

# Synaptic wiring motifs in posterior parietal cortex support decision-making

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The posterior parietal cortex exhibits choice-selective activity during perceptual decision-making tasks<sup>1–10</sup>. However, it is not known how this selective activity arises from the underlying synaptic connectivity. Here we combined virtual-reality behaviour, two-photon calcium imaging, high-throughput electron microscopy and circuit modelling to analyse how synaptic connectivity between neurons in the posterior parietal cortex relates to their selective activity. We found that excitatory pyramidal neurons preferentially target inhibitory interneurons with the same selectivity. In turn, inhibitory interneurons preferentially target pyramidal neurons with opposite selectivity, forming an opponent inhibition motif. This motif was present even between neurons with activity peaks in different task epochs. We developed neural-circuit models of the computations performed by these motifs, and found that opponent inhibition between neural populations with opposite selectivity amplifies selective inputs, thereby improving the encoding of trial-type information. The models also predict that opponent inhibition between neurons with activity peaks in different task epochs contributes to creating choice-specific sequential activity. These results provide evidence for how synaptic connectivity in cortical circuits supports a learned decision-making task.

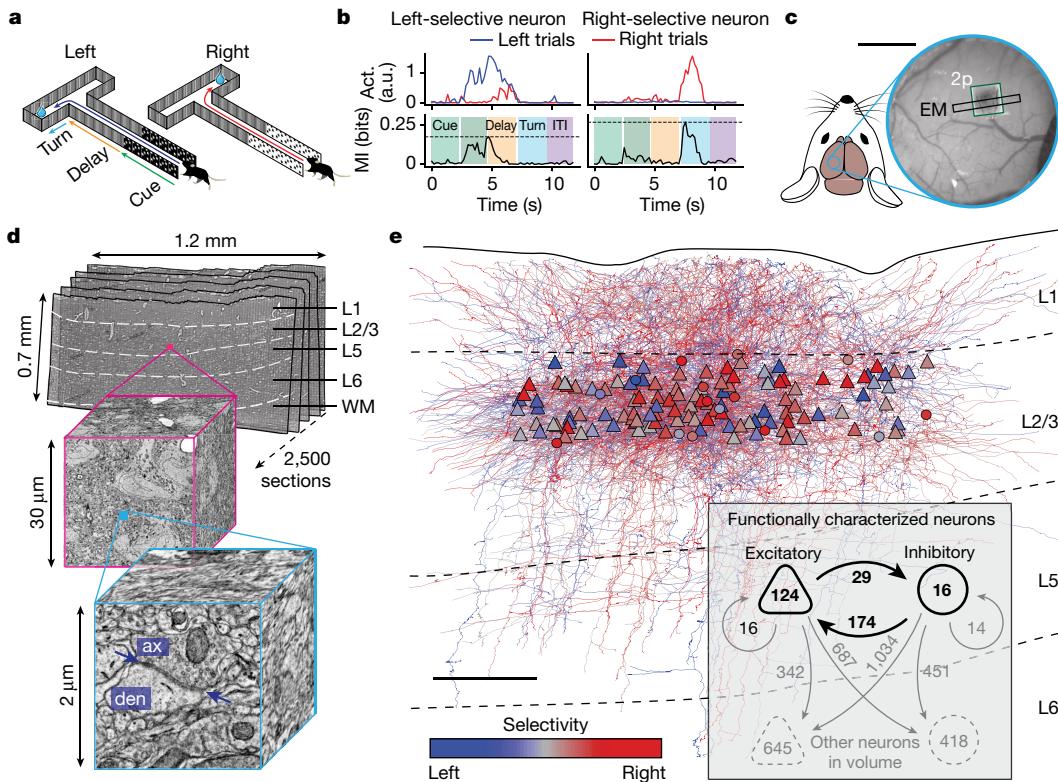
Decision-making is a critical component of behaviour and cognition, and understanding how it is implemented has been a long-standing goal in neuroscience. Experiments in primates have revealed the importance of the neocortex for perceptual decision-making, including the posterior parietal cortex (PPC), in which neuronal activity is predictive of upcoming behavioural choices<sup>1,2</sup>. Such choice-selective activity has also been found in the rodent PPC<sup>3–10</sup>. However, it remains unclear how this selective neuronal activity arises. Models of cortical decision-making circuits propose that choice alternatives are represented by pools of recurrently connected excitatory neurons, which compete through inhibitory connectivity<sup>11,12</sup>. Pioneering work often assumed that inhibitory activity was non-selective and inhibitory connectivity non-specific<sup>13,14</sup>, but recent research has shown that inhibitory activity is as selective as excitatory activity, which suggests that inhibitory connectivity may follow choice-selective rules<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, recent models have shown that selective inhibition can crucially alter circuit function by stabilizing network activity or maximizing competition between opposing excitatory pools<sup>15</sup>. However, activity measurements in the PPC are consistent with multiple possible circuit architectures<sup>10,15</sup>, and measurement of the underlying synaptic connectivity is lacking.

Until recently, direct measurements of synaptic connectivity within large neuronal populations have not been technically feasible. However,

advances in high-throughput electron microscopy (EM) have now made it possible to comprehensively map synaptic connectivity within circuits<sup>16–21</sup>. Such connectomic approaches in the cortex have focused mainly on sensory areas such as the visual cortex<sup>22–27</sup>, in which inhibitory activity and connectivity are generally less selective than excitatory<sup>22,28</sup> (but also see refs. 29,30). As a result, little is known about synaptic connectivity in association areas such as the PPC and how it may differ from the sensory cortex.

Here we combined a decision-making task, two-photon calcium imaging and automated serial-section EM<sup>3,19,31</sup> to measure how synaptic connectivity of hundreds of cortical neurons relates to their functional selectivity in the PPC. We found selective excitatory-to-inhibitory (E-to-I) and inhibitory-to-excitatory (I-to-E) connectivity: excitatory neurons preferentially targeted inhibitory neurons with the same selectivity, whereas inhibitory neurons preferred excitatory targets with opposite selectivity. Together, these preferences form an opponent inhibition motif, in which neurons associated with one choice suppress the activity of neurons associated with the alternative choice. The opponent-inhibition motif was present even between neurons with activity peaks in different task epochs. To investigate the functional implications of this connectivity motif, we modelled recurrent circuits with excitatory and inhibitory populations. The models predict that

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**Fig. 1 | Behaviour, functional imaging and EM.** **a**, Schematic of decision-making behaviour consisting of a navigational two-alternative forced-choice memory task performed in virtual reality. **b**, The trial-averaged activity (act.) for left (blue) and right (red) trials from two example selective neurons, plotted along with the MI with the trial type (bottom). The magnitude of the maximum selectivity was defined as the maximum value of the MI (dotted horizontal line). a.u., arbitrary units. **c**, Image of the cranial window of the selected mouse, showing the location of overlapping calcium imaging (2p, green) and EM (black) datasets within the PPC. Scale bar, 1 mm. **d**, Schematic of the volumetric EM dataset consisting of 2,500 serial sections. Insets: images at a progressively higher resolution, highlighting cell bodies (magenta) and an individual synapse (cyan; the arrows indicate the PSD). L, layer; ax, axon; den, dendrite. **e**, Reconstructed circuit in the PPC, consisting of 124 excitatory neurons (triangles) and 16 inhibitory neurons (circles) colour coded by selectivity (key). Inset: summary of the reconstructed circuit, indicating the number of neurons of each type (within shapes) and the number of synaptic connections (next to arrows). The direct E-to-I and I-to-E connections that are analysed in detail in Figs. 2 and 3 are shown in bold. Scale bar, 100  $\mu$ m.

opponent inhibition supports amplification of input selectivity and promotes reliable encoding of choices corresponding to each trial type, and that opponent inhibition between neurons of which the activity peaks in different epochs contributes to the creation of choice-specific sequential activity.

## Behaviour, imaging and EM

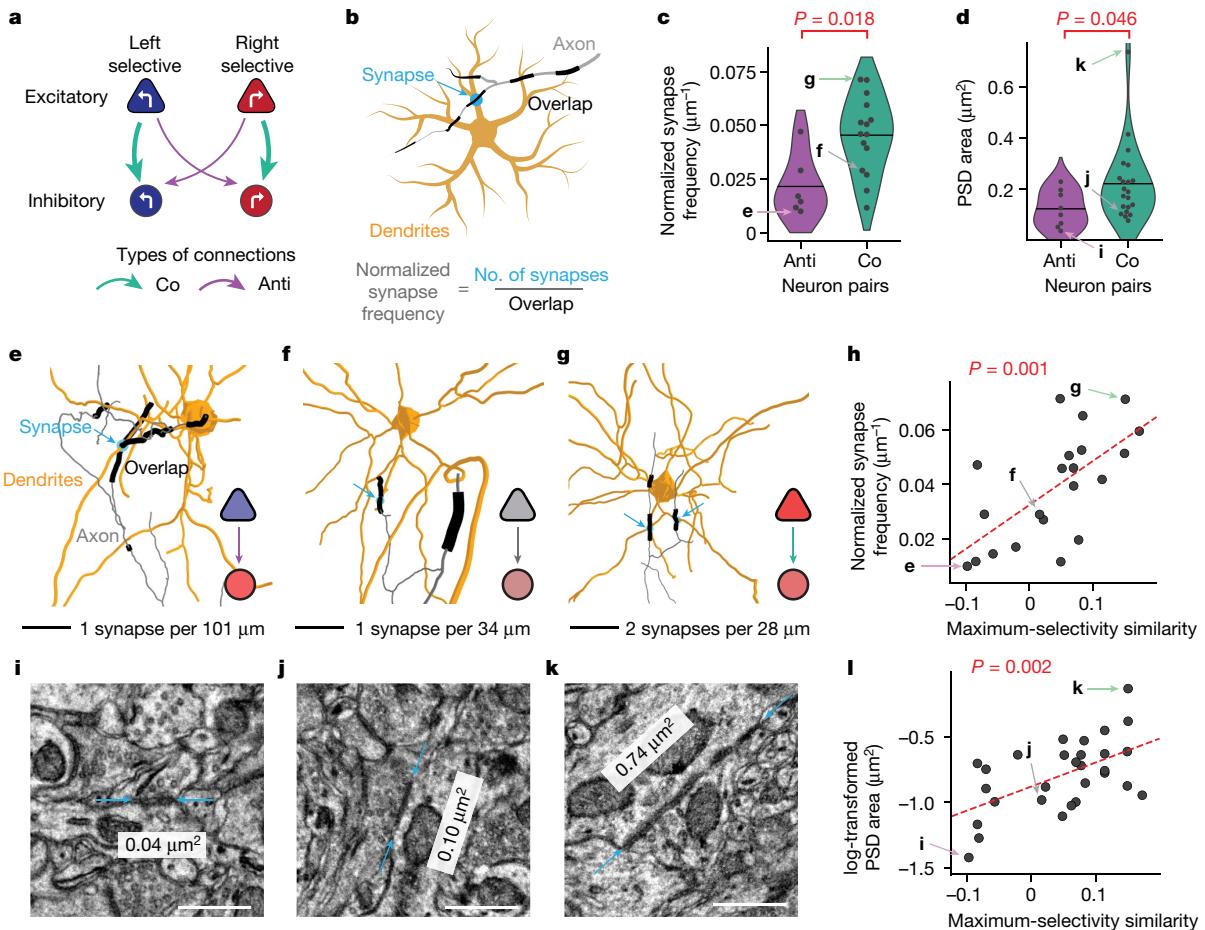
We trained mice to perform a two-alternative forced-choice task in a virtual reality T-maze and used two-photon calcium imaging to measure the activity of layer 2/3 neurons in the left-hemisphere PPC during task performance<sup>3,31</sup> (Fig. 1a and Extended Data Fig. 1a–c). These behavioural and functional imaging data were included in a previous study<sup>31</sup>. Consistent with previous results<sup>3,31</sup>, many PPC neurons exhibited temporal activity peaks that were selective for trial type (left or right turn trials; Fig. 1b) and staggered relative to one another in time, forming sequences of neuronal activation that spanned the length of a task trial<sup>3,31,32</sup> (Extended Data Figs. 1d–f and 2). To quantify trial-type selectivity, we defined the maximum selectivity as the maximum value of the mutual information (MI) between the neuronal activity and trial type across time within the trial (Fig. 1b and Methods). Away from the timepoint of maximum selectivity, neurons often had non-zero activity that typically shared the same left/right preference as the maximum, such that the maximum was generally representative of selectivity throughout the trial (Extended Data Figs. 1e,f and 2). Over the population of neurons, there was a diversity of maximum-selectivity values (Extended Data Figs. 1g,h and 2).

the volumetric EM dataset consisting of 2,500 serial sections. Insets: images at a progressively higher resolution, highlighting cell bodies (magenta) and an individual synapse (cyan; the arrows indicate the PSD). L, layer; ax, axon; den, dendrite. **e**, Reconstructed circuit in the PPC, consisting of 124 excitatory neurons (triangles) and 16 inhibitory neurons (circles) colour coded by selectivity (key). Inset: summary of the reconstructed circuit, indicating the number of neurons of each type (within shapes) and the number of synaptic connections (next to arrows). The direct E-to-I and I-to-E connections that are analysed in detail in Figs. 2 and 3 are shown in bold. Scale bar, 100  $\mu$ m.

We preserved the brain of one animal immediately after the conclusion of behavioural experiments and used EM to generate a high-resolution structural map of the same neurons of which the activity was previously measured *in vivo* (Fig. 1c and Methods). We used the GridTape automated transmission EM pipeline<sup>19</sup> to collect and image 2,500 serial 40 nm thin sections and aligned them to form a three-dimensional volume spanning all six cortical layers with about 1.2 mm extent (medial–lateral) and around 100  $\mu$ m depth (anterior–posterior). This dataset encompasses approximately 0.1 mm<sup>3</sup> at 4.3 nm  $\times$  4.3 nm  $\times$  40 nm per voxel resolution (Fig. 1d). We next co-registered the *in vivo* and EM data to match calcium-imaging regions of interest to cell bodies in the EM volume (Methods and Extended Data Fig. 1i,j). We were therefore able to relate behaviour, neuronal activity and network anatomy in the PPC.

Using the EM data, we reconstructed the axons and dendrites of the functionally characterized cells within the volume (Fig. 1e) and classified them as excitatory pyramidal cells or inhibitory interneurons (non-pyramidal) on the basis of their morphology ( $n = 124$  (pyramidal) and  $n = 16$  (non-pyramidal); Extended Data Figs. 3 and 4). Non-pyramidal cells in the PPC were generally as selective as pyramidal cells (Extended Data Fig. 1h;  $P = 0.20$ , Kolmogorov–Smirnov test), consistent with recent functional imaging experiments<sup>10</sup>.

To map the connectivity of the functionally characterized neurons, we annotated all of the outgoing synapses from their axons within the EM volume and traced the corresponding post-synaptic dendrites back to their cell bodies. We identified 233 synapses in which the post-synaptic cell was also a functionally characterized neuron (Fig. 1e



**Fig. 2 | Co-selective E-to-I connectivity.** **a**, Schematic of E-to-I connections among functionally characterized neurons. Connections are classified as co-selective (co; green) or anti-selective (anti; purple). **b**, Schematic of the axon–dendrite overlap and normalized synapse frequency metric, which quantifies the likelihood of synapses between a specific axon–dendrite pair per  $\mu\text{m}$  of overlap (axon path length within 5  $\mu\text{m}$  of the dendrite). Grey, presynaptic axon; orange, post-synaptic dendrites; black, axon–dendrite overlap; cyan arrows, synaptic connections. **c**, The normalized synapse frequency between co-selective neurons (green) is more than twice as frequent as between anti-selective neurons (purple) ( $0.021 \pm 0.006 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 6$  connections (anti-selective);  $0.045 \pm 0.005 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 15$  (co-selective);  $P = 0.018$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test). **d**, Synapses between co-selective neurons (green) have PSDs almost twice as large as those between anti-selective neurons ( $0.12 \pm 0.02 \mu\text{m}^2$ ,  $n = 8$  synapses (anti-selective);  $0.22 \pm 0.03 \mu\text{m}^2$ ,  $n = 21$  (co-selective);  $P = 0.046$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test). **e–g**, Example connections,

including strongly anti-selective (**e**), weakly co-selective (**f**) and strongly co-selective (**g**) neuron pairs, coloured as in **b**. The left/right selectivity of pre- and post-synaptic neurons is indicated by the coloured icons. Neuron pairs correspond to data points indicated by arrows in **c** and **h**. For **e–g**, scale bars, 20  $\mu\text{m}$ . **h**, The normalized synapse frequency is correlated with the maximum-selectivity similarity.  $n = 21$  connections. The dotted line is the linear fit ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $P = 0.001$ , Pearson correlation test). **i–k**, EM images showing example synapses between strongly anti-selective (**i**), weakly co-selective (**j**) and strongly co-selective (**k**) neuron pairs. PSDs are indicated by cyan arrows. Synapses correspond to data points indicated by arrows in **d** and **l** and are from the same connections shown in **e–g**, respectively. For **i–k**, scale bars, 500 nm. **l**, The log-transformed PSD area is correlated with the maximum-selectivity similarity index.  $n = 29$  synapses. The dotted line is the linear fit ( $r = 0.56$ ,  $P = 0.002$ , Pearson correlation test). Data are mean  $\pm$  s.e.m. Two-tailed significance tests were performed.

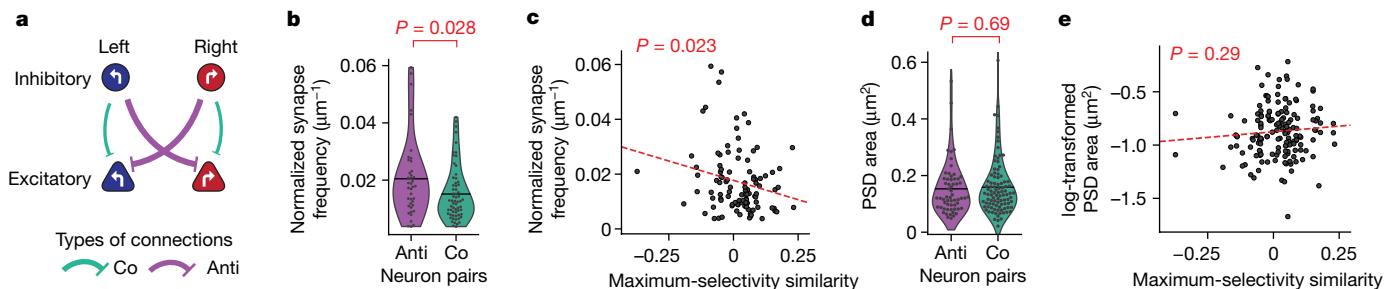
(inset)). The majority of these direct connections were I-to-E (74%), followed by E-to-I (12%), so we focused our analysis on these types of connections. We also quantified the area of the post-synaptic density (PSD area) associated with each synapse (Fig. 1d (inset) and Methods), which correlates with functional synaptic strength<sup>33</sup>.

