

Press Release

MAKING NEWS/MAKING HISTORY:

LIVE FROM TIANANMEN SQUARE

A Video Installation by Shu Lea Cheang

The International Center of Photography Midtown

June 15 - September 2, 1990

The Tiananmen Square massacre of June 1989 and the student protests that proceeded it received worldwide attention. The events were documented by the Chinese government, American television networks and individual spectators. The content and tenor of their reports varied widely. Each of these factions used audio and video for their own purposes -- to disseminate, to interpret or to censor information.

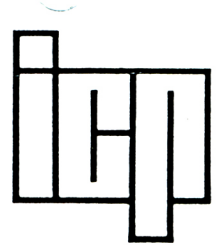
Video producer Shu Lea Cheang's **Making News/Making History** is a startling video installation that presents an alternative perspective on the Spring '89 student protests at Tiananmen Square. The installation will be on view in the Screening Room at the International Center of Photography Midtown from June 15 through September 2, 1990.

Illustrating the media's ability to make a single event appear to be fact or rumor, premeditated or random, official or personal, **Making News/Making History** combines conflicting visual and auditory messages which echo the conflicting ideologies behind the Chinese protest.

The installation will begin at the Screening Room's entrance with 9'x14' photographic stills of a satellite transmission station. Centered on the stills will be a 5" monitor showing images of a United States network anchor person relating information on the Tiananmen events. In the installation's screening room the viewer will be confronted with a four monitor/four channel installation, each of which presents a different perspective on the protests:

- personal videos taken by students at Tiananmen Square
- translated text and statements from student press, poems and interviews
- translated text from China Central Television and Radio broadcasts
(the government owned, and only network in the country)
- off-air recordings from China Central Television before and after June 4

These four video channels will be accompanied by demonstrators' posters and six audio tracks simultaneously playing the Chinese-speaking voices of students and



government officials from loud speakers and megaphones emanating from different sources around the Screening Room.

Viewers will be surrounded by auditory and visual information which is conflicting and unfamiliar, and challenged to continually choose which sources to focus on and which to screen out, recreating the breach between event and media documentation Shu Lea Chang experienced in Tiananmen Square.

"People got news from shortwave radios on the BBC, Voice of America or from Taiwan," Cheang explains. "You just had to stand on street corners where people told stories and you worked it out for yourself. The government said people were spreading rumors, but the students did a great job of getting the news out with hand-cranked mimeo machines and megaphones and poetry on posters. The amazing thing was how much the students tried to correct errors in the media."

Making News/Making History will further recreate the Tiananmen events through the presence of a surveillance camera positioned in a corner of the Screening Room, and a closed circuit monitor (positioned by the main reception desk) which will show the installation's viewers. The inclusion of this camera and outside monitor echoes the Chinese government's surveillance of the students. The audience witnesses and is witnessed; they both view events and participate in them.

Partial support for this video installation provided by Hy Photo Service, Inc., and Charlie Spataro's A.V. Workshop.

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The International Center of Photography Midtown's galleries and bookstore are open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday 11am-6pm; Thursday 11am-8pm; closed Monday. Gallery admission \$2.00; Students & Senior Citizens \$1.00; Free to Members. Bookstore admission Free. The International Center of Photography Midtown, 1133 Avenue of the Americas (at 43rd Street), New York City 10036, (212) 768-4680.

The International Center of Photography Midtown is supported by Eastman Kodak Company.



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