



Don't Tip The H

2024 - present

Elayne Adamczyk Harrington

Began as spray paint on paper, 360 mm × 260 mm, 2024, created during the Summer Transfer Programme at Cabra Community College, where Harrington developed the motif alongside students in a stencil and aerosol workshop. This early exploration of the Irish fire hydrant symbol served as the conceptual and visual foundation for subsequent projects, including site-specific installations, participatory engagements, found objects, print, performance, film, photography, and the development of the artist logo.

Don't Tip The H is an evolving, multi-modal project that explores Irish cultural symbols, urban heritage, personal identity, and the intersections of superstition, faith, and public engagement. At its centre is the recognisable yet often-overlooked Irish fire hydrant marker — a yellow and black sign with its stark 'H' — functioning as both a practical warning and a cultural provocation. The title references a childhood superstition: that tipping the hydrant marker could bring good luck. This playful belief, rooted in Dublin street culture, contrasts with the artist's Christian perspective, creating a meditation on the sacred and secular, ritual and superstition, and playfulness and reflection.

Since August 2024, the motif has expanded across multiple platforms:

- > Spray-painted and stenciled artworks on paper and other surfaces
- > Site-specific installations and engagements
- > Participatory and performative interactions with audiences and students
- > Film and live media documentation of process and interactions
- > Photographic documentation capturing progress and audience engagement
- > Graphic design and logo development

The logo, developed in collaboration with designer Jennifer Harrington in 2024, transforms the hydrant 'H' into a multi-layered personal and professional emblem. Its design incorporates a 3D graphic brick modelled on a standard red Leicester brick, rendered with texture to convey materiality. The upper face presents the artist's first name, Elayne, while the front face features her married name, Adamczyk, alongside her maiden name, Harrington. Within Harrington, the letters A, R, and T are highlighted, allowing the word ART to emerge visually, linking the motif to the artist's creative practice and identity.



The typography, “Chuck Round,” has softened, rounded edges that distinguish it from traditional hydrant signage. This choice references graffiti culture, street art, and urban aesthetics, bridging the DIY ethos of public street art with professional graphic design. It also recalls the aerosol stenciling process Harrington uses in her visual artworks, reinforcing continuity between her spray-painted pieces, public interventions, and logo.

Colour plays a pivotal role. Yellow, specifically ‘Crayola sunset yellow’, is the artist’s favourite colour, symbolises light and intelligence, and connects to her first name (Elayne, from Greek Helen, meaning “light” or “to bring sunshine”). Black grounds the design in urban, industrial, and working-class contexts. Red and black reference Harrington’s musical and performative persona, *Temper-Mental MissElayneous*, encompassing rap, poetry, lyricism, and live performance. The palette conveys multiple facets of her identity, uniting visual art, music, education, and street culture.

This year marks a significant moment for Harrington. Following the December 2024 digital and February 2025 physical release of the Red Album (*Temperamental Miscellaneous*, a remastered collection of her earliest works), the second album of her four-part, colour-themed quadriptych anthology — Yellow Album: *Temper-Mentality* — will be released in 2026. These releases align with her visual art practice, especially *Don’t Tip The H*, highlighting cohesion between her multidisciplinary identities: as a visual artist, educator, and musician/rapper leading hip-hop in Ireland since 2011. Each LP in the series corresponds to a colour and facet of her creative identity:

Red Album: *Temperamental Miscellaneous* (launched December 2024/February 2025; exhibition theme red, black, and white)

Yellow Album: *Temper-Mentality* (2026)

Blue Album: *Born & Bred*

Green Album: *Miscellany*



The motif has also expanded physically and socially. A cast-iron yellow fire hydrant sign, acquired at auction by her parents, will feature in her upcoming solo exhibition (2026), installed in a prominent position at the highest point of the gallery — a symbolic beacon linking street superstition, personal history, and artistic reflection. The sign retains its standard “100/1” marking, indicating the distance (100 metres) along the street and depth (1 metre) below ground to the hydrant access point. This practical layering of information is echoed in the logo, where the letters E and A (Elayne Adamczyk) are positioned within the central H (Harrington), creating a visual hierarchy that maps the artist’s full identity onto the iconic motif. Through participatory events and documented public interventions, the motif continues to evolve as a living symbol, tracing a trajectory from street signage to artwork, to logo, to gallery installation, and to archival documentation.

Don’t Tip The H and its associated logo embody a continuous exploration of boundaries — sacred and secular, superstition and faith, street and gallery — while celebrating heritage, identity, and the interplay between Harrington’s visual art, educational work, and musical/performative persona. The project demonstrates the adaptability of a single, urban motif, showing how it can transform into artwork, logo, public engagement, and multi-disciplinary identity across a sustained, evolving practice.

References

The Numerate Ninny (2019). Fire Hydrants of Ireland. The Numerate Ninny. Available at: <https://thenumerateninny.com/2019/08/14/fire-hydrants-of-ireland/> [Accessed 28 August 2024].