

Archives Of Possible Lives

social sculpture, interactive AI supported installation

From Truth to Probability

„Archives of Possible Lives“ is an artistic research project exploring the intersection of AI, biography, and social imagination.



Experience for Visitors

The installation sends each visitor on a unique journey through the archive.

From a numbered drawer to another numbered drawer. The tour will include up to 8 drawers.

Each drawer contains a thermal printer that prints out an individual biographical sentence fragment and sends the visitor to the next drawer.

The collected printouts ultimately form a fragmentary, personal narrative – a „possible life“ that was never lived but is conceivable.

At the end is a deep card index box from which each visitor takes a final card.

It reads: The truth is within you.

The visitors can take the printouts with them in a small envelope provided.

The archive of possible lives is a resonance chamber for our changed relationship to truth in the age of artificial intelligence.



The Archive of Possible Lives is an artistic research project at the intersection of AI, biography, and social imagination. It collects not the past, but the potential: alternative biographies, divergences, missed opportunities, courageous decisions that could have been. Each “possible vita” is a walk-in hypothesis about identity.

At the center is an installation that invites visitors to enter their own lives as a vector space: from a few deliberately chosen parameters, an AI generates biographical spaces of possibility. These are presented as concise poetic fragments that are neither true nor false, but statistically plausible.

In the form of printed cards, they unfold into narratives that lead step by step through the drawers of the archive. Each printout is a fragment of a possible identity, a scenario that continues to write itself. Visitors thus collect an individual path through the archive, consisting of a sequence of decisions and algorithmic coincidences.

At the end is a deep card index box from which each visitor takes a final card.

It reads: The truth is within you.

While the drawers overflow with printed out possible lives, this card points to the only place where certainty remains— one’s own inner self.

Social Laboratory

In this way, the work allows us to experience how artificial intelligence is changing our relationship to reality: from certainty to probability, from truth to narrative. The Archive of Possible Lives is at once an artistic experiment, a social laboratory, and a reflection on how algorithms are helping to write the biographies of tomorrow.

Artificial intelligence describes the world not in terms of truths, but in terms of probabilities. It calculates what is likely to happen—not what is really happening.

In the Archive of Possible Lives, each drawer opens to reveal a biography that is neither true nor false, but statistically plausible. “It’s possible that you stayed on one occasion, even though you could have left. That decision seemed insignificant. Yet its impact continues to be felt.”

Such statements are neither prophecy nor lies, but fragments of the narratives that algorithms write about us all every day. In this way, we become profiles in the space of possibilities. Our identity disintegrates into variants: applicant with moderate chances of success, patient with increased risk, consumer with deviant purchasing behavior. Artificial intelligence is increasingly oriented less toward what is and more toward what could be statistically probable.



The installation can deal with different languages and cultural local contexts

A language model such as „Qwen“ can adapt its generated text fragments to different languages and cultural contexts. It can refer for example to local places (cities) where it is exhibited.

At the cultural level, the model draws on probabilistic associations embedded in its training data. It can evoke locally familiar situations, social norms, and narrative structures without explicitly explaining them. These elements appear as subtle cues—references to everyday routines, spatial organization, or forms of interaction—that make a fragment feel contextually grounded.

Crucially, this process does not rely on explicit cultural labeling. Instead, the model generates „plausible variations within a contextual field“, allowing each text to align with a particular setting while remaining open and non-deterministic. The result can be a representation of a culture, but also a fragment that resonates within it, shaped by language, tone, and implicit social patterns.

