

MARCH 2024, ISSUE 1

WOMEN IN CARNIVAL

Women In Carnival Research Network Newsletter



Welcome

EMILY ZOBEL MARSHALL AND CATHY THOMAS

Dear Carnivalists!

Welcome to the first issue of the Women in Carnival Newsletter. We have gathered your news from across the globe. Many thanks for those who sent in your news. You have been involved in our 2022 international Women in Carnival workshops in Leeds, Trinidad, and California and we want to keep the network and the conversations going.

We have created this annual newsletter to connect carnival practitioners, artists, musicians, performers, activists, and scholars across the globe and share news and opportunities. Please send us your news for inclusion in our next Women In Carnival newsletter. We are interested in anything carnival-culture relevant that you're excited about and would like to share!

Please email:

cathythomas@ucsb.edu or E.Marshall@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

may the mas never die!

Warmest,
Emily & Cathy



This issue:

Welcome
01

Good News
02-03

Announcements
04

Mardi Gras Celebrations
05

Festival Round-up
06-08

Women of Luton Carnival
09-12

Meet Melissa Simon-Hartman
13-14

Trinidad Carnival 2024 News
15

Carnival Curious
16

Recognition for the work of carnival scholars, maskers, & makers!

CONGRATULATIONS TO RA!

Ra Malika Imhotep is starting a new position as an Assistant Professor in International Studies / African Diaspora Studies at Spelman College, a historically Black liberal arts college in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States. Ra Malika is “excited to find ways to bring Women in Carnival to the Spelman campus and find other ways to connect” with the network.

PRIZES, EXHIBITS, AND TALKS FOR DR KIM VAZ-DEVILLE

Dr Kim Vaz-Deville has been selected as a 2023-2024 [Harvard Radcliffe Fellow](#). She won a 2023-2024 National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Award, a Louisiana Board of Regent Awards to Louisiana Artists and Scholars, and a 2022 Sabbatical Grant from the Louisville Institute for her book in progress, *The Art of Resistance: Sacred Visual Creations of African American Mardi Gras Maskers*.

In collaboration with Steve Bourget, curator for the Americas at the Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac in Paris, France and *The Spirit of Fi Yi Yi and the Mandingo Warriors*, Big Chief Victor Harris, Vaz-Deville served as Associate Curator for the exhibit entitled “[Black Indians of New Orleans](#)” at the Musée du Quai Branly shown from October 2022-January 2023.

Kim also spoke in May 2023 at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria for a symposium on “Music & Racism.” My presentation “Coming Out the Door: Baby Dolls and Triumphal Entry on the creolization of our Black Mardi Gras traditions. You can [listen to her talk online](#).

CONGRATULATIONS TO IDAKEDA GROUP LTD!

Eintou Springer writes that Idakeda now has its own space in Newtown, Port of Spain. Lakou Wi is host to a series of activities including self-defense Stick Fighting Workshop for women in celebration of International Women's Day. They also launched The Kambule Performing Arts Junior Company. The space is run by Eintou's daughters, Dara Healy and Attilah Springer (pictured below).

Stay up-to-date on Lakou Wi events and sales
IG: [@lakou.wi](https://www.instagram.com/lakou.wi)
<https://idakedagroup.com>



WRITINGS, PROJECTS FROM ADANNA KAI JONES

The “Professor of Wine” has recently co-authored articles on pedagogy that have been published in the journals Performance Matters and Radical Teacher and in Radical teacher: A Socialist, Feminist, and Anti-Racist Journal, Vol 127 (Dec 2023) She also participated in NewWaves! 2023 in Trinidad as an artist in residence, researching for and workshopping her performance/writing based project “TranscenDANCing 'IT': Deciphering The Limits of Jam(IT)ness”. She is currently working on further developing this project into an evening-length performance.

**Recognition
for the work
of carnival
scholars,
maskers, &
makers!**

Carnival website goes live!

We are delighted to announce the launch of the [Women in Carnival network website](#)! The site features photos, videos, and reporting on the symposia in [Trinidad](#), [Leeds](#), and [California](#) as well as content from incredible participants including video [interviews](#) with carnival practitioners and scholars and the wonderful [carnival paintings exhibition by Rhian Kempadoo-Miller](#) (photo from exhibit, right).

The website will evolve to allow the Women in Carnival network to stay in touch, share opportunities and events, and network across the globe.



Ongoing: Dance & Performance Institute

Dancer, choreographer, and scholar Makeda Thomas Studies leads engagements on mas performance with her [Studies in Mas & Carnival Performance](#) and [New Waves Institute](#). "Studies in Mas" offers critical inquiry and embodied research around mas and Carnival. New Waves! 2024 gathers dance artists, scholars, teachers, and students "in an organizing principle of 'Emancipation.'" New Waves! 2024 includes performances, films, workshops, lectures, and a special program on Sylvia Wynter.

