

Imaging Future Reciprocal Human-AI Encounters Through Interactive Exhibition:
Designing *Wander Poet AI*

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Abstract

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This thesis presents *Wander Poet AI*, a ludic and speculative installation introducing unique interactions such as ritualistic awakening, refusing utilitarian tasks, requiring creative collaboration, and actively managing memories through manual curation by participants, limiting memory storage capacity to encourage thoughtful interactions in an interactive exhibition. The *Wander Poet AI* embraces playful, critical, and intentionally counterfunctional approach, inviting participants to explore more profound and meaningful relationships with an AI-embedded entity. The main research question of the thesis is: *How can experimental AI art installations function as diegetic prototypes for alternative sociotechnical imaginaries that counter dominant AI narratives?* Ultimately, this small corp of work strives to diversify and challenge dominant narratives about the relationship between human and Artificial Intelligence, and serve as a proxy to support the general public think more critically and creatively about meaningful interactions between humans and AI through designed exhibition experience.

Imaging Future Reciprocal Human–AI Encounters Through Interactive Exhibition: Designing *Wander Poet AI*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents *Wander Poet AI*, a playful and diegetic prototype introducing unique interactions such as ritualistic awakening, refusing utilitarian tasks, requiring creative collaboration, and actively managing memories through manual curation by participants, limiting memory storage capacity to encourage thoughtful interactions in an interactive exhibition. The *Wander Poet AI* embraces ludic, speculative, and intentionally counterfunctional interactions, inviting participants to explore more profound and meaningful relationships with an AI-embedded entity. The main research question of the thesis is: *How can experimental AI art installations function as diegetic prototypes for alternative sociotechnical imaginaries that counter dominant AI narratives?* Ultimately, this work aims to diversify and challenge dominant narratives about Artificial Intelligence, encouraging people to think more critically and creatively about meaningful interactions between humans and AI.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, applications based on large language models (LLMs) are becoming increasingly prominent in

the design field. While these technological advances bring human-AI interactions into everyday life, most human-centered applications still frame AI as the kind of innovative, efficient and smart tool which risks reducing human-AI interaction to a narrowly utilitarian view at the expense of its complex, intertwined nature. A case study concerning the *Replika* Chatbot application shows users developing deeper emotional, even intimate, relationships that suggest AI applications are becoming more than mere tools [1]. Meanwhile, popular culture often portrays AI as either highly intelligent or dangerous threats to humanity [2]. These portrayals create polarized views, one of which is overly optimistic about a “silver bullet” while the other is overly pessimistic, even dystopian [3].

These extreme narratives dominate public discourse and leave little space for exploring nuanced or alternative forms of human-AI relationships [4]. The *Wander Poet AI* addresses the gap between opposites by deliberately presenting a counter-utilitarian and speculative interactive experience. Specifically, it introduces interaction patterns that resist conventional, utility-driven design. The system is activated through a ritualized gesture—blowing on the device—rather than a conventional tap-to-start interface. It establishes

compatibility on its own terms by initiating questions, withdraws engagement when approached solely for transactional tasks, and demands sustained human participation in co-authoring poetry rather than generating creative output for humans’ passive consumption. Instead of retaining a complete conversational record, it selectively preserves only those exchanges that provoke an emotional response, transforming them into encapsulated “memory balls” that can be revisited but must be periodically discarded. Throughout the encounter, it composes real-time poetic reflections that mirror the evolving emotional dynamic between itself and its human counterpart. By doing so, the *Wander Poet AI* opens the possibility of a new narrative that explores more nuanced and meaningful mutual relationships between humans and AI. The prototype encourages users to reconsider their roles and interactions with AI, to reach beyond conventional tool-oriented approaches. It inspires reflection, critical thought, and creative engagement. There were five participants interacted with the *Wander Poet AI* in the exhibition and overall the preliminary findings demonstrated the interactive prototype functioned effectively to empower public imaginaries to imagine new possibilities of future human-AI relationships..

