

REF 2021

UoA 34: Art & Design: History, Practice and Theory

University of Worcester

The Rejo—inders

Jess Mathews



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The Rejoinders

Author: J Mathews

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2018

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300 Word Statement

The Rejoinders: a research network and curatorial project between India and Wales, funded by India Wales, a British Council (<https://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/programmes/arts>) and Arts Council Wales / Wales Arts International (<http://www.wai.org.uk/>) programme as part of the UK / India Year of Culture 2017-18 (<https://uk-india.britishcouncil.in/>). Realised in collaboration with g39 (<http://www.g39.org/>), CONA Foundation (<http://www.conafoundation.net/>), What About Art? (<https://www.whataboutart.net/>), and University of Worcester, the project received a total production budget of £28,500, with additional in-kind support. The project operated between May 2017 – August 2018, included four artist residences and culminated in a public exhibition (11/05/18 – 02/06/18). Audience numbers were 330, with many more members of the public accessing the project via the project web-platform, <https://www.therejoinders.org/> (1030 users).

Research and development of the project (a collaboration between Jess Mathews and Melissa Hinkin), arose from a British Council Wales Scoping Visit to Delhi & Mumbai in May 2016. Key concerns in its initiation were: the production of a new curatorial framework (both a conceptual model and practical tool) that could bring creative practitioners from Wales and India together; digital innovation through the production of a web-platform as a working resource, and a tool for articulation in the very realisation of its form; developing a practice-based approach to building a new language of collaboration across regions and disciplines.

Over the course of sixteen months The Rejoinders as a site of exchange was co-developed by its research network; Artists Salik Ansari, Neha Chaturvedi, Dhruv Jani, Lauren Heckler, Rujuta Rao, AJ Stockwell, Neasa Terry, Fern Thomas, KATCONA DESIGN CELL; Paul Goodfield (Web Designer); Per Törnberg (Graphic Designer); Dr Jonathan Prior (Lecturer in Human Geography, Cardiff University, and Sound Recordist); and Amanda Colbourne (Evaluation Consultant); resulting in a programme of studio visits; a purpose-built tool for collaboration (www.therejoinders.org); four artist residencies; and the production of twelve original artworks.

The Rejoinders project (in its conception and physical presence), relied on an open framework to collectively develop sites of action. The digital interface was conceived as a window onto the whole process of collaboration – designed to move through and be responsive to various phases. The exhibition was approached as another form of realisation, engaging open-ended enquiry through visual and written prompts, mirroring that of the platform. The underpinning methodology of practice-based enquiry into questions of curation as verb; the archive and its live-ness; and the possibility of new constellations of knowledge realised and presented in real-time, are of ongoing concern.



Research Outcome

0.1 CONA Foundation Research Visit

21/05/17 - 28/05/17

Studio Visits with; AJ Stockwell (Artist at Studio B); Sam Hasler (Artist at Spit&Sawdust Studios); Rabab Ghazoul (Artist at Studio B); Sean Edwards; Amber Mottram (The Boat Studio); and introductions to; g39 & UNIT(e) Programme with Anthony Shapland, Director; National Museum Wales Collection with Nick Thornton, Curator, National Museum Cardiff; Glynn Vivian Gallery Collection, Swansea, with Katy Freer, Curator; PEAK with Rebecca Spooner, Creative Director; Spit&Sawdust Skatepark and Artspace with Nia Metcalfe, Co-Director / Curator; St Fagans National History Museum with Claire Prosser, Artist in Residence.



