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G... IS FOR GULLY QUEEN

Gully Queens are a term for trans and gay people who live embattled lives at the outermost margins of Jamaican Society. They are visibly, openly living the truth of their gender and sexual identity in a nation where many choose to stay closeted, and they pay for it with complete alienation and constant abuse. After being forced from shacks, derelict buildings, and their own families, many homeless LGBTI Jamaicans have found refuge in the storm drainage systems of Kingston (known locally as the gully). In Jamaican patois *Gully* translates into A deprived area or a slum. For trans people and gay men unable or unwilling to hide their sexuality, the sense of community and relative safety the gully provides acts as a welcome sanctuary, and for many, a hope of change to come.

Jamaica remains a place with a strong undercurrent of transphobia and homophobia: a devoutly Christian nation with sodomy laws still on the books, the traumas of colonisation and the skewed teachings of Christianity leak into socio-political ideologies. In Jamaica Influential dancehall stars openly engage in transphobic and antigay incitement, major newspaper cartoonists mock the LGBTI+ community, and the national refrain of "One Love" blithely ignores those whose identity exists outside of the heteronormative/cisgender framework. As a 2014 Human Rights Watch report asserted, "Physical and sexual violence, including severe beatings and even murder, are part of the lived reality of many LGBT people in Jamaica. The level of brutality leads many to fear what could happen if their sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed."

GUQU - Named as a slick shorthand for "Gully Queen," is for queer and trans people of Caribbean and African descent — communities often sidelined in both mainstream queer and cultural nightlife. HARDFOOD Dedicates a series of upcoming events in London to those marginalised within their culture and to shed light on those in the Caribbean community who may not feel they have a space to represent their country and live their truth safely.

L... IS FOR LUDI

Ludo ***noun*** **/ˈL(j)uːdəʊ/ British a simple game in which players move counters round a board, also known as Ludi**

Ludo finds its roots in Pachisi, a strategy game played by Indian royalty as early as the 6th century. Originally played on cloth or stone with cowrie shells as dice, with the number of shells landing "mouth up" determining the number of spaces to move. In a true imperial fashion, the British appropriated their own version, simplified and commercialised; it was patented in 1896 under the name “Ludo.”

How it became Ludi

Similar to when north moroccans upgraded the spanish version ' ‘parchis”.

Caribbean’s elevated the game to become what we know as Ludi. Now with two dice, the rules of the game are flexible and fiercely debated. “Double six out,” “kill and go,” “safe house,” “back to base” — every, every group might play it slightly differently.

As a game for groups it can often be a revealer of the most patient, most competitive or most respectful people in the room. With several interpretations of how it's played, gathering around a board requires intentional listening and an element of blind faith in your instructor.

This game highlights the fickleness of the European white supremacist project, and holds prominence in the shared history of resistance across the globe.

Despite European attempts to colonise, the descendants of the ancient indian game have a strong resemblance yet globally they are known for their distinct often personal designs of the hands that chose to built it.

Like a kiss on a cheek, each manifestation can be drawn on a multitude of ready to use or repurposed materials like wood, plastic, or tapestries. but at its foundation, a Ludi board must have a cross or X shape with an equal amount of spaces for figures or stones to be able to ‘step’ around it.

QUEER DOMINO PROJECT

JUNE 2023



D... IS FOR DOMINO

The earliest dominoes were invented in ancient Egypt and later appeared in 12th-century China. Made from ivory, bone, or wood, these "bones" travelled imperial trade routes, reaching Europe—especially Italy and France—by the 18th century. Western sets evolved into the 28-piece double-six version we know today. These small tiles have witnessed the rise and fall of empires—emblems of continuity through shifting power.

By the 1900s, dominoes had spread globally. In the Caribbean, the game took on a distinctive meaning. Introduced by plantation owners, dominoes were reclaimed by enslaved Africans, adapted using scrap wood and scorched dots. Through trade, migration, and memory, they've become a fixture of Caribbean life.

From Kingston to Port of Spain to Brixton, the domino table has become more than a game—it is a space for joy and storytelling; a form of oral history and collective healing that affirms the living, breathing heritage of Caribbean cultures.

Dominoes require little: a surface, a few tiles, and a willingness to connect. The table becomes ritual space—where rules are passed down, strategies unfold, and memory is made. Intergenerational bonds are built, jokes fly, and stories take shape.

In mainstream metaphor, the "domino effect" implies collapse. But in Caribbean hands, each tile is not a casualty—it's a carrier of legacy. They ripple with survival and joy, showing how culture lives on not despite struggle, but through it. A domino table is a living archive. It holds our griefs and celebrations, our arguments and love. To slap down a tile is to enter a long-standing dialogue—one started before us, and destined to outlive us. It is memory in motion, played by hand.