

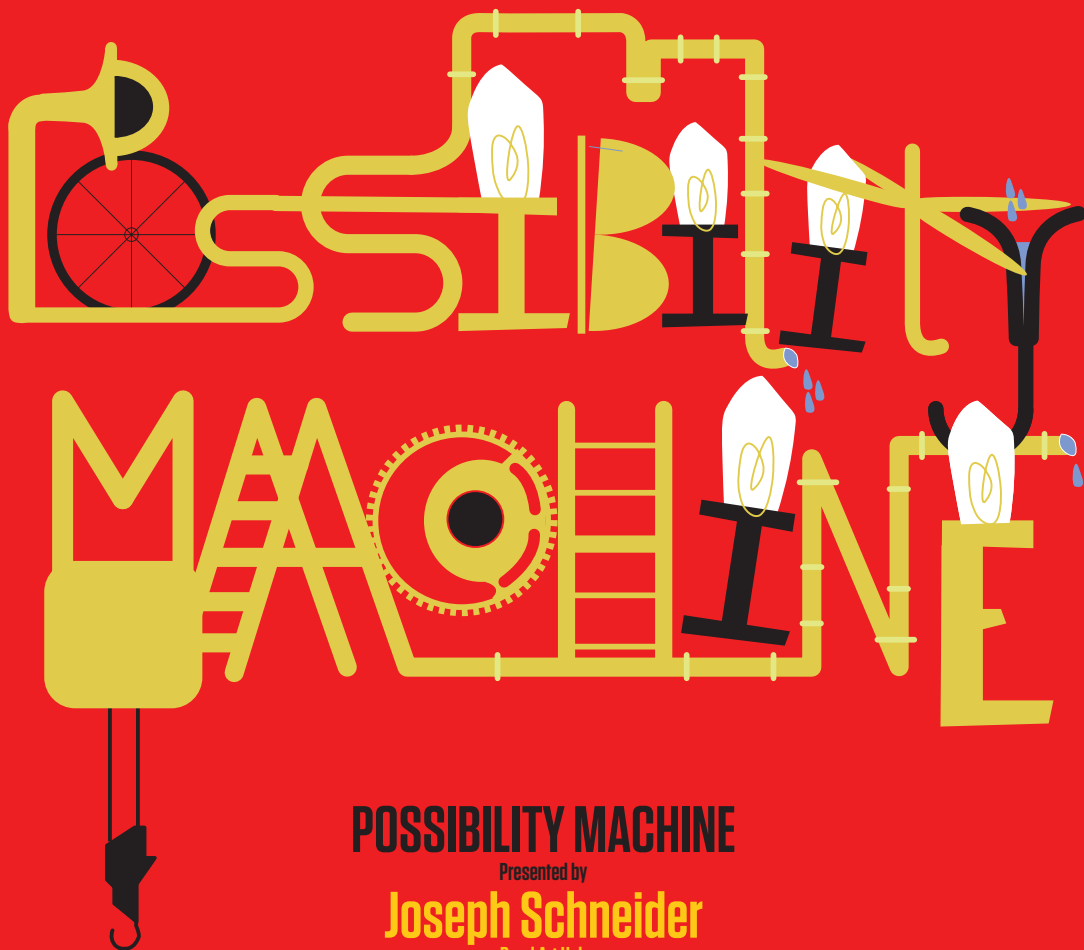
MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

BY RURAL ART HUB

Ever dreamed of building something extraordinary? Something that sparks creativity, invites the community to express themselves, and brings public art to life? Welcome to the Possibility Machine—a project designed to push the limits of imagination and innovation!

We're creating a *modular, interactive trolley* that will roam the streets, transforming spaces into *hubs of artistic expression*. Think of it as a traveling canvas, a moving stage, a *machine of endless possibilities*! But we need *builders, makers, and dreamers* like **YOU** to bring it to life!

Introducing the



POSSIBILITY MACHINE

Presented by

Joseph Schneider

Rural Art Hub

Join the Build Team!

Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



Link to our crowdfunding page!