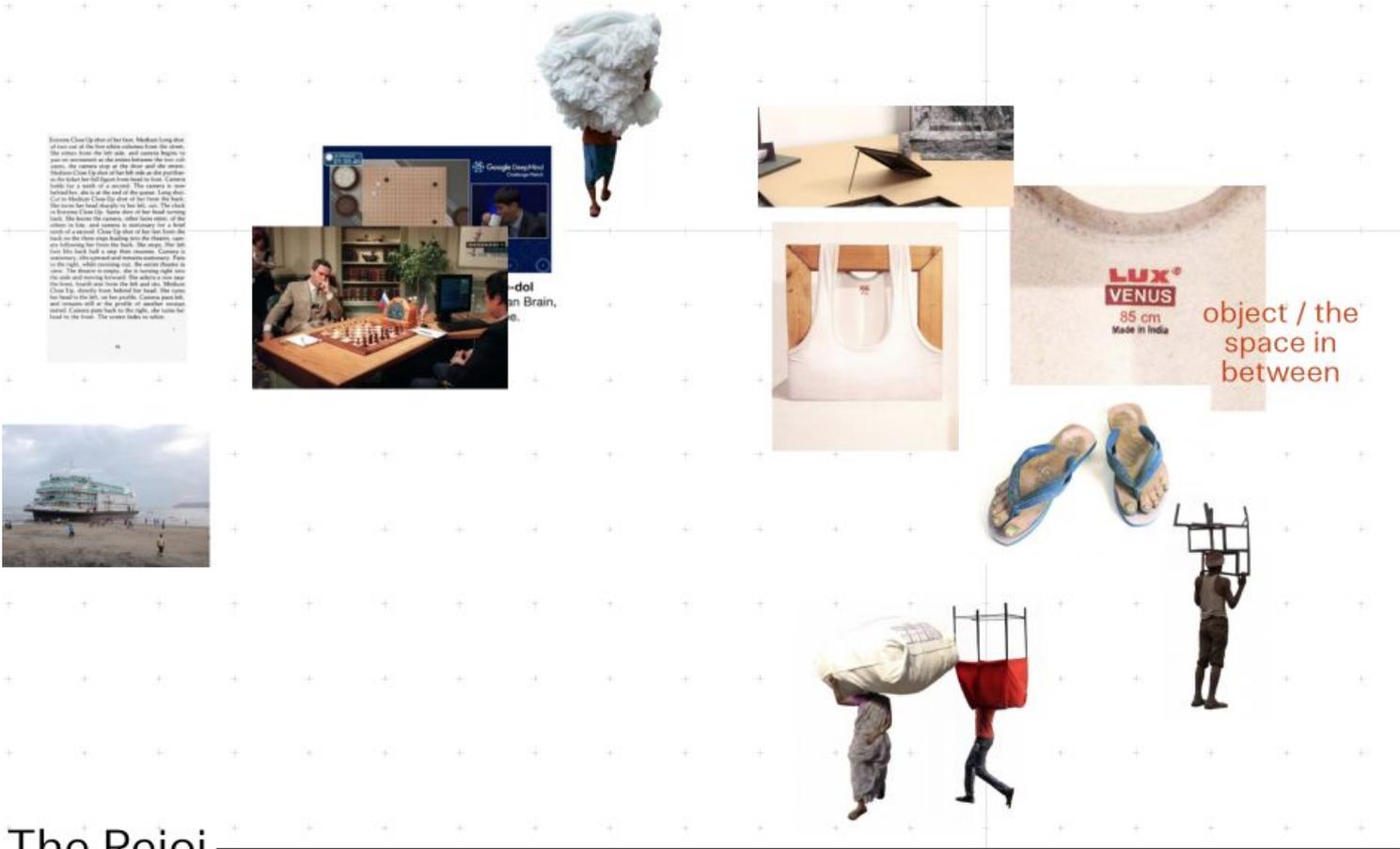
Research Outcome

0.2 The Rejoinders Web Platform

www.therejoinders.org

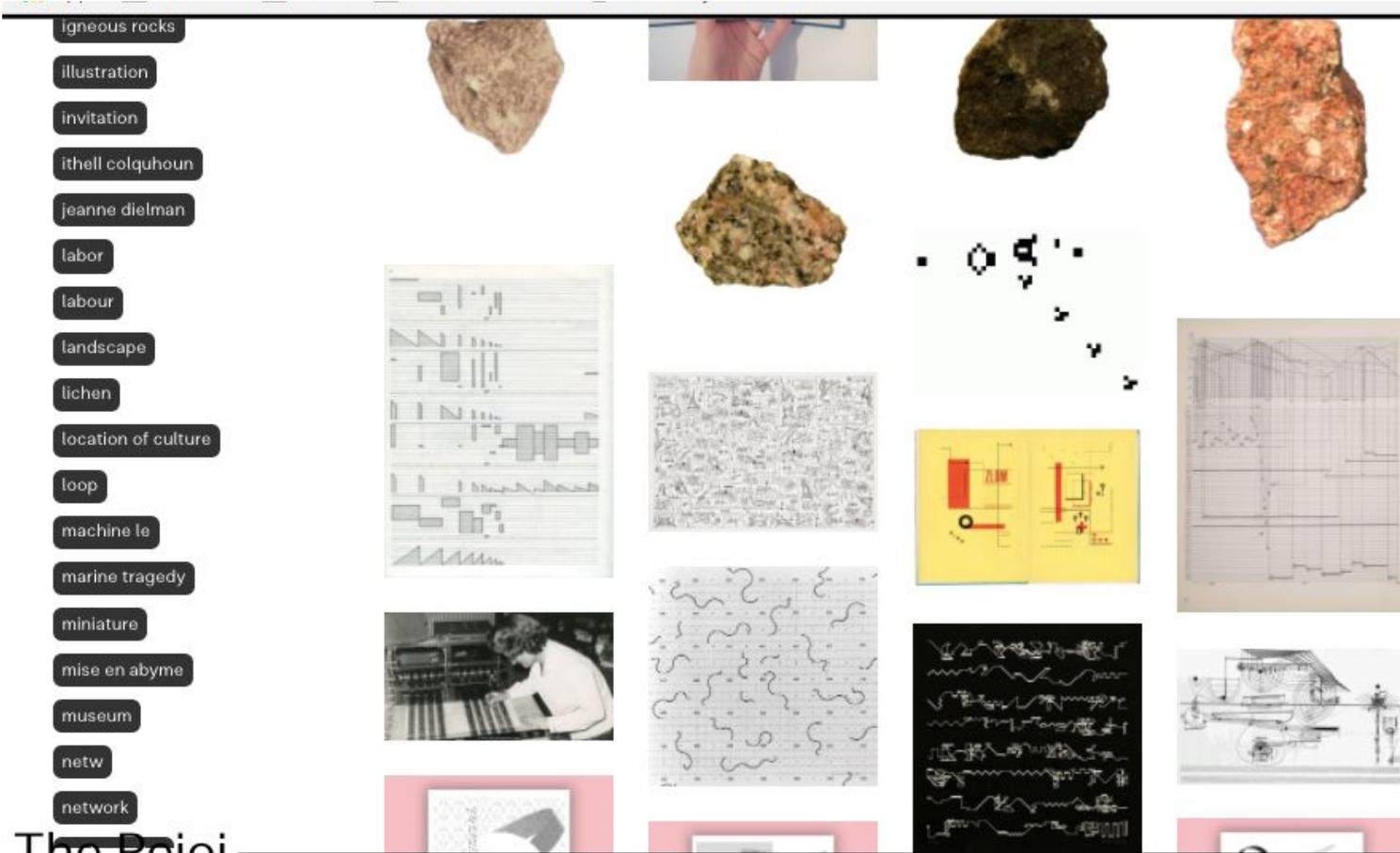
Designed by Paul Goodfield and Per Törnberg, with contributions from Salik Ansari, Neha Chaturvedi, Melissa Hinkin, Dhruv Jani, Jess Mathews, Jonathan Prior, Rujuta Rao, AJ Stockwell, Neasa Terry, Fern Thomas. Including 'Artist Takeovers' with Neasa Terry (20/01/18 – 25/01/18), AJ Stockwell (25/01/18 – 30/01/18), Salik Ansari (01/02/18 – 06/01/18), Dhruv Jani (01/02/18 – 06/01/18), Rujuta Rao (12/02/18 – 17/02/18), Fern Thomas (26/02/18 – 02/03/18), Dr Jonathan Prior (20/01/18 – 25/03/18).

