

The artists

Coral - Joon - Kawa - Kin - Maulidoodles - MoMing - Niko - Sheenie - Sundar



language cafe zine #1

art on language

cover by Kawa

Editor's note

Welcome to our Zine, Language Cafe's digital gallery and our debut issue.

This issue explores **"language"** through illustrations, poems, and photographs from **international artists creating without the pressure of perfection.** Here, language is represented in unique ways. Each artist expresses different aspects: the experience of language learning, exploring expressions and idioms, and visually representing words or the concept of language itself.

This zine is both invitation and celebration. As you browse, ask yourself: What does language mean to you? How would you define or picture it? What feelings do you associate with language and language learning? Take your time: let the pieces speak, and notice how they speak to one another.

Our zine exists to feature artists within our community and to host a safe, open space for creation. Everyone is welcome regardless of experience, "skill level," or medium. If you'd like to participate in a future issue, drop us a message in the Language Cafe server. We'd be honoured to feature your work.

See you in the next issue,



Kawa
Co-founder & Editor

Along with
Joon | Language Cafe Co-founder
Jam | Zine Coordinator

Zine #1 - Language

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Coral

Loves boba and seafood. Surfs on weekends. Interested in many types of art including paintings, drawings, music, photography and videography.

Ocean

Calligraphy, Digital Illustration



About the work

The first work title “ocean”: calligraphy. a Japanese kanji 海 (ocean) made with Korean word for ocean 바다. The strokes for the kanji are the Korean alphabets “Hangul”—ㅁ, ㅏ, ㅑ, and ㅓ. If you look at it closely, you might find a person surfing.

I wanted to create a brew of my native language, Japanese, and my target language, Korean.

Q&A

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I'm hoping to visually show a fun fusion of different languages through calligraphy!

Beach

Digital Illustration



About the work

The second work title “beach”: Related Korean words—바다 (ocean), 게 (crab), and 모래 (sand)— are incorporated in the drawing.



Joon

Joon is a casual photographer who started out taking pictures for her dogs' Instagram when she was a kid. Her coworkers said her vacation photos looked cool, so now she's here. She likes learning languages, doing theatre, and k-pop.

Language of the Road

Photography



About the work

As someone who grew up in the Midwest, cars have always been a part of everyday life. Where I'm from, it's normal for teenagers to get their permits at 15 and their first car at 16 so they can drive themselves to school or work: I was also one of them.

My piece was inspired by those early memories, as well as the long road trips I took and the countless hours I now spend commuting. I began thinking about cars and road markings in a more abstract way, almost as if they form a kind of language. Parking lot lines tell us where to park, orange plastic triangles on the ground warn us to stay away or not pass, and even something subtle like a flashing light on a specific side of a car communicates intention without a single written word.

Though each country has its own symbols and rules, the basic "language of the road" is shared internationally. Here in the US, it's even easy to get an international driver's license that lets you navigate nearly anywhere without restraint. I wanted to capture a piece of that universality, even from within something as ordinary as a traffic jam and road lines.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I felt reflective sitting in the middle of a traffic jam. The cones, the big arrow on the emergency vehicle, and the long line of cars all made me think about how the road has its own language that everyone is participating in at the same time.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: That language is not only spoken or written between people. Seemingly commonplace objects also bare the lingering marks of language. Road markings, signals, and traffic patterns are a form of communication that are shared between drivers every day.

I also wanted to show that the road has its own language, and that we all participate in it whether we notice it or not. The traffic jam on my way to work gave me a chance to capture that system in action: cones blocking the highway, an emergency vehicle's arrow telling us where to go, and cars stacking up behind me.

I also took photos through the rearview mirror because I liked the idea of showing both what was ahead and what was behind at the same time. With the inclusion of the photo containing own hands, it also reflects how quick people are to pull out their phones to take pictures and share experiences, which turns even a traffic jam into another form of communication.



Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: I only had my phone and was stuck in one spot, so it was hard to get the angle I wanted. But that limitation felt true to the experience, since we all read the road from a fixed position in our cars.



Kawa

Kawa is a self taught artist that has been drawing her whole life. Her focus while creating is either releasing and expressing emotions, or capturing beautiful moments of life.

