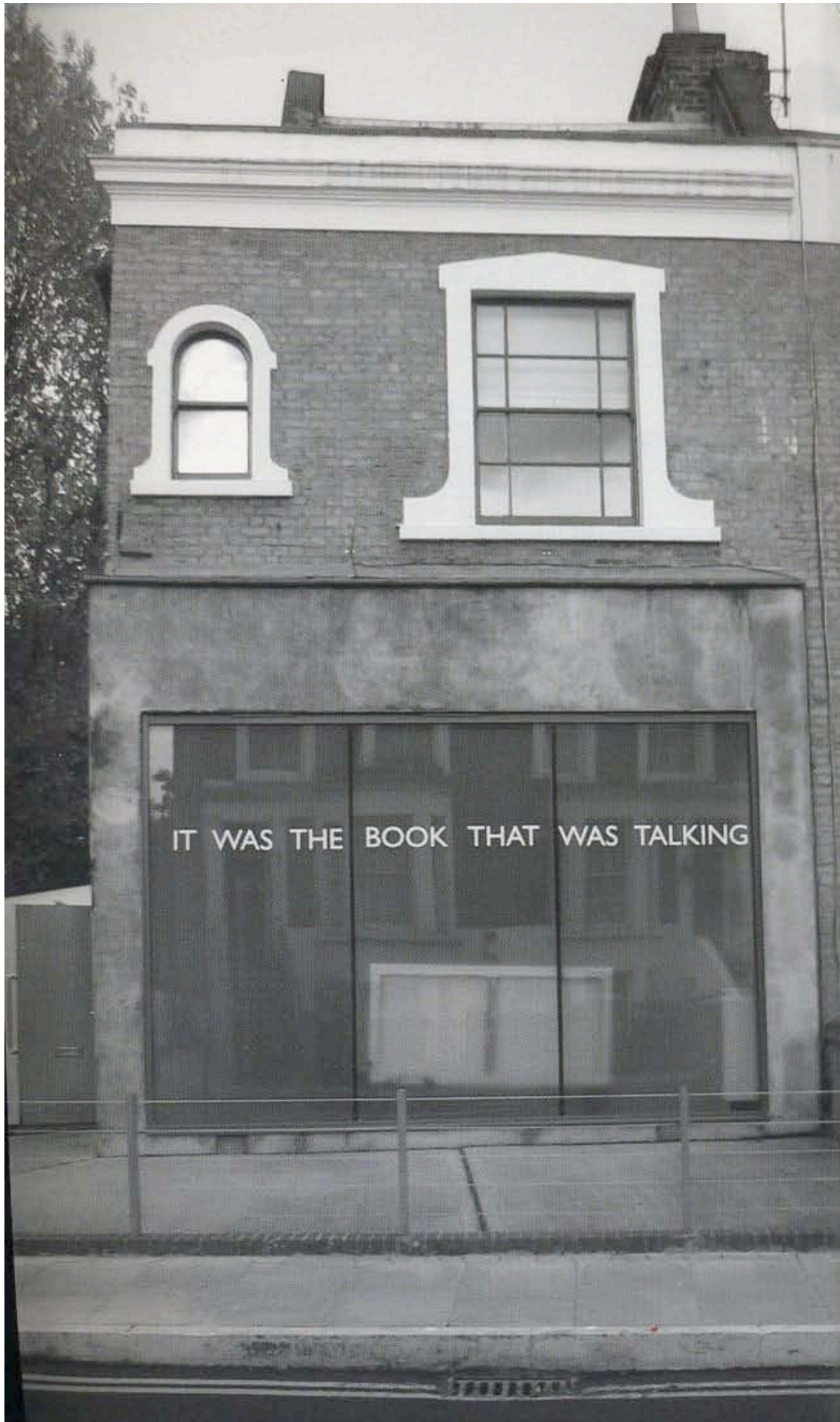


READING ROOM

Maria Chevaska & Simon Morley



MOCA
London



IT WAS THE BOOK THAT WAS TALKING

Revolution
Possession
Obsession
Confusion
Poison
Understanding
Mediation
Interpretation
Power
Knowledge
Escape
Relationship
Invocation
Identification
Contemplation
Potential
Crime
Blasphemy
Emancipation
Danger
Structure
Diversion
Escape
Obligation
Pleasure
Pain
Hunger
Research
Work
Duty
Achievement
Recitation
Investment
History
Memory

A wall of art-books in an empty well-lit room in south London.

