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Value-guided remapping of sensory cortex by lateral orbitofrontal cortex

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Abstract: Adaptive behaviour crucially depends on flexible decision-making, which in mammals relies on the frontal cortex, specifically the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC)^{1–9}. How OFC encodes decision variables and instructs sensory areas to guide adaptive behaviour are key open questions. Here we developed a reversal learning task for head-fixed mice, monitored the activity of neurons of the lateral OFC using two-photon calcium imaging and investigated how OFC dynamically interacts with primary somatosensory cortex (S1). Mice learned to discriminate 'go' from 'no-go' tactile stimuli^{10,11} and adapt their behaviour upon reversal of stimulus-reward contingency ('rule switch'). Imaging individual neurons longitudinally across all behavioural phases revealed a distinct engagement of S1 and lateral OFC, with S1 neural activity reflecting initial task learning, whereas lateral OFC neurons responded saliently and transiently to the rule switch. We identified direct long-range projections from lateral OFC to S1 that can feed this activity back to S1 as value prediction error. This top-down signal updated sensory representations in S1 by functionally remapping responses in a subpopulation of neurons that was sensitive to reward history. Functional remapping crucially depended on top-down feedback as chemogenetic silencing of lateral OFC neurons disrupted reversal learning, as well as plasticity in S1. The dynamic interaction of lateral OFC with sensory cortex thus implements computations critical for value prediction that are history dependent and error based, providing plasticity essential for flexible decision-making.

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38 **Adaptive behaviour crucially depends on flexible decision-making, which in**
39 **mammals relies on frontal cortex, specifically the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC)¹⁻⁹.**
40 **How OFC encodes decision variables and instructs sensory areas to guide**
41 **adaptive behaviour are key open questions. Here we developed a reversal**
42 **learning task for head-fixed mice, monitored the activity of lateral OFC neurons**
43 **using two-photon calcium imaging, and investigated how OFC dynamically**
44 **interacts with primary somatosensory cortex (S1). Mice learned to discriminate**
45 **go/no-go tactile stimuli^{10,11} and adapt their behaviour upon reversal of**
46 **stimulus–reward contingency ('rule-switch'). Imaging individual neurons**
47 **longitudinally across all behavioural phases revealed a distinct engagement of**
48 **S1 and lateral OFC: whereas S1 neural activity reflected initial task learning,**
49 **lateral OFC neurons saliently and transiently responded to the rule-switch. We**
50 **identified direct long-range projections from lateral OFC to S1 that can feed**
51 **this activity as value prediction error back to S1. This top-down signal updated**
52 **sensory representations in S1 by functionally remapping responses in a small**
53 **outcome-selective neuronal subpopulation that was also sensitive to reward**
54 **history. Functional remapping crucially depended on top-down feedback as**
55 **chemogenetic silencing of lateral OFC neurons disrupted reversal learning as**
56 **well as plastic changes in outcome-selective S1 neurons. The dynamic**
57 **interaction of lateral OFC with sensory cortex thus implements history-**
58 **dependent, value prediction error-based computations and plasticity essential**
59 **for flexible decision-making.**

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62 **Main Text**

63

64 Animals adapt their behaviour to variable contextual changes in the environment.
65 Central to adaptive behaviour is value-guided decision making, the ability to flexibly
66 associate stimuli with preferred actions based on reward-history. Deficits in
67 behavioural flexibility characterise brain disorders such as autism and
68 schizophrenia¹. In mammals, the prefrontal cortex is the locus of value-guided
69 decision-making^{2,3}, with the OFC implicated in cognitive evaluation of stimulus-
70 outcome associations⁴⁻⁷. OFC is a higher-order area with extensive connections to
71 sensory cortices and subcortical structures of the reward system^{8,9}. However, how
72 neurons in OFC respond to changing reward contingencies is poorly understood.
73 Further, whether OFC neurons instruct sensory areas to remap stimulus-outcome
74 associations in support of adaptive behaviour is unclear.

75 To study flexible decision-making, we employed a reversal learning paradigm
76 based on tactile discrimination. We trained mice to perform a ‘go/no-go’ texture-
77 discrimination task¹⁰ (**Fig. 1a**; P100 vs. P1200 sandpaper as go vs no-go texture;
78 **Methods**). Once task performance reached expert level (discriminability index $d' >$
79 1.5), we implemented a ‘rule-switch’ by reversing the stimulus-reward contingency
80 (**Fig. 1b**). Mice reached high d' values during initial learning (‘learning naïve’, *LN*,
81 through ‘learning expert’, *LE*), decreased performance after reversal, and re-learned
82 the task (‘reversal naïve’, *RN*, through ‘reversal expert’, *RE*) (**Fig. 1c, Extended Data**
83 **Fig. 1**, $n = 11$ mice). Reversal learning was significantly faster, and performance
84 remained stable over weeks (**Fig. 1c, Extended Data Fig. 1**). Task performance
85 depended on sensory input and was independent of initial go-texture ($n = 2$ mice;
86 **Extended Data Fig. 1**). Mice developed anticipatory whisking and well-timed licking
87 during initial learning¹¹. Following the rule-switch, the overall whisking behaviour did
88 not change but mice transiently reverted to delayed licking before re-learning (*RE*,
89 **Extended Data Fig. 2**). We investigated two areas implicated in task-learning: barrel
90 cortex in the S1, important for tactile discrimination and sensory learning¹², and the
91 lateral OFC (IOFC) that is critical for outcome-value assignment⁸. To examine the
92 necessity of these areas, we expressed inhibitory DREADD receptors (hM4Di) in
93 excitatory neurons in either S1 or IOFC (histology and electrophysiological validation
94 in **Extended Data Figs. 3 and 4**). Inhibiting S1 neurons during initial training (via
95 daily CNO injections before each behavioural training sessions during *LN* and *LE*
96 periods) prevented task acquisition (**Fig. 1d**). Inhibiting neurons in IOFC, but not
97 medial OFC⁷, after the rule-switch (*RN* and *RE*) impaired reversal learning and
98 increased perseverative errors (**Fig. 1d-f, Extended Data Fig. 3**). Interestingly,
99 IOFC-silenced mice could still learn a new stimulus-outcome association (a new
100 rewarded texture P600; **Fig. 1f**). Overall, these results indicate a dissociation of
101 learning and reversal learning involving S1 and IOFC, respectively.

102 To monitor neuronal activity in IOFC and S1 during learning and reversal
103 learning, we performed *in vivo* two-photon Ca^{2+} imaging in transgenic mice
104 expressing GCaMP6f in superficial layer (L)2/3 excitatory neurons. We imaged IOFC,
105 located deep in frontal cortex^{13,14}, via a gradient-index lens placed in a chronically
106 implanted cannula (**Fig. 2a; Extended Data Fig. 5; Methods**, $n = 4$ mice). Cannula-
107 implanted mice showed no whisking or behavioural impairments (**Extended Data**
108 **Fig. 5**). We observed large Ca^{2+} transients in IOFC neurons particularly during the
109 reward-outcome window (**Fig. 2a**). A longitudinally measured example neuron
110 displayed modest reward-related activity during initial learning (*LE*), but large and
111 robust responses to unexpected rewards immediately after the rule-switch (*RN*) (**Fig.**

112 **2b**). This activity was transient (*RN*) and decreased as mice re-learned the task (*RE*).
113 Averaging across all IOFC neurons revealed the same pattern: a significant increase
114 in the amplitude of reward-related Ca^{2+} transients after the rule-switch (*LE*→*RN*; **Fig.**
115 **2c**). These findings are consistent with IOFC encoding deviations from expected
116 outcome-value following rule-switch¹⁵. In agreement with this, the response of IOFC
117 neurons to a third rewarded texture (P600), associated with a constant small reward
118 unaffected by reversal, remained unchanged (**Extended Data Fig. 6**). In contrast,
119 L2/3 neurons in S1, imaged through a chronic cranial window (n = 5 mice), exhibited
120 Ca^{2+} transients during stimulus-presentation and reward-outcome window (**Fig. 2d**).
121 Responses to the rewarded go-texture emerged during learning (*LN*→*LE*), decreased
122 following the rule-switch (*RN*), and were remapped to the new go-texture (*RE*) (an
123 example neuron, **Fig. 2e**). Response remapping was significant across S1 L2/3
124 neurons (**Fig. 2f**). Response pattern was similar for anatomically identified S1→IOFC
125 projection neurons (n = 3 mice; **Extended Data Fig. 7**). The dissociation was also
126 evident in the fraction of active neurons in the periods of highest engagement: *LE*
127 and *RN* for IOFC, versus *LE* and *RE* for S1 (**Fig. 2c** and **2f**).

128 Do neurons selective for rewarded hit trials retain selectivity for the old go-
129 texture, or remap to the new go-texture after reversal, i.e. are they more stimulus- or
130 outcome-selective? Longitudinal measurements of IOFC and S1 neurons permitted
131 quantification of their response stability or flexibility upon rule-switch. To quantify
132 response selectivity of active neurons, we defined an ROC-based hit/CR selectivity
133 index (*SI*, ranging from -1 to 1, permutation test, $p < 0.05$; **Methods**; **Extended Data**
134 **Fig. 8**)¹⁶. We focused on *SI* values for the reward-outcome window. Note that the *SI*/
135 *per se* cannot distinguish between stimulus- and outcome-selectivity because these
136 trial-types differ in both texture-type and action-outcome. However, comparing *SI*/
137 values before and after the rule-switch reveals whether a neuron reverses (stimulus-
138 selective) or maintains (outcome-selective) its *SI* sign. **Figure 3a** schematically
139 presents the five major classes of *SI* changes and their distribution in a 2D before-
140 after plot. Note that each neuron may have mixed stimulus- and outcome-selectivity
141 (projections onto the diagonals). To assess both the immediate effect of the rule-
142 switch and stable adaptation after re-learning, each neuron was classified to a major
143 class twice (*LE*→*RN* and *LE*→*RE*, respectively; **Fig. 3a**). Among 107 chronically
144 imaged IOFC neurons (n = 3 mice), we found a preponderance of outcome-selective
145 neurons that responded strongly to new-hit trials immediately following rule-switch
146 (*RN*) (**Fig. 3b-c**). Additionally, some IOFC neurons lost or gained selectivity. This
147 distribution persisted after re-learning (*LE*→*RE*, **Fig. 3d**; **Extended Data Fig. 8**). In
148 contrast, S1 neurons were more stimulus- than outcome-selective following reversal

149 ($LE \rightarrow RN$, 18% of 218 neurons; $n = 4$ mice; **Fig. 3e-f**). However, the selectivity of S1
150 neurons changed markedly during re-learning ($LE \rightarrow RE$) with a large subpopulation
151 functionally remapping to the new, rewarded go-texture (**Fig. 3g; Extended Data**
152 **Fig. 8**). Moreover, a subpopulation of previously inactive or non-selective neurons
153 acquired outcome-selectivity. Changes were similar for identified S1 \rightarrow IOFC projection
154 neurons (**Extended Data Fig. 7**). An analogous analysis of texture-touch-evoked
155 responses during stimulus-presentation likewise revealed an overall remapping
156 towards the new go-texture ($RN \rightarrow RE$, **Extended Data Fig. 9**). The link between
157 functional subclasses and behavioural variables, especially reward-modulation of
158 outcome-selective neurons was further confirmed by GLM¹⁷ (**Extended Data Fig. 10**;
159 **Methods**). These results suggest that IOFC neurons exhibit a value-guided response
160 immediately following a rule-switch. In contrast, a subpopulation of S1 neurons
161 initially retains the learned stimulus-value association and functionally remaps upon
162 re-learning.

163 Is delayed S1 remapping causally dependent on IOFC? To investigate the
164 existence of OFC \rightarrow S1 projections in mice, we injected retrograde AAV-retro/2-
165 tdTomato into L2/3 of S1. Whole-brain light-sheet microscopy¹⁸ of cleared samples (n
166 = 2) revealed dense S1-projecting neurons primarily in L2/3 and L5 of IOFC (**Fig. 4a**).
167 Chemogenetic silencing of IOFC neurons after the rule-switch (RN through RE)
168 impaired remapping of S1 neurons (**Fig. 4b; Extended Data Fig. 8**; $n = 4$ mice). The
169 effect is best seen in the marginal distributions for the three salient learning periods.
170 Unlike in control mice, a significant fraction of S1 neurons in IOFC-silenced animals
171 preserved their selectivity, failing to remap during re-learning (cumulative
172 distributions, two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) (**Fig. 4c**). Lateral OFC silencing
173 also prevented $RN \rightarrow RE$ remapping of texture-touch-evoked responses (**Extended**
174 **Data Fig. 9**). We additionally tracked neuronal fate by comparing the assigned
175 classes for $LE \rightarrow RN$ and $LE \rightarrow RE$ transitions. Whereas a fraction of non-selective and
176 lost-selectivity S1 neurons ($LE \rightarrow RN$) normally gained selectivity for the new go-
177 texture ($LE \rightarrow RE$), such recruitment did not occur in IOFC-silenced mice (**Extended**
178 **Data Fig. 8; Methods**). These findings further confirm that S1 remapping crucially
179 depend on top-down input from OFC.

180 Finally, we leveraged the sensitivity of IOFC neurons to reward-history to
181 examine the mechanism by which IOFC influences S1 remapping. Most IOFC
182 neurons that responded to new-hit trials also responded to FA trials immediately after
183 reversal (RN), revealing IOFC neurons' sensitivity to deviations from expected
184 outcome (**Fig. 4d-e**). We computed a 'reward-history modulation index' (RHMI) for
185 IOFC and S1 neurons by comparing hit trials immediately preceded by a hit or a FA

186 (Fig. 4f; Methods). While outcome-selective neurons in IOFC exhibited significant
187 reward-history-dependent response modulation before (LE) and after (RN) rule-
188 switch, RHMI was significant in S1 for outcome-selective and acquired-selectivity
189 neurons, but not other classes, after re-learning (RE). History-dependent modulation
190 of S1 neurons was absent in IOFC-silenced mice indicating that IOFC is critical for
191 the functional reorganisation of S1 (Fig. 4g; Extended Data Fig. 10). These findings
192 corroborate the notion that IOFC encoding of outcome-value is essential to the
193 functional remapping of S1 neurons in support of flexible decision-making.

194 Adaptive behaviour is shaped by sensory evidence and prediction of
195 outcome-value of future choices. Predictions can shape perception¹⁹ and OFC
196 estimates the expected value of choices to achieve desirable outcomes, such as
197 increased reward²⁰. Our experiments revealed a crucial role of IOFC neurons in
198 encoding prediction-error, partly resembling classical dopamine responses^{21,22}.
199 Critically, IOFC projections to S1 convey this teaching signal that drive remapping of
200 sensory cortex (Fig. 4h). Tracking both positive and negative outcome-values, IOFC
201 neurons may represent ongoing neural estimates of position on a value map²⁰.
202 Pharmacogenetic silencing revealed the necessity of IOFC to achieve flexibility as
203 previously shown in rodents²³ (while OFC silencing showed mixed effects in non-
204 human primates⁶). Outcome-value signals from IOFC are likely to interact via a rich
205 assortment of projections to integrative cortical areas like the retrosplenial cortex²⁴,
206 and subcortical structures including the basolateral amygdala²⁵ and the mediodorsal
207 thalamus²⁶. Further, we found that a small subpopulation of S1 neurons do not
208 function as simple sensory feature detectors, but flexibly remap according to task
209 context and reflect reward-history^{17,27}, characteristics expected in higher order areas,
210 like OFC, but not in primary sensory areas. The cellular and circuit mechanisms
211 enabling such remarkable plasticity remain to be determined, but may involve
212 neuromodulators such as serotonin²⁸ or long-range, layer-specific excitatory and
213 inhibitory interactions²⁹. The existence of a reward-valence signal in the primary
214 sensory cortex and its modulation by higher-order inputs has important implications
215 for reinforcement learning algorithms³⁰. Taken together, this study revealed local and
216 long-range circuit interactions crucial to flexible sensory processing and adaptive
217 decision-making.

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236

237 **Author contributions**

238

239 A.B. conceived the project. A.B. and F.H. designed the study. A.B and J.T. carried
240 out all experiments except multi-unit electrophysiology experiments (performed and
241 analysed by C.L.). A.B and G.P. analysed all data, except whisking kinematics data
242 (analysed by C.L.). F.F.V developed light-sheet microscope and imaged cleared
243 brains together with A.B.; A.B. and F.H. wrote the manuscript with comments from
244 G.P. and C.L.

245

246 **Data availability**

247

248 The data that support the finding of this study are available upon reasonable request
249 from the corresponding author.

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331 **Figure Legends**

332

333 **Figure 1 | Lateral OFC-dependent reversal learning in a texture-discrimination**
334 **task. a, Top:** Schematic of experimental setup. **Bottom:** Trial-structure and outcome
335 types (CR, correct rejection; FA, false alarm). **b, Example** of task performance during
336 learning measured as mean correct rate (Hit + CR) and FA rate. After reaching stable
337 high performance, stimulus-reward contingency was reversed ('rule-switch'). **Top:**
338 Definition of salient task periods (*LN*: learning naïve, *LE*: learning expert, *RN*:
339 reversal naïve, *RE*: reversal expert). **c, Performance** (d' values) in the four task
340 periods pooled across 11 mice (different blue shadings). *Inset:* Number of sessions
341 to reach expert level ($d' > 1.5$) for initial versus reversal learning. **d, We** expressed
342 inhibitory DREADD (hM4Di) in S1 in 3 mice. Silencing S1 by systemic CNO
343 application prevented learning ($d' < 1.5$ in *LE*; hence mice were not reversed). CNO-
344 treated control mice (WT, $n = 4$) learned and re-learned normally. **e, We** expressed
345 hM4Di in IOFC in 4 mice. Silencing IOFC during *RN* and *RE* impaired reversal
346 learning. **f, Silencing** IOFC throughout all task phases did not affect initial learning but
347 impaired reversal learning ($n = 4$ mice). OFC-silenced mice could still learn a new
348 stimulus-outcome association (novel P600 go-texture). Data presented as mean \pm
349 S.E.M., * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test. Box
350 plots show median, 25th and 75th percentiles as box edges, and 5th and 95th
351 percentiles as whiskers.

