

# COMPASS SPRING 2014

CULTURAL VOCABULARIES

£1



Rita Donagh *Long Meadow* 1982 © Rita Donagh. Image courtesy Tate

MAGAZINE / DECODING / EQUALITY  
LANGUAGE / PERSPECTIVE / TWISTED / FLUX

# WELCOME

As well as a drawing and measuring tool, the compass is also an instrument of navigation. This publication is conceived to provide both functions: on the one hand we hope it will guide you through the various exhibitions, displays, events and talks at Tate Liverpool during the next three months, on the other hand it suggests links, creating bridges between sections of programme or individual works on view. Like a magazine in which you can find different articles linked to the publication's specialised area or themed around the same topic, we have brought together various interconnected segments into a single gallery experience. We have called this our 'magazine principle' that guides all of Tate Liverpool's activities. Our programme, therefore, is like a seasonal publication in which exhibitions, learning activities and talks are as articles under the same umbrella; the 'Compass' in your hands is a user guide to the three-dimensional magazine we produce every three months inside our galleries. The different articles discuss various threads across different floors of our galleries and I hope they will be starting points for the discovery of related ideas, questions or artworks.

This season focuses on the relationship between words and images and how their continuous transformation and migration impact on everyday life. *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* traces the relationship between

Raymond Williams's book investigating the fluctuating meaning of words and a generation of artists who explored how language – and theory – can shape us. In our *DLA Piper Series: Constellations* displays you can explore this recurrent theme across different rooms, and the constellation around Barbara Kruger explores pictures' ability to define our relationship with reality. *Richard Hawkins: Hijikata Twist* also provides us with a navigational chart. With the Tate collection as a starting point, his works map how images and forms can migrate, shaping how art might be produced and, in doing so, they force us to reflect on the importance of how visual culture is translated.

We are excited also about the prospect of experimenting with further opening our programme and its interpretation to your contributions. You will see this in visitor-generated word clouds in *DLA Piper Series: Constellations* and a forthcoming opportunity to write new definitions for some of our key words (check [tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool) for details).

I hope you will find your personal way through the building and its content, one that has real meaning and relevance to you. Have a nice visit.

**Francesco Manacorda**  
Artistic Director



# MAP / CONTENTS

	4	<b>Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain</b> Adult £8 / Concession £6
	2	<b>DLA Piper Series: Constellations 1960–present</b> Admission free
	1	<b>DLA Piper Series: Constellations 1900–1960</b> Admission free
	G	<b>Richard Hawkins: Hijikata Twist</b> Admission free
	B	Toilets Cloakroom <i>Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain</i> Adult £8 / Concession £6

# KEYWORDS: ART, CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN 1980S BRITAIN

28 FEBRUARY – 11 MAY 2014  
ADULT £8 / CONCESSION £6

FLOOR 4

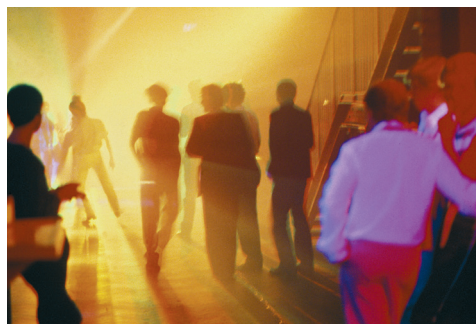
*Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* is an exhibition inspired by and building on Raymond Williams's critical study, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. First published in 1976, Williams's book remains influential not only in the field of English language generally but cultural studies and visual culture also. Drawing our attention to the malleability of language, the book examines more than 130 words, including 'anthropology', 'criticism', 'folk', 'liberation', 'private' and 'theory'. Williams observed how words were being adopted in new and unusual instances, often positioned in new sentence structures far from their dictionary definitions; their meanings were being confused, adapted and complicated. There is a concern too with the way in which some words were being used that ultimately could lead to uncertainty, bewilderment and misunderstanding. While this modification and misuse is as old as writing itself, Williams's investigation resonated and continues to do so today. It encourages us to think about language, its usage and relevance to the thing it is describing; if decoding vocabulary might help us to figure out our immediate world, today we might include key words such as 'Britain', 'economy', 'government', 'people' or 'race'. In these examples

the problems of meaning seem to be tied up with the subject for which it is being used to discuss.

