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Fifteen Fragile Absolutes

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working titles, works in progress, recent work and ideas for future work

• *all the words in italics* • from Slavoj Zizek's book *The Fragile Absolute or, Why the Christian legacy is worth fighting for?* published by Verso, 2000

Alan Phelan

The Process Room

West Wing, First Floor Galleries, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

5-18 May, 2008

www.alanphelan.com

www.motherstankstation.com

for more information on the artist

fully endorsing what one is accused of • should • there is no Christ outside of Saint Paul • persist • down there • Mitteleuropa • flair • finesse • Europe's ghost • displaced racism • Underground • The Balkans constitute a place of exception with regard to which the tolerant multiculturalist is allowed to act out his/her repressed racism • respect • The Phantom Menace • Star Wars • nothing but • global reflexivization/mediatization generates its own brutal immediacy • Id-Evil • Id-Evil • class • multiculturalist • hatred • tolerance • even more hatred • political •

Artists' Residency Programme (ARP)

The function of the Process Room is to reveal the processes in the creation, exhibition and consideration of contemporary art, which are often hidden from the public. The Process Room facilitates access to the ongoing practice of artists currently on residence at IMMA. This residency programme is located in the studios adjacent to the main Museum building where several studios are allocated to both national and international artists. The Process Room is used on a rotating basis and artists participating on ARP receive a two-week period to display their developing projects from their studio practice.

For more information on any aspect of the Artists' Residency Programme please contact Janice Hough, Artists' Residency Programme Co-ordinator, tel: + 353-1-612 9905 or email: janice.hough@imma.ie, web: www.imma.ie

Phantom Blanket, 2008
orange wool blanket

its own ghosts • *The Communist Manifesto* • *The Manifesto* • wrong • *The Manifesto* • *The Manifesto* • today • *The Manifesto* • sexual • *The Manifesto* • 'spiritualization' of the very material process of production • *The Manifesto* • this reduction of all heavenly chimeras to brutal economic reality generates a spectrality of its own • this • today • both sides are wrong • outside • capitalist • ideological • the only possibly framework of the actual material existence of a society of permanent self-enhancing productivity • utopian • radical enough • repeat • repeat • without • premodern • object • cause • obstacle • *Vertigo* • objet petit a • cause • make the cause of desire directly into our object of desire • *Vertigo* • the object of desire deprived of its cause • distance • desire • coincide • for itself • from which • object •

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American Partisans, 2008
(photograph by Ralph Gifford 1910-1919
from scanned nitrate negative,
courtesy of Oregon State University Archives)
colour photograph, leatherette, red plastic frame

jouissance • *Seminar XX: Encore* • objet petit a • jouissance • jouissance • *Breaking the Waves?* • jouissance • jouissance • reports • jouissance • jouissance feminine • without exception • not yet • break out • *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* • other • completed • all • incomplete • feminine • am also nothing • higher than completion • not • *Encore* • violate/transgress its prohibitions: • simply to do what is allowed • obeying it thoroughly • fulfil • the subject is actually 'in' (caught in the web of) power only and precisely in so far as he does not fully identify with it but maintains a kind of distance towards it • his own partner • *Ransom* • *The Usual Suspects* • striking at himself • *Moses and Monethism?* • ucole freudienne de Paris • subject • je ne sais quoi • object • [agalma] • agalma • une vraie femme • *Medea* • *Beloved* • *Beloved* • *Beloved* • kill • *Sophie's Choice* • *Sophie's Choice* • not • ethical • modern • abstaining [Versagung] • not • par excellence? • suspends this exception of the Thing • sacrificing (also) the Thing itself • out of her very fidelity to them • suspension • intersection • masculine • political • *Antigone* • ate • sine qua non • renounce • the • for whom • perverse • happy • *The Marriage of Figaro* • *The Shawshank Redemption* • hear I the light? • hear the light • see the voice • the Absolute appears • *Figaro* • qua • look as if we have seen a ghost •

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Bent, 2008
paper, EVA glue, metal exhaust, balsa, cocktail sticks, wood, fibre glass moulds

