

Press Release



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford WEURO 2022 Legacy Public Art Commission 'Becca-Lea – Home of' – by Ciara Callaghan

March – December 2023

**Opening Day: Saturday 25th March – 11am – 5pm, Brunel Shopping Centre, Bletchley
MK2 2ES**

In celebration of International Women's Day and the recent Freedom of the City award to Lionesses Captain Leah Williamson, Milton Keynes City Council and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council are pleased to announce that Bletchley based artist Ciara Callaghan has been awarded the WEURO 2022 Legacy Public Art Commission.

In July 2022, England hosted the record-breaking UEFA Women's EURO (WEURO) football tournament. Nine cities hosted 31 matches played by 16 national teams in 26 days, attended live by 700,000 people and watched by a global TV audience of 400m (the BBC screened every match live). Milton Keynes hosted four matches including a semi-final at Stadium MK.

365m people around the globe watched the Women's Euros in the summer as England lifted the trophy. The tournament ended as it began - with a record-breaking attendance. Wembley was packed with 87,192 spectators for the final between England and Germany.

The Women's EURO 2022 was more than just a football tournament, it was a showcase for the strength, intelligence, and resilience of women.

Building on the ground-breaking arts and heritage programme which ran alongside the WEURO tournament - uniting culture and sport to celebrate and explore the rich history and future of women's football; Milton Keynes City Council and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council have secured funding to deliver a legacy commission post tournament, with the aim of continuing to reach and engage girls and young women in both sporting and cultural activities.

Following an open call, artist Ciara Callaghan was selected for her commission proposal 'Becca-Lea - Home of'. Taking up residence in a former shop unit in the Brunel Shopping Centre, Bletchley - a free-year long programme of creative and sports related activities will be delivered in collaboration with local community and sporting groups. The programme actively promotes female leadership and creativity, offers work experience opportunities to young people and will provide multiple entry points to football, for girls and young women. The title of Ciara's proposal 'Becca-Lea is the original Anglo-Saxon name of Bletchley and the

surrounding areas and translates as 'Bletchley Meadows. 'Home of' is a playful nod to Bletchley Park and other local cultural institutions in Milton Keynes.

Ciara's practice as an artist explores ideas of place, belonging, feminism and the relationship between objects and their owners. Often working in collaboration with communities to explore these themes, her approach is defined by generosity, openness and sharing.

Opening in mid-March 2023, a dedicated website has been created – www.blecca-lea.com which includes all the information about the programme, opening times of the new cultural space and how to get involved. Regular updates will also be shared via social media and via local networks.

'Becca-Lea – Home of' like women's football is for everyone and Ciara and the team look forward to welcoming local residents, visitors, football fans and players, young and old to take part in what promises to be an exciting, engaging and energetic programme.

Cllr Robin Bradburn, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture adds:

'The Women's EURO 2022 was a truly remarkable moment in the history of women's football and one that we continue to celebrate and honour in Milton Keynes with the recent award of Freedom of the City to Lionesses Captain Leah Williamson and now with this important legacy commission, which will build on all that was achieved during the tournament and will ensure that local communities continue to have access to excellent cultural and sporting opportunities'.

Milton Keynes City Council and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council would like to thank Milton Keynes Development Partnership for their support and contribution towards Unit 4a, Brunel Shopping Centre, Bletchley.

For more information about the commission and to get involved please email: culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Milton Keynes
Development Partnership