Language Bouquet

Digital Illustration



About the work

I thought a lot about how to represent “language” and finally decided on various flowers. Not only flowers have their own language, but it’s also a play on the phrase “wine bouquet” referring to the aroma profile a wine has.

After sketching out the general composition, I just added flowers I like one by one until the bouquet was done.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

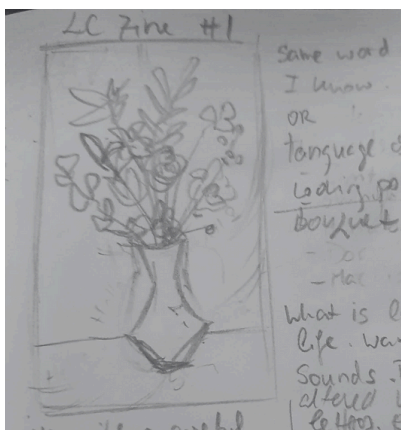
A: I was honestly stressed out at first since I couldn’t decide on an idea, but then while I was creating it I felt very relaxed.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I hope to invite everyone to think about their view on what makes a language a language and how would they represent it visually.

Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: The transition from the colour blocking phase to the shading. It was a huge difference.



Sketch in sketchbook



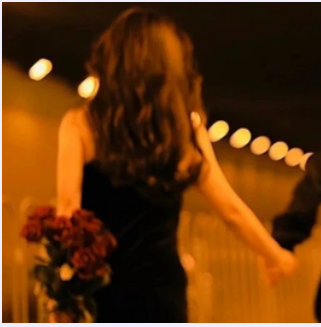
Digital Sketch



Base Colors

Kawa on Instagram

the_kawaa

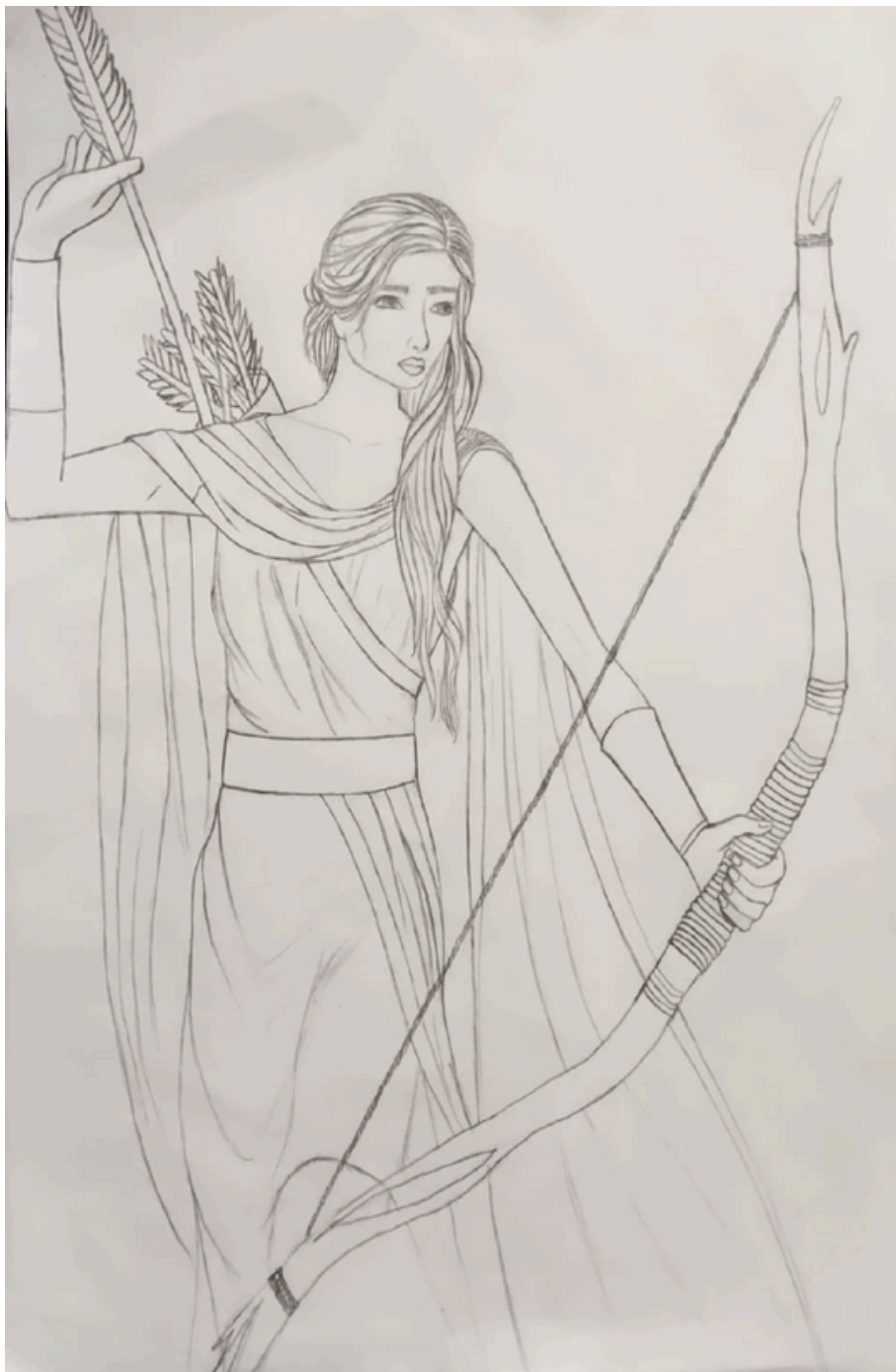


Kin

I am a curious soul who draws to relax. My hands are clumsy but my passion to learn is endless, so I am here to explore, absorb and create.

Artemis Portrait

Pencil on paper



About the work

It took me longer to decide what I wanted to draw than the actual process of sketching it.

I wouldn't call myself an artist at heart, but I love drawing beautiful things. For me, the joy lies in observing every little detail and interpreting it in my own way. For this event, I chose to draw Artemis. There's something timeless and powerful in her beauty that truly inspires me.

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: I simply enjoyed drawing this piece. It wasn't about expressing something profound...I just had fun with it and picked up little skills along the way, like figuring out how to draw hands.



Maulidoodles

Maulidoodles is self taught artist who started her journey as an illustrator in 2021. She really loves to draw since she was kid. Now, she is aiming to work with her passion heartfully.

Learning Japanese

Digital Illustration



About the work

This picture shows how she's learning Japanese because of her dream to go to Japan and talk in Japanese.

