



Like Hot Butter on Our Breakfast Toast

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This project operates within the critical and performative space established by *And They Became More Irish Than the Irish Themselves*, a multimedia exploration of Irish identity as fluid, contested, and deeply embodied. Both bodies of work interrogate how Irishness is performed, perceived, and perpetuated through cultural symbols, stereotypes, and lived realities—particularly through the lens of working-class life in Dublin.

By reappropriating the Irish Pride bread logo—transforming Big Toast into Big Boast in both tone and typography—this work engages with the commodification of Irish identity and its visual branding. The logo, a marker of familiarity and national pride, becomes a site of critical reflection where notions of simplicity and abundance, nourishment and hunger, authenticity and performance converge. Bread itself emerges as a potent metaphor, simultaneously representing the “bread-and-butter” necessities of working-class existence and the complex cultural signifiers of class, diet, and taste within Irish society.

This reimagining highlights the tension between class signifiers: white versus brown bread, middle-class ideas of quality and ‘taste’ versus working-class realities of economic constraint and cultural expression. It challenges surface-level *nostalgie de la boue*—the romanticised yearning for the grit and charm of ‘real Irishness’—and confronts the ambivalence between the celebration of culture and its commodification. The work critiques how consumerism, capitalism, censorship, branding, and bureaucracy intersect to shape and sometimes constrain expressions of identity.

Moreover, the project aligns with the ongoing themes in *More Irish* by exploring the performance of Irishness as both a personal and collective act. It reflects on how identity is embodied, staged, and sometimes co-opted—questioning whether the romanticised “grit and charm” of working-class Dublin life is genuinely embraced or merely appropriated as costume and spectacle.

On the Hoodie and Hip Hop

The presence of the yellow hoodie in this body of work is neither incidental nor purely aesthetic. It operates as a visual and cultural bridge—connecting threads between past and present work, music and visual art, personal narrative and public symbolism. Yellow ties directly into the artist’s forthcoming album, extending a chromatic language established through earlier works like *Temperamental Miscellaneous* (red) and *Temper-Mentality* (yellow), offering continuity in mood, emotion, and thematic intensity.

But the hoodie also carries embedded histories. Once stigmatised in media as a marker of delinquency, especially in British and Irish contexts, the hoodie is laden with associations tied to



class, youth culture, and resistance. Within hip hop culture and “the hood,” it becomes emblematic of marginalisation, anonymity, solidarity, and self-expression. Though now widely worn across class and cultural boundaries, its presence here still resonates with its roots—linking hood to working-class Dublin, and street style to performative identity.

It is in this spirit that the work's title—Like Hot Butter on Our Breakfast Toast—takes on added significance. Lifted from The Sugarhill Gang's 1979 anthem Rapper's Delight, the phrase, "I don't mean to brag, I don't mean to boast / But we're like hot butter on our breakfast toast," playfully underscores the crossover between bravado, nourishment, and performative cultural identity. The lyric becomes a layered signifier: of hip hop swagger, of working-class sustenance, and of a broader commentary on pride, ego, and survival. It reflects the artist's ongoing engagement with musical legacies and their intertwining with everyday life.

Appropriation, Adaptation, and Cultural Dialogue

This work also enters a wider conversation around the appropriation and commodification of Irish cultural symbols—from the Claddagh ring to the Irish language, the harp, and Guinness. These icons are frequently decontextualised and commercialised, presented as neat packages of Irishness for global consumption. This mirrors the broader commodification of culture and identity explored in *And They Became More Irish Than the Irish Themselves*.

Parallels can be drawn between this and the global journey of hip hop. Originating in African American communities as a form of resistance and self-expression, hip hop has travelled across continents, adapted and appropriated in various ways. In Ireland, it has been embraced not just as a genre, but as a poetic form resonating with local experiences. Ireland has cultivated its own voice within the hip hop scene—rooted in literature, oral storytelling, and spoken word traditions—while simultaneously grappling with the tensions of adopting a cultural form born of a different historical and social context.

The dialogue between Irish identity and hip hop culture in this work reflects the negotiations involved in cultural borrowing, authenticity, and adaptation. It raises questions about how Irish people relate to global cultural movements and how these influences are internalised or stylised. This layered cultural exchange challenges simplistic narratives of identity and belonging, emphasising instead a fluid, dynamic process shaped by history, place, and power.

Conclusion

Through its visual and conceptual dialogue with public archives, personal memories, and cultural iconography, the work remains an open-ended inquiry—neither condemning nor celebrating, but rather unfolding layers of complexity, contradiction, and lived experience. It situates the humble loaf and the branded hoodie as microcosms of broader social narratives, offering a space to reconsider heritage, pride, and the everyday realities that shape Irish identity today.