

THIS

zine

IS NOT SUPPOSED

TO SELL.



gia ngân, kitty

September 2025

WHAT IS A ZINE?!

I first got into zines because I could not properly design and write a book.

Both books and posts that got shared on Instagram seemed professional and out of reach. Worse, I had a good taste in authors and the luck to have many capable artists / designers as friends. Since I never thought of myself in those terms, I intuitively made quick zines to say certain things I wanted.

The first long zine I made was on the bus from Copenhagen to Stockholm, which I then sent to my professor.

ZINE STER

Qualifications:



zero skills



zero experience



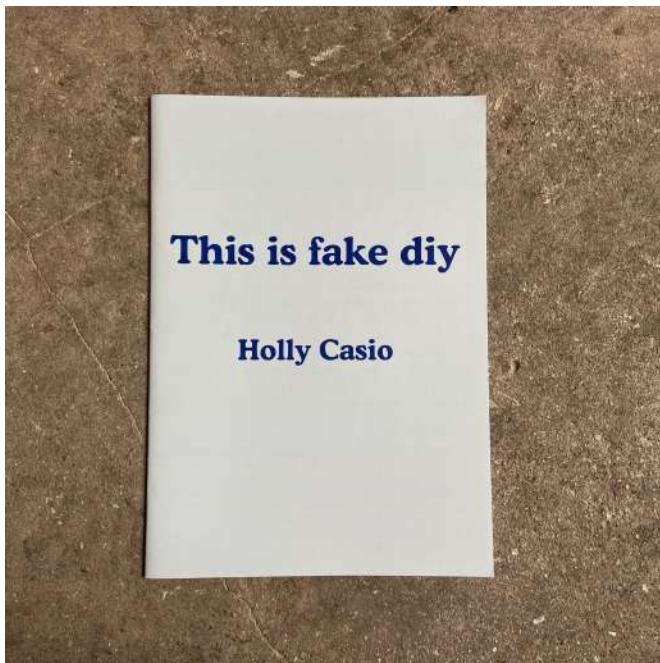
motivated by self-expression



not for profit

Holly Casio wrote in *This is fake diy*, 2019:

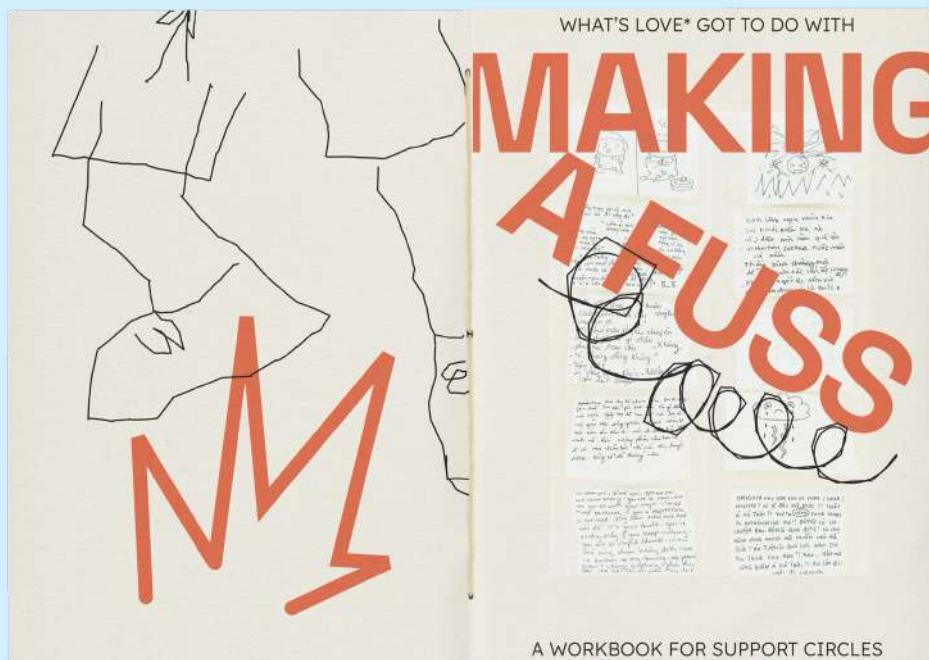
But I truly believe that zines can't be separated from history. The intent of zines, the whole idea of publishing something quickly, cheaply, and with no strings attached, is important to disseminate them as cheaply as possible. Self-publishing is radical, but zines to me are more than a trend, it's community, and anti-capitalist, and political.



