

## Professor Emeritus Margaret Mary Manion

Margaret Manion is one of Australia's pre-eminent art historians, whose scholarship on Medieval and Renaissance art and, in particular the art of the illuminated manuscript, is acclaimed internationally. She was a student of the Loreto Convent at Normanhurst, New South Wales, and subsequently became a member of the Loreto Sisters. A graduate of Melbourne University and Bryn Mawr College, she has dedicated some thirty years of her life to developing the discipline of art history in this country.

As Herald Professor of Fine Arts from 1979 to 1995, Margaret Manion set directions in the teaching of art history that have had far reaching consequences. These include the introduction of specialist courses in art curatorship and cinema studies. The art history programme which she fostered at Melbourne has equipped a generation of students, many of whom now hold positions as directors, curators and academics in major art institutions in Australia and abroad. Her influence transformed the postgraduate programme. She herself supervised in a range of areas, including Australian and indigenous art.

Professor Manion's publications include the groundbreaking studies of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in Australian and New Zealand collections (1984, 1989); major books such as *Medieval Texts and Images* (1991) and *The Art of the Book: its Place in Medieval Worship* (1998); and specialist studies such as *The Wharncliffe Hours* (1981). Her most recent book, *The Felton Illuminated Manuscripts in the National Gallery of Victoria* (2005) breaks new ground, not only in bringing to light new research but also in the integration of text and image as a result of new technologies. In 2000, she was guest-curator of the major exhibition on the *Book of Kells* at the National Gallery of Australia. This exhibition also brought together fifty-five manuscripts from Australasian collections and attracted an audience of some 81,000 people. An international conference was held in her honour in 2001, with a festschrift entitled: *Reading Texts and Images: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Patronage in honour of Margaret M Manion*, published by Exeter University Press in the following year.

Margaret Manion's high academic standing in art history is reflected in the role she has played on Australian and international professional bodies. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (of which she was Deputy President) and of the Australian College of Education. She was a foundation member for Australia of the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art; a foundation member of the Società di Storia della Miniatura, Italy and served for two terms as Foreign Adviser to the International Center of Medieval Art, New York.

Professor Manion has also made an outstanding contribution to the academic and cultural life of the University. She was the first woman to be appointed to an established Chair in the University; and the first woman to chair the Academic Board. She served as Deputy Dean and Acting Dean in the Faculty of the Arts, and Associate Dean for Research. Her leadership in these roles included the development of supportive programmes for staff and postgraduate research; and the establishment of the Australian Centre. Her achievements across the University have included a major part in the establishment of the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

Margaret Manion has brought passion, generosity, dedication and creativity to her work as a scholar and teacher. In keeping with the mandate of the Herald Chair 'to communicate the principles of the Fine Arts to the community', she has fostered the visual arts. She was a trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria for fifteen years and its Deputy President from 1984 to 1990. She has been a member of the Council of Adult Education (1989-1994), the Victorian Arts Centre Trust (1980-90), the Australia Council (1981-1984), and the Victorian Tapestry Workshop (1992-2000). She is also honorary curator of Early Medieval and Renaissance Art at the National Gallery of Victoria and in 2004 was appointed Trustee emeritus of the National Gallery of Victoria in recognition of her continuing contribution to the Gallery.

Margaret Manion was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for her contribution to the arts and education in 1988. She received the Centenary Medal in 2001.