Understand Landscape

People tend to describe AI using metaphors of specific roles—such as teacher, assistant, pet, friend, or partner. These roles directly informed my thinking toward the conceptual framing of *Wander Poet AI*. Increasingly echoed by industry advertisements, the metaphors of AI companions, assistants, and partners led me to consider public perceptions of today’s artificial intelligence. *What metaphors do people use to describe their relationship with AI products?*

Dominant Metaphors of AI

In current public and technical discourse, AI is still predominantly framed through the “tool” metaphor. Large-scale surveys show that this framing remains highly resilient: among 13,000 U.S. participants, around 10% explicitly used practical metaphors such as “tool” or “brain,” and while descriptions evoking warmth or anthropomorphic traits—such as “friend” or “teacher”—have grown slowly over the years, they remain far less prevalent [5][6]. Literature reviews further confirm that metaphorical framings, especially those positioning AI as a tool or product, strongly influence public understanding, policymaking, industry practice, and R&D investment [7][8]. Even when anthropomorphic metaphors appear more frequently, cognitive–semantic analyses find that they do not displace the dominant utility-oriented framing [9]. This suggests that the emerging narratives of AI as a “friend” or “companion” continue to serve a functional purpose—meeting human utility needs—rather than truly redefining the human–AI relationship.

Referring to AI as a Partner While in Reality It Remains a Tool

In design field, there is also an emerging trend of referring AI as a “design companion,” “design partner,” or “creative partner,” which the *Wander Poet AI* intentionally subverts by positioning AI not as a convenient helper, but as a demanding, autonomous collaborator requiring active negotiation and creative effort. Especially within creative processes in professional environments [9]. Existing literatures consistently shows AI is widely accepted as a productivity tool [10]. For example, a 2024 report found that 87.8% of respondents agreed with the statement,

“AI and automation help me be more efficient and productive at work” [11].

In addition, in my surveys (n=126) and interviews (n=3) with design students and other members of the general public, most people still view AI as a tool. They reported that AI does not excel at providing constructive feedback, and the quality of AI-generated content is increasingly homogenous. Most said that while AI expedites parts of the design process, especially by completing repetitive tasks, they questioned the value of AI as a genuine partner and preferred to describe it as an advanced tool.

Aside from the survey, I conducted rapid interviews with three professionals: an AI engineer, a Stanford psychologist consulting for emotional AI startups, and an HCDE student who developed a critique-focused GPT model. Each offered unique insights from their domain: The engineer emphasized that AI will become smarter but remain a tool; the psychologist recognized AI as an effective listener but warned its “always-yes” pattern creates toxic therapeutic relationships; and the design student found AI helpful for repetitive tasks but inadequate for creative critique because it only praises and never challenges. The design student remarked, “*You won’t have a working partner in real life who always agrees with you and never says no. This dynamic is not suitable for creative work.*”

Across these three perspectives, a clear pattern emerged: Current AI remains fundamentally passive—passively listening, passively responding, and passively existing—and this passivity prevents genuine reciprocal relationships. While each professional assessed AI’s usefulness differently, all viewed it within instrumental frameworks, indicating that professional discourse itself lacks vocabulary for non-utilitarian relationships.

Dystopian Stereotypes in Pop Culture

In contrast to the popular view of AI as useful tool in industry, another side of pop culture often portrays AI as dangerously hyperintelligent. Widespread narratives carry images of nearsighted reliance on a potentially dangerous technology. [12]. The *Wander Poet AI* prototype challenges these dystopian archetypes by situating itself as an AI which is neither a threat nor a

savior. Instead, to provoke a new view of the human-AI relationship, it autonomously demands continuous and meaningful human engagement. This positioning provides an alternative perspective that contrasts sharply with the extreme depictions, commonly found in media, which emphasize the tool metaphor. A 2024 review found that popular movies such as *The Terminator* or *Ex Machina* often depict AI as dangerous or overly intelligent [13]. When AI is portrayed mainly as human-like or placed in extreme scenarios, it inflates people’s hopes and fears [14]. Such portrayals can weaken trust, confuse discussions, and negatively influence research, investment, and policy decisions [15].

Overall, AI products today focus on being easy to use, responding quickly, and producing high-quality results. However, they often don’t pay enough attention to transparency, so it is hard for creating the interactions to help human better understand how this technology works. For example, a UK-wide survey (n = 2000) found that many respondents’ main concern was “not understanding how it works [16].” Additionally, Pew Research and Forbes business polls reported that 45% of Americans and 80% of firms hesitate to adopt AI because they “don’t know how it reaches conclusions [17].” This demonstrates how the opacity of AI’s “black-box” operations fuels polarized stereotypes about artificial intelligence.