The web-platform continues to be accessible to viewers and researchers beyond the life of the project, as a resource and tool to be explored, mined, and added to.



object / the space in between

The Rejoice



The Rejoice

Research Outcome

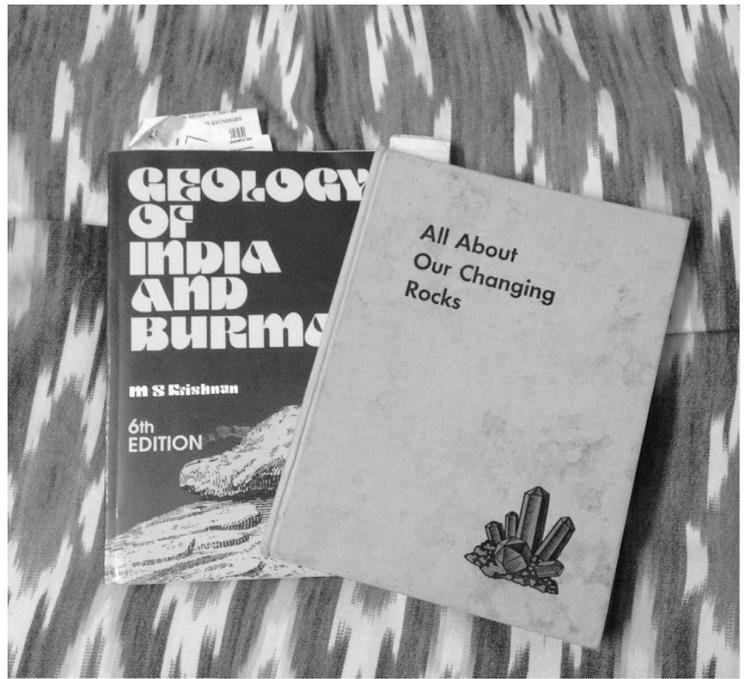
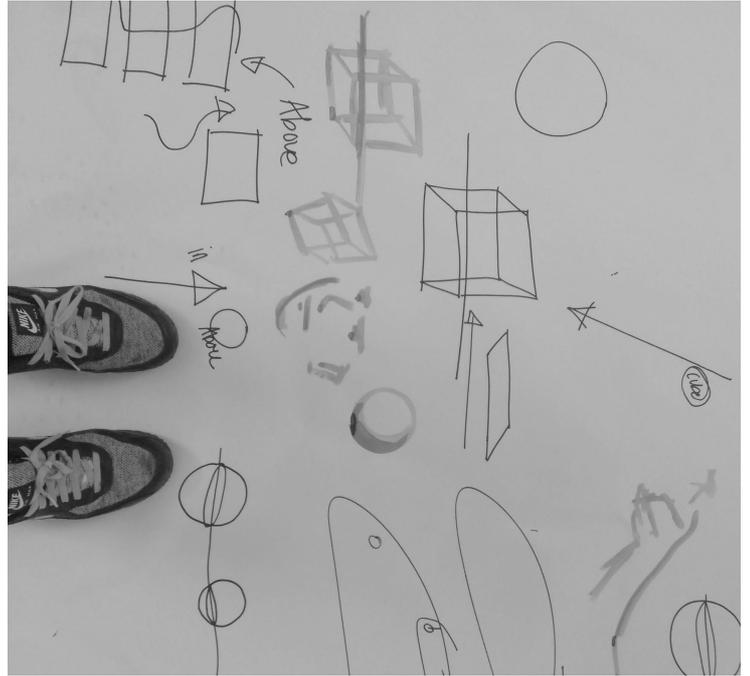
0.3 Artist Exchange, India/Wales

Neasa Terry Residency, What About Art? Mumbai, 05/04/18 – 26/05/18
(supported by International Opportunities Fund, Wales Arts International).

Salik Ansari Residency, g39, Wales, 21/04/18 – 12/05/18.
Including collaboration with Artist Lauren Heckler.

Rujuta Rao Residency, g39, Wales, 27/04/18 – 20/05/18.
Including hosting Breakfast Club at g39, 19/05/18.

AJ Stockwell Residency, CONA Foundation, Mumbai, 04/06/18 – 18/06/18
(supported by International Opportunities Fund, Wales Arts International).



