TYPEWRITER POETICS:
CREATING COLLABORATIVE MEMORY MAPS

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In a world shifting toward an existence that remains increasingly lodged within the human-machine threshold, we combine visual art, poetry, software engineering, and electrical engineering to examine the ethics of human-machine interactions and to interrogate what it means to be human.

In response to the explosion in usage of large language models (LLMs), such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Anthropic's Claude, particularly in the way they flatten and output data from artists without proper accreditation, we created a collaborative and generative system that treats the viewer as an artist and that gives them full agency over how their work is represented.

Rather than asking the industry- and capital-motivated questions of how we can optimize our lives and how we can predict what the user wants, we instead ask:

*how do we live, how can we **continue** to live,*
despite the invisible and visible forces
of power that surround and exploit us?

MACHINE

+ Brother Ax-25 electronic typewriter
+ Arduino Mega
+ Raspberry Pi 4 Model B

PCB   PCB

KEYBOARD   KEYBOARD
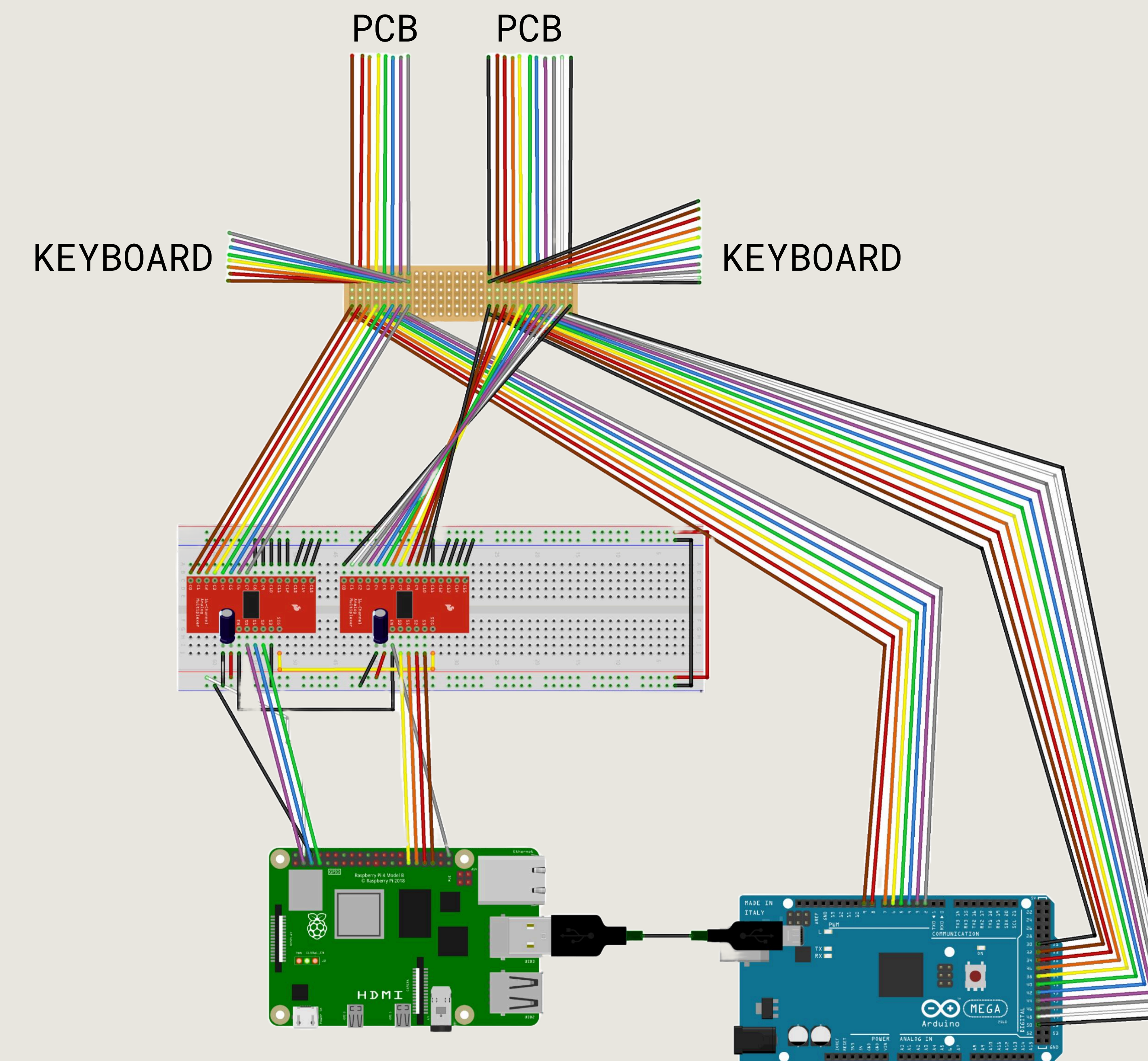
We designed an automatic read and write system by rewiring the typewriter's PCB to two multiplexers controlled by an Arduino (read) and a Pi (write).

We chose a typewriter for its physicality—**each thought must be felt multiple times** as the viewer presses the keys.

There is no way for the viewer to passively give the machine data, and there is no way for the machine to use the data in a way that the viewer does not know about or consent to.

ZINE

<travelogue>

memories tagged by <holly>
in the year <2046>
in the season of <winter>
on planet <tree>

Our script controls the typewriter to automatically prompt the viewer with generative questions, pausing while the viewer responds.

During this process, the Arduino reads the key presses and organizes the responses into a zine, which is automatically printed upon completion of the writing prompts.

What landscape, either physical or emotional or both, are you coming from? Where are you going?

The original typewriter copy is **saved and assembled as part of a larger, growing body of art**. The entire system is enclosed in a standalone unit made of wood, acrylic, and mirrors.

The writing prompts are centered around the viewer's imaginations for what a **collective and technologically ethical future** might look like.

Toward the end, there is the opportunity for participants to contribute prompts to future viewers.

Thus, each time someone visits the artwork, their experience will be different. In this way, we also hope to resist the instant gratification demanded by consumerist timelines.

The artwork will always be ongoing and will retain the memory of those who have passed through it.

The viewer simultaneously serves as a writer and artist, contributing to an ever-evolving art piece and conversing with an ever-growing community of past and future visitors.