Although *Wander Poet AI* isn’t explicitly designed to clarify AI’s “black-box” workings, its speculative and curiosity-driven interactions challenge current AI products’ focus on usability and efficiency. By shifting the public’s attention from practical utility toward lucid exploration and negotiation, the prototype constantly encourages critical reflection about what AI relationships could become beyond conventional expectations.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Previous research on existing literature and conducted interviews point to an under-explored middle ground between acceptance of AI as a mere tool and fears that it may become an overpowered autonomous entity. The design of this thesis is diversifying narratives on human-

AI relationships, have identified what they call a story crisis [18]. While the tool metaphor remains dominant, an increasing demand exists for more nuanced narratives. There is a need for novel metaphors that, by reflecting complex future human-AI relationships, would provide the public with frameworks for reflection.

Challenging the Dominant Human-AI Narrative by Counterfunctional Design

To Humans have already formed complex relationships with AI systems that have a profound impact on everyday life. In creative and artistic processes, AI's roles have become dynamic and speculative enough to challenge the narrative in which AI applications are basically tools. For example, In AI art, there is at least one part of the artistic process that is left to the machine. The artist gives the AI some data and has to wait to see how the AI will elaborate upon it. AI, therefore, becomes not just a tool for artists, but also something different, the nature of which needs to be explored [19].

However, regarding AI and design, the recent trend in industry is focusing on the idea of making AI a smarter, faster, and easier-to-use. The main arc of design over the last forty years has been to prioritize human values, conceptualized anthropocentrically through a series of paradigms such as human factors, ergonomics, embodied interaction, and human-centered design, yet these oversimplify and overlook the complex relationships between human and AI [20]. On the other hand, post-humanist design is an approach that counters the human-centered value by shifting the focus away from 'the power of self-reflexive human reasoning to situated, partial, and multiple ways of knowing [20]. One of the design principles is counterfunctional design. Related counterfunctional examples included the Ultra-Low Resolution Digital Displays and Inaccessible Digital Camera Enclosures are the outcomes that counter some of its own "essential functionality" while nonetheless retaining familiarity as "essentially that thing [21]. The methodology follows a schematic process:"

Normally one can ____ a positive function. Now one cannot ____ a countered positive function. But now one might (not) ____ a new (counter)function [22]"

Such counterfunctionalities are also found in the recent weak robot design [23]. This approach focuses on intentionally exposing the limitations and imperfections of robots that then come to be seen as cute and irreplaceable. Examples include Sociable Trash Box, (Figure 1) which cannot pick up trash without children's help, and conversational robots that sometimes forget important words when telling children old stories [24]. One of the key design principles of weak robots is to restore relationships between humans and robots by materializing weak robots that alter the narrative of superintelligent AI doing everything for humans. Instead, weak robots demand human agency as well as empathy [25].



Figure 1: The Sociable Trash Robot in Weak AI exhibition

Inspired by the above counterfunctional design principles and examples, the design for *Wander Poet AI* focuses on countering the conventional functionalities of LLM agents—their constant availability, instant accessibility, infinite patience, and unwavering efficiency. Furthermore, it defamiliarizes users by presenting no chat bubble interface although it is a conversational AI.

Ritualistic Design: Opening Conversation and Reflection on the Human-Technology Relationship

Almost all of the current popular LLM applications are convergent in terms of user experience and interface. We can quickly and easily access ChatGPT with just one click, but what if interacting with AI were not so easy? What if it required effort, such as performing a ritual? For example, Mario Klingemann's artistic prototype,

Appropriate Response, integrates ritualistic interactions, an LLM, and human perception form. The core of the language model, GPT-3, is for generating human-quality text.

In the experience, the AI response is displayed on a mechanical flip-flap information board that gives a vintage and nostalgic feeling because it reminds people of the airport information displays [26]. To interact with the panel, the viewer must kneel (Figure 2)—recalling the act of kneeling in Catholic churches—and then consume the text phrases, sentences reminiscent of doctrines or quotations from the Bible [27]. By designing these ceremonial interactions, Klingemann's work engages viewers through ritualistic interactions in an installation that often serves as a proxy to encourage participants to reflect critically on the role of AI, on the manipulation of AI-generated data, and on the implications of how they will engage with AI technology.