To keep up to date with announcements and future events check out: www.makedathomas.org

New Waves! 2024
BIM
26 JULY - 1 AUGUST
LET'S DANCE!

IN HONOR OF THE LATE JOHN MICHAEL GORING

BARBADOS

NEW WAVES! INSTITUTE. A gathering of dance artists, scholars, teachers, students, and leaders in the field of dance who embody the depth and spirit of contemporary dance and performance practice in the Caribbean and its Diasporas. In an organizing principle of 'Emancipation', New Waves! participants connect in essential ways that alters and brings out light in one another. Join us! Let's Dance!

REGISTER

INFO & FAQs

dance &
performance
institute

I remember our plantation was sold twice before de war. It was a sheriff's sale. De white peoples, dey stand on de porch and de black men and women and children stand on de ground. And de man, he shout, 'How much am I offered for plantation and fine

NOLA's living history

A VISIT TO THE WHITNEY PLANTATION

Cultural site visits help us articulate and visualize carnival research's importance. The Whitney Plantation operated between 1752 and 1975, producing indigo, sugar, and rice. It was created by German immigrants and sold to an American industrialist. The historic site is solemn and does not shy away from its hideous past. Monuments and spaces of meditation honor and name the enslaved workers, the children who died there, and the 500 men and women responsible for the 1811 slave revolt.



WALKING RADDY



Left to right: Merline Kimball (Gold Digger Baby Doll) dances on the steps of her childhood home; Baby Dolls stepping down Clairborne; Kim Vaz DeVille and granddaughter posed in Black Indian costume that Kim hand-beaded over the course of the year. Above: Etching with WPA interviews from former slaves of Whitney Plantation; Emily stitching; Below: Cathy & Emily as honorary NOLA Baby Dolls in Mardi Gras 2023.



"Traditionally Baby Dolls wore satin...Satin is the one thing that has been consistent in this culture, the short dresses, the ruffles, the satin, the material, the rolling and shaking, and the dirty dancing."

DENISE AUGUSTINE
GOLD DIGGER BABY DOLL



Carnival Round-up 2023 and 2024

23 FEBRUARY 2024

MASHRAMANI - "THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC" GUYANA

From the Amerindian word meaning "a job well done," celebrations are countrywide. Bands are usually supported by Ministries. Health Ministry and Heritage are featured

Learn more about "Mash": <https://www.carnivaland.net/mashramani-carnival/>

Learn more about Guyana Carnival: <https://www.carnivaland.net/guyana-carnival/>



Left to right: Ghodlyn with hand-made costume walking with the Heritage Band; Alisa, Devon, and Eljin; and unknown band queen with the Ministry of Health

11 -14 FEBRUARY 2024

MARTINIQUE CARNIVAL

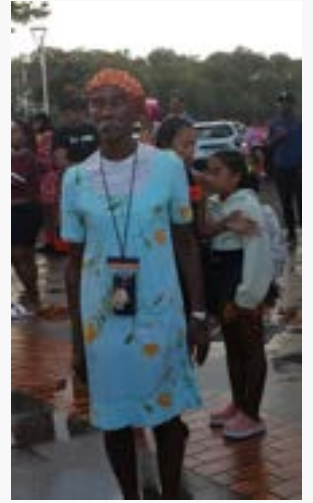
The pre-Lenten festivities include the coming out of King Vaval (emblem of carnival), daily Pyjama l'évé (pajama parade), Burlesque Wedding, Red Devils Parade (Diable Rouge), and the funeral and burning of King Vaval. There are growing numbers of molasses devils called 'neg gwo siwo' and 'clay men'

Learn more: <https://www.carnivaland.net/martinique-carnival/>



Cathy, Emily, and Ann Catherine pose with Red Devils.

MARTINIQUE (CONTINUED)



Left to right: Placard on anti-rape reads “women will take care of the problem”; revelers as the *neg gwa siwo* (a tribute to cane workers); King Vaval mourner in white paint his effigy burns; cross gender play in pyjama carnival.

JULY 2023

FIESTA DE SANTIAGO APOSTOL IN LOIZA, PUERTO RICO

The apparition of Saint James was to appear to the 12th century Christian Spanish army in a battle against the Muslim on the Iberian Peninsula. Later, this apparition also appeared P.R. The vejigante mask (painted coconut shell with wooden horns) meant to symbolize the “pagan Moor,” is now, according to residents, seen as an anticolonial symbol critiquing relations former relations to Europe and current relations with U.S.