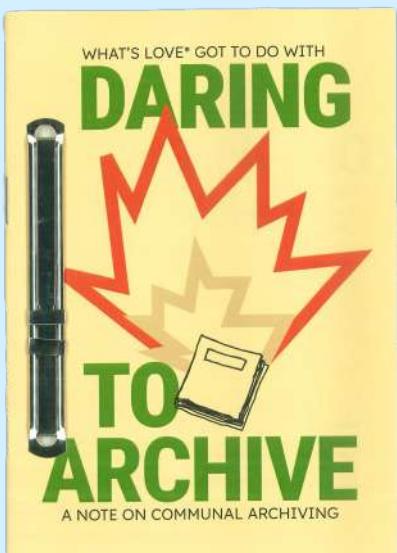
erated from their radical and political
a behind them was to create
skill whatsoever and most
ly as possible. It's true that all
are lo-fi and diy. And diy isn't a
and cheap, and requires zero skil.

DIY isn't a trend, it's community, anti-capitalist, cheap, and requires zero skill.

I wrote MAKING A FUSS in 3 days—combining with recorded conversations I had with friends and editing their sharing:

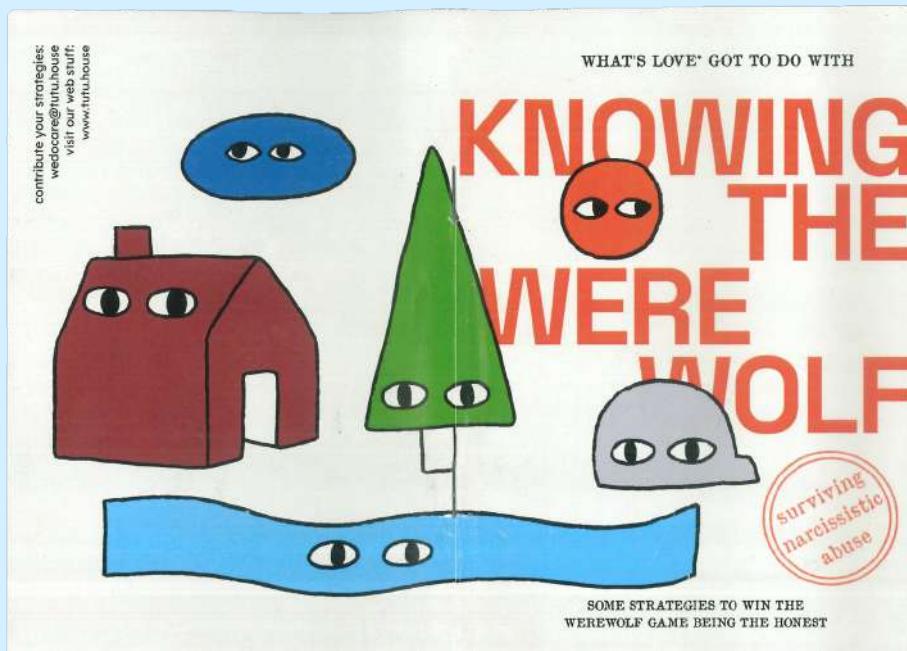


ARCHIVE was made in a day or three, I think?!



The photo shows someone reading it at a zine fair in Saigon.

WEREWOLF was actually made *during* that same zine fair. I finished it on day 2, Mui helped print it and had it displayed right away lol.



I traced a drawing from Jon Klassen for the cover :^D

tracing, remixing, collaging and borrowing are common practices in zine culture

HUG was first made as a blog on Substack. But friends loved it so I printed them.



These zines then got archived by Asia Art Archive. They somehow found them in Malaysia Design Archive.