The *Keywords* exhibition is not an exploration into the field of text-based art practices; rather, using works of art it responds to words whose meanings remain fluid, problematic or both. Including more than 50 artworks all made between 1976 & 1996 by artists such as Stuart Brisley, Helen Chadwick, Lubaina Himid, David Hockney, Jo Spence and Anne Tallentire, there is particular emphasis on the 1980s (the decade following the book's publication). Informed by ideas about learning, experiencing and appreciating, the basic premise of the show is to think about the language we use when trying to interact with objects. The exhibition has been devised by artist Luca Frei and designer Will Holder in such a way as to highlight certain words, repeatedly used in relation to particular artworks, while on the other hand stressing the need for the invention of new vocabulary so that we can continue to open up conversation with objects allowing new ideas and meanings to come.

**Gavin Delahunty**

Head of Exhibitions and Displays



Sunil Gupta *Heaven from the tape-slide project London Gay Switchboard* 1980 35mm slide projection © Sunil Gupta



Supported by

**Liverpool City Council**

Tate Liverpool Members and  
The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

## TALKS AND LECTURES

As discussed elsewhere within these pages, the exhibition *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* responds to Raymond Williams's book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. The book remains a starting point for conversation and debate around language, and a series of talks and lectures from artists, academics and cultural commentators accompanies the exhibition.



**7 March 2014, 18.30**

Ethical: a *Keywords* lecture with Baroness Young of Hornsey

**3 April 2014, 15.00–16.30**

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, journalist  
Sunil Gupta, *Keywords* artist  
(*London Gay Switchboard* 1980)  
Professor Jonathan Harris,  
Director of Research at  
Winchester School of Art

**8 May 2014, 15.00–16.30**

Ekow Eshun, writer  
Dr Amna Malik, senior lecturer  
in Art History and Theory at the  
Slade School of Fine Art, UCL  
Sutapa Biswas, *Keywords* artist  
(*Housewives with Steak-Knives*  
1985)

All events are free and take place at Tate Liverpool, booking essential at [tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool](http://tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool)

Speaking at Tate Liverpool in April is the journalist, author and cultural commentator, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown...

Writing in her regular column for *The Independent* newspaper in 2011, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown described herself thus: 'avowedly a leftie liberal, anti-racist, feminist, Muslim, part-Pakistani, and yes, a very responsible person...' all of which are terms which would appear to build a rudimentary picture. However, as with so many things, that picture is open to interpretation, one which can prove slippery, which will twist and change given different contexts and perspectives.

Alibhai-Brown regularly confounds any such traditional stereotypes and pigeon-holing; as it says on her website: 'Don't expect her to deliver any given line – she is a feminist who furiously criticises some forms of feminism, an anti-racist who will always expose black and Asian hypocrisies and oppression, a Muslim calling for reformation, a British citizen who battles for real equality for immigrants and their children.'

Given the nature of *Keywords* – both the exhibition and the book that inspired it – and its interrogation into language and meaning, it seems only fitting that such a figure be part of the generative discussion strand of the exhibition.

Sir Anthony Caro *Emma Dipper* 1977  
© The estate of Anthony Caro /Barford Sculptures Ltd



# CULTURAL VOCABULARIES IN DLA PIPER SERIES: CONSTELLATIONS

UNTIL SPRING 2015, FREE

As *Keywords* reflects on how cultural vocabularies change, a scattered history of the literal presence of language in art can be found throughout *DLA Piper Series: Constellations*, showing artists employing words to diverse effect throughout the 20th century. Fragments of letters and words rendered by cubist painters such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso appeared as early as 1911, with actual print material soon after being pasted into their paintings. Picasso's *Bowl of Fruit, Violin and Bottle* 1914 includes the letters 'AL' in the splintered depiction of a still life, probably suggesting the end of the word 'journal', French for 'newspaper'. This word also featured (divided into 'journ' and 'al') in his subsequent *Still Life with Compotier* 1914–15, as well as in various fractions in many of Braque's works. The pieces of text provide clues to be connected together with other cubist fragments of the still life, offering a visualisation of our constantly shifting temporal encounters with the world. 'Journal' also translates as 'diary', suggesting an alternative interpretation relating directly to personal experience.