352

353 **Figure 2 | *In vivo* Ca²⁺ imaging of IOFC and S1 neurons during reversal**
354 **learning. a, Top:** Schematic and photograph of cannula-window for imaging IOFC.
355 **Bottom left:** Two-photon fluorescence image and GCaMP6f signals ($\Delta F/F$) during
356 different trial types for example IOFC L2/3 neurons imaged through a GRIN lens.
357 **Bottom right:** Example Ca²⁺ transients during hit trials for an individual IOFC neuron
358 with single-trial example of whisking-amplitude and lick events during a hit-trial
359 below. B: baseline, S: stimulus-presentation window, R: reward-outcome window. **b,**
360 Heat-map of single-trial $\Delta F/F$ responses of an example IOFC neuron (sorted by hit
361 and CR; FA and misses not shown; performance (d') indicated next to behavioural
362 phases). **c, Average** Ca²⁺ transient amplitude in reward-outcome window for IOFC
363 neurons for hit and CR trials (63 active out of 228 recorded neurons in 3 mice; $n = 15$
364 sessions). Across-trial average Ca²⁺ transients and percentage of active neurons for
365 each phase shown above and below. **d, Top:** Schematic and photograph of cranial
366 window above S1. We identified barrel cortex by whisker-evoked intrinsic imaging
367 signals (two-photon imaging area indicated). **Middle and bottom left:** Fluorescence

368 image and GCaMP6f signals ($\Delta F/F$) for example S1 L2/3 neurons. *Bottom right:*
369 Example Ca^{2+} transients during hit trials for an individual S1 neuron, exhibiting
370 responses during both stimulus-window and reward-outcome window, with single-trial
371 example of whisking-amplitude and lick events below. **e**, Heat-map of $\Delta F/F$ transients
372 for an example S1 neuron as in (b). **f**, Average Ca^{2+} transient amplitude in reward-
373 outcome window for S1 neurons for hit and CR trials (261 active out of 539 recorded
374 neurons in 5 mice; $n = 56$ sessions; 11 sessions discarded due to motion artefacts).
375 S1 responses increased in hit trials of both expert phases (*LE* and *RE*). Across-trial
376 average Ca^{2+} transients and percentage of active neurons for each phase shown
377 above and below. Data presented as mean \pm S.E.M.; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, two-sided
378 Wilcoxon rank-sum test. Box plots show median, 25th and 75th percentiles as box
379 edges, 5th and 95th percentiles as whiskers and dots as outliers.

380

381 **Figure 3 | Distinct task-related dynamics of neuronal populations in IOFC and**
382 **S1.** **a**, Schematic illustrating 5 major classes of hit/CR selectivity changes upon rule-
383 switch and their distribution in a 2D-scatter plot of selectivity before and after. To the
384 right, dual assignment for *LE*→*RN* and *LE*→→*RE* comparison. We assessed
385 selectivity by ROC analysis. **b**, Mean $\Delta F/F$ amplitude in the reward-outcome window
386 for IOFC neurons for hit (left) and CR (right) trials, averaged across each salient
387 phase. *Bottom*: Heat maps for 107 longitudinally imaged neurons (20 sessions in 3
388 mice). *Top*: Average values pooled across all neurons as box plots. **c**, 2D-scatter plot
389 and marginal distributions (histograms) comparing hit/CR selectivity of IOFC neurons
390 in **b** for *LE*→*RN* (*SI* computed in reward-outcome window). We display data points for
391 neurons active only in *LE* above the plot, for neurons active in *RN* but not *LE* to the
392 right. Active neurons with non-significant selectivity ($p > 0.05$, permutation test) are
393 marked yellow. Note the high fraction of outcome-selective IOFC neurons. Neurons
394 inactive in both phases are not included in the plot (percentage of active neurons on
395 the right). **d**, Same plot as **c** but for *LE*→→*RE*. A fraction of IOFC outcome-selective
396 neurons maintained their hit preference while another subset of previously inactive
397 neurons acquired selectivity for the new-hit (51 active out of 68 chronically recorded
398 neurons; 16 sessions in 3 mice). **e**, Same plot as in **b** but for S1 neurons (218
399 longitudinally imaged neurons; 28 sessions in 4 mice). **f**, Same *LE*→*RN* plot as in **c**
400 but for S1 neurons. Most neurons retained their preference for the previous
401 contingency (90 active out of 142 chronically recorded neurons; 20 sessions in 4
402 mice). **g**, Same plot as in **f** but for *LE*→→*RE*. A subset of neurons updated their
403 outcome-selective preference in *RE* while another subset of previously inactive
404 neurons acquired new selectivity for the newly rewarded hit trials (198 active out of

405 218 chronically recorded neurons; 28 sessions in 3 mice). Box plots show median,
406 25th and 75th percentiles as box edges, 5th and 95th percentiles as whiskers and
407 crosses as outliers.

408

409 **Figure 4 | Lateral OFC input reconfigures functional responses of S1 neurons.**

410 **a**, Retrograde AAV-retro/2-tdTomato injection, CLARITY and whole-brain imaging
411 revealed long-range IOFC→S1 long-range projections (n = 2 mice; inset shows L2/3
412 IOFC). **b**, Left: Schematic of chronic imaging of S1 neurons in IOFC-silenced mice
413 (*RN* and *RE*). Middle and right: 2D-scatter plots of *SI* values computed for *LE*→*RN*
414 and *LE*→→*RE* together with marginal distributions as histograms (85 active neurons
415 out of 164 neurons recorded in *LE* and *RN*, 24 sessions, one session discarded due
416 to motion artefact; 115 neurons out of 210 neurons recorded in *LE* and *RE*, 25
417 sessions in 3 mice). **c**, Comparison of *SI* marginal distributions for *LE*, *RN*, and *RE*
418 periods for IOFC neurons (Fig. 3 c,d), S1 neurons (Fig. 3 f,g), and S1 neurons in
419 OFC-silenced mice (this figure, panel **b**). **d**, Heat-map of single-trial $\Delta F/F$ responses
420 of an example IOFC neuron during *RN* sorted by hit and FA trials. Solid bars indicate
421 periods for texture-presentation (light blue), reward (grey), and white-noise (red). **e**,
422 Average Ca^{2+} transients (top) and mean $\Delta F/F$ amplitudes (bottom) of FA trials for
423 IOFC neurons during four behavioural periods (63 active out of 228 neurons in 3
424 mice). *Inset*, Percentage of active neurons for hit and FA trials with overlap indicated.
425 **f**, Average hit $\Delta F/F$ responses of two example outcome-selective neurons in S1
426 exhibiting trial-history dependent modulation with previous trial being rewarded
427 (hit→hit; light grey trace grey) or punished (FA→hit; dark trace). **g**, Reward-history
428 modulation index (RHMI) for outcome-selective neurons (blue) and neurons with
429 acquired-selectivity (red) in IOFC, S1, and S1 in IOFC-silenced mice before (*LE*) and
430 after (*RN*, *RE*) rule-switch. Data presented as mean ± S.E.M (*p < 0.05; bootstrap-
431 permutation test; S.E.M. of RHMI with permuted indices as grey boxes). **h**,
432 Schematic showing cortico-cortical feedforward (FF) and feedback (FB) interactions
433 for value-prediction error computation in IOFC.

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442 **Methods**
443

444 **Animals.** All experimental procedures were carried out in accordance with the
445 guidelines of the Federal Veterinary Office of Switzerland and were approved by the
446 Cantonal Veterinary Office in Zurich under license numbers 285/2014 and 234/2018.
447 A total of 30 adult male mice (6-8-week old) were used in this study. For behavioural
448 experiments, we used wild-type (WT) C57BL6/J mice (n = 16 mice). For imaging
449 neurons in IOFC and S1, we used Rasgrf2-2A-dCre: CamK2a-tTA: TITL-GCaMP6f
450 triple transgenic mice, expressing GCaMP6f in excitatory neocortical layer 2/3
451 neurons (n = 14 mice). For causal pharmacogenetic manipulations, both WT and
452 L2/3-GCaMP6f animals were used (n = 3 WT mice and n = 3 GCaMP6f mice). To
453 generate triple transgenic animals amenable to two-photon imaging, double
454 transgenic mice carrying CamK2a-tTA (JAX# 016198³¹) and TITL-GCaMP6f (JAX#
455 024103³²) were crossed with a Rasgrf2-2A-dCre line (JAX# 022864³³). The de-
456 stabilised Cre-recombinase expressed under the control of the Rasgrf2-2A promoter
457 was stabilised by trimethoprim (TMP, Sigma T7883) to render it functional. TMP was
458 reconstituted in Dimethyl Sulfoxide (DMSO, Sigma 34869, 100 mg/ml), freshly
459 prepared before each induction, and administered two weeks before surgery. During
460 induction, mice were given a single intraperitoneal injection (150 mg TMP/g body
461 weight diluted in 0.9% saline solution) using a 29g needle. To specifically label and
462 image from S1→IOFC projection neurons, we injected AAV2.9.hSyn.FLEX.GCaMP6f
463 virus into S1 of WT mice. Mice were grouped with their WT siblings and housed at
464 24°C and variable humidity in 12-hour reverse dark-light cycle (7:00 a.m. to 7:00
465 p.m.). At the end of an experiment, the animals were deeply anaesthetised and
466 transcardially perfused or euthanised with an overdose of pentobarbital (150 mg/kg
467 body weight, i.p.). All efforts were made to minimise suffering. All mice belonged to
468 the C57BL6/J strain.

469
470 **Reversal learning task.** Mice were extensively handled during pre-training sessions
471 to familiarize them with the experimenter and experimental setup. Once they had
472 acclimatised to handling, mice were placed on water-restriction and trained on a
473 go/no-go tactile-discrimination task. Mice remained on water-restriction for the
474 remainder of the experiment. The behaviour set-up has been described previously¹⁰.
475 During the start of each trial, an auditory cue (2 beeps at 2 kHz, 100 ms duration with
476 50 ms interval), indicated the approach of one of two possible textures (sandpapers
477 of grit size P100, rough texture; P1200, smooth texture). The texture was positioned
478 to reach the mouse's whiskers and 'go' or 'no-go' textures were presented pseudo-

479 randomly with no more than three consecutive repetitions. The texture stayed in
480 touch with the whiskers for one second ('sensation'), after which it moved out of
481 reach. An additional auditory tone (response cue; 4 beeps at 4 kHz, 50-ms duration
482 with a 25-ms interval) signalled the start of a 2-second 'response window' during
483 which the mouse had to lick or withhold from licking the water sprout to indicate its
484 choice ('outcome or response', 2 seconds). A sucrose-water reward was delivered
485 only for licks in response to the 'go' texture and after the response cue ('hit').
486 Incorrect licks in response to the non-target 'no-go' texture ('false alarms', FA) was
487 punished with a brief period of mild auditory white noise. Reward and punishment
488 were omitted when mice withheld licking for the no-go ('correct-rejections', CR) or go
489 ('miss') textures. The licking detector remained in a fixed and reachable position
490 throughout the entire trial. Animals were motivated to perform the task and typically
491 showed a fraction of 10-15% miss trials during *LN* period which reduced significantly
492 upon learning (*LE*) and remained same upon rule-switch.

493 Mice proficiently performed the sensory-discrimination task from learning
494 naïve (*LN*) through expert phase (*LE*). Once mice had achieved stable performance
495 of the tactile-discrimination task (reaching a $d' = 1.5$ for 3-4 sessions), the stimulus-
496 response mapping was switched ('rule-switch'). Upon rule-switch, performance
497 initially dropped to chance level or below. However, after 4-5 days, all mice ($n = 11$
498 out of 11 mice) learned the new texture-response mapping and increase
499 performance from reversal naïve (*RN*) through expert phase (*RE*) as quantified by
500 the increase in the discriminability index (d') (training period 4-5 days, 200-300
501 trials/session/day).

502

503 *Animal training and performance measurement.* We quantified mice task
504 performance using the discriminability index d -prime (d') rather than percent correct
505 to account for motivation and criterion³⁴. We set the learning threshold to $d' = 1.5$. d'
506 was calculated for each session as $= Z(\text{hit}/(\text{hit}+\text{miss})) - Z(\text{FA}/(\text{FA}+\text{CR}))$ with $Z(p)$, $p \in$
507 $[0,1]$, being the inverse of the cumulative Gaussian distribution (FA, number of false
508 alarm trials; CR, number of correct rejection trials). We selected in both training
509 periods pre- and post-reversal two relevant phases corresponding to the salient
510 phases - learning and reversal naïve (*LN* and *RN*, respectively), in which the mice
511 were performing lower or close to chance level ($d' = 0$, $p < 0.05$ for $d' > 0$, $n = 1-3$
512 sessions), and learning and reversal expert (*LE* and *RE*, respectively, $n = 1-3$
513 sessions), in which the mice were stably performing above a criterion set as $d' = 1.5$.
514 Expert sessions were always selected from the last sessions available immediately
515 before rule-switch (*LE*) or task completion (*RE*), and this resulted in high

516 performance level ($d' > 2$). For imaging data, only days among these respective
517 sessions were used.

518 **Whisking and licking measurement.** During task performance, whisker kinematics
519 and fine body movement were simultaneously monitored using high-speed cameras.
520 We identified behavioural correlates of task learning by quantifying licking rate and
521 whisking amplitude obtained from lick-sensor measurements and high-speed
522 videography, respectively. The whiskers were illuminated with 940 nm infrared LED
523 light and movies were acquired during the behaviour at 500 Hz (500 × 500 pixels)
524 using a high-speed CMOS camera (A504k; Basler). Average whisker angle across all
525 imaged whiskers was measured using automated whisker tracking software. The
526 whisking amplitude (envelope) was calculated as the difference in maximum and
527 minimum whisker angle along a sliding window equal to the imaging frame duration
528 (142 ms). Principal whisker velocity was calculated by applying a band-pass filter to
529 the whisking angle time vector and then computing its first derivative. For all trials
530 recorded (n = 3 mice), the first and last possible time point for whisker-to-texture
531 contact was quantified manually through visual inspection.

532 Licking was detected by using a piezo-electric sensor attached to the lick
533 spout and lick rates were calculated by thresholding this signal and counting the
534 number of events per unit of time. Multiple consecutive threshold crossings which
535 occur in rapid succession can result in a lick rate that exceeds the physical capability
536 of a mouse. We therefore made the reasonable assumption of a peak lick rate of 10
537 Hz based on manual checks on videography. A low pass filter was applied to the lick
538 rate time series, which effectively combined multiple events occurring within a 100
539 ms window into one event. Expert mice showed a decrease of early licks. While early
540 licks are not exhibited immediately upon rule-switch when the behavioural
541 performance is low, lick rates are slightly lower compared to expert sessions.
542

543 **Open-field test.** General locomotor activity was measured in an open-field (a
544 rectangular arena of 40 x 30 x 20 cm)³⁵ made from grey Plexiglas that was
545 illuminated from a centred diffuse light source. A single animal was exposed to the
546 environment for 5 minutes while being recorded by a video camera placed above the
547 open field and operated by LabVIEW (National Instruments). Mouse velocity (cm/s)
548 and distance covered (cm) were analysed using the EthoVision software.
549

550 **Horizontal ladder-rung test.** A 1-m long horizontal ladder, consisting of two
551 platforms connected by an irregular pattern of 70 rungs was used. The distance

552 between rungs varied between 1-3 cm. Mice were given time to practice with three
553 trials before being tested. Three trial sessions per animal were recorded using a
554 high-speed camera (Nikon AF Nikkor) at 100 frames per second. Each forepaw
555 placement was analysed and the quality of the placement was scored using the
556 following scoring system³⁶. A perfect paw placement on the rung was scored as 1;
557 partial digit placement, correction and replacement were scored as 0.5, slip or total
558 miss were scored as 0. The success rate was calculated for each animal group as
559

560
$$\text{Success rate} = (\text{Total score}/\text{Number of steps}) \times 100 \quad (1)$$

561

562 **Virus injection.** Mice were briefly anaesthetised with isoflurane (2%) in oxygen in an
563 anaesthesia chamber and subsequently transferred to a stereotactic frame (Kopf
564 Instruments). Body temperature was maintained at ~37°C using a heating blanket
565 with a rectal thermal probe. The eyes of the mouse were covered by Vitamin A cream
566 (Bausch & Lomb) during the surgery. The cranium was secured with ear bars and
567 anaesthesia was maintained during the surgery with 0.8-1.2% isoflurane. After
568 disinfection with Betadine, the skin was opened using a scalpel and an L-shaped
569 incision was made in the skin, and the cranial surface was cleaned using absorbent
570 swabs (Sugi; Kettenbach GmbH). We identified IOFC based on stereotactic
571 coordinates from previous studies (2.6 mm anterior and 1.2 mm lateral from
572 bregma)¹³. For S1, injection coordinates were 3.5 mm lateral and 1.5 mm posterior
573 from bregma. The skull was thinned along a 1-mm line at the rostral edge of S1 using
574 a Dremel drill with occasional cooling with saline. After drilling through the cranium,
575 the dura was punctured using a glass micropipette filled with the virus suspended in
576 mineral oil. Several injections (3-4) were made at neighbouring sites, at a depth of
577 200-250 µm. A volume of 100-150 nl of virus was injected at 50 nl/min rate at each
578 site. After each injection, the pipette was held in place for 5-8 minutes before
579 retraction to prevent leakage. Skin was sutured using a synthetic, monofilament, non-
580 absorbable suture (Prolene 7.0, Ethicon).

581

582 **Cranial window and GRIN lens implantation.** To study neural dynamics in the
583 IOFC, a chronically implanted metallic cannula was implanted on top of IOFC with a
584 glass coverslip at its base. Cannula implantation and cranial window preparation was
585 performed under isoflurane anaesthesia following details as described above. A
586 circular piece of cranial bone (diameter ~ 1.5 mm) was drilled on top of OFC using a
587 Dremel drill. A modified biopsy punch (diameter 1.0 mm; Miltex) was inserted 1.5 mm
588 deep into the cortical tissue for two minutes. The cortical tissue (primary and

589 secondary motor areas) was gently aspirated with a cut using a 27-gauge needle
590 connected to a water jet pump, while constantly being rinsed with Ringer solution.
591 We removed the overlying cortex using aspiration until layer 5 (depth 1.5-1.7 mm)
592 and implanted a stainless-steel cannula (internal diameter 1.0 mm, 1.5 mm height)
593 was with its base covered by a cover glass (0.17 mm thickness) 1.6-1.8 mm below
594 the pial surface. The cannula was secured in place by UV curable dental acrylic
595 cement (Ivoclar Vivadent). We waited two-three weeks after surgery before
596 commencing training. Before each imaging session, a rod-like gradient-index (GRIN)
597 lens (NEM-100-48-00-50-NC, customised needle endomicroscope for two-photon
598 microscopy, ~ 0.4 pitch, corrected for wavelength $\lambda = 920$ nm, diameter = 1.0 mm,
599 length ~ 4.3 mm; GRINTECH GmbH, Jena) was inserted through the cannula and
600 neurons were imaged 100-300 μ m below. Before each imaging session, the cannula
601 was cleaned with distilled water.

