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BEING WORTHY OF YOUR NAME

"The fluidity of forms has historically been inherent in Islamic architecture. Numerous grids or sequences of columns here flow into infinity, like trees in a forest, creating a hierarchical space. Continuous calligraphic and ornamental patterns flow from carpets to walls, from walls to ceilings, from ceilings to domes, establishing seamless relationships and blurring distinctions between architectural elements and the environment. We intended to give this historical understanding of architecture a new impetus and create a new identity based on tradition."

This is how the famous Zaha Hadid defined the ideological content of her favorite project – the Heydar Aliyev Center in Baku. The architect considered the Heydar Aliyev Center one of the most important projects of her

company, Zaha Hadid Architects. Having received one of the most prestigious architectural awards in 2014 when the London Design Museum presented it with the "2014 Design of the Year" award, it strikes the imagination with the flight of forms harmoniously integrated into a large-scale landscape, the conditions of which were accepted by the author and became an organic continuation of the architectural appearance of the Heydar Aliyev Center.

The foundation of the building of the Heydar Aliyev Center was laid on 10 September 2007, while the official opening of the building was held on 10 May 2012, on the 89th anniversary of the birth of National Leader Heydar Aliyev.







The Heydar Aliyev Center was established by a decree of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev with the aim of promoting the philosophy of state building, the ideology of Azerbaijanism and the heritage of Heydar Aliyev; implementing measures and preparing proposals in the field of preservation and development of the heritage of the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people in the field of science, education, culture, healthcare, sports, ecology, economy and other areas; representing and promoting the history and culture of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani language, national and spiritual values on an international scale; assisting various fields of science, education and culture; implementing projects to develop these areas; hosting conferences, symposiums, museums, exhibitions, as well as other events related to the fields of activity of the Center; establishing and developing cooperation with other institutions in the field of studying the heritage of Heydar Aliyev.

The Heydar Aliyev Center is rightfully considered one of the masterpieces of world architecture, captivating with the uniqueness and innovativeness of its architectural solutions.

The site of the former machine-building plant named after Sattarkhan was allocated for the construction of the Center. The plant was relocated, an area of 16

hectares was cleared and construction began according to Zaha Hadid's plan. Using the height differences and natural terraces of an almost sheer slope, Zaha Hadid managed to create complex spatial bundles. Peering into the wide expanse, it is impossible not to notice that when developing the geometry of the Center, the architect completely excluded straight lines, as if deliberately emphasizing the axiom of Antonio Gaudi who argued that nature excluded straight lines for itself.

Architectural and symbolic components form an amazingly harmonious combination here. Parametric design and modern materials have allowed the guru of postmodernism the opportunity to create a structure that blurs the distinction between architecture and landscape of the metropolis, the façade of the building and the city square, a man-made structure and the earth, the interior and the exterior.

The building started attracting the attention of international media already at the stage of construction. It was covered in an episode of "Build it big" on Discovery and Science channels, dedicated to the most daring engineering projects of our time and architectural masterpieces of the world. In the program, host Danny Forster said about the Center: "It's not just a culture center, it is a way of asserting your place in the world."



Striving for the future... It is visible both in the outline of the Center building itself and in the park around it, which covers an area of about 13.58 hectares and where spacious green lawns are replaced by geometric ponds and bright "staircase" paths. Therefore, it is quite natural that the ensemble forming the image of an ultra-modern metropolis in the fall of 2013 was received with enthusiastic reviews from specialists at the World Architecture Festival in Singapore. The first woman to win the prestigious Pritzker Prize remained true to the spirit of postmodernism. An explosion of dazzling whiteness leaves a truly lasting impression.

The architectural solutions of the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center are based on the interaction of two systems: a concrete structure and a large number of spatial frames. To create large spaces that allow the visitor the opportunity to experience the fluidity of the interior, the vertical structural elements are hidden by a system of enclosing panels and curtain walls.

