

Art Review

Anger over Tiananmen Square takes form in Cleveland exhibit

• 80 artists' works recall failed student rebellion

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Three years have passed since China crushed its student democratic uprising; three years is a long time ago in today's news-hungry world. Even by the most stringent of news yardsticks, 1989 was the year that was.

The tragedy of Tiananmen Square, which descended rapidly from joy to grief between April and June 3-4, 1989, was quickly edged aside in the media by other riveting events.

Among them were: the Solidarity Party's victory in Poland's first free elections; Czechoslovakia's "Velvet Revolution"; the U.S. Supreme Court's new restraints on a woman's right to have an abortion; Congress' passage of legislation to rescue the savings and loan industry; F.W. de Klerk's election as president of South Africa; Hurricane Hugo, which killed 50 people in the Carolinas; the San Francisco earthquake, which killed more than 60 people; the stock market's second biggest one-day decline in points in its history; Hungary's declaration of itself a free republic and preparation for democratic elections; television evangelist Jim Bakker's sentencing to 45 years in prison; the opening of the Berlin Wall; and the U.S. invasion of Panama.

But even by the white-knuckle standards of these events, the brutal crushing of the student rebellion at Tiananmen Square still stands out, like the 1970 shootings at Kent State, because it completely changed the way we look at the world.

Through Oct. 4, the Reinberger Galleries at the Cleveland Institute of Art, 11141 East Blvd., will exhibit *China: June 4, 1989*, an exhibit organized by the Asian American Art Centre in New York City in response to the spirit of democracy at Tiananmen Square and the deadly military force that drove the movement underground.



Vito Acconci's *China Doll Flag* is part of the exhibit *China: June 4, 1989*, on display at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

The show consists of works by 80 artists, both amateur and professional. The works were submitted to the center after it issued a call for artwork on the tragedy. The original exhibit was shown at Blum Helman Warehouse in Soho in October 1989. It contained nearly 200 works, 70 of which took the form of doors hinged together to form one long, snaking protest of angry, anguished images.

But artists continued to submit works, and the show grew to more than 280 works. Part of the show was reinstalled at the Asian American Art Centre until spring 1990, when it went to P.S. 1 in Long Island City through June. By that time artists had submitted more than 200 doors.