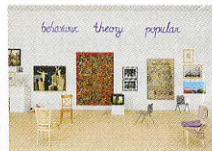


# Proposal

by Will Holder and Luca Frei

Stephen Guise,  
4th Estate Publishers, UK

Dear Mr. Guise,



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interieur

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Following up on previous correspondence with Tate Liverpool, we take this opportunity to present a proposal. Before which we must tell you how glad we are that 4th Estate will reprint Raymond Williams's *Keywords*. It's been heartening to see how exhibition-making might play a rôle in much larger public gestures. Thank you.

The proposal – for the cover of this reprint – is derived from a writing style which we have developed together for the 'Keywords' exhibitions to date – at Iniva, London<sup>1</sup>, continuing at Tate Liverpool in February – curated by Gavin Delahunty and Grant Watson. A selection of keywords will be drawn at a very large size, on the walls of the gallery spaces, where, unlike a caption or wall text, meaning is not directly ascribed to a work on show. The space between works and words is where a visitor should actively produce his or her own meaning.

Our keywords are drawn at a large scale – imagine an "o" being the size of your head. Through enlargement, we are "making public", or drawing a public-sized attention to gestures and words that – in such fluent productions as speech or writing – might normally be produced in sequence, unread and unnoticed. We see language's workings as analogous to other social constructions: made up of parts whose relationships are fluid and aren't hindered by explanation. It is this enlargement of handwriting's finger-movements, to similar gestures made by arms drawing at this scale, that ties our drawings to the public-ation of Williams's *Keywords*. To do this, we developed a perspex template<sup>2</sup>, allowing us to construct seemingly fluid lines, in separate parts<sup>3</sup>. This is a little like a French curve – each part's different curvature is guided by the template.

Key to understanding the nature of this work is the production of this "template" as opposed to a "stencil". A stencil also breaks a letter down, yet requires each part to be reproduced at a prescribed length and direction, from start to finish, in order to build a whole letter<sup>4</sup>. As such, Luca has described a stencil as "passive" and our template as "active". No single letter has such a prescribed construction – since it is derived from handwriting, and is certainly not a "font" with exact, digitally reproduced and hence unconsidered parts – we are forced to *reconsider* every gesture we produce, in relation to a) previous gestures made, and b) forthcoming gestures. More simply: if we write the word "popular", we will construct the first "p" in such a way that we can go on to produce the "o", while the following "p" will require a different construction because it begins and ends elsewhere. This adaptation according to context is exactly what Williams wishes to pull out with regard to keywords: "on paper" the two "p"s are the same, like printing "popular" next to "popular". Yet, we understand implicitly that every iteration of that word has a different meaning dependent on the context that comes before and after. So every "p" that we draw is different. When we normally write a letter by hand, we don't consider this, but at this size, under our conditions (two people writing together, vertically, 50 times larger than normal, aided by a flexible tool), the difference becomes heightened, with every part of every letter drawn.

Conversely, we feel we should point this out to you since, when reducing these drawings back to a size that might seem handwritten – on a bookcover<sup>5</sup> – all of these details become illegible. We don't mind if this is lost on the reader, and we hope *you* don't mind us describing them in this way.

We'd be happy to know what you think.

Yours Faithfully,  
Will Holder and Luca Frei

art behaviour class dialectic  
experience family genius  
hegemony industry jargon  
**keywords** liberation media  
naturalism ordinary peasant  
racial sex tradition under-  
privileged violence welfare

**Raymond Williams**

*A vocabulary of culture and society*