Conway actants
Deborah Gardner
Jane Millar
This catalogue is published in the context of the artists' residency and site responsive events at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. November 2015 - July 2016.

Deborah Gardner  Jane Millar
Ellen's Gaze (E.D. Conway)  D. Gardner
Dark Red H.G. Wells  J. Millar

Ellen Dana  J. Millar
Conway Binocular (detail)  D. Gardner

Ellen Hive  D. Gardner
Moncure  J. Millar
The Free Thinker  D. Gardner
Moncure Matter  Gardner & Millar

H.G Galaxy  Gardner & Millar
Multicolour Annie  J. Millar
Conway Hall has stood as an outpost to seek refuge from the chaotic, yet monotonous, outpourings of life and to provide space and opportunity for other thoughts and inspirations to come to light.

Conway Actants, as a project, captured the eyes and minds of everyone who visited Conway Hall during the elongated grey midwinter of 2015/16.

The artistic and curatorial decisions that Deborah Gardner and Jane Millar resolved in putting together this immense site specific series of works gave light, breath and contemplation for our audiences. Once snared, the eye would give way to the mind in a process of curiosity as glimpses of key actants revealed themselves in the works to provoke interest, questions and intrigue as to who or what was being depicted. Balancing the sometimes soothing and sometimes harsh composition, materials and tone of each work ensured that every encounter was different and valuable in its own right. A remarkable achievement in a world of monochrome tastes being catered for that reduce rather than enhance the very necessary disruption of our patterns of thought which tend at times to gravitate solely towards the known and easily understood.

The artists’ pictorial and sculptural manifestations of key figures from Conway Hall’s past and present bring edgy and quirky components, alongside their mastery of aesthetic and technique, that play and encourage mindful play. Characters, inhabitants and hive dwellers are all referenced to encourage enquiry but also individual resonance as their art works do channel self-reflection upon some of the serious issues and ethos that Conway Hall’s varying actants stood for, represented or proclaimed. One is also given, as one should be, a mirror to one’s own ideas, actions and beliefs in a manner that encourages thought rather than defensiveness.

It is testament to Gardner and Millar’s own journey of engagement with Conway Hall that their works positively shine forth to aid others as they engage with their own thoughts, lives and inspirations whilst looking at the ‘Actants of Conway Hall’.

To the artists themselves, and all those who were involved in supporting and collaborating with them, I am deeply grateful for their bringing this exhibition to Conway Hall. To witness the excitement of children engaging with the work and the reflections of critical theorists were in themselves sufficient rewards. However, to have the privilege of the work surrounding my ‘office’ life for the duration of the exhibition brought great personal joy, reflection and inspiration. Mine was the luxury of being able to relate to these works on a daily basis yours, hopefully, will be the luxury of relating to them vicariously though their legacy in reproduced image and essay within this publication. Both are valid and necessary luxuries.
In our collaboration and journeys around Conway Hall (CH), we considered how we receive and respond to a place. In the case of CH, this became a means of us inhabiting a space, from the underbelly of stacked storage in the cellar to the bee hive area on the roof, and how this habitation constituted a form of agency. When deciding a title for our project, we thought of ourselves as agents, Conway Agents, who were members of a larger body; co workers who were part of an exchange. Further thoughts of agency as an enactment, led us to Jane Bennett’s reference to actants as having ‘the capacity to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle’\(^1\). It should also be said the historical figures, whose activity and radicalism developed Conway Hall’s history, were also viewed by us as Conway Actants.

It should be stated that this included our anticipation of, and reception to, the activity of other habitants of CH both past and present; human and non-human.

Taking Guiliana Bruno’s view of a ‘spectatorial voyage’\(^2\) throughout CH where we view and absorb the spaces not at a fixed static point but as a moving physical entity, we are structuring our comments in this essay around a journey from the bottom (basement) of CH, to the top (roof), working through the building.

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\(^1\) Jane Bennett, Vibrant Mattera political ecology of things (Durham & London, 2010), 6
Cellar
Our photography of Conway Hall’s hidden spaces uncovered a threshold place, where light partially entered a Bachelardian ‘dark entity’.

It acted as another kind of archival space - a repository of leaflets, signs, props, refreshments, which both revealed and concealed activities in the building, entangling the past, present and future.