I used digital tools to draw this scene with the oil pastel brush.

Q&A

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I am hoping to show how we as learners have a dream to be consistent, keep learning, and use the language someday.

Maulidoodles on Instagram

maulidoodles



MoMing

I love art in many many forms and I try to consume art as much as possible but I am not the most artistic person. I do try sometimes. :-)

About the work

I used to sew a lot. Nowadays not a lot unfortunately... But I still think that sewing is one of my hobbies, so much so that when I visited South Korea I went and bought fabric to make an hanbok. My installation is about this trip to the place that speaks the language I want to learn.

I used all the fabric I bought to give the shape that the hanbok will have. The hanbok's decorative trimmings are made of tickets to the places I've visited, money, my travel card...all symbols of my memories I made there. The round fan is from a stranger that guided us through a maze of streets in Busan and gave it to us since it was very hot outside. I wanted to buy a separate suitcase just for the books. The tea set is a reminder of all the traditional tea houses from which we've soaked the atmosphere in, all the weird and wonderful teas we sampled and, of course, squirrelled in my luggage to bring home.

One day, I will find the time to dust off my sewing machine and bring this hanbok to life. So many people were excited to see a foreigner interested in traditional clothing that they gave me a book about hanboks and told us where we can go to buy cord and tools to make my own norigae – the lovely trimmings that would replace the ones I made out of my Seoul palaces entry tickets.

Display of My Trip to South Korea

Sewing, Photography, Collage and Photo Manipulation



Fun fact: the cord knots that form the norigae require a sharp tool. When I packed my luggage, I moved the fabric and everything I bought - including the sharp tool, without realizing - into my cabin luggage. It was inspected at the security check in the airport, but when I explained what it was, they let me through. Not the same happened when changing planes in China, but that was ok because I had another one in my main luggage! I'm serious about my crafts, I buy double of everything!