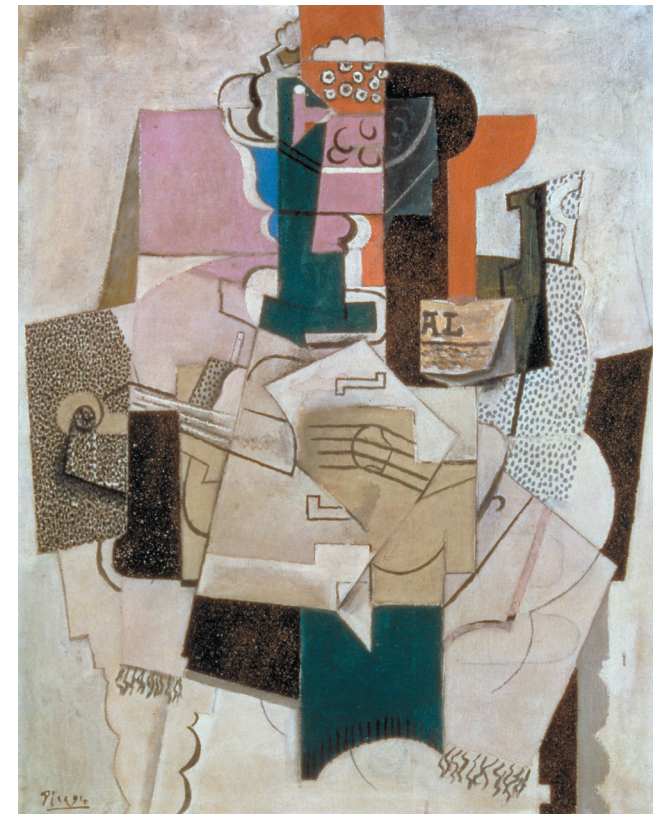
Marcel Duchamp's *Why Not Sneeze Rose Selavy* 1921 provides another linguistic puzzle, this time requiring decoding through layers of meaning. The title is presented as a riddle, printed backwards underneath a sculpture comprising a white birdcage and matching marble cubes, visible only through judicious placement of a mirror. Rose Sélavy was the name that Duchamp chose for his female alter ego, and sounds like the French phrase 'eros, c'est la vie' when spoken, translated as 'physical love, that is life'. Duchamp indicated that the phrase 'why not sneeze' referred – via sneezing – to bodily impulses that we have no control over. Combined with the sexual allusions of 'Rose Selavy', and the contradictory cold purity and containment of the white sculpture, this work has been interpreted

FLOOR 7

as suggesting the anticipation of desire as yet unreleased.

The use of language within surrealism, and in surreal objects like Duchamp's, is apt considering that the movement counted writers and poets as its members as well as artists. This conjunction of influence led many visual artists associated with surrealism to take a literary turn, such as Joan Miro who, in an interview with *Partisan Review* from 1948, stated that 'the poets [Andre] Masson introduced me to interested me more than the painters'. A *Star Careses the Breast of a Negress (Painting Poem)* 1938 is one of a series of 'poem-paintings' that Miro made from 1925 which combine a line of erotic poetry with free linear gestures and symbols. The inclusion of text as part of the visual construction created a spatial void that was non-representational but bound to reality through language. In *Joan Miro Selected Writings and Interviews* (Margit Rowell, ed.), he noted that during this period 'the signs of an imaginary writing appeared in my work. I painted without premeditation, as if under the influence of a dream. I combined reality and mystery in a space that had been set free.'