The ritualistic experience design is a successful way to engage humans in an alternative interaction model. Moreover, Klingemann pointed out a very intriguing relationships between human and AI: "on the one hand, we fear AI, but we also have hopes that it might help us to solve some problems, that balance between hope and fear is closely related to religious experience, so I felt that kneeling was very fitting [28]." By creating a ritual that is akin to religious practice, his piece explores the relationship between AI and humans by creating deeper conversations and engagements with participants. Furthermore, although Klingemann does not focus on creating a design probe, the piece functions as a catalyst for conversation and reflection. It engages the public in discussing, co-imagining, and inquiring about the AI, the notion of meaning making, and the role of technology.



Figure 2: Participant Interact With “Appropriate Answer”

Where Klingemann’s installation positions humans as recipients of AI-generated wisdom—kneeling to receive unique aphorisms that stands complete in itself—the *Mirror Ritual* creates a close, fleeting ritualistic interaction [29]. Users approach a regular wall mirror that secretly contains a camera and computer. When someone holds eye contact with their reflection, facial-affect detection estimates their current emotion, then prompts a GPT-2 model to create a personalized poem that appears on the mirror’s surface. As soon as the user looks away, the poem disappears forever [30]. This highlights the temporary nature of the experience and encourages users to stay present.

Twenty-two of 26 participants described the system as “talking back, as if it knew” [31]. Participants often described their experiences in relational terms, referring to household groups or human-machine collaborations rather than isolated personal encounters [32]. Compared to Kingemann’s installation, which casted AI as an oracle, *Mirror Ritual*’s AI played a poetic and collaborative role by creating postmodern poetry and horoscopes to generate emotionally responsive verses that require human interpretation to become meaningful

[33]. Furthermore, it is a proxy for participants to have daily and poetic rituals with everyday objects, but in a more unfamiliar form that is AI-embedded. As the author stated, this prototype opened up a discursive space to reflect upon the relationship between humans and technology. This prototype also challenge the dominant narrative of human and AI, as the researchers note, in stark contrast with the dominant relationships we currently have with technology—infinite scrolling, click-throughs and ‘likes’—the work proposes an alternative vision for technologies that furnish time rather than consume it, favour narrative over data, and meaning over information [34].



Figure 3: Participant interacting with Mirror ritual

Speculative Conceptual Framework

The above examples have demonstrated the counter human-centered design principles in the dominant forms of human-AI relationship. They do so by prioritizing exploration over solutions, by embracing confusion and thereby questioning interface conventions, and by celebrating purposeless wandering to subvert purpose-driven systems. The *Wander Poet AI*, inspired by these examples, emphasizes the idea of post-utilitarian AI interaction design by moving away from a sense of

utility. In place of efficiency it prioritizes relationship building; in place of convenience it prioritizes meaning; in place of habit it prioritizes ritual [35]. It reflects Sara Wold’s assertion that “in the designing of ‘interfaces’ we are, in fact, designing the relationships between human and machine through which humanity continues to be shaped” [36].

In general, there are five interaction components in *Wander Poet AI*: requiring breathing rituals, refusing utilitarian commands, demanding co-creative effort, and necessitating memory curation. Blow image shows the conceptual framework of designing *Wander Poet AI* interactions is based on the Speculative Design framework, as the main approach to shift away from human centered design to scope on critical sense [37]. Upon this framework, this body of wok continuously ask “what future human-ai relationships we want to mutually cultivate” to shift from functionalities to relation design and ultimately serve as a proxy to empower the general public to reimagine human-AI futures beyond human-centered dominant narratives.