## E-to-I connectivity

We first investigated how E-to-I connectivity in the PPC is related to selective activity. We compared the number of synapses between neurons that preferred the same trial type at their maximum selectivity (co-selective) versus those with opposite preferences (anti-selective) (Fig. 2a). As the opportunities for neurons to make synaptic connections are limited to locations where their axons and dendrites come into close proximity, we also quantified the axon–dendrite overlap<sup>23,34</sup> between

all pairs of neurons (Fig. 2b and Extended Data Fig. 5a). Although the axon/dendrite overlaps were similar for co-selective and anti-selective pairs ( $P = 0.56$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test), the number of synapses per  $\mu\text{m}$  overlap (normalized synapse frequency) was over two times higher for co-selective pairs (Fig. 2c;  $0.021 \pm 0.006 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$  (anti-selective) and  $0.045 \pm 0.005 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$  (co-selective);  $P = 0.018$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test; Fig. 2e–g and Extended Data Fig. 5b).

To account for the continuous distribution of selectivity strengths across neurons (Extended Data Fig. 1g,h), we defined for each cell pair maximum-selectivity similarity, the magnitude of which quantifies how selective the cells are, and the sign of which indicates whether the cells are co-selective or anti-selective (Methods and Extended Data Fig. 5c). The maximum-selectivity similarity was strongly correlated with the normalized synapse frequency ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $P = 0.001$ , Pearson correlation test; Fig. 2h, Extended Data Fig. 5d and Supplementary Table 1). As the



**Fig. 3 | Anti-selective I-to-E connectivity.** **a**, Schematic of I-to-E connections among functionally characterized neurons. Connections are classified as co-selective (green) or anti-selective (purple). **b**, The normalized synapse frequency is greater for anti-selective (purple) than co-selective (green) I-to-E connections ( $0.020 \pm 0.002 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 40$  connections (anti-selective);  $0.015 \pm 0.001 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 63$  (co-selective);  $P = 0.028$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test). **c**, The normalized synapse frequency is negatively correlated with the maximum-selectivity similarity.  $n = 103$  connections. The dotted line is the

linear fit ( $r = -0.22$ ,  $P = 0.023$ , Pearson correlation test). **d**, PSD areas are not significantly different for anti-tuned (purple) and co-tuned (green) I-to-E connections ( $0.15 \pm 0.01 \mu\text{m}^2$ ,  $n = 60$  connections (anti-tuned);  $0.16 \pm 0.01 \mu\text{m}^2$ ,  $n = 96$  (co-tuned);  $P = 0.69$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test). **e**, The PSD area is not significantly correlated with the maximum-selectivity similarity.  $n = 156$  synapses. The dotted line is the linear fit ( $r = 0.08$ ,  $P = 0.29$ , Pearson correlation test). Data are mean  $\pm$  s.e.m. Two-tailed significance tests were performed.

maximum selectivity can occur at different times in the trial for different neurons, we also defined a ‘simultaneous-selectivity similarity’, which compares the selectivity of the pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurons at the same timepoints (Methods and Extended Data Fig. 5e) and therefore relates more directly to synaptic interactions between neurons. The simultaneous-selectivity similarity was also strongly correlated with the normalized synapse frequency (Extended Data Fig. 5f;  $r = 0.58$ ,  $P = 0.006$ , Pearson correlation test). These results indicate that excitatory neurons preferentially target inhibitory partners with similar selectivity.

We next examined whether the size of individual synapses was correlated with the selectivity of the connected neurons. The PSD area of cortical excitatory synapses is known to correlate with functional strength<sup>33</sup>. Here we found that co-selective E-to-I synapses had PSD areas nearly two times larger than those of anti-selective synapses (Fig. 2d;  $0.12 \pm 0.02 \mu\text{m}^2$  (anti-selective) and  $0.22 \pm 0.03 \mu\text{m}^2$  (co-selective);  $P = 0.046$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test). Synapse size was also strongly correlated with maximum-selectivity similarity (Fig. 2i–l;  $r = 0.56$ ,  $P = 0.002$ , Pearson correlation test) and simultaneous-selectivity similarity (Extended Data Fig. 5g;  $r = 0.50$ ,  $P = 0.006$ , Pearson correlation test).

Consistent with previous research<sup>31</sup>, we observed that the functional selectivity of PPC neurons can change over time even after the animal attains stable, expert performance of the task (Extended Data Fig. 5h). Concordantly, selectivity similarity between pairs of neurons also drifts on the timescale of days (Extended Data Fig. 5i). Comparing earlier with later behavioural sessions (Extended Data Fig. 1a) revealed that structure–function correlations are weaker on days further from when the brain was preserved (Extended Data Fig. 5j,k). This suggests that synaptic connections in the PPC may also change over timescales of days, which is consistent with turnover rates of some types of axon boutons and dendritic spines<sup>35</sup>.

## I-to-E connectivity

We next examined whether I-to-E connectivity was also functionally selective (Fig. 3a). We found that the normalized synapse frequency (synapses per  $\mu\text{m}$  of axon/dendrite overlap; Fig. 2b) was higher for anti-selective I-to-E pairs compared with co-selective pairs (Fig. 3b and Extended Data Fig. 6a,b;  $0.020 \pm 0.002 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$  (anti-selective) and  $0.015 \pm 0.001 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$  (co-selective);  $P = 0.028$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test), and was negatively correlated with the maximum-selectivity similarity (Fig. 3c;  $r = -0.22$ ,  $P = 0.023$ , Pearson correlation test, Extended Data Fig. 6c and Supplementary Table 2). These correlations were weaker on days further from when the brain was preserved (Extended Data Fig. 6d). The normalized synapse frequency was also negatively

correlated with simultaneous-selectivity similarity for I-to-E connections (Extended Data Fig. 6e;  $r = -0.20$ ,  $P = 0.041$ , Pearson correlation test). These results indicate that inhibitory neurons preferentially target excitatory partners with opposite selectivity.

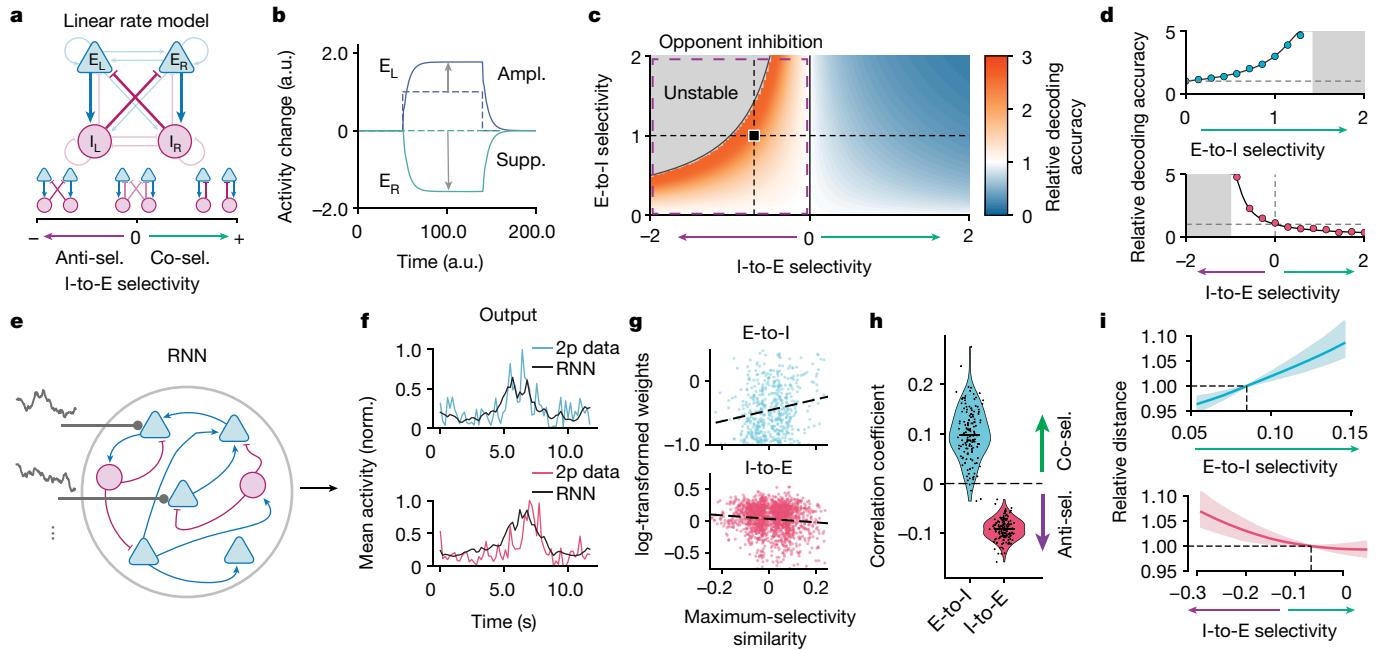
In contrast to E-to-I connectivity, we did not detect a significant difference in the PSD area of I-to-E synapses between co-selective and anti-selective pairs (Fig. 3d;  $P = 0.69$ , Mann–Whitney  $U$ -test), and PSD area was not significantly correlated with the maximum-selectivity similarity (Fig. 3e;  $r = 0.084$ ,  $P = 0.29$ , Pearson correlation test), suggesting that selective I-to-E connectivity may be mediated more by the number of synapses than the strength of individual synapses.

## Activity peaks of connected neurons

We considered how connectivity relates to neurons that have differences in the timing of their peak activity within a trial. The majority of connected E-to-I and I-to-E neuron pairs had activity peaks in different temporal epochs in the trial (Extended Data Fig. 7a–c), suggesting that trial-type selectivity may be a stronger determinant of connectivity than the timing of the peak activity. This finding was somewhat surprising because connectivity might be expected to be strongest among neurons with activity peaks at similar timepoints in the trial. However, cells exhibit non-zero activity away from their peak activity times (Extended Data Figs. 1e,f and 2), which enables a presynaptic cell to influence the activity of a post-synaptic cell even if they have activity peaks in different epochs. We tested this idea by computing noise correlations (a measure of simultaneous trial-to-trial co-fluctuations in activity after regressing away covariations due to similar tuning to cue and/or behavioural variables such as running patterns<sup>32</sup>; Methods) and found that noise correlations were positively correlated with E-to-I connectivity and negatively correlated with I-to-E connectivity (Extended Data Fig. 7d,e). Furthermore, as noted above, the simultaneous-selectivity similarity was positively correlated with E-to-I synaptic connectivity (Extended Data Fig. 5f) and negatively correlated with I-to-E connectivity (Extended Data Fig. 6e). Together, these results indicate that opponent inhibition patterns of connectivity can affect activity and computation on timescales relevant to direct synaptic transmission.

## Circuit modelling

Together, co-selective E-to-I (Fig. 2) and anti-selective I-to-E connectivity (Fig. 3) comprise an opponent inhibition motif (Fig. 4a (top)). We used network modelling to investigate how opponent inhibition may support decision-making computations. We first studied a linear rate model<sup>10,14</sup> comprising two excitatory and two inhibitory units.



**Fig. 4 | Opponent inhibition connectivity motif enhances trial-type signal encoding.** **a**, Illustration of the linear rate model comprising two excitatory and two inhibitory units. Left (or right) trial-type input is fed to  $E_L$  (or  $E_R$ ) (top). Bottom, variants in which I-to-E selectivity differs. The purple and green arrows indicate stronger anti-selectivity (anti-sel.) and co-selectivity (co-sel.), respectively. **b**,  $E_L$  and  $E_R$  activity (solid lines) in response to a left trial-type input (dotted lines) for a network with opponent inhibition.  $E_L$  is amplified and  $E_R$  is suppressed. **c**, The relative decoding accuracy (ratio of output to input decoding accuracy) as a function of E-to-I and I-to-E selectivity. The black square indicates the parameters used for **b**. **d**, The relative decoding accuracy as a function of E-to-I (top) and I-to-E (bottom) selectivity, corresponding to the dashed lines in **c**. **e**, Illustration of an RNN fit to the population activity. The networks are trained to reproduce experimental trial-averaged activity. **f**, Examples of the PPC activity (coloured lines) and RNN fits (black lines) for one

excitatory (top) and one inhibitory (bottom) neuron. **g**, Correlations between connectivity strength and the maximum-selectivity similarity for E-to-I (top) and I-to-E (bottom) connections for a single RNN. E-to-I connections are positively correlated (co-selective), whereas I-to-E connections are negatively correlated (anti-selective). **h**, The correlation between connection strengths and the maximum-selectivity similarity.  $n = 147$  randomly initialized RNNs. E-to-I connections are co-selective, whereas I-to-E connections are anti-selective. **i**, The distance between left and right RNN activity (averaged across time) as a function of selectivity perturbations, normalized to its value in the unperturbed network (dashed lines). E-to-I (top) and I-to-E (bottom) connection weights were perturbed in a manner that increases anti-selectivity or co-selectivity without changing the average connection weight (Supplementary Methods). The solid lines show the median and the error bars show the interquartile range.  $n = 147$  randomly initialized RNNs.

Left- or right-selective excitatory neurons ( $E_L, E_R$ ) receive elevated external input during left or right trials and interact with left- and right-selective inhibitory neurons ( $I_L, I_R$ ) (Fig. 4a, Methods and Supplementary Methods). In networks with opponent inhibition, input onto  $E_L$  decreases  $E_R$  activity through feed-forward inhibition, which amplifies  $E_L$  activity through feedback disinhibition<sup>13–15,36–38</sup> (Fig. 4b). In left trials, both suppression of  $E_R$  and amplification of  $E_L$  increased the difference between neural activity on left and right trials, and this difference was therefore larger for networks with stronger opponent inhibition (Methods, Extended Data Fig. 8a–c and Supplementary Methods). As a consequence, networks with stronger opponent inhibition supported more accurate decoding of trial type in the presence of readout noise (Fig. 4c,d and Extended Data Fig. 8d,e). Opponent inhibition also improved decoding accuracy over a broad range of values of E-to-E selectivity, and even without recurrent excitatory connections (Extended Data Fig. 8f), as well as in networks in which both E and I neurons received external selective input (Extended Data Fig. 9a,b). When time-dependent input noise was included, opponent inhibition amplified the signal more than it amplified the noise, therefore enhancing trial-type encoding (Extended Data Fig. 8g–j).

Although the linear rate model explains how opponent inhibition can affect network coding, it does not include heterogeneity of connection weights, nor does it produce sequential activity peaks as observed in the experimental data. To determine whether its predictions hold for more biologically constrained models, we built a recurrent neural network (RNN) model with the same number of excitatory and inhibitory

neurons as the experimentally reconstructed circuit (Fig. 4e), and trained the connection weights of the RNNs to reproduce the measured calcium activity for left and right trials<sup>39,40</sup> (Methods). After training, the RNNs generated dynamics that accurately reproduced PPC activity<sup>39</sup> (Fig. 4f). Although we did not constrain the selectivity of the RNN connections, the trained RNNs exhibited co-selective E-to-I and anti-selective I-to-E motifs, similar to those found experimentally (Fig. 4g,h and Extended Data Fig. 9c). To investigate whether these motifs supported signal amplification, as predicted by the linear rate model, we systematically manipulated the RNN connectivity<sup>41</sup> by perturbing the E-to-I or I-to-E selectivity around the trained values, and regenerated the dynamics using the new connections (Supplementary Methods). Stronger opponent inhibition (stronger E-to-I co-selectivity or I-to-E anti-selectivity) amplified the separation between left and right population responses (Fig. 4i and Extended Data Fig. 9d), further suggesting that opponent inhibition may enhance the coding of trial-type signals in the PPC.

In the RNNs, as with the experimental data, connections comprising the opponent inhibition motif also include many neuron pairs with peaks in different trial epochs (Extended Data Figs. 7b,c and 10a). By perturbing the connections in the RNNs, we found that the selectivity of connections both between neurons with peaks in the same or different trial epochs promotes the separation between left- and right-choice population responses (Extended Data Fig. 10b–d). An analysis of the modelled currents during network dynamics revealed strong off-peak inhibition specific to connections between neurons peaking in different

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epochs (Extended Data Fig. 10e), suggesting that I-to-E connections are critical for the formation of sequential activity peaks. Weakening or removing connections between neurons with peaks in different trial epochs disrupted trial-type selective sequential activity dynamics (Extended Data Fig. 10f–m and Supplementary Methods). Taken together, these results suggest that selective connections between neurons with activity peaks at different times are crucial for generating trial-type-selective and sequential population dynamics.

If opponent inhibition is used to compute signals relevant for choice, we would expect inhibitory activity to have a role in determining whether the animal makes the correct choice. To test this, we examined how the activity of I and E neurons in the PPC differed on error trials versus correct trials. Selective activity was generally degraded (reduced or reversed) on error trials (Extended Data Fig. 11a), and this degradation was comparable in magnitude for I and E neurons (Extended Data Fig. 11b,c). Thus, the activity of both I and E neurons was related to the mouse's choice. To confirm this result, we performed additional behavioural and functional imaging experiments on mice in which inhibitory neurons were labelled (Methods and Extended Data Fig. 11d) and found results consistent with those from the mouse used for EM analysis (Extended Data Fig. 11c). To understand how error trial selectivity degradation relates to selective connectivity, we also examined how I and E unit activity in the linear rate model correlate with choice (defined on the basis of which E unit was more active in each trial<sup>13,14</sup>). Only networks with opponent inhibition exhibited inhibitory selectivity degradation on error trials comparable in magnitude to excitatory selectivity degradation, as observed in the experimental data (Extended Data Fig. 11c,e). Taken together, these analyses suggest that inhibitory activity could have a role in producing correct choices and provides further evidence that opponent inhibition contributes to choice-selective activity and, ultimately, decision-making.

## Discussion

We sought to understand the relationships between trial-type-selective neuron activity and synaptic connectivity in the PPC. Although selective activity in the PPC has been reported in many previous studies<sup>3,5–10,42</sup>, accompanying connectivity data have been lacking. Here we used automated serial-section transmission EM<sup>19</sup> to acquire synapse-resolution images in a volume from the PPC that was functionally imaged during behaviour. As neuronal arborizations extend over large distances in the mammalian cortex, it is critical to image a large enough volume to sample them. The EM volume collected here in the PPC contains a much larger volume compared with previous cortical EM datasets<sup>21–24,26</sup> (but also see refs. 20,27), enabling the reconstruction of substantial portions of axonal and dendritic arborizations, including synaptic connections made on distal branches. The resulting connectivity data, combined with behavioural and functional imaging data from the same animal, enabled us to reveal circuit motifs that support decision-making. Still, these data include only a modest sample size of functionally characterized neurons and synapses between them, and do not include synapses made outside the EM volume. Future functional connectomic datasets involving larger EM volumes and more neurons will probably reveal additional circuit motifs.

