





**Ice: Hong Kong 2005, 2005**  
**“From Pictogram to Pinyin... and Beyond”**

Chinese script was derived from the pictographic, and has been closely related to visual arts since ancient times; throughout Chinese history, the script has sustained ambiguity between word and image. My project is an artistic investigation of Chinese language as a medium for cultural and political commentary in contemporary Chinese art. The Chinese language is deeply affected by a complicated relationship between the text itself and the visual aesthetic of the pictographic forms. Its characters have been subjected to political and cultural influences, such as the introduction of simplified characters during the Cultural Revolution, the romanization of characters to Pinyin, and the current incorporation of regional dialects and English-influenced slang add a new global dimension to what is already a very mixed language. These tensions in the script are often exploited by contemporary Chinese artists in politically and culturally themed artworks. By looking at such artworks, I will investigate the role of Chinese script in each work; how allusions to language and media are effective in communicating political ideas in visual art forms. The dual-dimensional approach of combining written analysis with visual imagery is aimed to push the theme “Word and Image” to its full capacity, and correspond with my interest in contemporary Asian art practice and theory.