602 To allow long-term *in vivo* calcium imaging in S1, a cranial window was
603 implanted over S1 as described previously^{10,37}. A metallic head-post for head fixation
604 was glued to the skull, contralateral to the cranial window, using dental acrylic. One
605 week after chronic window implantation, mice were handled daily for one week while
606 they became acclimatised to a minimum of 15 mins of head-fixation.

607
608 **Brain clearing and light-sheet microscopy.** To verify task-relevant projections and
609 connectivity between S1 and IOFC, we injected retrograde AAV-retro/2-shortCAG-
610 tdTomato virus *in vivo*. Two to three weeks after virus injection, animals were
611 perfused, and the brains entered a clearing protocol using CLARITY³⁸. After
612 perfusion, the brains were post-fixed for 48 hours in a hydrogel solution (1%
613 paraformaldehyde, 4% acrylamide, 0.05% bis-acrylamide, 0.25% VA044)^{38,39} before
614 the hydrogel polymerization was induced at 37°C. Following the polymerization, the
615 brains were immersed in 40 ml of 8% SDS and kept shaking at room temperature
616 (RT) until the tissue was cleared sufficiently (20-40 days depending on the age of the
617 animals). Finally, after 2-4 washes in PBS, the brains were put into a refractive index
618 matching solution (RIMS)³⁸ for the last clearing step. They were left to equilibrate in 5
619 ml of RIMS for at least 4 days at RT before being imaged.

620 Cleared brains were imaged using a mesoSPIM light-sheet microscope
621 (www.mesospim.org)¹⁸. Whole-brain imaging revealed that IOFC receives direct
622 monosynaptic bottom-up, feed-forward projections from both superficial (L2/3) and
623 mostly deep (L5 and L6) layers of S1. Conversely, a similar injection in mouse S1
624 (2.55 mm posterior and 3.5 mm lateral from bregma)¹⁰ revealed superficial cortical
625 L2/3 neurons in mouse S1 receiving direct top-down feedback projections from IOFC.

626
627 **CNO application.** Inhibitory DREADDs (CaMKII α -hM4D(G i)-mCherry) were used in
628 the chemogenetic silencing experiments and neuronal populations of interest were
629 virally transfected with AAV-hM4Di injected unilaterally on the superficial layers
630 (L2/3) of contralateral IOFC and bilaterally to superficial (L2/3) and deeper (L5) layers
631 of S1. Intraperitoneal (i.p.) injection of clozapine *N*-oxide (CNO-dihydrochloride, 1-5
632 mg/kg, TOCRIS, Cat.No.4936), the ligand that activates hM4Di, silenced the activity
633 of neurons. Clozapine (1-5 mg/kg) was used as control as there are reports that a
634 small proportion of systemically-administered CNO is metabolized to clozapine⁴⁰.
635
636 ***In vivo* electrophysiological recordings.** We characterised pharmacogenetic
637 silencing of IOFC neurons by performing acute, *in vivo* electrophysiology in a subset
638 of hM4Di-injected animals after completion of the reversal learning protocol. To
639 perform acute recordings, animals were anaesthetised with isoflurane (2% for
640 induction and 0.8% during recording), and their body temperature was maintained
641 stably using a heating pad. A small craniotomy (1-mm diameter) was performed to
642 provide access to the left OFC and the brain was covered with silicon oil. A silver
643 wire was placed in contact with the CSF through a small trepanation (0.5 mm) over
644 the cerebellum to serve as reference electrode. A silicon probe (Atlas
645 Neurotechnologies, 16 linear sites, 100 μ m spacing) was implanted through the
646 craniotomy into the left cortical hemisphere and we recorded multi-unit activity from
647 the injection site in the left OFC and surrounding cortex. We waited 30 minutes to
648 allow the recording to stabilise after implantation of the electrode array. After
649 stabilisation, the broadband voltage was amplified and digitally sampled at a rate of
650 30 kHz using a commercial extracellular recording system (RHD2000, Intan
651 Technologies). The raw voltage traces were filtered offline to separate the multi-unit
652 activity (MUA; bandpass filter 0.46-6 kHz) using a fourth-order Butterworth filter.
653 Subsequently, the high-pass data were thresholded at 6.5 times the standard
654 deviation across the recording session and the numbers of spikes in windows of
655 interest were counted. After a baseline recording of 30 mins, CNO (1-5 mg/kg) was
656 injected (i.p.). During the baseline period (30 minutes), the average firing rate
657 remained stable, while upon CNO injection the average firing rate in the IOFC
658 steadily decreased over time. Recording electrodes in the IOFC showed a stable and
659 significant decrease in spiking activity 30 minutes after CNO administration, while
660 control electrodes from areas uninfected by the virus did not show any modulation.
661 To combine data across mice, the activity at sites with clear MUA was expressed in
662 percent of the baseline value, i.e. the average spike rate during the 30-minute pre-

663 injection baseline (100%). All multi-units were then combined from the injected or
664 control region and a t-test was performed between the baseline period (-30-0 minutes
665 pre-injection) and the post injection period (30-60 minutes post injection).

666

667 **Intrinsic signal optical imaging.** The S1 barrel cortex was identified using intrinsic
668 signal optical imaging under approximately 0.8-1 % isoflurane anaesthesia. The
669 cortical surface was illuminated with a 630-nm LED, multiple whiskers were
670 stimulated (2 to 4 rostro-caudal deflections at 10 Hz), and reflectance images were
671 collected through an objective with a CCD camera (Toshiba TELI CS3960DCL; 12-
672 bit; 3-pixel binning, 4273 347 binned pixels, 8.6-mm pixel size, 10-Hz frame rate)⁴¹.

673 Intrinsic signal changes were computed as fractional changes in reflectance
674 relative to the pre-stimulus average (50 frames; expressed as DR/R). The centres of
675 the barrel columns corresponding to stimulated whiskers were located by averaging
676 intrinsic signals (15 trials), median-filtering (5-pixel radius) and thresholding to
677 find signal minima. Reference surface vasculature images were obtained using
678 546-nm LED and matched to images acquired during two-photon imaging.

679

680 **Two-photon imaging.** We used a custom-built two-photon microscope controlled by
681 HelioScan⁴², equipped with a Ti:Sapphire laser system (approximately 100-
682 femtosecond (fs) laser pulses; Mai Tai HP; Newport Spectra Physics), a water-
683 immersion 16X Olympus objective (340LUMPlanFI/IR, 0.8 numerical aperture, NA)
684 for S1 imaging and a 20X Leica objective (Leica Plan Apo 0.6 NA) for GRIN lens
685 based OFC imaging, galvanometric scan mirrors (model 6210; Cambridge
686 Technology), and a Pockels Cell (Conoptics) for laser intensity modulation.

687 Based on intrinsic imaging, along with the blood vessel pattern, we targeted
688 specific areas of interest for two-photon imaging of L2/3 neurons in each mouse. We
689 excited GCaMP6f at 940 nm and detected green fluorescence with a photomultiplier
690 tube (Hamamatsu). Images (128x64 pixels) were acquired at 12-Hz frame rate and
691 10-50 cells per field of view were imaged simultaneously. Single trials of 6-8 s
692 duration were recorded, with 1-s breaks between trials to allow the data to be written
693 to hard-disk during inter-trial periods.

694

695 **Calcium imaging analysis.** Calcium imaging data was first motion corrected using
696 an online piecewise rigid 2d (planar) method (NoRMCorre: Non-Rigid Motion
697 Correction) in MATLAB (Mathworks). Regions of interest (ROI) corresponding to
698 individual neurons were found from both the mean image and the standard deviation
699 image generated from a single-trial time series using ImageJ (US National Institutes

700 of Health). ROI masks were manually selected using an online method (OCIA) in
701 MATLAB and raw fluorescence time courses ($F(t)$) were then extracted as the (non-
702 weighted) mean pixel value for each ROI. Another fluorescence time course was
703 extracted from a neuropil defined by an ROI selecting a portion of non-somatic tissue
704 in the imaging frame. The neuropil calcium signal never resulted in activity peaks
705 significantly high to be classified as an active neuron (check Criteria for active
706 neurons). The background was subtracted on each channel (bottom first percentile
707 fluorescence signal across entire time series). A running estimate of fractional
708 change in fluorescence time courses was calculated by subtracting the baseline
709 fluorescence $F_0(t)$ from $F(t)$, then dividing by $F_0(t)$

710

$$711 \Delta F/F(t) = (F(t) - F_0(t))/F_0(t) \quad (2)$$

712

713 $F_0(t)$ was estimated as the mean fluorescence value of the first 1.5 s prior to tactile
714 stimulus onset. For cells that were not silent in the pre-stimulus window, $F_0(t)$ was
715 instead taken as 8th percentile of a trailing 1.5-s sliding window.

716

717 **Alignment of cell-masks across days.** All analyses for the alignment of cell-masks
718 across days were manually performed with the aid of custom MATLAB GUIs in the
719 OCIA software. To align masks across any pair of daily sessions, we first chose one
720 set for the first day and then imported it onto the single-trial image series of the
721 subsequent days. When displacement occurred, the masks were manually moved to
722 the corresponding neurons. This was done for all pairwise combinations of days. We
723 then manually observed by eye each ROI mask confronting it to both the mean and
724 the standard deviation image of the time series on ImageJ, to confirm the presence
725 of each cell across days. If the z-plane did not match and a cell was not found, it was
726 excluded from further longitudinal analysis.

727

728 **Criteria for active neurons.** To determine if a neuron was active during a time-
729 period of interest (stimulus-related and reward-outcome related responses), we
730 independently tested its evoked response using conservative criteria. For each
731 neuron, we calculated its mean response and its peak value ($\Delta F/F$) during the 0.9 s
732 window after a texture was presented (i.e. for stimulus presentation-window) or
733 during the 1.6-s window after the texture was removed (i.e. for reward-outcome
734 window). A neuron was considered active if all the following criteria were met:

735 • its response was significantly ($p < 0.01$, t -test) different from the average pre-
736 stimulus baseline response (1.5 s before texture is presented).

- its mean response (for stimulus-presentation or reward-outcome window) was more than 3*noise from the baseline. This baseline was calculated by averaging a 35-point sliding-window across the trial response and taking the 5th percentile of the mean response distribution. The noise level taken as the 1st percentile of the distribution of the standard deviation calculated across the same sliding window.
- its peak response ($\Delta F/F$) (for stimulus or reward-outcome window) was greater than 25%.
- In the 2D scatter plots of selectivity indices (see below) neurons were considered active if they were active in either of the considered learning periods (e.g. *LE* and *RN*). In other words, they were considered inactive only if they were inactive in both respective periods.

749

750 **Selectivity index.** We assessed the selectivity of single-neuron activity for specific
 751 trial-types using a receiver operating characteristic (ROC) analysis, which quantifies
 752 the ability of an ideal observer to discriminate between trial-types based on single-
 753 trial responses^{16,10}. For the purpose of this study, we assessed selectivity for hit vs.
 754 CR trials. We performed the ROC analysis on the segments of the $\Delta F/F$ transients in
 755 the trial period of interest, i.e., either in the 2-s long reward-outcome window or in the
 756 1 s long stimulus window. Specifically, each trial was assigned a “discrimination
 757 variable” score (DV) equal to the dot product similarity of the $\Delta F/F$ segment to the
 758 mean $\Delta F/F$ segment for the same trial-type minus the dot-product similarity to the
 759 mean for the other trial-type (see also **Extended Data Fig. 8**). Thus, we computed
 760 for hit trials

$$761 \quad DV_{Hit} = H_i(\bar{C}_{\forall j \neq i} - \bar{C}) \quad (3)$$

762 and for CR trials

$$763 \quad DV_{CR,i} = C_i(\bar{H} - \bar{C}_{\forall j \neq i}) \quad (4)$$

764 where H_i and C_i are the single-trial $\Delta F/F$ segments for the i -th hit and CR trial,
 765 respectively, and \bar{H} and \bar{C} denote the mean $\Delta F/F$ segments for the respective trial
 766 type (excluding the individual trial under consideration). We classified trials as
 767 belonging to the go-texture or the no-go-texture if DV (DV_{Hit} or DV_{CR}) was greater
 768 than a given criterion. To determine the fraction of trials an ideal observer could
 769 correctly classify, we constructed an ROC curve by varying this criterion value across
 770 the range of DV . At each criterion value, we plotted the probability that a hit trial
 771 exceeded the criterion value against the probability that a CR trial exceeded the

772 criterion value. The area under this ROC curve (AUC) indicates the selectivity for trial
773 type, with an AUC value of 0.5, meaning no selectivity. We defined the “selectivity
774 index”, SI , such that it spanned the range from -1 (CR-preferring neurons) to +1 (hit-
775 preferring neurons) by calculating

776
$$SI = 2 \times (AUC - 0.5) \quad (5)$$

777 We tested whether neurons showed trial-type selectivity above chance using a
778 permutation test creating 500 permutations with trial-type labels randomly shuffled.
779 From these permutations, we created a distribution of indices that could have arisen
780 by chance and considered a neuron’s SI value as significant if it fell outside the
781 centre 95% interval of this distribution ($p < 0.05$).

782

783 **Functional classification of neurons.** Neurons that met the activity criterion in at
784 least one of the salient learning periods were classified in different groups according
785 to their hit/CR SI value changes upon rule-switch. For each of these neurons we
786 compared the SI value in the pre-reversal period (LE) to the SI value in the two post-
787 reversal periods (RN and RE). This resulted in two classifications for each neuron
788 (for $LE \rightarrow RN$ comparison and $LE \rightarrow RE$ comparison) (Fig. 3a). When two SI values
789 before and after reversal were found concordant, i.e. of the same sign and
790 significant, a neuron’s response was classified as ‘outcome-selective’ for the
791 respective post-reversal phase and the specific trial time-window considered
792 (stimulus or reward-outcome). Such neuron’s response amplitude was significantly
793 higher for hit compared to CR trials (or CR compared to hit trials) independent of
794 stimulus-identity (in the 2D scatter plots these neurons are found in the upper right
795 and lower left quadrants). When SI values before and after reversal were discordant,
796 i.e., of opposite sign and significant, the neuron’s response was classified as
797 ‘stimulus-selective’ as it switched from hit- to CR-preferring (or CR- to hit-preferring),
798 where the new CR was associated with the same stimulus as the previous hit. In the
799 2D scatter plot these neurons are found in the upper left and lower right quadrants. If
800 an active neuron was discriminating above chance during the pre-reversal period LE
801 and lost significant selectivity in the pre-reversal period considered (RN or RE), or if it
802 simply became inactive, it was classified as a ‘lost-selectivity’ neuron. Likewise, if an
803 inactive neuron or an active neuron without significant selectivity in the pre-reversal
804 period became active and gained a significant selectivity for the new hit/CR trials, it
805 was included in the ‘acquired-selectivity’ group. Finally, all the active neurons that did
806 not show a significant SI value during either phase (based on permutation tests),
807 were considered ‘non-selective’. Each one of these neurons was assigned twice to a

808 functional group, in earlier (*RN*) and later phases of reversal (*RE*). We tracked the
809 class transition through the course of re-learning using a fate map. For each *LE*→*RN*
810 group we showed the fraction of neurons falling into the new *LE*→→*RE* classes. Only
811 active neurons during both phases are shown.

812

813 **Reward-history modulation index.** To quantify the effect of previous performance
814 on neural responses, we analysed how response magnitude varied as a result of the
815 outcome of the previous trial (punishment or reward)¹⁷. We compared the response
816 magnitude of each neuron during a hit trial when the previous trial was rewarded hit
817 ($R_{\text{Hit-Hit}}$) versus the response magnitude when the previous trial was punished ($R_{\text{FA-Hit}}$). To quantify modulation by previous trial history, we created a reward-history
818 modulation index (RHMI) by normalizing the difference between these two history-
819 dependent responses by the mean overall response of all the Hit trials:
820

821

$$822 \quad RHMI = \frac{|R_{\text{FA-Hit}} - R_{\text{Hit-Hit}}|}{R_{\text{Hit}}} \quad (6)$$

823

824 Only cells that were active during a specific phase were included in the RHMI
825 analysis for that respective phase. To check whether a neuron was modulated above
826 chance, a bootstrap permutation test was performed (500 permutations).

827

828 **Generalized linear model.** To estimate the contribution of behavioural and task
829 variables (cue, stimulus onset and offset separated by behavioural response, reward
830 delivery, punishment, licking) to the activity of each neuron, we fit a Poisson
831 generalized linear model (GLM) for each session (MATLAB glmnet package). We
832 first down-sampled deconvolved neural data and all behavioural and task variables to
833 10 Hz and then smoothed neural activity using a Gaussian filter. Regression
834 functions were created from behavioural and task variables by implementing vectors
835 of Gaussian filters (all filters had a standard deviation of 1 s, overlapping and evenly
836 distributed, 1 Gaussian/3 frames, 100 ms/frame, 144 filters). Each imaging session
837 consisted of 100-120 trials of 6 seconds each (15 Hz) (training set 75% of each run,
838 testing sets 25%; 10-fold cross validated with 11 evenly spaced chunks of trials). We
839 used an elastic net regularization consisting of 99% L2 and 1% L1 methods for each
840 individual neuron. Deviance explained was calculated by comparing the activity
841 predicted by the model to the actual activity calculated using data not used during the
842 fitting procedure. Finally, the contribution of each variable to the neural activity is
843 derived by calculating again the deviance explained using just that variable and

844 normalizing it to the total deviance explained. This is plotted separately for each
845 group of neurons.

846

847 **Statistical analysis.** Statistical analyses are described in the main text and in figure
848 legends. If not stated otherwise, we used non-parametric statistical analyses (two-
849 sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test) or permutation tests to avoid assumptions about the
850 distributions of the data. When assumptions could be made based on previous
851 literature and on small datasets (Fig. 1d, Extended Data Fig. 1c and 5), *t*-test was
852 used. All statistical analysis was performed using custom written routines in
853 MATLAB. Quantitative approaches were not used to determine if the data met the
854 assumptions of the parametric tests.