**MSA
LIVE25**

Team

Hannah Batho (MArch1)

Nur Iman Sofiah binti Nur Aziz (MArch1)

Shivsen Padhiar (MArch1)

Yu Gongxin (MArch1)

Liu Zeyu (MA AR)

Weng Yuqi (MA AR)

Harry Olliver-Bewey (BA1)

Irmak Coskun (BA1)

Madeleine Rona Alice Dobson (BA1)

Samuel Sherwood (BA1)

Taoran Li (BA1)

Alexandra Nedelcu (BA2)

Alyssa Binti Adam Nasir Binti Adam (BA2)

Elena Grechi (BA2)

Regine Salido (BA2)

Sana Fathima Ali (BA2)

Partners

Joseph Schneider

Artist, Co-Founder of Rural Art Hub

Joseph Schneider is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice centres around community engagement, sustainability, and creative accessibility. As co-founder of the Rural Art Hub, he works to activate public and underused spaces through participatory art that invites collaboration and play.

For the Possibility Machine, Joseph provided an open, imaginative brief that encouraged us to explore how design can serve as a tool for connection. His guidance throughout the project helped balance creativity with practical application, focusing on adaptability, durability, and community interaction.

Joseph's collaborative approach allowed us to work fluidly, refining the design based on ongoing feedback. His presence during the final testing phase which ensured that the machine remained rooted in real-world use, while still pushing creative boundaries. Working with Joseph gave us valuable insight into interdisciplinary practice and showed us the power of art to transform everyday spaces.

This partnership highlighted the potential of interdisciplinary practice, and offered us a deeper understanding of how art, design, and community can come together to create something truly transformative.

Introduction

Possibility Machine

Have you ever dreamed of building something extraordinary? Something that invites creativity, brings people together, and turns ordinary streets into stages for public art? Welcome to the Possibility Machine, a bold, community-driven project that reimagines how art can move through space and society.

Throughout this two-week project, we set out to design and construct this machine at full scale, engaging directly with the public to test its potential as a tool for participation and inspiration. The brief was ambitious yet open-ended: create a structure that could serve as a canvas, a stage, and a hub for creativity, all while being robust, adaptable, and easy to move. Before the action weeks, we held early discussions with our collaborator, Joseph, to define the core ambitions of the project, prepare a material list, and explore precedents for mobile artistic interventions. These preparatory conversations helped ground our thinking and set realistic expectations for what could be achieved at 1:1.

From the outset, the project was envisioned as a tool for public engagement, an object that would not just occupy space but invite interaction. As a team, we approached the design process with curiosity and openness. Each student contributed unique ideas, resulting in a wide range of initial concepts that considered flexibility, materiality, and community use. Narrowing these down required collaborative decision-making and quick iteration, but this was made possible by a shared commitment to the project's values.

