



# Designing the World

PRITZKER  
PRIZE-WINNING  
ARCHITECT  
ZAHA HADID  
IS SHOWING  
NO SIGNS  
OF SLOWING  
DOWN OR  
TONING DOWN.

BY CHRISTINA BOHNSTENGEL



Zaha Hadid has been bucking the status quo from a young age. The Iraqi-British architect entered the so-called starchitect stratosphere after taking center stage, in 2004, when she won the industry's highest award: the Pritzker Architecture Prize. And she was the first woman ever to do so. In 2010, the stylish Hadid went on to claim the RIBA Stirling Prize and then did it again in 2011. New projects kept filling up the drawing boards, and today, she has an established international presence. Her design aesthetic is manifested through distinctive curvaceous characteristics, exoskeleton designs, and a futuristic *Jetsons*-like feel—a sensibility that she also applies to buildings and structures as well as to yachts, vases, jewelry, furniture, and other such items, including what you see here on this page. Controversy chases her from time to time, in attempts to tear it all down. But Hadid has not reached the top echelon of professional glory by playing it small. Her courageous nature is intrinsic to her bold personality.

“Daring is to not worry about the status quo, to not worry about conventions, and to just do what you think is right. For that you need enormous confidence,” she says in a *Harper's Bazaar* feature about what it takes to be daring, published in the October 2014 issue.

Perhaps Hadid's courage, her confidence, and her bold personality were developed early on. In our interview with the mastermind of modern design, she credits her upbringing for the premature global awareness that impacted her lifelong passion. “When I was a child I traveled every summer with my parents, and my father made sure I went to every important building and museum in each city we visited,” she says. She cites the profound impact the Great Mosque in Cordoba, Spain, had on her at seven years old, recalling it as the most stunning space. Subsequent family trips had her studying art in

#### BEYOND BUILDINGS

Hadid has lent her unique design sensibility to objets d'art and luxury items. *Clockwise from left:* Crystal vase for Lalique. Liquid glacial table for David Gill Galleries. Liquid Skyline Fabergé egg. Vortexx chandelier for Sawaya & Moroni. Peekaboo bag for Fendi.





### CONTEMPORARY ICONS

A rendering of the view from 1000 Museum tower, in Miami. Above, Sleuk Rith Institute, in Cambodia.

Paris, baroque designs in Vienna, and ancient structures in Rome. “We’d go to new cities to learn about architecture,” she says. “I think that’s what inspired my love of buildings.”

Today, she credits the inspiration for her designs, often so ahead of their time, to her power of observation. “Observation of the site, of people, and culture of the city,” she explains. “Every design revolves around how people will use the space.” At her Zaha Hadid Architects firm, each project is the very specific result of how the context, local culture, programmatic requirements, and innovative engineering come together. She describes her designs as reflecting a sense of place by allowing the architecture, city, and landscape to seamlessly combine.

Identifying the coherence of science and beauty of nature as additional sources of inspiration, she sums architecture up as being all about well-being. “It’s about the creation of pleasant and stimulating settings for all aspects of life. But I think it is also important to build projects that give uplifting experiences that will inspire, excite, and enthuse people.”

In Miami, the Zaha Hadid-designed 1000 Museum will soon be a landmark on the downtown skyline seen from the port. The 62-story residential tower, described as “Zaha at an unprecedented scale,” will be wrapped by a concrete exoskeleton that provides not only a visually unique facade but also allows for interior floors that are almost entirely column free. In nearby Miami Beach, the

## Zaha Travels

**Where did you take your last vacation?**

**ZH** Miami. I’ve been visiting Miami regularly for many years. It’s a great city with wonderful people and its own unique dynamism. Of course, the beaches and weather have always been popular with tourists, but the city is also establishing a stronger global presence as a cultural center—a global meeting place for many different people from all around the world.

**What are some of your travel essentials, what do you always have with you, what’s in your carry-on?**

**ZH** My iPhone. I never really switch off and stop working, and my phone does just about everything. And Issey Miyake’s “Pleats” apparel pieces. They are very versatile and you can travel with them everywhere. You can just take them out of your suitcase and wear them immediately.

**What is one piece of travel advice you could share?**

**ZH** Keep an open mind and take every opportunity to explore. I never tire of visiting new places; of learning what’s around the next corner. It’s always exciting to experience something new.

**Where haven’t you been that you would like to go?**

**ZH** I’ve been to Russia several times, but my last visit was more than ten years ago, so I would love to return and continue exploring its modernist buildings of the last century, many of which are sadly now under threat of demolition. These extraordinary projects paved the way for utopian ideals and important advances in architecture and urbanism.





## FLUID FORMS

Top, Exterior of the Heydar Aliyev Center, in Azerbaijan. Inset, Lobby of the Hotel of Dreams, in Macau, China.

Hadid-designed Collins Park Place, a 500-car parking garage, will soon be inspiring, exciting, and enthusing visitors and residents alike. Described by Hadid as “so much more than a parking garage,” the new civic space incorporates public plaza with shops, cafés, and outdoor areas adjacent to the public library and the city’s cultural institutions, with important pedestrian and urban links to the city.

“Its design is an architectural expression of the circulation paths for cars within the building. The flared

edges of each looping ramp enhance this expression, while fields of slender columns are set back from the edge of the building to enable the parking levels to appear to ‘float’ above each other.”

“Throughout the design, landscaping and trees will grow in between its structure to create green areas...blurring the boundaries between interior and exterior and embedding Collins Park Place within its surrounding environment.”

With so many achievements, awards, and groundbreaking architecture already received, conceived, and constructed, what is left to do that she hasn’t already done? “I would love to build a city district or quarter,” she says, “to apply all I have learned about creating public spaces on a grand scale.” Just as she and her firm have done with buildings, they can apply the idea of elements fitting together to form a continuum to the urban city scale. “We can develop a whole field of buildings, each one different, but logically connected to the next in an organic, continually changing way that is highly correlated. With these new techniques we can do something radically different.” [A](#)