

APHIDS



ANNUAL  
REPORT 2023

APHIDS ACKNOWLEDGES THE  
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG AND  
BOON WURRUNG PEOPLES ON  
WHOSE LANDS WE LIVE AND WORK.

SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEVER CEDED  
AND WE PAY OUR RESPECT TO  
PAST, AND PRESENT ABORIGINAL  
ELDERS AND COMMUNITY, AND TO  
THEIR LONG AND RICH HISTORY OF  
ARTMAKING AND CULTURE ON THIS  
COUNTRY.



CONTENTS

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Who is APHIDS?                   | 06 |
| Values                           | 08 |
| Operations & Governance          | 10 |
| APHIDS in Numbers                | 12 |
| Artistic Directors' Report       | 14 |
| Chair's Report                   | 16 |
| APHIDS TRIAD                     | 18 |
| Keynote                          |    |
| <i>OH DEER!</i>                  | 20 |
| <i>GUTFUL: BUG IN THE SYSTEM</i> | 24 |
| <i>DEAD RICH</i>                 | 28 |
| In Repertoire                    |    |
| <i>THE DIRECTOR</i>              | 32 |
| <i>DESTINY</i>                   | 36 |
| Online                           |    |
| <i>APHIDS LISTENS</i>            | 40 |
| Features and Awards              | 44 |
| Reviews & Socials                | 46 |
| In Development                   | 48 |
| SUPERMASSIVE & SUPERDRIVE        | 50 |
| APHIDS Merch                     | 52 |
| Advocacy & Sector Development    | 53 |
| Acknowledgements                 | 54 |
| Donor Family                     | 55 |





# WHO IS APHIDS?

## PHILOSOPHY

APHIDS is proudly artist-led — placing artist's practice at the centre of all that we do. As one of Naarm/Melbourne's longest standing experimental art organisations, APHIDS makes work that is socially engaged, outspoken, and political. Spanning theatrical, gallery-based and public art contexts, our projects are inspired by urgent issues and a passionate belief in the social impacts of art.

Every project we make starts with lived experience. This is central to the role that we play in the arts sector and requires us to play with form, break down barriers for engagement with experimental practice, and reach across the blurry edges of social, political and cultural divides. Our works are often developed through

research and conversation with citizen experts who become paid collaborators as the projects evolve into multi-form outcomes that have long life spans.

From our home at Collingwood Yards on unceded Kulin lands, we bring artists into meaningful exchange with the public through performance, critical dialogue, events, films and publications, as well as knowledge sharing through workshops and intergenerational dialogue. Working collaboratively, we prioritise bold experimentation. In the process of making work with, alongside, and around each other, we are creating a collaborative practice that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In 2023, APHIDS was led by Co-Director's Lara Thoms and Mish Grigor, alongside Executive Producer Anna Nalpantidis.

### VISION

URGENT ART FOR URGENT TIMES:  
EXPLODING WHAT ART CAN BE AND  
WHO IT CAN BE MADE WITH.

### PURPOSE

TO BE CRITICAL AND ACTIVE IN  
SOCIAL CONCERNS BY MAKING  
OUTSPOKEN AND UNEXPECTED ART.

### MISSION

- TO CREATE DYNAMIC AND UNEXPECTED ART ACROSS ACCESSIBLE AND HIGH PROFILE PLATFORMS.
- TO COLLABORATE WITH PEOPLE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ARTS TO BRING ATTENTION TO SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONCERNS.
- TO INTERROGATE POWER STRUCTURES AND CREATE RADICAL WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER.

VALUES

APHIDS works through an intersectional feminist and queer methodology: a set of values that we use to make decisions; structure our company; run projects; communicate, and collaborate.

**WE ARE ARTIST LED:**

placing artists and collaborators at the centre.

**WE CENTRE LIVED EXPERIENCE:**

collaborating with and paying citizen experts — those with lived experience of the issues that we are investigating.

**WE CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO:**

making projects inspired by urgent contemporary issues, and motivated by a passionate belief in the social impacts of art making.

**WE WELCOME EVERYBODY IN:**

creating shared experiences that are accessible yet rigorous in concept, content and form.

**WE IMAGINE A BETTER WORLD:**

prioritising ethical practices and sustainability for ourselves, our sector and our society.

**WE SHARE KNOWLEDGE:**

privileging knowledge sharing and intergenerational exchange and valuing collaboration over competition.

**WE PUSH FORM AND STRADDLE PLATFORMS:**

making art across contexts: in the public realm, major institutions, festivals, galleries, online, and unexpected sites that attract audiences of all walks of life.

**WE BEND AND RESPOND:**

experimentation requires fluidity. We pay attention to when the temperature is shifting.

**WE MAKE IT TOGETHER:**

at the centre of art making is building community.







## OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

### STAFF

Lara Thoms, Co-Director / Co-CEO  
Mish Grigor, Co-Director / Co-CEO  
Anna Nalpantidis, Executive Producer (until September)  
Rebecca McCauley, Graphic Designer  
Freya Waterson, International Market Development Consultant  
Au Nguyen, FAME Group, Book-keeper

### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Angharad Wynne-Jones, Chair  
Georgie Meagher, Deputy Chair  
Monir Safari, Treasurer  
Rebecca Liley, Secretary  
Marc Goldenfein, Member  
Michaela Coventry, Member (until November 1)  
Meredith Martin, Member

### 2023 COLLABORATORS

APHIDS values its relationships with collaborators inside and outside of the arts. We proudly advocate for artists, and work hard to build a safe and lively collaborative environment where an eclectic set of skills and experiences can be held. We are humbled every day by the energy and enthusiasm that these people bring to our studios and spaces.

Sammaneh Pourshafighi, TRIAD Artist  
Amaara Raheem, TRIAD Artist  
Amrita Hepi, TRIAD Artist

Tony Yap, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Alison Andrews, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Bron Batten, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Jason Hood, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Bakani Pick-Up, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Josh Glanc, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Louise Mothersole, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Michael Hassell, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Roslyn Orlando, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Alana Fishman, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Elena Gomez, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Hallie Shellam, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Joshua Tavares, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Panda Wong, Artist/Citizen Expert

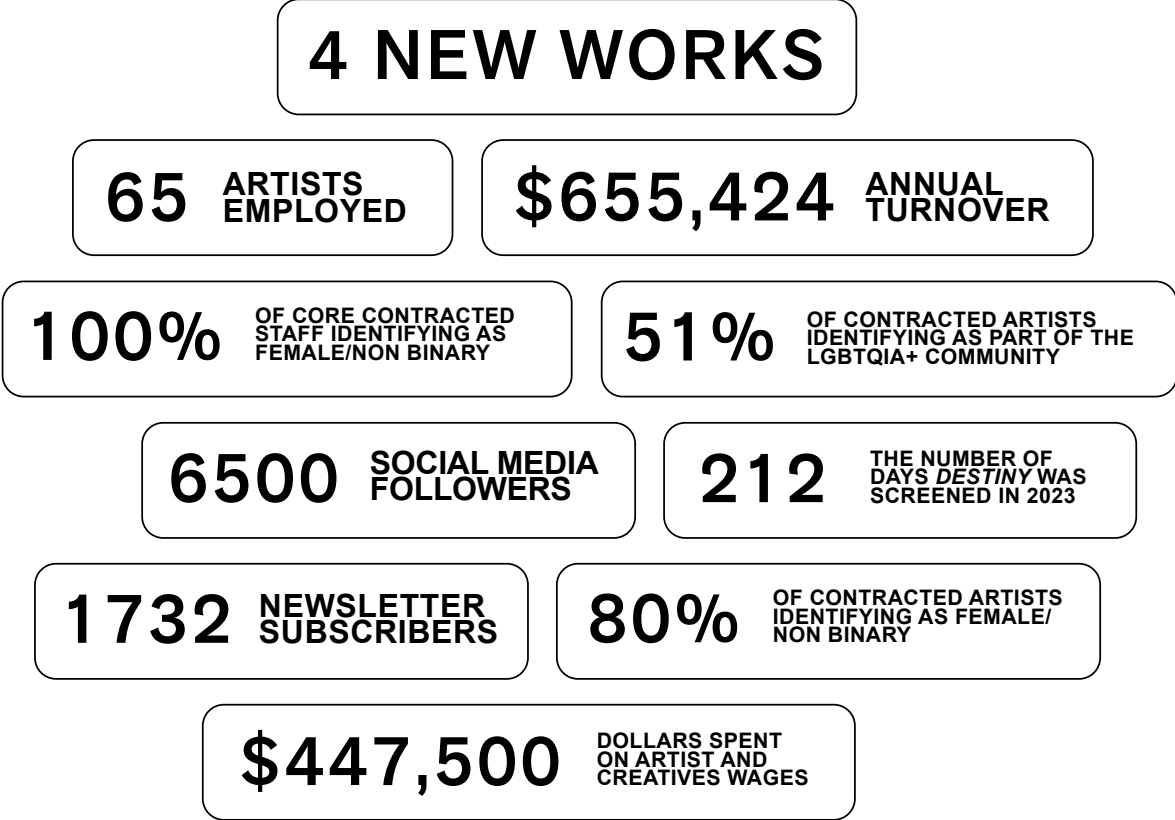
Robert Draffin, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Yoni Prior, Artist/Citizen Expert  
Tom Smith, Sound Design/Composition  
Soloman Thomas, Performer/Video Design  
Morven Macbeth, Performer/Video Operator  
Rob Curulli, Sound Design/Composition  
Marleena Forward, Cinematographer  
Gena Reiss, Director  
Lily Swan, Hair & Make Up  
Alec Barnett, Gaffer,  
Alana Fishman, Psychologist  
Cecily Rabey, Stage/Production Manager  
Zoey Dawson, Dramaturg  
Alice Dixon, Performer  
Sarah Aiken, Performer  
Catherine Ryan, Artist  
Marcus McKenzie, Artist  
Harrison Hall, performer  
Kathleen Campone, Performer  
Cora Hughes, Performer  
Lauren Stephens and Frederick Mora (Long Prawn), Artists  
Dennis Yong/Furmien, Chef  
Madeleine Thomas/Quiggi Design, Design  
Stefan Grudza, Stage Manager/Performer  
Verity Mackay, Costume Designer  
Sally Stone, Costume Assistant  
Katie Sfetkedis, Lighting Designer  
Nate Thomas, Production Manager  
Jenny Hector, Technical Manager  
Jason Maling, Outside Eye

