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Reflection 1 - Zaha Hadid

Zaha Hadid, an Iraqi-British artist, designer, and architect, is known for her radical deconstructive designs, and is recognized as a key figure in architecture of the late-20th and early-21st centuries. Hadid was the first woman to be awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize, in 2004. As an Arab and a woman in her field, Hadid's career and achievements are inspiring, reflecting the power and impact of bringing diverse perspectives into traditionally western dominated and male dominated fields. Her work is recognized for its inventive use of shapes and spaces, which pushes the limits of architecture to create fluid, futuristic constructions. Hadid's designs frequently evoke the flow of natural shapes, with components that convey movement and fluidity. Her approach was not only about aesthetics or looks; it was also about breaking architectural standards and expectations, as well as society norms around cultural expression.

One of Hadid's most well-known designs is the Heydar Aliyev Center. The building has received several awards, including the Design Museum's Design of the Year Award in 2014. The Heydar Aliyev Center, stands as a monument of modern architectural innovation in Baku, Azerbaijan. The center is named after Heydar Aliyev, the third President of Azerbaijan, and stands as a cultural hub that has an auditorium, a gallery hall, and a museum, among other facilities. The iconic building is celebrated globally for its revolutionary design that challenges architectural norms and expectations with its fluid and dynamic form. Hadid's style was rooted in the idea of seamlessness and fluidity, which is expressed through the building's curves and wavy surfaces. The building rejects traditional architectural styles with its lack of sharp angles, by adopting a continuous 'skin' that surrounds/embraces the various spaces within. The interior, similarly, offers a flowing ambiance that creates a sense of openness. The use of natural light is another critical element in the design, with skylights and large windows illuminating the soft contours of the walls, enhancing the beautiful quality of the space. This design choice not only distinguishes the building visually but also symbolizes the progressive spirit of Azerbaijan as it merges its rich historical legacy with a forward-looking modern identity. The Heydar Aliyev Center not only serves as a functional space for cultural activities but also stands as a piece of sculptural art. It reflects Hadid's commitment to innovative, powerful, and expressive forms that evoke emotional responses and invite engagement. The center is more than just a building, it is a landmark of cultural identity and architectural innovation.

Hadid's achievement as a female architect did not come without obstacles to overcome. She encountered discrimination and disapproval from some industry professionals who did not believe a woman could be a successful architect. Some critics and peers viewed her work as overly futuristic and impractical, questioning the long-term relevance and adaptability of her architectural style as well. Nonetheless, she persisted and became a role model in the field especially for women. Hadid's legacy continues on through her work and her impact on the architectural world. She motivated countless women to pursue professions

in architecture, demonstrating that women can be as imaginative and successful as men in the industry. Her contributions to the field of architecture will be remembered for years to come.



Works Cited

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