A space for reading and a space for projects.

In **Reading Room** we've tried to improvise on some of the themes we saw flashing-up amongst the many book-spines.

Simon Morley

Rosa, Leon, Vladimir, Vladimir, El, Kasimir, Kurt, Clara, Marcel, Franz, Marcel, Mary, Svetlana, Anna, Rainer, Tristan, Friedrich, Paul, Mary, Pablo, Piet, Antonin, Virginia, Piero, Yves, Samuel, Natalie, Eva, Joseph, Lucio, Gego, Alighero, Bruce, Lygia, Mira, Andy, Ana, Hanne, Katarzyna, Gunther, Blinky, Vaclav, Clarice, Helene, Hans, Louise, Nelson, Susan, Ilya, Thomas.

Maria Chevska



To read good books is like holding a conversation with the most eminent minds of past centuries and, moreover, a studied conversation in which these authors reveal to us only the best of their thoughts.

Left: installation entrance view
Above: *Social Significance of Abstract Art* (Herbert Read)
Simon Marley, 2005

READING AS REVOLUTION

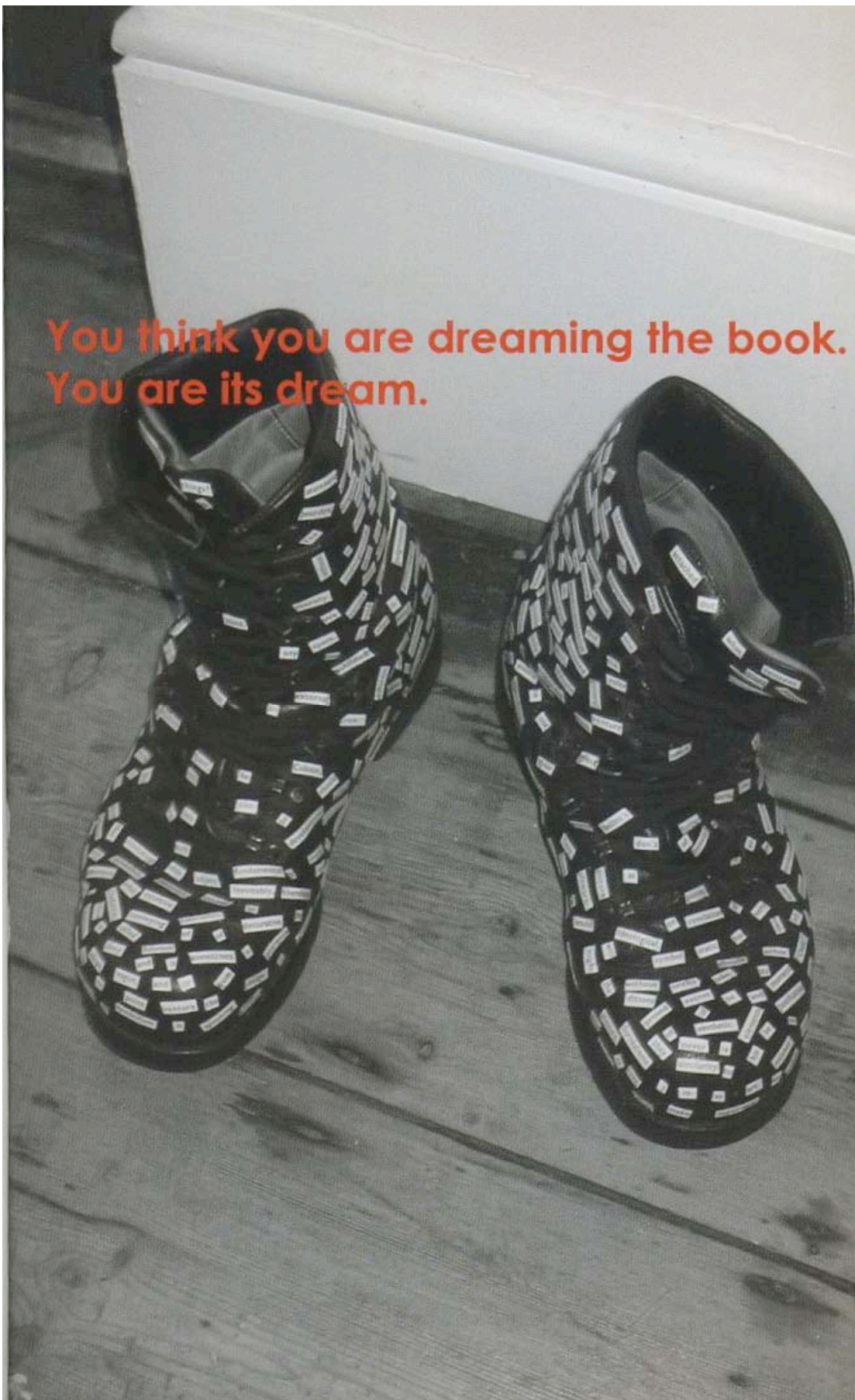
The word 'revolution' can have a different etymological meaning to the one it is associated with today. Scenes from the velvet revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989 come to mind. Or, looking further back into the history of the twentieth century, it is the epic of the Russian Revolution that is most clearly brought before our eyes. Here was a revolution that not only changed the political landscape of Russia (and as subsequent events unfolded, the political landscape of that half of the continent which we call Central and Eastern Europe), but also, significantly for this exhibition, the visual and artistic language of the avant-garde – that grouping of artists who were seen to be at the forefront of artistic and social development. Yet, 'revolution' also has this older meaning – one which is now largely lost and forgotten. It can also refer to going back 'full-circle', to the beginning, as in a rotating wheel.