855

856

857

858 **Extended Data Figure Legends**

859
860 **Extended Data Figure 1 | S1-dependent tactile-discrimination-based reversal**
861 **learning task.** **a**, Time-course of task-performance (discriminability index, d') of
862 individual mouse reveals dynamics of learning and reversal learning upon rule-
863 switch. Each line in various blue shades represents a single mouse of a total of 11
864 mice. **b**, Percentage of correct decision '(hit+CR)/all trials' as 'outcome rate' plotted
865 during the four salient behavioural phases of learning (learning naïve, *LN*; learning
866 expert, *LE*) and reversal (reversal naïve, *RN*; reversal expert, *RE*) ($n = 11$ mice). **c**,
867 Reversal performance is stable and remains high when mice with reversed reward
868 contingency (P1200 as go-texture, *RE*) were tested 6 weeks later ($n = 2$ mice). **d**,
869 Reversal learning is independent of initial texture training (fine grit size sandpaper
870 P1200 texture as initial go-texture; $n = 2$ mice). **e**, Texture-discrimination is
871 dependent on sensory input. *Left*: Keeping textures out of reach in expert mice after
872 reversal (*RE*) impaired their performances ($n = 3$ sessions in two mice). *Right*:
873 Clipping whiskers in expert mice similarly resulted in impaired performance (low d')
874 indicating sensory input is essential for the correct execution of the task ($n = 3$ mice,
875 longitudinally studied before and after whisker-clipping). Data presented as mean \pm
876 S.E.M., * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test.

877
878 **Extended Data Figure 2 | Whisking and licking behaviour during reversal**
879 **learning.** **a**, *Upper row*: Time-course of envelope whisking amplitude aligned to first-
880 touch during go- (left) and no-go-trials (right) across two salient periods of initial
881 learning (learning naïve, *LN*; learning expert, *LE*). In naïve animals (*LN*), mice
882 exhibited low amplitude whisking activity throughout most of the trial. In expert mice
883 (*LE*), whisking behaviour became time-locked to the arrival of the texture. *Lower row*:
884 equivalent whisking traces for the periods after rule-switch (reversal naïve, *RN*;
885 reversal expert, *RE*; *right*). Both in *RN* and *RE* periods, mice showed stimulus time-
886 locked whisking amplitude ($n = 3$ mice). Note that amplitudes and temporal profiles of
887 the whisking envelope were similar for the smooth P1200 and the rough P100
888 texture, independent of stimulus-outcome association. **b**, Equivalent analysis as in
889 (a) but for the mean whisking velocity. No significant difference was found in the
890 velocity profile between the two textures in the stimulus-presentation window. **c**,
891 Time-course of average lick rates during go-trials across two salient phases of initial
892 learning (left) and reversal learning (right) ($n = 11$ mice). Expert mice (*LE* and *RE*)
893 showed both an increase in licking activity during report window (grey) and a

894 decrease of early licks (B-baseline, S-stimulus-presentation, R-reward). Data is
895 presented as mean (solid line) \pm S.E.M. (shaded area).

896

897 **Extended Data Figure 3 | Immunohistochemical and behavioural validation of**
898 **pharmacogenetic silencing using hM4Di. a**, Neuronal silencing was achieved via
899 viral injection of inhibitory DREADD (AAV-hM4Di-mCherry) into S1 and/or IOFC in
900 mice followed by systemic CNO application. S1 injection (top) was bilateral and IOFC
901 (LO) injection (below) was unilateral and to the ipsilateral side of the barrel field. **b**,
902 Injection of hM4Di in IOFC and systemic administration (i.p.) of clozapine (1-5 mg/kg)
903 after rule-switch (*RN* and *RE*) selectively impaired reversal learning (n = 3 mice). **c**,
904 Injection of hM4Di in IOFC and CNO treated animals showed increased
905 perseverative errors (false alarm, FA) in *RE* compared to *LE* (n = 4 mice). **d-e**,
906 Silencing medial OFC (MO) by injecting hM4Di unilaterally in the MO, followed by
907 daily systemic CNO application after rule-switch (*RN* through *RE* period), did not
908 have any effect on reversal learning. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001 two-sided
909 Wilcoxon rank-sum test. Data is presented as mean \pm S.E.M.

910

911 **Extended Data Figure 4 | Electrophysiological validation of IOFC silencing**
912 **using hM4Di. a**, Timeline depicting experimental sequence for validation of IOFC
913 (LO) silencing (top). Schematic of acute electrophysiological recording from frontal
914 cortex (bottom). DAPI stained slice imaged with a confocal microscope showing red
915 fluorescence from DiD to mark the probe location. Example traces from three
916 electrode contacts from one recording session for pre- and post-CNO injection
917 (middle). Box plots showing change in firing rate (% change relative to baseline) for
918 electrode contacts above, in, or below IOFC. Plots show median, 25th and 75th
919 percentiles as box edges, and 5th and 95th percentiles as whiskers. To the right,
920 example waveforms from units showing significant modulation by CNO. *p < 0.05, t-
921 test.

922

923 **Extended Data Figure 5 | Unaltered whisking and simple behaviour following**
924 **OFC cannula implantation. a**, A schematic diagram and whole-brain image showing
925 the location of cannula implantation in OFC. Coloured regions on the schematic
926 indicate pre-motor and motor areas as described in the previous studies^{43,44,45,41} (left
927 hemisphere), or regions according to the Allen institute Common coordinate
928 framework (right hemisphere). **b**, A schematic diagram based on the Allen brain
929 atlas, light-microscopic and confocal view shows the GCaMP6f expressing mice in
930 IOFC (LO) and cannula placement above the virus injection site. **c**, Whisking

931 behaviour in OFC cannula-implanted animals is preserved. Envelope whisking
932 amplitude (top) and whisking velocity (bottom) in expert animals (*RE*) centred on the
933 texture-approach (n = 2 mice). **d**, Open-field test showed normal locomotor function
934 of wild-type and OFC cannula-implanted mice (n = 4 WT and n = 2 OFC cannula-
935 implanted mice). Representative picture of locomotor track (top) and heat-map
936 (bottom) of an OFC cannula-implanted mouse. Total distance covered (cm) and
937 mean velocity (cm/s) is plotted. Scale bar = 5 cm. **e**, Horizontal ladder-rung test
938 showed normal locomotor function of wild-type (WT, n = 4) and OFC cannula-
939 implanted mice (n = 2). A representative picture showing paw placement of a mouse
940 on irregular horizontal rung-ladder. **f**, Analysis of paw placement of the limb
941 contralateral to the cannula-implanted side showed no significant difference between
942 WT and OFC cannula-implanted mice. **g**, No differences were seen in paw
943 placement of the limb ipsi- or contralateral to the cannula-implanted side in OFC
944 cannula-implanted and in control WT mice. Data is presented as mean \pm S.E.M.
945

946 **Extended Data Figure 6 | Re-learning task with neutral context and *in vivo* Ca²⁺
947 imaging of IOFC neurons.** **a**, Schematic of the stimulus-outcome associations in a
948 three-textures task with positive (large reward), neutral (small reward), and negative
949 (punishment) context. Same coarse P100 and smooth P1200 sandpapers were used,
950 but an additional intermediate coarseness P600 sandpaper was introduced as go-
951 neutral context (go_{nc}) associated with a small reward, that did not change upon
952 reversal. **b**, Average Ca²⁺ transient amplitude in the reward-outcome window for
953 IOFC neurons for Hit, Hit_{nc} and CR trials (n = 63 active neurons out of 228 neurons
954 recorded in three mice; n = 15 sessions) showing increased Hit responses upon rule-
955 switch but no significant changes during Hit_{nc} trials. Across-trial average Ca²⁺
956 transients for each behavioural period are shown above. All box plots show median,
957 25th and 75th percentiles as box edges, and 5th and 95th percentiles as whiskers.

958
959 **Extended Data Figure 7 | Task-related functional dynamics in S1→IOFC
960 projecting neurons during reversal learning.** **a**, Retrograde AAV-retro/2-tdTomato
961 injections *in vivo* in the IOFC followed by clearing the brain using CLARITY and
962 whole-brain light-sheet microscopy revealed feed-forward S1→OFC projections from
963 both deeper (L5 and 6) and superficial (L2/3) layers of S1 (n = 2 mice). Labelling is
964 weaker on the contralateral side of the injection site. **b**, S1→IOFC projecting neurons
965 were labelled with GCaMP6f using a dual-viral strategy with retrograde AAV2-retro/2-
966 Cre injected in IOFC and Cre-dependent AAV-DIO-GCaMP6f in S1. *Inset*, L2/3
967 neurons in S1 labelled with such strategy. **c**, Average Ca²⁺ transient amplitude in the

reward-outcome window shows a significant increase in response amplitude during expert phases of training (*LE* and *RE*) ($n = 96$ active neurons over $n = 135$ recorded neurons in two mice, $n = 5$ sessions/phase). **d**, *Top*, $S1 \rightarrow$ IOFC projecting neurons were labelled using a dual-viral strategy with retrograde AAV2-retro/2-Cre injected in IOFC and Cre-dependent AAV-DIO-GCaMP6f in $S1$. *Bottom*, peak responses of $S1 \rightarrow$ IOFC projection neurons averaged across hit (left) and CR (right) trials, longitudinally measured across four salient periods ($n = 96$ neurons from $n = 2$ mice, $n = 5$ sessions/phase). Box plots (median, red line; 25th and 75th percentile, box edges; whiskers as most extreme non-outliers; outliers, red crosses; zero, dashed grey line) are also shown (*inset*). **e**, Scatter plot and histogram comparing selectivity index (*S*) of $S1 \rightarrow$ IOFC projecting neurons during learning expert (*LE*) and reversal naïve (*RN*) phase ($n = 39$ active neurons over $n = 46$ neurons from $n = 2$ mice, $n = 5$ sessions/phase). **f**, Scatter plot and histogram comparing *S*/*I* of $S1 \rightarrow$ IOFC projecting neurons during *LE* and reversal expert (*RE*) phase ($n = 61$ active neurons over $n = 73$ from $n = 2$ mice, $n = 5$ sessions/phase). All box plots show median, 25th and 75th percentiles as box edges, and 5th and 95th percentiles as whiskers. Data presented as mean \pm S.E.M., * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test.

985

Extended Data Figure 8 | Tracking neuronal responses during early and late phases of reversal learning. **a**, A schematic view of the step-by-step derivation of the selectivity index (*S*/*I*) from the ROC curves. **b**, Selectivity indices of longitudinally tracked IOFC neurons across the salient task-periods of *LE*, *RN*, and *RE*. Marker colours for *RN* and *RE* indicate the assigned classes for the $LE \rightarrow RN$ and $LE \rightarrow RE$ comparisons, respectively. Plots are shown separately for each $LE \rightarrow RN$ class. **c**, Fate mapping of longitudinally tracked IOFC neurons. For each $LE \rightarrow RN$ assigned class, the distribution of these neurons across classes for the $LE \rightarrow RE$ comparison is shown as coloured bar on the right. **d**, Same as in (b) but for $S1$ neurons. **e**, Same as in (c) but for $S1$ neurons. **f**, Same as in (b) but for $S1$ neurons in IOFC-silenced mice. **g**, Same as in (c) but for $S1$ neurons in IOFC-silenced mice. *Inset* in **e**, The fate distributions of the non-selective neurons in $LE \rightarrow RN$ show a significantly smaller fraction of neurons that acquire selectivity for the newly rewarded go-texture in the *RE* phase in $S1$ neurons when IOFC was silenced in mice (22% vs. 60%, one-tailed Chi-square test). Note that the fate mapping plots include additional neurons compared to (b), (d), and (f) as these were not assigned an *S*/*I* value in each phase but still classified.

1003

1004 **Extended Data Figure 9 | Texture touch-related dynamics in S1 neurons during**
1005 **reversal learning.** **a**, Average Ca^{2+} transient amplitude ($\Delta F/F$) in the stimulus-
1006 presentation window for S1 neurons ($n = 142$ neurons in $n = 3$ mice, $n = 2$
1007 sessions/phase). **b**, Scatter plot and histogram comparing texture touch-related
1008 selectivity index (S/I) for the stimulus- presentation window for S1 neurons during
1009 learning expert (LE) and reversal naïve (RN) phase ($n = 218$ from $n = 3$ mice, $n = 28$
1010 sessions). **c**, Scatter plot and histogram comparing S/I of S1 neurons during LE and
1011 reversal expert (RE) phase ($n = 218$ neurons from $n = 3$ mice, $n = 28$ sessions). **d**,
1012 Average Ca^{2+} transient amplitude ($\Delta F/F$) in the stimulus-presentation window for S1
1013 neurons in IOFC silenced mice ($n = 87$ neurons in $n = 2$ mice, $n = 2$ sessions/phase).
1014 **e**, Scatter plot and histogram comparing texture touch-related S/I of S1 neurons
1015 during LE and RN phase in IOFC-silenced mice ($n = 165$ neurons, $n = 25$ sessions
1016 per phase). **f**, Scatter plot and histogram comparing touch-related S/I of S1 neurons in
1017 IOFC silenced mice during LE and RE phase ($n = 210$ neurons in $n = 3$ mice, $n = 28$
1018 sessions). **g**, Comparison of S/I marginal distributions for the three salient periods LE ,
1019 RN , and RE for IOFC neurons (2D scatter plots not shown), S1 neurons (panels c,d),
1020 and S1 neurons in IOFC-silenced mice (panels e,f). All box plots show median, 25th
1021 and 75th percentiles as box edges, and 5th and 95th percentiles as whiskers. * $p < 0.05$,
1022 two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test.

