

Questions and Answers

What is the Dark Mountain Project?

The Project started in the UK in 2009, when a small group of writers wrote the ‘Uncivilisation Manifesto’ in response to the failings of contemporary art and literature in addressing the scale of our entwined ecological, economic and social crises. 4 Anthologies, an album and 3 festivals later, the Dark Mountain Project has become an International network of writers, artists and thinkers who offer up a challenge to the foundations of our civilisation. It is not a political organisation. It is not a campaign. It is not an ‘activist’ project, seeking to use writing or art to ‘save the planet’. Rather, it is a creative space in which people can come to terms with the unravelling of the world without pretence or denial, a path to finding news stories and rediscovering old ones.

And what does Uncivilisation mean?

As The Dark Mountain folk say “Uncivilisation is a process: the stripping away of forms of thinking and ways of seeing which might be termed ‘civilised’ – those associated, for example, with control, measurement, management, disconnection from nature, reason-over-intuition and the like. Our art, our writing and our culture more generally is, we believe, *over-civilised*. As an alternative, we propose a form of cultural engagement which is rooted in place and time, takes an [ecocentric](#) view of the world and is not taken in by ephemeral promises of growth, progress and human glory”.

How did the *Slow Wing* emerge from Uncivilisation?

One of the principles of Uncivilisation is *celebrating writing and art which is grounded in a sense of place and of time*. For the past 200 years the predominant stories in Australia have been shaped by faraway places that are filled with castles, church musk and lyrical green hills, but that is not the Mythology of this place. We found the bridge between *Slow Wing* and Uncivilisation, by remembering that *stories belong to different places* (Diane Bell, *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin, 1998*). By holding a satellite workshop in Australia 16,750 kilometres (10,400 miles) from Uncivilisation as the crow flies, we can celebrate a diversity of stories and the places and languages that seeded them.

How did you get involved with creating an Australian event and what exactly is a satellite workshop?

When I was researching my Masters I discovered the Dark Mountain crew and really resonated with the Manifesto. Because my thesis mixed storytelling, deep ecology and creative practice, it was a natural step to approach Dark Mountain about creating *Slow Wing*. They loved the idea. So we’ve been discussing the workshop as an experiment with time and distance, and ways of connecting our continents on the weekend that doesn’t involve telecommunications. The workshop dovetails into the UK event by taking one of its main themes and burrowing into it intensively over 2 days, in slow time, thus how it got its name because it’s the slow wing of the festival.

Do you have to be a writer to participate in the workshop?

Not at all, we want to find stories from the deep and they can be found using whatever creative tools you wield. But you do have to be prepared to walk a couple of hours each day, participate in confronting conversations about the death of the world, and write (as the Manifesto says) with dirt under your fingernails.

***Slow Wing* takes place on Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th August, to find out more or register for the workshop:**

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