Chevská and Morley's 'Reading Room' can be read through both these meanings. Firstly, and most obviously, they evoke the participants and the political rhetoric of the central and eastern European avant-gardes and the revolutions which spawned them. The support for Chevská's slide piece 'Die Parteischule 1910' is literally formed of stacks of books whose themes are centered on the revolutionaries of 1918. In another work, 'Now all at once', the viewer is invited to sit upon a stool in order to view the statements painted on a canvas that is positioned in front. As in the previous piece books are used as a support, this time placed under the stool so that it is us – the viewer – who is supported by literary and political narratives that the books represent. Yet, by the act of sitting a viewing the work our physical presence slowly crushes and distorts the revolutionary idealism that the books represent. This, perhaps, may be read as a comment upon the failure, in the face of our fallible natures, of the utopian ideals that the Russian revolution espoused. Rosa Luxemburg's ghost hovers over the room, whilst the presence of Marx, whose name fills the height of the gallery (Signature Painting: Karl Marx), at once dominates the installation and is pushed away into a corner, perhaps signifying a certain crisis in how the political left copes with the legacy of socialism.

Yet, there are other narratives at play here. If Chevská and Morley are, as they state, interested in using 'Reading Room' in order to explore the relationship between literature and painting, between historical narratives and contemporary culture, then they can also be seen to be engaging with a specific art-historical narrative and its return to contemporary culture.