We found that the frequency and size of synaptic connections in the PPC depended significantly on the selectivity of pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurons. For E-to-I connections, co-selective synapses were larger and more frequent, whereas, for I-to-E connections, anti-selective synapses were more frequent. We did not detect a difference in the synapse size between co-selective and anti-selective I-to-E connections. However, synapse size analysis for both E-to-I and I-to-E connections should be interpreted cautiously, as the correlation between synapse size and functional strength in the cortex has been directly measured only for E-to-E synapses<sup>33</sup>.

The combination of co-selective E-to-I and anti-selective I-to-E comprises an opponent inhibition motif, in which the activity of left-selective excitatory neurons suppresses the activity of right-selective ones, and vice versa. This motif has been shown to mediate action selection in zebrafish and *Drosophila*<sup>43,44</sup>, and a related motif has been reported in the ferret visual cortex<sup>45</sup>, but motifs of this type have not previously been reported in the association cortex. Previous research in the mouse PPC proposed that selective connectivity motifs underlie choice-selective inhibitory activity, but could not rule out models with non-selective inhibition<sup>10</sup>. Here, the combination of neuronal activity measurements and EM-based connectomics in the same neurons has enabled the identification of the underlying connectivity motifs.

Selective inhibitory connectivity in the PPC contrasts with the primary visual cortex, in which previous connectomic analysis has suggested that E-to-I connectivity is non-selective in mice<sup>22</sup> (but also see refs. 46–48). This suggests that specific inhibitory connectivity may be a distinct feature of PPC relative to the primary visual cortex, which underlies specialized functional roles of different cortical areas. Alternatively, opponent inhibition may be a more general motif that can arise in both sensory and association cortices with task learning<sup>49</sup>, as well as in the motor cortex<sup>50</sup>. Experiments comparing connectivity across multiple cortical areas in the same trained animal will be needed to assess how general opponent inhibition is across the cortex.

Although we observed selective connectivity across a population of neurons, the individual connection probabilities between neuron pairs were quite variable. This connection noise is a source of biological variability<sup>51</sup> that places limits on our ability to detect connectivity motifs given limited experimental sample sizes. Thus, although data presented here were sufficient to reveal the opponent inhibition motif, more subtle motifs may require more data to uncover. For example, we did not find selectivity in E-to-E connections (Extended Data Fig. 6f,j), but recurrent E-to-E co-selectivity (which is found in the primary visual cortex<sup>23,52</sup>) might be observable with a larger dataset. Thus, we anticipate that future connectomics experiments encompassing even larger volumes and numbers of functionally characterized neurons will uncover additional connectivity motifs and elucidate differences among interneuron subtypes. Nevertheless, our circuit modelling suggests that advantages of opponent inhibition apply over a wide range of E-to-E and I-to-I selectivity (Extended Data Fig. 8f).

In models of decision-making, the formation of categorical choices is typically facilitated by non-selective lateral inhibition<sup>12</sup>. Recently, it has been proposed that selective inhibition could have one of two possible roles: promoting competition with anti-selective I-to-E connectivity, or stabilizing dynamics through co-selective I-to-E connectivity<sup>15</sup>. These distinct contributions are also present in the linear rate model presented here (Extended Data Fig. 8f). Our anatomical data suggests that PPC lies in the competition regime.

Although some decision-making models focus on the production of categorical choices through winner-take-all dynamics in attractor models<sup>13,15</sup>, previous research suggests that, during navigational tasks, the PPC produces more complex dynamics in which multiple activity patterns arise for each trial type<sup>53</sup>. These neural trajectories in the PPC probably represent a wide range of task and behavioural variables, including the mouse's choice, its navigational movements and position, and sensory cues from the environment<sup>3,31,54–56</sup>. For this reason, the model developed here focuses on a graded encoding of the choice signal, whereby the PPC circuit helps to separate these multifaceted neural trajectories to enhance the encoding of the signals relevant for navigational decision-making.

Temporal sequences of activity in the cortex have become a prominent topic of discussion because they have been identified across many cortical areas and in many contexts in recent years<sup>3,57,58</sup>. Although the analysis in this study has focused on choice selectivity, choice and temporal selectivity are intermingled within neuronal activity dynamics. Indeed, we observed that choice-specific connections include neuron pairs that

have activity peaks at different times (Extended Data Fig. 7a–c). Using modelling, we showed that recurrent networks need such connections to generate choice-specific sequences (Extended Data Fig. 10), which provides a theoretical intuition for why we find such connections in the experimental connectivity data. Although further studies will be needed to fully understand how synaptic connectivity underlies temporal activity sequences, our study provides a start in this direction.

In summary, we identified an anatomical opponent inhibition motif consisting of functionally selective connectivity between excitatory and inhibitory neurons in the PPC. Using modelling, we showed that this opponent inhibitory motif improves the encoding of trial-type information. Together, these results identify an anatomical connectivity motif in the PPC that supports decision-making.

## Online content

Any methods, additional references, Nature Portfolio reporting summaries, source data, extended data, supplementary information, acknowledgements, peer review information; details of author contributions and competing interests; and statements of data and code availability are available at <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07088-7>.

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# Article

## Methods

### Behaviour and calcium imaging

All of the experimental procedures were approved by the Harvard Medical School Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Mice were housed under a reversed 12 h–12 h light–dark light cycle. We trained mice to perform a two-alternative forced-choice delay task in a virtual reality T-maze and performed *in vivo* calcium imaging as previously described<sup>3,31</sup> (Fig. 1a). In brief, the task consisted of cue, delay and turn phases. During the cue phase, the mice were presented with one of two visual cues on the walls of the T-maze. In the second half of the T-maze (the delay period), the cues were replaced by a neutral grey. At the T-intersection, the mice turned left or right based on the presented cue to earn a water reward. The mice performed the task by running on a spherical treadmill and were presented with visual stimuli projected onto a screen using the ViRMEn software engine<sup>59</sup> (forked at <https://github.com/lauradriscoll/virmen>).

We used raw calcium imaging and behavioural data from a single mouse originally from a previous study<sup>31</sup>. Owing to the extensive effort required to generate a large enough EM volume (~6 months for imaging, ~6 months for alignment, ~7,000 annotation hours for neuron tracing), it was not feasible to generate multiple such datasets from multiple animals in this study. In brief, the mouse was a male C57BL/6J mouse (The Jackson Laboratory) aged 8 weeks at the start of behavioural training, 14–18 weeks during imaging and 18–19 weeks when the brain was preserved for EM imaging. GCaMP6m was expressed in left-hemisphere PPC layer 2/3 neurons by viral injection (AAV2/1-synapsin-1-GCaMP6m) and neuronal activity was recorded during behaviour using a two-photon microscope (5.3 Hz volume imaging rate) controlled by ScanImage (v.4; Vidrio Technologies). Behaviour and functional imaging were recorded every day for around 30 consecutive days (with a few 1 day breaks). However, for the main analysis in this study, we focused on data from the last four sessions. For additional analyses investigating how structure-function relationships evolve over time, we used sessions 8–10 days before (early), 4–7 days before (middle) and the last 4 days before (late) euthanasia (Extended Data Figs. 1a, 5j,k and 6d).

For each session, we performed source extraction using Suite2p<sup>60</sup> (<https://www.suite2p.org>) and manually screened the resulting regions of interest (ROIs) to obtain putative cell bodies and associated calcium signals. The dF/F calcium signals were deconvolved using the constrained FOOPS1 algorithm<sup>61</sup> (<https://github.com/epnev/constrained-foopsi>) to obtain an event rate that estimates the relative firing rate of each neuron over time. We synchronized the event rates to the behavioural trials structure to obtain trial-wise event rates for each neuron. As the length of trials can vary based on the how quickly the mouse runs, we synchronized based on three landmarks during the trial: the beginning of the trial, the start of the delay period and the end of the trial. Trial aligned event rates had 63 timepoints (each 188 ms) according to the following scheme: timepoints 1–13 correspond to the cue (beginning) epoch and are aligned to the landmark timepoint: 1, the start of trial (running onset); timepoints 14–25 correspond to the cue (end) epoch and are aligned to the landmark timepoint: 26, the start of delay period (cue offset); timepoints 26–38 correspond to the delay epoch and are aligned to the landmark timepoint: 26, the start of delay period (cue offset); timepoints 39–51 correspond to the turn epoch and are aligned to the landmark timepoint: 52, the end of the trial (reward given or omitted); and timepoints 52–63 correspond to the inter-trial interval and are aligned to the landmark timepoint: 52, the end of the trial (reward given or omitted).

Thus, synchronized trials were not completely continuous in time (there are two discontinuities). We next calculated trial-averaged event rates by averaging over left and right trials separately.

For experiments analysing the activity of excitatory and inhibitory neurons during error trials, additional mice were trained to perform

the virtual reality behavioural task. We injected the left-hemisphere PPC with AAV9-hSyn-jGCaMP7f, AAV9-mDlx-NLS-mRuby2 and AAV8-CaMKIIa-ChRmine-mCherry-Kv2.1 and installed a cranial window and headplate<sup>62–64</sup>. This set of viruses labelled both excitatory and inhibitory neurons with jGCaMP7f, excitatory neurons with a somatic membrane-localized red fluorophore and inhibitory neurons with a nuclear-localized red fluorophore (Extended Data Fig. 11d). We recorded neural activity in the PPC using two-photon microscopy (~30 Hz frame rate) and synchronized behaviour and imaging using frame triggers from the microscope and iteration triggers from ViRMEn. We also collected a z stack spanning ±10 µm around the imaging plane to record structural data from both the red and green channels. ROIs were automatically extracted using Suite2p and non-cell sources were discarded. After aligning the calcium imaging field-of-view to the structural z stack, for each source, we measured the red fluorescence in the somatic membrane and in the nucleus. To measure the nuclear red fluorescence, we eroded the masks for each source and took the mean grey value of the eroded ROI in the aligned red channel image; the somatic membrane red fluorescence was the mean grey value of all of the pixels in the ROI that were not included in the nuclear region. To identify neurons with enriched nuclear red fluorescence, we computed the ratio of nuclear to membrane fluorescence. We took cells with the top 10% of these values to be putative inhibitory interneurons labelled by AAV9-mDlx-NLS-mRuby2 and considered the bottom 70% of these values to be putative excitatory neurons with red fluorescence in the somatic membrane. These thresholds were chosen to be conservative in our labelling of inhibitory and excitatory neurons.

### Information-theoretic selectivity index

For each neuron in each session, we calculated an information-theoretic trial-type selectivity index as follows. The event rates were converted to binary values by setting all non-zero values to 1, measuring when the neuron is active versus inactive. Then, as done previously<sup>32</sup>, we calculated the instantaneous MI<sup>65</sup> between this binarized event rate and the identity of the sensory cue (which has two possible values for right and left trials) for each timepoint in the trial using the Information Breakdown Toolbox<sup>66</sup>. This measures the instantaneous trial-type information, with trial type intended as the type of cue presented to the mouse. All left- and right-turn trials were included in this analysis, including error trials in which the mouse turned the wrong direction. Alternative analyses, such as including only correct trials or defining the trial type based on the mouse's choice, lead to slightly different values of MI, but did not significantly change the results. We subtracted the limited-sampling bias from the information estimates using the Panzeri–Treves bias correction<sup>67</sup>, which improved the accuracy of information estimates by removing the confounding effect of differences in trial numbers across sessions (see the 'Method selection for estimating trial type selectivity and noise correlation' section in the Supplementary Methods; Extended Data Fig. 12). We computed information in each available session (among the last four sessions) and then averaged the value across sessions to provide an information estimate for each neuron, as this optimized the SNR of the calculation (Extended Data Fig. 12). We estimated the significance of the information value at each timepoint ( $P < 0.05$ ) using the 95th percentile of the null-hypothesis distribution obtained by randomly permuting neural responses across trials<sup>66</sup> ( $n = 1,000$  permutations), and we set to zero non-significant information values to avoid attributing selectivity to timepoints that were not. The MI has units of bits and is bounded between 0 and 1.

We defined the magnitude of the maximum selectivity to be the maximum value of the MI across timepoints. The timepoint of peak MI was different for different neurons. We defined the sign of the maximum selectivity based on the trial-averaged event rates at the timepoint of peak MI. The maximum selectivity was given a negative sign if the trial-averaged binarized event rate was greater on left trials

than right. Thus, the maximum selectivity ranges from  $-1$  to  $+1$ , with the sign indicating preferred trial type and the magnitude indicating MI with trial type, and  $0$  indicating non-significant information. Maximum selectivity values were calculated separately for each behavioural session. To obtain the overall maximum selectivity for each neuron, these values were averaged across the last four behavioural sessions before the mouse was euthanized (see the ‘Co-registration between *in vivo* and EM data’ section below for alignment of multiple sessions and EM data). For additional analyses investigating how structure–function relationships evolve over sessions, we calculated maximum selectivity separately for early, middle and late sessions (Extended Data Figs. 1a, 5j,k and 6d).

This information-theoretic definition of selectivity is distinct from metrics based on receiver-operator characteristic analysis<sup>10</sup> or trial-averaged activity<sup>3,31</sup> used in other studies. In contrast to these other metrics, the MI metric quantifies information available in individual trials and can capture any linear or nonlinear tuning. However, these different metrics for selectivity are highly correlated with each other, so the main conclusions of this study also hold when using alternative definitions of selectivity.

Note that, in our dataset, the number of right-selective neurons outnumbered the left-selective (Extended Data Figs. 1g and 2). As a result, the number of functionally characterized left-selective inhibitory neurons was small. Thus, our findings on trial-type selective connectivity primarily comes from connections involving right-selective inhibitory neurons.

### Error trial analysis

To investigate the relationship between neuronal activity and the animal’s choice, we compared correct and error trials (Extended Data Fig. 11). Error trials were defined as trials in which the animal turned the wrong direction, causing a mismatch between the cue and the choice. As the rate of error trials was low, we pooled trials from 11 sessions (including early, middle and late sessions indicated in the Extended Data Fig. 1a). However, each individual neuron was typically detected in several, but not all 11 sessions. To account for experimental differences across sessions, we normalized the deconvolved activity of each neuron in each session to the average activity level of that neuron across the whole session.

For each neuron, we defined the preferred and non-preferred cue based on the functional selectivity of that neuron. For example, for a left-selective neuron, the preferred cue was the one that indicates a left turn (white cue), and the non-preferred was the one that indicates a right turn (black cue). By definition, neurons are generally more active during preferred-cue trials than non-preferred.

To analyse how activity changes on error trials compared to correct trials, we quantified for each neuron the relative change in activity for preferred ( $\Delta_{\text{preferred}}$ ) and non-preferred ( $\Delta_{\text{non-preferred}}$ ) trials:

$$\Delta_{\text{preferred}} = \frac{\text{act}(\text{preferred correct trials}) - \text{act}(\text{preferred error trials})}{\text{act}(\text{all preferred trials})}$$

$$\Delta_{\text{non-preferred}} = \frac{\text{act}(\text{non-preferred error trials}) - \text{act}(\text{non-preferred correct trials})}{\text{act}(\text{all non-preferred trials})}$$

where  $\text{act}(x)$  refers to the mean activity over trials of type  $x$ , with activity averaged over both trial types and across time for each trial (except in Extended Data Fig. 11a, in which activity is shown as a function of time for visualization purposes). Generally, when the animal makes an error, neuronal activity is lower on preferred trials and higher on non-preferred trials, which is consistent with the activity encoding to some extent the (erroneous) choice. Thus, the functional selectivity of

neurons is degraded (or even switched) on error trials. We defined the signs of  $\Delta_{\text{preferred}}$  and  $\Delta_{\text{non-preferred}}$  to both be positive in this case.

To quantify the overall selectivity degradation, we defined the ‘error trial selectivity degradation’ for a given neuron  $i$  (Extended Data Fig. 11b) as:

$$D_i = \Delta_{\text{preferred}} + \Delta_{\text{non-preferred}}.$$

For a neural population, the error trial selectivity degradation was defined as:

$$D = \text{median}(\Delta_{\text{preferred}}) + \text{median}(\Delta_{\text{non-preferred}}),$$

where the median is taken over neurons belonging to the neural population considered (Extended Data Fig. 11c). The median, rather than the mean, was used to reduce the effect of outliers that can result due to the small number of error trials.

Positive values of  $D_i$  indicate that the neuron’s selective activity is degraded in error trials compared with correct trials. In fact, if a neuron’s activity is selective for the wrong choice on error trials,  $\Delta_{\text{preferred}}$ ,  $\Delta_{\text{non-preferred}}$  and  $D_i$  are all positive. Null values of  $D_i$  indicate that the selective activity does not change between correct and error trials. If a neuron’s activity is the same on error and correct trials,  $\Delta_{\text{preferred}}$ ,  $\Delta_{\text{non-preferred}}$  and  $D_i$  are all 0. Negative values of  $D_i$  (rarely seen in our data) would indicate that selective activity is enhanced in error trials.

To assess the statistical significance of  $D$  for different populations of neurons (such as excitatory or inhibitory), we performed a permutation test in which we shuffled the identity of error trials (keeping the total number of error trials the same) and recalculated  $D$  for each shuffle. The  $P$  value of  $D$  was determined by comparing the measured  $D$  to this null distribution.

Note that the value of the degradation index  $D$  is sensitive to the number of trials and the number of error trials. If the number of error trials is small, results will become noisier and values of  $D$  will be closer to zero. To mitigate this, we excluded neurons with fewer than four total error trials of a given type (preferred or non-preferred). However, trial numerosity was far greater in the EM mouse (because it was based on many co-registered sections) compared with the additional mice with only 1–2 sessions. Thus, the magnitude of  $D$  cannot be meaningfully compared between the EM and additional mice, but can be compared between I and E neurons within each dataset, which share the same number of trials.

### EM dataset

On the last day of *in vivo* imaging, we injected the tail vein with a fluorescent dye to label blood vessels (rhodamine B isothiocyanate–dextran (molecular mass, 70 kDa), 5% (v/v), Sigma-Aldrich) and acquired an anatomical 2p reference stack of the imaging ROI in the PPC (green channel, GCaMP6m for cells; red channel, rhodamine for blood vessels). After performing behaviour and calcium imaging, the mouse was perfused transcardially (2% formaldehyde/2.5% glutaraldehyde in 0.1 M cacodylate buffer with 0.04%  $\text{CaCl}_2$ ) and the brain was prepared for EM imaging as previously described<sup>23</sup>. In brief, 200- $\mu\text{m}$ -thick coronal vibratome sections were cut, post-fixed and en bloc stained with 1% osmium tetroxide/1.5% potassium ferrocyanide followed by 1% uranyl acetate, dehydrated with a graded ethanol series and embedded in resin (TAAB 812 Epon, Canemco).