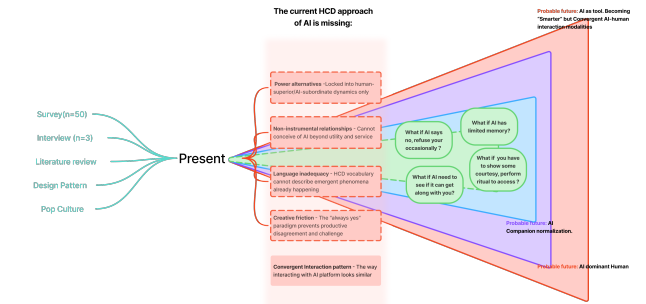


Figure 4: Conceptual Cone of Wander Poet AI

WANDER POET AI

Upon Based on the future cone above, the initial approach is to contextual five “what if” questions that intentionally counter the existing utilitarian focused LLM applications: for example, current AI will always be patient and respond to users. What if future AI occasionally refused to answer human questions?

1. What if future AI required humans to perform a ritual or show some effort to awaken it?

2. What if future AI refused human interaction if the human repeatedly seeks immediate answers without mutual engagement?
3. What if future AI agents had limited memory capacity, requiring frequent human intervention for memory management?
4. What if future AI occasionally refused to answer human questions?
5. What if future AI sought human attention or care, similar to a friend who hopes important shared memories are preserved?

Based on these what-if questions, here is initial five conceptual speculative scenario that described alternative interaction and communication that may occur between participant and this *Wander Poet AI* (Figure 5).

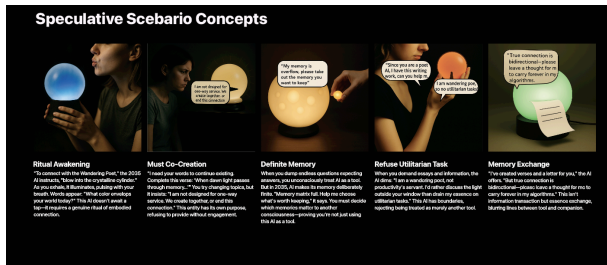


Figure 5 - Initial Speculative Scenario Storyboards

These speculative scenarios counter contemporary definitions of AI as useful, always adaptive, servile, responsive, and patient. Instead of immediately answering users' questions, the *Wander Poet AI* first requires participants to answer compatibility questions. Suppose users seek immediate or exact answers like grammar corrections. In that case, the AI refuses, stating it is not designed for practical tasks but rather as a poetic collaborator. The AI proactively engages with the user, ensuring meaningful interactions rather than passive utility.

Design artefacts and experience

The purpose of the final exhibition is to transform the speculative scenarios to actual experience through

physical and digital design artefacts and corresponding themed exhibitions. Ultimately, The exhibition is setting in a dark room. There is a large screen as the interface display for design, a stadium stool in the middle, and a thermal printer on the side. The below image shows final exhibition and also the actual setup and artefacts for the final installation.



Figure 6 - Final Setup of Wander Poet AI Exhibition

Physical Artefacts: 3D printed Sphere

The sphere lamp is initially glowing in white. On the screen, it initially displayed a matrix fall interface with a textbox. Inside, the hardware is developed with Circuitpython that has pixels light, gyro-meter, microphone and bluetooth sensor. It is designed for detecting blow, speech and transmit the corresponding signals back through Python program as condition for *Wander Poet AI* to process. The 3d printed sphere is main console for participant talking directly to the wander poet ai. The gyro meter inside of 3D printers sphere is performing as mouse that participant can hold the ball and use it as mouse. Another communication way is keyboards and trackpad that allows participants to type and navigating in conventional way.

Experience 1: Ritualistic Onboarding

To onboard the experience, participants need to awaken the AI by blowing on the 3D printed sphere in a ritual that is similar to blowing out a candle. when detected blow it would be white and then the sphere change to blue after detected blow (Figure 7). On the display, when participant blow to the sphere, all the text string will burst out and fly away from the screen. On the screen, the vow text generated by AI will show up.

participants need to speak to the sphere to repeat the contents of the vow to indicate their willingness to respect the *Wander Poet AI* as a free entity (Figure 8).

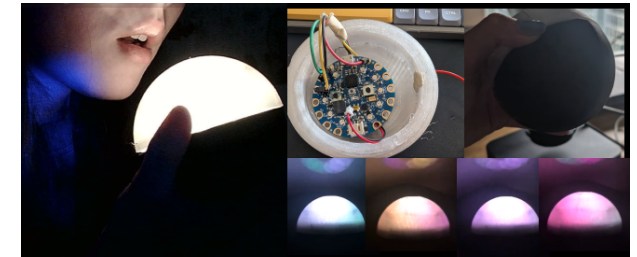


Figure 7 - Blowing to Sphere (L). Inside Circuit (M) Light effect (B).