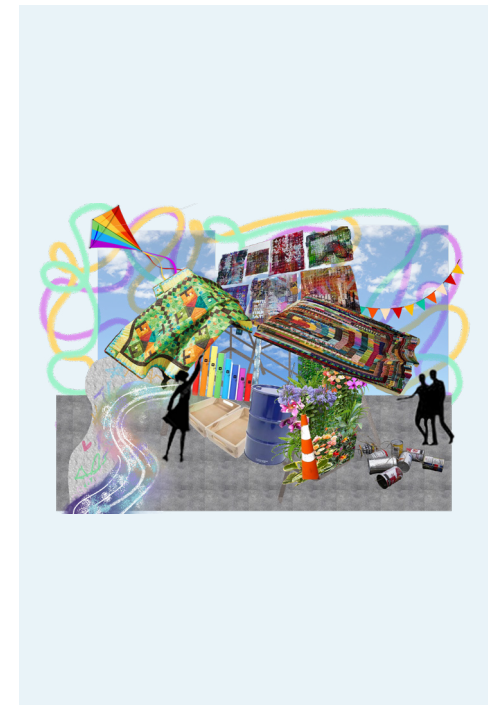
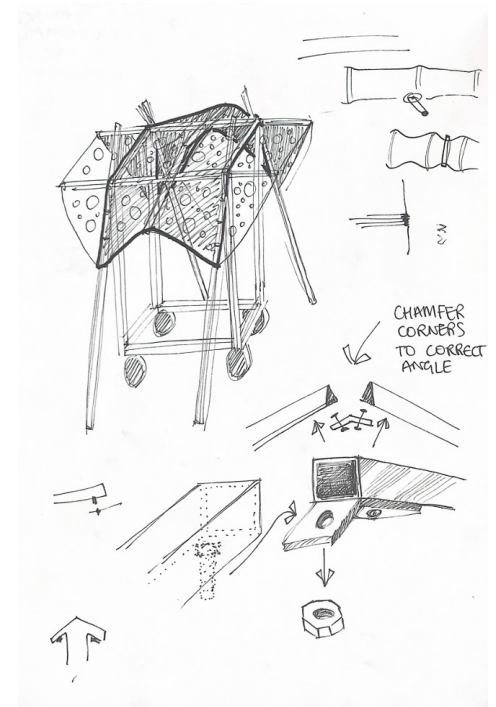
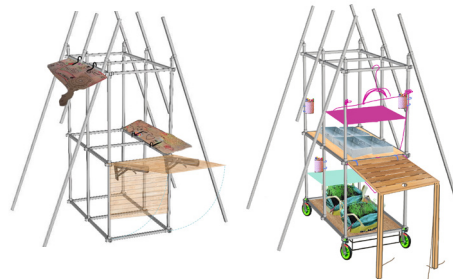
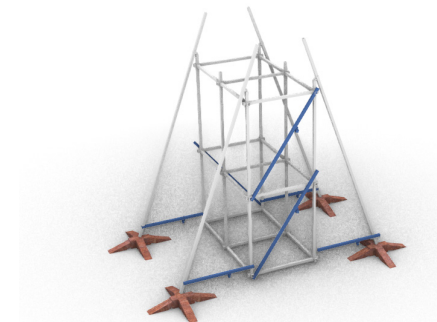
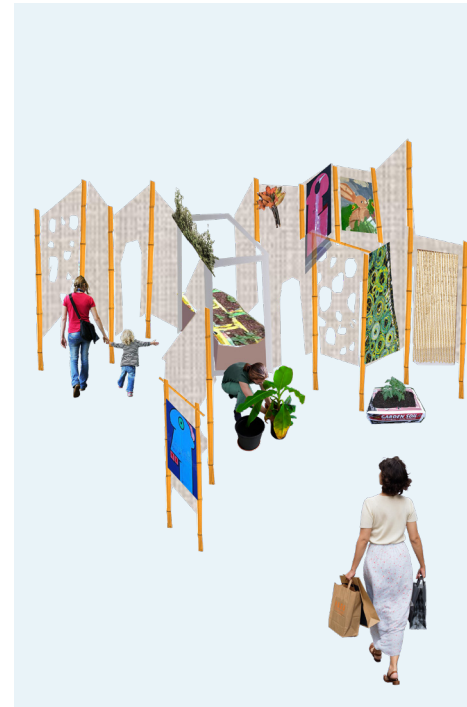
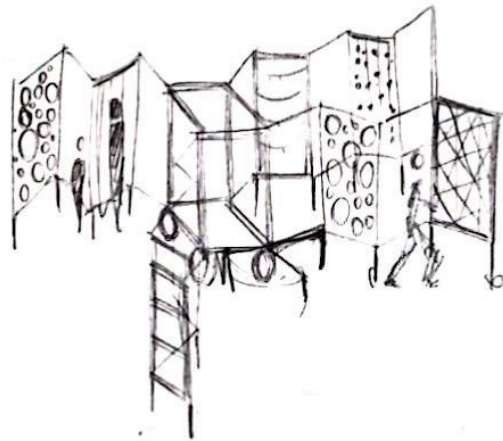
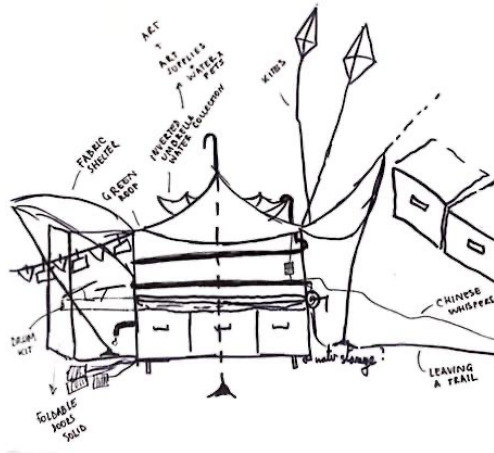
Over the course of the two weeks, we designed the trolley from conceptual collages to creating a scale model at 1:10 which prepared us to constructing the Possibility Machine at full scale. The final trolley reflects the collective creativity of the team, blending practical construction with playful design features intended to spark engagement. Testing the Possibility Machine within the community in Oswestry alongside our collaborator provided valuable feedback and a real sense of purpose.