We cut serial 1- $\mu\text{m}$ -thick sections from regions a few sections away from the PPC, stained them with toluidine blue (EMS), imaged them with light microscopy and aligned them to large blood vessels on the surface of the brain (from photos taken through the cranial window) to estimate which sections overlap with the PPC regions imaged *in vivo*. We then used micro-CT (Zeiss Versa) to confirm the correct vibratome section by registering corresponding vasculature between the micro-CT volume and 2p reference stack.

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We cut a series of 2,500 thin sections (thickness, 40–45 nm) and imaged them using the GridTape system as previously described<sup>19</sup>. In brief, we trimmed the tissue block to mesa containing the tissue of interest using an ultramicrotome (Leica UC7) and a diamond trimming knife (EMS-Diatome). Then, using an automated tape ultramicrotome (ATUM), we sectioned and collected 2,500 sections onto a reel of GridTape over a period of about 15 h. During pickup, 37 sections (out of 2,500, comprising 1.4%) did not adhere to the transparent slots on the GridTape and 8 sections (0.3%) had ruptured film supports.

After sectioning and pickup, we post-stained the sections with lead citrate using a semi-automated reel-to-reel system. The sections were imaged using an automated transmission EM system over a period of about 6 months. For each section, an ROI of approximately 1.2 mm × 0.7 mm was imaged (for the first 800 sections, a larger ROI of about 1.5 × 0.7 mm was imaged). During staining and imaging, 38 (1.5%) additional sections were damaged in a way that precluded successful imaging. Overall, 2,427 (97.1%) of the intended 2,500 sections were successfully imaged. The missed sections included one four-section gap, two three-section gaps and ten two-section gaps. The dataset consisted of around 400 TB of raw data (16-bit images). The raw images were converted to 8-bit format and stitched together to form a contiguous three-dimensional volume using an elastic spring mesh algorithm (AlignTK).

## Co-registration between *in vivo* and EM data

On the last day of *in vivo* imaging, we recorded a volumetric reference stack of the ROI in the PPC with 1 μm<sup>3</sup> voxel size, which was used as a bridge between the calcium imaging planes for each session (4 planes separated by 25 μm in z) and the EM volume. First, we co-registered the reference stack to a down-sampled version of the EM volume (Extended Data Fig. 1i). Then, for each session, we co-registered the imaging planes to the reference stack. Both registrations were calculated by manually identifying a moderate number of correspondence points (~10–30) using the ImageJ (v.1.53) plugin BigWarp<sup>68</sup> (release 6.0.0; <https://imagej.net/BigWarp>) to calculate an affine transformation matrix (custom MATLAB code).

Using these affine transformations, we overlaid the extracted source ROIs from each calcium imaging session onto the EM space, and manually inspected each ROI for matching cell bodies in the EM volume (Extended Data Fig. 1j). Some ROIs were not associated with any cell bodies, presumably because they were other objects such as large dendrites. To increase confidence, we matched ROIs to EM for multiple sessions simultaneously, and used the trial-aligned activity to help to determine whether ROIs in different sessions were from the same neuron. Activity was usually, but not always, similar for the same neuron over several sessions. At the conclusion of this correspondence process, we identified 140 functionally characterized neurons within the EM volume with matching calcium imaging ROIs. For most neurons, matching ROIs were found in multiple, but not all, sessions. This might be because they were not identified by the source extraction algorithm, or because they were excluded due to uncertainty in the co-registration and manual matching procedure. The co-registration results were reviewed by a 2nd expert annotator, and only cell matches that were agreed upon by the two independent annotators were included in analysis.

## Neuronal circuit reconstruction

The morphology and connectivity of the functionally characterized neurons were reconstructed through manual tracing by a team of annotators using the CATMAID<sup>23,69,70</sup> (release 2018.11.09) collaborative annotation software. Starting from the cell body (which was previously co-registered to calcium imaging source ROIs), all branches (including axons and dendrites) were traced completely until they either ended or reached the boundary of the EM volume. In some cases, data quality issues such as missing sections or poor image quality prevented further tracing. The functionally characterized neurons were classified as pyramidal or non-pyramidal (inhibitory) on the basis of

their reconstructed morphology. Pyramidal cells were classified as such on the basis of characteristic features that included a prominent, pial-projecting apical dendrite, outward/downward projecting basal dendrites and downward-projecting axon (Extended Data Fig. 3). Non-pyramidal cells had a variety of morphologies probably corresponding to distinct interneuron subtypes (Extended Data Fig. 4). In total, 124 excitatory and 16 inhibitory neurons with co-registered calcium imaging were traced within the EM volume. For the main analyses, 116 excitatory and 15 inhibitory neurons, which were detected in the calcium imaging data from the last four sessions (see the ‘Early, middle and late behavioural sessions’ section below) were used.

Synaptic connections were identified by characteristic ultrastructural features<sup>71</sup>, including concentrated synaptic vesicles and a post-synaptic density (PSD), which is a darkening/thickening of the post-synaptic membrane at synapses. We annotated synapses in a way that also encodes an estimate of the area of the PSD. Connector objects were annotated on the section in which the PSD appeared longest, and the pre- and post-synaptic nodes were placed in a way such that the distance between them was equal to the length of the PSD (Figs. 1d and 2i–k). This length was taken to be the diameter of circular PSD to estimate PSD area. Although PSDs are not exactly circular, the errors inherent to this estimation are probably small compared with the large variations in size from synapse to synapse<sup>25,72</sup>.

Starting from the outgoing synapses on the axons of functionally characterized neurons, each post-synaptic neuron was traced until either the cell body was found or the neuron left the edge of the EM volume. Those post-synaptic partners with cell bodies within the volume were classified as pyramidal or non-pyramidal as described above. Some of the post-synaptic partners were other functionally characterized neurons (direct connections). Thus, the first-order output connectivity of the functionally characterized neurons was traced completely within the EM volume (Fig. 1e (inset)).

All tracing (including neuronal morphologies and synapse size estimations) was reviewed a second time by an independent reviewer. In general, we took a conservative approach to terminate ambiguous continuations to avoid merge errors. Neuron tracing required approximately 7,000 h, including around 5,000 h of tracing and about 2,000 h of reviewing.

## Connectivity analysis

Analysis of neuron morphology and connectivity was performed by querying the CATMAID database and performing calculations using custom Python code based on the navis (v.1.1.0; <https://github.com/navis-org/navis>) and pymaid (v.2.4.0; <https://github.com/navis-org/pymaid>) libraries. Specific details for particular analyses are provided below.

## Axon–dendrite overlap

To quantify how many opportunities pairs of neurons have to make synaptic connections, we calculated the axon–dendrite overlap, which is the length of pre-synaptic axon that comes within 5 μm of the post-synaptic dendrites. All neuron pairs with synaptic connections had non-zero axon–dendrite overlap, because the axons and dendrites need to come into close proximity to form a synapse. Neuron pairs that have a high frequency of synapses per overlap were interpreted to have a high affinity for forming synaptic connections. The axon–dendrite overlap was calculated using the cable\_overlap function in navis. To mitigate tracing irregularities, the neuron skeletons were first resampled at 100 nm inter-node distance and then smoothed with a radius of 1 μm. We also examined the effect of changing the 5 μm distance threshold in Extended Data Fig. 5d and 6c.

## Maximum-selectivity similarity

The maximum-selectivity similarity quantifies in a continuous manner how similar the selectivity is between two neurons, and was defined as (Extended Data Fig. 5c):

$$s = \text{sign}(c_1 c_2) \sqrt{|c_1| |c_2|},$$

where  $c_1$  and  $c_2$  are the maximum selectivity values (across timepoints) for the two neurons, and the sign of  $s$  is positive if  $c_1$  and  $c_2$  have the same sign (co-selective) and negative if they have opposite sign (anti-selective). Thus, the maximum-selectivity similarity encodes both directionality and strength of selectivity.

A pair of neurons was considered to be co-selective if their selectivity indices (see the 'Information-theoretic selectivity index' section above) had the same sign, and anti-selective for opposite sign.

### Simultaneous-selectivity similarity

The maximum-selectivity similarity used in the main analysis combines the maximum selectivity (over timepoints) of the pre- and post-synaptic neurons separately. This metric does not guarantee that the same timepoint is used to calculate selectivity for the pre- and post-synaptic neurons. Thus, a pair of neurons can have high maximum-selectivity similarity even if they are never active at the same time or during the same temporal epoch.

To quantify selectivity similarity of neurons restricted to timepoints at which they are both active, we developed the simultaneous-selectivity similarity (Extended Data Figs. 5e–g and 6e). For this metric, the simultaneous-selectivity similarity  $s(t)$  is first calculated from the simultaneous trial-type MI values  $c_1(t)$  and  $c_2(t)$  for each timepoint (see the 'Information-theoretic selectivity index' section above):

$$s(t) = \text{sign}(c_1(t) c_2(t)) \sqrt{|c_1(t)| |c_2(t)|}.$$

Finally, we defined the simultaneous-selectivity similarity as the value of  $s(t)$  at the timepoint with the maximum absolute value across timepoints within the trial length. Therefore, this metric considers only selectivity of simultaneous activity in the pre- and post-synaptic neurons.

### Synapse size

The PSD area was calculated for each individual synaptic connection based on synapse annotations that estimated the PSD size (see the 'Neuronal circuit reconstruction' section above). The PSD area has been shown to be a correlate of synapse strength (at least for E-to-E synapses in sensory cortex<sup>23</sup>).

### Normalized synapse frequency

The normalized synapse frequency  $f$  quantifies how many synapses are made between a source and target neuron, normalized to the length of overlap between the pre-synaptic axon and post-synaptic dendrite.

$$f = N/L_a,$$

where  $N$  is the number of synaptic connections and  $L_a$  is the axon-dendrite overlap, defined as the path length of the source neuron's axon that is within 5 µm (maximal spine length<sup>23</sup>; Extended Data Figs. 5d and 6c) of dendrites of the target neuron (Fig. 2b). The  $L_a$  value quantifies how many opportunities there are for the two neurons to connect based on their fine-scale morphology<sup>23</sup>.

### Non-connected neuron pairs

In addition to neuron pairs connected by synapses, there were also many non-connected pairs of neurons that have non-zero axon-dendrite overlap but do not form synaptic connections within the EM dataset. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that they form connections outside the bounds of the dataset (due to the limited volume) or that some connections were missed due to tracing errors. Nevertheless, the non-connected pairs can be informative of connection selectivity; in particular, pairs that have a large amount of axon-dendrite overlap without making a connection suggest a low affinity for forming synapses.

To include non-connected neuron pairs in the selectivity analysis, we calculated a pooled synapse frequency  $f_{\text{pool}}$  as:

$$f_{\text{pool}} = \frac{N_{\text{cn}} + N_{\text{non}}}{L_{\text{cn}} + L_{\text{non}}},$$

where  $N_{\text{cn}}$  is the total number of synapses among connected pairs,  $N_{\text{non}}$  is the number of non-connected pairs,  $L_{\text{cn}}$  is the total axon–dendrite overlap among connected pairs, and  $L_{\text{non}}$  is the total overlap among non-connected pairs. To avoid outliers and noise from pairs with very little cable overlap (which can vary strongly based on small differences in local tracing), only non-connected pairs with an axon–dendrite overlap of greater or equal to the average overlap per synapse ( $L_{\text{cn}}/N_{\text{cn}}$ ) were included in this calculation. As non-connected pairs are weighted as if they have one synapse each,  $f_{\text{pool}}$  should be considered to be an estimate of the upper bound on synapse frequency. For Extended Data Figs. 5b and 6b,  $f_{\text{pool}}$  was calculated separately for co-selective and anti-selective pairs. Confidence intervals and  $P$  values (two-tailed) were calculated by bootstrapping over pairs of non-connected neurons.

### Structure–function correlations

To quantify structure–function relationships (in Figs. 2h,l and 3c,e and Extended Data Figs. 5f,g,j,k and 6d,e, and across all cell types in Extended Data Fig. 6f–m), we calculated Pearson (linear) correlation coefficients between the functional (maximum-selectivity similarity or simultaneous-selectivity similarity) and anatomical (normalized synapse frequency or PSD area) measures. For normalized synapse frequency, each datapoint was a connection between two neurons, which can involve one or more synapses. The  $P$  values reported for these correlations indicate the probability that the correlation deviates from zero (Pearson correlation test with Student's  $t$ -statistics<sup>73</sup>, using the `scipy.stats.pearsonr` or MATLAB `corr` functions).

### Early, middle and late behavioural sessions

For analyses investigating how structure–function relationships evolve over time, functional selectivity indices were calculated separately from early (8–10 days before sacrifice), middle (4–7 days before) and late (0–3 days before) sessions. Correlations between similarity indices and connectivity (normalized synapse frequency or PSD area) were then calculated separately for early, middle and late sessions.

### Noise correlations

In Extended Data Fig. 7d,e, we compute noise correlations between all pairs of simultaneously recorded neurons within the last four sessions. To discount contributions to the neurons' activity due to shared tuning of neurons to behavioural variables such as running patterns, we implemented a partial noise correlation calculation (adapted from a previous study<sup>32</sup>). For each neuron, and separately for each trial type, we performed at each timepoint a linear regression using as dependent variables the single-trial neuron's activity and as independent variables the single-trial values of the  $x$  and  $y$  positions and velocities and the heading angle. We then regressed away the linear contribution of the behavioural variables to neural activity as well as the trial-type mean activity, and computed noise correlations using the average over time during the trial of the residual activity. We pooled all available data from the four last sessions to compute the estimate of noise correlations for each pair. The details of the calculation procedure were set to optimize the signal-to-noise ratio of calculations on simulated activity of pairs of neurons (Extended Data Fig. 12; see the 'Method selection for estimating trial type selectivity and noise correlation' section of the Supplementary Methods). As regressions are meaningless in the absence of variability of firing across trials, for each pair of neurons, only timepoints at which both neurons had significant non-zero activity (corresponding to timepoints in which the  $P$  values of a one-sample  $t$ -test against zero activity was lower

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than 0.05 for both neurons) were included in the noise correlation calculation.

## Same-epoch and different-epoch connections

For each neuron, we defined the peak epoch as the epoch (see the ‘Behaviour and calcium imaging’ section for definitions of the epochs) in which the trial average activity (defined as the mean over trials and over left and right trial types) reached its maximum value. Connections between neuron pairs that shared the same peak epoch were referred to as same-epoch connections, whereas connections between pairs with different peak epochs were referred to as different-epoch connections.

## Network models

We examined a simple linear network model with recurrent connections (Fig. 4 and Extended Data Figs. 8, 9a,b and 11c,e). The network comprises excitatory and inhibitory units organized in two trial-type selective subnetworks, each of them including one excitatory and one inhibitory unit (respectively  $E_L, I_L$  and  $E_R, I_R$  for left and right subnetworks). The dynamics of the network follows the differential equation:

$$\dot{r}_i = -r_i + \sum_{j=1}^{N=4} J_{ij} r_j + I_{\text{ext},i} + \eta_i(t), \quad (1)$$

where  $\mathbf{r} = (r_{E_L}, r_{I_L}, r_{E_R}, r_{I_R})$  represents the firing rate deviation from the baseline activity level. The term  $J_{ij}$  represents the connectivity weight between the presynaptic unit  $j$  and the post-synaptic unit  $i$ . We model left and right trial types through modulations of the external trial-type selective input to the excitatory units,  $I_{\text{ext},i}$ , assumed to be constant in time. The term  $\eta_i(t)$  represents a source of zero-mean Gaussian input noise to unit  $i$ , which in general depends on time.

For each pre-synaptic and post-synaptic types  $X, Y \in E, I$ , we denoted by  $w_{YX}^{\text{in}}$  and  $w_{YX}^{\text{out}}$  the synapses that connect units belonging to the same or to different subnetworks, respectively, and we assumed that these connections were symmetric with respect to the left and right subnetworks  $L$  and  $R$ . We denote by  $\Delta_{YX} = w_{YX}^{\text{in}} - w_{YX}^{\text{out}}$  the connection selectivity for the  $X$ -to- $Y$  synapses.

We examined the response of the network to external inputs. We defined the network response as the steady state of the network with external input  $I_{\text{ext}}$  and zero external noise. When the dynamics is linear, the steady-state  $\mathbf{r}^*$  can be written as a function of the connectivity matrix  $J$  and of the external input  $\mathbf{I}_{\text{ext}}$  as:

$$\mathbf{r}^* = (\mathbb{I} - \mathbf{J})^{-1} \mathbf{I}_{\text{ext}}. \quad (2)$$

We therefore examined the network dynamics as a function of  $\Delta_{YX}$  at fixed average connection strength  $S_{YX} = w_{YX}^{\text{in}} + w_{YX}^{\text{out}}$ . In Fig. 4b–d and Extended Data Figs. 8 and 9a,b, we set the overall magnitude of the connectivity weights to  $S_{IE} = S_{EI} = 2$ , while varying the E-to-I selectivity in the range  $\Delta_{IE} \in [0, 2]$  and the I-to-E selectivity in the range  $\Delta_{EI} \in [-2, 2]$  (Fig. 4b–d and Extended Data Fig. 8).

Assuming that the external selective inputs are symmetric for left and right trials (that is, for left trials,  $\mathbf{I}_L = (c_1, 0, c_2, 0)$  with  $c_1 > c_2$ , while, for right trials,  $\mathbf{I}_R = (c_2, 0, c_1, 0)$  with  $c_1 > c_2$ ), we computed the trial-type encoding dimensions, defined as the vectors connecting the trial-specific mean responses of the excitatory units on left and right trials, both at the input and output stages, given by  $\mathbf{d}_{\text{in}} = \mathbf{I}_L - \mathbf{I}_R$  and  $\mathbf{d}_{\text{out}} = \mathbf{r}_L^* - \mathbf{r}_R^*$ , where  $\mathbf{r}_{L/R}^*$  are the responses of the network to inputs  $\mathbf{I}_{L/R}$ . The input encoding dimension is the dimension connecting trial-specific responses in the absence of recurrent connections. The input and output encoding dimensions are related through the relationship:

$$\mathbf{d}_{\text{out}} = \frac{1}{\delta} \mathbf{d}_{\text{in}}, \quad (3)$$

where  $\delta = (1 - \Delta_{EE}) (1 + \Delta_{II}) + \Delta_{EI} \Delta_{IE}$ . When the value of  $\delta$  decreases, the separation between the output mean activities  $\|\mathbf{d}_{\text{out}}\|$  increases. Moreover, when  $\delta < 1$ , the separation between trial-specific activities at the output is larger than at the input stage. Importantly, under the assumption of symmetric inputs for left and right trial types, the separation of mean responses depends only on the connection selectivity  $\Delta_{XY}$ , but not on the average connection strength  $S_{XY}$ . In the absence of E-to-E and I-to-I connections, increased separation of trial-specific activities occurs when  $\Delta_{EI} \Delta_{IE} < 0$ , corresponding to co-selective E-to-I and anti-selective I-to-E (Fig. 4c,d and Extended Data Figs. 8 and 9a,b).

