

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

In-Situ is a socially engaged arts organisation in Pendle, Lancashire, dedicated to integrating art into everyday life. As part of the Nelson Town Deal, its initiative This is Nelson brings together artists, local groups, and residents to explore identity, heritage, and the town's future through creative collaboration. A key project within this is the 'It's Nelson Innit' (TIN) youth group, which, alongside RESOLVE Collective, transformed the disused upstairs floor of an old Methodist church into a multifunctional space at 3B-Systems. Designed as a safe and inclusive hub, it features hanging installations, seating areas, and spots for music and relaxation, with ongoing development to support the wider community.



Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



**MSA
LIVE25**

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Partners

In-Situ is a social arts organisation based in Pendle, East Lancashire. Since 2012, it has embedded artists within local communities to explore place, sustainability and culture. Their mission is to make art a part of everyday life, often working in overlooked or transitional spaces to activate social change. With an emphasis on long-term collaboration, In-Situ promotes environmentally and socially responsive practice, often co-creating with residents, young people and interdisciplinary practitioners.

This is Nelson (TIN) is one of In-Situ's initiatives, developed through the Nelson Town Deal to rejuvenate local arts and cultural engagement. A key component is the TIN Youth Group, which meets weekly in a re-purposed upper floor of the 3b-Systems building, a former Methodist church. Working with RESOLVE Collective, the youth group co-designed and built a safe, expressive, and sustainable pop-up community space using salvaged local materials. Their work reflects their values and aspirations for their town, prioritising creativity, sustainability and social connections.

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Introduction



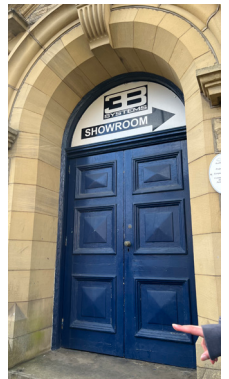
Upstairs @ 3B

3-B Systems is a flexible community space of an old methodist church in the heart of Nelson, co-designed by This is Nelson (TIN) and RESOLVE Collective. Over a 3 month period, the organisers have reactivated the disused upper floor by creating interventions from locally sourced materials from Nelson, and most importantly, by involving the community members themselves in the regeneration of the town's cultural and social identity.

In this project, we are seeking to fulfill the philosophies of In-Situ to further activate the upstairs space as a hub for local creatives, producers and community members to work within, as they plan to convert the space into a publicly used space for designing, crafting and bringing communities together.

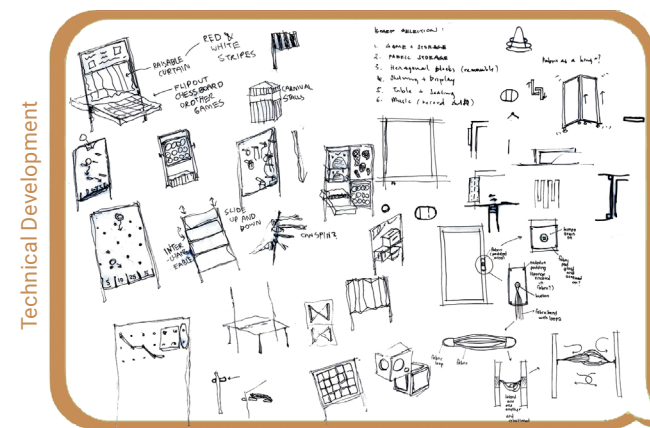
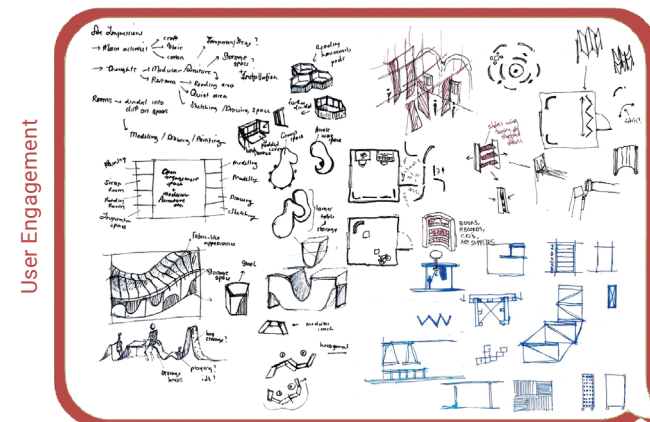
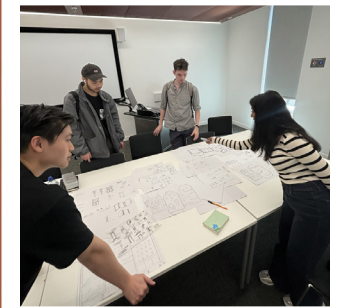
For this live project, we aim to further the ideas and philosophies that TIN and RESOLVE have applied on 3-B Systems to allow community members to realise their creative ideas and to reinforce the social & cultural identity of Nelson, bringing people together and fostering a conducive space for the youth to develop their talents and integrate their roots and taking ownership of their place in Nelson.

