

Zaha hadid - all about her life and career

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Today's society is fixated on one very important thing, the future. Whether it be the phones that we carry in our pockets, the vehicles that we take to get to and from work, or the very buildings in which we live our lives, everyone wants to have the newest, most cutting-edge version offered. When it comes to architecture, deconstructivism is the future, and in turn it is the style which people want and strive to achieve. People love it because it defies all preconceived notions that we currently have when it comes to the construction of new buildings. Very few architects have made as much of an impact in deconstructivism as Zaha Hadid. The Iraqi-British architect had a long career in architecture beginning with her studying mathematics at the American University of Beirut and ending with her designing several buildings at her very own architecture firm. Hadid lived a long, influential life in which she broke down both stereotypes and barriers, designed a great deal of iconic buildings, and won a great deal of awards along the way.

Feminism

People often say that architecture is a man's game and women should be weary of trying to enter the field due to fears of failure. Although Zaha Hadid had heard this her whole life she did not let it stop her from entering and revolutionizing the field of architecture. As a woman this was no easy task for her and she encountered many obstacles along the way. Hadid broke free from the typical expectations society had for her as a woman. For example, she never got married or had any children. Instead, she devoted all of her energy into her work and ended up doing extraordinarily well in her professional life. All of the different accomplishments Hadid achieved helped her to break down typical stereotypes and become a role model for women

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in architecture and especially for Muslim women by helping to create new opportunities for these people.

Education

Zaha Hadid was born in Baghdad, Iraq on October 31, 1950. She was born into a very wealthy family and influential family. Her mother, Wajiha al-Sabunji, was an artist and her father, Muhammad Hadid co-founded the National Democratic Party in Iraq. Her father specifically held a great deal of power as she was growing up. Following a coup in 1958, Hadid was selected to be the Minister of Finance. This allowed Zaha the chance to achieve a very good education beginning at an early age. Hadid attended boarding schools in Switzerland and England. One of these schools was a very progressive Catholic school. Hadid came from a Sunni Muslim Arab family, but attended the school with French, Muslim, and Jewish students.

Hadid continued her schooling at the American University of Beirut where she studied mathematics very diligently.

Early Career

Coming from such a prominent family and having received such a great formal education allowed Hadid to choose from a wide array of different career paths, yet she became fascinated with architecture. She attributes this in part to a family trip she took when she was just a teenager. Her father took her on a trip to ancient Sumer region located in Southern Iraq. This is the location of one of the worlds oldest civilizations and Hadid got the chance to visit and see the different cities, villages and even took a boat ride

through the marshes. This was the first moment that Hadid really began to become fascinated with the world of architecture. As she put it, “ The beauty of the landscape—where sand, water, reeds, birds, buildings, and people all somehow flowed together—has never left me. I’m trying to discover—invent, I suppose—an architecture, and forms of urban planning, that do something of the same thing in a contemporary way.” To me it is amazing that something as simple as a family trip her father decided to take her on touched her life so much and ultimately shaped the career path she would eventually take that would consume her life. Never marrying or having children left her with one important thing in her life, her work. All of which stemmed from this moment of awe, taking in the beauty of the worlds oldest civilizations.

Top Buildings

While Zaha Hadid spent much of her professional life as a professor and running her company, her true legacy started to emerge upon the construction of her first building. The Vitra Fire Station, which was completed in 1994, was the building that transformed this paper architect in a real architect. Hadid had designed many buildings before, and while her works were studied and greatly revered by critics, none had managed to break free from the paper and become constructed until this one. Incidentally, this commission only became available due to an act of nature. The previous building had been struck by lightning and burnt to the ground. The man in charge of commissioning the construction of the new building had decided that he wanted the new building to exemplify the spirit and creativity of the

company he run. The new building was constructed in Weil am Rhein, Germany. They began construction in 1989 and the project took only four years to complete. The Vitra Fire Station was “ a complex construction of tilted and clashing planes – looks very different from her later, organic designs.” Architects were very impressed with her designs that inspired ideas that were outside of the box of creativity usually brought to architecture. The firefighters however were not big fans of the building and eventually moved out leaving the building vacant. The building is now a museum that is open to the public.

Another influential building of Hadid’s career is her Aquatics Center in London. She was commissioned to design this building for the 2012 Olympics in London. The Aquatics Center was described as a “ cathedral for water sports” and included two fifty-meter pools and an undulating roof. Since the Olympics, the center had become a city landmark and has become a popular spot for children and swimmers alike to gather and enjoy the pools. This “ indoor facility with two 50 meter Olympic sized pools and a 25-meter diving pool with boards and platforms up to 10 meters, dry diving zone, a state-of-the-art 50-meter station gym, a cafe and a creche” transformed from one of the main venues at the 2012 Summer Olympics to a staple in the community hosting a plethora of events ranging from fitness sessions to diving lessons. This is another example of how Hadid transcends normal architecture and instead creates buildings that serve many purposes while managing to stay cutting edge both in terms of construction and aesthetics. The inspiration for this building was rather poetic for Hadid. Being that this was a building who’s main purpose was water related Hadid decided to give the building

characteristics that water conveys. The buildings style stems from the fluidity of water and the geometries created that surround the environment. The roof of the building itself resembles a sweeping wave in motion moving over the pools enclosed below. Hadid put intense thought into every aspect of her designs. This is conveyed in this building by the placement and location of the pools. Hadid designed all of the pools to run perfectly perpendicular to the Stratford City Bridge, this creates the illusion that the base of the pool hall is a podium attached to the bridge.