The poem-paintings often referred to imaginary women, in this case 'a negress'. Miro's use of this term, which originated in the late 18th century to describe black women, highlights the changing approach to language throughout the 20th century. Although used descriptively in Miro's time – other 'painting-poems' feature 'a dark-haired woman' and 'a blonde' – the use of racially descriptive words has altered as the power of language to subjugate has been recognised. Artists have reacted to this oppressive linguistic capacity, such as Henrik Olesen in his works *Untitled* 2004 which appropriate images of homophobic graffiti found on the internet. Slogans such as 'Roy is Homo' or 'ALL FAGETS in



the Army Will Be Killed [sic]', which were originally written in toilet cubicles or alleyways, are heavily enlarged and made into unique art objects, creating new public contexts which underscore both their absurdity and the continued marginalisation of these communities through language.

Displayed alongside these works is Barbara Kruger's monumental *Who owns what?* 1991/2012. While Olesen vividly shows the continuing power of words to offend, Kruger's practice from the 1970s onwards combines words with existing images from mass media to create 'rallying points for certain assumptions' (*BOMB Magazine*, 1982). The texts are often questions that concern our concept of identity, particularly relating to the control thereof in the face of gendered and politicised socio-economic systems. The ability of art to affect a

reconsideration of reality in the viewer is executed in many different ways, but the use of language engages at a primary level, using the tools with which we conceptualise and think. Words are fluid. *DLA Piper Series: Constellations* sees them variously utilised as visual signifiers, creating mental images and operating with multiple meanings, or exposing the underlying power structures inherent in the way we describe our world.

**Eleanor Clayton**  
Assistant Curator

Sponsored by DLA Piper



Pablo Picasso *Bowl of Fruit, Violin and Bottle* 1914  
© Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2013

# BARBARA KRUGER: WHO OWNS WHAT?

UNTIL JUNE 2014, FREE

FLOOR 2



Barbara Kruger *Who Owns What?* 1991–2012 © Barbara Kruger. Courtesy: Mary Boone Gallery, New York

Barbara Kruger's *Who owns what?* 1991/2012 in *DLA Piper Series: Constellations* asks, seemingly, a simple question. The answer, however, will be different depending on perspective.

Those familiar with Kruger's politics will see it as an overt comment on gender inequality, addressing questions of corporate, material and intellectual ownership through the prism of feminism.

Remove such prior knowledge of Kruger and what do we know? Without the frame of reference, her question becomes a much more open ended one. Such questions of context inspired Raymond Williams to write *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (first published in 1976). Selecting more than 100 regularly used words on the basis of their potentially confusing nature, his interrogation informs current fourth floor exhibition *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain*.

Words chosen for the exhibition (all of which feature in Williams's book) include: 'private', 'folk', 'violence', 'criticism' and 'liberation'; 'anthropology', 'materialism', 'unconscious', and 'theory', and while they offer insight into the works clustered opposite them, the relationship between the words and works is anything but fixed.

Within the 'liberation' grouping, for example, is Sutapa Biswas's *Housewives with Steak-Knives* 1985, which appears at odds with our understanding of the very word which has been chosen to represent it here – we think of liberation as the status quo, established, but Biswas tells a different story, one involving an ongoing battle.

Is it that 'different story', in this case the preferred reading, that audiences take away, or one unique to them and their circumstances? These questions bring us back to Kruger, whose work seems to bristle with antagonism however you read it.

The assault on ideas of ownership implicit in Kruger's work serves also to amplify two key words: 'criticism' and, as with Biswas, 'liberation'. A critique of the established socio-political system in which Kruger operates (and rails against), *Who owns what?* 1991/2012, points to a casually assumed rather than any attained state of liberation.

Kruger's critique proposes otherwise. This duplicity of language and our shifting understanding echoes Williams and *Keywords*, whose observations on, and investigations into the malleability of everyday words, continues to resonate.

**Mike Pinnington**  
Content Editor

# 'DIRTY AVANT-GARDE' RICHARD HAWKINS: HIJIKATA TWIST

28 FEBRUARY – 11 MAY 2014, FREE

FLOOR G WOLFSON GALLERY

Since emerging in the early 1990s, Richard Hawkins has evolved an emphatically diverse practice that defies easy categorisation. Working in a range of artistic disciplines, including writing, it is collage that constitutes his primary artistic medium. Its capacity to bring together dissimilar and contradictory visual elements and ideas provides the philosophical device and method by which he expresses his vision, while reflecting the depth and eclecticism of his knowledge.