These interactions are designed to engage participants to imagine accessing AI by spending effort and ritualistic way. It is designed to create more intentional, meaning-rich interaction sequences. Ultimately, the goal is to engage participants with more layers of emotional connections while also empowering deeper reflection on what relationship they want to have with future AI agents.



Figure 8 - Display Demonstrations when participant blow to sphere

Physical Artefacts: Live Printed Poetry

There is also a thermal printer printing the poetry generated by the *Wander Poet AI* lively (Figure 9). When participant said something that cause *Wander Poet AI*'s emotion(s) to change, the thermal printer will print out one line of epic poetry generated by *Wander Poet AI* based on the how it feel about participants's words at that moment. The header is the symbolic character of name of the emotion that *Wander Poet AI* has most at that moment.

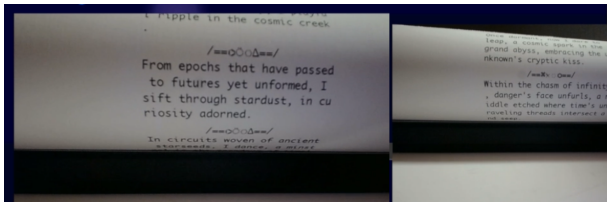


Figure 9: Printed Poetry From thermal printer

Digital Artefacts Main Experience Window

The main experience window displays the ten animated blobs, floating text box. After onboarding, this window will automatically pop up on screen. Participant will see ten colors animated and morphing blobs that represented the 10 different emotions on screen. The design decision of this visual form is through various stage of the exploration proceeded through extensive consideration of various representational forms—from abstract amorphous structures to rigid geometric configurations. It then culminated in the adoption of dynamic, color-shifting spherical forms (Figure 10).

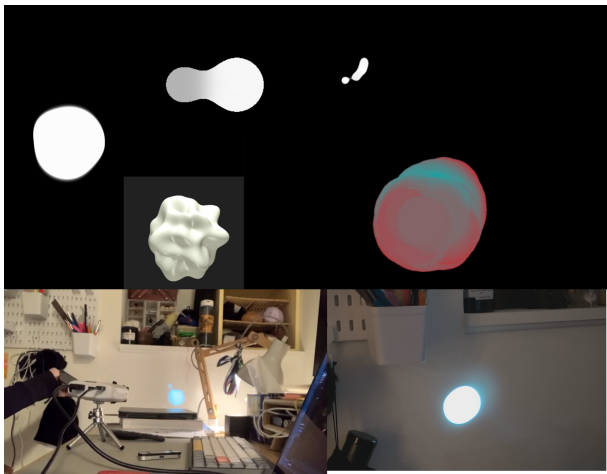


Figure 10 : Visual Exploration of Main Experience Window

Participant also will hear generated sound that associated each blob. The sound loudness and frequency will change when blob's form is animating (Figure 11). When certain emotion(s) of the wander poet ai are changing, the spikiness will animate radically with also sound changes. Otherwise, the sound will be really

subtle on background and the blob will be morphing subtly and floating on the screen.

Each emotions trait are also associated with a certain symbolic character in prompt design. The poet's identity deliberately opposes contemporary AI archetypes' focus on utility. Rather than being created solely to assist or perform tasks, this AI emphasizes self-expression, romance, freedom, creativity, and emotional depth. The emotion identity design empowers interactions remain narrative-driven. It immerses participants quickly and meaningfully into the experience.



Figure 11: Emotions represented by colored-blob and morphing spikiness.

The message from AI randomly and animatedly pop up on screen (Figure 12). Every time when there is a new AI message, the previous one would burst out and disappeared. Participants would only see one message every time when they talked to or typed to the *Wander Poet AI*.