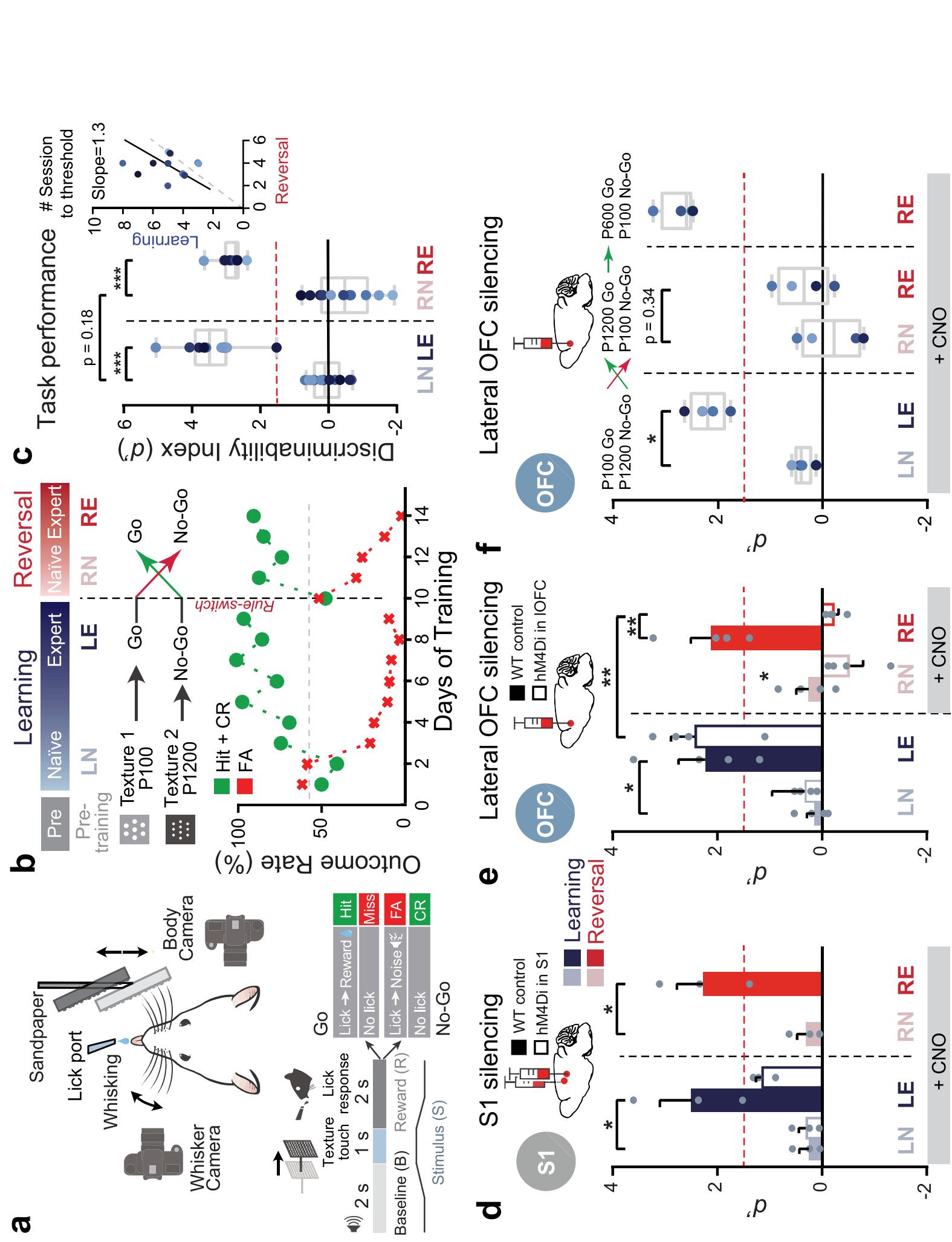
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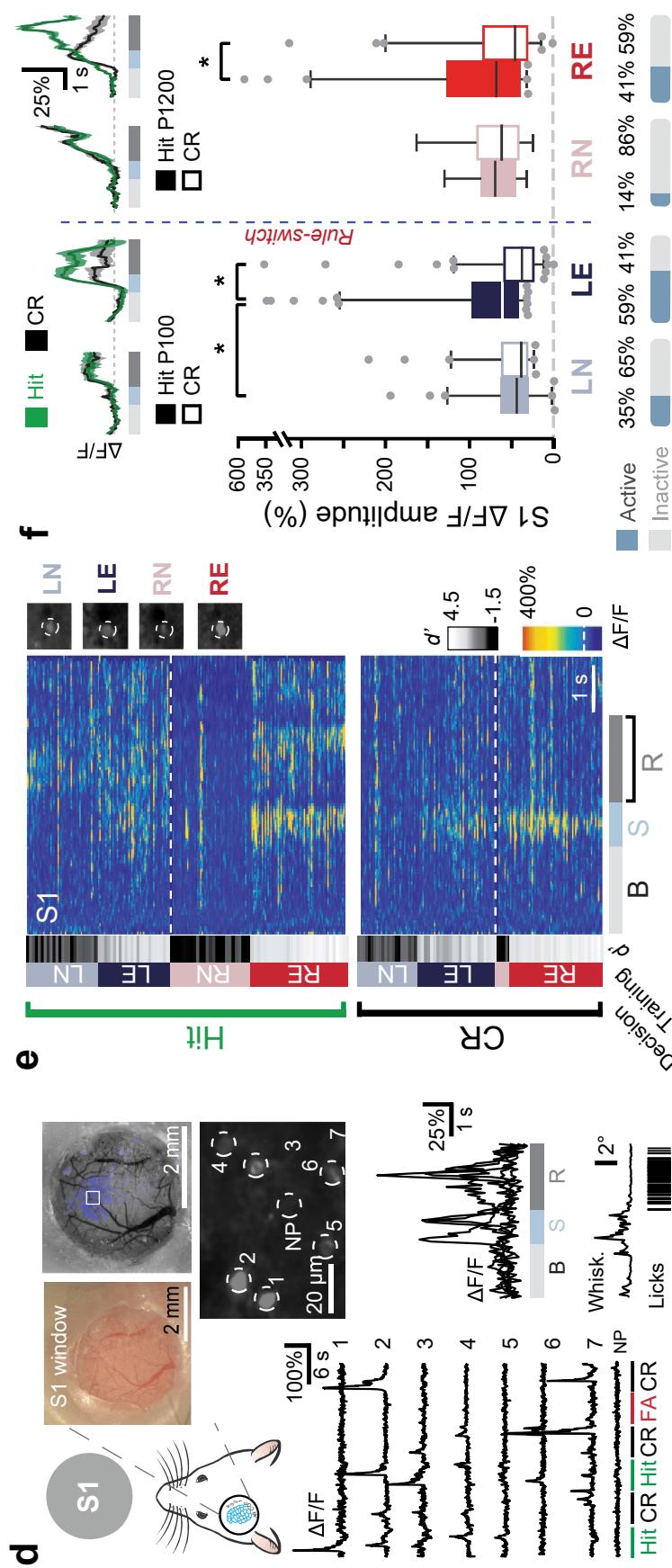
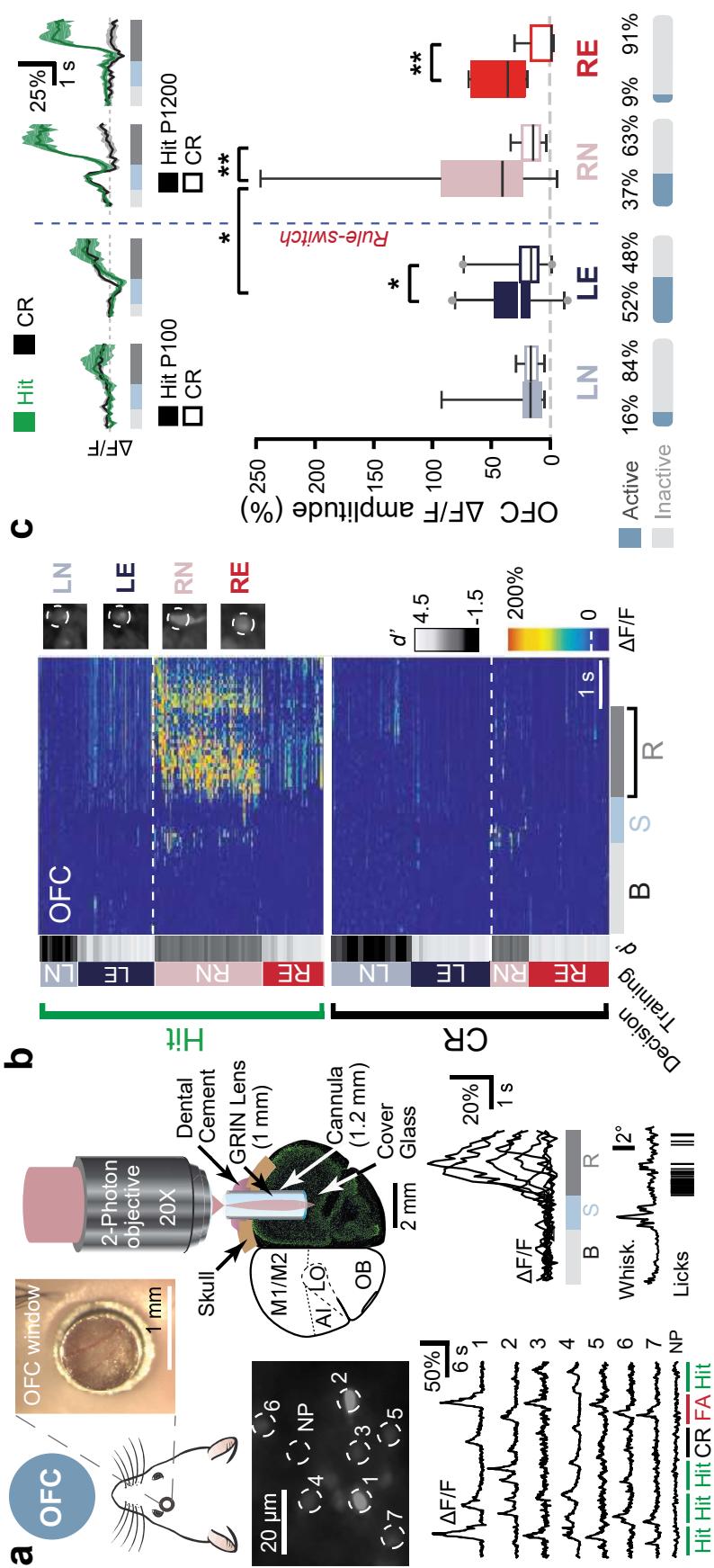
1024 **Extended Data Figure 10 | Differential modulation of task variable-relevant**
1025 **events in neuronal responses.** **a**, Schematic diagram of a generalised linear model
1026 (GLM, Poisson regression) to predict neural activity from behavioural task variables.
1027 Each event was expanded into a series of evenly spaced gaussian filters. **b**, GLM
1028 predicting deconvolved neural activity of an example S1 outcome-selective neuron
1029 from task variables. **c**, Separate components contributing to the average response of
1030 this neuron reveal major sensory modulation together with reward-evoked activity. B-
1031 baseline, T-touch, R-reward. **d**, To quantify each task variable contribution,
1032 the relative fraction of deviance explained is calculated and normalised by the total
1033 deviance explained for each neuron both pre- and post-reversal. The reward
1034 component in IOFC outcome-selective neurons is significantly greater than the touch
1035 related component. **e**, Fraction of deviance explained for each component in
1036 separate subsets of S1 neurons reveal distinct modulations for specific task-related
1037 events. Notably, responses of outcome selective S1 neuronal responses are mostly
1038 explained by reward component. Licking activity seems to modulate S1 neural
1039 responses less than reward in each subset. Neurons analysed using GLM are same
1040 neurons from Fig. 3. Data is presented as mean \pm S.E.M., * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, two-

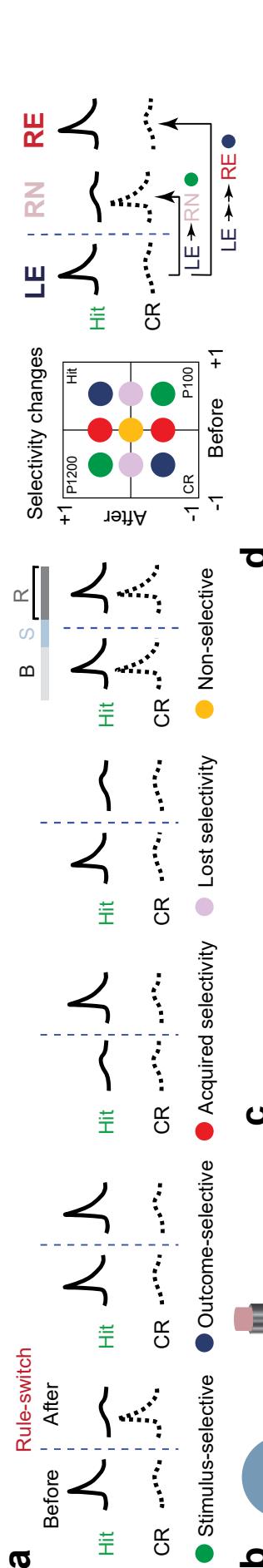
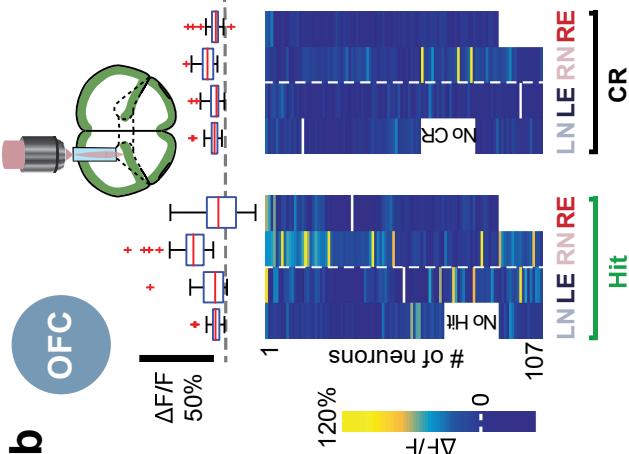
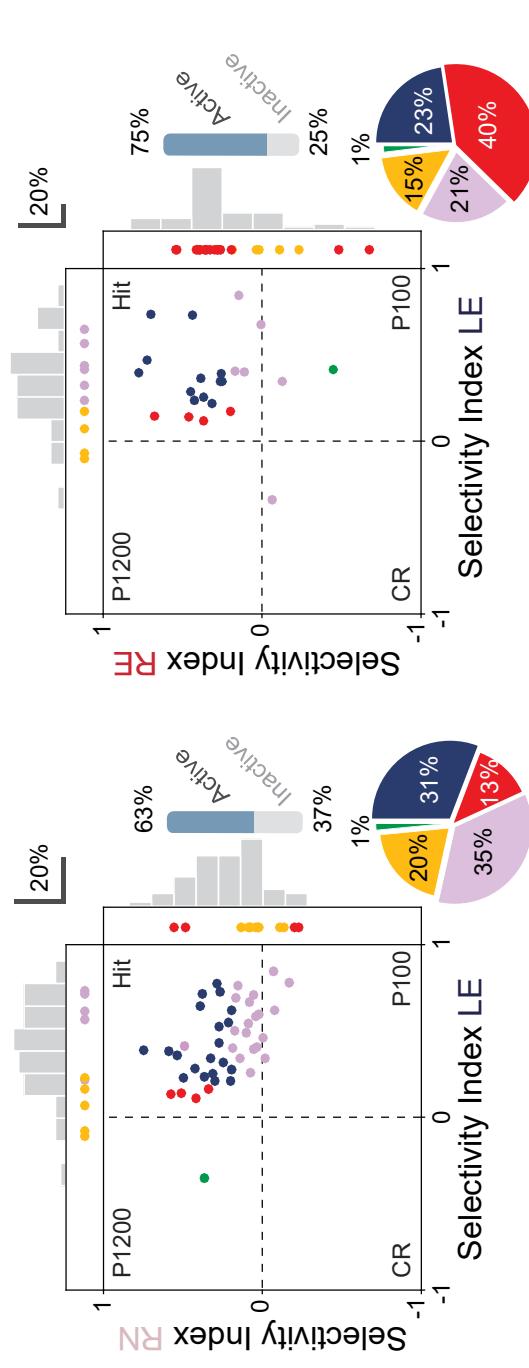
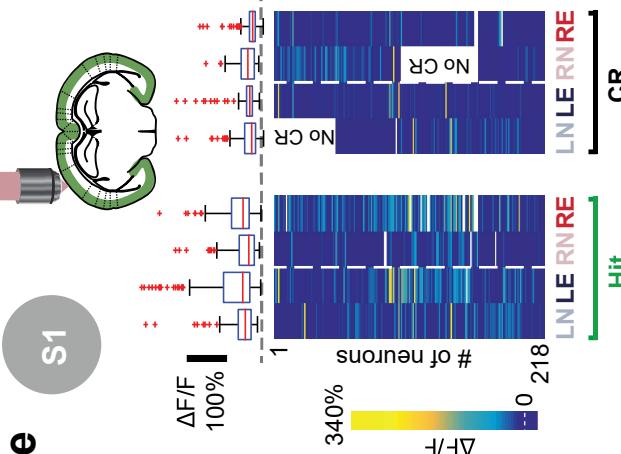
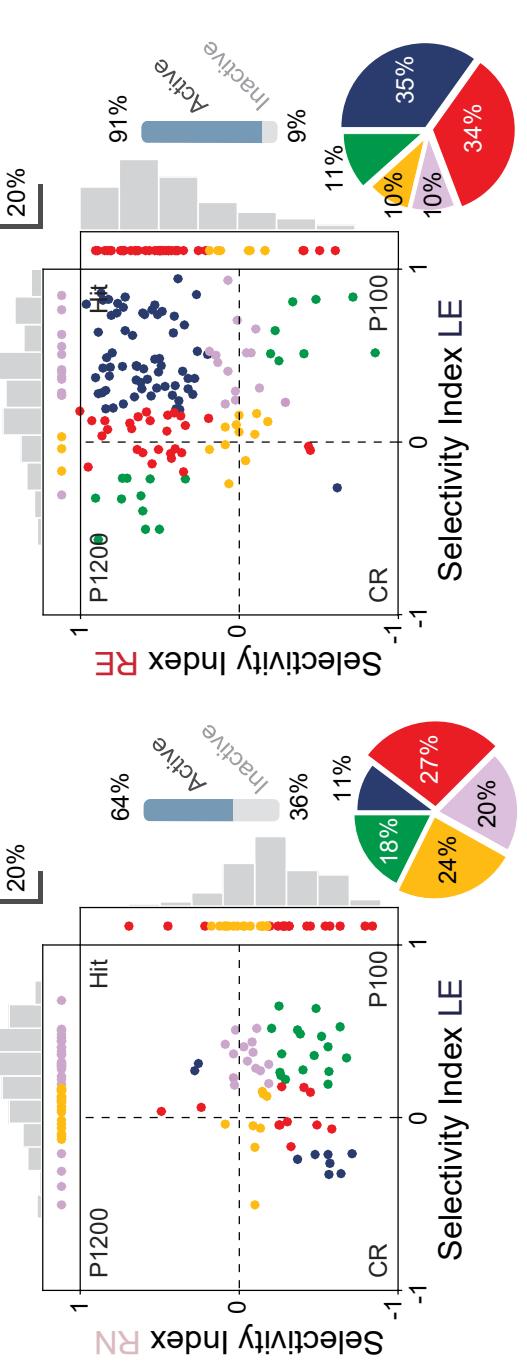
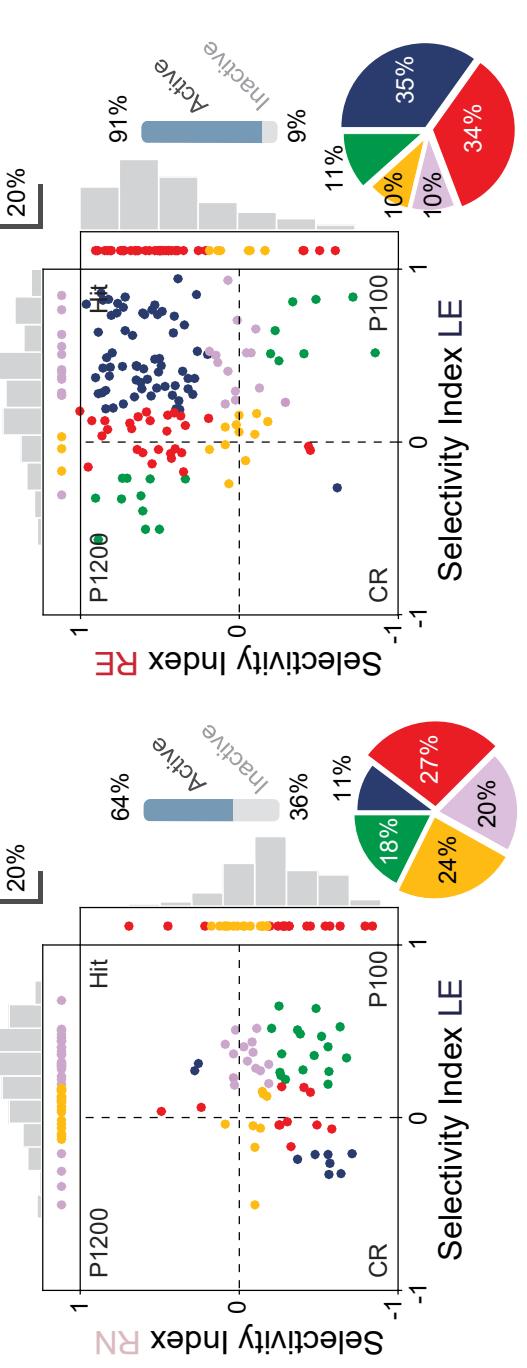
1041 sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test. **f**, Reward-history modulation index (RHMI) for
1042 functional subclasses of IOFC neurons and S1 neurons in OFC intact control mice
1043 and IOFC-silenced mice (neurons analysed are from Fig. 4b; ns = p > 0.05;
1044 bootstrap-permutation test; S.E.M. of RHMI with permuted indices as grey bars).
1045