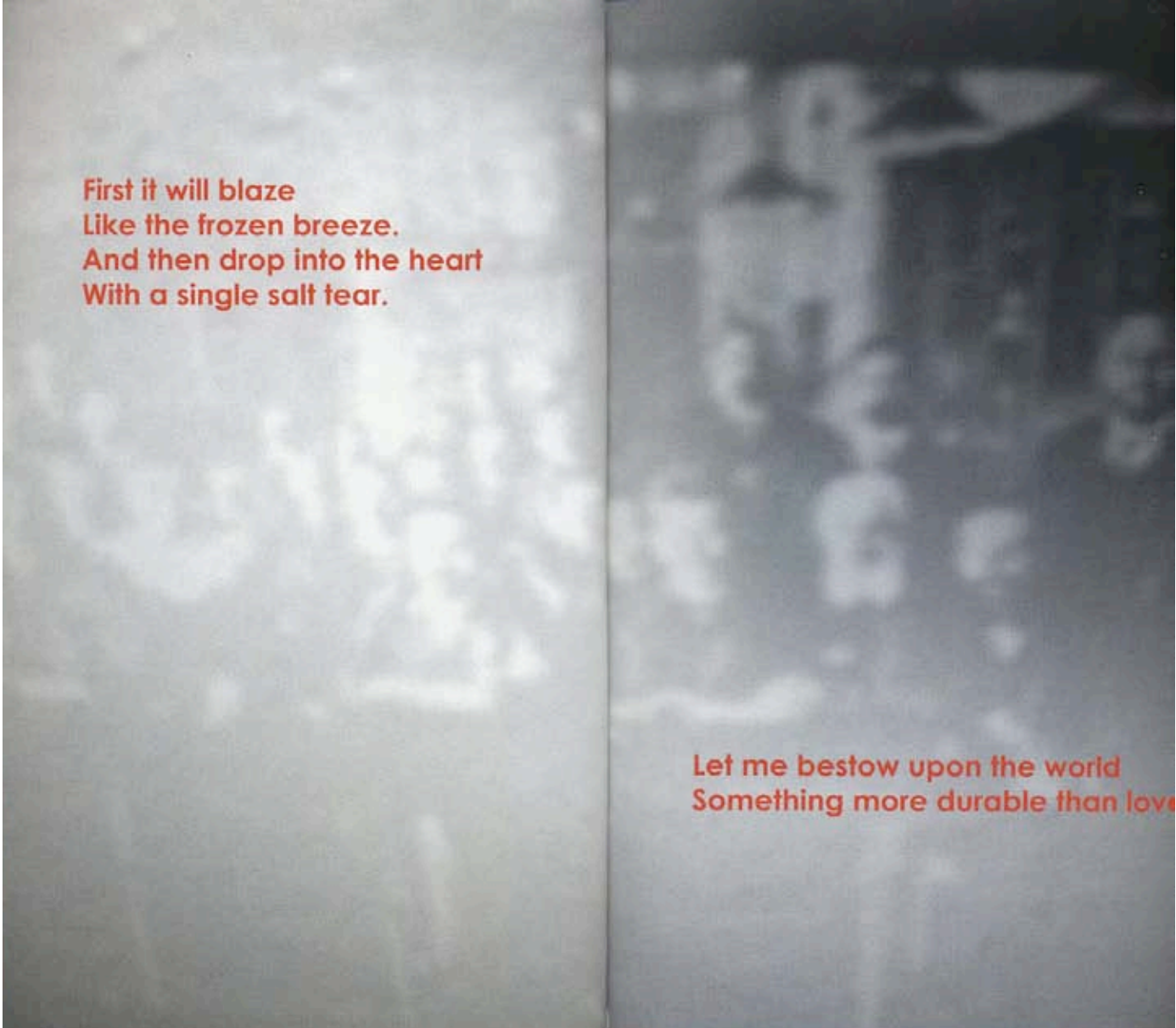
Jerzy Kierkuc-Bielinski

**You think you are dreaming the book.
You are its dream.**



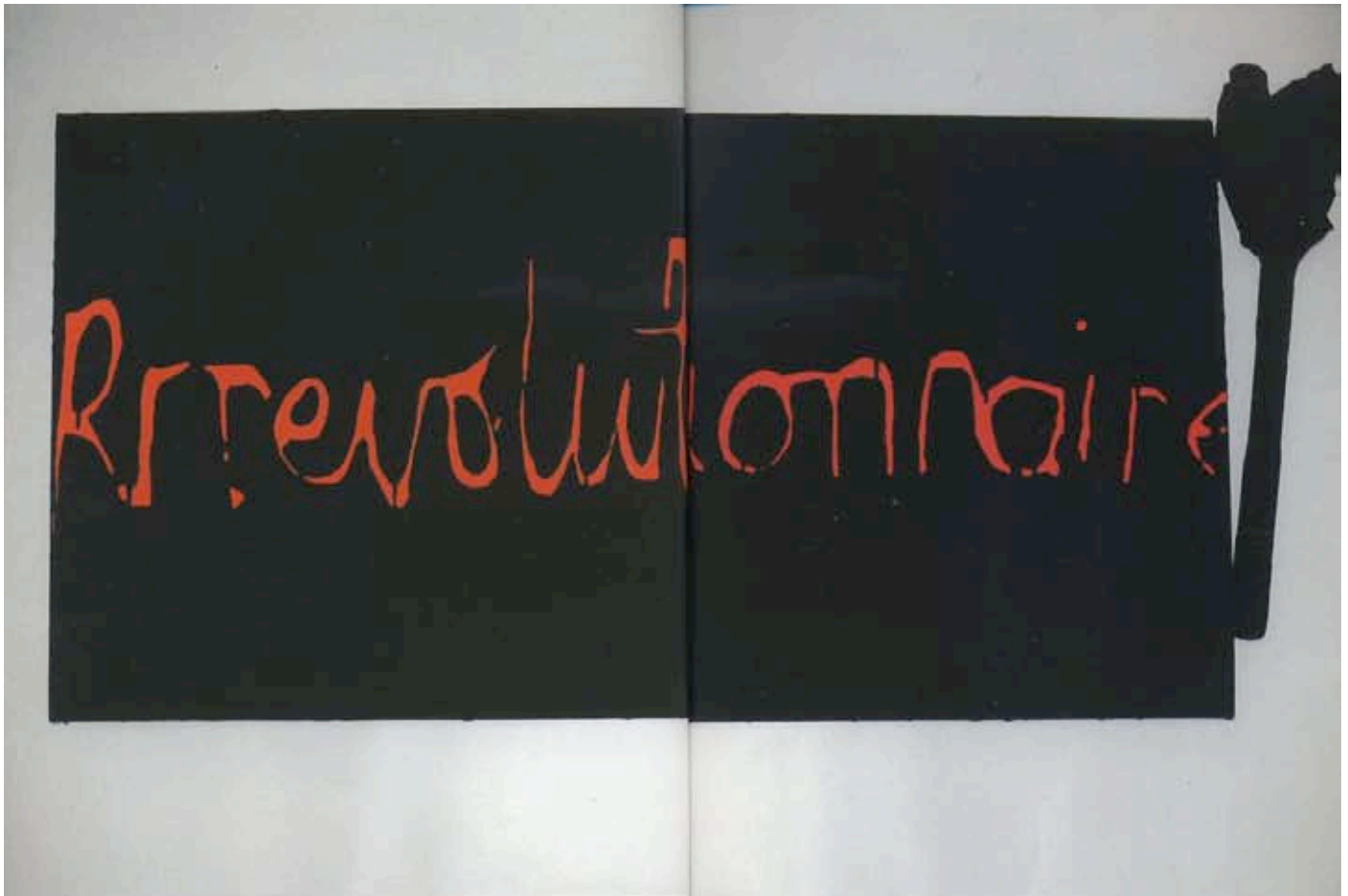


I
Build
My
Time



First it will blaze
Like the frozen breeze.