In Fig. 4c,d and Extended Data Figs. 8 and 9a,b, we computed the decoding accuracy of an optimal linear decoder trained to classify trial types from the neural activity of the excitatory units. Given the difference in mean activity between left and right trial types  $\Delta\mu$ , and the noise covariance matrix  $C$ , we computed the signal-to-noise ratio as  $\text{SNR} = \Delta\mu^T C^{-1} \Delta\mu$ .

The decoding accuracy of an optimal linear classifier can then be computed as:

$$\text{Decoding accuracy} = \Phi\left(\sqrt{\frac{\text{SNR}}{4}}\right), \text{ where } \Phi(x) = \int_{-\infty}^x \frac{e^{-z^2/2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma^2} dz. \quad (4)$$

In Fig. 4c,d and Extended Data Figs. 8 and 9a,b, we defined the relative decoding accuracy as:

$$\text{Relative decoding accuracy} = \frac{\text{Decoding accuracy}(\text{output}) - 0.5}{\text{Decoding accuracy}(\text{input}) - 0.5}$$

In Extended Data Fig. 11, we examined the predictions of the network model on how the activity of the excitatory and inhibitory units affect the correctness of the behavioural choices. As in previous work<sup>13,14</sup>, the behavioural choice was modelled by comparing the firing rate of the two excitatory units. The model expressed a left choice when the left excitatory unit fired more strongly than the right excitatory unit. The model choices were determined from the excitatory responses alone because generally only excitatory neurons project to downstream areas. Correct/error trials were those in which the trial-type identity and choice coincided/differed. We considered the version of the model with input on excitatory units. For only the analyses of Extended Data Fig. 11, we added a non-selective background input term on top of the trial-type selective input component. The common background input determined the average firing across the preferred and non-preferred trial-types. The inclusion of a background input does not affect any of the results of the other analyses (Fig. 4b–d and Extended Data Figs. 8 and 9a,b), but aided the comparison between the model and the data in this specific analysis as, in the comparisons of activity on error versus correct trials in PPC data, the activity differences were normalized to the average activity over all trials (Extended Data Fig. 11; see the ‘Error trial analysis’ section above).

In Fig. 4e–i and Extended Data Figs. 9c,d and 10, we trained high-dimensional RNN models<sup>74</sup> to reproduce the trial-averaged PPC activity traces on left and right trials. We then analysed the connectivity weights obtained after training to evaluate the predictions of the linear rate model on the trained networks. Before training, the PPC traces were normalized to the peak of each cell’s activity on preferred trials. The RNN is described by the differential equation

$$t\dot{x}_i = -x_i + \sum_{j=1}^N J_{ij} \phi(x_j) + I_{\text{ext},i}(t) + \sigma\xi_i(t), \quad (5)$$

where  $x_i$  represent the synaptic current of neuron  $i$  and  $r_i = \phi(x_i)$  is the firing rate of neuron  $i$ ,  $I_{\text{ext},i}$  represents the trial-type selective external input,  $\sigma\xi_i(t)$  is a source of time-dependent external noise (Gaussian noise with zero mean and standard deviation  $\sigma$ , uncorrelated across neurons and time) and  $t = 0.025$  is the time constant of the neurons.

The network is constrained to have the same number of neurons and the same type (116 E neurons and 15 I neurons) as the experimentally reconstructed circuit. Accordingly, the connectivity matrix  $J_{ij}$  is constrained to satisfy Dale's law, that is, with elements belonging to the same column having the same sign according to the type of the pre-synaptic neurons<sup>40</sup>. The external input  $I_{ext,i}$  consisted of temporally correlated white noise (see the 'The recurrent neural network model' section of the Supplementary Methods). In Fig. 4e–i and Extended Data Fig. 10, the input was fed only to the excitatory neurons. In Extended Data Fig. 9c,d, both excitatory and inhibitory neurons selective for the same trial type received selective external input with the same amplitude. Only RNNs that fit well with PPC activity ( $R^2 > 0.3$ ) were considered in the analyses of Fig. 4f–i and Extended Data Figs. 9c,d and 10.

## Reporting summary

Further information on research design is available in the Nature Portfolio Reporting Summary linked to this article.

## Data availability

Directions for accessing the EM dataset, reconstructed neurons and calcium imaging data are available at GitHub ([https://github.com/hitem/PPC\\_inhibitoryMotifs](https://github.com/hitem/PPC_inhibitoryMotifs)).

## Code availability

Software and analysis code is available at Zenodo (<https://zenodo.org/doi/10.5281/zenodo.10310186>)<sup>75</sup>. Code used to perform all information-theoretic analyses was published previously<sup>66</sup> and is available online (<https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2202-10-81>). Code for the network model analyses is available at Zenodo (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10200999>)<sup>76</sup>.

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**Author contributions** A.T.K., G.B., L.N.D., S.P., C.D.H. and W.-C.A.L. conceptualized the project and designed experiments. L.N.D. and D.E.W. performed mouse behaviour and calcium imaging experiments. W.-C.A.L., D.G.C.H. and A.T.K. prepared tissue samples for EM. D.G.C.H. and A.T.K. performed GridTape sectioning. B.J.G. and A.T.K. developed automated EM techniques and performed EM imaging. A.T.K. and L.A.T. performed EM image processing and alignment. M.K. and A.T.K. performed co-registration between calcium imaging and EM datasets. J.H. and A.T.K. performed and managed neuron tracing and data annotation. A.T.K. performed analysis of circuit connectivity. A.T.K., G.B. and S.P. analysed functional data. G.B. performed circuit modelling. A.T.K., G.B., S.P., C.D.H. and W.-C.A.L. wrote the paper, and all of the authors assisted in reviewing and revising the manuscript.

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## Additional information

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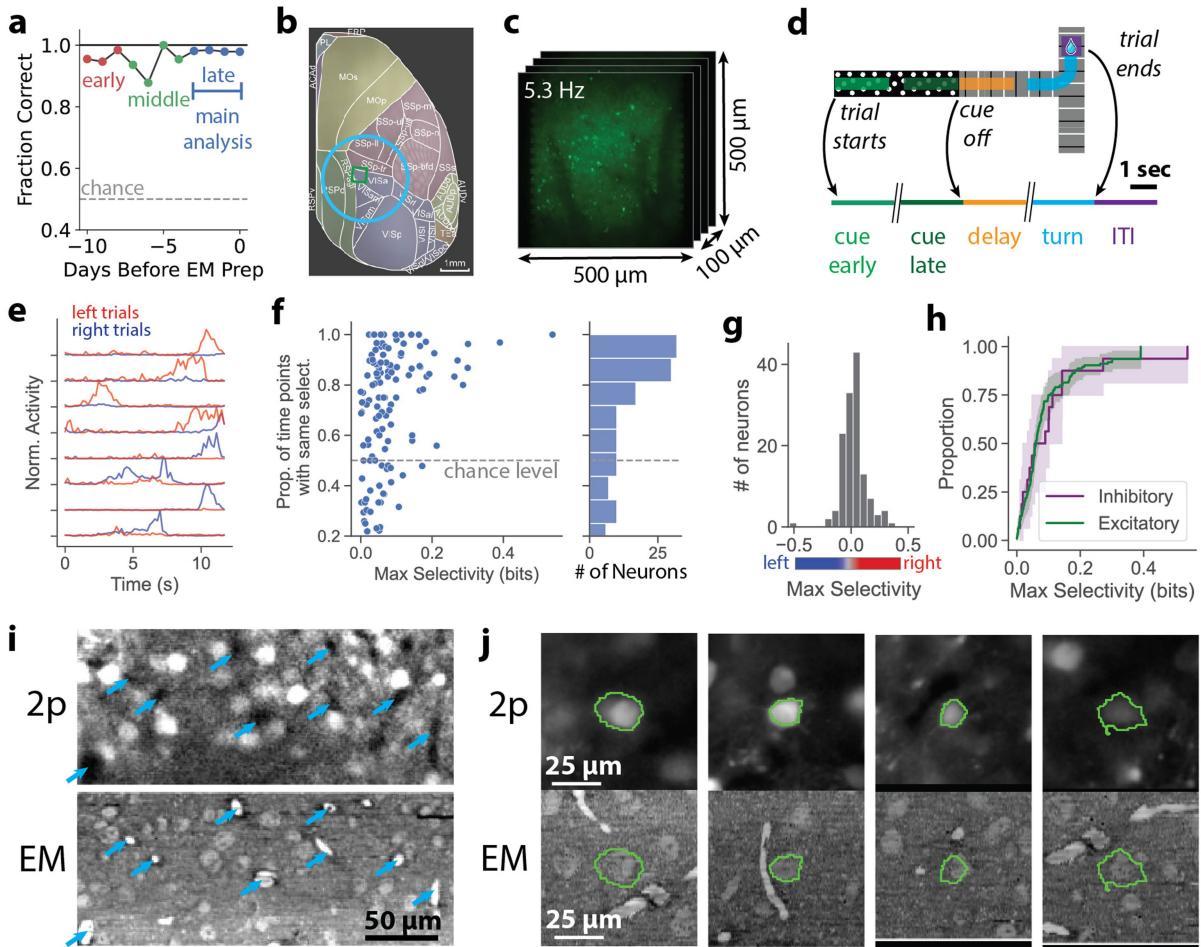
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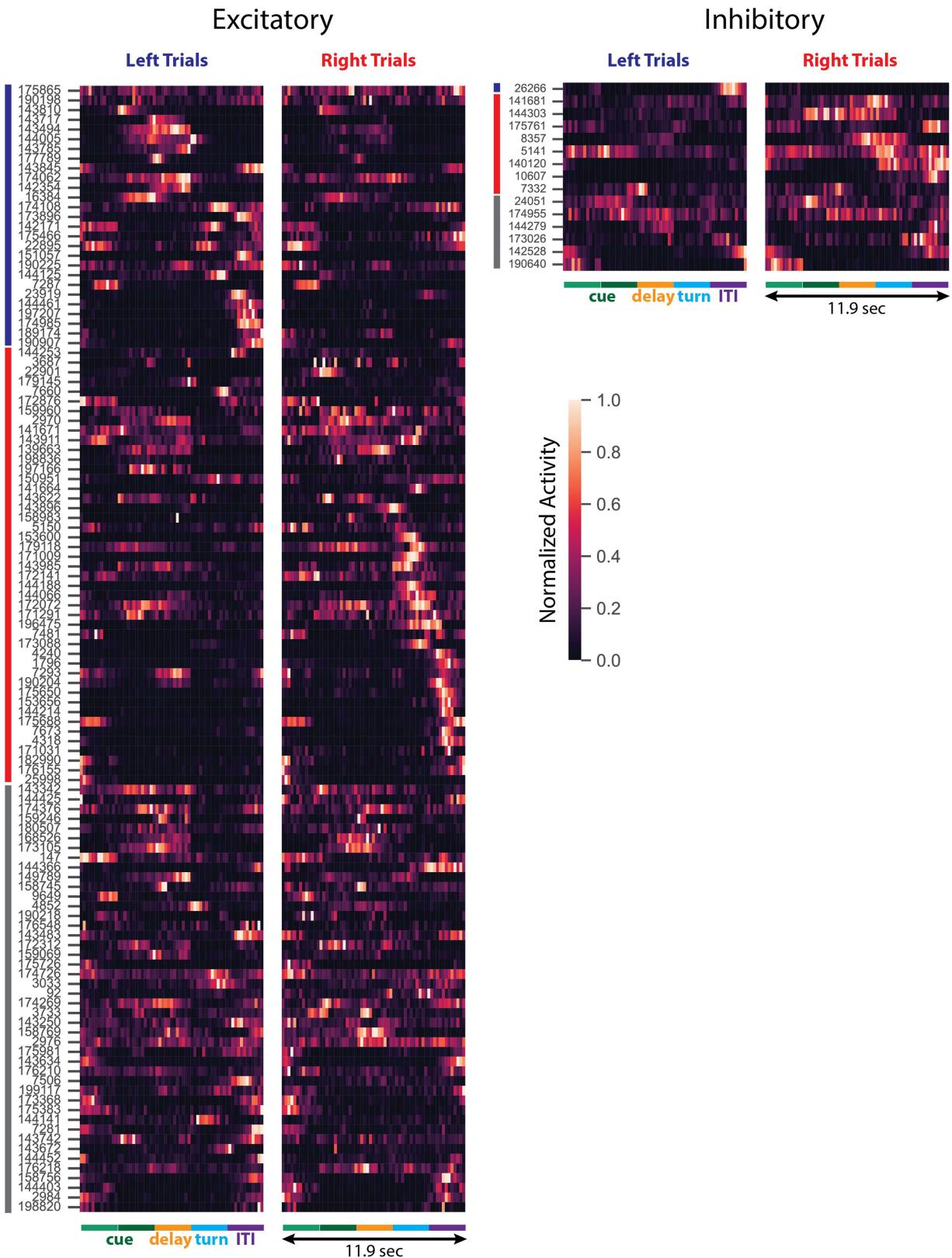
## Article



## Extended Data Fig. 1 | Trial-type selectivity analysis and images

**co-registration.** **(a)** Performance on the navigational two-alternative forced-choice memory task plotted over different daily sessions. Functional data from the last 4 sessions (“late”), which were closest in time to when the brain was preserved for EM, were used for all analyses with the exception of those investigating how structure-function relationships evolve over time (Extended Data Fig. 5j, k, Extended Data Fig. 6d), which also include “early” and “middle” sessions. Early, middle, and late sessions were all after the initial training of the animal and comprise expert level task performance. **(b)** Approximate location of cranial window and calcium imaging ROI relative to cortical regions (adapted from the Allen Mouse Brain Common Coordinate Framework<sup>77</sup>). Although this figure depicts the right hemisphere, the experimental data was collected from the left hemisphere. **(c)** Calcium imaging ROI: 4 500  $\mu\text{m}$  x 500  $\mu\text{m}$  planes in layer 2/3 (separated by 25  $\mu\text{m}$  in z) were imaged at 5.3 Hz volume rate. **(d)** Diagram indicating temporal epochs of trial. Different trials were synchronized to temporal landmarks (trial start, cue off, trial end) and 5 temporal trial epochs (cue early, cue late, delay, turn, inter-trial interval (ITI)) were defined relative to

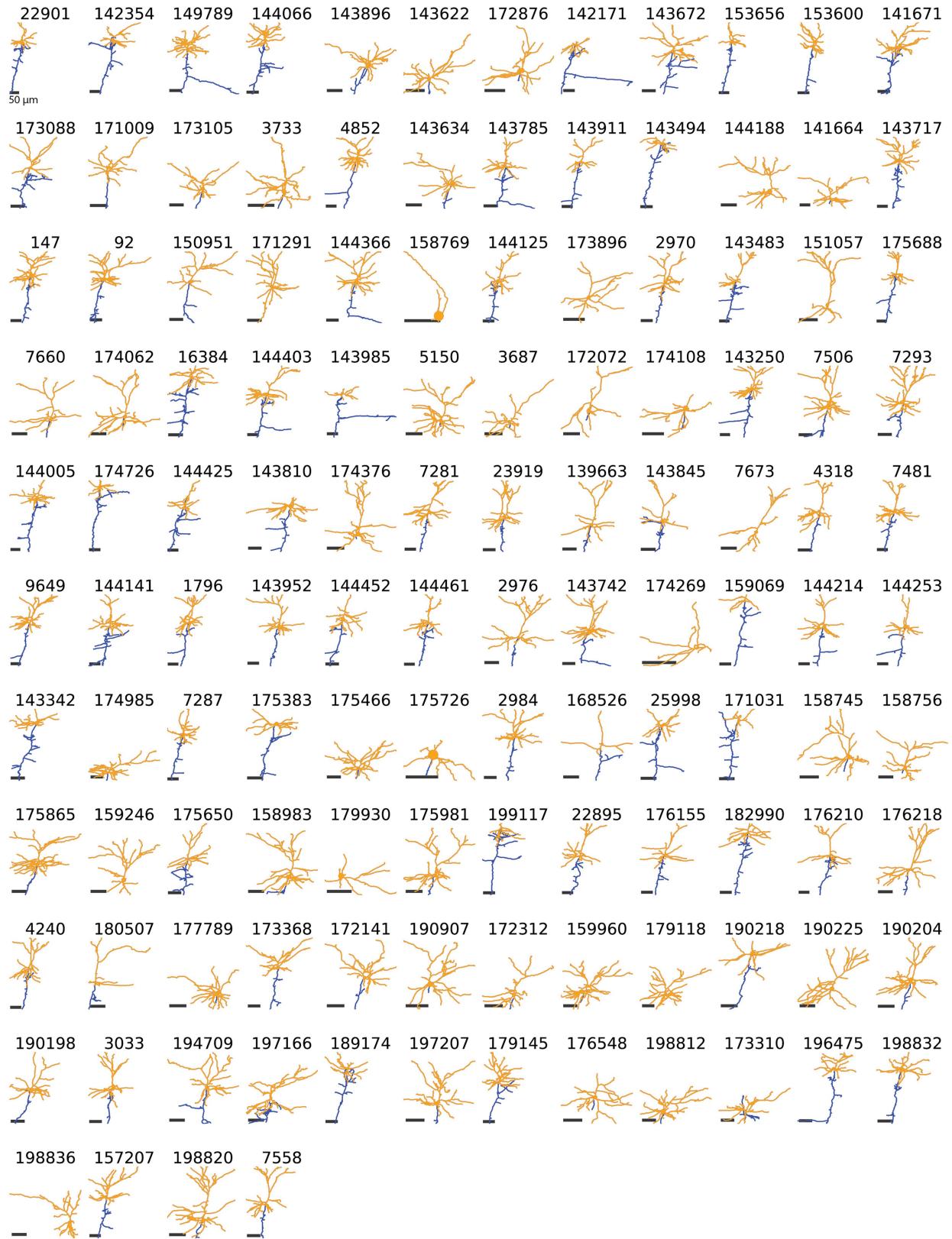
those landmarks (Methods). Each epoch lasts 2.2–2.4 s. (e) Trial-averaged activity for left (blue) and right (red) trials for several example neurons. Neurons typically have some non-zero activity away from the temporal peak on preferred trial type. (f) Proportion of time points with significant selectivity that share the same trial-type preference as the max selectivity, showing that the left-right direction of max selectivity is generally representative of selectivity throughout the trial, especially for strongly selective neurons ( $n=134$  neurons active in the last 4 sessions). (g) Max selectivity for functionally characterized neurons contained within the EM volume ( $n=134$  neurons active in the last 4 sessions). (h) Cumulative histograms of mutual information with trial type, demonstrating that it was not statistically different between inhibitory (purple solid line) and excitatory (green solid line) neurons ( $n=124$  excitatory, 16 inhibitory neurons,  $p=0.20$ , K-S test). Shading indicates 95% confidence intervals generated via bootstrap. (i) Corresponding slices from co-registered two-photon calcium imaging (2p, top) and EM (bottom) datasets. Cyan arrows – blood vessels used as landmarks. (j) Example cellular ROIs (green) co-registered to calcium imaging (top) and EM data (bottom).