Research Outcome

0.4 The Rejoinders, Exhibition at g39, Cardiff

11/05/18 – 02/06/18

Contributing artists AJ Stockwell, Dhruv Jani, Dr Jonathan Prior, Fern Thomas, KATCONA DESIGN CELL, Neasa Terry, Rujuta Rao, Salik Ansari. Including new works from AJ Stockwell, Salik Ansari, Neasa Terry, Rujuta Rao, Fern Thomas, Jonathan Prior.

Audience figures: 304

Event figures, Rujuta Rao Breakfast Club, 19/05/18: 26

THE REJOINDERS



PARTICIPANTS

UNITED KINGDOM

JESS MATHEWS
MELISSA HINKIN
DR JONATHAN PRIOR
AJ STOCKWELL
NEASA TERRY
FERN THOMAS
AMANDA COLBOURNE

INDIA

SHREYAS KARLE
HEMALI BHUTA
DHRUV JANI
SALIK ANSARI
RUJUTA RAO

COLOPHON

JESS MATHEWS - PROJECT DIRECTOR
MELISSA HINKIN - CREATIVE PRODUCER
PER TÖRNBERG - DESIGN
PAUL GOODFIELD - PROGRAMMING

PREVIEW: FRIDAY 11 MAY, 6-9PM

OPEN: 12 MAY - 2 JUNE 11AM-5PM WED TO SAT

RHAGARDDANGOSIAD: DYDD GWENER 11 MAI, 6-9YP

AR AGOR: 12 MAI - 2 MEHEFIN 11YB-5YP, DYDD MERCHER HYD DDYDD SADWRN

g 39

Wales arts international
celfyddydau rhyngwladol cymru

Ffôn Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

Arts Council of Wales

ARMENNE GAN
LOTTERY FUNDED

Armenian Arts Council

University
of Worcester

BRITISH COUNCIL UK/IN

Artworks

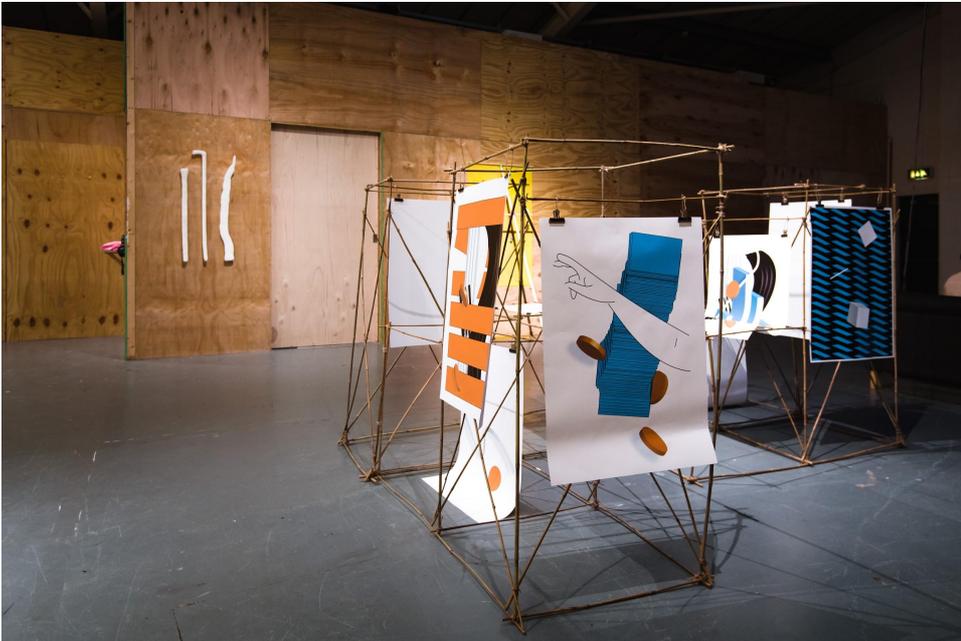
A document of new artworks created as part of The Rejoinders Exhibition Programme, that each have lives / iterations beyond the exhibition:

1. Salik Ansari, *Walker I: Khilonewala (Toy seller)*, 2018. Medium: Wood, paint, objects, threads.
2. Salik Ansari, *Walker II: Crossing*, 2018. Medium: Wood and Fabric.
3. Salik Ansari, *Walker III: Fallen*, 2018. Medium: Wood, Polyurethane foam, Fabric, Paint & Plastic toys.
4. Salik Ansari, *Walker IV: Still*, 2018. Medium: Stone & used bag strap.
5. Salik Ansari, *Anatomy of walkers I*, 2018. Medium: Air drying clay.
6. Salik Ansari & Lauren Heckler, *We carry each other*, 2018 (Performance + Video, 2 channel). Medium: Wearable object and Video.
7. Rujuta Rao, *Work in progress*, 2018.
8. AJ Stockwell, *research-collage-Kanheri090518*, 2018.
9. Neasa Terry, *Flatlands*, 2018
10. Fern Thomas, *Notes on a future and a past event*, 2018.
11. Jonathan Prior, Dawn chorus, Heath Park Woods, Cardiff, 4.50-5.50am, 6 May 2018.
12. Jonathan Prior, Evening chorus, Heath Park Woods, Cardiff, 7.30-8.30pm, 6 May 2018.









All images:
The Rejoinders at g39, Cardiff, exhibition installation.
Courtesy: Polly Thomas

Further Evidence

References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-2017-uk-india-year-of-culture>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-38898612>

<https://uk-india.britishcouncil.in/explore/india-wales-season-2017>

Collected Quotes

“The digital platform and the open ended curatorial view was the highlight for me, along with the title of the project. Being part of this has helped me to look into the shared history of both the countries in a new way, through my exploration of walking as an act.” Salik Ansari Feedback, March 2018.

“Then I came to Cardiff, and I’m working on a piece, a performance with another artist, Lauren Heckler, so now I’m getting this good sense of collaboration because we are meeting daily for this work and I’m aware of the space nearby, and the digital platform – so now for me it is making more sense. So now, when I am going back to Italy and upload my new research progress, so for me it is more alive now. So, I like this connection with the web-~platform in the real space, and when now going back to the web-platform. Coming here was one of the most important parts in the entire process. When you meet people who you have been talking with online, and then you spend time, you make something together.” Salik Ansari Feedback, May 2018.

“it’s not a conversation with words. Unless you have the privilege of having a mentor, or a specific person who’s really interested in your work, it’s very difficult to have a conversation where you can bring your work forward. So that’s what I’m talking about through the platform, ‘a conversation’, I’m putting it in inverted commas. That’s what I’m talking about when I say a conversation, it’s more like, you can see all these ‘conversations’ happening and you can kind of get your own out of it, out of seeing these conversations visually.” Neasa Terry Feedback, May 2018.

“Exchanges like these come down to personal experience and connection and both artists 'embedded' themselves as part of Wales that will always be India. Even if it's an India with added Granny Macs, pickled onion Monster Munch and blue WKD.” Anthony Shapland Feedback, July 2018.

“What I find really amazing is the crossovers between me and other people’s practices, and I don’t know whether it’s a result of a certain kind of choice of people, or whether it has just happened to be so. But that is very interesting to me.” Rujuta Rao Feedback, May 2018.

“it is very rare.....it’s not often when I see the other artists work (which I haven’t yet, so that’s still left), it’s then that I will start thinking about everything that was posted on the website by them and I think that’s very unique. Usually we walk into a gallery or we go to a residency, and you work with other artists, but you may not have necessarily seen their process, and for me, more than what they have to say about their work, I’m very interested in people’s interests in general, even if they may not obviously translate into the work. I think in that aspect the website has been extremely successful. I’m really not interested in reading an artists bio or a text about the work, as much as I am in knowing what they like to watch.” Rujuta Rao Feedback, May 2018.

“Really enjoyed @TheRejoinders @g39cardiff. It was populated with small acts of resistance, objects and images you can turn in your hands, the sense of a miniaturisation of bigger things.” Dr Richard Allen, 23/05/2018, via Twitter.