Our photography in the cellar completed the third part of our work Conway Trilogy (fig1), a holding space between disintegration or propagation; something in passage, spreading out and varying in size.

We saw the cavernous cellar as an assemblage, within the assemblage of the whole.

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3 Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space (Boston:Beacon Press, 1994), 18
We were struck during a visit to a Franz West retrospective exhibition by his astuteness in consistently testing the possibilities of relations between seemingly disparate objects and materials in clusters of combinations and re-combinations.

The visit consolidated our decision to curate non-hierarchical sets of assemblages in the Brockway Room, where the emphasis was on an overall magnetic attraction of encounter. Manipulated images of portraits of historical figures from CH (Annie Besant, Ellen and Moncure Conway, Eliza Flower, Sarah Fuller Flower, H.G. Wells)) appeared in wall-based clusters alongside painted and constructed networks, lumps of matter, crystals, images of splatters, which were scattered, repeated, layered and hole punched surfaces, in a mutual constitution of societal and biological systems.

The configuration of the assemblages was not predetermined, their associations and forces emerged at different points but could be shifted and reassembled to form new contexts.

Like a physicist’s field of action, the feature of their interconnectedness was that the enfolded in and each enfolded in...
The mutational and adaptable relations, subject to unseen laws, are suggested in the uncontrollable capacities of a society, and CH of course. The potential and ineffable force of change or destruction, governed by ecosystems, propagation and repetition, expressed in the Red Colony sculptures (fig 4 & 5) and other works, where the fusion of plastic with other things refers to the sociopolitical aspects of a ‘material actant’ as much as to accumulative expansion and in two Bismuth images (fig 6 & 7) where non-human physical forces act on a metal element to make human-made looking spaces, like a Wells-ian vision of a future utopian city.

In our verbal and visual conversations as to how we would bring things into mutual relation within an assemblage, the material articulation of the bead, resin, plastic and cardboard constructed particles acted as congealing matter: within a resinous, crystalline compound: congealed matter, like the dried blood of a scab or the trace of blood on a pavement, forms a skin, protecting reactionary processes and forces underneath. The combined force of violent impact and regenerative action exists within Crystal Magma (fig2) and Sympathy (fig3). Yet it is also arrests freedom and fluidity; a reactionary political response to change or uncertainty; a fear of death. We drew connections between this and the brittle, crystalline freezing of change, particularly in a human organisation’s psychology.

Round hallway
Both the painting Either Side (fig 8) and the sculptural installation Conway Hive (fig 9) referred to a potential networkability in form.

The works and their siting questioned the boundaries of circular space: in the hive works, which swelled and pushed within the constraints of the aperture that held them, and in the punctured image they co-operated in collapsing boundaries between the self and the world, material and ethereal, permeation and aura. A strange auditory effect of the round hallway where Either Side and Conway Hive were installed is a bouncing back of one’s voice, reverberating through the body, and a consequent uncertainty of where and how your verbal expression is located.

Further along the corridor and in dialogue with the cellar space, the collaborative triptych light work Conway Trilogy (fig1) explored the door as a portal from one space to another, creating a filmic path where, as Bruno describes architecture, like film, ‘is shaped by the montage of spectatorial movements’.

7 Guliana Bruno, 2002, 56
Library Hive (fig 10) bulged from the circular window of the roof, into the space of the library: an ‘event’ sculpture in that the altering light and times of the day, dusk night and dawn significantly affected its reading.

The work Stacks, (figs 11 & 12) consisted of photographic images on blocks, spread along the shelves, punctuating the space of the library, the interstices between each block filled with books. Images of layers of concrete slabs and tiles presented seemingly impenetrable strata, containing unseen spaces; a potential movement resonant of slow, geological time.

Placed within the shelves of the library, we were conscious of these works prompting thoughts both on the minutiae and magnitude of social, political and cultural bodies and Deleuze and Guattarri’s reference to the book as an assemblage within the assemblage of the library.8

The work *Marsden Rock Communities* (fig13), tested the impact of proximal space; photographs of barnacles and limpets clustered on the surface of Marsden Rock, reflected on how bird, insect and marine life swarm, migrate and co-exist in an interdependency with the rock strata, to make up the vibrant assembly.