This publication documents our journey—one grounded in imagination, collaboration, and hands-on learning—and offers a glimpse into how a team of students can co-create something that is both functional and fantastical.

DAY 1 AND 2

We kicked off the first day of the MSA Live action weeks by meeting the full team and introducing the project. Our client, Joseph, welcomed everyone and presented his social agenda virtually to the BA students. The group was full of energy, immediately generating ideas in response to the brief. During a design charette, students explored precedents and began sketching initial concepts. Guided by the master's team, the BAs pushed their thinking using the client's keywords: improbable, messy, irrational, and impossible. These ideas were developed into conceptual collages and shared for group review and collaboration.

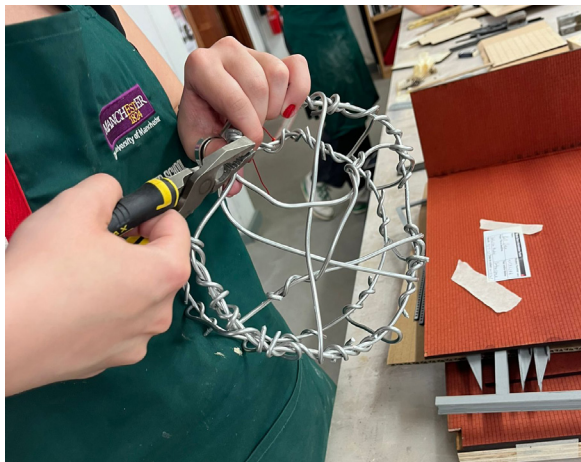
Day 2 started with a presentation to our client on our ideas of the (im)Possibility Machine. Joseph responded enthusiastically, offering thoughtful feedback that helped us critically refine our concepts. His insights helped us critically refine our ideas. We then split into smaller teams to focus on three key design elements: shade, stability, and surfaces. By the end of the day, we had a growing set of creative proposals, including a fabric roof canopy, stabilising feet and struts, moulds for natural materials, and a wiggly fold-down table. The studio buzzed with excitement as we moved toward a unified design direction, just two days away from building the trolley at 1:1!



DAY 3 AND 4

On Day 3, our team transitioned from conceptual designs to hands-on prototyping by making scaled models at 1:10 within their groups. Group Shelter explored shelter, crafting layered fabric shade structures. Using recycled textiles from the School of Fashion and even balloons to model dappled light, they combined texture, sustainability, and creativity. Group Surfaces developed mark-making surfaces with embedded practicality, imagining how Joseph and the community might co-create art. Their designs maximised space and reused materials provided by the client. Group Stability focused on stabilising elements, designing grounding interventions to ensure safety and ease of use.

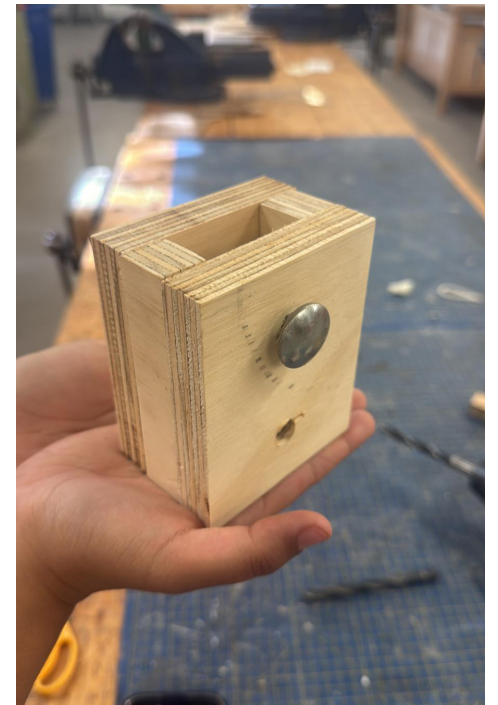
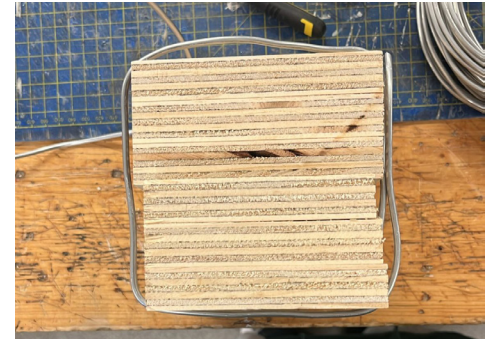
Day 4 marked a major milestone, the arrival of the Possibility Machine! Joseph joined us in Manchester, bringing with him the machine's skeletal framework. The day kicked off with a team effort to haul the parts up to the third floor of MTC, transforming our studio into a construction site. Once assembled, the structure stood tall, ready to receive each group's creative interventions. In the afternoon, excitement grew as each team presented their final designs alongside the scale model to Joseph. Shelter, mark-making surfaces, and stability are now in direct dialogue with the real machine.