For the maestro of postmodernism, the architectural development of the cladding of the building was one of the most important and, at the same time, complex elements of the project. As conceived by the author, its forms resemble waves running on each other. The

roof consists of 12,027 panels in the form of various geometric shapes. During construction, a network of iron structures with a total length of 90 km was created. Triangles, rectangles and trapezoids occupy an area of 4 hectares. The necessary shape was given to the panels using vacuum. Fiberglass-reinforced polyester was chosen as ideal cladding material because it provides strong structural ductility and meet a wide variety of functional requirements. The white color of the panels not only symbolizes a brighter future, but thanks to it, the sun's rays emphasize the unusual forms of the building, and its appearance changes with the time of day and change in natural light.

With the help of lighting that is directed from the inside to the outer surfaces, a night image of the building is created. Streaming from the inside to the outer surface and unfolding the formal composition, the luminous lines reveal its content and maintain harmony between the interior and the exterior. The height of the highest point of the complex is 74.1 m. The shell gives the building a monolithic appearance. It looks like a continuous volume and passes on to the surface surrounding the building, spreading over the ground and stopping at a random place. The higher you climb the

slope of the hill along the wide and white stairs towards the entrance to the Center, the wider the panoramas of surrounding areas of the modern city. The ascents alternate with spacious platforms bounded by fountains in the form of waterfalls, which flow down vertical walls into wide bowls of artificial reservoirs.

Rising like an island above the “sea” of a big city. Like a white mountain top. The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center, by the power of the author’s imagination, is embodied in bizarre and smooth curves, as if wind and water worked on them for a long time. And inside it are stored real treasures of broad, spectacular and informative exhibitions.

The building of the Center covers an area of about 101,801 square meters, making it one of the largest spaces dedicated to various exhibitions. The salons of the highest part of the building house permanent and temporary expositions, seasonal and project shows describing Azerbaijani culture in a very informative and vivid fashion. Each of them organically blends into the uniqueness of the building’s atmospheric plasticity. Immersed in the fluidity of soft

light that reigns in all the internal spaces of the museum, the masterpieces seem to slow down the pace of communication.