Learn more: <https://www.puertoricodaytrips.com/loiza-festival/>



JUNE 2023

HOLLYWOOD CARNIVAL

The Caribbean diaspora in the Los Angeles area drew together popular mas bands in the beads and bikini tradition, Garifuna communities, Latinx/Chicanx biker groups, Black cowboys, and drum circles that begin in Hollywood and ends in the traditional Black community of Leimert Park.

Learn more: [Hollywood Carnival](#)



JANUARY 2023

WOMEN OF WAKANDA KREWE - NEW ORLEANS

Started in 2018 by Jalessa and Wankeeta Jackson, this krewe draws on joy and Afrofuturism to create its tradition that center Black-identified women. Dr. Sonita Singh (a researcher with Guyanese and Trini roots) is one of the krewe's designers. WOW takes great pride in handcrafting costumes and floats as is the NOLA tradition of Black Mardi Gras. WOW walks in the Chewbacchus Parade during Mardi Gras season but parade together multiple times yearly. Great pride is taken in handcrafted costumes and adornments as well as traditional throws given to the crowds at the night parade scheduled before Mardi Gras day (over 60,000 spectators). It seamlessly blends the expressive arts of cosplay and carnival. The 2023 theme honored the two homegoings in the Wakandanuniverse.

Learn more: [Women of Wakanda NOLA](#)



Left to right: Cathy as Shuri, Krysten as Afrofuturist Hippolyta Freedman, and Tahlor as Wakandan Priestess; Sonita Singh as winged funerarial panther spirit; throws with seeded paper; cowrie adornment

Women of Luton Carnival

CLAUDETTE WHITTINGHAM

Luton has a long history of parades dating back to the 1400s. In 1976, the Caribbean carnival culture made its impact in Luton, which can be seen today. Luton Carnival forged its way to being the biggest one-day carnival in the UK by 2012. The UK Centre for Carnival Arts was opened in 2009 in response to the vibrant carnival culture in Luton, and the collective cultural impact carnivals around the UK have had on British society. Luton Carnival is a diverse, family friendly, child-focused event. Luton Carnival 2024 will take place in Luton Town Centre between 12pm-6pm on Sunday 26 May.

Here are some of the women who help to make Luton Carnival a home of mass happiness and joy for all.



Marilyn Gearing

At 15 years old, Marilyn Gearing was crowned the Hat Queen at Luton Carnival (then a hat fair) in April 1954. Her crown, made by a Luton milliner, was a replica of the crown used to crown Queen Elizabeth II just 2 years previously. Marilyn still takes part in Luton Carnival annually, designing and making the Luton Samaritans float that traditionally ends the Luton parade as 'Samaritans are always at the end of the line'.



Women of Luton Carnival

Margaret Matthew

Margaret Matthew, lovingly known locally as 'Auntie Margaret', is one of the Windrush generation who brought the Caribbean flavour to Luton Carnival. Leading the Luton based St Kitts, Nevis and Friends carnival group since 1984, Auntie Margaret, now 82, will still be on the road with her group for Luton Carnival 2024, which she has announced will be her last carnival leading her band.

Picture: Aunty Margaret at Luton Carnival 2018 (Left)

Sarah Salim

Sarah Salim is one of Luton Carnival's newest queens. After graduating from the UK Centre for Carnival Arts' artist development programme, Sarah founded the carnival group, Alif New Beginnings in 2019 to celebrate Islamic culture and traditional crafts whilst challenging negative stereotypes of Muslim culture in the UK and empowering women from her community. As well as participating annually in Luton Carnival, Sarah also works with local groups in Luton to deliver the annual Colours of Eid carnival parade.

Picture: Sarah in one of six mobility scooter carnival costumes she created for Luton Carnival 2023 (Right)



Women of Luton Carnival

Janet Skepple

Janet Skepple has been involved in carnival since 1984 and in 2013, formed Luton's only children dedicated carnival band 'Scandalous'. Like many people from Caribbean backgrounds, Janet has been brought up in the carnival tradition and passed this to her children and grandchildren, with her daughters designing and making some of Luton's iconic costumes and her son performing as Saint Patrick in the annual Luton St Patrick's Festival hosted by the Luton Irish Forum.

Picture: Janet Skepple in Angels costume she created for Luton Carnival 2022



Women of Luton Carnival

Maureen Scarlett

Maureen Scarlett, praised in the carnival world for being one of only a few women in the UK who build their costume frames, is the leader of the Luton Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Care Forum (SCTCF) carnival band, formed in 2005. Luton Carnival has given the group a platform to raise awareness of the disease and promote the group's support services for those affected.