**Extended Data Fig. 2 | Trial-averaged neuron activity.** Each row shows trial-averaged activity of a functionally-characterized neuron. Row labels are neuron IDs corresponding to the CATMAID EM database, Extended Data Figs. 3 and 4, and Supplementary Tables 1 and 2. Left and right columns show activity on left and right trials, respectively. Temporal epochs shown correspond to Extended Data Fig. 1d. Activity was averaged over the last 4 behavioural sessions.

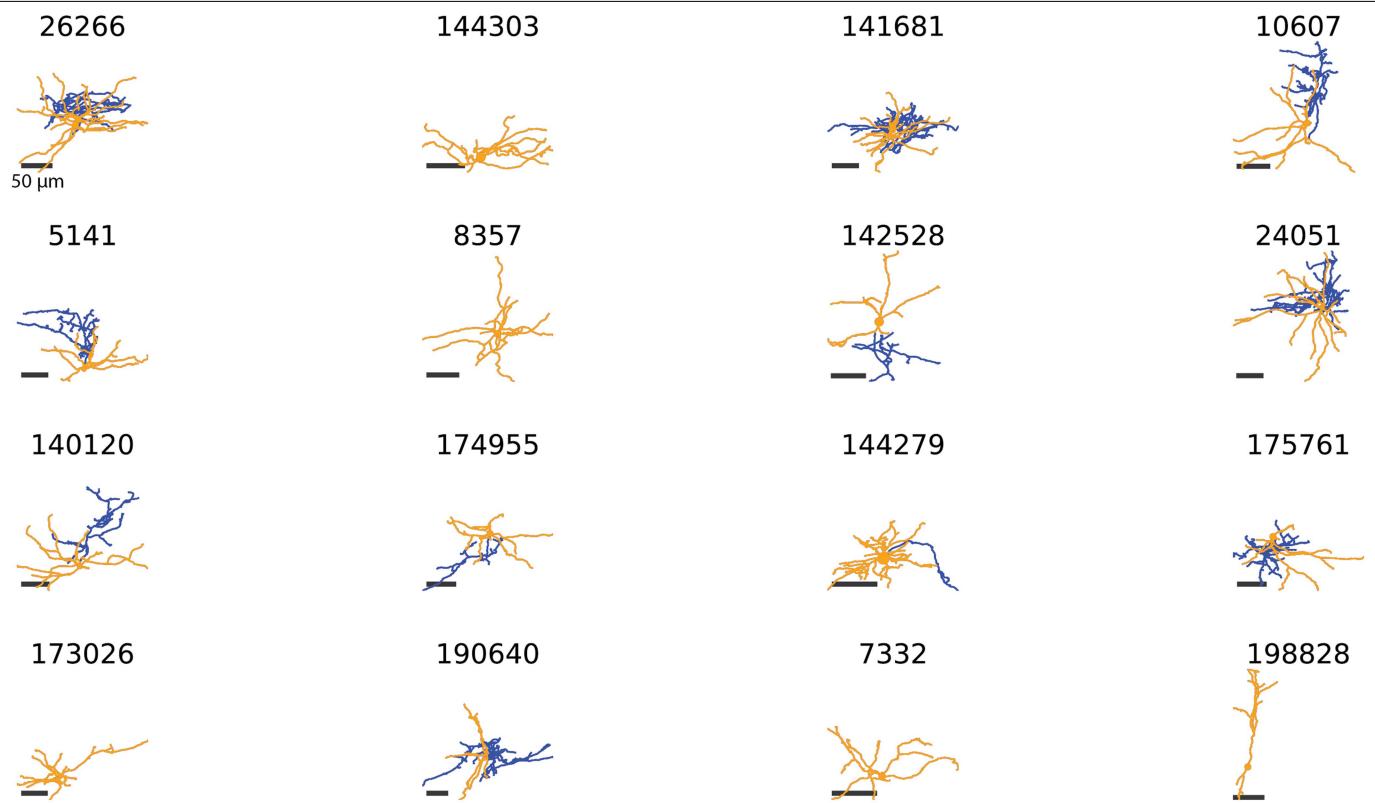
then normalized by the maximum activity rate over both trial types for each neuron separately. Neurons were sorted first by selectivity (indicated by coloured bars on the y-axis: left (max selectivity  $< -0.05$ ) – blue, right (max selectivity  $> 0.05$ ) – red, non-selective ( $-0.05 \leq \text{max selectivity} \leq 0.05$ ) – grey), then by timepoint of maximum mutual information with trial type (early to late).

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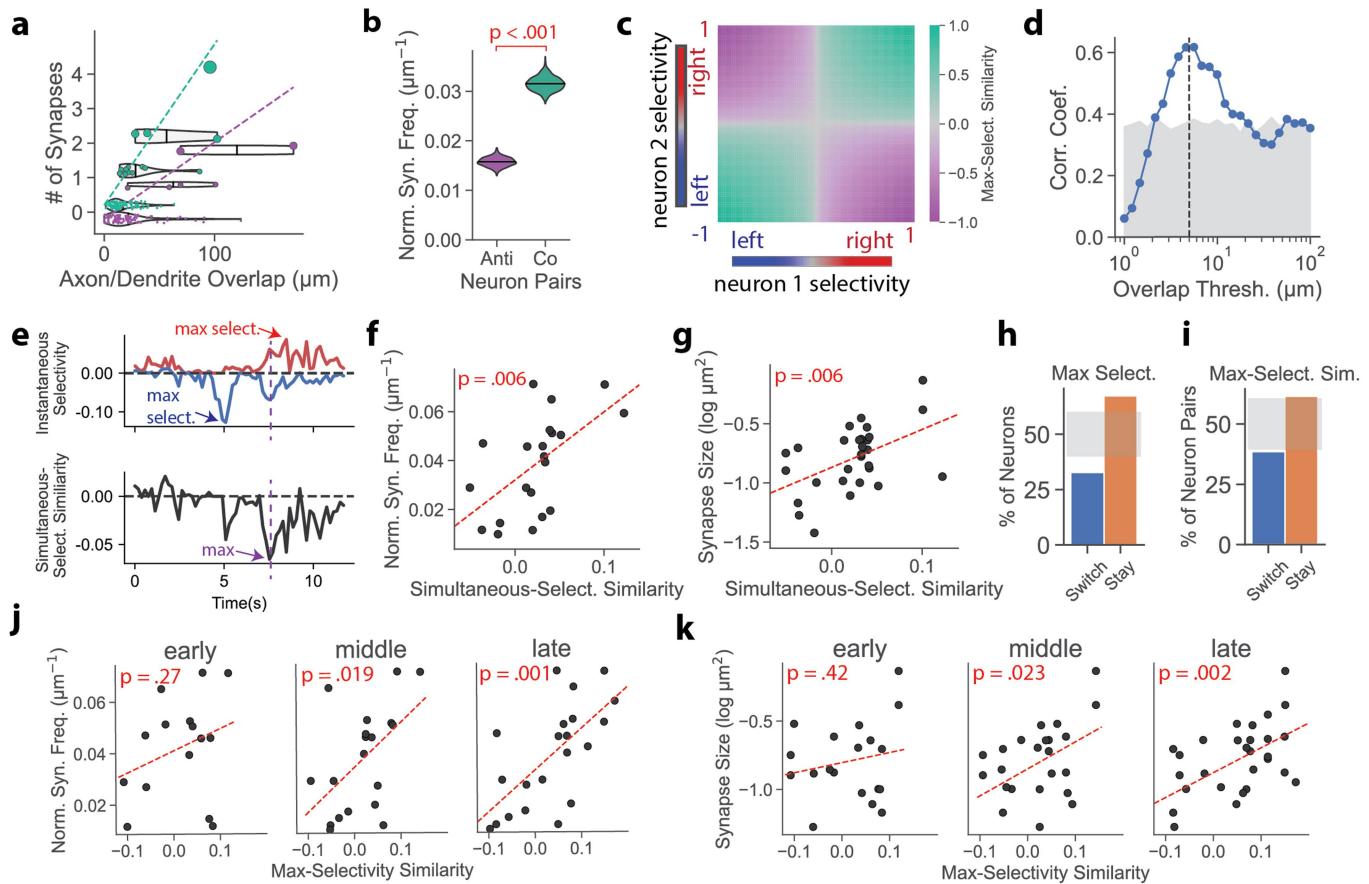


**Extended Data Fig. 3 | Excitatory Neuron Morphologies.** Traced neuron morphologies are shown for functionally-characterized excitatory pyramidal neurons in the PPC. Axon – blue, dendrites – orange. Labels are neuron IDs

corresponding to the CATMAID database and Supplementary Tables 1 and 2. Scale bars: 50 μm.

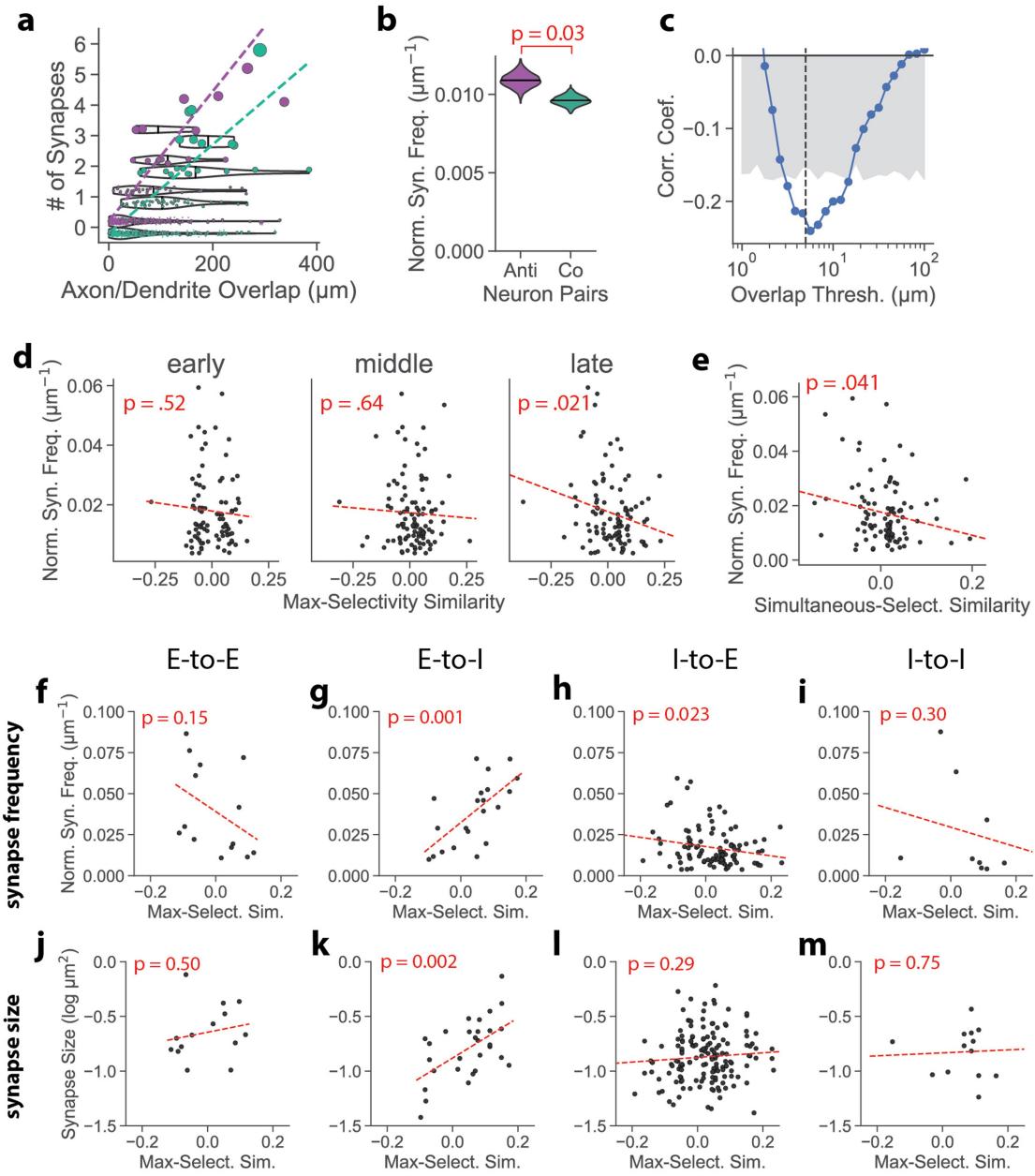


**Extended Data Fig. 4 | Inhibitory Neuron Morphologies.** Traced neuron morphologies are shown for functionally-characterized inhibitory neurons in the PPC. Axon – blue, dendrites – orange. Labels are neuron IDs corresponding to the CATMAID database and Supplementary Tables 1 and 2. Scale bars: 50 μm.



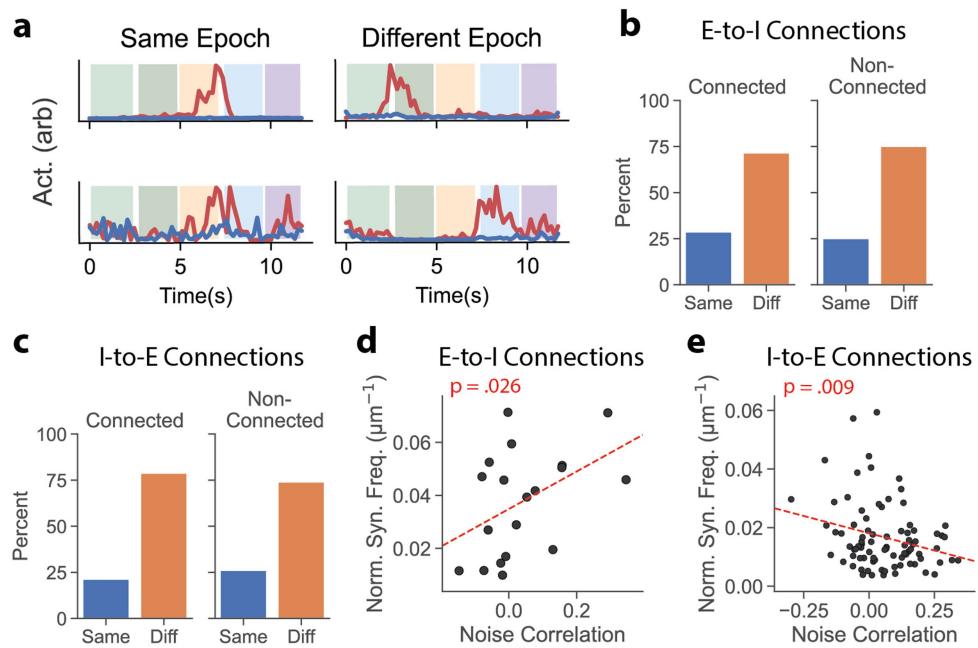
**Extended Data Fig. 5 | Co-selective Excitatory-to-Inhibitory Connectivity and Simultaneous-Selectivity Analysis.** (a) Number of synapses plotted as a function of axon/dendrite overlap for E-to-I neuron pairs, including both connected and non-connected pairs. Co-selective pairs (green) generally have more synapses per overlap than anti-selective (purple). Dotted lines indicate linear fits. (b) Normalized synapse frequency for E-to-I connections including non-connected pairs, calculated by pooling all co- or anti-selective pairs together (Methods). Co-selective pairs have higher normalized synapse frequency than anti-selective pairs (anti:  $0.0315 \pm 0.001 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 21$  pairs, co:  $0.0157 \pm 0.001 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , bootstrap test). Violin plots show distributions generated via bootstrap. (c) Maximum-selectivity similarity as a function of the maximum selectivity of the two neurons. Co-selective neuron pairs have positive (green) and anti-selective pairs have negative values (purple). (d) Correlation coefficient between normalized synapse frequency and selectivity similarity for E-to-I connections in PPC (as in Fig. 2h), calculated using different distance thresholds for determining axon/dendrite overlap (see Fig. 2b). Grey shading indicates correlations expected by chance (95% confidence interval of random shuffles). The correlation is significant over a broad range of values (-2–18)  $\mu\text{m}$ , and is maximized for thresholds close to value used (5  $\mu\text{m}$ , dotted line). (e) Top: instantaneous selectivity for example right- (red) and left-selective (blue) neurons. Arrows indicate maximum selectivity for each neuron. Bottom: simultaneous-selectivity similarity quantifies the selectivity similarity between neurons at the same time point. Arrow indicates the

maximum absolute value, which is used for x-axis values in (f) and (g). (f) Simultaneous-selectivity similarity is correlated to normalized synapse frequency ( $n = 21$  pairs,  $r = 0.58$ ,  $p = 0.006$ , Pearson correlation test). (g) Simultaneous-selectivity similarity is correlated to synapse size ( $n = 29$  synapses,  $r = 0.50$ ,  $p = 0.006$ , Pearson correlation test). (h) Number of neurons that change maximum selectivity from left to right or vice versa ("switch"), or keep the same right-left selectivity ("stay"), between early (8–10 days before sacrifice) and late (0–3 days before) sessions. Grey region indicates expected range if neurons switch at chance levels. (i) Number of neuron pairs that change maximum-selectivity similarity from co- to anti-selective or vice versa ("switch"), or keep the same similarity ("stay") between early and late sessions. Grey region indicates expected range if neurons switch at chance levels. (j) Correlations between normalized synapse frequency and maximum-selectivity similarity for E-to-I connections, calculated using functional data from early (8–10 days before sacrifice), middle (4–7 days before), and late sessions (0–3 days before). Correlation coefficients are lower for earlier sessions (early:  $r = 0.31$ ,  $p = 0.27$ , middle:  $r = 0.53$ ,  $p = 0.019$ , late:  $r = 0.66$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , Pearson correlation tests). (k) Correlations between PSD area and maximum-selectivity similarity for E-to-I synapses, calculated for early, middle, and late sessions. Correlation coefficients are lower for earlier sessions (early:  $r = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.42$ , middle:  $r = 0.46$ ,  $p = 0.023$ , late:  $r = 0.56$ ,  $p = 0.002$ , Pearson correlation tests). All statistics reported as mean  $\pm$  standard error with two-tailed significance tests.