And then drop into the heart
With a single salt tear.

Let me bestow upon the world
Something more durable than love



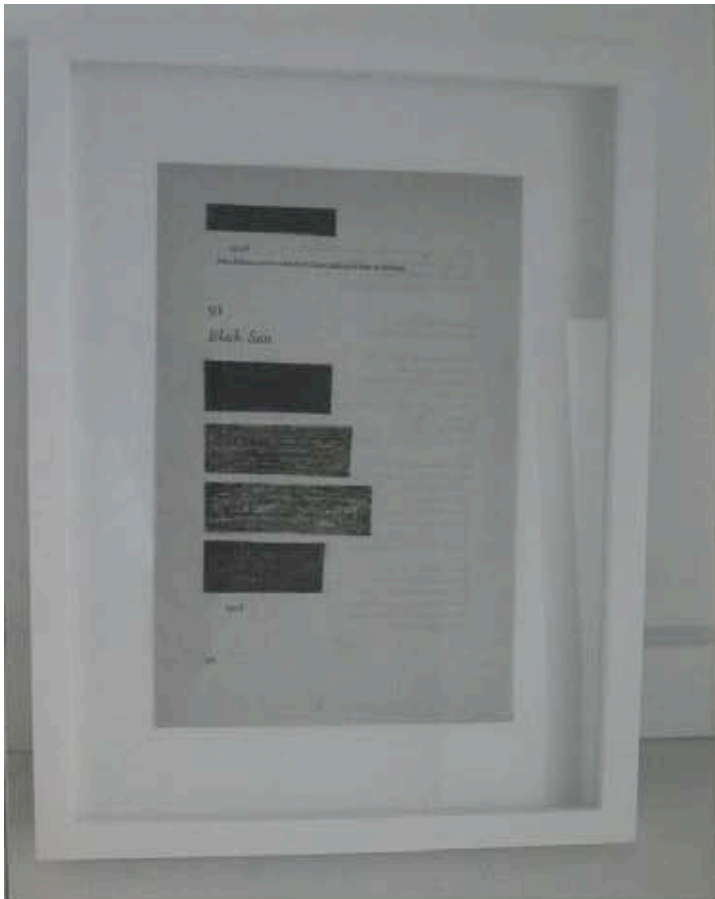
Above: Rrevolutionnaire, mixed media, paint on canvas,
Maria Chevka, 2004