Picture: Maureen Scarlett, Luton Carnival 2015

Meet designer Melissa Simon-Hartman

Melissa Simon-Hartman is a London-born artist, costume, and fashion designer best known for her contributions to Beyoncé's 'Black is King' and, most recently, her album 'Renaissance'. Extremely proud of her Trinidadian and Ghanaian heritage, both cultures heavily influence her work, on stage and screen, and through her own label, Simon-Hartman London.

Melissa was born an only child and raised in Kilburn, a borough of North-West London, to a Ghanaian father and Trinidadian mother. She excelled creatively at a young age and received a diploma in General Art & Design at Barnet College, where she was nominated for the Alan Young Art Student of the year award and just narrowly missed out on snagging the coveted prize. After completing her studies at Barnet, Melissa attended the prestigious London College of Fashion (now known as University of Arts London) and graduated with a degree in Theatrical costume.



Connect

Instagram: [@melissasimonhartman](https://www.instagram.com/melissasimonhartman)

Website: simon-hartman.com

Behance: [MelissaSimon-Hartman](https://www.behance.net/MelissaSimon-Hartman)



After a career detour, Melissa came back to her fashion roots in 2009 with the launch of the Simon-Hartman brand, which was born out of a desire to create statement footwear and accessory pieces that could be seen as works of art as well as something nice to wear. Simon-Hartman footwear would debut a few years later in 2013 at the Mercedes Benz Fashion week in Berlin, gracing the feet of models showcasing the collection of British celebrity fashion designer and stylist, Romero Bryan.

Over the next years, Melissa would begin to refine her work and aesthetic and started to move away from footwear, returning instead to her college and university roots as an artist and costume designer and building on her desire to create a distinctive brand that specialised in wearable and displayable art, while at the same time incorporating an Afro-futuristic aesthetic and consistently highlighting the beauty of black culture.

This new journey would begin on the streets of Notting Hill, specifically Notting Hill Carnival. A fitting spot as this is where Melissa first fell in love with costume design while working as a young designer for one of the local Mas bands. Here her costume designs went well beyond the traditional beads and feathers and took on a life of their own as avant-garde fashion pieces. The response was overwhelming and soon her costumes began appearing in theatre and stage productions in countries such as Ghana, Beijing, Shanghai, Martinique, and Italy, while back home in the UK they were showcased on the widely popular series 'X-Factor'.

From there, Melissa was commissioned to produce costumes for the world premier of the hit documentary 'I Am Bolt'. Her biggest project would come a short while later as she was picked by stylist Zerina Akers to be one of the designers on the Disney Plus production 'Black is King', a visual album created by superstar singer Beyoncé.

Since then, Melissa's work has been seen on screen and stage. She contributed decor pieces to the Afro-futuristic set design of the character Safe Odum, played by R&B singer Neyo, in season three of the popular 'Step Up' series on Starz. Her costumes have featured in a number of prominent music videos - Little Mix's 'Love (Sweet Love)', Stefflon Don's 'Can't Let You Go', WizKid ft Burna Boy's 'Ginger', and Doja Cat's smash hit 'Woman'. Her work has also been featured in publications such as Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, The Cut, and GQ.

TRINIDAD CARNIVAL

2024

Biggups to Amanda and Renella

COMING OF AGE IN CARNIVAL: CHAPTER 1, THE GIRL
by Amanda T. McIntyre

Dolly Mas is a Contemporary Caribbean Baby Doll troupe by Trinidadian artist and writer, Amanda T. McIntyre. The work intersects science fiction and gothic themes of time travel and shape shifting to present fantasy narratives in performances that comment on the history, culture, socio-politics and possible futures of the Caribbean and its diasporas. The 2024 presentation is the first chapter in the adventures of the Loreto family. The focus is on Dolly Ma La Niña, who used to be a doll but became a real girl through Dolly magic.



IG: @amandatmcintyre

Carnival is life!