During our somnambulist photographic journey through the building, witnessing and photographing its rooms at dusk, the library was a point where, when light faded, the daytime material solidity of books, statues, tables was called into question. Conscious of the cinematic, there was a Powell Pressburger-like tension: a rose-coloured book lies open at the front of the space, the pattern of lighting from outside beams across the trace of a bust on a shelf, outside we see a lit domestic window on the opposite side of *Red Lion Square* (fig 14).

However, our photographic process used the Dogme principle of only using available light; a scenographic space with no elaborate special effects or technology. The triptych *Conway Trilogy* (fig1) (installed in the downstairs corridor), recorded this hidden life, an immateriality; one state merged into another. The encounter with the library also revealed a contingent space, a storeroom, behind the scenes, which began the trilogy.

The collaborative work *Looking Out* (fig15), a light box installed on the exterior of CH, echoed the CH illuminated sign outside the entrance. Projected out onto Red Lion square from the balcony railings, this work inverted and exposed the view from the interior of the library, it’s balcony door left open, collapsing private and public space; a doorway through to the nighttime exterior, connecting the interior of Conway Hall with its immediate surrounding environment.
The works Conway and Library Hives bulged from the windows nudging into the space of the building with an impetus for disturbance and a reference to the network culture of honey-bee hives on the roof.

**Stairwell**
The ground floor of CH hosts piano auctions every four months, filling with the sound of itinerary instruments and music: composers Cynthia Millar and Roly Porter collaborated on a moving site-responsive sound work in a response to the piano auctions, which create a ‘landscape’ (fig 16) throughout the ground floor at Conway Hall.

Solely using a recording by Cynthia Millar of the pianos being played and tested prior to auction in the ambient spaces, they responded to the itinerant nature of the pianos, of music and to the nature of CH as a refuge for free thinking. The work was installed in a space on the stairs behind the main hall, with the volume set at a subtle level to just reach visitors as they approached, and with the sound sensitively calibrated to seem to move about the space; a space that also contained a wall of old cabinets holding some of Conway Hall’s collection of chamber music manuscripts.

The work can now be accessed at http://conwayhall.org.uk/event/conway-actants/

**Roof**
These hexagonal colonies transmit and receive information across their various constituents; conversely colony collapse disorder, likely attributed to environmental change and infection, causes mass exodus and the eventual disintegration of such agencies. And in continuing with the agency of networking patterning, within the world of neuronal networking, the firing fields of grid neurons in the brain tessellate spatial movement in a hexagonal array. With such considerations in mind, the network systems we employed in our work were strategically distributed throughout the building to act as a means of connective mapping, which navigates movement through the spaces and ethics of Conway Hall.
The children from St Joseph's school, who took part in a Conway Actants workshop, were completely complicit with this notion of the hive; of a repeating hexagonal cell, of individuals working for the good of all, a political idea that may only express and expand to a limited form, but is potentially endless.

Conway Hall staff collaborated with Jane Millar to develop a schools workshop that gave pupils from St. Joseph's primary school the opportunity to gain an understanding of the artists’ artwork, subject matter and processes for Conway Actants, whilst also introducing them to the history and ethos of Conway Hall. Twenty-nine pupils took part and were given a talk by C.E.O. Jim Walsh on the history of Conway Hall, followed by a tour of the building and exhibition, culminating in the pupils creating an artwork which was exhibited within the building.

The artwork created by the school pupils took one of the recurring exhibition themes of honeycombs as its inspiration, particularly from Deborah's hive works, installed in the library and hallway circular ceiling windows. In turn Jane Millar and Deborah Gardner's inspiration for these motifs in some of their artworks came from the beehives situated on the roof of Conway Hall, and from their visual conversation about propagation and the relationship between individuals, an organisation and political assemblages. Each pupil created an hexagonal shape out of cardboard in which they drew a picture of themselves, or family members. They created another layer over the top of each cell with transparent yellow cellophane, with more images. These layered hexagonal structures were then glued together to form a honey comb structure, connecting themselves and their families together as a sculptural community, expressing individuality within a group.

"Thank you for a wonderful day on Monday! We enjoyed ourselves so much and it was one of the most successful trips I've had with my class this year. They loved soaking up all your knowledge and being hands on with the art as well."