In this project, we created a series of modular boards that serve respective functions that can be used in various settings, private or public. These individual boards each serve specific functions and can be mobile across all internal spaces of Upstairs@3-B, reflecting the flexibility of the use of spaces. When put together, these boards form a social and creative hub in and of itself, following a series of different activities that can be moved outside of 3B-Systems for public events, and forging new connections with community members, and most importantly, providing an interactive and engaging atmosphere for the youth to nurture and grow their own, and Nelson's identity.





USER ANALYSIS

[illegible]

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graph LR
    A[29.2% of the population are under 18 years old] --> D[Integration of main space with air, rooms]
    B[52.6% of the population identifies as Asian/Asian British ethnic groups] --> D
    D --> C[Regeneration of art and community amid loss of local art spaces and shops]
    C --> E[Proposal that caters to a diverse multi-cultural group of people]
    E --> F[Inclusive, safe, and engaging space for young people]
    F --> G[Facilitates a creative hub for local makers, artists, creatives]
  
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29.2% of the population are under 18 years old

52.6% of the population identifies as Asian/Asian British ethnic groups

Integration of main space with air, rooms

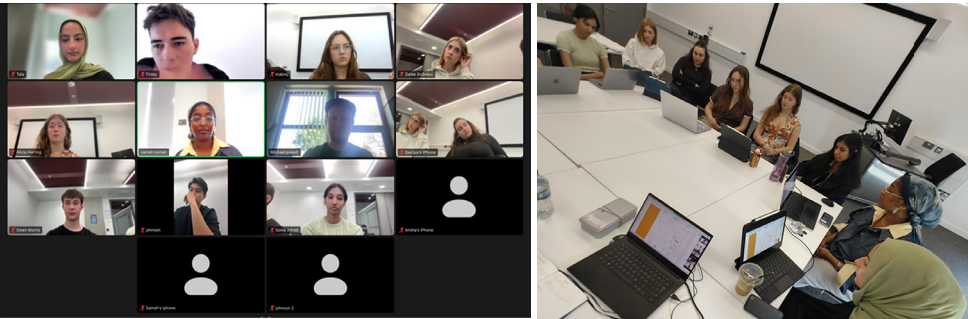
Regeneration of art and community amid loss of local art spaces and shops

Proposal that caters to a diverse multi-cultural group of people

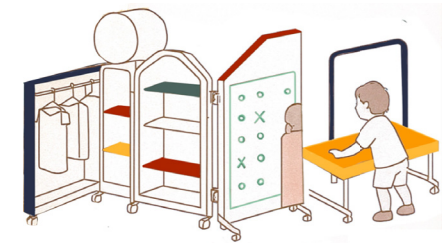
Inclusive, safe, and engaging space for young people

