidou. He subsequently moved to Paris. From the early 1970s to the 1990s, he worked with the engineer Peter Rice, sharing the Atelier Piano & Rice from 1977 to 1981.

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Renzo Piano has received numerous awards and recognitions among them the Royal Gold Medal at the RIBA in London (1989); the Kyoto Prize in Kyoto, Japan (1990); the Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO (1994); the Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo, Japan (1995); the Pritzker Architecture Prize at the White House in Washington (1998); the Leone d'oro alla Carriera in Venice (2000); the Gold Medal AIA in Washington (2008); and the Sonning Prize in Copenhagen (2009).

Since 2004 he has also been working with the Renzo Piano Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of the architectural profession through educational programs and educational activities. The new headquarters was established in Punta Nave (Genoa), in June 2008.

In September 2013 Renzo Piano was appointed senator for life by the Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, and in May 2014 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Columbia University.

Carol Becker, Dean, Columbia School of the Arts

Carol Becker is dean of Columbia School of the Arts. Her research interests range from feminist theory and American cultural history to the education of artists and social responsibility. Her many books include *The Invisible Drama: Women and the Anxiety of Change*, *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society and Social Responsibility* and *Thinking in Place: Art, Action and Cultural Production*. In her most recent work, *Losing Helen*, the cultural critic turns to one of the most personal subjects, coping with the death of her mother. She was dean of faculty and vice president for academic affairs at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before coming to Columbia. She travels widely and lectures on issues of art and society. Since her arrival at Columbia, Becker has successfully brought to the School of the Arts some of the most interesting writers, artists, theater practitioners, filmmakers and film historians working today. The School also has further developed its curriculum for graduate and undergraduate students. As dean, she has helped to oversee the concept and development of the Lenfest Center for the Arts, which will make all the energy and excitement of the School visible to the Columbia community, the surrounding neighborhoods and the general public.

Deborah Cullen, Director and Chief Curator, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery

Deborah Cullen is director and chief curator of Columbia's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. Before joining Columbia in 2012, she worked at El Museo del Barrio, New York, for more than 15 years. Recently, Cullen curated *Passages: Robert Blackburn*, a retrospective on the Jamaican-American printmaker (Driskell Center, University of Maryland-College Park, 2014), *Interruption: The 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts* (International Center of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, 2013) and *The Hive: The Third Poligraphic Triennial of San Juan* (Puerto Rico, 2012). At El Museo, Cullen's numerous projects included *Retro/Active: The Work of Rafael Ferrer* (2010), *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis* (2009) and *Arte ≠ Vida: Actions by Artists of the Americas 1960-2000* (2008). She has received a fellowship from the Center for Curatorial Research, an Emily Hall Tremain Exhibition Award, a J. Paul Getty Curatorial Research Fellowship and a Faith Ringgold "Anyone Can Fly" Foundation Professional Scholars Grant, among others. Cullen earned her PhD from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, with a dissertation on printmaker Robert Blackburn.