



JOANNA MALINOWSKA

BY JIMBO BLACHLY

Dazed from lack of sleep, I entered CANADA on Chrystie Street one afternoon to see Malinowska's exhibition *Time of Guerrilla Metaphysics*. Sitting on a metal chair, I gazed at *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, a rough-hewn video in which older men, looking more haggard and delirious than I at that moment, spun around a female pianist banging a toy piano while music by Messiaen blared from a nearby boom box. With the names of the planets written in Polish and pinned precariously on their backs as if someone were attempting to keep order among schoolchildren, those drunken planet personifications are perfect and sad incarnations. One wouldn't entrust the maintenance of the solar system to them, though if they are gods, that's about as good a representation as any, given that it appears they truly don't give a shit. A Satyr-like man recites scraps of epic verse, waving a bouquet as if conducting these planets, who eventually collapse on the tarmac after crashing into one another. "There's nothing new under the sun... O dear Apollo, your chariot is the jewel of the sky..." he

serenades, beaming an existential smile at the pianist/sun and eclipsing Matthew Barney's self-lubricating satyrs with disarming, bittersweet mundanity.

Before venturing into the gallery's inner chamber, I glance at a banal photo of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and wonder about what its Hadron Collider is actually supposed to do. Particles collide. A giant mud-coated, featureless beast stands near me—a Boli, a West African talisman—seemingly transfixed by an inkjet reproduction of Malevich's *Black Square*. In a corner leans a sagging ghost shirt made of imitation suede, its interior billowed by balloons filled with a specific air from the prairies, or perhaps from the artist's lungs. Still, thinking of the prairies while filling a balloon in a gallery in Chinatown might affect the universe in a way beyond mere mortal's comprehension. I feel more at home than I should. I strip and put on this poor halfhearted Native-American costume fit for an eight-year-old's birthday party. Barely able to squeeze my flabby middle-aged midriff into it, I hold on tenuously to some hope of meaning and protection.