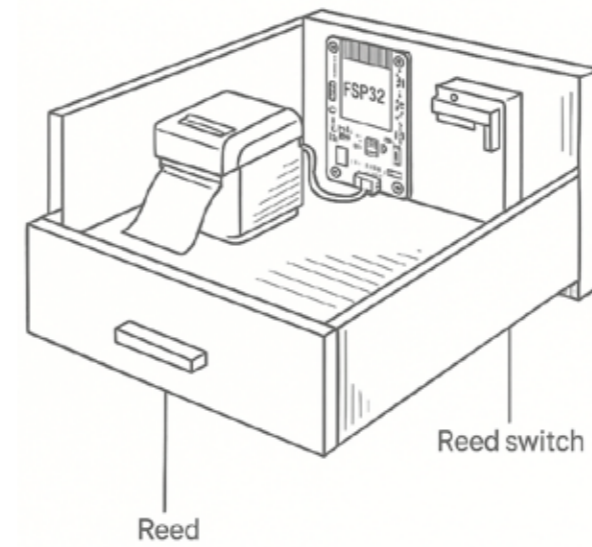
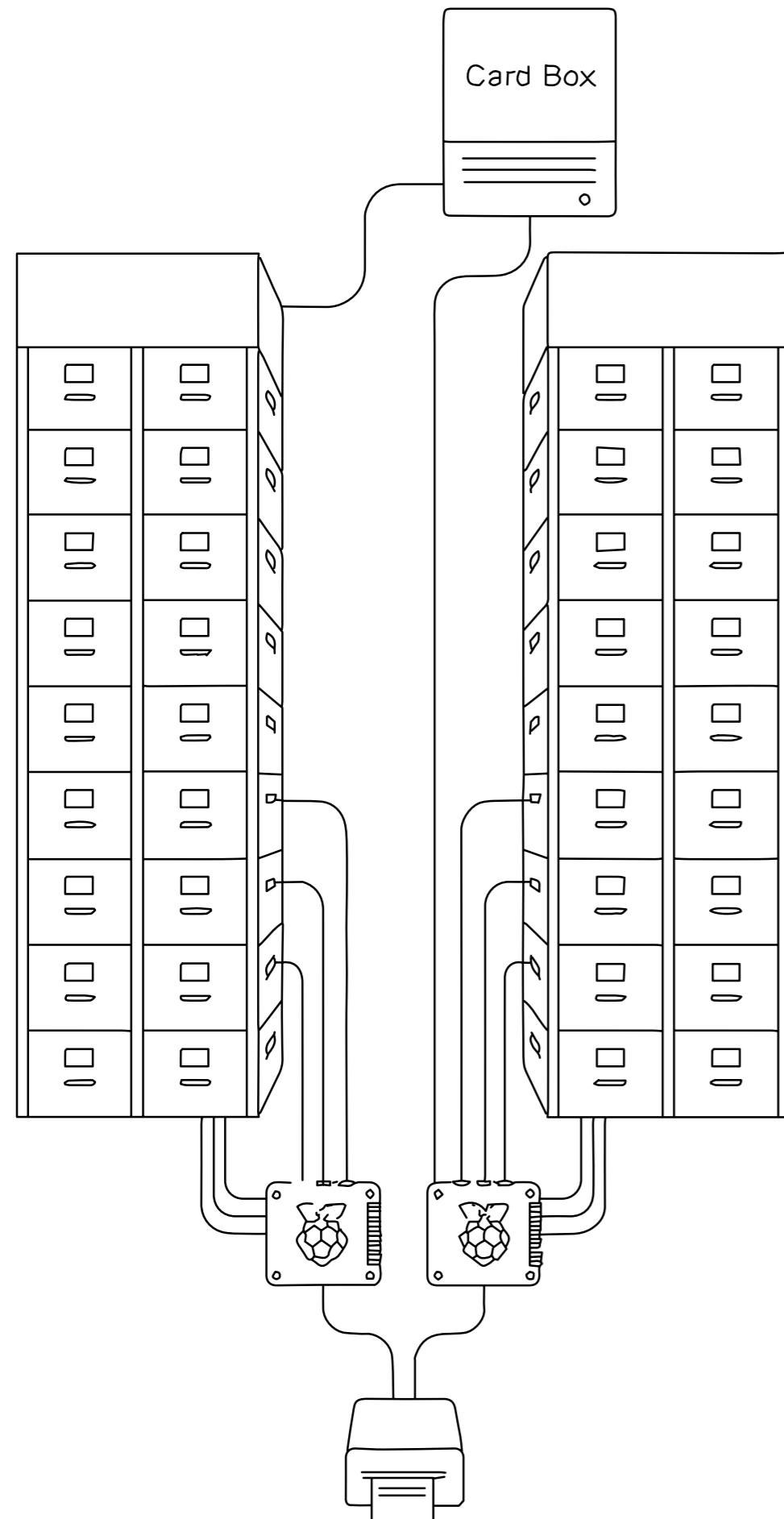
AI as a medium, not a tool