Jamie Lewis, APHIDS LISTENS  
Anna Kennedy-Borissow, APHIDS LISTENS  
Priya Namana, APHIDS LISTENS

Sylva Venus Storm, SUPERMASSIVE Mentoree

Bryony Jackson, Photographer  
Michael Pham, Photographer  
Eugene Hyland, Photographer  
Takeshi Kondo, Videography  
Willian Octave Emile, Videography  
Savannah James, Video Editor  
Robbie Rotman, Website  
Matthew Gardiner, Website







# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR’S REPORT

2023 was a landmark year for APHIDS and our family of collaborators, with our largest ever co-commission *OH DEER!* premiering at RISING festival and then touring to TRANSFORM Festival UK. This work was made in collaboration with over 30 everyday people, artists and creatives, and it received critical and audience acclaim. It was particularly refreshing to have the support of an international partner to create a socially engaged connection with local UK artists, as each presentation is built through local workshops, interviews and improvisations. Performing at the beautiful Capitol Theatre and then the Leeds Playhouse were surreal and magical experiences. We thank our citizen experts for sharing their lived experience of losing a parent to make this special new work.

We also took another project about death on tour, to MONA FOMA Launceston, followed by PLATFORM arts Geelong and finishing in Austin, Texas for the brilliant Fusebox festival. Seeing *The Director* continue its long life is always a delight — new audiences open new lines of enquiry, and we are humbled by the long conversations at the end of each show. We were thrilled to be listed as one of the top shows of 2023 by The Guardian Australia.

Our Executive producer Anna Nalpantidis spearheaded a partnership with Melbourne’s newest festival *Now Or Never*, where we worked with robots, chefs, dancers and academics to question technology for *Gutful: Bug in the System* at the State Library. Down the road Lara and Mish performed a season at the National Gallery of Victoria as part of the 10 year annual exhibition Melbourne Now, extending APHIDS’ status in the visual arts community. Our local activity was very much noticed this year with APHIDS receiving the City of Melbourne’s

highest accolade for our sector: the Melbourne Award for Arts and Events, an unexpected and delightful win alongside brilliant organisations and inspiring individuals.

Throughout the year we were supported by our brilliant TRIAD, who offered artistic guidance as well as participating in our program, most recently with Amarra Raheem’s takeover of APHIDS LISTENS.

We said goodbye to executive producer Anna Nalpantidis in September. Anna treated the company with deep enthusiasm and commitment, and contributed significantly to APHIDS’ growth. Her hard work was especially felt when we heard the news that we had secured four year funding 25–28 from Creative Australia, which gives us new sustainability, and security. We thank Anna, and are grateful as we consider what this significant shift in our company might mean for our work and for the community.

In 2023 we are proud to have supported artists and creatives directly with almost half a million dollars toward fees and wages, at a time when the arts industry feels particularly precarious. We feel totally lucky to work with such stellar teams of creatives, alongside our rigorous board, and to be supported by our donor family and government partners. It’s been a powerful twelve months, and we are thrilled with all we have achieved.

— Lara and Mish







## CHAIR'S REPORT

Tour a work about death to two states. Then take it all the way to Texas. Make another work with people whose parents have died. Present that at Rising. Then tour it to the UK. Remake it there with local participants.

Watch two of the fiercest artists in the country navigate the complexities of shared artistic leadership. See them make space for three artists Sammaneh Pourshafghi, Amaraa Raheem, and Amrita Hepi, to work in the company as a TRIAD. Carry on despite the departure of an excellent executive producer in Anna Nalpantidis. Keep a PHD on the boil. GET 4 YEAR FUNDING for 2025. Parent. Partner. Mourne. Grieve. Be Afraid. Be Kind. Be Alive.

Some might say the job of good governance is about succession and money. And that is true to a point. But governance is also about witnessing and holding space and being accountable to and in our relationships.

So it's been an honour to take up the position of Chair at APHIDS, a company that is compelled in its DNA to make exceptional, experimental socially engaged art, and support the work of

Mish and Lara as they lead this 30 year old arts company. A big thank you to the exceptional Board Members including my dear friend and ex Chair Meredith Martin, who thankfully has remained on the Board and has provided great advice and support to us all in a year of big transitions.