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*In my hand I have nothing, in the bush
there is everything, and yet - so it is
decided by conditions of battle and
the exigency of life - I must choose the
nothing.*



Everything forgets
But not language



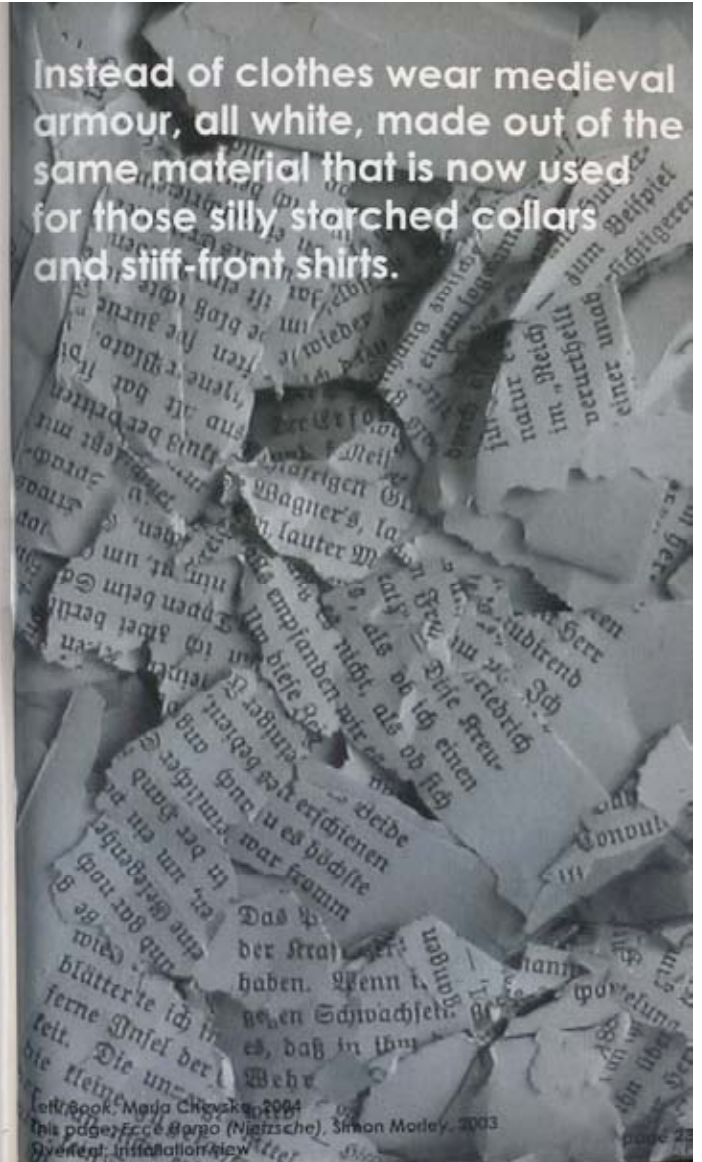
Above: *Black Sun (Mandelstam Drawing)*, Simon Morley, 2005
Top right: *Idyll*, mixed media and red light, Maria Chevaska, 2005
Bottom right: *Taboo*, video still, Simon Morley, 2005