Renella Alfred, from the famous Alfred Jab Jab family, is Whip Princess. She placed first in the Traditional Character Competition, Female Individual. One only needs to Google her to see the evolution and rise of this beautiful women in carnival.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO				
TRADITIONAL INDIVIDUAL OF YEAR FEMALE				
12TH FEBRUARY 2024				
NO.	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	PROFESSION
1	RENELLA ALFRED	12, ALFRED STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-1234	WHIP PRINCESS
2	JANE SMITH	45, MAIN ROAD, PORT KAITUMA	554-5678	TEACHER
3	JOHN DOE	78, QUEEN STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-9012	ENGINEER
4	MARY JONES	101, MARKET STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-3456	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
5	DAVID BROWN	123, RIVER ROAD, PORT KAITUMA	554-7890	ARTIST
6	SARAH GREEN	145, HILL STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
7	MICHAEL WHITE	167, BAY STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	TECHNICAL SKILLS
8	EMILY BLACK	189, GARDEN STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
9	CHRISTOPHER GRAY	211, PARK STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	TECHNICAL SKILLS
10	AMANDA PINK	233, CENTRAL STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
11	ANDREW BLUE	255, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	TECHNICAL SKILLS
12	STEPHANIE YELLOW	277, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
13	DANIEL RED	299, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	TECHNICAL SKILLS
14	OLIVIA PURPLE	321, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
15	JACOB GREEN	343, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	TECHNICAL SKILLS
16	ISABELLA BLUE	365, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
17	LEONARD YELLOW	387, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	TECHNICAL SKILLS
18	ANASTASIA RED	409, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
19	ANTHONY PURPLE	431, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	TECHNICAL SKILLS
20	ANITA GREEN	453, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
21	ANTHONY BLUE	475, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	TECHNICAL SKILLS
22	ANITA YELLOW	497, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
23	ANTHONY RED	519, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	TECHNICAL SKILLS
24	ANITA PURPLE	541, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
25	ANTHONY GREEN	563, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	TECHNICAL SKILLS
26	ANITA BLUE	585, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
27	ANTHONY YELLOW	607, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	TECHNICAL SKILLS
28	ANITA RED	629, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
29	ANTHONY PURPLE	651, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	TECHNICAL SKILLS
30	ANITA GREEN	673, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
31	ANTHONY BLUE	695, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	TECHNICAL SKILLS
32	ANITA YELLOW	717, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
33	ANTHONY RED	739, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	TECHNICAL SKILLS
34	ANITA PURPLE	761, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
35	ANTHONY GREEN	783, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	TECHNICAL SKILLS
36	ANITA BLUE	805, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
37	ANTHONY YELLOW	827, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	TECHNICAL SKILLS
38	ANITA RED	849, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
39	ANTHONY PURPLE	871, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	TECHNICAL SKILLS
40	ANITA GREEN	893, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
41	ANTHONY BLUE	915, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-2345	TECHNICAL SKILLS
42	ANITA YELLOW	937, NORTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-6789	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
43	ANTHONY RED	959, SOUTH STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-0123	TECHNICAL SKILLS
44	ANITA PURPLE	981, WEST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-4567	WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR
45	ANTHONY GREEN	1003, EAST STREET, PORT KAITUMA	554-8901	TECHNICAL SKILLS

"My personal portrayal is a representation of Kali."

RENELLA ALFRED



photo credit: Edwin Boodoosingh

IG: @the.originaljabjab

Carnival Curious

“Carnival word discovery” Mas Band

The phrase Mas Band is a carnival parade's lifeblood. A mas band consists of people who pay for a chosen costume from a theme and march together. Not just any beautiful costume will get you into the parade. You have to join them or be invited in to dance with them on parade day. Mas band's costume designs vary from time to time exploring playful, erotic, satiric, and social commentary themes.



PICTURE: NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL

“Carnival Highlight” Miami Carnival

The Miami-Broward Carnival is a vibrant celebration of Caribbean culture in Miami, typically held in early October. It's a multi-day event that attracts over 75,000 attendees, showcasing a fusion of Caribbean cultures. Highlights include the Parade of Bands, featuring over 18,000 participants in masquerade bands with colorful costumes and live Caribbean music. The carnival also offers a variety of events such as the Junior Carnival, Panorama Steel Band Competition, and J’ouvert, where attendees can immerse themselves in the festivities. This carnival is a significant event for Miami's Caribbean-American community, offering a rich experience of Caribbean heritage, art, and music.



PICTURE: MIAMI CARNIVAL J’OUVERT BANDS

Food culture highlight” Pholourie

Pholourie, often spelled phoulourie, is the perfect festival noon snack. Pholiurie, spiced, fried chickpea dough balls, is a popular street meal in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyanese, and Surinamese cuisines. These dough balls are flavorful and slightly crunchy on the outside, warm and delicious on the inside. At the Caribbean Carnival, you can try pholourie with mango or tamarind chutneys to balance the deep-fried snack or velvety yogurt sauces.



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Women in Carnival Research Network web



[@WOMENINCARNIVALCULTURE](https://www.instagram.com/WOMENINCARNIVALCULTURE)



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[@barely_elsewhere_art](https://www.instagram.com/barely_elsewhere_art)

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