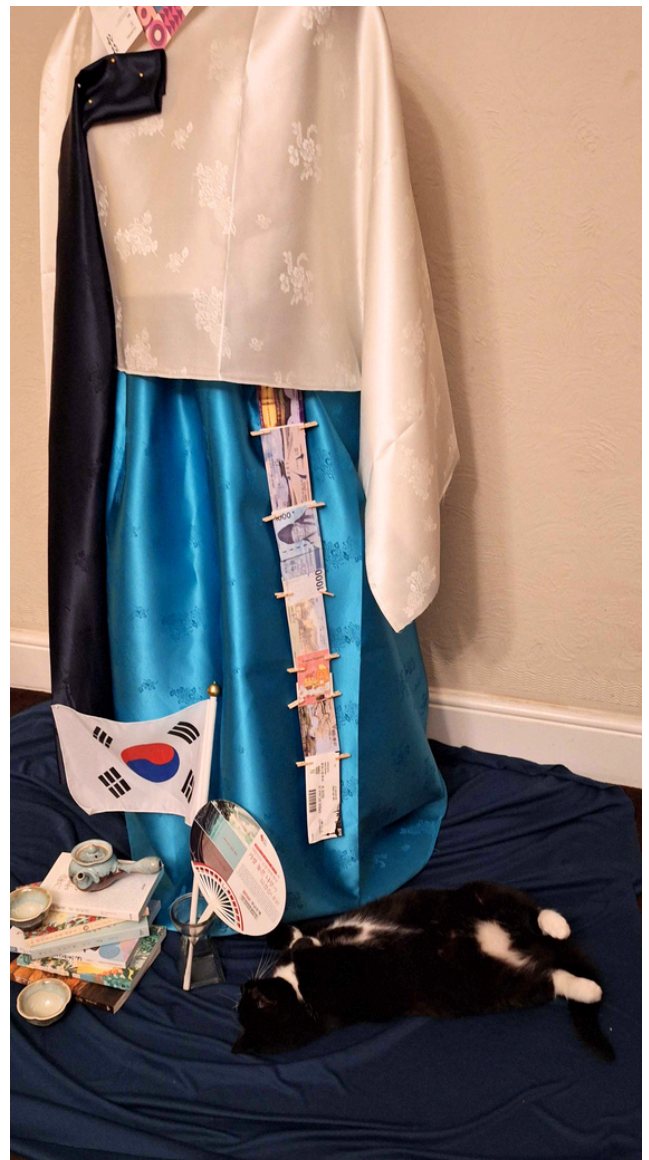
Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: This is the first time I try to express something through an installation. I had the elements I wanted to include, all in my mind, but when I had to put it together, I discovered that it wasn't easy.

I wanted to avoid the window shop display character of the whole thing but I realized it would be impossible in the set up I am in - a home - so in the end I decided to embrace it. After all it is a DISPLAY of my experience and my passion for all things traditional Korean.

After I took the pictures, I got the vote of confidence from my cat that decided to relax at the bottom of the dressed mannequin. I bet she thought this might be early Christmas!





Niko

Niko is a young artist from Belgium who explores all the media she can get her hands on. She's either creating paintings to brighten up her world, or poetry to explore those harsher feelings.

Poem using idiom in Hindi

Poetry

*As distant drums draw me in
With songs of hope and fruitful life
I start to feel the repentful sin
That begins to cut deep like a knife.*

*The drums grew louder
The sound disturbing and distorted
My world turned sour in an instant,
Now I forever yearn to be comforted.*

*As I come to stand before the drums
I wish I had understood before
What I was told about their distant hums:*

दूर के ढोल सुहावने लगते हैं।

About the work

I decided to focus on idioms and proverbs for this project, and picked my favourite Hindi one. I've always been fascinated by this eccentric usage of language.

Poetry seemed to be the best medium to tackle this project: so I brainstormed and got to work!

Q&A

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: I'm hoping to show my own interpretation of a common proverb, and dive deeper into what it actually says in my eyes.

Niko on Instagram

nikosarts26



Sheenie

A Language Cafe member whose priority is... make art instead of learning new languages.