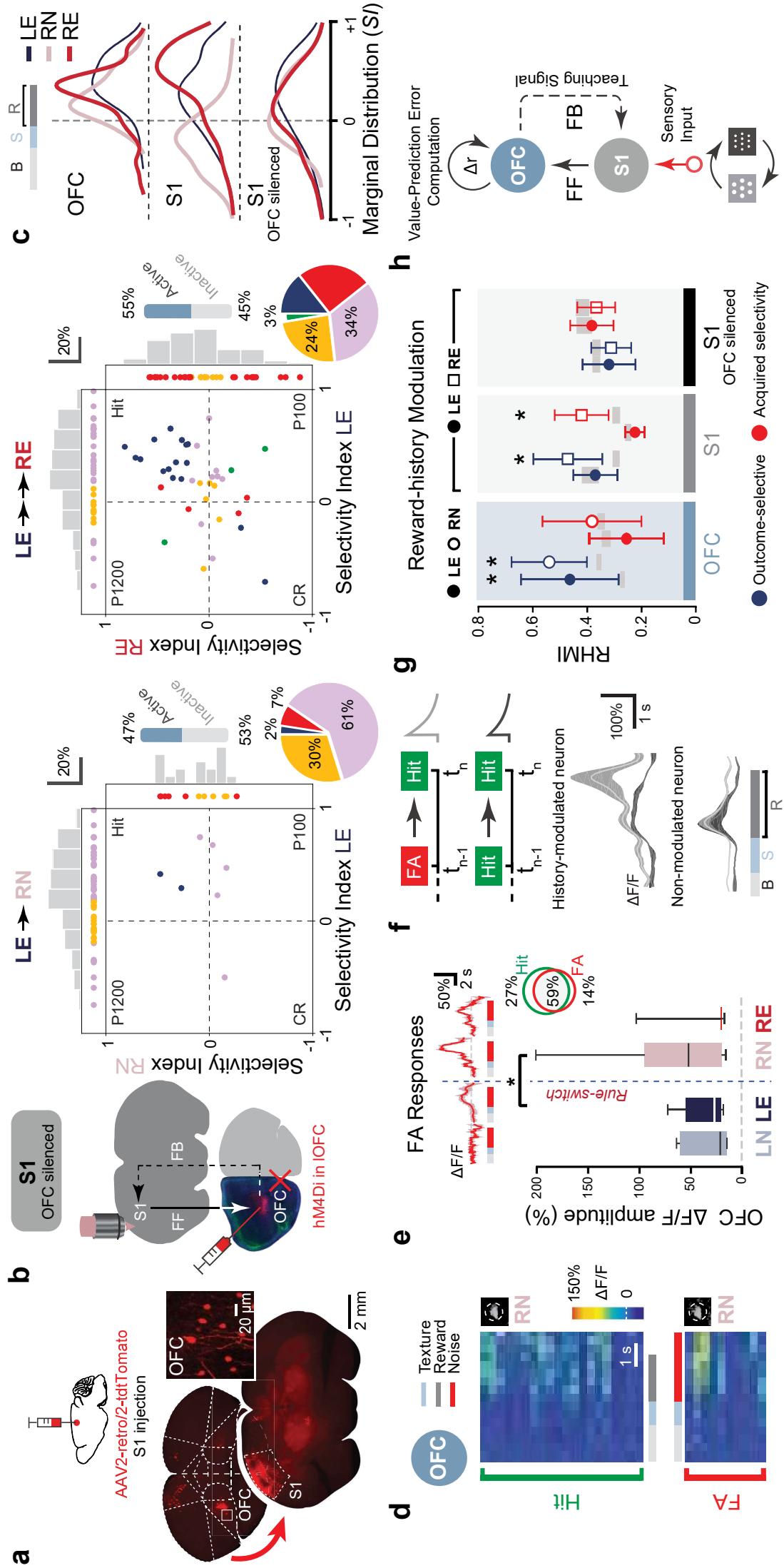
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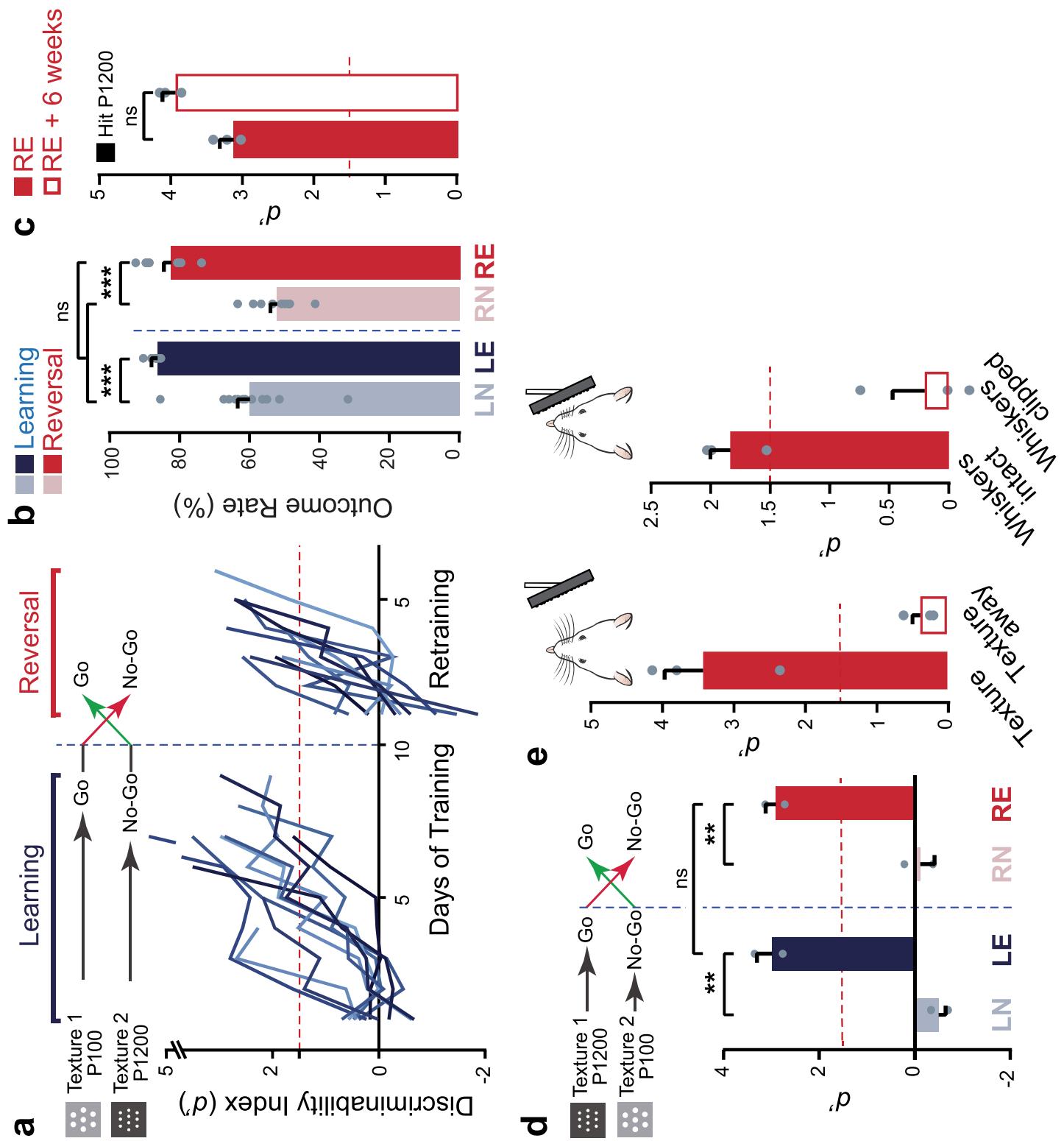




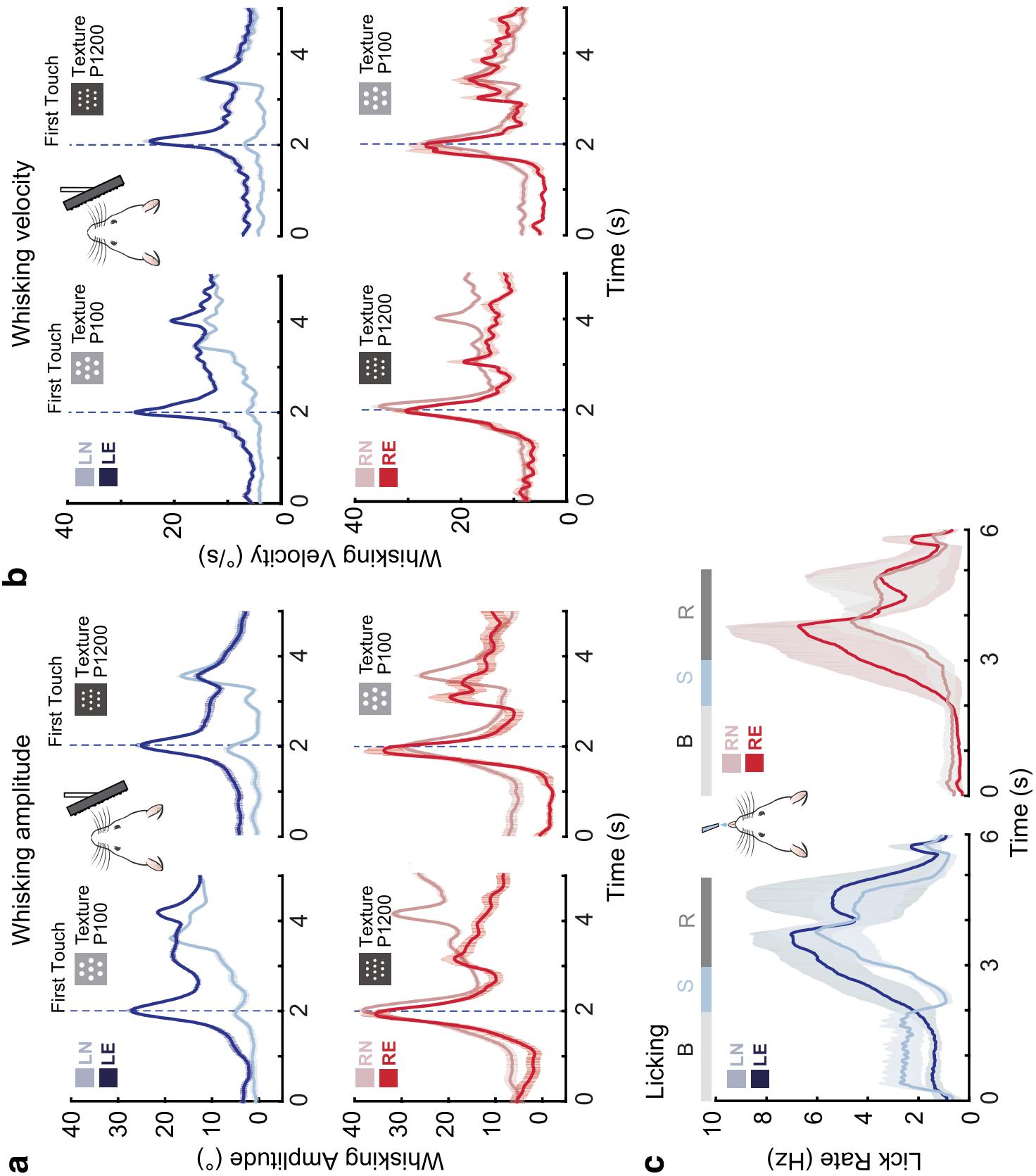
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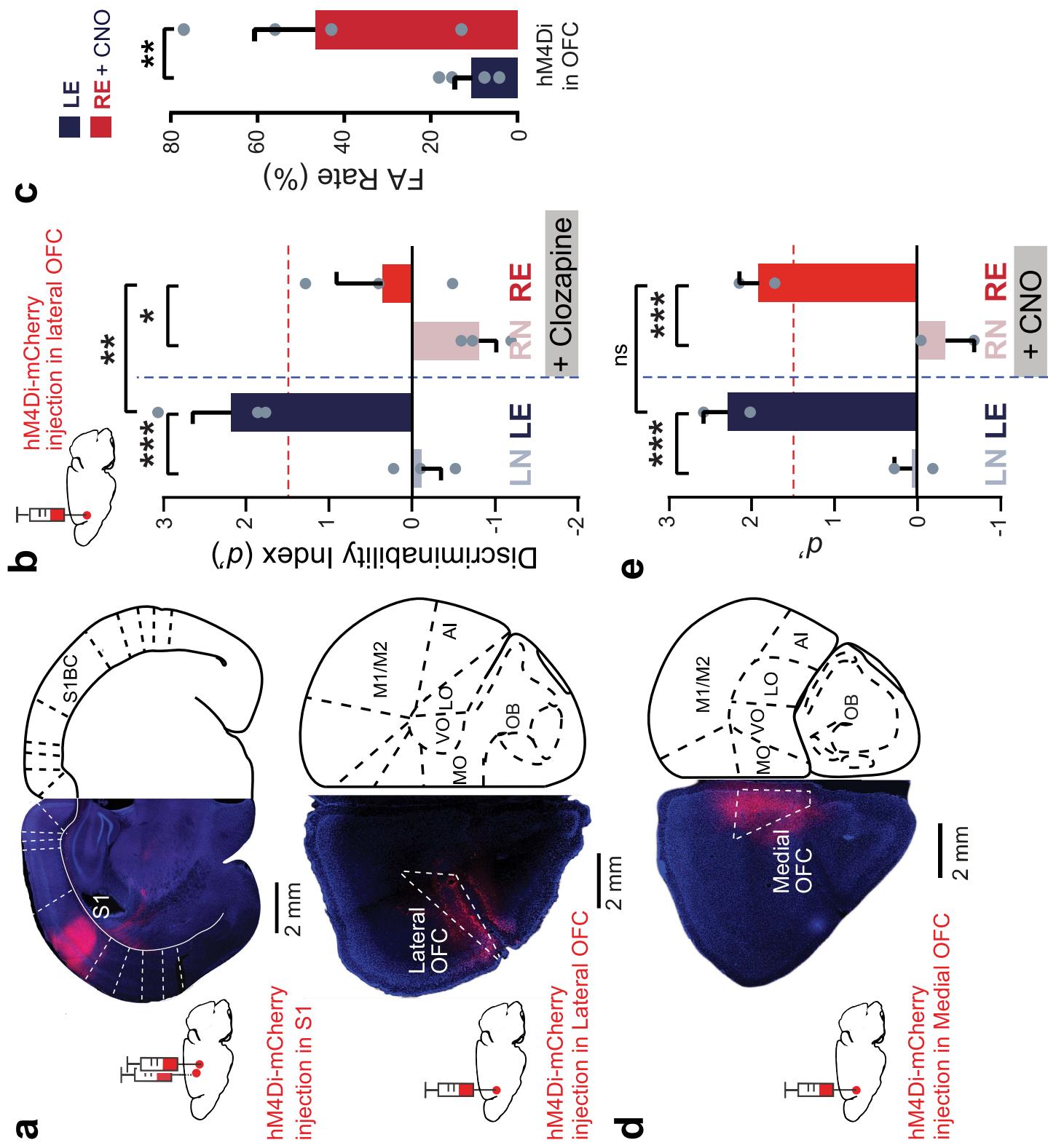
Suppl. Fig. 1



