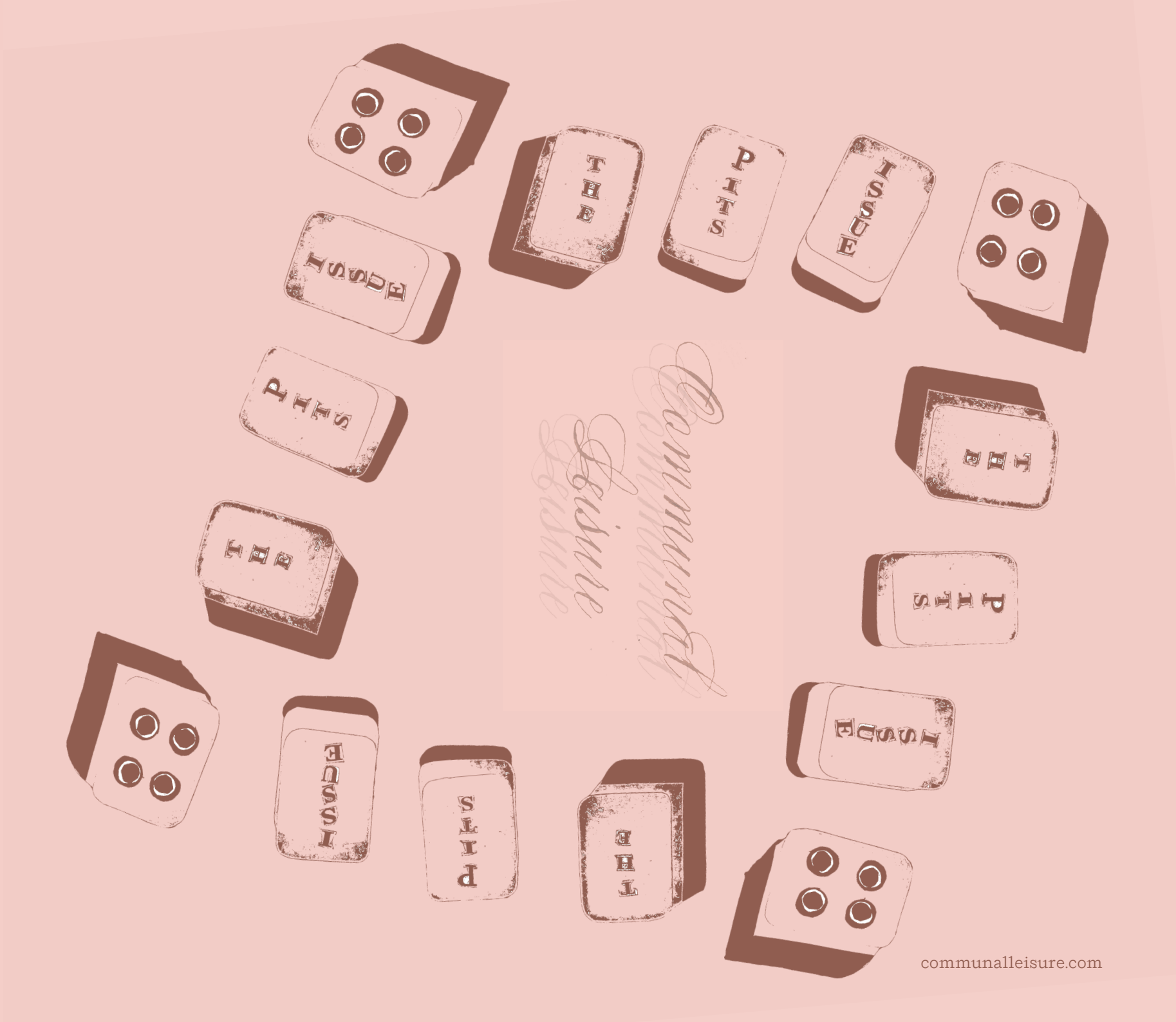
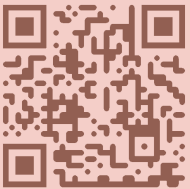
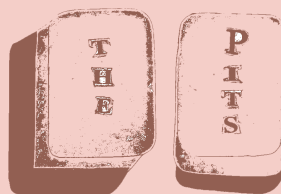




Mahjong



Words by Zola Mooney

We were having a conversation in which speaking took few shapes. There were sentences in circles and in long lines, drawn vertically, crossed at the middle. Someone who had come like some outer flower had questions and these were rearranged like tiles like teeth and made to cut a white square at the centre of the table. And everyone was given a hand in which the shapes repeated. And Popo said that you cannot win the “chicken” way! So we were careful with our contradictions. And order came because we knew what to say and what to do. Maybe the shrimp was bad; I had a moving middle and order came in rounded ways, bending.

I had to give up eyes to keep a second arm. I had to hope a row of birds would make me lots of money. Then just as I found luck, T. stole my only hope of green - and gambled it while clicking his teeth, his face an o. And he is always gambling with

luck that is not his. And wins though he comes as a tourist, shaped like an o in high alert (ô).

Then the sun through curtains was insinuating itself into our company. You were a shape becoming dissolved in light, discarding circles, collecting characters, thinking too long about the north wind. While nibbling shrimp you turned an angle of light behind your ear into a pointed line. It crossed the table and my hand was cut between its thumb and index.

The room was hot. You were talking in circles worth of circles and I was so confused by what you meant I stopped instead to count my coins and eat some bread in a place unbothered by your glare.

There was shade by the door. From there the tiles were white houses on a green hill and the swallows were circling making circling shadows on their walls.

[1] Information about Mahjong & how to play:

The game is played by 4 people and with 144 tiles.



[2] The players are usually seated around a square table, but any table will do as long as the players are at an equal distance from the pool of tiles.

A hand is comprised of 13 tiles. The players take it in turn to draw a tile and choose whether to exchange it with one of their own or discard it, with the aim of making pungs (three identical tiles), chows (three in sequence), kongs (four identical tiles) and a pair.



[3] Though online versions do exist, it is better to play in person since sound (mahjong meaning little birds) and feel are important; many experienced players are able to identify a tile by the indentations carved on its surface, without looking.



[4] Winning is the most triumphant feeling you will ever feel; the final set of tiles is smacked down sending shockwaves across the felt and up the spines of the baffled players.

You should play with your friends or with your family or with strangers.



Thanks for all the great responses, and we hope you enjoyed this fourth issue of The Pits!

If you're interested in writing a piece for the series please get in touch with your ideas via communalleisure@proton.me

- we imagine written pieces to be 800-1200 words long, but are open to other formats. We can pay £150 per commission. Essays will be printed, like this one, on specially designed posters, and distributed far and wide.

See you in the pits!

Love,

Communal Leisure x