About the work

I used highlighters and fountain pen for the animals, and gouache and paper for the background. The canvas is my sketchbook.

I had thought about how each one of us in this server is like an animal, we all speak different languages... I imagined all of the animals communicating and understanding each other merrily... :D

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: At first I felt it was like handing in an assignment, but after I have finished it, I realized that I could actually make a spread beautiful too - especially the decoration part. Normally I don't decor that much since it's only my own sketchbook and I'm not showing it to anyone. Perhaps I should decorate the backgrounds more.

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: Respect, cherish, and embrace our differences, and most importantly have fun here in Language Cafe!

Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: When I realized that I'm not that bad at drawing animals. I do human portraits more.

Animals

Highlighters, fountain pen, gouache





Sundar

Just a guy who's trying to live his life in the best possible way rather than simply existing!

Dusk

Photography



About the work

I believe Photography is the medium where you can express yourself to others with photographs. I love showing people what I see through photography.

Whenever I think of Dusk, I remember this quote "There is only one day left, always starting over: it is given to us at dawn and taken away from us at dusk." from Jean-Paul Sartre.



Sundar on Substack

sund4r

Q&A

Q: How did you feel while creating your artwork?

A: Just being curious since I was using the professional camera for the first time

Q: What are you hoping to communicate through your artwork?

A: The beauty of Dusk.

Q: What was a surprising moment while creating?

A: I was surprised the I could capture photographs just as if I am capturing them with my eyes

Flâneur

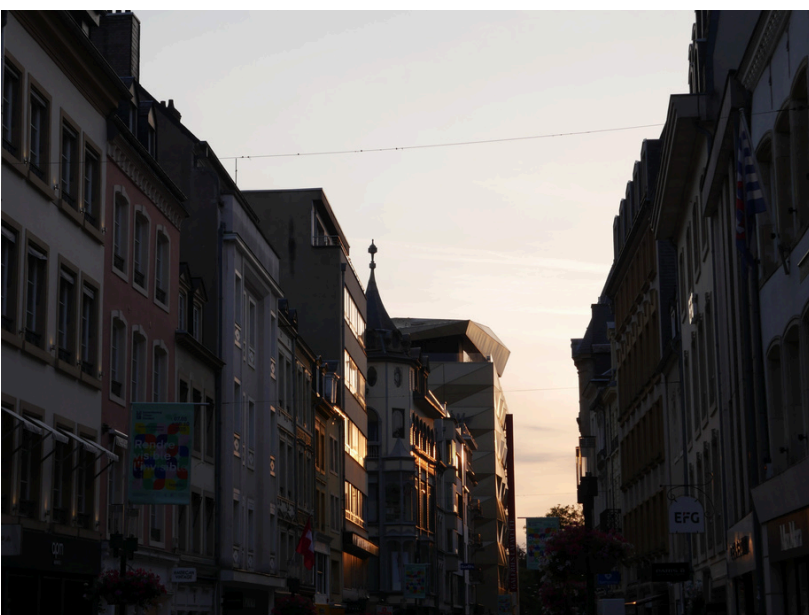
Photography

About the work

In French there's a word 'Flâneur'. This term carries a specific cultural meaning, describing a person who wanders a city's streets with no particular goal, simply observing and enjoying the urban environment.

As I wandered around the city and took these photographs, I just noticed people, animals, birds and a cozy environment, as my foot guided me to the places without planning before. Suis-je un flâneur ?





Outro

Thank you for checking out our zine!

