





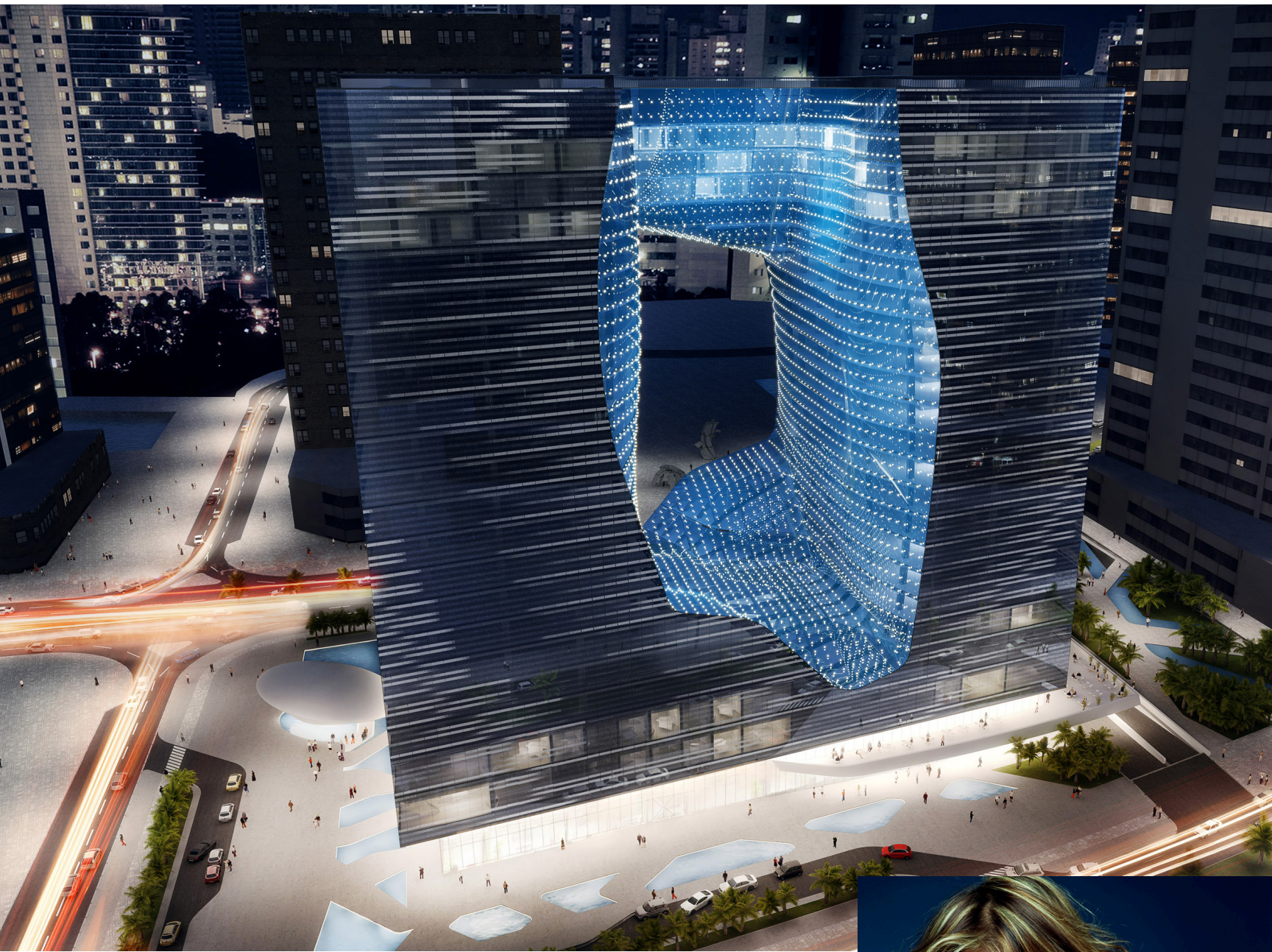
# Zaha Hadid

## LEGACY OF AN ARCHITECTURAL DISRUPTOR

BY SEEMA DHAWAN

**I**t was in the middle of the night that her creative muse struck. Dame Zaha Hadid awoke, picked up a bedside marker and began sketching on her linens. Translating a dream into structure, a cube-shaped building emerged. After the sun arose, she presented her London office with what would become the blueprint for the ME Dubai. A stunning new Melia hotel in the heart of the Burj Khalifa District with an anticipated opening for early 2018.

Located inside the Opus building, ME Dubai is the first hotel project entirely designed by Hadid, who passed away suddenly in Miami in early 2016. The UK-based, Iraqi born architect's buildings have been commissioned around the world, and include the London Aquatics Centre for the 2012 Olympics, Guangzhou Opera House in China and a



