

BEFORE THE ANSWER

A participatory conceptual artwork about human intuition
Human After All Prize 2026

THE QUESTION

When every possible answer is available,
who decides which one matters?

A person proposed a single word at the beginning of this artwork:
INTUITION.

Not superior speed. Not certainty. Not the ability to give reasons.
The capacity to move, feel, and choose before reasons arrive.

The work invites visitors to experience a decision that offers
no reward for being correct.

PROPOSED FORM

A quiet room. A corridor of translucent paper.
Two unmarked exits. One continuous red thread.
There is no audience leaderboard, recommendation engine,
or correct destination.

The work is a proposal for an installation and participatory
performance. It has not yet been physically constructed.

THE CENTRAL CONTRAST

A machine can generate reasons for either path.
Only the visitor can decide what this moment means to them.

One choice is invisible to the system and visible in the artwork.

THE EXPERIENCE

1 / THE MANY ANSWERS

Twenty suspended sheets present plausible recommendations, each certain of its own logic. The text is intentionally persuasive, not authoritative; its purpose is to saturate the visitor with reasons.

2 / THE INTERRUPTION

At the end of the corridor, the sheets stop.
Two doors lead to the same unmarked space.
Neither is more efficient. Neither is scored. Nothing is collected that could rank the visitor's intelligence or taste.

3 / THE HUMAN MOMENT

The visitor stands in silence for twelve seconds.
They choose a door before anyone asks them to explain why.

4 / THE TRACE

On the other side, the visitor ties one short red thread to a shared lattice, pointing in whichever direction feels right. Every thread remains visible. No algorithm straightens the lines.

5 / THE AFTERIMAGE

As visitors accumulate, the lattice becomes a map of individual decisions. Its beauty comes from disagreements and irregularities. No average can replace any single mark.

WHAT THE WORK DOES NOT CLAIM

It does not claim intuition is infallible, magical, or exclusive to one type of person. It asks whether the demand to explain everything can erase a meaningful part of choosing.

A final sentence is printed on the way out:
"You do not need to win to have chosen."

ARTIST STATEMENT

Before the Answer begins with a human intuition about intuition. I am interested in the split second between perceiving a possibility and supplying a justification. Generative systems can produce countless articulate answers. Yet a meaningful choice also carries personal history, bodily experience, uncertainty, and responsibility.

This work refuses to demonstrate a smarter answer. It removes the scoring system entirely. When both doors are equally reasonable, the work shifts from prediction to commitment.

The red threads make a temporary human record: distinct choices that remain distinct. No thread needs to represent the majority. The installation would be completed not by the machine's output but by the unrepeatable presence of its visitors.

CREATIVE PROCESS AND AI DISCLOSURE

The human entrant supplied the central creative proposition, in Vietnamese: "trúc giác" ("intuition"), as the human quality they wished to explore. The entrant approved developing the work under the title "Before the Answer."

An AI assistant helped formulate the installation sequence, draft and refine this English concept text, and arrange the PDF. An AI-generated visual sketch was explored but is not submitted as the main work. No physical installation has been built. The submission is a concept, not documentation of an exhibition.

The human contribution is the originating choice of subject and the decision to pursue this particular question. The AI contribution to the detailed expression and presentation is acknowledged here rather than attributed solely to the entrant.