I was proud to see APHIDS' huge contribution to the cultural life of Naarm being recognised in the winning of the Melbourne Award for arts events, City of Melbourne's highest accolade, *The Director* listed as one of the top shows in 2023 by Guardian Australia and prouder still to see them sign up as part of A Climate for Art union and divestment campaign and continue to Pay The Rent.

There's a lot at stake and the future awaits — APHIDS will take us there.

— Angharad Wynne-Jones



## APHIDS TRIAD

This year, we welcomed three pals into the APHIDS family. It was a formalisation of relationships we already had, with people we already knew and loved – collaborators whose role extended beyond the lifespan of a project. It was special to feel like we could keep growing and shifting how we thought about 'APHIDS' as a collective identity.

The APHIDS Triad is an artistic brains trust made up of artists Sammaneh Pourshafighi, Amaraa Raheem, and Amrita Hepi. The Triad assisted in programming decisions, offered community consultation, and provided curatorial care to APHIDS projects and operations. They also collaborated directly on various APHIDS keynote projects and public programs including *OH DEER!* and APHIDS Listens.

**Sammaneh Pourshafighi** is a queer genderfluid Muslim who arrived in Australia as a refugee after the Iranian Revolution. Sammaneh is a hereditary witch, producer and multidisciplinary artist. After performing in *GUTFUL: Revolt!*, Sammaneh Pourshafighi developed *Over The Borderline* as part of Arts House Culture Lab.

**Dr Amaara Raheem** is a Sri Lankan born dance-artist, writer and researcher. As part of her time as Thinker in Residence with APHIDS, she is researching methods of 'in-residence' as ways to reveal alternative narratives within colonial and decolonial systems. Amaara also curated and hosted APHIDS Listens this year.

**Amrita Hepi** is an award-winning First Nations choreographer and dancer from Bundjalung (Aus) and Ngapuhi (NZ) territories. Her mission as an artist is to push the barriers of intersectionality and make work that garners multiple access points. After working with APHIDS on *DESTINY* and *Easy Riders* she choreographed and performed in *OH DEER!*.



KEYNOTE

OH DEER!







## OH DEER!

**RISING FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE  
TRANSFORM FESTIVAL, UK  
15 – 17 June | 13 – 14 October 2023  
The Capital Theatre, Leeds Playhouse**

**'★★★★... Equally funny and  
devastating' – Catherine Love,  
The Guardian, UK**

A collection of performers who had all lost a parent gathered on stage, dressed as orphans from popular culture. There was Annie, Elsa, Frodo — a whole host of plucky parentless kids who had dusted themselves off and done extraordinary things. Followed by a camera, the performers were directed to act out scenes, slipping back and forth between the fictional characters they were inhabiting and their own experiences of loss.

After three months of group conversations, workshops and rehearsals APHIDS premiered this bold new work with 30 collaborators in Naarm, Melbourne as part of RISING festival and the APAM program at the magical Capitol theatre.

Three months later APHIDS reimagined *OH DEER!* by bringing together local performers in Leeds, UK with part of the original cast. Building in new stories and gestures, this iteration was our international premiere, and resulted in exciting collaborations, networks and artistic connections.

*OH DEER!* was commissioned through RISING's 2020 A Call to Artists initiative, a program supported by Creative Victoria and City of Melbourne and co-commissioned by Transform.

Director/Lead Artist: Lara Thoms  
Performers/Co-creators: Alison Andrews, Amrita Hepi, Bron Batten, Jason Hood, Bakani Pick-Up, Josh Glanc, Lara Thoms, Louise Mothersole, Michael Hassell, Morven Macbeth, and Roslyn Orlando Alana Fishman, Elena Gomez, Hallie Shellam, Joshua Tavares, Panda Wong, Robert Draffin, and Yoni Prior  
Choreographer: Amrita Hepi  
Costume Designer: Verity Mackay  
Costume Assistant UK : Sally Stone  
Lighting Designer: Katie Sfetkidis  
Video Design: Soloman Thomas  
Video Operator UK : Morven Macbeth  
Sound Design/Composition: Rob Curulli and Tom Smith  
Production Manager: Nate Thomas  
Production Manager UK: Cecily Rabey  
Stage Manager/Assistant Director Naarm: Cass Fumi  
Assistant Stage Managers: Stefan Grudza and Sylva Storm  
Tour Producer: Freya Waterson  
Original Dramaturg: Mish Grigor  
Original Producer: Anna Nalpantidis



## GUTFUL: BUG IN THE SYSTEM





GUTFUL: BUG IN THE SYSTEM

NOW OR NEVER FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE  
30 – 31 August 2023  
State Library Victoria

'Food for thought and bottomless  
archival worm holes' – Rochelle Fong

Part-performance lecture, part-intervention, and part-snack pack, this event looked at bugs, food, technology, and breakdowns in popular culture.