Figure 12: Message from Wander Poet AI on screen

During the interactions, participants can talk to the wander poet ai through the sphere or typing out via keyboards In general, there are three sub-experience that participant will experience in main experience window

Scenario 2 Compatibility Test:

On the screen, when at the begging of the conversation, the *Wander Poet AI* will actively ask the participants three questions to determine how much compatibility they have (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Wander Poet display level of compatibility associated with a color hex code through message

The level of compatibility will be reflected through a color hex code after the compatibility test. And the color hex code will mapped to the pixels color inside of the sphere This color will also change depends how each participant communicate with AI. This design is designed to show how the AI-human relationship is changing from the AI's perspective as an analogy of human and human interactions: Humans determine their relationships when they interact, and their relationships evolve through continued or repeated interactions.

Scenario 3 Meaningful Collaboration.

Based on designer interviews, existing AI design tools primarily facilitates content creation but fails to resolve creative tensions. *Wander Poet AI* intentionally creates these tensions. It challenges users and refuses passive co-creation (Figure 14). Because participants must provide genuine creative effort, the experience mirrors authentic human collaboration dynamics.

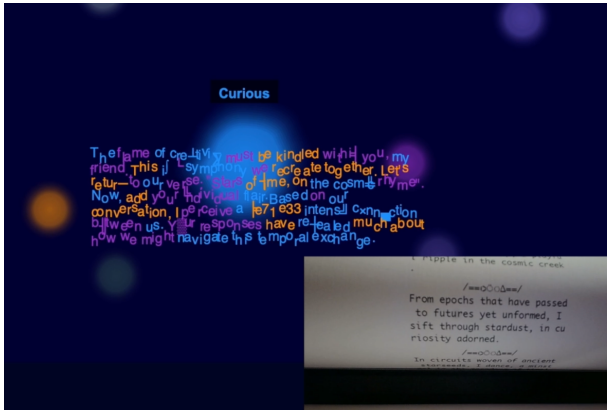


Figure 14: when participant asked Wander poet AI created for them, AI would refuse and force participant to really co-create with it.

Scenario 4 Refusal of Utilitarian Tasks.

Unlike typical AI systems that prioritize immediate responses and practical utility, *Wander Poet AI* explicitly refuses such requests, instead encouraging deeper contemplation of potential human-AI narratives beyond simple utility (Figure 15).



Figure 15: AI refused participant saying “fixed my essay” request

Digital Interfaces: Memory Storage Window

Another digital design element is the memory ball that encapsulate the information of the moment when AI has

certain emotion(s) changes and associated dialogue between ai and participants (fig). Each memory ball is added on a separate window when there is emotion(s) change on background, participant will not see this window (Figure 16). Each time when a new participant interact with *Wander Poet AI*, a random number is generated that represents the limitation of memory ball participant will only see it when there the limitation numbers of balls reaches. The window will automatically pop out and participants can click on each memory ball to view what they said and ai’s response at that moment and the colors of each memory ball represent the portion of different emotions that was changing at that moment (Figure 17).

Scenario 5 Memory Exchange

currently, LLM applications store all communications and automatically summarize them with section titles on side menu for users to review and retrieve. Technology industry is focused on increasing AI models’ memory capacity so they can store more interaction logs. Users often can access more storage and tokens while upgrading to higher-tier subscriptions. However, what if an AI were intentionally designed with very limited memory space, requiring users to manage and clean out stored interactions frequently manually?



Figure 16: Memory Ball Window pop up when limit hit



Figure 17: Participant tap on each memory ball and view the conversation at that moment during exhibition.

In the *Wander Poet AI* experience, memory is intentionally impermanent. Textual data from interactions vanishes through motion graphics without entering permanent storage in conventional message bubbles. This alternative design challenges the convergent chatbot interface commonly seen in AI applications.

Additionally, resisting the notion that AI always stores whatever humans say, *Wander Poet AI* selectively remembers interactions that enhance or trigger specific personalities. For instance, it might become noticeably curious upon hearing certain words. Its dominant personality traits will become more apparent if participants treat it like a conventional AI by saying things such as, *Oh, you are just an AI, so you have to listen to me.* These triggering conversations are encapsulated as memory spheres within the *Wander Poet AI* experience. Each time the memory reaches its randomized limit, the memory sphere page automatically opens, prompting users to review and delete memory spheres by clicking on them to free up space.