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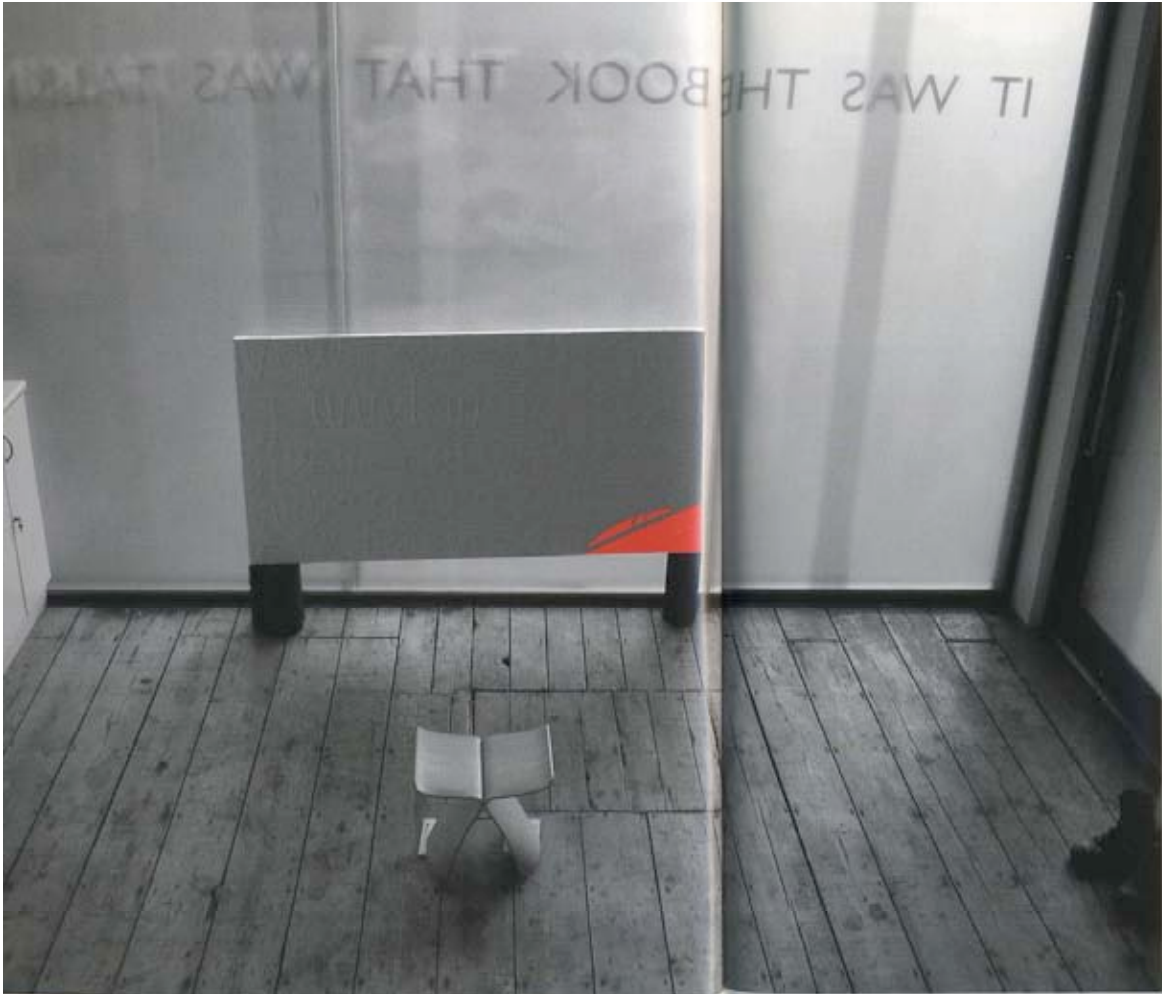




Instead of clothes wear medieval armour, all white, made out of the same material that is now used for those silly starched collars and stiff-front shirts.



Textbook: Mada Chayka, 2004
This page: Ecco Homo (Nietzsche), Simon Morley, 2003
Source: infocollor.ru