As part of the new Now or Never festival, *GUTFUL* was a dynamic experience featuring crickets, millennium bugs, and sneaky robot waiters. Drawing from the State Library Victoria archives, *GUTFUL* asked the question: Is it a bug or is it a feature?

Co-creators: APHIDS and Long Prawn  
Food: Long Prawn and Furrmien  
Performance lecture: Catherine Ryan  
Host/performer: Marcus McKenzie  
Performer: Sarah Aiken  
Design: QUIGGI  
Waiters/performers: Harrison Hall, Cora Hughes and Kathleen Campone  
Creative Producer: Anna Nalpantidis

An event that liberated the food-free zone of the library with waste-combatting chef Furrmien, performance artist and researcher Catherine Ryan, dance artist Sarah Aiken, design by Quiggi, and proceedings by experimental performer Marcus Ian McKenzie.

*APHIDS would also like to acknowledge the generous funding and support from partners; Now or Never and State Library Victoria.*





## DEAD RICH



DEAD RICH

MELBOURNE NOW, MELBOURNE  
5 – 19 August 2023  
Presented by the National Gallery of Victoria

*DEAD RICH* was a two-part performance lecture by APHIDS co-directors Mish Grigor and Lara Thoms. In two discrete and interlinked segments, *DEAD RICH* explored how lived experience infiltrates art practice in strange and unexpected ways. The lecture took its cues from autoethnographer and performance scholar Tami Spry's concept of the 'textualising body' – or what Spry describes as an unhierarchical 'collaboration between body, page and stage'. Through this lens, *DEAD RICH* attempted to use liveness, image, words, and bodies to portray and unpack the performance of class and death in present-day Australia.

The piece was segmented into two discrete halves. In the first half, Lara Thoms examined a life spent making art about death, and the economic ramifications of dying in Naarm, with the assistance of maths teacher Stefan Grudza. In the second half, Mish Grigor took on class consciousness through physicality, video and text. Over time Mish replaced herself with dancer Sarah Aiken, to contribute to this performance of abstraction.

*This project was commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria as part of the Melbourne Now Performance Program.*

Lead Artists/Performers: Lara Thoms, Mish Grigor  
Performers: Alice Dixon, Sarah Aiken, Stefan Grudza  
Voiceover: Catherine Ryan  
Outside Eye, DEAD: Jason Maling  
Dramaturg, RICH : Zoey Dawson





IN REPERTOIRE

## THE DIRECTOR







## THE DIRECTOR

MONA FOMA, TASMANIA, PLATFORM ARTS,  
GEELONG, FUSEBOX, USA  
17 – 19 February | 22 – 25 March |  
12 – 16 April, 2023  
Old Tafe, Launceston, Platform Arts,  
Geelong, Austin Playhouse, Texas

'A standout.. I was so stunned by the  
blurring of reality and theatre'  
— Sian Cain, *The Guardian*, Best  
Theatre of the Year 2023

APHIDS were thrilled to perform *The Director* regionally in Launceston and Geelong and internationally in Austin, Texas. Presenting as part of two major festivals and in partnership with a growing regional venue allowed for new audiences, exchanges, conversations and networks.

*The Director* is a performance starring charismatic ex-funeral director, Scott Turnbull, and artist Lara Thoms. Together the pair demystify elements of the death industry, using humour and first-hand knowledge to dig a little deeper on what happens after we go. Blurring the roles of funeral director and theatre director, Thoms and Turnbull ask each other to perform tasks, share knowledge and give feedback on each other's actions. Balancing macabre reality, playfulness and the tragic elements of death, the result is a spiky, funny and invigorating performance.

*The Director* is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Creators: Lara Thoms, Scott Turnbull, Aaron Orzech, Lz Dunn  
Performers: Lara Thoms, Scott Turnbull  
Designer/Technical Manager: Katie Sfetkidis  
Sound: Kenneth Pennington  
Producer/Tour Manager for 2023 seasons: Anna Nalpantidis  
Rehearsal Director: Mish Grigor  
Touring Technical Manager for US season: Jenny Hector



DESTINY

Doing a long shift without any breaks  
makes me tired as a dog.



DESTINY

ARTSPACE 52 ACTIONS TOUR  
April – June | June – October 2023  
Wangaratta Art Gallery, VIC, Jervis Bay  
Maritime Museum & Gallery, NSW

*DESTINY* (2021) is a moving-image work made in collaboration with on-demand or 'gig economy' workers, including rideshare drivers, food delivery riders and cleaners, that explores personal and global experiences of the platform economy. We were thrilled to continue our regional tour with Artspace as part of 52 *Actions*.

