

# MK Gallery

The long awaited re-opening of the new MK Gallery took place on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2019. The building has undergone a three year re-development program, funded by Art England, Milton Keynes Council, and private trustees. Before the build, the gallery carried out an extensive public and private market survey to ascertain which facilities the new building needed in order to become a sustainable project. The results included better mobility and wash room facilities, somewhere to eat, a learning room and a unique and contemporary space to put the gallery back on the map as a place to attract visitors.

Milton Keynes investors have steadily develop an art and culture community in the new town since the conceptual plans in the 1970s. The founding architects recognised art as an integral part of society in terms of learning, cohesion and a loving celebration of creativity. Art and the city aims to inspire all ages, building confidence and nurturing the human potential. You can see many of these ideas incorporated around the new gallery facilities.

The open day included an official ceremony with speeches and a programme of dance and music, as well as public viewings of the first exhibition called the Lie of the Land. The aim of the opening was to welcome members of the public back into the Gallery. It is hoped the first exhibition with 85 exhibits will illustrate how outdoor space has evolved through time. The show hopes to capture the concept of the story of the MK development corporations and it's ideologies for Milton Keynes, being a city within the countryside, and considerations for the environment.

The new gallery has 5 exhibit rooms with higher ceilings and state-of-the art air conditioning to protect higher value art pieces. The ribbon cutting ceremony was performed by the Mayor of Milton Keynes at 11 am. During the day around 1,500 visitors attended the opening. People of all ages attended. I felt the gallery had achieved their dream to be a space for all. The most ambition dream for the architects was to design multi-functional auditorium space. The new space named the Sky Room has state of the art sound proofing, with seating for 150 and 300 standing. The colour palette chosen for the interior and exteriors of the gallery are the 1978 Habitat earth and urban palette. These

colours were the signature colours used by the MK Development Corporation architect offices in the 1970's.

### Captions

Image 1: Martin Petchey, the Mayor of Milton Keynes performs the ceremonial ribbon cutting with the crowd behind him.

Image 2: 100 free goody bags: First visitors inside receive surprise gifts.

Image 3: Ian Revell, CEO of Milton Keynes Community Foundation shares the story behind the funding provided by the Margaret Powell Trust.

Image 4: Motus professional dancers perform a contemporary dance to open the new MK Gallery playscape area for children.

Image 5: Young art lovers taking a closer look at works in exhibit room 2.

Image 6: Beret gentleman inspired in exhibit room 3.

Image 7: Happy volunteer on 'welcome' and clicker-counting duties.

Image 8: Sky Room crowd find time to chat and catch up with friends.