Controversy

“ Inevitably, she stirred nearly as much controversy as she won admiration, provoking protests from human rights advocates when her \$250 million cultural center in Baku, Azerbaijan, forced the eviction of families from the site. A commission to design a stadium in Qatar — a sensuous plan that more than a few observers likened to female anatomy — became, in truth unfairly, a lightning rod for critics who decry the treatment of foreign laborers by the government there. She sued for defamation one critic who falsely reported that 1, 000 workers had died building her stadium — before construction had even begun. She won a settlement and an apology.

“ After winning the competition to design a new stadium for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Ms. Hadid’s firm was fired by Japanese authorities, over accusations about looming cost overruns, a decision Ms. Hadid loudly declared unjust and political.

Awards

While Zaha Hadid's buildings alone are more than enough to exemplify what a great influential architect she was, her many awards are something that must be addressed as well. To begin with, one of her most prestigious awards is one that she earned in 2004. This is when she won the 'Pritzker Prize', which is known to be the highest honor that one can receive as an architect. Another amazing thing about this achievement is the fact that this was the first time that the award had ever been bestowed to a woman. This once again shows how Hadid was breaking down walls and stereotypes both for the world of architecture and for women.

While Hadid had accomplished a great deal in her life and won many different awards it is important to look back to the beginning to see how she started. The 'Gold Medal Architectural Design' was the first major award that she won. She won this award in 1982 for her British Architecture and this would be the first of over 100 prestigious awards and other honors that she would receive. Later, in 2012, Hadid received the "Dame commander of the Order of the British Empire" honor. Then in 2014, Hadid won the Design of the Year Award for the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre which she designed.

Death

Tragically though, all great things eventually come to an end and the life of the great Zaha Hadid is no exception. Zaha Hadid's influential and inspirational life came to an end on March 31, 2016. The great architect died at the age of 65. Hadid was already in a Hospital in Miami receiving treatment for bronchitis when she suddenly had a heart attack which proved fatal. Upon her death, Hadid had an estimated net worth of a whopping two

hundred fifteen million dollars. This lump sum was the value of her “property holdings, stock investments, cosmetic deals, restaurants, a football team, a brand of Vodka, top selling brand of perfume, and a fashion line.”

However, although Zaha Hadid is no longer alive on this Earth a part of her does live on through her work. The time, effort, sweat and tears that she put into all her work lives on not only in the buildings that she designed but also in the minds of every new architect out there today who was influenced by Hadid. She transformed and revolutionized architecture with her style of deconstructivism and greatly affected very many other architects both while she was alive and even still today.

One way in which Zaha Hadid lives on is through her designs which are still being constructed. One breathtaking design that was just recently finished this spring is the Morpheus hotel in Macau. “Unique in the fact that it is the first tower in the world to use an external skeleton to support its massive structure, the Morpheus hotel is one of the final projects designed by celebrated architect Zaha Hadid” Although Hadid passed away before the project was completed, Viviana Muscettola, an employee of Hadid’s architecture firm, took over as the director of the project and ensured that Hadid’s work would not go unfinished and instead would come to life. One of the most intriguing aspects of this building is the fact that 28, 000 tons of steel were used in the construction of the exoskeleton that supports this massive building. This is unlike any other building that has been constructed before, which one again hit home on the theme that even up until her final days Hadid’s deconstructivism views were a major influence revolutionizing

the field of architecture. Viviana describes the culmination of the design as “‘ a sensuous and intriguing form,’ which ‘[provides] the construction advantage of contributing to the building’s stability, and reduces the internal structural requirements optimizing the interior layout.’” What this means in layman’s terms is that by rethinking how the building is supported and using an exoskeleton approach opposed to the normal approach of supporting the building from within allows the architects and inhabitants of the building to retain much more freedom and flexibility on how they choose to use the space within the building. This is the epitome of Hadid’s style because it encompasses all the different aspects of architecture that she had strived her whole career. As she taught Viviana, the goal of architecture is to create a design “ where function, form and structure complement each other.” While this building costed nearly 2. 8 billion dollars to construct, it was well worth it to the city of Macau in which it was constructed. This is because the city is trying to become a hub for tourism and they hope by having such an iconic and futuristic hotel for their guests to stay it will attract admirers from all over the world.

This project was a very ambitious one, and one that from the start seemed to be nearly impossible. Although they were making progress in the beginning, it was very slow up until they had a little help with some new breakthrough technology. The two keystone pieces of technology that were instrumental in the construction of this building were “ bespoke scripts to control the geometry, and computer-controlled robots to assemble components. ‘ Without either of the two,’ Viviana admits, ‘ we could have not designed, developed and evaluated a huge amount of data that subsequently enabled

the fabrication of extremely sophisticated geometries.’” It is amazing for me to think that if these two pieces of technology were not available for their team to use this building may have become nothing more than another great design by Zaha Hadid that would never come to life. Luckily, however, that was not the case. Between the breakthrough technology and the support of Viviana Muscettola, this “ unique piece of architecture, as the last project of a great design legend, the Morpheus hotel will undoubtedly make a mark on its surroundings – and give Macau a bright future as a luxury travel destination.”