Weaving together alternative, neglected and often incongruent narratives, Hawkins speculates on the connections and overlaps across a diversity of subjects, including decadent French sub-cultural literature, ancient statuary, low-brow horror, art history and the teenage heartthrobs of 1980s pop culture. Despite the diverse nature and appearance of his work, a profound conceptual rigour underpins his vision: it focuses on the thrill of the intense gaze and the relationship between this and the creation of meaning. Exploring the ways in which beauty and rapture can coexist with ugliness and imperfection, or how visual intelligence and complexity can coexist with what is supposedly 'mindless' or ephemeral, his generosity of approach proposes an expansion in the sources that inform critical thinking and understanding, forcing a reappraisal of our assumptions about the nature of artistic process and influence.

The exhibition brings together recent and newly created works by Hawkins to explore the ways in which classic western figurative painting can be interpreted or 'twisted' to create ideas far beyond those usually associated with art history. It presents mid-century works from the Tate collection by Francis Bacon, Hans Bellmer, Jean Dubuffet, Willem de Kooning and Graham Sutherland chosen by Hawkins to reveal their unlikely effect on the work

of the Japanese artist Tatsumi Hijikata, a seminal figure and inspiration for radical and experimental culture in Japan over the second half of the 20th-century. In particular, Hawkins is interested in the overlooked effect of western art on Hijikata's founding of 'Ankoku Butoh', a performance art and dance movement referring to forms of traditional Japanese dance ('butoh') and 'ankoku', which alludes to extreme ideas of abjection, darkness and eroticism. This led to butoh being referred to in Japan as the 'dirty avant-garde', echoing Hijikata's statement: 'the dirty is the beautiful and the beautiful is the dirty, and I cycle between them



Richard Hawkins *Ankoku 9 (Index World flower)* 2012 © Richard Hawkins. Courtesy of the artist and Greene Naftali, New York

forever.' Hawkins's collages explore the influence of western art on butoh, speculating on further connections across various art-forms and disciplines, while at the same time revealing the influence of Hijikata on his own work.

Traditional accounts of butoh tend to regard it as an expression of Japan's existential trauma and militarised reconstruction in the aftermath of the Second World War. Complicating such partial readings, Hawkins became fascinated by the tangled influence of western art by studying Hijikata's 'butoh-fu' – the scrapbooks he used during the 1960s when devising the art-form (selected scrapbooks are presented within the exhibition). When producing the scrapbooks, he would look through Japanese art magazines, choosing and cutting out the pictures of western art which he liked. He would then sticky-tape the cut images into the pages, rearranging them in a quasi-artful manner, adding scribbled handwritten interpretations, described by Hawkins as 'an intriguing form of recorded inspiration, a disentangling of figurative abstraction in visual art with a tendency towards the erotic, if not the all-out obscene.' The nature of Hijikata's interpretations, however, inspired Hawkins to channel the choreographer's voice as a poetic guide towards the creation of further works, some informed by Hijikata's literary sources and others fabricated by Hawkins, opening up additional speculative connections between different art forms.

Hijikata's annotated interpretations often focus on the extremes of the human body and behaviour. Delighting in their perverse extremity, he typically describes scenes that veer towards the depraved or the fantastical and the exotic; the female figure in a de Kooning abstract expressionist painting is identified by Hijikata as an 'old prostitute' with a face and body distorted by icy winds, while Vincent van Gogh portrayed in Francis Bacon's painting is described as having 'a body composed entirely of particles [...] His skull packed with branches and straw'. Such readings reflect a profound interest in the work of decadent French writers such as Marquis de Sade and Jean Genet (a shared intellectual touchstone for Hawkins), as well as

the surrealists Antonin Artaud and Comte de Lautréamont, who aimed to create new meanings through shock montage and the intermingling of wildly incompatible images.

The exhibition explores the transfer of influence, for instance, between the motifs of gesture and painterliness in Dubuffet's figurative canvas *The Tree of Fluids* 1950 – identified by Hijikata as 'a monster made from dust' – and the 'corrupt' surface and unseemly bodily performance of butoh. Hawkins's works oscillate between ideas of revulsion and attraction; his belief in the human mind's capacity to occupy multiple contradictory positions reflected in his use of cut and pasted imagery.