Kate Cvitanovich, teacher.
St Joseph's Primary School, Camden
Artists familiar with Deleuze and Guattari might already know the rhizome brain.1 Although it
meet and the potential to disentangle art from the cultural circuitry of capitalism.

but I’m interested here in the critical spaces that open up when philosophical and artistic brains
kinds of brain. These two brains might seem like an uncanny way to engage with an art exhibit,
problematize the relation between art and philosophy in very different ways by introducing two

My critical intervention into Conway Actants draws on two books by Deleuze and Guattari which
produce forms in representational space or objects of art under the scrutiny of subjective acts
of signification. Rhizome art is an aesthetic propagation; a contagion, spreading outward in
unquantifiable spaces of experience.

Rhizome brains closely follow the neuron doctrine. They are not, as such, a continuous reticular
fabric. There’s a synaptic discontinuity between cells. Thoughts leap across gaps, making the
brain an uncertain, probabilistic multiplicity, swimming in its own neuroglia. Indeed, as some
artists might notice, many people have a metaphorical tree growing in their head, but axons
and dendrites are more like bindweed than roots. The artist’s rhizome does not, as such,

The regular space of Club Critical Theory has most often been upstairs at the Railway
Hotel in Southend-on-Sea, but on the 3rd March 2016 the club moved to London for
the evening to engage with the Conway Actants exhibit.

Another attraction of the rhizome is that it connects anything to everything. There are indeed
many rhizomatic mixtures in Conway Actants. In the Brockway Room, for example, there’s a
series of abstract machines, acting like transmitters and receivers. This is not information
transmitted through a medium. These are assemblages of disparate materials, objects and
structures. Like Franz West’s adaptive and portable art we find the open possibilities of
relationality. This is art that teeters on a threshold between propagation and disintegration.

Chaos Brains

The artist seduced by the rhizome might be surprised by Deleuze and Guattari’s second brain. It
certainly disturbs the composed mixtures of sensation and concept. But it is here in the chaos
brain that we find an unexpected critical turn enabling us to more closely inspect the space of
possibilities in which artists and philosophers meet.

In their swansong, What is Philosophy? Deleuze and Guattari unpredictably argue that concepts
and sensations do not mix. Forget the nomads that used to cut across art and philosophy. We
now have distinct planes. It’s not that artists or philosophers have different kinds of brains. This
is not a crude neuroimaging exercise, differentiating between the location of sensations and
concepts in the brain. It is the work of all brains to tear open the umbrella that shields the brain
from chaos—and “plunge” into the infinity that confronts us all.2 The difference here is found
in what artists and philosophers discern from the endless possibilities they encounter. What
emerges from these plunges into chaos is a difference in kind. The promises of rhizomatic
mixture are replaced by the almost biblical affirmation: Thou shalt not mix.3

Philosophers Produce Concepts, Artists Produce Sensations

How do these differences affect the relation between art and philosophy? To begin with, both
need to be considered in relation to the endless possibilities we find in events. Some of the
mixture of the rhizome is retained in the work of concepts. They give consistency to infinite chaos
– they actualize the event. This is not, however, about giving form to the event. A concept is not a
representation of events! Concepts are not forms of opinion. They are always relational.

“There is always an area ab that belongs to both a and b.”4
The philosopher’s analytical tool of choice, the conceptual personae, is intended to surpass forms of opinions. But like one Nietzsche’s personae, concepts can only interfere with sensations. They can never become sensations.

The artist’s sensation never actualizes the event, but instead embodies the possibilities it produces. The sensation is, in fact, neither virtual nor actual. It is always the possible. Like this, the hive sculptures give a body to the event, providing it with a universe of possibilities in which to live. So while the artist composes with her materials; offering contemplations and enjoyments, she also produces a universe that constructs limits, distances, proximities and constellations. Importantly then, sensations are not perceptions or acts of signification. They are affects that deploy aesthetic figures to route around perception and signification.

The historical trajectory of art leads Deleuze and Guattari to a junction whereby the emergence of abstract art and conceptual art seems to promise to bring sensations and concepts together. The shadow of Duchamp looms large here since he assembles both in the same gallery space. But to what extent do they really mix? Indeed, the move to conceptual art is explicitly rejected by Deleuze and Guattari. This is because when art becomes too informative it also becomes unclear as to whether or not it is a sensation or concept. The problem is, it seems, that it’s not in the artwork itself, but in the spectator’s “opinion” that the sensation is, or is not, manifested as art. It is the audience who decide (as receivers of information) whether it is art or not. Like this, Duchamp’s readymade does not mediate affect through the experience of a sensation. It is a subjective act that mixes signification with sensation, and as a consequence, it seems, the artist loses some of the affective power of the work.

