

# Another Name for Design: Words for Creation

## The 6th International Conference of Design History and Design Studies, Osaka University, Japan, 24-27 October 2008

The Osaka ICDHS conference (<http://www.cscd.osaka-u.ac.jp/user/icdhs2008osaka/>) was the sixth in a series of design history conferences that started in Barcelona (1999), followed by Havana (2000), Istanbul (2002), Guadalajara (2004) and Helsinki/Tallinn (2006). The driving force behind these events is the working group under the name of International Committee of Design History and Studies, a team of academics from different parts of the world and a common aim of promoting design history and design studies in their various guises.

The Osaka conference was a rich and stimulating event, incorporating several parallel activities, such as exhibitions, tours and receptions, and was supported by a number of Japanese academic societies, professional associations and corporations. As professor Haruhiko Fujita, the Chair of the Conference Executive Committee, notes in his introduction to the volume of the conference proceedings, the Osaka conference marks the meeting of two different movements towards the internationalization of design studies, one coming from the East and one from the West. The origins of these movements may be traced back to the 1990s and the series of ICDHS conferences seems to highlight the enduring vitality and increased momentum of this internationalization process.

As it happens too often in recent conferences, this vitality is expressed by a large number of papers presented, which have to be organized along numerous parallel tracks or themes, usually preventing a single individual from having an overall impression of the conference. One has to be very selective and unfortunately end up having a partial view of the event, biased by personal choice. The volume of the proceedings is however a very useful tool in acquiring a more complete picture of research issues and developments in design history. The title of the conference indicates that the event was particularly focused on design etymology, the actual words used to describe and defend design in



*Image Caption: A kimono on show during the Fashion and Architecture workshop.*

various epochs and places.

A memorable highlight of the conference was the fashion workshop that took place in the new Naniwabashi station in central Osaka and looked at the similarities and differences between architecture, "the art of stability" and fashion, "the world of the ephemeral". The workshop explored a range of issues within the above spectrum, such as the spatial dimensions of fashion and the textural aspects of architecture. The discussion of parallel strategies and formal languages employed by the two domains opens up numerous possibilities for fascinating historical research as well as practical applications.

The next ICDHS conference will take place in Belgium, in September 2010. It will be co-convened by Javier Gimeno Martinez and Fredie Floré and will focus on crafts and their relationship to design. I am looking forward to another exciting event that will bring together a variety of design historical perspectives.

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