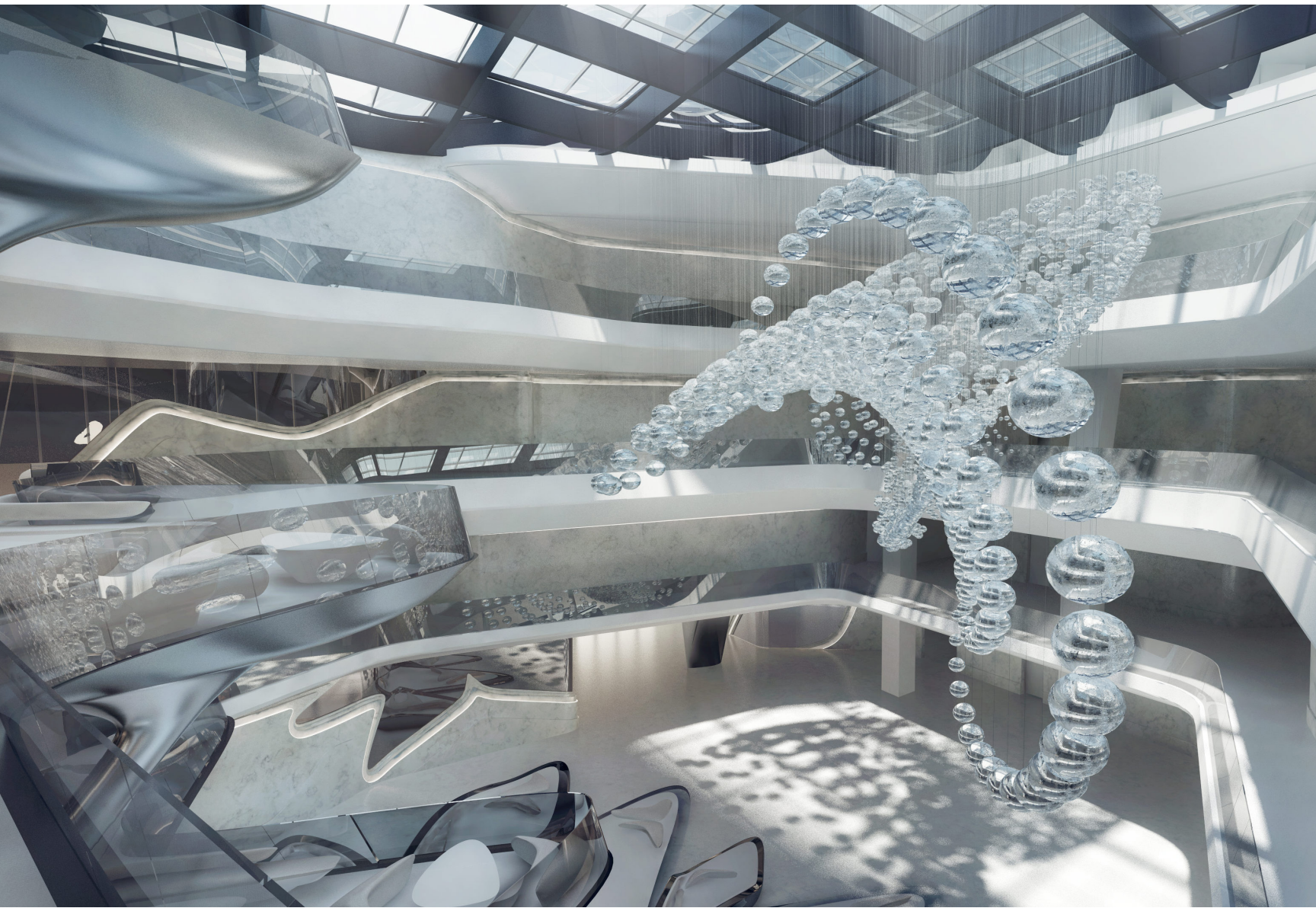
deconstructionist's dream Port House in Antwerp, which marries a classic fire station structure with a striking modern extension that crowns the building.

Undoubtedly, Hadid's accolades will continue posthumously as her company has more than a dozen projects underway worldwide including the Dominion Tower in Moscow, the Danjiang Bridge in New Taipei, Wangjing SOHO in Beijing, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup stadium in Qatar.

Hadid's oeuvre occupies prime real estate on some of the most formidable lists in the world. In 2008, she was 69th on the Forbes List of the World's Most Powerful Women and TIME Magazine's '100 Most Influential People in the World', one of the '50 Best-Dressed over 50' as decided by the Guardian (2013), named as one of the '100 Most Powerful Women in the UK' by Woman's Hour on BBC Radio 4, and ranked in Arabian Business Magazine's 'World's 50 Most Powerful Arabs' in 2011.



**Zaha Hadid**



Additionally, she was awarded the title of Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to Architecture by Queen Elizabeth II, is a two-time winner of the prestigious design Stirling Prize, and was the first woman to receive the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) gold medal. From 1982 to present, her architectural firm also received 19 RIBA awards.

Tony Cortizas, VP of Global Brand Strategy at Melia Hotels International, described Hadid as a rebel who created designs that architects only dream of building.

“She really was a visionary and had unbelievable standards, in terms of what was possible, what was doable,” says Cortizas. “All of her designs pushed the functional envelope to the limit. The building design itself is crazily cool. It’s like a sugar cube with this melted out centre to it.”

The design for ME Dubai was challenging to build and expensive. The Opus building is valued at \$716 million, but that did not deter Hadid from turning the blueprint into an extraordinary build.

Developed by real estate company Omniyat, the 95 metre high building’s centre was created using 4,544 individual pieces of double curved glass and in many ways the building is a stunning example of Hadid’s work: constructed in free form, with soft edges, and dramatic interiors.

The iconic architect’s work pushed the boundaries of conventional design and her legacy lives on in her breathtaking buildings.

“She did it and she made it and it carried her all the way to the top,” Cortizas says, remembering Zaha Hadid as an architectural pioneer and top influencer in her field.