Deleuze and Guattari evidently favour abstract art. It refines the sensation by dematerializing matter. Turner’s chaotic seascapes, for example, produce a sensation of the concept of the sea. In contrast, conceptual art is not so refined. It dematerializes through generalization. This is undeniably a surprising denunciation given that conceptual art is the condition for contemporary art and Deleuze and Guattari are seen by many to be the philosopher kings of contemporary art. Nonetheless, the problem is clear: conceptual art produces signification not sensation.

Maybe in its pursuit of mixture, contemporary art has been decidedly selective in its choice of Deleuzean brains. I’m sure the revelation of a second brain will cause a certain amount of discomfort. But perhaps art as sensation retains apolitical clout that art as signification can never achieve? The former is famously infused with autonomy while the latter has too much information, which might, Deleuze and Guattari feared, collapse into immaterial capitalism.

**Art in the Cultural Circuits of Immaterial Capitalism**

In his Control Society thesis, Deleuze expressed concern about art’s relation to capitalism. Art had already left the gallery and “entered into the open circuits of the bank.” As Rivera must have asked himself in the Rockefeller Center in the early 1930s, “how can art find a critical space in this place?” Conceptual art is indeed part of an art system today; made up of critics, uber dealers, advisors, bankers and oligarchs. It’s these nodes in the circuitry, not the spectator, who decide if a concept is art (or not) by attributing a discourse, and ultimately, a price tag to it. This is a system that even Charles Saatchi calls “too toe-curling for comfort.”

How can art escape the cultural circuits of capitalism? Can a post-conceptual art create new conceptual weapons or frame its own concepts? Does art need to become, as Deleuze and Guattari contend, non-art? If nothing else the uncomfortable critical space produced by this second brain asks art to search for new rhizomatic lines of flight that might become disentangled from the circuitry in which it seems to be presently trapped.

**Notes**

1. Deleuze and Guattari explicitly reject Conceptual Art.
2. Conceptual Art is the condition of Contemporary Art.
3. Deleuze and Guattari are touted far and wide as the philosophers of Contemporary Art.
4. ... Huh?


As for example, Ricardo Basbaum’s work seeks to do. From a discussion between Basbaum and the author in London (July 2013).

As Zepke argues.
Space Invaders and the Value of Art
Andrew Branch, senior lecturer in media, communication and screen, University of East London

Works of art…are not closed, self-contained and transcendent entities, but are the product of specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given conditions, and therefore bear the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions of existence of those groups, and their representatives in particular artists.

Janet Wolff’s insistence on the need to make known the historical, ideological and social determinants of the artistic habitus,1 in order to scrutinise the practice of artists, retains its forcefulness in the contemporary neoliberal moment: who is able to acquire the temporal and financial resources that facilitate practice, and secure the institutional setting for the output arising from it? Further, how can the aesthetised aesthetic legitimised by field gatekeepers be employed – and it must be if value is to be conferred - without risking the accusation that it serves only to validate the particular interests of the dominant?

The work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is illuminating in this regard. Bourdieu’s (1987) insistence on exposing the historical conditions that allowed for the validation of such an aesthetic - framed by a Kantian definition of ‘good’ art as art that is disinterested because it resists interpretation (we might say resists signification) in favour of a sensorily intuitive appreciation by the viewer - compels us to ask, who decides this and is such disinterestedness ever truly realisable? For Bourdieu, what remains paramount is the extent to which artists expose the forms of domination that frame the field conditions in which their work is produced. Thus, Flaubert’s Madame Bovary (1856), or Scritti Politti’s self-produced Work in Progress EP (1979) to identify a less obvious example,2 were both progressively disruptive because each called attention to processes of symbolic violence – and counterclaims for revolt – in play at each historical juncture. The political challenge therefore becomes how to open up access to the conditions that might produce a universal aesthetic reflexively alert to exposing forces of domination, including its own.