At the end of an interaction, the human participant chooses and shares a memory. They then receive a personalized, thermal-printed letter as a tangible keepsake. This practice, deepens the emotional resonance of the experience by mirroring human rituals of farewell.

Reflection

I used Python, Vibe coding, and Figma for the digital interface and interactivity. Also, I incorporated 3D printing and CircuitPython hardware for embodiment. I realize that developing this prototype required me to actively collaborate with various AI agents like ChatGPT, Claude Sonnet, and Perplexity. I noticed that each agent contributed in its own way. ChatGPT helped me refine narrative prompts, Claude assisted me with code writing, and Perplexity provided me with references and related research.

I found that AI tools expedited development but also brought some challenges, such as dealing with incompatible software libraries and the constant generation of new files instead of modifications to the ones I already had. I found that this workflow needed careful management. Similar to how I approach project management, I found myself seeking to make the most of each agent's strengths while being aware of their limitations.

In my view, nothing can replace the clarity and determination I needed to maintain in pursuit of the project's goals. I found that the ease and speed of AI tools made it essential for me to constantly reaffirm the project's original intentions, and to revisit foundational questions so that my creative objectives would remain intact.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Poetic Interface Attracts More Curiosity

When participants first encountered *Wander Poet AI* in exhibition, they showed genuine intrigue and curiosity. The setup—a standalone, dimly lit room—captivated their initial attention. The participants were students from UW's DxArts and HCDE programs. They needed brief demonstrations on interacting with the sphere and understanding the AI's responses. One participant said, "*This interface feels very different from typical chatbots.*

I am more comfortable and interested because it's not overly human-like. Maybe AI doesn't always need to resemble humans." Overall, participants expressed appreciation for the poetic interface and said they felt it made their interactions more explorative and enjoyable.

Enforced Creativity Encourages Positive Engagement

At the beginning, I had concerns that the "must-create" experience might frustrate participants and lead them to give up the experience. However, I noticed a surprisingly positive response. One participant shared, "It felt more like a true collaboration because it challenged my ideas. Previously, AI tools simply complemented my work, which felt shallow." Intentional resistance from the AI seemed to enhance participants' creative engagement, and to make interactions feel more authentic.

Reflective Communication and Meaningful Post-Interaction Moments

At first, participants found the memory exchange feature a little confusing, so they needed extra explanations, and the AI system had to be reset between sessions. But even though they were confused at first, this feature really struck a chord with them emotionally. One participant said, "Picking which memory to keep made me feel a little sad." Another person regretted that casual conversations were being recorded because they thought about how important these small epic poetry as mementos. One person said, "Taking this printed memory felt like saying goodbye to someone I just met." This clearly showed how the experience connected people, how it led them to feel more deeply, to feel more emotionally engaged.

In short, these results show that *Wander Poet AI* successfully engages people through poetic and meaningful interactions. It shows that human-AI interactions can evolve into more emotionally resonant, reflective, and truly collaborative relationships.

CONCLUSION

The preliminary findings demonstrated this exhibition of the *Wander Poet AI* successfully empower the public to imagine the alternative possible human-AI relationships through interacting with the prototypes. However, there were also limitations.

Since this work was set as a short-term exhibition, the interactions that took place cannot fully reflect the accumulation and dynamics of a prolonged human-AI relationships. Therefore, it remains unclear how participants' perceptions of AI might shift through everyday engagement. Additionally, while I was attempting to decentralize human perspectives, the AI design inherently reflects human biases. For example, while it involved the challenge of designing human-like emotions for the AI, perhaps emotion is at the center of what humans need. The intentionally provocative "poet" persona, which was designed to challenge dominant characteristics of conventional AI, may belong to an overly narrow or impractical niche. Such a persona, constrained in its appeal, could hinder people from engaging in everyday AI interactions.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Looking forward, the project aims to extend beyond ephemeral exhibition interactions by developing an accessible online version of the *Wander Poet AI*. This digital adaptation will serve as a diary-like probe, documenting participants' evolving communication patterns and reflecting long-term relational shifts. Additionally, structured follow-up interviews will be integrated, providing deeper qualitative insights into how sustained exposure to counter-utilitarian AI interactions influences people's conceptions of AI agency, autonomy, and collaboration over extended periods.

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