Facilitates a creative hub for local makers, artists, creatives

CLIENT REVIEW



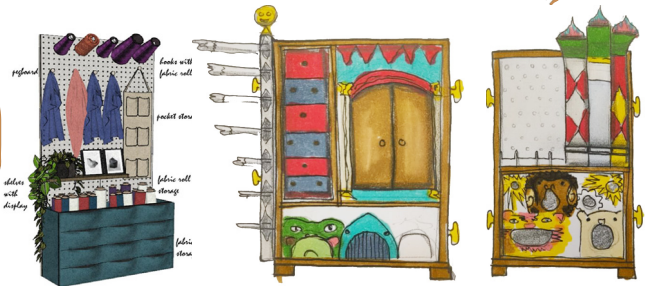
At this point in the project, establishing a clear direction was essential, and the client meeting helped solidify this. The BA students were introduced to the client, Michael Powell, and was briefly updated on the outcomes of the first two days of action plan. We presented a proposal featuring multifunctional boards for all proposed functions, with Michael showing interest in several concepts. The boards designed for the rooms were positively received by Michael for their potential to be combined into a larger installation, but he emphasised the importance of modularity and versatility, prioritising practical storage solutions first with playful, engaging design elements.



"The more playful ideas were great, perhaps one or two boards could have playfulness, musical and interactive elements incorporated."

"I also really liked the musical element idea as a further more interesting and playful element."

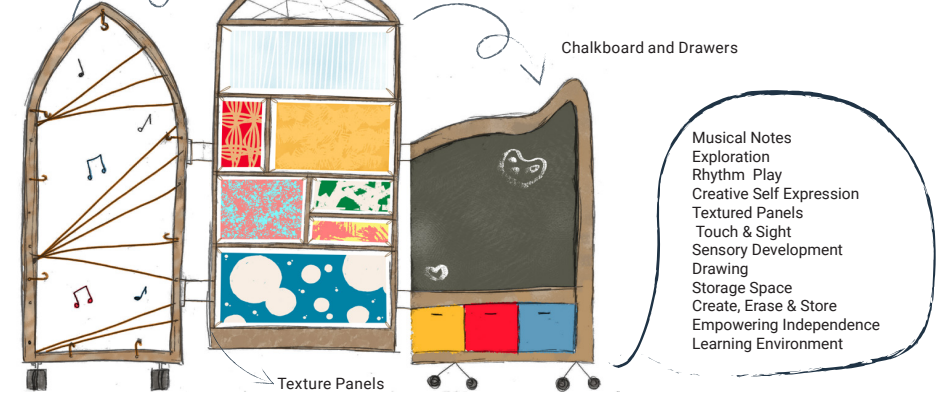
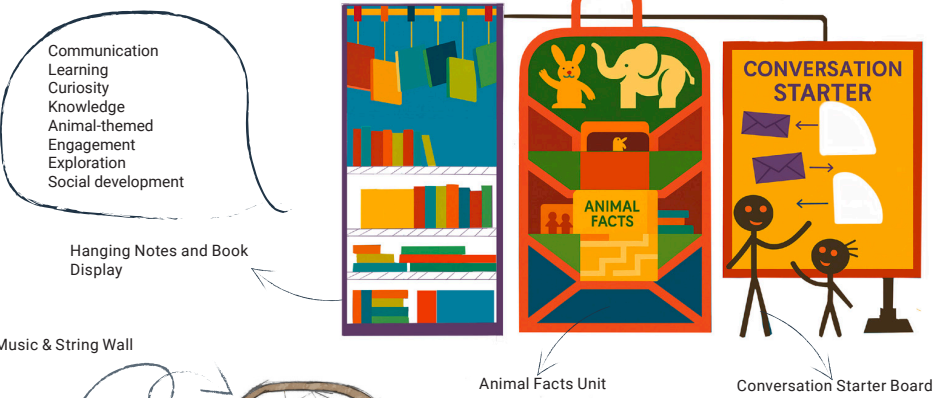
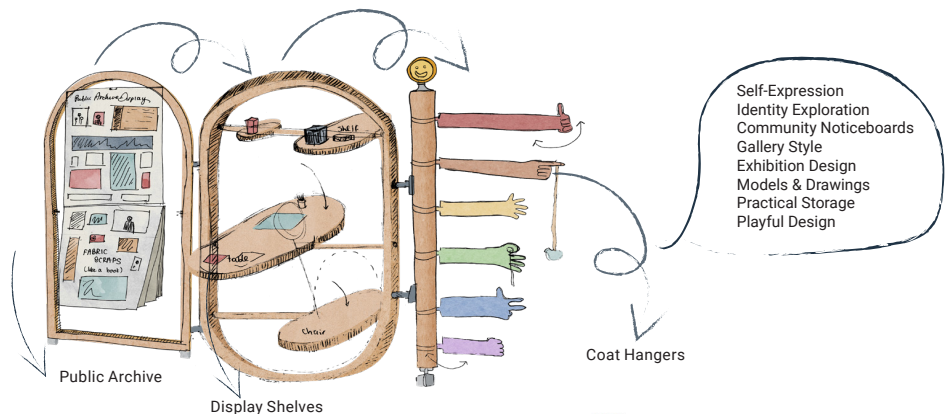
"I particularly liked the peg and drawer storage board option and the honeycomb seating and storage option."