Deborah Gardner and Jane Millar, the artists commissioned by Conway Hall to explore its spatiality, are alert to these questions. Their interventions invite the possibility of disruption, of unsettling spatial settings such that new ways of seeing and feeling are invited. Conway itself is reframed as spatial dissonance is celebrated through sonic intervention, with the familiar re-sensationalised.

These interventions are important because new forms of vision disrupt what is orthodox. For as Bourdieu argues, producing the conditions in which the social world is self-reflexively re-experienced is immensely difficult but critical, the force of the preconstructed resides in the fact that, being inscribed both in things and in minds, it presents itself under the cloak of the self-evident which goes unnoticed because it is the definition taken for granted. Rupture in fact demands a conversion of one’s gaze…The task is to produce, if not a ‘new person,’ then at least a ‘new gaze’…And this cannot be done without a genuine conversion, a metanoia, a mental revolution, a transformation of one’s whole vision of the social world.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 251)

For a politics predicated on defending both the value of state-funded art and the erosion of symbolic violence – an aspiration rife with contradictions, as I argue here - such disrupting of the preconstructed requires: (i) the presence of those whose domination has excluded them from occupying the affective spaces that might facilitate metanoia; (ii) a dispositional openness to such sites of transformation; and (iii) following Rancière’s (2009) philosophical account of art practice, and the critique of Bourdieu’s sociology which informs it, an acceptance of the views of others as legitimate, or more precisely the need to presume as a starting point that everyone’s view is equal.3

These are major challenges for as Robert Hewison has noted in his unpacking of the instrumental logic underpinning the branding of Britain as ‘cool’ and ‘creative’, only four percent of the English population can be defined as ‘voracious’ consumers of publicly-funded culture if we define voracious as frequenting a minimum of three events per annum across at least two of the following domains: music; theatre, dance and cinema; and visual arts, museums, festival and street arts (2014: 208). Such sites of transformation are not restricted to publicly funded domains such as these of course - an important point – but the empirical evidence paints a damning picture of what we might call ‘legitimated’ cultural practice enacted by the few, for the few.

We must accept, then, that the issue of presence is problematic given that the vast majority of the public appear oblivious of, and sceptical towards such art practice. This is because, for Bourdieu, it self-evidently conflicts with what he calls their doxic attitude, their naturalised way of comprehending the social world, which leads them to defensively sanction their exclusion via the reactionary discourses propagated in media accounts of ‘a child-of-three-could-paint-that’ populism. Therefore the challenge for artists with a commitment to political change remains how to engender metanoia through work that is alert to the conditions that produced it. This challenge requires an understanding of how affective atmospheres operate, the term developed by Anderson (2009) in his account of how affect and emotion can be theorised spatially: how do our bodies, which bear the imprint of history, experience such spaces?4 That is to ask, how do the uninitiated feel when they enter the sanctified spaces of institutions housing legitimuated culture?

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Margaret Wetherell’s account of the contribution made by psychobiologists to this debate is instructive: she contends that such contributions, which seek to address the ‘patternning of affect’, by theorising how our brains process the sensations our bodies experience, remain ‘unsettled’. I agree with her assessment that this is because such contributions ultimately fail to capture both the specificity of the nature of the signification processes central to the formulation of affective experience and the fact that ‘categorisation is embedded in social activity’ (2012: 50).

Thus in order to make sense of how art is experienced, we need to examine both the discursive and non-discursive practices that constitute our experience of the social world or, more fruitfully in my view, to render problematic this very distinction, as Jeremy Gilbert has done. In his review of the legacies of Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida and Foucault, in the context of a defence of cultural studies as a political project, Gilbert (2004) contends that to speak of ‘discourse’ is only helpful if we think of that concept as capturing a ‘continuum of effects’ where the ‘conceptual hierarchy’ that seeks to privilege meaning-project, Gilbert (2004) contends that to speak of ‘discourse’ is only helpful if we think of that concept as a ‘continuum of effects’ where the ‘conceptual hierarchy’ that seeks to privilege meaning-making over affect is contested, such that verbal language is not, a priori, privileged ‘as the key metaphor for all other forms of social practice’. He states that,

...this is not to say that some other form of practice or knowledge must be accorded a similar privilege. Rather, these observations require that meaning be considered as but one portion on a continuum of effects which discourse/practice may have, and that the meaningful be considered only one dimension of the social: sociality must be understood as a necessary condition for meaning, but meaning must not be taken to exhaust the reality of sociality.