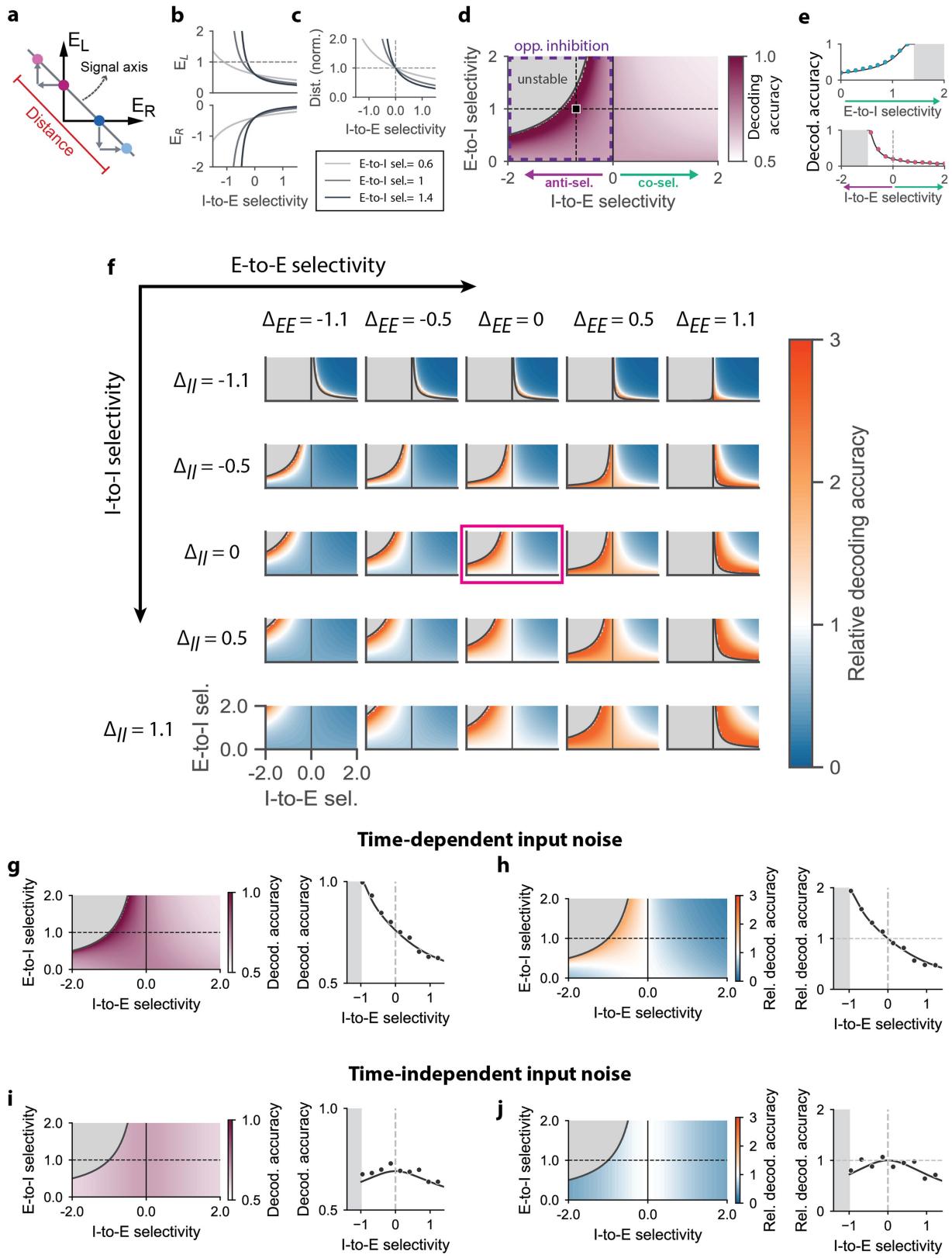
**Extended Data Fig. 6 | Anti-selective Inhibitory-to-Excitatory Connectivity and Structure-function Analysis Across Connection Types.** (a) Number of synapses plotted as a function of axon/dendrite overlap for I-to-E neuron pairs, including both connected and non-connected pairs. Anti-selective pairs (purple) generally have more synapses per overlap than co-selective pairs (green). Dotted lines indicate linear fits. (b) Normalized synapse frequency for I-to-E connections including non-connected neuron pairs, calculated by pooling co- or anti-selective pairs together (Methods). Anti-selective pairs have higher normalized synapse frequency than co-selective pairs (anti:  $0.0109 \pm 0.0004 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 99$  pairs, co:  $0.0096 \pm 0.0003 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ ,  $n = 112$ ,  $p = 0.03$ , bootstrap test). Violin plots show distributions generated via bootstrap. (c) Correlation coefficient between normalized synapse frequency and maximum-selectivity similarity for I-to-E connections (as in Fig. 3c, calculated using different distance thresholds for determining axon/dendrite overlap (see Fig. 2b). Grey shading indicates correlations expected by chance (95% confidence interval of random shuffles). The correlation is significant over a range of values (-3–15  $\mu\text{m}$ ), and is maximized for distances thresholds close to value used (5  $\mu\text{m}$ , dotted line). (d) Normalized synapse frequency plotted as a function of maximum-selectivity

similarity for I-to-E connections in PPC, calculated using functional data from early (8–10 days before sacrifice), middle (4–7 days before), and late (0–3 days before) sessions. Correlation coefficients are less negative for earlier sessions (early:  $r = -0.06$ ,  $p = 0.52$ ; middle:  $r = -0.05$ ,  $p = 0.64$ ; late:  $r = -0.22$ ,  $p = 0.021$ , Pearson correlation test). (e) Simultaneous-selectivity similarity is negatively correlated to normalized synapse frequency ( $r = -0.20$ ,  $p = 0.041$ , Pearson correlation test). (f–m): Structure-function correlations for all connection types in PPC. For each panel, the scatterplot on the left side shows the correlation between maximum-selectivity similarity and normalized synapse frequency (top row) or synapse size (bottom row). Different connection types are shown in each column (from left to right: E-to-E, E-to-I, I-to-E, I-to-I). Red line indicates linear fit. (f) E-to-E synapse frequency:  $n = 14$ ,  $c = -0.40$ ,  $p = 0.15$ . (g) E-to-I synapse frequency:  $n = 21$ ,  $c = 0.65$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . (h) I-to-E synapse frequency:  $n = 103$ ,  $c = -0.22$ ,  $p = 0.023$ . (i) I-to-I synapse frequency:  $n = 10$ ,  $c = -0.37$ ,  $p = 0.30$ . (j) E-to-E synapse size:  $n = 14$ ,  $c = 0.20$ ,  $p = 0.50$ . (k) E-to-I synapse size:  $n = 29$ ,  $c = 0.56$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . (l) I-to-E synapse size:  $n = 156$ ,  $c = 0.084$ ,  $p = 0.29$ . (m) I-to-I synapse size:  $n = 14$ ,  $c = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.75$ . All p-values are from two-tailed significance tests.



**Extended Data Fig. 7 | Connections Between Cells with Activity Peaks in Different Epochs and Noise Correlations.** (a) Example activity of connected neurons that have activity peaks during the same or different epochs. Top row indicates presynaptic excitatory neuron, bottom row indicates postsynaptic inhibitory neuron. Trial-averaged activity for right (red) and left (blue) trials are plotted for each neuron. Temporal epochs are indicated by colours as in Extended Data Fig. 1d. (b) Proportion of connected (left) and non-connected (right) E-to-I pairs that have activity peaks in the same (blue) or different (orange)

temporal epochs. (c) Proportion of connected (left) and non-connected (right) I-to-E pairs that have activity peaks in the same (blue) or different (orange) temporal epochs. (d) Noise correlations were positively correlated to normalized synapse frequency for E-to-I connections ( $n = 19$  connections,  $r = 0.45$ ,  $p = 0.026$ , one-tailed Pearson correlation test). (e) Noise correlations were negatively correlated to normalized synapse frequency for I-to-E connections ( $n = 84$ ,  $r = -0.26$ ,  $p = 0.009$ , one-tailed Pearson correlation test).



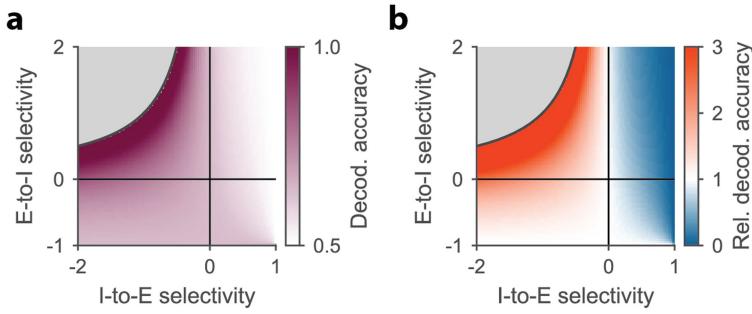
**Extended Data Fig. 8** | See next page for caption.

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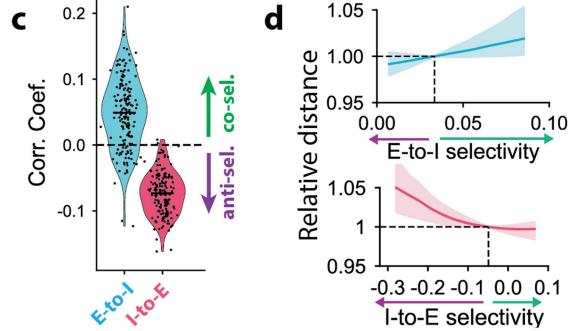
**Extended Data Fig. 8 | Decision-making circuit dynamics in the linear rate model.** **(a)** Cartoon illustrating the distance between mean responses to left and right trial types (coloured dots) in the state-space of the excitatory neuron activity. This distance is enhanced by opponent inhibition between trial-type selective subnetworks. On left trial-types, both suppression of  $E_R$  and amplification of  $E_L$  (grey arrows) contribute to increased separation along the signal axis (and symmetrically for right trials), thus enhancing the encoding of trial-type in presence of readout noise. **(b)** Values of the steady-state activity of  $E_L$  (top) and  $E_R$  (bottom) units as a function of the I-to-E (x-axis) and E-to-I (line colours) connection selectivity. **(c)** Normalized distance between the mean activity corresponding to left and right trial-types (see panel **(a)**), as a function of I-to-E and E-to-I connection selectivity. **(d)** Decoding accuracy computed by linearly decoding the trial-type from the excitatory units in presence of readout noise, as a function of the E-to-I and I-to-E connection selectivity. The region with anti-selective I-to-E selectivity (purple arrow and box) corresponds to networks with opponent inhibition, and the black square denotes the parameter values used in simulations of Fig. 4b. The grey area corresponds to unstable network dynamics. **(e)** Decoding accuracy as a function of E-to-I (top)

and I-to-E (bottom) selectivity, corresponding to two cuts of the phase plot (dashed lines in panel **(d)**). In panels **(d)** and **(e)**, purple and green arrows indicate the directions where connection motifs increase respectively their anti- and co-selectivity (see Fig. 4a). **(f)** Dependence of the relative trial-type decoding accuracy (see Fig. 4c) as a function of the selectivity of the four connection types. Each subplot shows the dependence on E-to-I and I-to-E selectivity (as in Fig. 4c); different subplots correspond to different values of the E-to-E and I-to-I connection selectivity. The subplot highlighted by a magenta box corresponds to the one shown in Fig. 4c. In the linear rate model (Fig. 4a-d), the region corresponding to selective E-to-I and anti-selective I-to-E (left quadrant) becomes linearly unstable when the E-to-E and I-to-I selectivity ( $\Delta_{EE}$  and  $\Delta_{II}$ ) satisfy  $(1 - \Delta_{EE})(1 + \Delta_{II}) < 0$ . **(g-h)** Absolute and relative trial-type decoding accuracy for time-dependent input noise, i.e. input noise that varies in time. Here the noise affects only the excitatory units, which are also the units that receive external trial-specific input. **(i-j)** Same as **(g-h)** for time-independent input noise, i.e. noise that affects the external input on the excitatory units on a single-trial basis, but is otherwise constant in time.

## Linear Rate Model



## Recurrent Neural Network

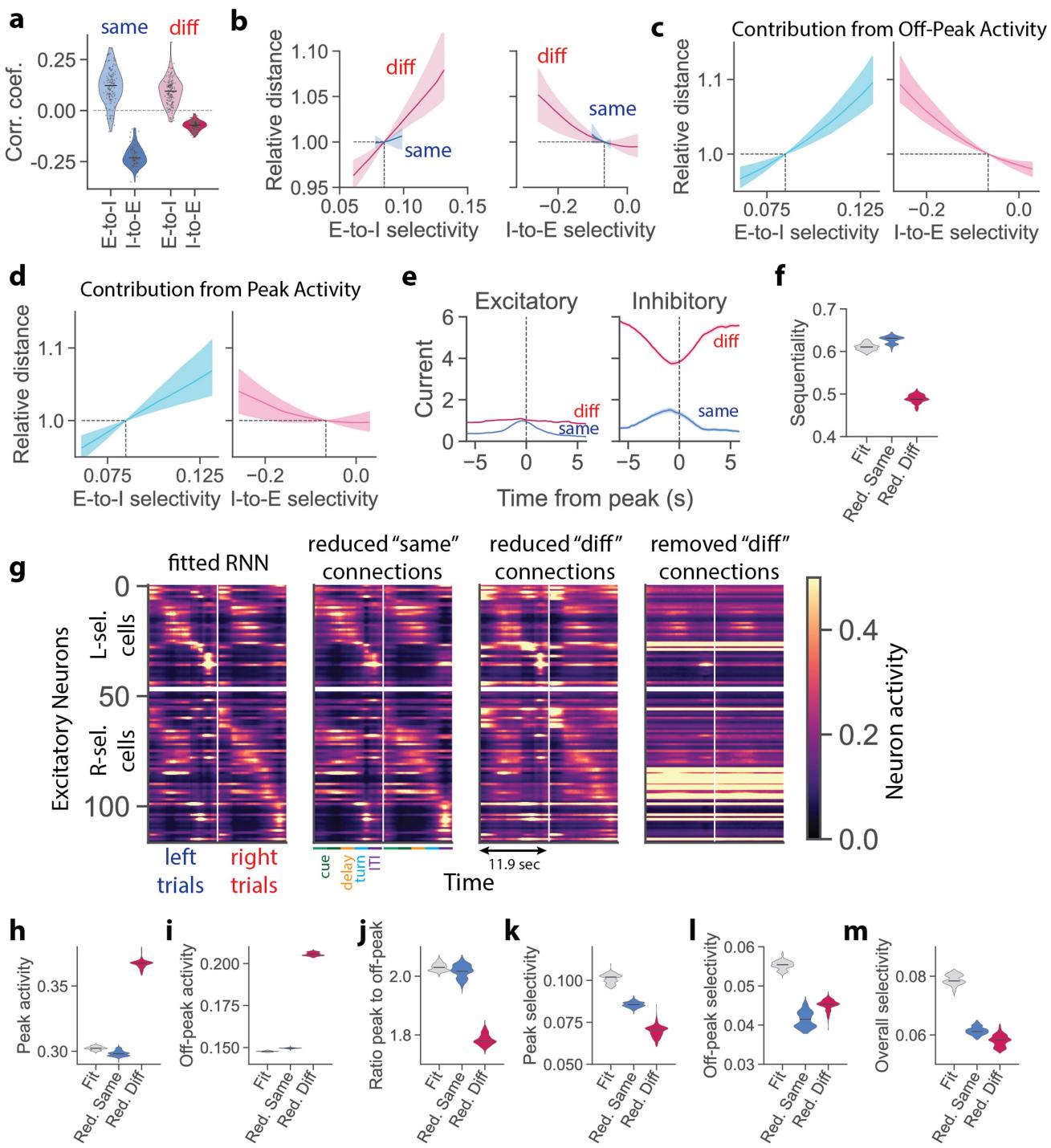


### Extended Data Fig. 9 | Decision-making circuit dynamics in models receiving external input onto both excitatory and inhibitory units.

(a) Decoding accuracy of the linear rate model, computed by linearly decoding the trial-type from the excitatory units in presence of readout noise, as a function of the E-to-I and I-to-E connection selectivity. The upper left quadrant corresponds to networks with opponent inhibition. The grey area corresponds to unstable network dynamics. (b) Relative decoding accuracy of linear rate model, defined as the ratio of output to input decoding accuracy, as a function of E-to-I and I-to-E selectivity. Compared to the corresponding model with external inputs only onto E units (Fig. 4c), this model shows a larger improvement in decoding accuracy from opponent inhibition (higher relative decoding accuracy when opponent inhibition is present, and lower relative decoding accuracy when opponent inhibition is absent). (c) Correlation coefficient between connection strengths and max-selectivity similarity across trained

RNNs ( $n = 164$ ). The majority of networks exhibit opponent inhibition. Compared to RNNs trained with external inputs only onto E neurons (Fig. 4h), I-to-E connections are more anti-selective, whereas E-to-I connections are less co-selective. (d) Distance between left and right RNN activity (averaged across time) as a function of selectivity perturbations, normalized by its value in the unperturbed network (dashed lines). E-to-I (top) and I-to-E (bottom) connection weights were perturbed in a way that changes anti- (purple arrow) or co-selectivity (green arrows) without changing the average connection weight. Solid lines represent the median across networks, error bars correspond to the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile across networks ( $n = 164$ ). Stronger opponent inhibition (stronger E-to-I co-selectivity or I-to-E anti-selectivity) amplified the separation between left and right population responses, similar to the effect of perturbations on RNNs with external inputs on E units only (Fig. 4i).