The gridded composition of Hawkins' juxtapositions further refers to the making sense of disparate information. In this way, his work points towards a redefinition of collage as the construction of meaning, rather than a mere arrangement of forms. Bringing together mid-century western works alongside interpretative notes from a Japanese artist, translated into English with new works by Hawkins, the exhibition traces unexpected relationships and meanings between different art-forms and disciplines on different continents.

The exhibition exemplifies Hawkins's expansive artistic practice, enabling us to regard Hijikata's exoticised reading of western art in his creation of butoh as a form of Orientalism in reverse. It also demonstrates how we might consider the blind spots and omissions in history, as well as the supposedly unapproachable or taboo ideas, so they might be embraced and integrated within an expanded visual and cultural realm, and within political and historical narratives.

#### **Darren Pih**

Exhibitions and Displays Curator

Supported by Tate Liverpool Members and the Richard Hawkins Exhibition Supporters Group

## 5 MINUTES WITH...

ALISON CORNMELL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



#### **Hi Alison, tell us about your role:**

I am responsible for managing the press office at Tate Liverpool. We publicise the gallery by creating opportunities for local, regional, national and international press to cover our exhibitions, events and learning programme.

#### **What is the best thing about working at an art gallery?**

Not many people can say they get to walk past work by Jeremy Deller, Marina Abramović or Henri Matisse on their way to a meeting. I also enjoy the opportunity I have to learn new things. It is only in a job like this that I get the chance to discover wide ranging subjects from the Japanese performance art explored in *Richard Hawkins: Hijikata Twist* to understanding the work of British artists in the 1980s seen in *Keywords*.

#### **What do you find interesting about the themes in this season's exhibitions?**

I find the idea of the interpretation and misinterpretation of meanings interesting, especially in relation to *Richard Hawkins: Hijikata Twist*. Hijikata's warping of traditional understandings of western modern art is very apt in the context of *Keywords*, an exhibition about how words and their meanings are also regularly prone to flux. Hijikata highlights that alternative interpretation is not just valid but has the potential to create beautiful things.

#### **What is your favourite artwork currently at Tate Liverpool and why?**

My favourite piece is Mary Martin's *Inversions* 1966 on display in *DLA Piper Series: Constellations*. The angled mirrored blocks are completely mesmerising.

When you stand in front of it you see a disjointed version of not only yourself but the world around you. It's a really accessible artwork which allows visitors to feel comfortable with it, so opening up the opportunity to explore its meanings.

#### **What one piece of art would you love to see at Tate Liverpool?**

I would love to see Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* 1889. When I was at primary school our teacher split a copy of the picture up into nine equal sections and in groups we were asked to reproduce our segment. She then put them together and put them on the wall. I'll always remember how impressed I was when I saw it all together. Now I just need to see the original to see how good ours actually was!

#### **What exhibitions are you looking forward to next?**

I can't wait for the Nasreen Mohamedi exhibition to open at Tate Liverpool this summer. Despite not having seen her work I have had the opportunity to research her and discovered what an incredible woman she was. Mohamedi stood alone in adopting a more abstract style among peers who favoured a figurative narrative style. Only recently has her work been more widely recognised, and this will be the largest solo exhibition of the artist's work in the UK to date. I can't wait to see it!

#### **Tell us a secret:**

It's not so much a secret but... I've been to art galleries and museums around the world and without a doubt Liverpool has some of the best I've ever seen. I'm really proud to work here and I hope you enjoy visiting Tate Liverpool as much as I do working here.





Willie Doherty *The Bridge* 1992 © Willie Doherty. Image courtesy Tate.  
From the exhibition *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain*

Join as a Liverpool Member today and get *free*  
unlimited entry for you and up to three guests.

LIVERPOOL  
**TATE**

**FIND OUT MORE**  
TATE.ORG.UK/LIVERPOOL  
0151 702 7400  
OR ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF

**STAY IN TOUCH**  
SIGN UP FOR THE  
TATE LIVERPOOL E-BULLETIN  
TATE.ORG.UK/LIVERPOOL

 Facebook  Twitter