

Leigh Carmichael

Mona's DarkLab Creative Director & Keynote Speaker

Leigh Carmichael is the visionary and creative director of DarkLab, a creative project subsidiary of Tasmania's famously irreverent Mona (Museum of Old and New Art).



DarkLab is dedicated to creative projects outside the normal Mona sphere. Two of its main projects, the annual multi-arts festival Dark Mofo (winter) and Mofo (summer), have helped put Tasmania on the map as one of the most important cultural destinations in the world.

Voted as one of Australia's top ten most powerful people in culture by the Australian Financial Review Magazine, Leigh is on the board of the Australia Council for the Arts.

He speaks to audiences about removing barriers to creativity and the importance of cultural branding. He also provides a unique insight into the world of artistic performance, describing the evolution of the Mona brand along with the Mofo and Dark Mofo festivals.

More about Leigh Carmichael:

Leigh Carmichael worked as a graphic designer for companies including Crank Media, G3, and Roar Film. It was as a freelancer that he won the contract to design labels for David Walsh's Moorilla winery Muse Series and Moo Brew beer line. As David's vision evolved, the Moorilla site soon became known as Mona, and Leigh has been responsible for its creative direction ever since.

Under Leigh's direction as a team leader, Mona has grown to include a myriad of brands including two festivals, Mofo (summer) and Dark Mofo (winter). Since 2013, Dark Mofo has delved into centuries-old winter solstice rituals, exploring the links between ancient and contemporary mythology, humans and nature, religious and secular traditions, darkness and light, and birth, death and renewal. In 2016 the festival attracted more than 280,000 people and is fast becoming an event of international renown. Now annual events, both festivals incorporate music, art, interactive performance, and film, and have boosted Tasmania's tourism to unprecedented levels. Together, Leigh and David have helped put Tasmania on the map as one of the most important cultural destinations in the world.

As Creative Director, Leigh manages to dance a marketing tightrope within Mona's egalitarian, anti-formulaic and non-hierarchical modus operandi. Its anti-marketing ethos and unique take on cultural branding and creative risk has been referred to as "The Mona Effect" and its nature continues to evolve. You could say that Mona is characterised by irreverence, egalitarianism,

hedonism and mystery with a sense of discovery, and somehow, Leigh Carmichael has taken that all on board to create an accessible, celebrated brand, embraced by all walks of life.

Speaker Topics:

Creative Risk - Out of box thinking doesn't have to be an unattainable end goal. Embracing creative risk is about removing the barriers to creativity that are in place and working together to come up with new ideas and new ways of approaching challenges.

Personal Transformation - Perfect for smaller groups, Leigh talks through the creative process and how this can be embraced as part of your everyday mode of thinking. Creativity isn't just about scheduling time for a brainstorm in a boardroom, it's a way of thinking that shifts every aspect of your life.

Branding Design & Trademark - The Mona brand has redefined cool: it is irreverent, playful, distinctive, and brave. In this talk, Leigh details the creative evolution of the brand and how it has evolved in to multiple channels and events.

The History Of Mona - Leigh talks about the beginnings of Mona, his partnership with David Walsh, and the evolution of the brand, including the Mofo and Dark Mofo festivals.

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