Following the client review meeting, we went through Michael's feedback point-by-point discussing how we could develop our proposal to fit his requirements.

We then proceeded to finalise 8 boards which served as practical storage while maintaining creative and engaging activities for the community and public.

REFINED DEVELOPMENT

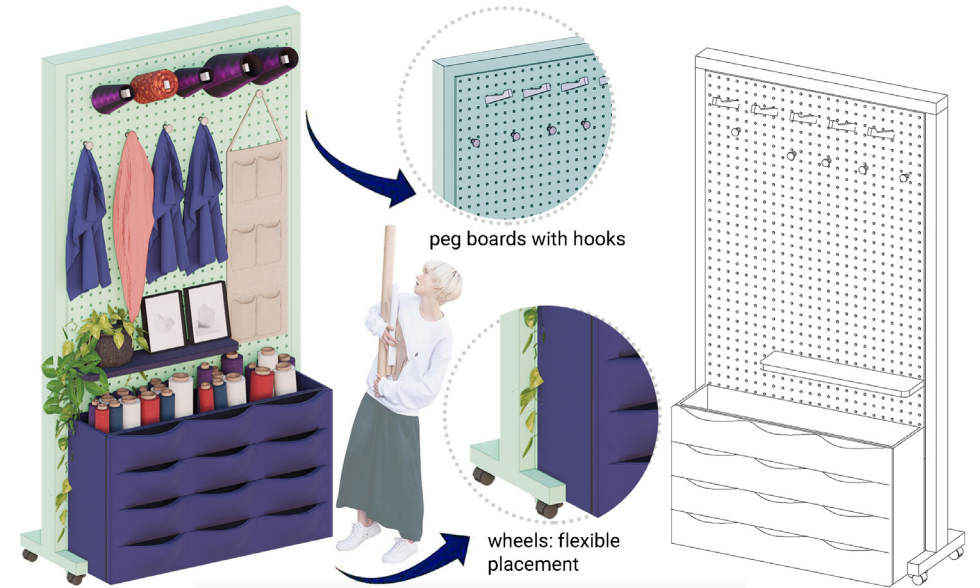


CONCEPT COLLAGE

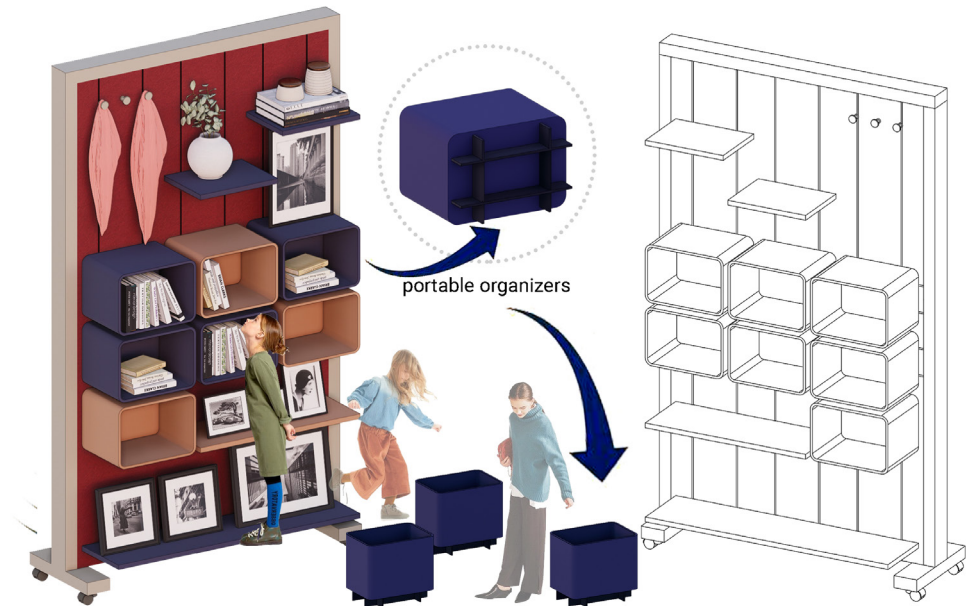


These series of modular boards capture the diverse and unique essence of Nelson's community - to assist and encourage the growth of their ideas, skills and personal development by accommodating various social settings that 3-B's spaces host.