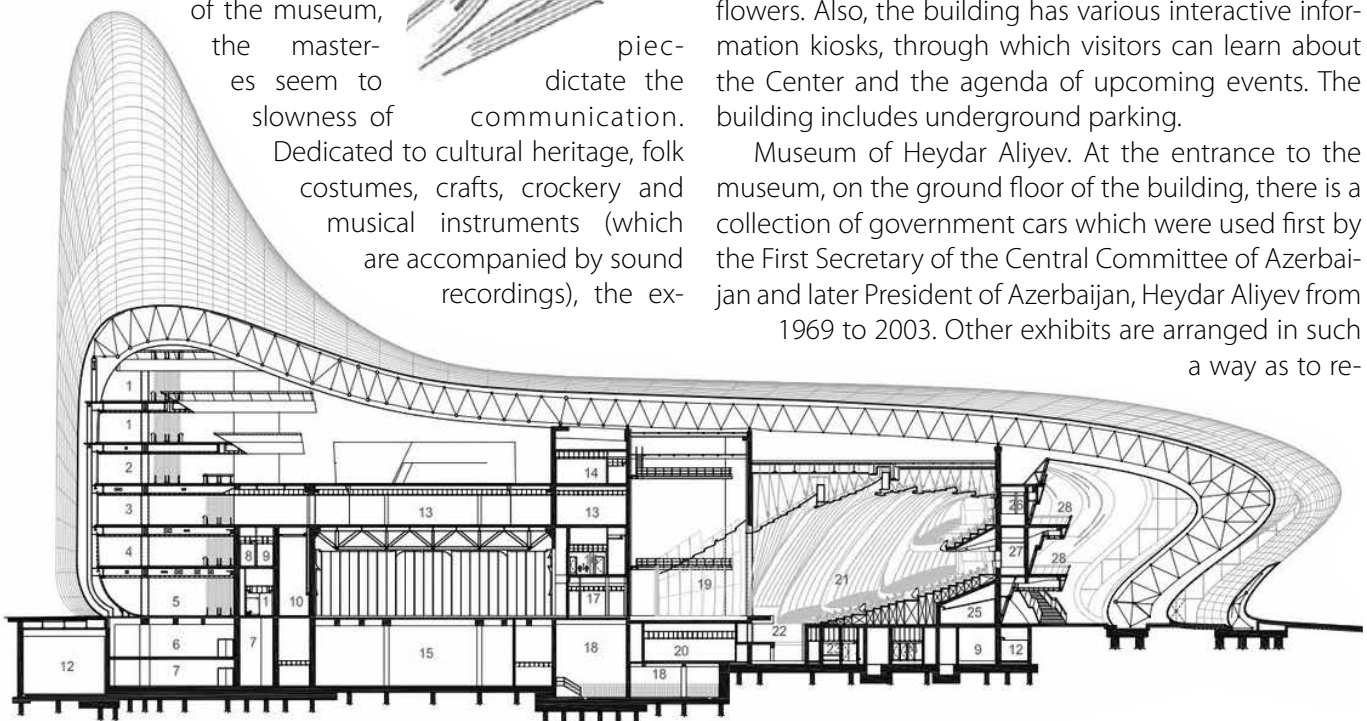
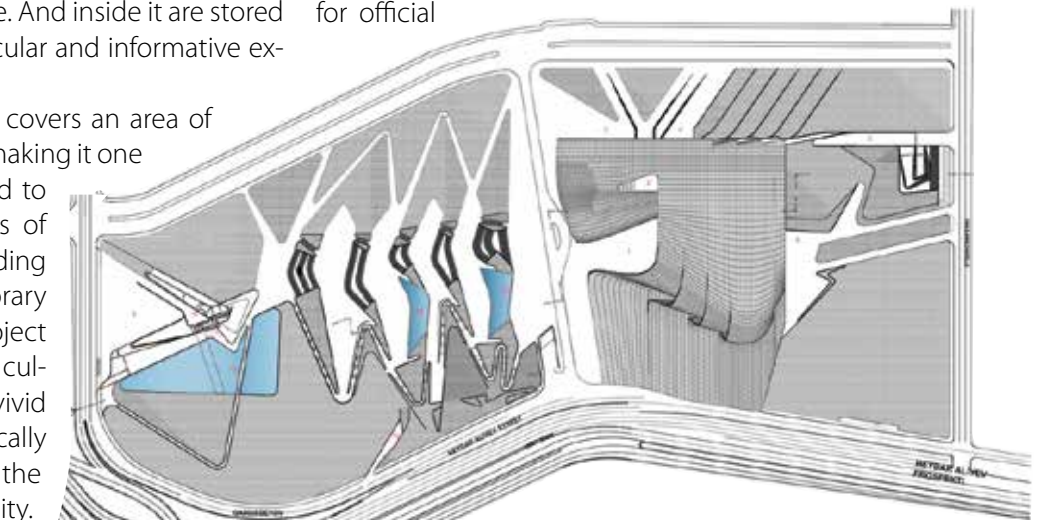
Dedicated to cultural heritage, folk costumes, crafts, crockery and musical instruments (which are accompanied by sound recordings), the ex-

hibits are displayed in their authentic appearance, taking visitors through the vicissitudes of historical stages that succeeded each other at the crossroads of important trade routes.

The main building of the Center consists of three departments: the Heydar Aliyev Museum, exhibition halls and the Auditorium. The nine-story section of the exhibition halls houses exhibition salons, offices, as well as a restaurant and café. The four-story Auditorium consists of the Auditorium itself, two conference rooms, rooms for official

meetings and conferences, and a Media Center. The building also has a landscape area, consisting of ornamental trees and flowers. Also, the building has various interactive information kiosks, through which visitors can learn about the Center and the agenda of upcoming events. The building includes underground parking.