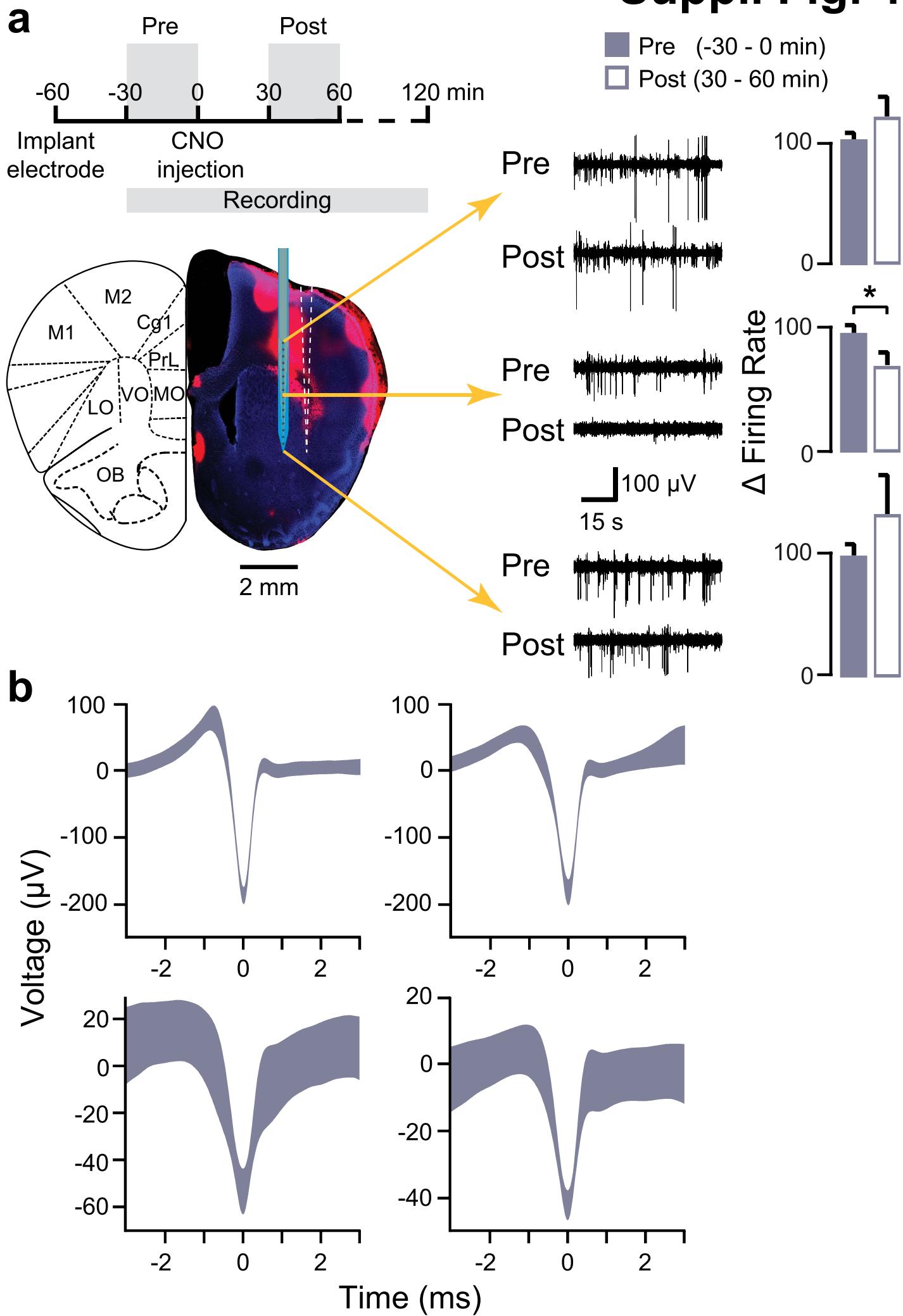
Suppl. Fig. 2



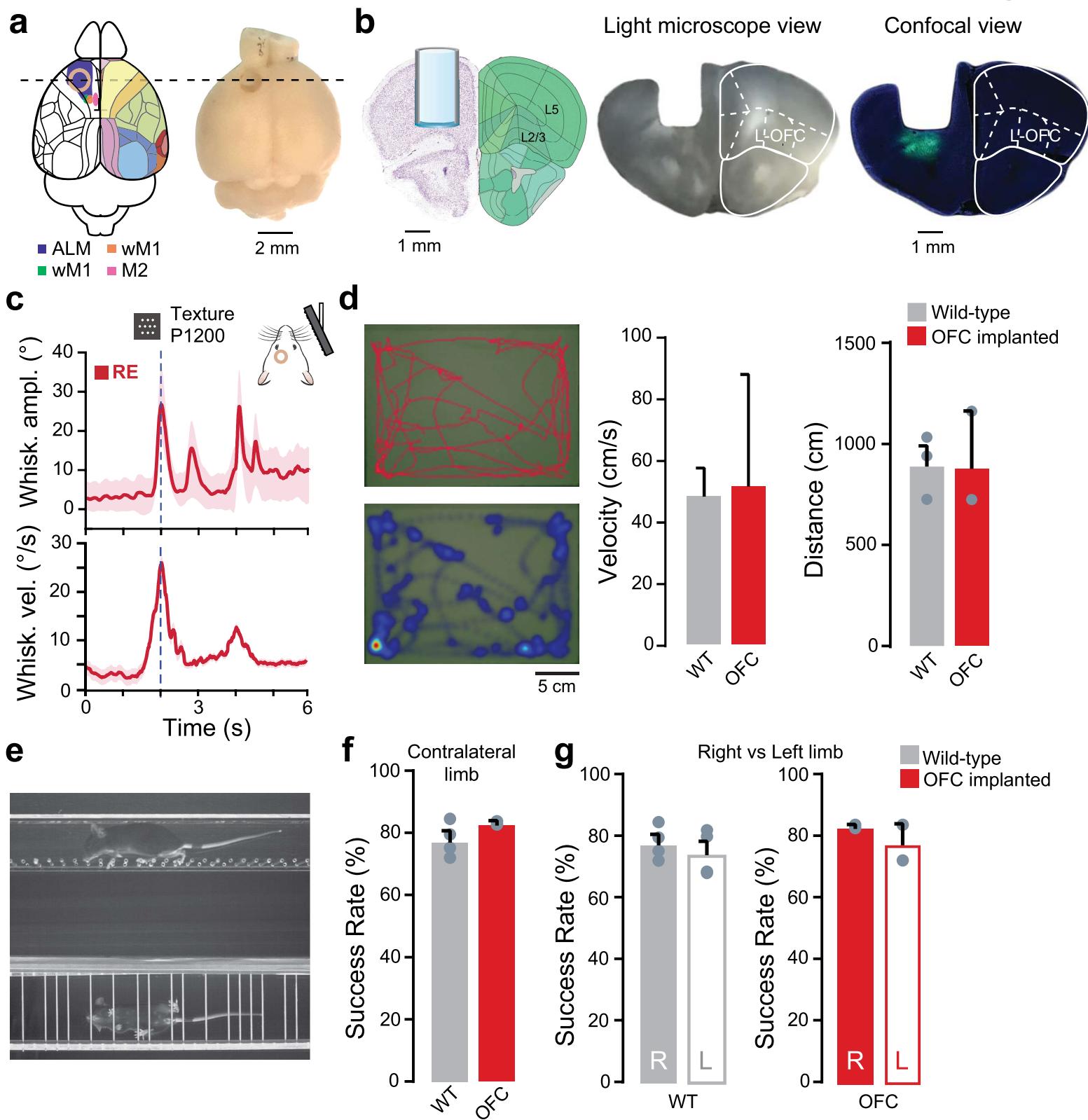
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Suppl. Fig. 4

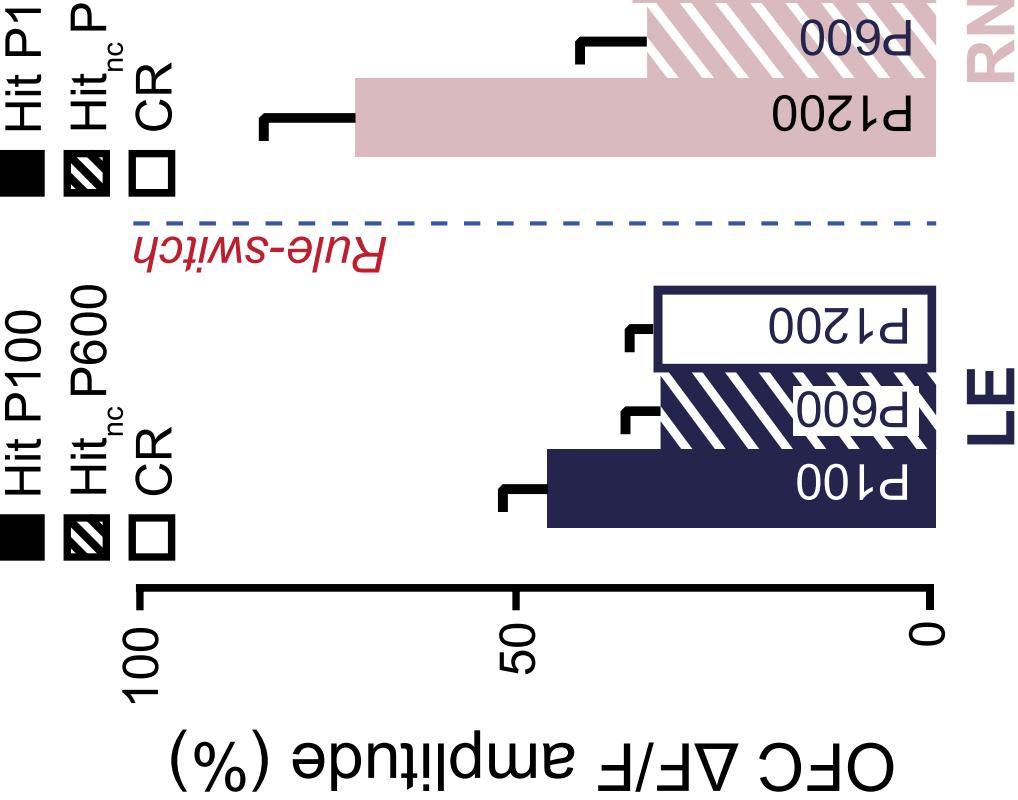


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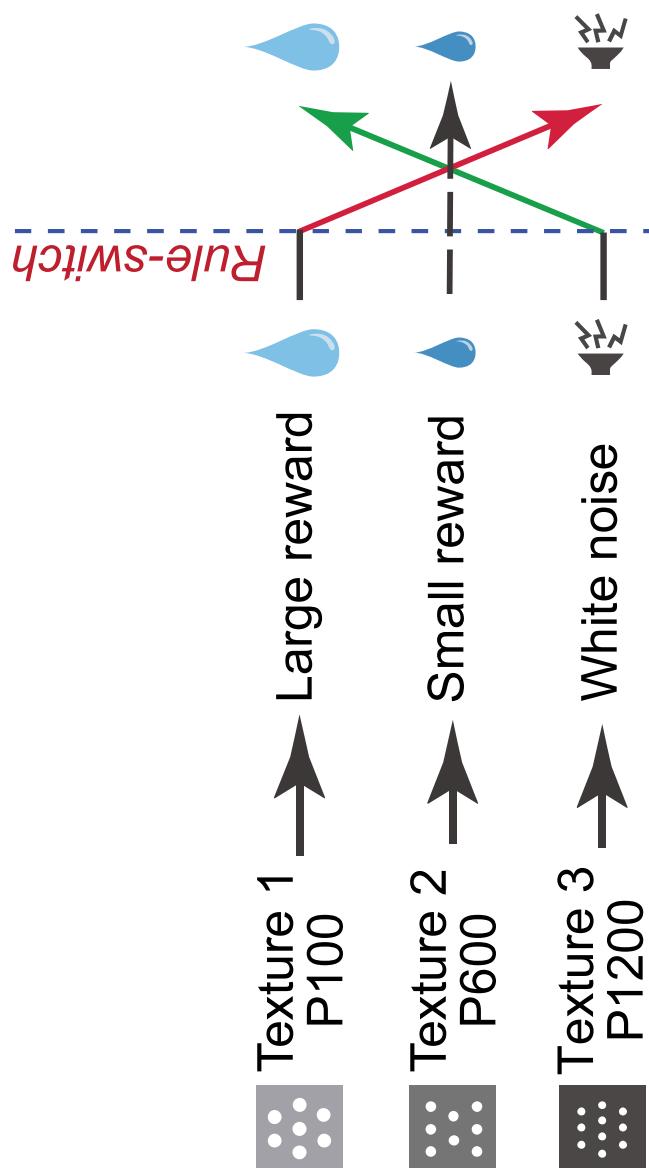


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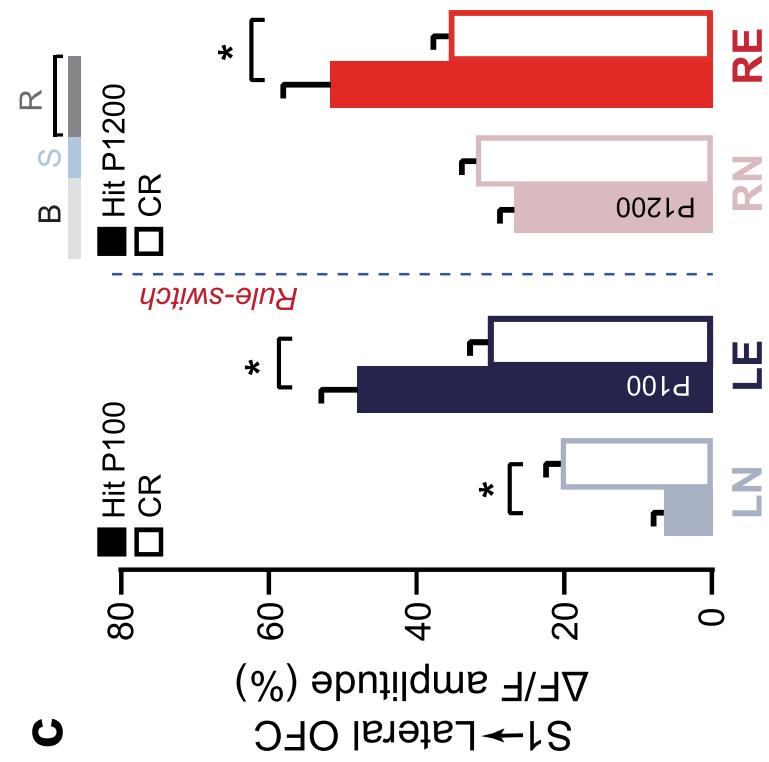
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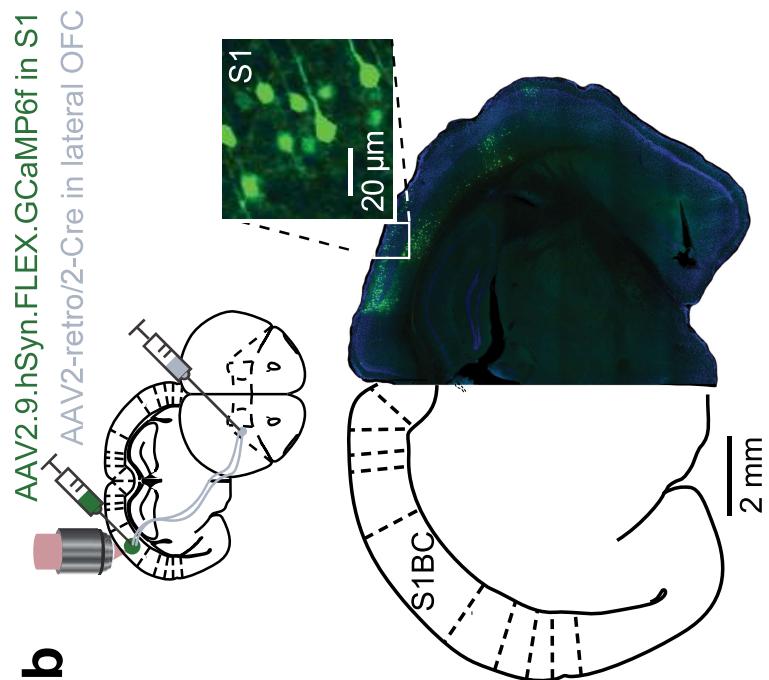
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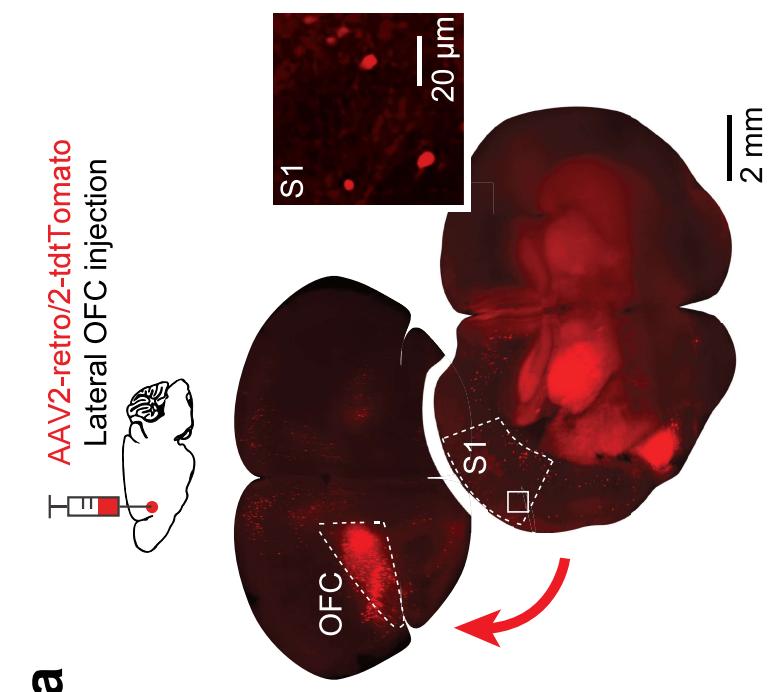
Suppl. Fig. 7