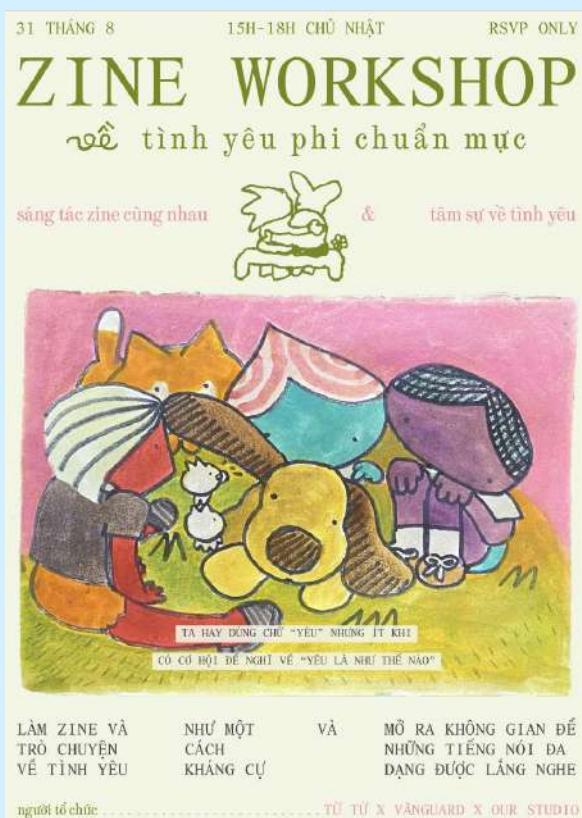
This is a 30-second long video of a friend and a stranger (?) practiced hugging after reading HUG zine:



—sent to me by @asiangayfriend literally this morning.

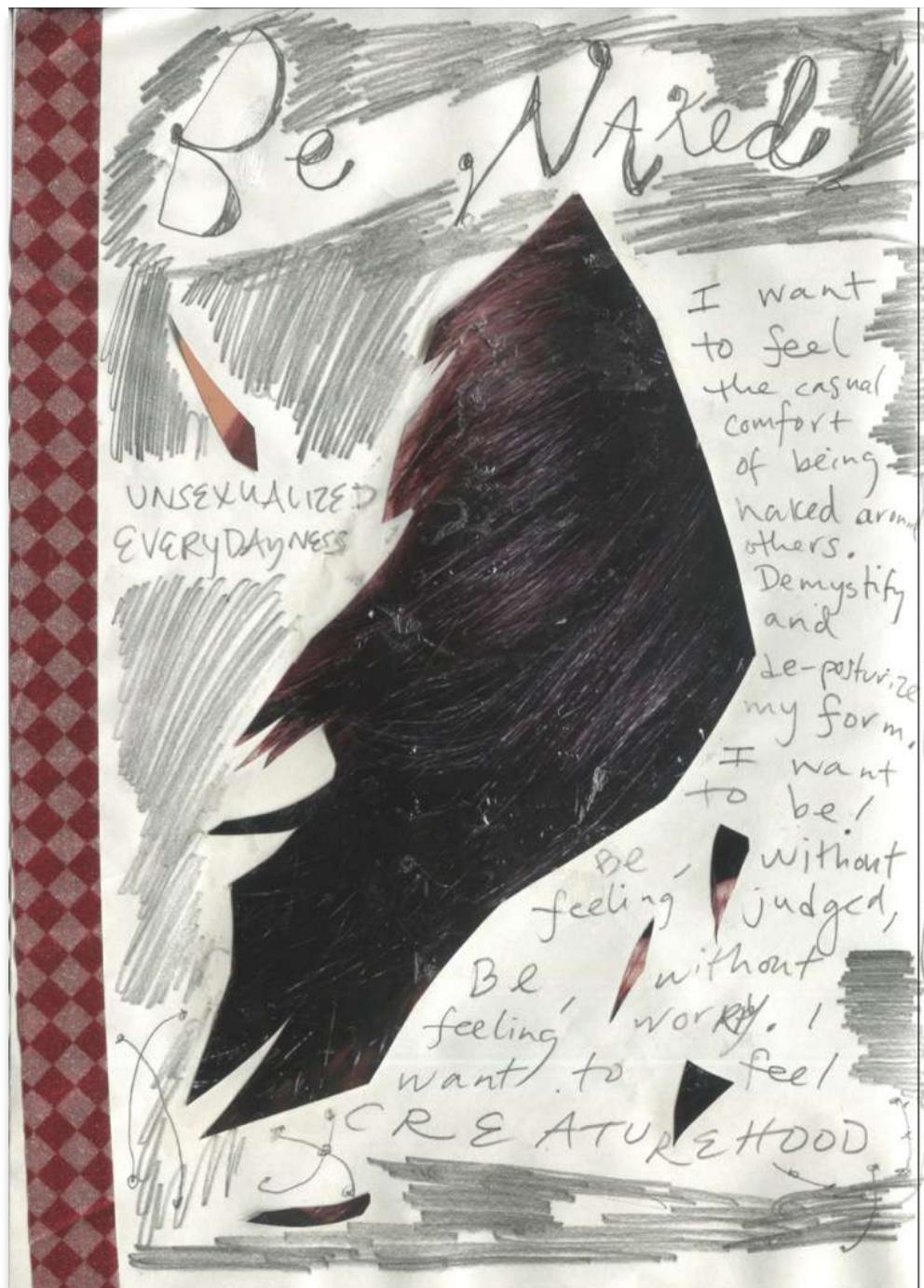
Ooops, I got a bit side-tracked. These are crazy examples but the point is that ZINE IS VERY LOW-KEY, CHEAP, requiring no skills to make and in my opinion, they are meant to be shared to your own community because it means something TO YOU.