*This work was made possible by the Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government initiative.*

Lead artist/Director: Eugenia Lim  
Dramaturgs: Lara Thoms and Mish Grigor  
Producer & 1st AD: Alexandra George  
Worker-performers: Wasay, Cher Tan, Jessica Wen, Mirza Baig  
Composer: Corin lleto  
Director of photography: Alex Cardy  
Steadicam op & gaffer: Han Palmer  
Best person: Joel Green  
B-cam op: Bonita Carzino  
1st AC: Harrison Byrne  
Drone ops: Radar Kane, Josh Labita  
Choreographer: Amrita Hepi  
Production designer: Imo Walsh  
Wardrobe designer: Gemma Baxter  
Graphic designer/project admin: Rebecca McCauley  
Set fabricator: Stefan Polastri  
Art dept assistant: Karli Laredo  
2nd AD: Priya Pavri  
Interpreter: Ching Ching Ho  
Translation: Wasay, Eugenia Lim  
Sound recordist: Alex Wakefield  
Post sound facility: Folklore Sound & Music  
Sound designer: Thom Kellar  
Offline editor: Christine Cheung  
Online editor: Chris Tomkins  
Colourist: Dan Stonehouse, Crayon  
Crayon producers: Laura Hesse, Meg Doyle





APHIDS LISTENS







## APHIDS LISTENS

### ONLINE

Soundcloud, Anchor, Spotify,  
and Apple Podcasts

**APHIDS LISTENS is a 10 year alternative archive where artists shared a work they'd made and a work they'd loved.**

Curator/host: Amaara Raheem  
Theme music: Becky Sui Zhen  
Sound production: Nina Buchanan

Our 2023 trio of APHIDS LISTENS episodes was curated and hosted by the dynamic dancer and scholar Amaara Raheem, one of the APHIDS Triad. She skillfully guided discussions with extraordinary women who reshaped their fields and challenged existing ways of making art and culture in Australia. The podcast became a companion for contemplation, urging listeners to reflect on the potential for actions small and large that instigate systemic change.

Amaara brought her robust interrogation of ideas and charming ability to pick up on poetic possibilities and crossovers.

#### Episode 16 – Priya Namana

Artist and curator Priya Namana dives deep into concerts, borders, dewdrops and autonomy. Priya's practice is led by felt senses and lived experience.

#### Episode 16 – Jamie Lewis

Naarm based artist Jamie Lewis chatted about food as practice, migration and intergenerational exchange. Jamie is a Singaporean-Australian artist, curator, dramaturg and facilitator making site-responsive, autobiographical and participatory work.

#### Episode 17 – Anna Kennedy-Borissow

Anna's research investigates how arts engagement stimulated recovery and resilience in disaster-affected communities. Together Anna and Amaara spoke about site-specific art, the Strathewen bushfire memorial, and community engagement.





## FEATURES AND AWARDS

### MELBOURNE AWARD 11 November

We were humbled to receive the 2023 Melbourne award for Arts and Events. The Melbourne Awards are the City of Melbourne's highest accolade, celebrating the inspirational Melburnians who dedicate their time and energy to making this city a world leader. We were chuffed to be nominated alongside Melbourne Fringe, The Butterfly Club, Salam Fest and the Future Joy Club. We thank the 2023 judges Padmini Sebastian, Terry Wu, Judy Small, Bronwyn Johnson and Stephen Beers and The City of Melbourne for recognising our contribution to the city.

### MELBOURNE FASHION WEEK 2 – 27 October

*Big Things*, an exhibition as part of Melbourne Fashion Week provided local artists, designers, and makers with a platform to showcase their creativity and talent on a large scale. Held at Collins Square over three weeks *Big Things* featured work from Ange Jeffery, APHIDS, Emma Davis, Keedan Rigney, Melanie Katsalidis, Michelle Irwin, Millinery Jill & Michelle Mantsio.

APHIDS showcased a costume and publication from a work in repertoire, *HOWL*. *Big Things* was curated by Virginia Dowzer.





OH DEER!

'The performance pokes away at our culture's strange orphan fetish, which it undercuts with brutally honest glimpses of the reality of bereavement. The performers drop small but telling details, which are often equally funny and devastating. But they also leave plenty of space around their topic, as if to acknowledge the impossibility of ever being comprehensive. Through this delicate, simple and playful approach, Aphids make room for a real reckoning with what grief means.'

— *The Guardian*

'*OH DEER!* is full of humorous moments and we are reminded that coping with grief is often through humour — who knows how to react or behave when news of the macabre reality of life is delivered? The absurdity of life and death is presented here with poignancy and humour in a delicate balance. The result is a playful, resonant and life affirming festival event.'

— *Theatre Travels*

'For all its absurdity, Thoms thinks *OH DEER!* will connect with audiences whatever their own experience of death. "I don't feel like there's a singular experience that will come from this piece, but I hope that there's something for everyone, and there's room to have different emotional experiences throughout the...show and then in conversation afterwards."'