Museum of Heydar Aliyev. At the entrance to the museum, on the ground floor of the building, there is a collection of government cars which were used first by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan and later President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev from 1969 to 2003. Other exhibits are arranged in such a way as to re-



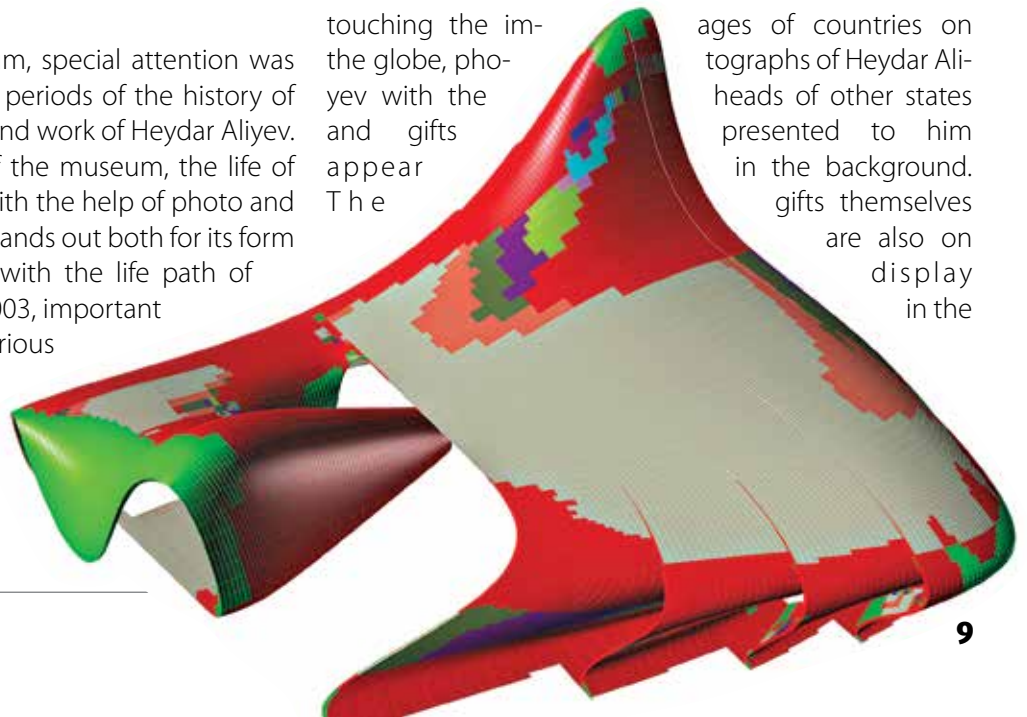


flect the history of the country, the formation of statehood, national achievements in the field of economy, culture and sports through the prism of the life of a political leader. In addition to the recreated interior of the office, awards and gifts, visitors to the Center can review interesting photo chronicles and visit the interactive hall, where Heydar Aliyev's meetings with heads and prominent figures of other states are visualized using a globe.

When creating the museum, special attention was paid to reflecting the various periods of the history of Azerbaijan, as well as the life and work of Heydar Aliyev. In the three-story building of the museum, the life of Heydar Aliyev is showcased with the help of photo and video footage. The museum stands out both for its form and original content. Along with the life path of Heydar Aliyev from 1923 to 2003, important events that took place at various historical periods in the public and political life of Azerbaijan are brought to the attention of visitors. Various aspects of Heydar Aliyev's activities both during the So-

viet era and the years of independence are displayed in virtual form in the sections of the museum "Life Captured in Pictures", "Public and Political Life of Azerbaijan", and "Our Statehood, Heritage, Achievements". Voice information on each topic is provided in Azerbaijani and English. One of the sections of the museum is a multimedia hall reflecting the meetings of Heydar Aliyev with the leaders of different countries. When touching the interactive globe, photos and gifts appear on the screen.

When touching the interactive globe, photos and gifts appear on the screen. The gifts themselves are also on display in the background.