*Darwins' s Dangerous Idea • The Subject – Encore • against your will? • false
• lie • against your will? • she knew perfectly well that if she answered 'No', the
judge would order enforced transfusion • statement • enunciation • true to
herself • without • disregard • does not deceive • irrelevant • The Institute for
Judaism and Science • literally • indifference • even if it helps you! • pace •
against • doing • is • do not feel any guilt • it is only truth that matters • always-
already mediated by the (repression of the) desire to transgress the Law • are
• is • desire • act • Murder in the Cathedral • this • their • not •*

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*Buds, 2008
plaster, paint*

*it • it • it • more! • did • drink the Nothingness itself • objet petit • opposite •
'culturalization' of the market economy itself • place • objet petit a • horror
vacui • creating empty, unoccupied place • occupant without a place •
correlative • only an element which is thoroughly 'out of place' • can sustain
the void of an empty place • rien n' aura en lieu que le lieu • suicide • imaginary
• imagined • Real • passage a l' acte • resists • cannot • resists • internal •
passage a l' acte • direct • directly • same • passage a l' acte • passage a l
'acte • symbolic • almost-nothing • opposite • this • L' objet du siècle • future
anterior • rien n' aura eu lieu que le lieu • takes place • save • its own • a la
'objectively' ugly • 'represents' the function of ugliness • irrelevant •
Verweisung • The Last Tycoon • But • behind • desublimation • directly
depicting • had to be accomplished • the Void itself • trash itself • within •
directly •*

3

*World War 1 in colour,
narrated by Kenneth Branagh, Episode 1 Catastrophe,
free with the Daily Mirror, 2008
DVD
(public screening prohibited)*

objet petit a • The Manifesto • Stalker • not • objet petit a • Oedipus at Colonus • Oedipus the King • tragique • moque-comique? • Phemonology • tragique • moque-comique? • Nephew of Rameau • Eighteenth Brumaire • repeats • grandeur • passage • from which • the • avoid • emphasizing • assuming • not • Rameau • not radical enough • remains the same • nothing • money • das Selbst • sustains • do • objet petit a • objet petit a • objet petit a • expected • as such • two • objet petit a • tragique • moque-comique • objet petit a • objet petit a • symbolic • identification with the way the Other(s) misperceive(s) me • misperception • objet petit a • all the time • horse • look like • resemble • the guarantor of non-identity • signifier • ad infinitum • nothing • as such • absence • object • all • excluding himself in •

4

*Small Wall, 2008
polyurethane foam, latex, ink*

turns around • defence • superego • Das Ding • das Ding • beyond • jouissance • You may! • Du kannst, denn du sollst! (You can [do your duty] because you must [do it]!) • You can, because you must! • You should [you must], because you can • authoritarian • totalitarian • really want • enjoy doing your duty • duty to enjoy yourself • act •

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*Blurred Chicken, 2008
paper, EVA glue, metal, paint*

Crowd Psychology • qua • wo es war, soll ich werden • interrupt the circular logic of re-establishing balance • because he is the lowest outcast • hate the beloved • what dimension • agape • singular point of subjectivity • sublimation • violence • death drive • 'love believes everything – and yet is never to be deceived' • les non-dupes errant • extremely fragile • idealization • sublimation • work • this • Bhagavad-Gita • not • work • alternative • the proper Christian uncoupling suspends not so much the explicit laws but, rather, their implicit spectral obscene supplement •

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*Dirt Car Stack, 2008
colour photograph*

does • Die Süddeutsche Zeitung • Nineteen Eighty-Four • the problem with 'militaristic humanism/pacifism' lies not in 'militaristic' but in 'humanism/pacifism' • The New York Times • the full-scale armed resistance of the Albanians themselves • helpless • cast off this helplessness • they would remain victims • perverse • Heroine • in so far as it remains a victim • uncanny • The Sun • Bild • stepping down • what would have happened if Lafontaine had not been forced to step down? • nothing • second • there is no second way • alternative • first and only • global capital with a human face •