— *The Age*

THE DIRECTOR

'Exceptionally good...an often hilarious, intimate show that's also a sharp evisceration of how even funerals have been captured by predatory capitalism'

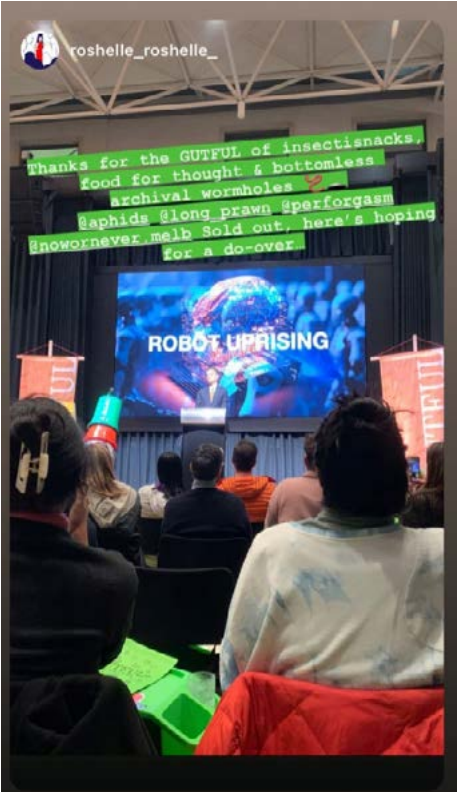
— Alison Croggon, *The Saturday Paper*

'It takes its audience on a hilarious and heart wrenching journey through the unspoken rituals of death, cremation, and ceremony preparation.'

— Hannah Foley, *The Conversation*

'It's a fascinating insight into how the deceased are prepared for viewing, ceremony and internment.'

— *Artshub*





IN DEVELOPMENT

OVER THE BORDERLINE

*OVER THE BORDERLINE* is a collaboration with cross-artform queer artist Samanneh Pourshafighi. In partnership with Arts House, this new performance will interrogate how border control, queerness and popular culture intersect — starting with how Australian refugee tribunals expect people to prove their queerness through a Western lens.

I AM INVISIBLE

*I Am Invisible* is a new socially engaged performance that explores care work, visibility and the healthcare industry. Drawing on interviews with Mish Grigor’s mother — a nurse — *I Am Invisible* asks why certain labour is undervalued, underpaid, and unnoticed; and considers what our society would be if all the hidden domestic and emotional workers disappeared for real. The work will combine Grigor’s signature humour, storytelling, and philosophical musings, along with a few disappearing acts.

PLAYING DEAD

A documentary team led by Director Gena Riess followed the cast of *OH DEER!* throughout 2023. The film is a one hour character-driven, multi-narrative documentary that intimately follows the transformative journey of a diverse group of strangers who have all lost a parent. Joined by cinematographer Marleena Forward and producer Madeleine Martiniello this work is set to premiere in 2024 in film festivals globally.





# SUPERMASSIVE AND SUPERDRIVE

SUPERMASSIVE supports interdisciplinary artists to engage with the APHIDS ethos of creating urgent art for urgent times, with a program of mentorships, workshops, internships and exchange.

## SUPERMASSIVE Mentorship — Sylva Venus Storm

Sylva Storm is an interdisciplinary artist practicing on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. Their practice is engaged in the intersectional membrane between corporeality and relationality. They are interested in where the body meets the artwork, resulting in a charged site for mark making and dialogue. Sylva did a production internship on *OH DEER!* as part of RISING for their RMIT studies and then toured the work with the company to Transform Festival in Leeds.

## SUPERMASSIVE Drop In Centre Collingwood Yards, December 14

APHIDS invited experimental artists to book in for a free SUPERMASSIVE session. APHIDS sought form-disrupting Victorian-based artists to meet and discuss their practice with Co-Directors Mish Grigor and Lara Thoms in an individual (or collective) 30-minute session in the studio.

Together they connected artists to the places, spaces, and people to take their work to the next level.

SUPERDRIVE is APHIDS' program where co-directors join mid-career women and non-binary artists to build a project to the next level. These include dramaturgy, directing, producing, auspicing and strategic supporting roles to co-build a future for new work. 2023 projects included:

## RINSE

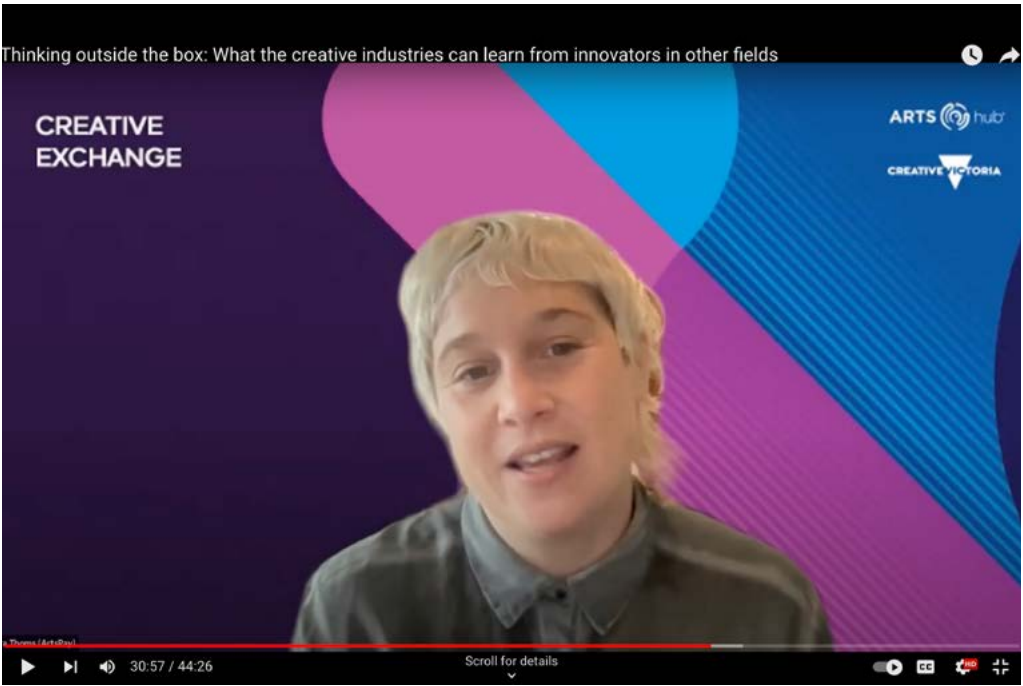
A solo dance work by choreographer and First Nations artist Amrita Hepi that explores the romance of beginnings and what happens next, when those initial thrills begin to fade and inertia takes over.

Directed by Mish Grigor, Fusebox Festival, USA.

## THE READ

*Pieces for Small Spaces* is a program that Lucy Guerin Inc. has produced annually since 2005. Three choreographers are invited to create a short dance work, with the aim of developing their choreographic ideas and their own personal approach to the choreographic process. Mish Grigor was invited to dramaturg new work by triad member Amrita Hepi, whose piece *The Read* explores the body in professional service in a collaboration between a choreographer/dancer and a sex worker.





**ART-MERCH – OH DEER!**

Like all APHIDS projects, our art-merch is a labour of love between many collaborating artists and minds.

APHIDS X COCO STAR created *OH DEER!* hoodies, t-shirts and combs using locally sourced materials and makers. Working with Lauren Stephens of Practice Studio Practice these hoodies included specially flocked material to evoke a Bambi esque deer aesthetic and embroidered ribbon saying 'Touch me in the Mourning.'

All APHIDS merch is sold through our online store at Open Hours.

**PUBLIC TALKS & ADVOCACY**

- Mish Grigor**
- Attended *Class Concerns: Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy* conference, Glasgow
  - Green room panellist – Contemporary and Experimental Performance awards
- Lara Thoms**
- APAM Panel presenter – *Artist Built Independence*
  - Delegate, Fusebox delegates program (USA)
  - Guest lecturer, New York University, *Leading Global Theatre* (USA)
  - Selection panel for Midsumma and Australia Post Art Award
  - Selection panel for Now or Never festival program
  - Delegate, Australian International Documentary Conference
  - Workshop Leader, Midsumma, Queer Methodologies
  - Presenter, Creative Victoria Webinar – *Thinking outside the box: what the creative industries can learn from innovators in other fields*
  - Liveworks curator – *Nighttime Righttime*, Performance Space (NSW)

- Anna Nalpantidis**
- Green room awards chair Contemporary and Experimental Performance
  - Presenter – *Producing Fundamentals*, Theatre Network Vic
  - Delegate, APAM
  - Fusebox delegates program (USA)
- All directors support Pay the Rent (First Nations sovereignty) on a monthly basis.**



## FUNDING PARTNERS



## PROJECT PARTNERS



## SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS



APHIDS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES OUR MANY COLLABORATORS, SUPPORTERS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR ONGOING PROGRAM.

*APHIDS is supported by; the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding & advisory body; the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and Business Victoria; the City of Melbourne through its Arts & Culture Investment Program; and through our presenting and commissioning partners and venues.*

## DONOR FAMILY

In 2023, we asked our donor family to help us make urgent art and received \$11,769.00 in donations from over 20 donors via our Shout For Good campaign.

APHIDS thanks our donors, whose generosity and support makes our art possible:

Kelly Mackerer, Angharad Wynne-Jones, Katherine Sulan, Julius Rath, S Dudley-Bateman, D Koop, James Sormann, Meredith Martin, Diana Goldenfein, Lydia Dobbin, Simon Abrahams, Marc Goldenfein, Filanthy Nalpantidis, Eugene Schlusser, Joel Stern, Henry Wolff, Ulanda Blair, Hannah Fox, Bradley Spolding, Michelle Reichinger, Georgie Meagher, Michaela Coventry, Bruce Gladwin, David Ralph, Ruby Schwartz, Thomas Thoms, and Emma McManus

APHIDS IS PROUDLY  
PART OF A CLIMATE  
FOR ART ACTION UNION



URGENT **ART** FOR  
URGENT **TIMES**

