



FAWN, APHIDS (2022)

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About FAWN by APHIDS

4 min 59 sec

FAWN is a tender exploration of grief, reciprocity, care and popular culture. This video work is the latest iteration in an ongoing project by feminist art collective APHIDS that explores the contours of grieving a parent, as embodied by performer-participants with lived experience, including lead artist Lara Thoms.

In *FAWN*, performer-participants do not put words or narrative to their grief; they are not asked to monumentalise or eulogise. Rather, the work explores the intimacies of a life lived alongside the loss of a parent.

The performers first appear alone, dressed as Disney orphans and other characters in children's literature and cinema missing a parental figure, such as Pippi Longstocking, Nemo, Dumbo and Batman. As they dance, preen, or read, their performances are playful, even a little defiant – but as the work develops, we see them gravitate towards each other. Rather than following the heroes' journeys of a Disney orphan, for whom parental death is a single, instigating event that often leads to adventure, this tender performance meditates on the continuity of parental grief, and its slippery relationship with intimacy, family, and care.

The figures who occupy *FAWN* honour the myriad of daily, seemingly minor experiences of absence that follow the loss of a parental figure. The performers care for each other in a manner that is intimate, tender and sometimes even frivolous – from brushing another's teeth or applying band-aids, to holding each other. The ministrations between performers mimic parental care, bringing its absence into conversation with the presence of new, temporary, queered notions of intimacy and family. The work meditates on the reality that grieving a parent entails much more than just the monumental loss of a single person; it is the loss of a paradigm of care, either lived or imagined. This experience of loss reverberates throughout the minutiae of the everyday.

Despite its grave subject matter and refusal of linear narrative, *FAWN* is far from tragic. As much as it memorialises intimacies lost, the work is equally a celebration of the infinite and continuous possibility for intimacies in the plural.

Through its quiet, domestic choreographies of care, it reframes grief not as a linear process of healing, but as an ongoing series of adjustments and personal reconciliations – an experience that is inherent to the act of caring itself. *FAWN*, like so much of APHIDS' work, is fundamentally communal in nature. By refusing to narrativise the experiences of grief it embodies, *FAWN* shies away from framing loss as the diametric opposite of intimacy. By contrast, these diverse, collective experiences of mourning offer a doorway into new intimacies, new paradigms of care – new forms of family.

– Jini Maxwell; Curator, ACMI

About the artist



APHIDS creates urgent art in urgent times.

APHIDS

APHIDS is a 28-year-old artist-led experimental art organisation based in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia. Collaborative and future-focused, APHIDS is led by Co-Directors Lara Thoms and Mish Grigor with Executive Producer Anna Nalpantidis. The work of APHIDS is feminist, intersectional, angry, and funny; we bring artists into meaningful exchange with audiences through performance, screens, critical dialogue, and unpredictable encounters in the public realm.

Past APHIDS works have been presented in major venues in every state and territory in Australia, and in more unexpected places: Elderly homes in Finland, industrial zones in Bulgaria, Union headquarters and beamed into outer space. Our collaborators have included funeral directors, Uber drivers, scientists, and pop stars. Our projects promote open, accessible yet complex and rigorous encounters between artists and the public.

[Visit Aphids' website](#)

Credits

**[FAWN](#), commissioned by ACMI as part of a larger project
commissioned by **RISING**.**

Created by APHIDS

Lead Artist & Director **Lara Thoms**

Creative Producer **Anna Nalpantidis**

Dramaturg **Mish Grigor**

Performers **Liv Fay, Jason Hood, Panda Wong, Yoni Prior, Joshua Tavaras, Elena Gomez, Robert Draffin**

DOP **Alice Stephens**

Gaffer **Alec Barnett**

Costume Designer **Verity Mackey**

Hair & Make Up **Lou McLaren**

Editor **Tommy Thoms**



Sound Design **Tom Smith**

Collaborating Artists **Marleena Forward, Amrita Hepi and Xanthe Dobbie**

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