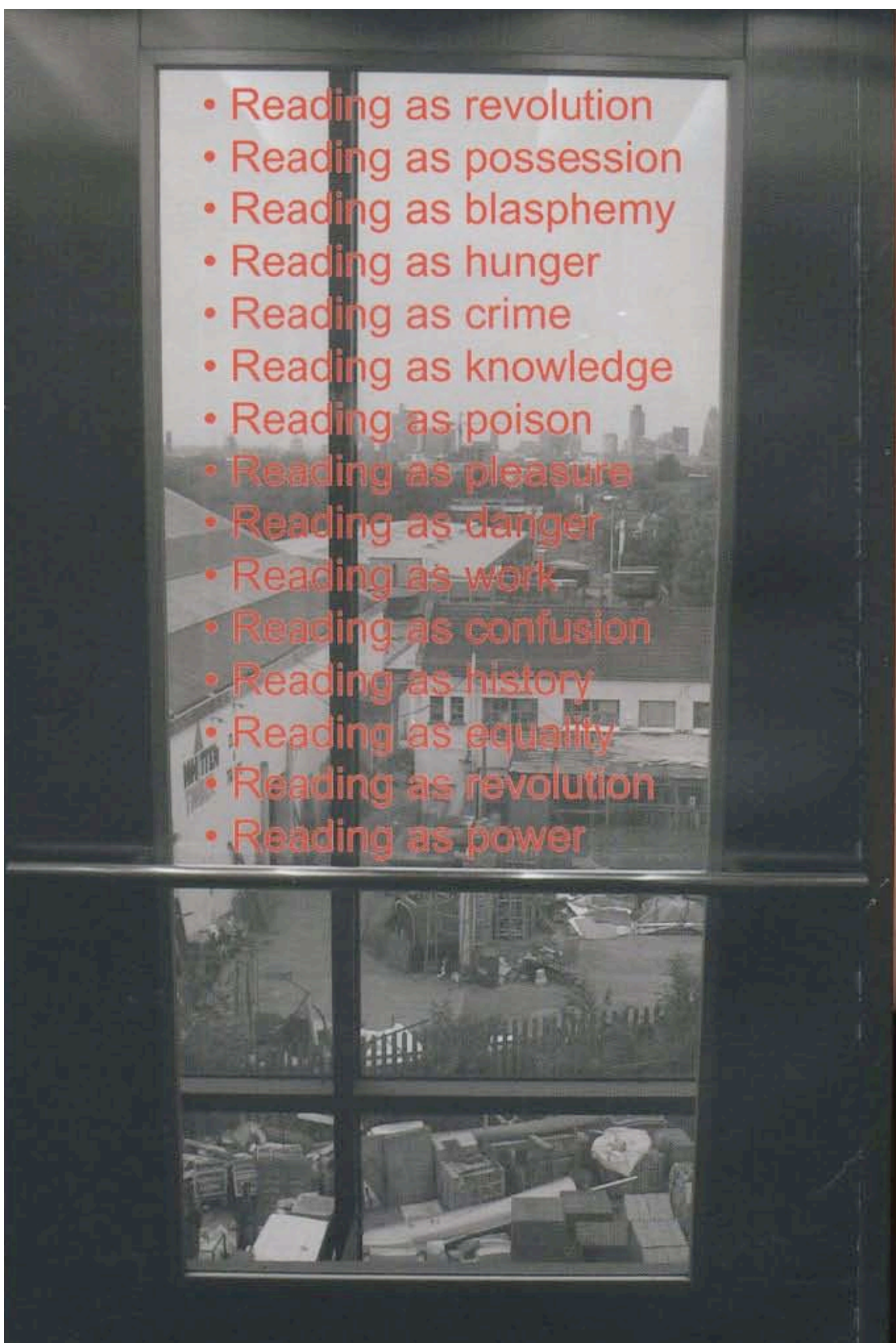
But could you
play
right to the finish
a nocturne on a drainpipe flute?

Below: *Now all at once* (detail), kaolin, paint on canvas, wood, Maria Chevska, 2004
Right: *Now all at once* (detail), stool on books, Maria Chevska, 2004



*Now all at once a
window has been
flung open a fresh
invigorating gust of
air is blowing in*



- 
- A window with a dark frame is shown. The top pane is covered with a semi-transparent white overlay containing a list of 15 phrases in red text. The bottom panes show a view of a cityscape with buildings and a large pile of debris, including cardboard boxes and wood, in the foreground.
- Reading as revolution
 - Reading as possession
 - Reading as blasphemy
 - Reading as hunger
 - Reading as crime
 - Reading as knowledge
 - Reading as poison
 - Reading as pleasure
 - Reading as danger
 - Reading as work
 - Reading as confusion
 - Reading as history
 - Reading as equality
 - Reading as revolution
 - Reading as power