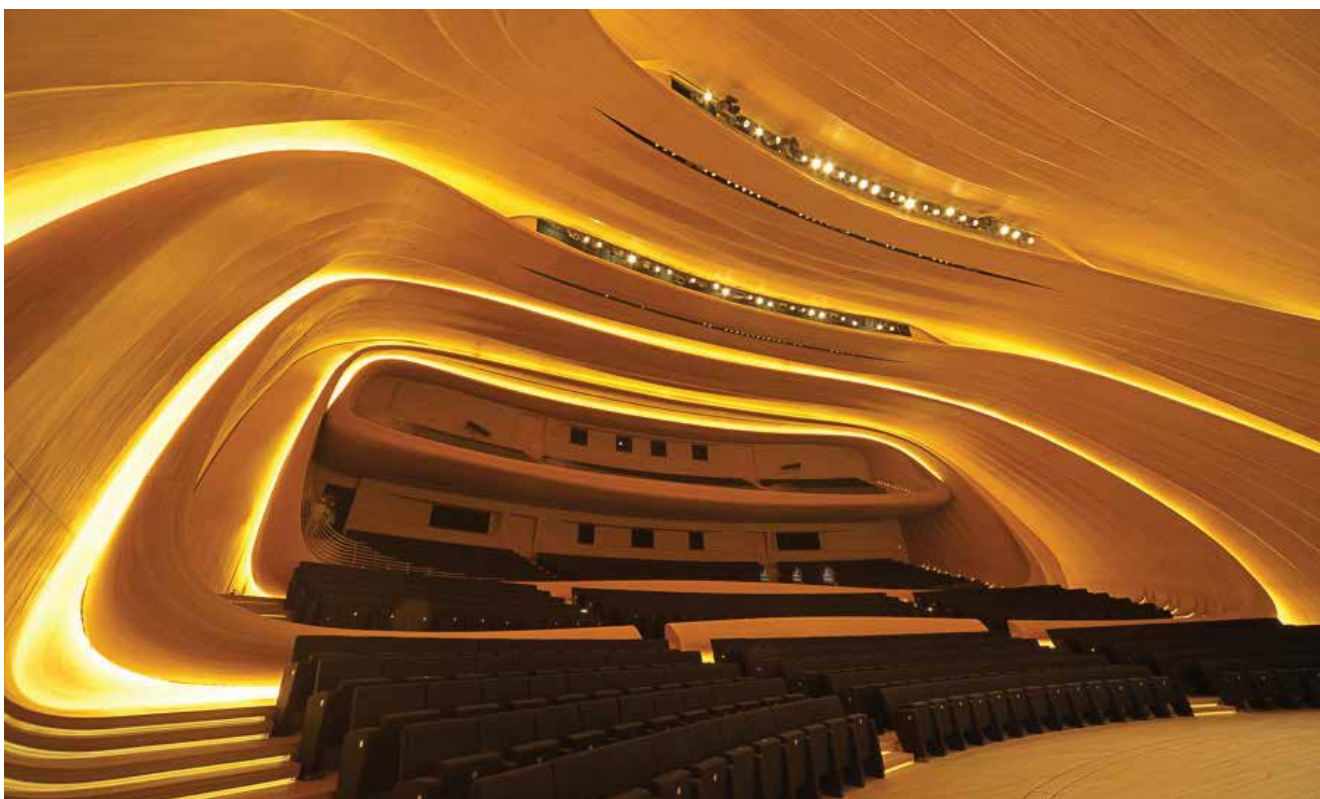
museum. The hall also exhibits Heydar Aliyev's military and civilian clothes, his desk, orders and medals.

"Pearls of Azerbaijan: in the flow of history". Located on the first floor of Zaha Hadid's masterpiece, this exhibi-

tion provides the opportunity to get acquainted with unique exhibits of the country's history and cultural heritage, including the rock paintings from Gobustan, ancient coins and jewelry, medieval clay and copper items, ancient copies of the Koran, the Bible and the Torah. Of course, traditional Azerbaijani carpets and musical instruments, the sound of which, by the way, can actually be heard, are also on display.

