

2010 ITAA Fellow – Diane Sparks



Diane Sparks, Professor of Apparel Design and Production at Colorado State University, is an inspirational teacher of design and practice-based researcher who is known among her students for internationalizing their academic experiences. Dr. Sparks has served as a Visiting Professor at Hong Kong Polytechnic University and has received the Honorable Professor Award from Beijing Union University in Beijing, China. In 2000, Dr. Sparks was selected as a Fulbright Scholar in India. She has effectively integrated Asian culture into academic experiences at Colorado State University through leadership in the acquisition of over 300 kimonos comprising the prestigious Maxson Collection, now housed in CSU's Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising, and through her role as curator of eight Asian-focused exhibitions. Dr. Sparks emphasizes cross-cultural design transposition from traditional Asian sources to contemporary American wearable art in her research. Her innovative and highly aesthetic designs have resulted in multiple design awards including the ITAA Technical Merit Award, three times receiving the Lectra Best of Show Award, Best of Fashion, and Best Art. Through photo-documentation, Dr. Sparks' scholarship provides a forum to facilitate replication of design techniques among current and future artists. Her study, refinement, and application of pleating techniques inspired by Mariano Fortuny, which she has innovatively integrated with Asian themes into contemporary wearable art exemplifies the design scholarship for which she is known. With acceptance into 54 juried exhibitions, 18 funded projects as PI, and numerous peer-reviewed articles and papers, Dr. Sparks' scholarship has been well disseminated. In fall of 2015, a recent Shibori pleated design was acquired by the China National Silk Museum for the permanent collection. As Director of the Bohannon Summer Series in Design offered at Colorado State University, she has provided strong leadership for rigorous study of advanced hand-based techniques in textiles arts and design. Additionally, Dr. Sparks has provided valuable service to ITAA, notably in leadership roles to the Design and Aesthetics Committee and representing design on the ITAA Board.