DISPLAY BOARDS

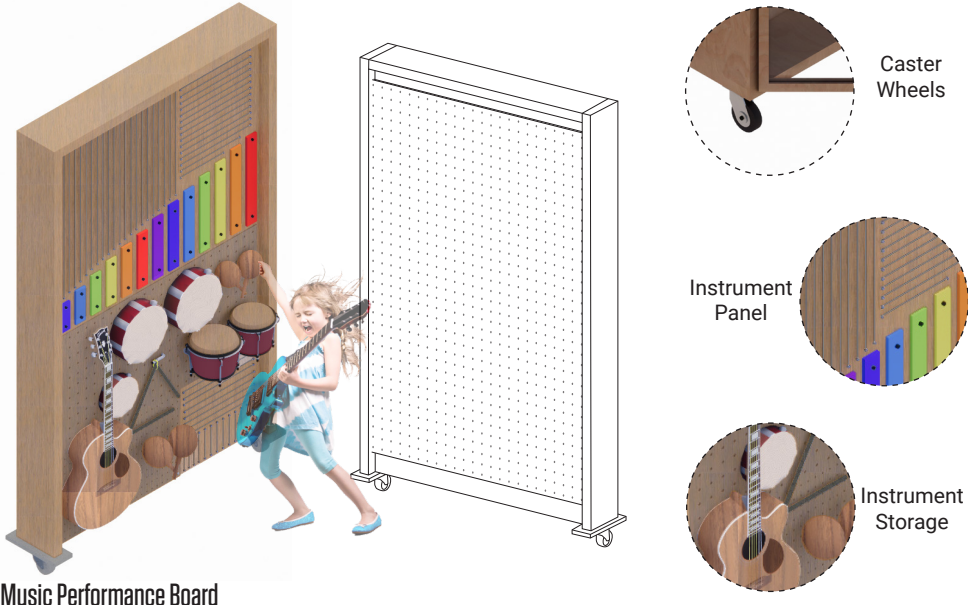


Fabric - Focused Peg Board Storage

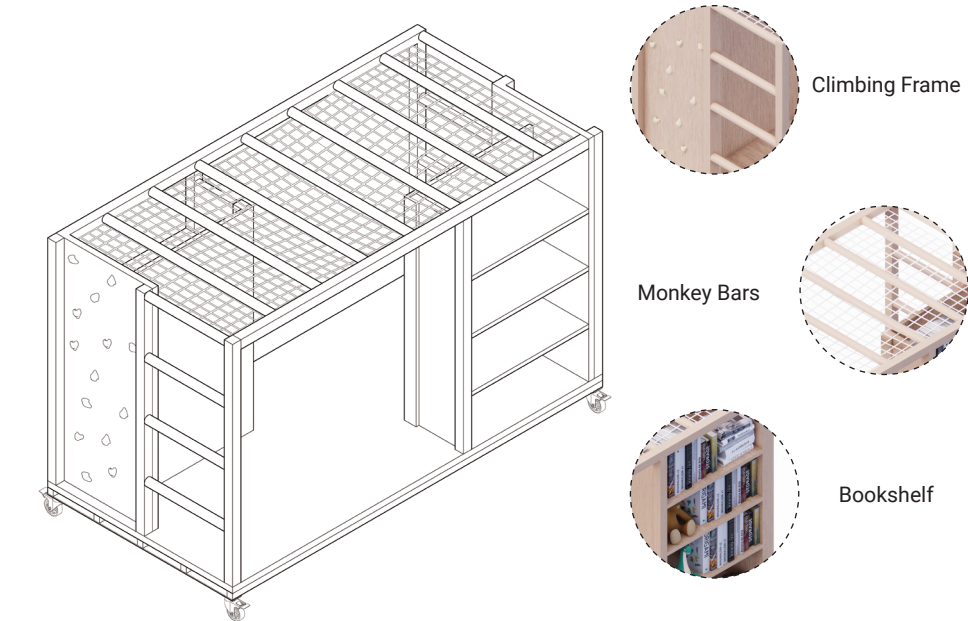


Flexible Foam Board Storage

MUSIC BOARDS



CLIMBING FRAME



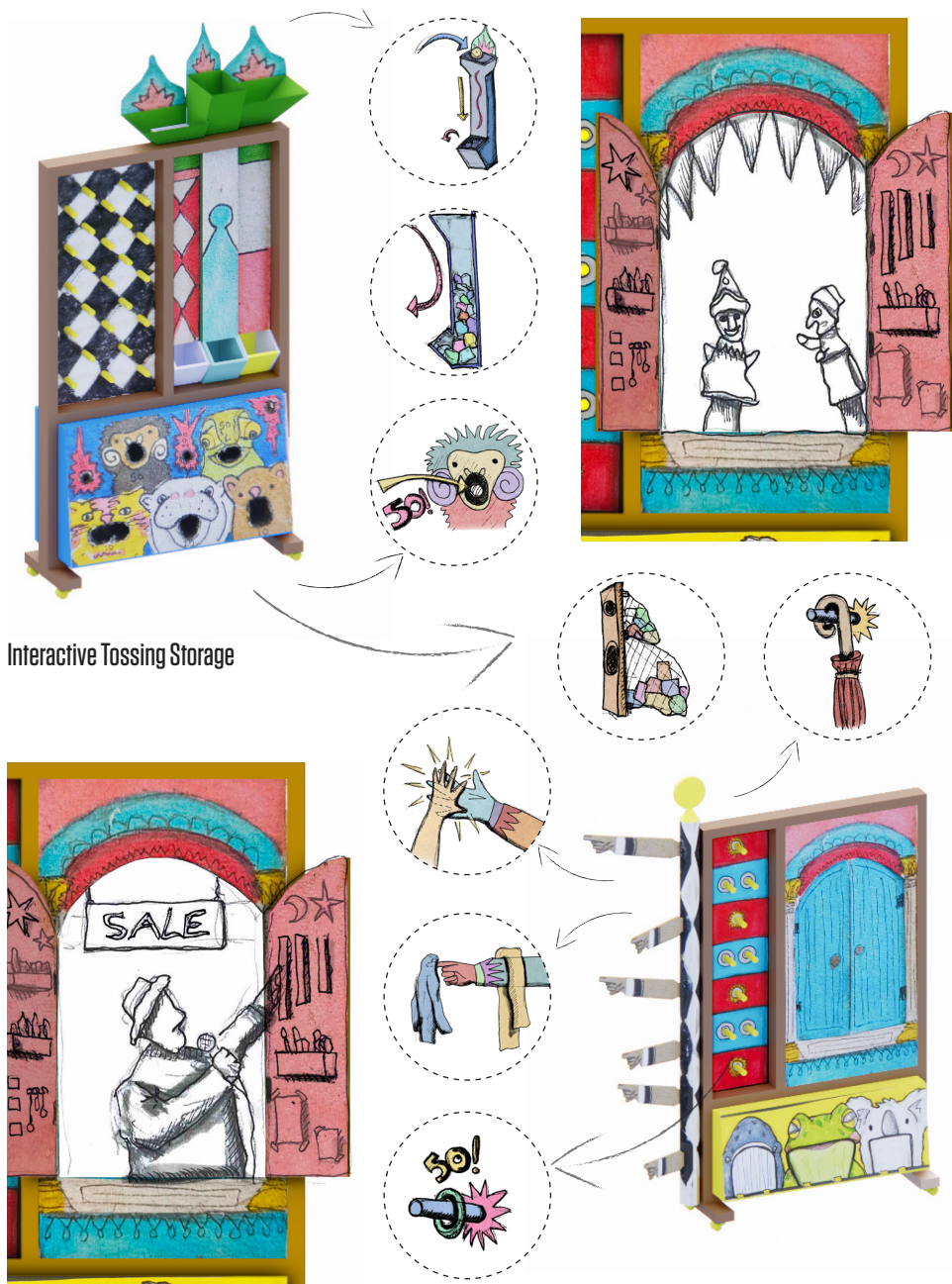
The largest unit of the boards, the climbing frame acts as a mobile library for children that fits entirely into 3-B's auxiliary rooms, and can be transported outdoors as an open portal and/or an active climbing frame for public events.