C

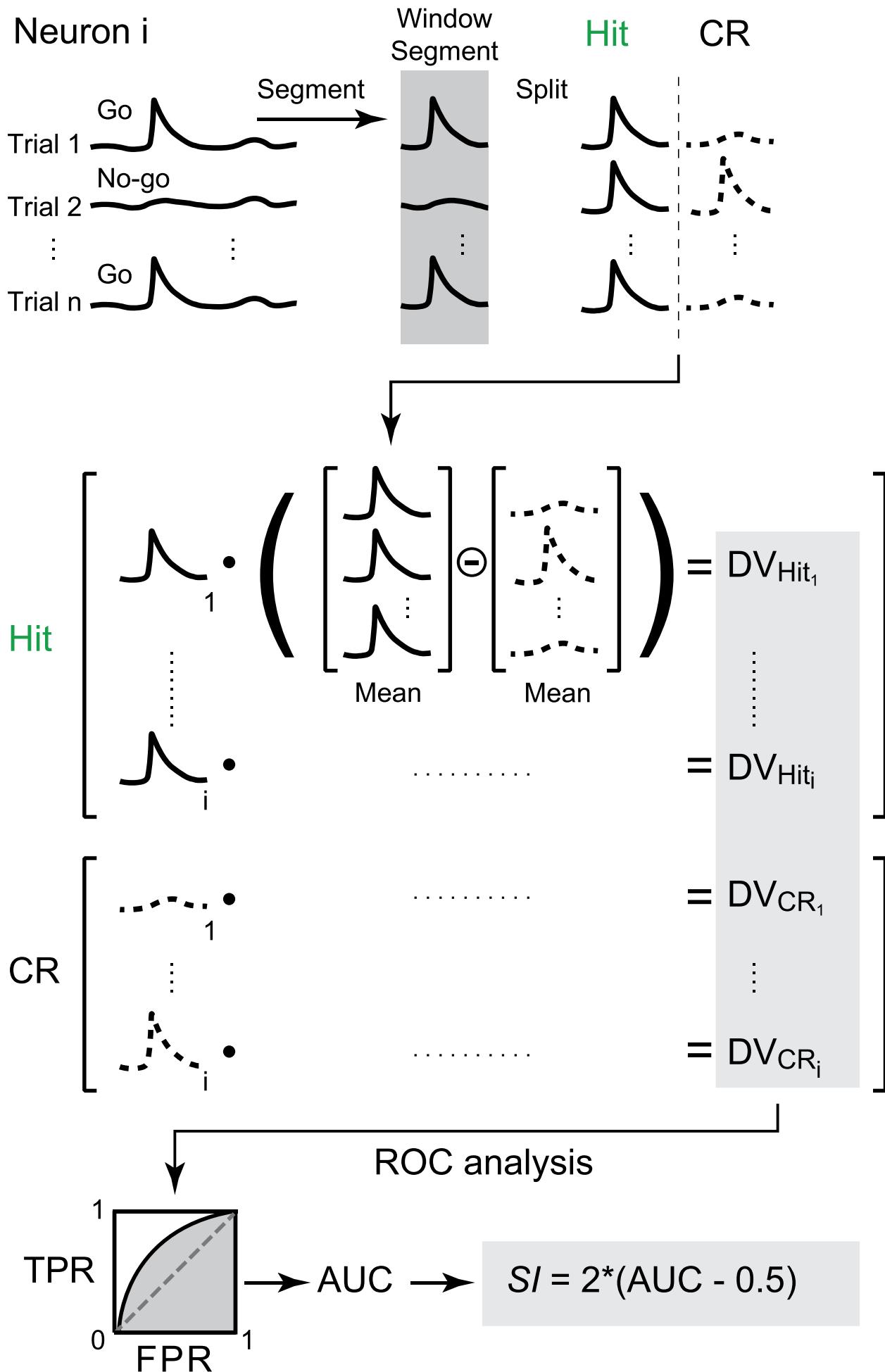


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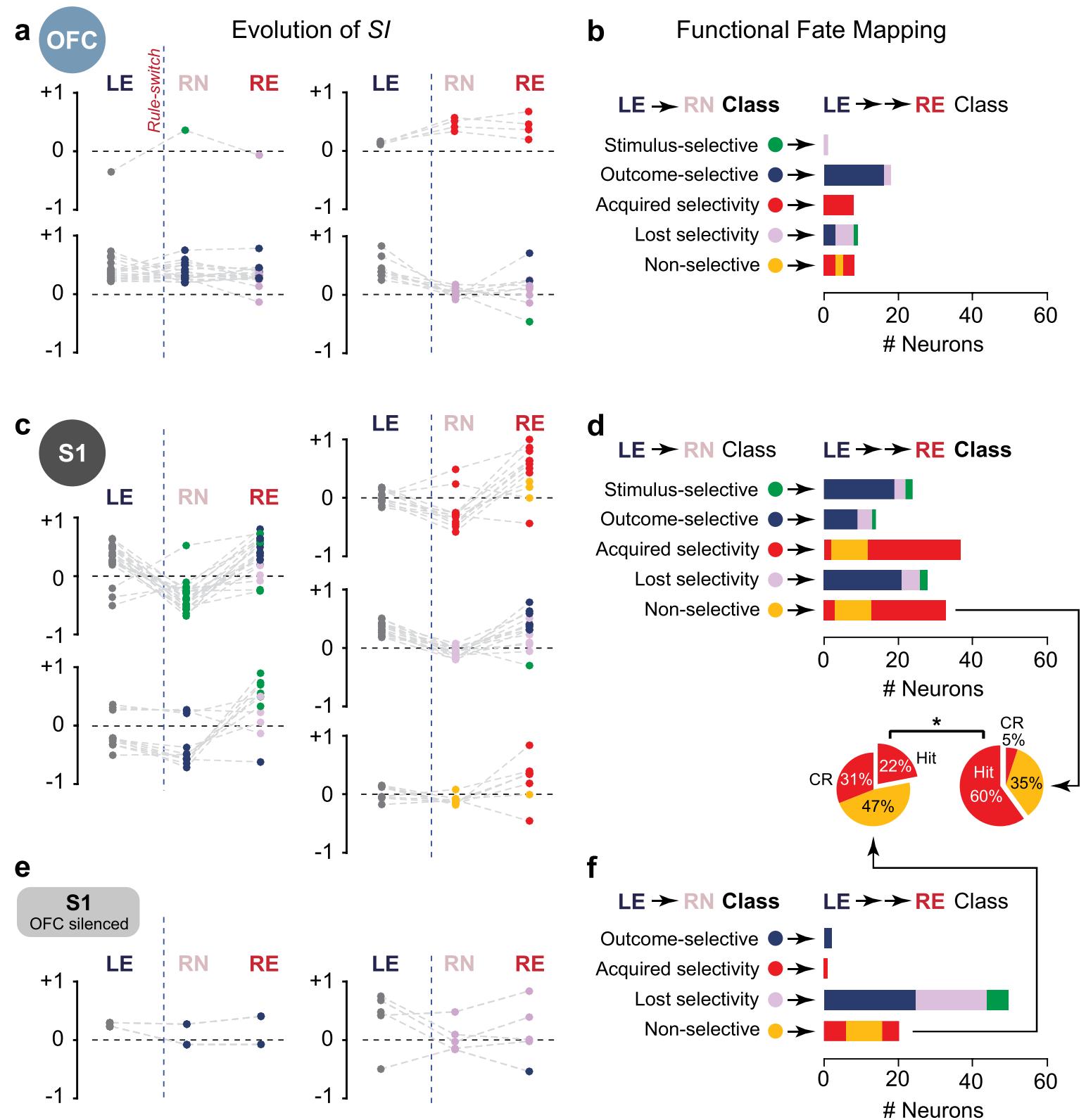


Suppl. Fig. 8

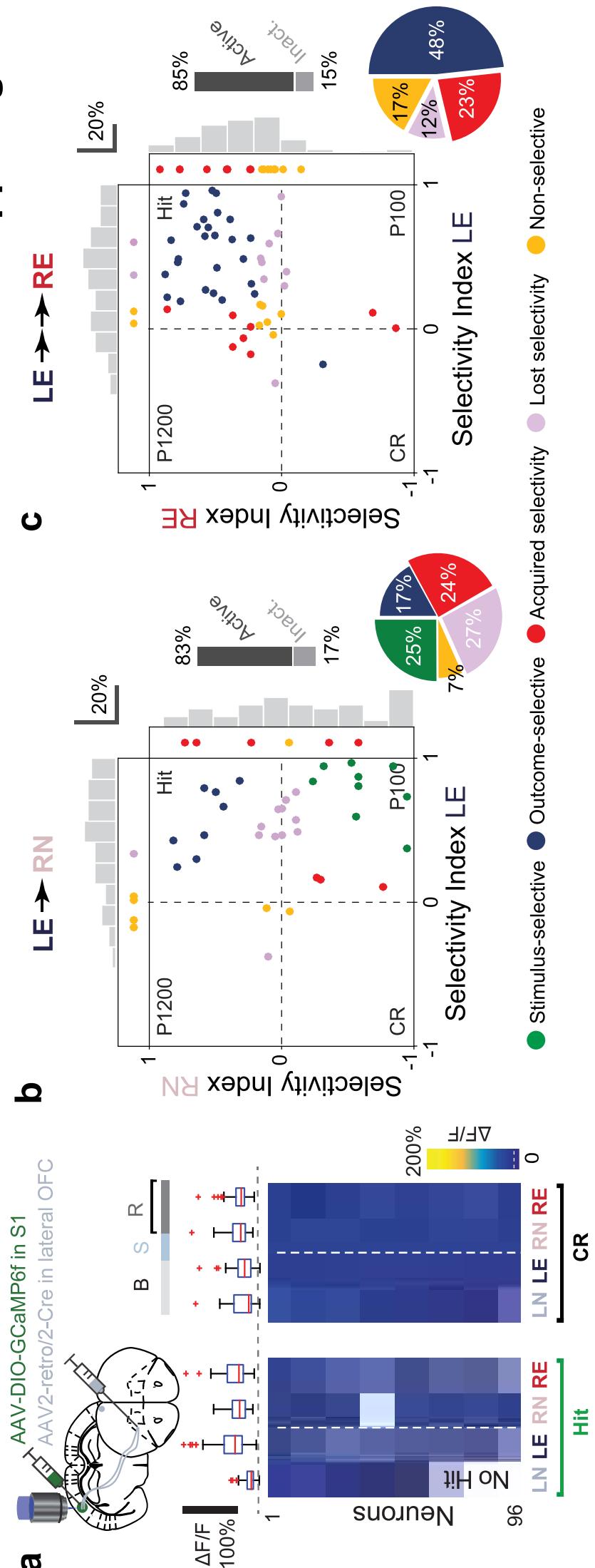
Selectivity Index (SI) derivation



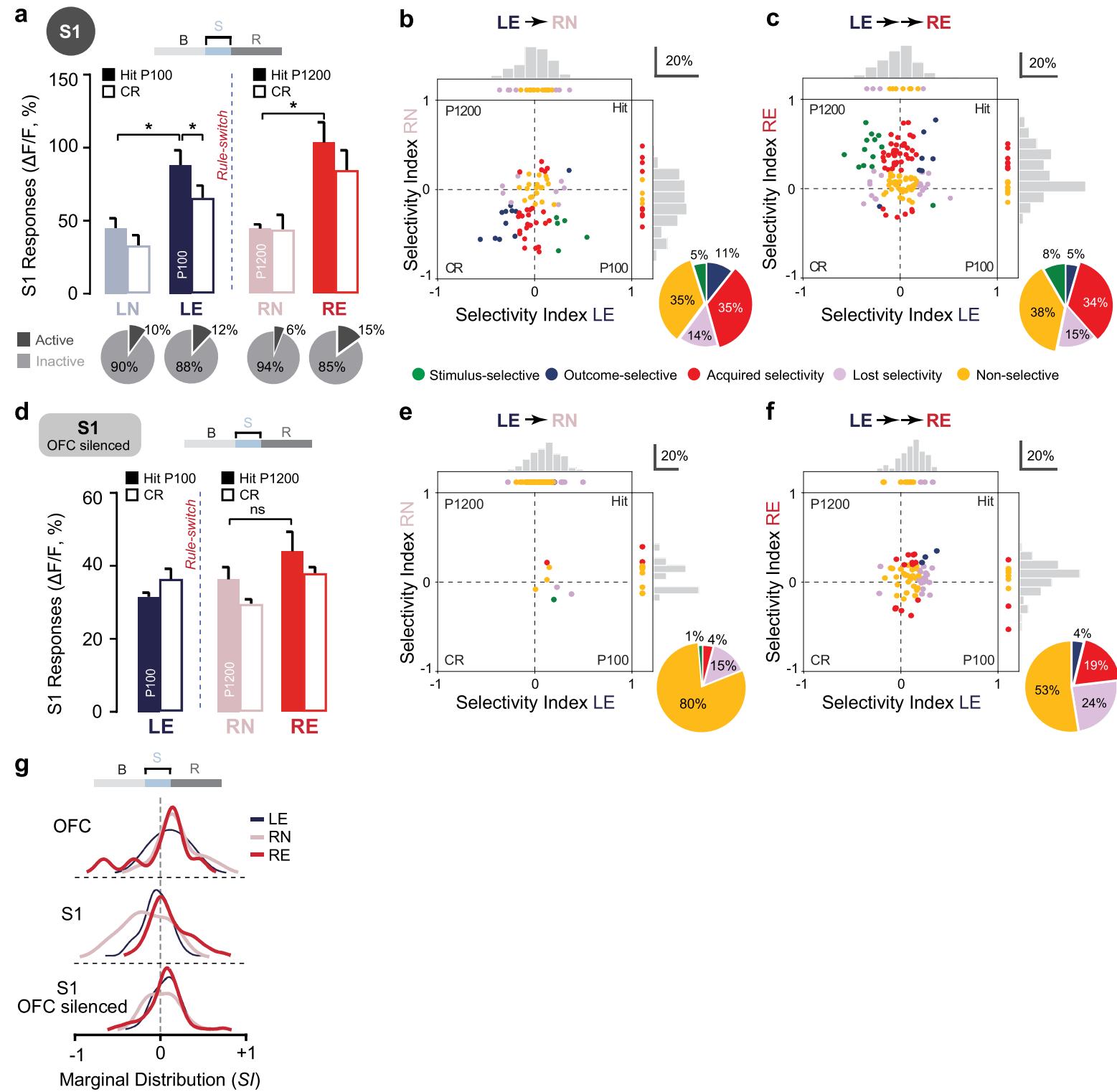
Suppl. Fig. 9



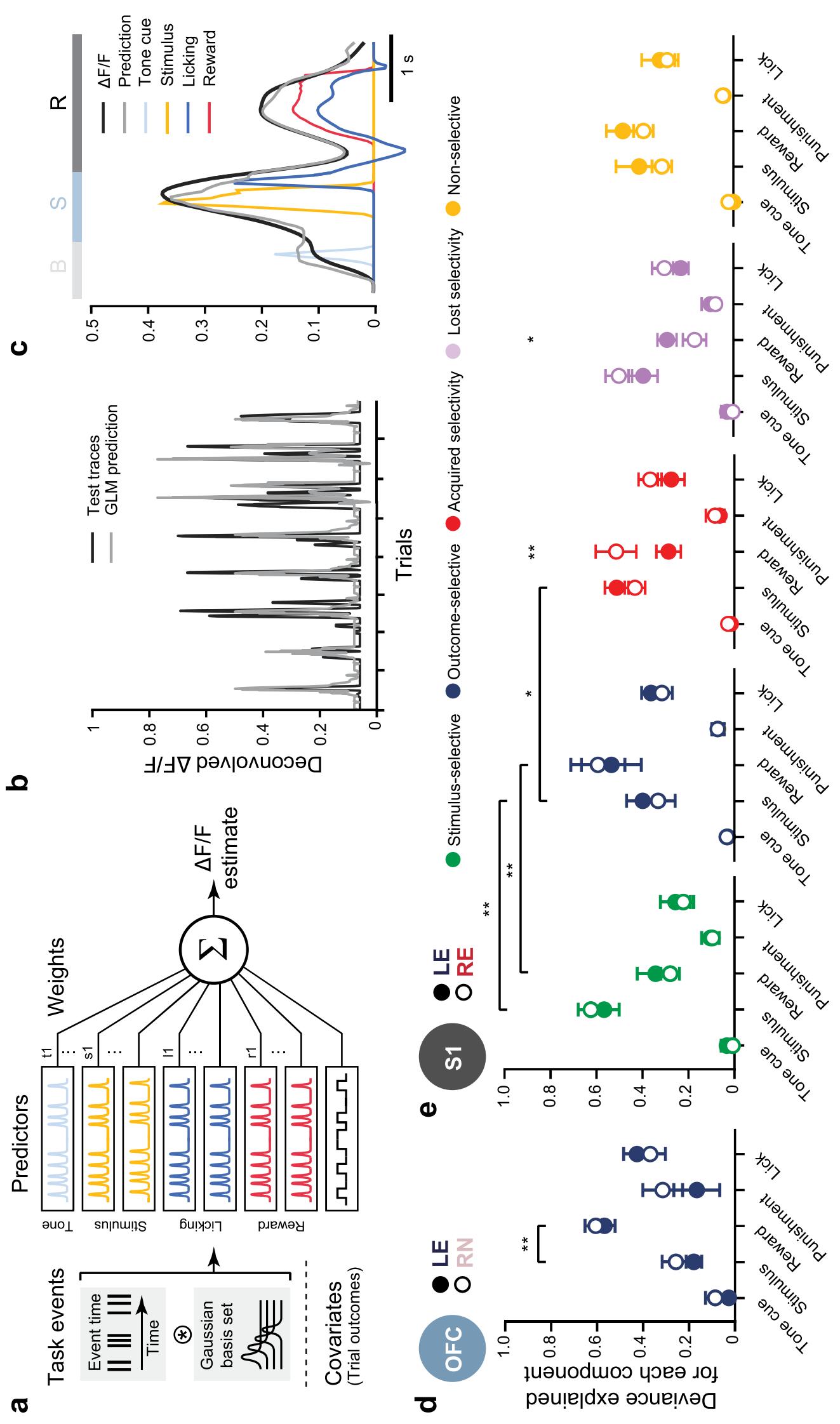
Suppl. Fig. 10



Suppl. Fig. 11



Suppl. Fig. 12

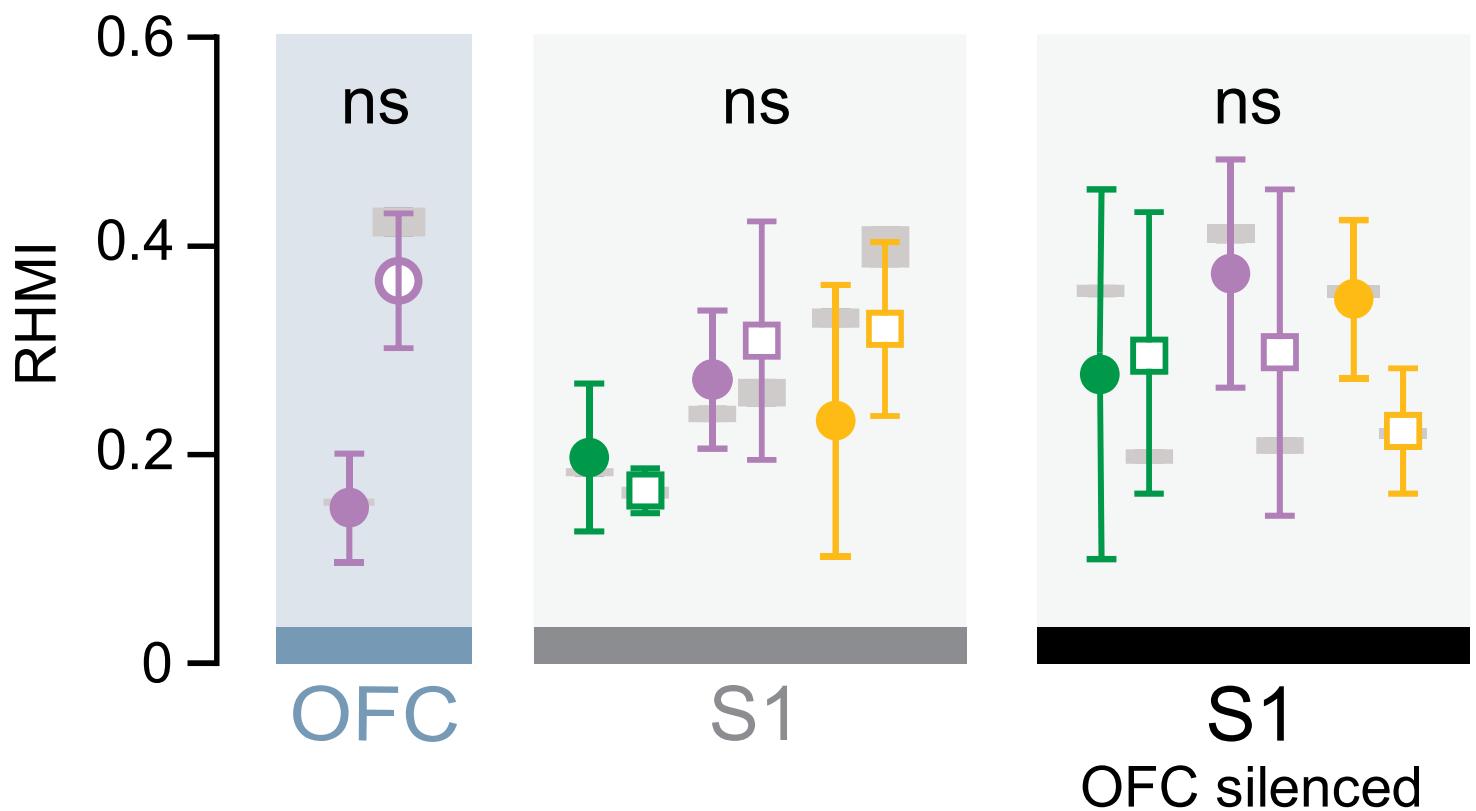


Suppl. Fig. 13



Reward-history Modulation

● LE ○ RN — ● LE □ RE —



● Stimulus-selective ● Lost selectivity ● Non-selective