DAY 5 AND 6

Day 5 marked a transition from prototyping to full-scale making. Group Shelter began by drafting a large paper template to define the canopy's dimensions. Using recycled textiles from the Manchester School of Fashion, they started sewing a patchwork cover, introducing vibrant colour, tactility, and a sustainable narrative. Group Stability fabricated structural gabion baskets, reimagining them with aluminium wire to stabilise the trolley while offering potential for planting. Group Surfaces tested and refined their first leg bracket prototype, using recycled B.15 plywood and iterative experimentation to find the best balance of strength and simplicity.

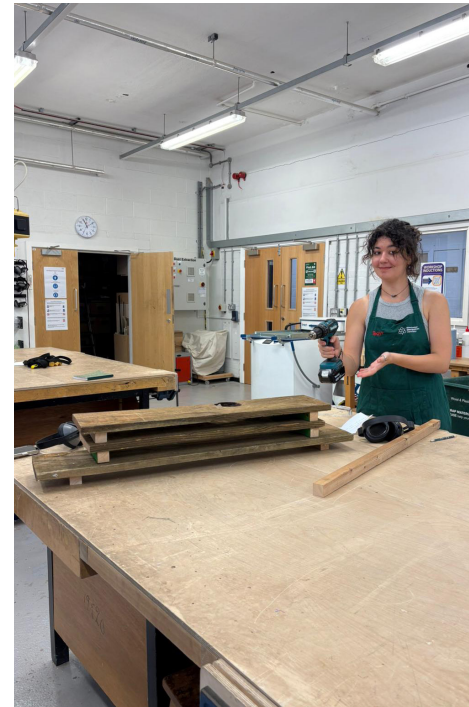
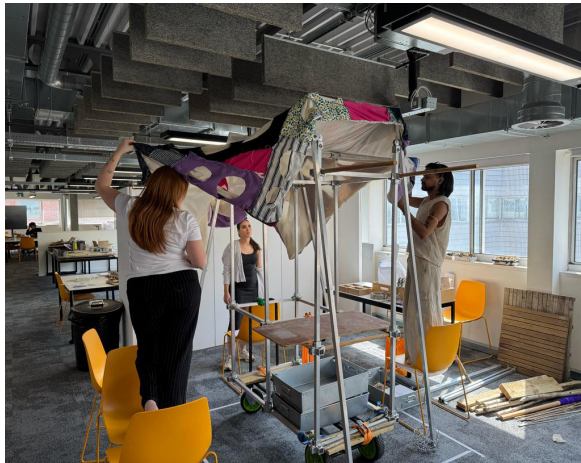
By Day 6, momentum built across the studio. Group Shelter sourced enough fabric to complete the entire canopy, now a marathon of stitching ahead. Group Stability completed the fabrication of all four gabion baskets and Group Surfaces finished assembling all four leg brackets, refining their design from Day 5 to ensure better fit and durability, using recycled plywood from B.15. With their respective structures complete, Groups Stability and Surfaces began merging efforts to develop the tabletop elements that would sit atop the brackets, marking a new phase of collaborative making. The Possibility Machine was taking form, layered with care, creativity, and collaboration.



DAY 7 AND 8

As the Possibility Machine neared completion, Day 7 focused on refinement and detail. Group Shelter began hemming the patchwork canopy over a cotton underlayer, cutting out sections to create dappled light effect below. Groups Stability and Surfaces turned their attention to strengthening the machine's interactive surfaces. They laminated recycled plywood sourced from the client (originally used for mark-making), creating a more durable tabletop. They also created modular brick-shaped moulds for pressing natural materials, referencing the client's rural-to-urban ethos. The moulds double as storage units, showing thoughtful, multifunctional design as teams pushed toward completion.

