

Citation

Milton Moon AM

August Graduation 2008

Chancellor, the University of South Australia awards the Honorary Doctorate Degree to a recipient in recognition of distinction by the person in public service or service to the University, or in recognition of distinguished contribution by the person in a field of academic endeavour.

Mr Milton Moon AM is an extremely worthy recipient of this award for his outstanding contribution to the visual arts in South Australia, Australia and internationally, and his distinguished career as a master potter.

Mr Moon has been a potter for over fifty years and has played an instrumental role in the development of ceramics in Australia. He is very highly regarded within Australia and in the South Australian School of Art in particular. From 1969 to 1975 he was Senior Lecturer and Head of Ceramics at the South Australian School of Art. In this position he made a lasting mark on South Australian crafts practice and established the School of Art as a centre of excellence in the teaching of ceramics.

Mr Moon's interest in pottery began in 1950 while he was studying as a part-time post-war student of Painting and Drawing in Brisbane. His first major exhibition was in Brisbane in 1959, followed by his first major Sydney exhibition in 1963. He has exhibited widely in numerous one-person and group exhibitions in all of Australia's major centres. He has also represented Australia in exhibitions in many countries, including England, Germany, Japan, and in America where his work has been shown twice at the Smithsonian Institute.

He has also had a major one-person exhibition in Japan, where such honours are rarely awarded to foreigners. He has been welcomed for over 40 years with the highest regard and respect by the Japanese ceramic community, in a country where pottery is seen as one of the most pure and admired forms of craft and art.

Throughout his career Mr Moon has maintained an absolute integrity in his work, unswayed by fashion or passing trends. He has the humility to absorb influences and techniques from the ancient ceramic traditions of other countries, but the steadfastness and honesty to remain true to his personal vision of a unique Australian pottery style which reveals the earthiness of clay, the beauty of glazes, and the transforming power of the kiln.

Mr Moon is widely recognised and revered for his outstanding work as an artist-craftsperson, teacher and mentor and admired for his quest to incorporate, interpret and express a unique Australian identity and legacy through his work.

To date he has been recognised with a number of prestigious awards.

- In 1965 he was awarded a foundation Churchill Fellowship which took him to sixteen countries and in 1966 he was invited to address the World Craft Conference in Switzerland.

In 1974 Mr Moon was awarded a Myer Foundation Geijutsu Fellowship to live and work in Japan, and investigate the relationship between Zen Buddhism and Japanese culture. Japan is a country he revisited many times, and whose diplomatic relations with Australia were furthered by the hospitality and knowledge of both Mr Moon and his wife, Bette. Mr Moon served as a member of the Australian Japan Foundation from 1976 to 1981.

- In the 1984 Queen's Birthday Honours Mr Moon was made a Member of the Order of Australia as one of Australia's most senior potters.
- He was made a Life Member of the South Australian Crafts Council in 1990.
- In 1991 Mr Moon was accorded a retrospective of his work, covering a period of 35 years, at the Art Gallery of South Australia.
- In 1992 he was a recipient of an Advance Australia Foundation Award.

- The Australian Government, in 1993, awarded Mr Moon with an Australian Artists Creative Fellowship, one of the most prestigious art awards ever given by the Australian Government. Mr Moon used his fellowship to create a distinctive body of work highly influenced by the Australian landscape.
- In 2007, thirty years after undertaking the Myer foundation fellowship, Milton Moon published a book ‘The Zen Master, the Potter and the Poet’, an investigation into Japanese culture and the tea ceremony based on his own studies with a Zen Master during his fellowship in 1974 and his correspondence with the Australian poet Harold Stewart, a highly regarded figure in Japan. This book demonstrates the range and depth of Milton Moon’s understanding of Japanese culture and its significance in the development of his own work as a potter and complements other books he has written on ceramics.

- At the age of 82, Mr Moon has been designated a Master of Australian Craft by Craft Australia, in recognition of the significance of his work and his outstanding influence on generations of potters and ceramists.

Mr Moon's achievements as a notable and longstanding South Australian resident since 1969, his past teaching associations with the SA School of Art, and his commitment to assisting emerging artists, are deserving of the highest public acknowledgement by this University.

Chancellor, I present Milton Moon for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of these significant contributions to Australian culture.