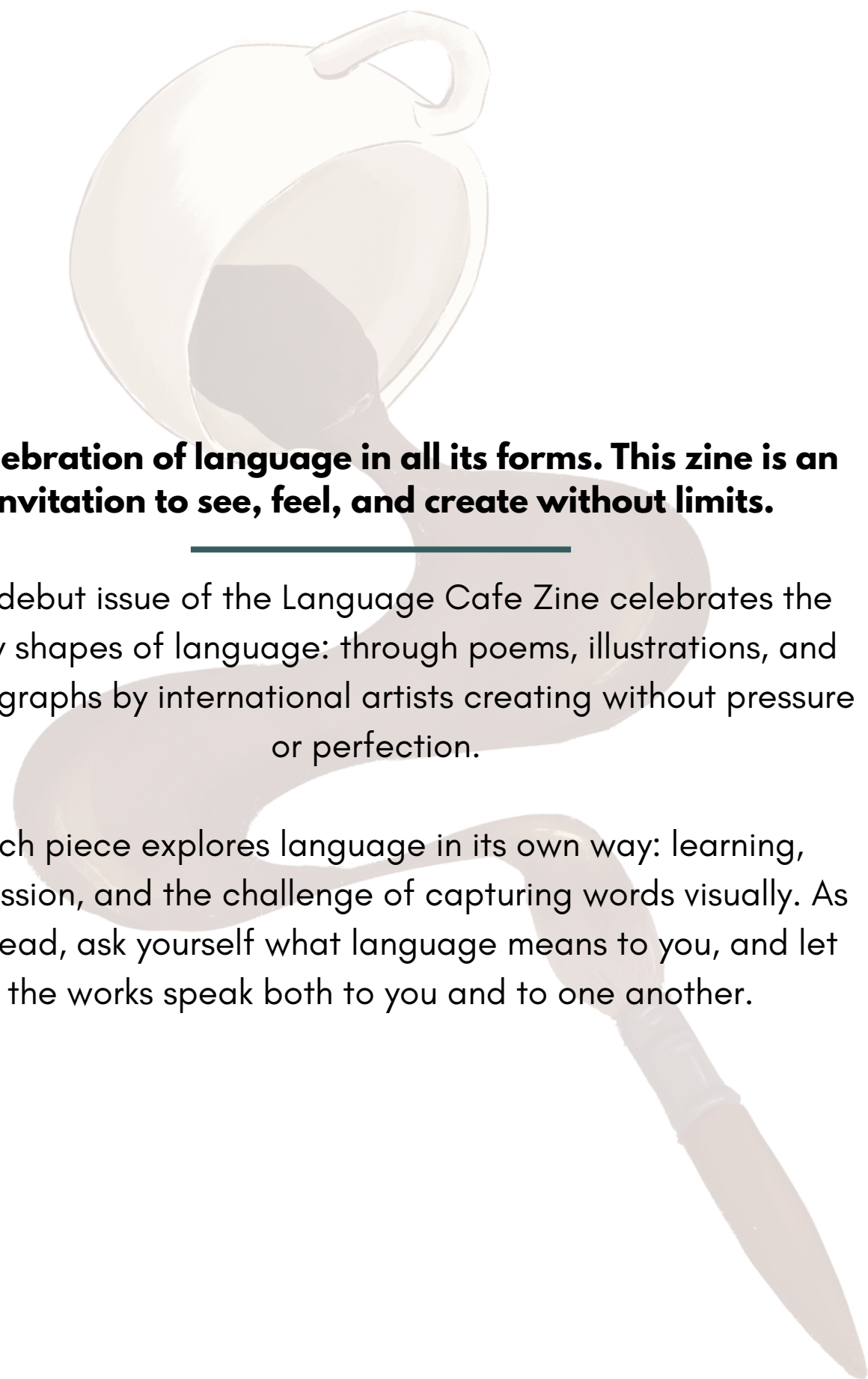
Close this tab, but keep the spark. If something in these pages inspired an idea, pursue and explore it: scribble a few lines, take a photo on your walk, sketch what you can't quite put into words yet.

When you're ready, bring it to the Language Cafe server. You'll find the #creative-corner channel that's always open for conversation. Share a work-in-progress or a finished piece, ask for eyes on a draft, or simply sit in and create.

We welcome all mediums and experience levels. All you need is a wish to create and explore. Come add your voice to the conversation, we'd love to make the next issue with you.

Stay open and curious.

Join our community.



A celebration of language in all its forms. This zine is an invitation to see, feel, and create without limits.

This debut issue of the Language Cafe Zine celebrates the many shapes of language: through poems, illustrations, and photographs by international artists creating without pressure or perfection.

Each piece explores language in its own way: learning, expression, and the challenge of capturing words visually. As you read, ask yourself what language means to you, and let the works speak both to you and to one another.