Gilbert (2004)

Crucially, Gilbert goes on to note, ‘that non-linguistic aspects of social experience can be discussed and differentiated, even if they must be brought within the realm of linguistic meaning in order to make this possible’ (ibid; my emphasis).

These are difficult challenges, for artists and the audiences they wish to elicit, as they require all participants to develop dispositions that disorientate and allow for sufficient ‘play’ to disrupt those practices that Wetherell credits Bourdieu with for exposing; practices which, ‘congeal and constrain, producing difficult to shift social formations, hierarchies, epistemic regimes and patterns of distinction’ (2012: 23). Recognising that such practices are endemic to neoliberal subjectivity is to recognise the scale of the task. If we also take note of Deleuze and Guattari’s rejection of conceptual art - arguably the dominant contemporary art form - that Tony Sampson acknowledges in this publication, we can recognise that an art practice worth defending politically is one that is both self-reflexively enacted and, because it generates cognitive dissonance, resistant to closure through signifying practices, even if such practices must be utilised at a later point in order to articulate the metanoia undertaken.

How can such dispositions be developed and how does the brain’s plasticity - its ability to reorganise neurological connections in response to socially-constituted stimuli – facilitate such change? And what ethics should we hold as normative when we evaluate such dispositions? These problematics are beyond the spatial capacities of this article, but they are important ones, especially given the interest expressed in them by the advertisers and propagandists busily coding new algorithms in support of their (contested) attempts to increase our consumption and divert our attention. The rich history of Conway Hall as a space for hierarchical disruption - a history respected by ‘space invaders’ such as Gardner and Millar - provides the basis for a way forward.

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Notes
1 Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977: 78-86) term to define the inherited dispositions that structure our practice.
2 The first example is Bourdieu’s. The second is mine: its punk-inspired DIY aesthetic remains a formative influence. I was also more disposed to buying post-punk singles in my teens than nineteenth century French novels.
3 See Jeremy Lane’s reply to Brigitt Fowler for a lucid account of the challenge Rancière’s philosophy poses for Bourdieusians seduced by what Lane reads as a priori assumptions rather than posterrior justifications.
4 For reasons made clear in this article, I prefer the term experience to affect and in this respect I keep good company: Raymond Williams (1977: 132) thought the word “better and wider” to capture what he initially described, contra ‘world-view’, as a structure of feeling.

Bibliography
Reflecting Pool (Annie Besant), 2015 (resin beads, metal sheet, 24 x 16 x 10 cm)

Archive Pillow, 2015 (plaster, 11 x 30 x 50 cm)

Ellen Conway Sarah Flowers, 2015 (resin, magnifying glasses, 24 x 18 x 4 cm)
Reflecting Pool II (Sarah Flowers), 2015 (plaster, tin, resin, 15x15x12cm)

Reflecting Pool III (Ellen Conway), 2015 (plaster, tin, resin, 20 x 20 x 11cm)
Conway Binocular, 2015 (stereoscope lens, resin, plastic cups, 16 x 20 x 12 cm)

Time Traveller (H.G. Wells), 2015 (metal, resin, 9 x 9 x 11 cm)
Nebula, 2015 (plastic ball and straws, 25 x 20 x 10 cm)

Library Hive, 2015 (cardboard, 80 x 80 x 40 cm)

Conway Hive, 2015 (cardboard, 120 x 120 x 45 cm)
The Heat of Us, 2015 (acrylic, beads and thread on Tyvek, 30 x 42 cm)

Untitled, 2015 (acrylic, beads and thread on Tyvek, 30 x 42 cm)

Untitled (mushrooms), 2015 (acrylic, beads and thread on Tyvek, 48 x 31 cm)
Actants, 2015 (acrylic and cardboard approx 29 x 42)

Bismuth 2, 2015 (acrylic, beads and thread on silver paper, 39 x 45 cm)

Bismuth 1, 2015 (acrylic on silver paper, 52 x 55 cm)
Either Side, 2015 (pastel, beads and thread on Tyvek, 125 x 125 cm)

Demons, 2014 (acrylic, beads and thread on Tyvek, 30 x 42 cm)
Souvenir, 2012 (handkerchief, beads, thread, 42 x 42 cm)

Broken, 2015 (found drawing, glassine and beading on paper, 26 x 22 cm)