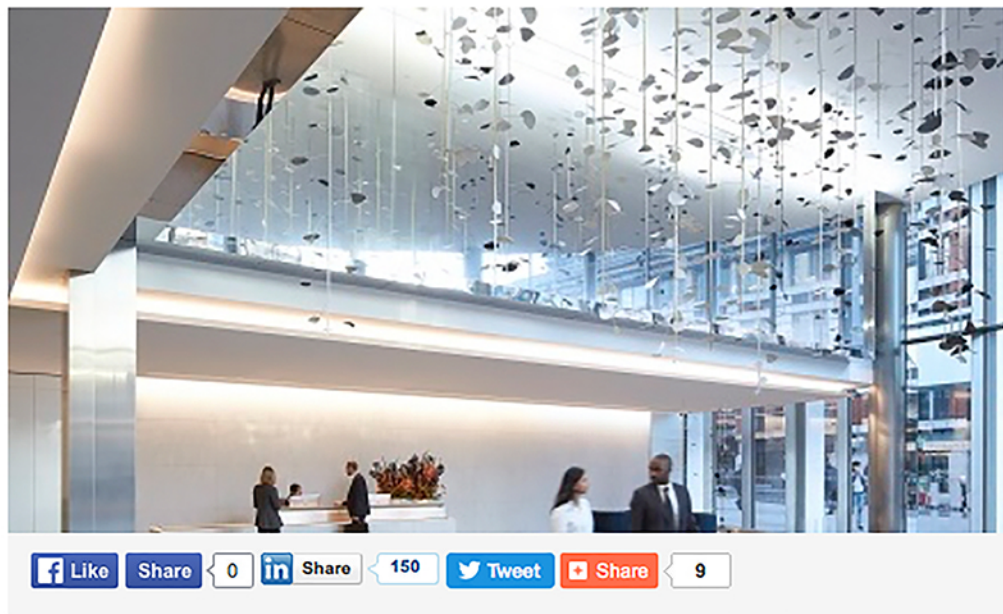


## Capturing imagination through art

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*Natalie Essa, Development Surveyor in the [London Portfolio](#), discusses the role of art in placemaking*

Art captures people's imagination. It inspires us, makes us think, stop and look. Whether it's in the public spaces around our buildings or in the reception areas of our buildings, art is an integral part of our developments and key to Land Securities' philosophy of creating thought-provoking spaces which engage with the public.

When integrated intelligently into a development, art can be a very powerful way of making a scheme individual and unique. But it's important for the art to have a purpose. The story we are telling through our development is just as important as the aesthetic and that's why we work closely with artists alongside our designers and architects from an early stage.

We work with ArtSource, a progressive consultancy, to find inspiring artists to work with, but our commitment extends beyond simply acquiring and commissioning art. We also believe it's important to support artists directly in the communities where we operate.

In 2007, we set up the Land Securities Studio Award in collaboration with The Slade, The Royal Academy and The Royal College of Art. This programme provides three recently-graduated artists with studio space for a year and a bursary towards the cost of their materials. It supports them through the transition from a large educational institution to an individual artist, by providing them with space to work alongside other artists as well as giving them the freedom to concentrate fully on their studio practice.

We often build a lasting relationship with the artists and go on to work with them in the future. Nika Neelova was one such artist. She won a Studio Award in 2011 and in 2015 won the commission to create a piece of artwork for the reception of One New Ludgate, EC4. Her piece 'A vane a feather a blade a sickle a curve an edge a crescent an oar' is an intricate sculpture based on ventilation fans which have been cast in marble, graphite and charcoal dust, brass and aluminium steel.

Nika is also currently pitching to contribute to the public art at Nova, Victoria, due to launch in the Autumn. This will take the form of a rotating outdoor gallery with regularly changing artwork, to create a more vibrant atmosphere than a traditional permanent installation.

The first artist to be selected for this commission is Saad Qureshi. His 'Places for Nova' creation comprises six landscapes derived from the stories of people who live, work and travel through Victoria. The result will be an installation firmly rooted in the community where it is displayed, demonstrating once again the important role art plays, both for a specific development and for the community of which it is a part.