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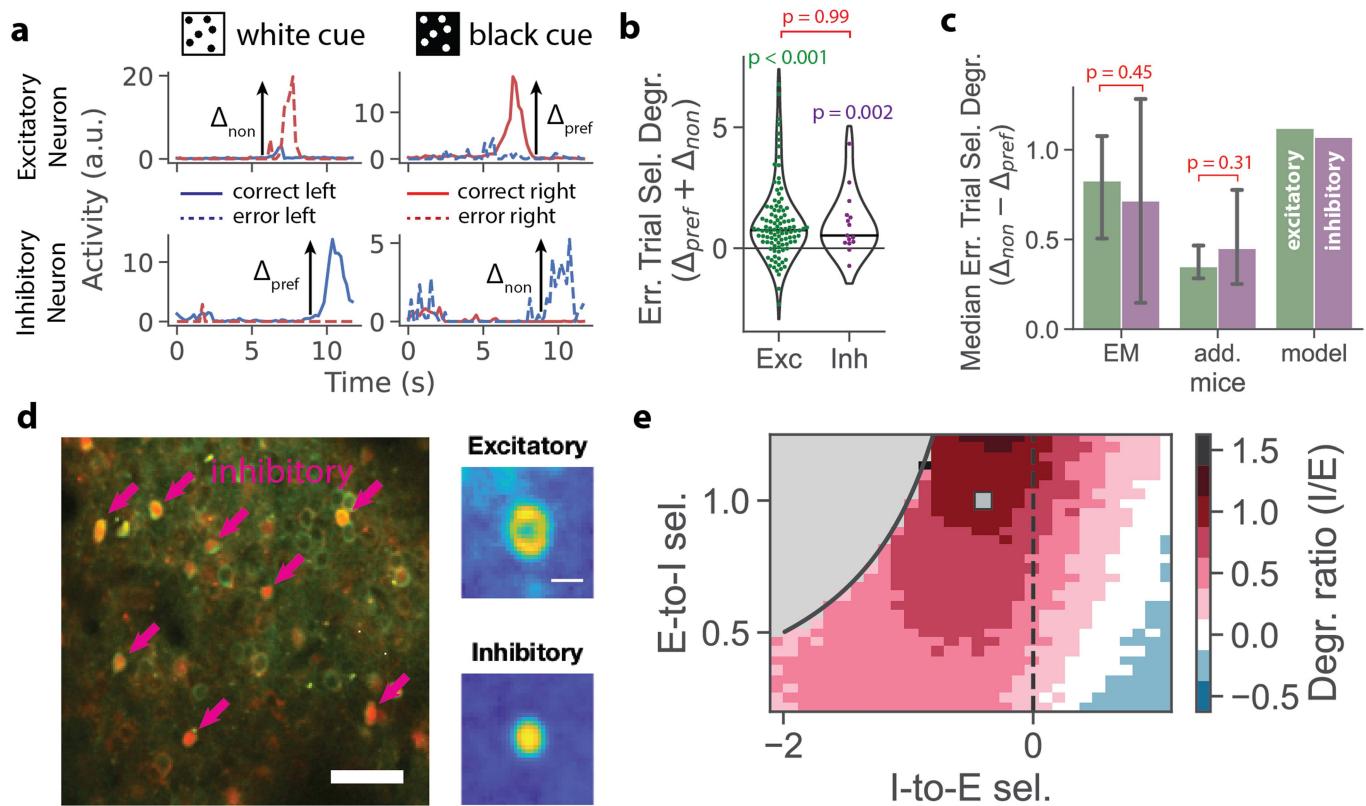


Extended Data Fig. 10 | See next page for caption.

**Extended Data Fig. 10 | Functional role of connections between neurons with activity peaks in the same or different task epochs for sequential, trial-type selective population dynamics in the recurrent neural networks.** **(a)** Correlation coefficient between connection strengths and maximum-selectivity similarity across trained RNNs (as in Fig. 4h). Opponent inhibition motif (co-selective E-to-I and anti-selective I-to-E connections) is observed when separately considering connections between neurons with activity peaks in the same temporal epoch within the trial (i.e. ‘same-epoch’ connections; blue distributions, ‘same’) and connections between neurons peaking at different temporal epochs (i.e. ‘different-epoch’ connections; red distributions, ‘diff’). **(b)** Distance between left- and right RNN activity (averaged across time) as a function of selectivity perturbations of ‘same-epoch’ and ‘different-epoch’ connections separately, normalized by its value in the unperturbed networks (dashed lines). E-to-I (left) and I-to-E (right) connection weights were perturbed in a way that altered connection selectivity without changing the average connection weight. For each connection type (E-to-I or I-to-E) perturbations were induced separately on the ‘same-epoch’ and ‘diff-epoch’ connections. Solid lines represent the median across networks, error bars correspond to the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile across networks (as in Fig. 4i). **(c)** Contributions from off-peak neural activity to the distance between left and right RNN activity (averaged across time) as a function of ‘different-epoch’ E-to-I (left) and I-to-E (right) selectivity perturbations, normalized by its value in the unperturbed network (dashed lines; as in Fig. 4i). Solid lines represent the median across networks, error bars correspond to the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile across networks ( $n = 147$ , randomly initiated artificial neural networks). The contribution from off-peak activity to the distance was computed as follows. Prior to averaging the distance over time points, at each time point the distance was computed by selecting only neurons that were not at their activity peaks at that specific time point. **(d)** Same as (c) for the contribution of peak activity to the distance between trial-type selective population activity. Prior to averaging the distance over time points, at each time point the distance was computed by selecting only neurons that were at their activity peaks at that specific time

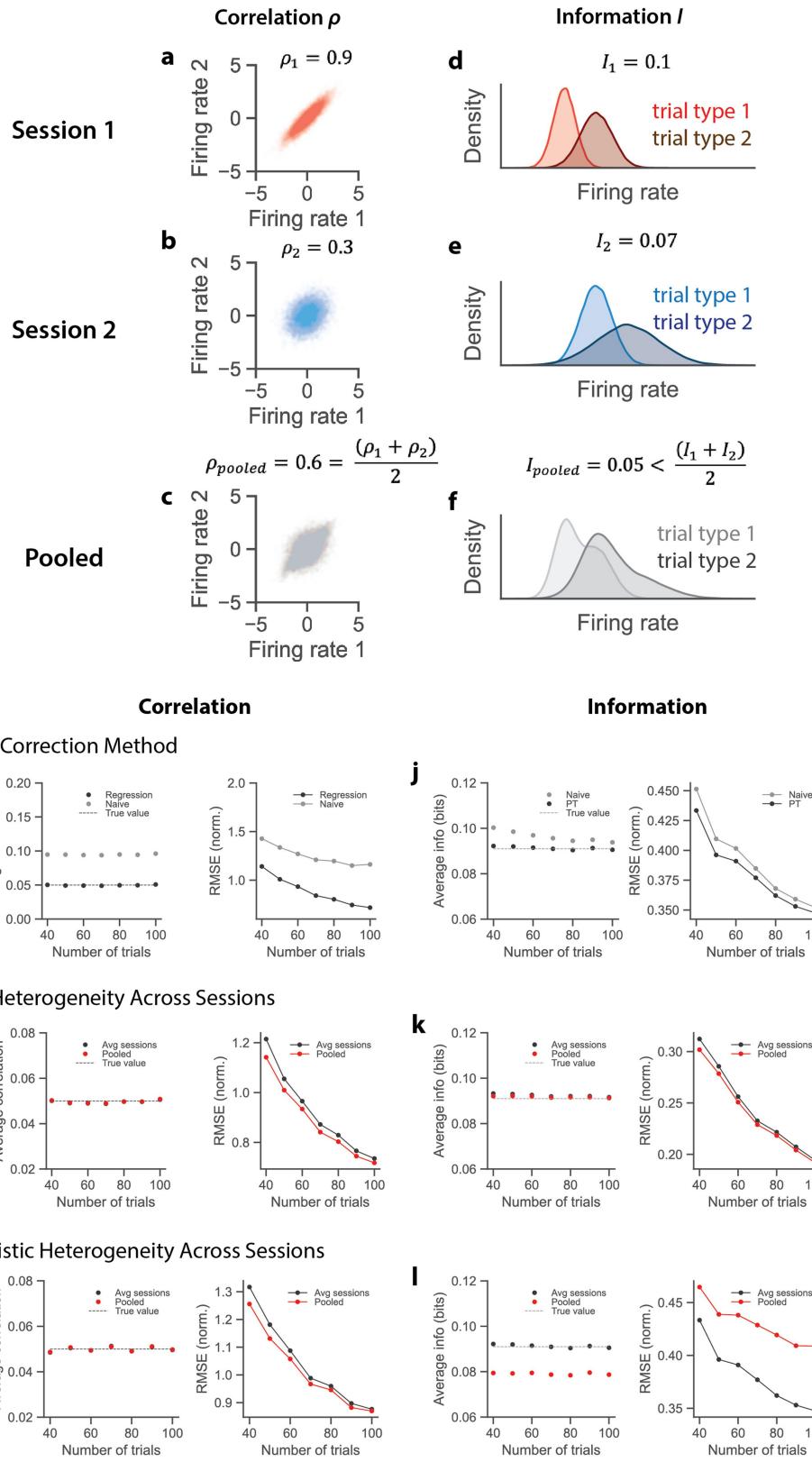
point. **(e)** Total excitatory (left) and inhibitory (right) currents received by postsynaptic excitatory neurons through ‘same-epoch’ (blue) and ‘different-epoch’ connections (red), centred around the peak time of the postsynaptic neurons’ activity averaged over preferred and non-preferred trial types. Currents are computed as the mean across trained RNNs of single-cell currents, summed over presynaptic neurons and averaged over postsynaptic neurons and over preferred and non-preferred trial types. **(f)** Values of the sequentiality index of neural responses across all fit RNNs (grey), RNNs with reduced strength of ‘same-epoch’ (blue) and ‘different-epoch’ (red) connections. The sequentiality index was defined as the Spearman (rank) correlation between the order of activity peak times across neurons in PPC data and the fit RNN responses (see Supplementary Methods Section “Analysis of the function of ‘same-epoch’ and ‘different-epoch’ RNN connectivity”). **(g)** Median excitatory activity across RNNs subject to different types of connection perturbations. Left: all fit RNNs (without perturbations); centre left and centre right: RNNs with reduced strength of ‘same-epoch’ or ‘different-epoch’ connections respectively; right: RNNs with ‘different-epoch’ connections entirely removed prior to training (only ‘same’ connections are trained). **(h)** Peak activity values averaged across neurons and stimuli across all fit RNNs (grey), RNNs with reduced strength of ‘same-epoch’ (blue) and ‘different-epoch’ (red) connections (as in panel g). **(i-m)** Same as (h) for the off-peak activity, ratio of peak to off-peak activity, trial-type selectivity of the peak and off-peak activity and overall selectivity (see Supplementary Methods Section “Analysis of epoch-specific RNN connectivity”). In panels (h-m) and the selectivity was defined as the normalized difference between left/right trial- and time-averaged activity (i.e.  $(r_L - r_R)/(r_L + r_R)$  or  $(r_R - r_L)/(r_L + r_R)$  respectively for left and right neurons) and was averaged across all neurons belonging to each left/right selective sub-population comprising both excitatory and inhibitory neurons, then averaged over left and right sub-populations. In all panels, the peak activity was defined as the activity at times ranging from  $-10$  to  $+10$  time bins around the time at which the activity averaged across left and right trial types was maximum. In all panels the results are shown across ( $n = 147$ ) RNNs.

# Article



**Extended Data Fig. 11 | Error-Trial Selectivity Degradation in PPC Activity and in models.** (a) Average activity (experimental calcium imaging data) in correct and error trials for example excitatory (top row) and inhibitory neurons (bottom row). In each plot, neuronal activity is plotted as a function of time. Trials are grouped based on whether the white (left column) or black cue (right column) was presented and coloured based on which direction the mouse turned. Arrows indicate activity changes on error trials that degrade selectivity: activity is generally decreased in preferred cue trials ( $\Delta_{pref}$ , i.e. white/black for left/right-selective neurons) and increased on non-preferred cue trials ( $\Delta_{non}$ , i.e. black/white for left/right-selective neurons). (b) Error-trial selectivity degradation ( $\Delta_{pref} + \Delta_{non}$ , see (a)), which quantifies how much selective activity is degraded on error versus correct trials (Methods), for E and I neurons. Each datapoint indicates one neuron. At the population level, both E and I neurons both had positive degradation (E:  $0.74 \pm [-0.52, 0.80]$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; I:  $0.52 \pm [-0.28, -0.79]$ ,  $p = 0.002$ , Wilcoxon signed-rank tests), and there was no significant difference between E and I ( $p = 0.99$ , Mann-Whitney U-test). (c) Median error trial selectivity degradation for E and I neurons in the EM mouse (same as (b),  $n = 1$  mouse, 120 E neurons, 16 I neurons, 11 sessions, 95–1354 trials per neuron), additional mice ( $n = 3$ , 824 E neurons, 96 I neurons, 1–2 sessions, 149–395 trials per neuron), and the linear rate model. Error bars show 95% confidence interval of the median.

For experimental animals, both E and I neurons exhibited significant error trial selectivity degradation (EM mouse: E: 0.82, I: 0.72, additional mice: E: 0.38, I: 0.48,  $p < 0.001$  for all cases, permutation tests), and there was no significant difference between E and I neurons (EM mouse:  $p = 0.45$ , additional mice:  $p = 0.31$ , permutation tests). The model shows qualitatively similar results (E: 1.12, I: 1.07). (d) Example imaging plane from an additional mouse showing labelling strategy to distinguish excitatory and inhibitory neurons. In addition to the green calcium indicator, inhibitory neurons were labelled with a nuclear-localized red fluorophore (magenta arrows) and excitatory neurons were labelled with a somatic membrane-localized red fluorophore. To identify neurons with enriched nuclear red fluorescence, we computed the ratio of nuclear to membrane fluorescence. Insets show average images of cells deemed excitatory (top right) and inhibitory (bottom right). Scale bars: Left: 50  $\mu$ m, Right: 10  $\mu$ m. (e) Error-trial selectivity degradation as a function of E-to-I (y-axis) and I-to-E (x-axis) selectivity for the linear rate model. Values for E and I units are both positive and similar in magnitude (ratio  $\approx 1$ ) only in networks exhibiting opponent inhibition (E-to-I selectivity  $> 0$  and I-to-E selectivity  $< 0$ ). Grey square marker indicates the selectivity values corresponding to the bars in (c). Statistics reported as mean  $\pm$  standard error with two-tailed significance tests.



**Extended Data Fig. 12** | See next page for caption.

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**Extended Data Fig. 12 | Tests of methods for estimation of noise correlations and information.** (a,b) Illustration of the distributions of firing activity of two neurons of fixed trial type across multiple trials for two simulated example sessions. The correlation value is different across the two sessions (heterogeneity across sessions). (c) Distributions of the firing activity of the two neurons pooled across sessions 1 and 2 (pooled distributions). In presence of heterogeneity of correlation values across sessions 1 and 2, the correlation value computed from the pooled distribution is equal to the value averaged across session 1 and 2. (d,e) Illustration of the distributions of the firing activity of a neuron across multiple trials for two trial types in two example sessions. The trial-type information value of the neuron is different across the two sessions (heterogeneity across sessions), as a result of changes in the trial-type-specific mean firing and firing variance across trial types. (f) Distributions of firing activity of the neuron across the two trial types pooled across sessions 1 and 2 (pooled distributions). Because of the heterogeneity in the neuron's firing parameters across sessions 1 and 2, the trial-type information of the pooled distribution is less than the average information on session 1 and 2. (g) Average correlation and RMSE of correlation computed without regressing out behaviour (grey) and regressing out behaviour (black). (h) Average correlation and RMSE of correlation computed using the average value across sessions (black) or pooling data across sessions (red) when no heterogeneity across sessions is present. (i) Same as (h) when realistic heterogeneity across sessions is present. (j) Average trial-type information and RMSE of trial-type information computed without using a bias correction (grey) and using the Panzeri-Treves (PT) bias correction (black). (k) Average trial-type information and RMSE of information computed using the average value across sessions (black) or pooling data across sessions (red) when no heterogeneity across sessions is present. (l) Same as (k) when realistic heterogeneity across sessions is present. In all panels, left and right plots respectively show the average value and the root mean squared error (RMSE) computed across 5000 simulations of the correlation (g-i) or information (j-l) values.

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- The exact sample size ( $n$ ) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
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*Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.*

### Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

#### Data collection

- Open-source software:
1. ViRMEn software engine (forked at <https://github.com/lauradriscoll/virmen>)
  2. scanImage (version 4, <https://vidriotechnologies.com/scanimage/>)

#### Data analysis

- Open-source software:
1. Suite2p (<https://www.suite2p.org>)
  2. constrained FOOPSI algorithm (<https://github.com/epnev/constrained-foopsi>)
  3. Information Breakdown Toolbox (<https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2202-10-81>)
  4. AlignTK (<https://mmbios.pitt.edu/aligntk-home>)
  5. ImageJ (version 1.53; <https://imagej.net/>)
  6. BigWarp (release 6.0.0; ImageJ plugin BigWarp)
  7. CATMAID (release 2018.11.09; <https://catmaid.readthedocs.io/en/stable/>)
  8. pymaid (version 2.4.0; <https://github.com/navis-org/pymaid>)
  9. navis (version 1.1.0; <https://github.com/navis-org/navis>)

Custom software: [https://github.com/hitem/PPC\\_inhibitoryMotifs](https://github.com/hitem/PPC_inhibitoryMotifs)

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

## Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
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Directions for accessing the EM dataset, reconstructed neurons, and calcium imaging data, will be available at [https://github.com/htem/PPC\\_inhibitoryMotifs](https://github.com/htem/PPC_inhibitoryMotifs)

## Field-specific reporting

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## Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size	All functionally-characterized neurons within the electron microscopy volume were included in the study. The number and size of the electron microscopy volume and reconstruction was constrained by technical limitations, and not predetermined by a sample size calculation. This is standard for the field. All synapses between functionally-characterized neurons were included in analysis. Statistical tests (Mann-Whitney U test, Pearson correlation test with Student's t-statistics, permutation tests) were used to determine significance of findings.
Data exclusions	All connectivity data was included in the study. For behavior and functional imaging, only the last 4 daily sessions were included in the main analysis because these sessions were closest in time to when the brain was preserved for electron microscopy. In further analysis exploring how structure-function relationships evolve over time, the last 11 sessions were included in analysis.
Replication	Technical limitations make it only feasible to study 1 mouse in this study. However, connectivity trends were observed for many different neurons, significance was tested with statistical tests (Mann-Whitney U Test, Pearson correlation test with Student's t-statistics, permutation tests), and all reconstructions and annotations were reviewed a second time by an independent reviewer.
Randomization	Samples were not randomized because this study was limited to 1 mouse.
Blinding	The investigators were not strictly blinded in this study. However, neuron reconstruction was performed primarily by annotators who were blind to the functional data for each neuron, and who did not participate in the subsequent analysis of the data.

## Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

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## Animals and other organisms

Policy information about [studies involving animals; ARRIVE guidelines](#) recommended for reporting animal research

Laboratory animals

This study involved a male C57BL/6J mouse (The Jackson Laboratory) that was 8 weeks old at the start of behavioral training, 14–18 weeks old during imaging, and 18–19 weeks old when the brain was preserved for EM imaging.

Wild animals

This study did not involve wild animals

Field-collected samples

This study did not involve field-collected samples

Ethics oversight

All experimental procedures were approved by the Harvard Medical School Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and were performed in compliance with the Guide for Animal Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.