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*Wrong Box, 2008
die-cut cardboard, poster, glue*

not • its own • symbolic history • 'spectral', fantasmatic history • Moses and Monotheism • Encore • not • not • more real than reality • logos • The Woman and the Ape • Blade Runner • unbearable ideal couple of a male ape copulating with a female cyborg • My Best Friend's Wedding • they • performing a fake appearance • sublime • shine through • Dr. Caligari • Woman in the Window • The Strange Affair of Uncle Harry • All-Movie Guide • Woman in the Window, Uncle Harry • engages • we were •



Cabbage, 2008
paper, EVA glue, polystyrene

agape • Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation • fake • cosa nostra • ignorance • break • Seminar XX: Encore • directly coincide • exceptions • no • only • Seminar XX • jouissance • jouissance • 'sinthome' • Vertigo • sinthome • sinthome • charity • Seminar XX • qua • a contrario • Parsifal • backwards • not • rupture • Parsifal • global • universal • immediate • directly • irrelevant • agape • maya • separation • throws the balanced circuit of the universe off the rails • Star Wars I: The Phantom Menace • how did Darth Vader become Darth Vader • Ben Hur • Star Wars • correct • it lacked the dimension of radical Evil • in favour of the Good? • did • Weltalter • Ent-Scheidung •



Bad Glue, 2006
newsprint, PVA, card, framed

Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus • coitus a tergo • externally imposed, contingent and traumatic • semblable • qua • hystericizes • jouissance • anti-narrativist • Rights to violate the Ten Commandments • lie • kill • directly • not • beyond • semblant • inhuman • Dead Man Walking • qua • and • Yes! • defences • qua • generated • before my countenance •

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reality • did • excess • logos • act • Weltalter • Weltalter • logos • Weltalter • mythos • logos • act • Ent-Scheidung • Weltalter • Ent-Scheidung • the highest Deed of my self-positing • Weltalter • logos • logos • Ent-Scheidung • Life is Beautiful • Celebration • jouisseur • Celebration • Urvater • Celebration • Fragments • jouissance • somewhere there is full, unconstrained enjoyment? • suspend the agency of the symbolic Law/Prohibition • outside the constraints of the (symbolic) Law • desire • guilty • anxiety • not • Festen • Life is Beautiful • against • Urvater • this • Grund • act? • 'the kind of error • adequatio • adequatio • adequatio • this • modi • qua • qua • feign to feign • lie in the guise of truth itself • not • and • lethe • derangement [Ver-rückhung] • ontological • Treatise on Human Freedom • ontological madness • sine qua non •

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Lady from Mars, 2008
high density insulation foam, hole filling foam, clay, paper, EVA glue

The Other Hand of Victory, 2008
Lidl wooden modelling hand, filler, glue, paint

derangement • Letter on Humanism • proton pseudos • has • lethe • alethia •
fantasy • he is not aware how Jews really seem to him? • this is not how things
really seem to you • phenomenal • inaccessible • inaccessible phenomenal •
empty, non-phenomenal subject • phenomena that remain inaccessible to the
subject • phenomenon • monstrosity • grounds • sustains • The Fundamental
Concepts of Metaphysics • are • logos • logos • Naturphilosophie • Satyricon •
Gemeinschaft • Gesellschaft • historical • historical • the present itself •
ourselves •

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Club and Fred, 2008
paper, EVA glue, varnish, toner

act • Ent-Scheidung • Gap • because bosses do not wear them • never was
• beyond • trauma • not • excluded • temporal • eternal • temporal event •
eternity itself • repeat • change (undo the effects of) eternity itself • not •
give up the ghost • give up their ghost • confession • Moses and Monotheism
• confess • betray • trauma • agape • agape • superegotize • agape • eros •
within the confines of the Law • agape • Blue • agape • Vertigo • Blue • Vertigo
• Blue • freedom • expansion • agape • itself • meaningless • identity • the • is
• appearance • this • appearance • appears through • hegemonic imaginary
• qua • appearance • How do • stand with regard to – in the eyes of –
Schelling? • opposite • What does • mean in the eyes of God? •

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Hungarian Italian Abstraction, 2008
customised mousemat