I am in the U.K. right now PARTLY because I wanted to start making a book this year—and I didn't want to create while worrying about my country's censorship regime. Anyway, with the support of many friends, a workshop on making zine was conducted on the night before I left Vietnam.



*poster designed by
@uyo_hyo and hachul.com
photographs by hachul.com*

Us—the workshop participants—came together to talk about our queer yearnings and our queer relations. This sample page from the workshop is made by Ḥa-Lan:



I seriously was so wowed by all of these zine pages that I feel guilty to choose a sample to showcase. Please go read the full version online!



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Thank you—Huy, Ngọc Trinh, Liên, Giang, BabeL, Yến-Vi Đinh, Cỏ, Thuy Vy Vũ, alexis kit, Khánh Linh & Tam, Hà Trang, Hachul, and perhaps many more—for your brave, kind becomings.

Another sample from the workshop by Hoàng Châu:



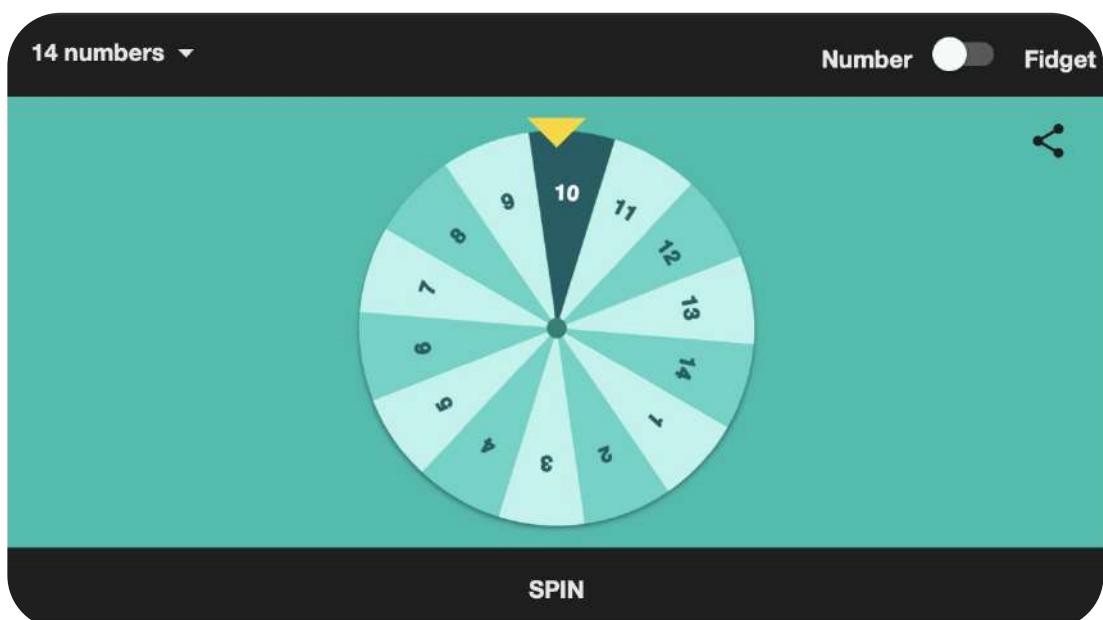
Hồng Vân:



Vân Anh:



These samples are NOT chosen because they are aesthetic! I just ran a random number generator to pick them lol.



The point is, we came together and talked about ourselves. We shared a kind of vulnerability, queerness, and honesty we hadn't thought there was space for. To me, that's the ancestral spirit of zines.

and when we speak
our words will not be
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to stay
remembering
we were never meant to be alone

ak we are afraid

ot be heard

silent

speak

eant to survive.

Zines also serve as a method for marginalized voices, who are often pushed aside with fewer skills recognized, less social understanding, and little visibility, to create and speak on their own terms.

Alongside many other DIY-ers, we would make countless random things that are not for profit nor our portfolio, but simply to share or realise an idea. Why? It's a deadening capitalist notion that everything we make has to feed productivity for the machine.

But zines have become a hip thing in certain places, promoted by institutions and capital-seekers as an “in-touch” way to make money and a name.

Echoing Holly Casio, I don’t mind myself and others making money, or making art or designing books, but I think we should NOT call these mediums as ZINES because this practice *excludes* newcomers, hobbyists, or zinesters from making zines.

To end this zine—which is starting to hurt my eyeballs from staring at the laptop—I would like to include a short list of guidance for making zines in the following pages.

These are intended
as suggestions
rather than rules

All that really
matters is that
you move and act.

1. Resist perfection.
let edges be rough,
folds uneven, be a
refusal of perfection.

2. Let your zine be an opening.

Let it be a way of inviting others to speak, draw, act and make their own.

3 Scavenging

Suggestion 1

Resist perfection. Let edges be rough, folds uneven, be a refusal of perfection.

Suggestion 2

Let your zine be an opening. Let it be a way of inviting others to speak, draw, act and make their own.

*F*CK*

AESTHETICS!



I am seeing so many beautiful zines being made by creative agencies in Vietnam. I know that visual styling is also parts of the message, but if there is NO MESSAGE, REALLY, then a beautiful zine is another showcase of exclusivity, gate-keeping, visual prowess, and tool to spread the agendas of the capital.



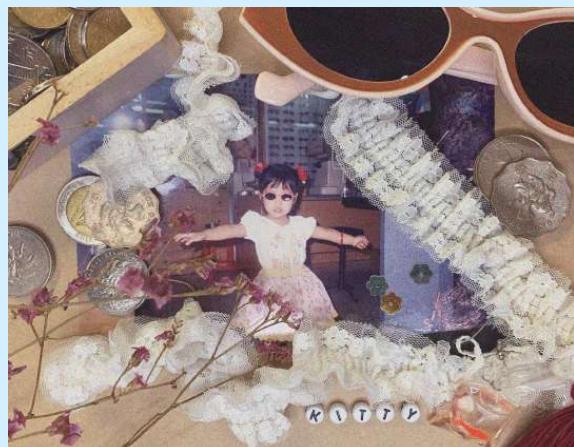
GUYS, STOP
MAKING *PERFECT*,
BEAUTIFUL BUT
MEANINGLESS
THINGS >:(

**MAKE WHAT ACTUALLY
MEANS SOMETHING TO
YOU PERSONALLY.**

If you make in this way, instead of intimidating others, you invite more to come, dialogue, and (co-)create. This is honesty, friendship, and resistance.

*This zine is first published in ptpt.voyage
as part of my zine series called
What's Love* Got To Do With It?!*

This zine is gathered from many existing zines and zinesters who had impacted how I think and feel about DIY culture and anti-capitalistic social change.



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