The final day of the build arrived with a strong sense of urgency and excitement. Group Shelter completed the canopy, finishing the last round of stitching in edge pockets and punching eyelets along the border to allow for future adaptability so hooks, tools, or decorations can now be hung with ease. Groups Stability and Surfaces focused on finalising the tabletop surfaces. Using reclaimed timber from the client, they crafted insertable trays that function much like oversized bath caddies that are practical, removable, and inviting interaction. With yesterday's laminated tabletops ready, they were shaped into organic, wiggly forms, the final pieces were assembled.



SOFT LAUNCH

To mark the culmination of two weeks of intense making, we took the Possibility Machine on its first journey for a soft launch with our client, Joseph Schneider. A coach brought the team from Manchester to Oswestry, where the trolley was assembled and pushed to the local Horse Market, testing it for the first time in a real public setting. Promoted through Joseph's social media, the event welcomed curious passersby and sparked lively interactions. Together with the client, we ran chalk-based mark-making activities, transforming the pavement into a collaborative canvas. Conversations flowed as people engaged with the trolley, bringing the project's ethos of accessibility and creative expression to life.

On the last day, we wrapped up MSA Live with a small thank-you picnic for the BA students. Despite juggling their own academic deadlines, they brought incredible energy, creativity, and commitment to the project. The informal gathering offered a moment to pause, reflect, and celebrate the achievements of the past two weeks, reminding us that behind every successful build is a dedicated and passionate team.



Reflection

Over the course of two amazing yet demanding weeks, the Possibility Team brought the Machine from concept to creation. Guided by Joseph Schneider, the brief challenged us to think beyond conventional public art and instead imagine something mobile, modular, and deeply participatory. From the outset, the project invited us to embrace contradiction: to design something improbable yet buildable, irrational yet practical, something messy, alive, and open-ended. We began with collaborative ideation sessions, where BA and MArch students explored initial responses through sketching, collage, and precedent studies. With guidance from our client, our concepts resolved quickly with teams formed around key functional themes: Shelter, Stability, and Surfaces. Design refinement and scaled models at 1:10 gave way to 1:1 making, using recycled and reclaimed materials sourced from the client, the Manchester School of Fashion, and B.15 Workshop.

Group Shelter developed a canopy stitched from textile offcuts, creating a playful, tactile shelter. Group Stability engineered gabion-style baskets for structure, while Group Surface crafted leg brackets and modular tabletops from laminated plywood and reclaimed timber. The collaborative build phase was intense and rewarding, demanding precision, communication, and adaptability from everyone involved. The soft launch in Oswestry tested the trolley in real-world conditions. We pushed it through the town to the local horse market, where we co-hosted chalk-based mark-making activities with Joseph. The community responded with curiosity and warmth—validating our efforts and sparking meaningful conversations.

As a team, we are incredibly proud of what we've achieved over the past two weeks. We navigated tight timetables alongside academic extensions, and despite these pressures, the Master's team pulled through with commitment and collaboration. Sofiah spearheaded the team, acting as the main liaison with the collaborator while overseeing overall management, workflow, and project ideation. She was supported by Shiv and Hannah, who regularly stepped in to lead sessions, coordinate daily tasks for the undergraduate students, and guide the design development and resolution process. This was underpinned by Sofiah's detailed action plan, which kept the project on track. Gongxin and Liu acted as the team's handymen, taking charge of assembling and disassembling components and assisting with key documentation tasks, including the finance plan and initial publication draft. Shiv and Hannah also took on responsibility for documenting the process through daily blog posts and preparing the final publication for submission, ensuring the story of the Possibility Machine is clearly and creatively communicated.



ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse students with those in BA year 1 and year 2 and Masters Landscape Architecture 1 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

LIVE PROJECTS

All MSA LIVE projects are live. A live project is where an educational organisation and an external partner develop a brief, timescale, and outcome for their mutual benefit.

SOCIAL IMPACT

All MSA LIVE projects are for community benefit or have social impact. Social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of a community. Our agendas are set by our external collaborators.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.

STUDENT-LED

Our MSA masters students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. Other cohorts joined for an eventful 2 weeks of activities at the end of the academic year.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Working in teams within and across year groups and courses; MSA students participate in peer to peer learning. In addition, collaborators, participants and students engage in the transfer of tangible and intellectual property, expertise, learning and skills.

LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 650 students from 5 cohorts in MSA have worked on 40 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team:

msalive@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2025

SOCIAL

#MSALive25

@msa.live.25

@TheMSArch

@MLA_TheMSArch

WEBSITE

www.msa.ac.uk