

Professor Ian North

Citation for conferral of Doctor of Arts (honoris causa) Ceremony 11, Monday 5 May 2014, 2:00pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Professor Ian North.

Professor Ian North who is being admitted to an Honorary Degree of Doctor in Arts is a person who has rendered distinguished service to the visual arts community and to tertiary study in South Australia.

Ian North is an outstanding artist, curator and educator and he has made an exceptional contribution in each of these fields. He is first and foremost a highly regarded photographer whose work is held in all major national collections. He was Curator of Paintings at the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1971–80, then Foundation Curator of Photography at the Australian National Gallery from 1980–84. At the National Gallery of Australia, and at a time when photography was still waiting to receive due recognition in the museological world, he built up the highly-regarded collection of international and Australian photography. Due to Ian North's foundational work overseeing the largest acquisition program of photography then occurring in the world, the NGA now leads Australia in this area.

Professor North has also made an outstanding contribution to academic and related profession activities. While Professor of Visual Art at the University of SA he established the College Art Gallery as a professional gallery and laid the foundation for its transition to the nationally acclaimed Samstag Museum. His research for the exhibitions and accompanying publications on modernist artists Dorrit Black (1975) and Margaret Preston (1980) contributed to the 'recovery' of women artists. His re-evaluation of Hans Heysen's paintings in a 1976 exhibition set Heysen scholarship on new trajectory. His contributions across a range of important areas consistently show innovation and leadership. Since 2002, he has been a Visiting Research Fellow in the School of History and Politics at the University of Adelaide and has been an Adjunct Professor here since 2007.

His standing among his peers is such that he was President of the Art Museums Association of Australia (1982-84) and then President of the Art Association of Australia in 1997-1999. In this role he forged an amalgamation with New Zealand thus creating the Art Association of Australian and New Zealand, the peak trans-Tasman body today of art historians and theorists. His intellectual contributions are many, but his prize-winning 2007 publication *Visual Animals* is a standout in its originality and cross-disciplinarity in forging an intellectual relationship between art and neuro-aesthetics. Similarly his 1998 exhibition and publication *Expanse: Aboriginalities, spatialities and the Politics of Ecstasy* were at forefront of Indigenous/non indigenous art world dialogue.

To conclude Ian North has made an exceptional contribution to the Visual Arts in Australia as an artist, curator and educator at the highest level, and over the past decade has brought this record and his reputation to the University of Adelaide.

I am very pleased and proud to present to you Chancellor, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts (honoris causa) — Professor Ian North.