Closed / Storage

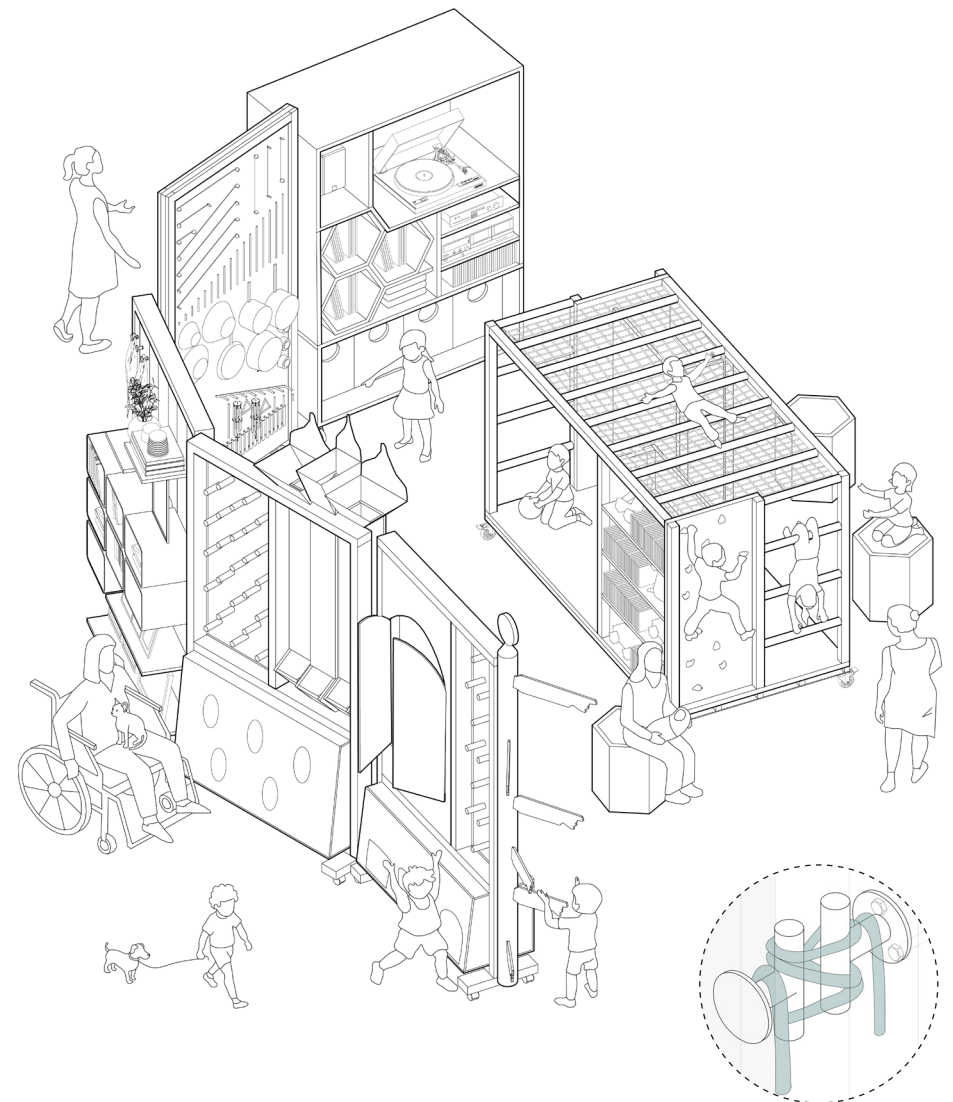
Open / Public Events

ENTERTAINMENT BOARDS



Hanging Storage + Portal

AXONOMETRIC DIAGRAMS



Axonometric Diagram + Joinery Detail

Joinery detail of how boards connect with each other. The detail for ropes reflect the fabric identity of Nelson's history and its philosophy of tying communities together.

OUR MODELS



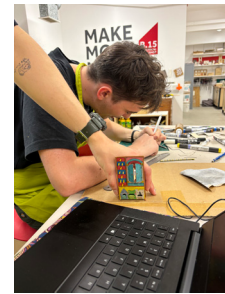
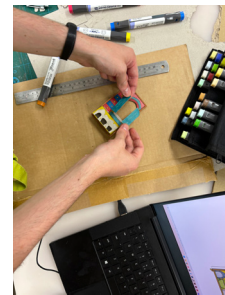
REFLECTION

This project has been an insightful and enjoyable experience. Live projects are incredibly useful, and they show us just how much great work can be done with a fantastic and talented team. Like these boards, there is no hierarchy - just individual creatives, bringing their own unique aspects to the team and supporting each other throughout these incredible past weeks, coming together to form a collaborative unit.

What we thought was a missed opportunity was budgetary limitations due to Nelson's distance from Manchester, which restricted our BAs from fully capturing the atmosphere of Nelson and 3-B Systems at the beginning of the project. We think that our initial seriousness during the start of project added unwarranted pressure on the BAs, in addition to MSA's low attendance requirements, which set their attitude for the following weeks to come.

However, despite conflicting schedules and unpredictable attendance, our team managed to create work that we are extremely satisfied with, and It would have been a tremendous struggle to carry this project all the way through to completion without the support from our tutor, Jason Taylor, our lovely BAs, Alicia, Madeleine, Sadie, Tala, Danae, Georgia, Max, Owen, Nicholas and Sonia - Thank you so much!

In fact, some of us have even never stepped foot into our modelling workshop since inductions, but our enthusiasm to experiment and learn new things is what ultimately saw through our work till the very end, and we are eternally grateful to have worked with Michael, In-Situ, TIN, and 3-B Systems, and especially amongst each other in our team to show them possible opportunities to enrich Nelson's community, and we hope that the work that we have built will inspire others to not do the same, but to build onto our creative ideas and pursuits for everyone around us.



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:

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BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2025

SOCIAL

#MSALive25

@msa.live.25

@TheMSArch

@MLA_TheMSArch

WEBSITE

www.msa.ac.uk