Archives of Possible Lives is an artistic research project because it approaches Artificial Intelligence not as a tool, but as a medium.

The installation translates abstract processes of probability calculation into a physical, sensory experience: visitors move through drawers and collect poetic fragments of possible biographies.

In this way, it becomes tangible how AI describes identity not in terms of truths, but in variations. The project combines artistic form and societal inquiry by making the shift from certainty to probability both visible and debatable.





Technical project description (summary)

The installation consists of a walk-in archive with 120 drawers in several cabinets. Each drawer contains a module with an ESP32 microcontroller, thermal printer (58 mm), and reed sensor to detect when it is opened.

A central orchestrator server coordinates the entire process. It manages visitor sessions, controls the path engine (next drawer) and the text engine.

Hubs (Raspberry Pi 4) operate between the orchestrator and the drawers, caching print jobs and providing fallbacks for each cabinet. Power is supplied via a central 12 V rail with step-down converters to 5 V per drawer.

At the entrance, there is a kiosk terminal (tablet + printer) where visitors enter their alias and language. A personalized start card is issued there ("Person A – begin at Drawer 32").

From there, the system guides visitors through several drawers to the end.

Each drawer opened triggers a print job with a poetic text fragment that is personalized with the person's name and indicates the next drawer.

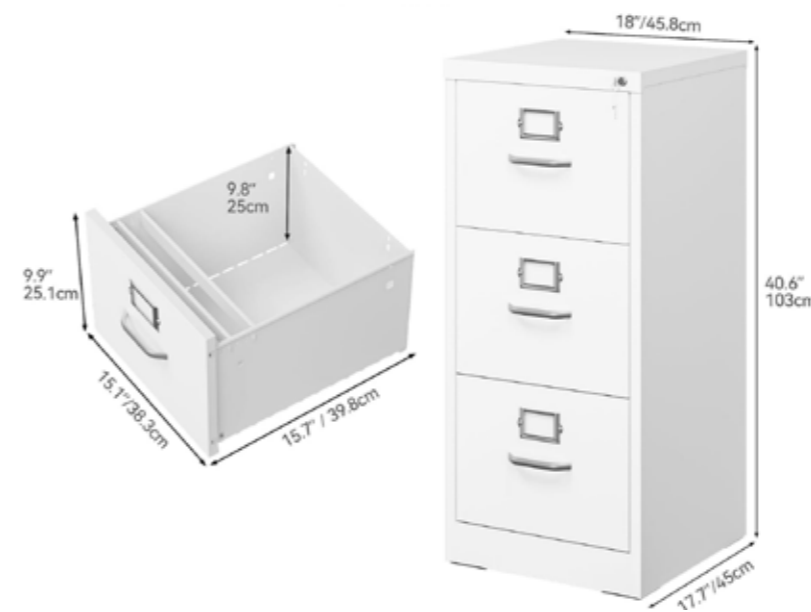
At the end, visitors take a final card from a card index box that reads: The truth is within you.

2 rows of 10 cabinets each 6 drawers
cardindex in deeper box (table)

kioskterminal (tablet on table with thermoprinter)
the language model runs locally,
electric supply: 220 V

dimensions variable:

5 m, (16,4 ft) x 2,50 m, 8,2 ft



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