"Mini-Azerbaijan". On the second floor of the Center, there are models of 45 historical and architectural sights from the capital and other regions of the country. Visitors can see tiny versions of the Maiden Tower, the Mordine-Khatun Mausoleum, the Baku railway station, the Philharmonic Hall and Ismailia buildings, as well as examples of Soviet architecture – the Government House and the Green Theater. Finally, modern and "future" architecture are represented by the Baku Crystal Hall and Flame Towers, as well as the building of the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan.

Exhibition of classic cars. This exhibition features masterpieces of the world automotive industry of different countries from the late 19th century to the present day in fascinating illumination. The exposition introduces guests to the history of the automotive industry and shows exhibits from Germany, USA, France, Italy, Great Britain and post-Soviet countries. In addition to



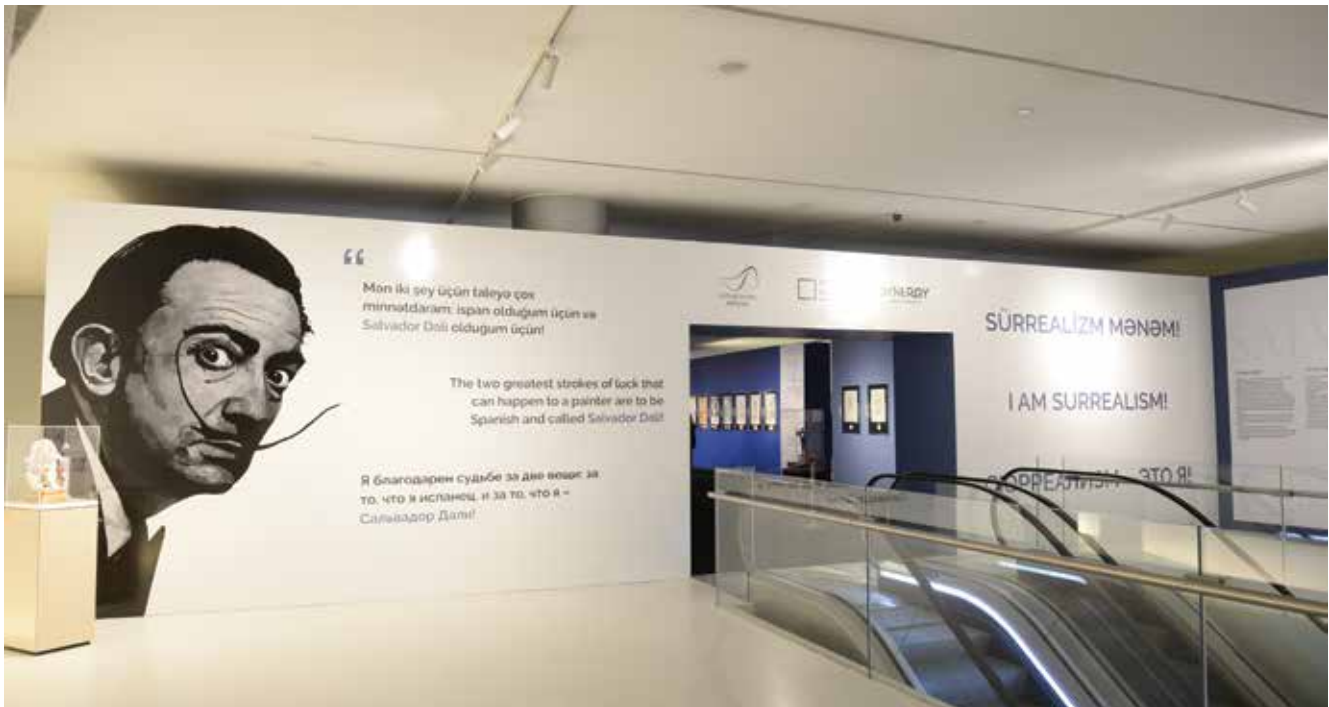


cars, original gas stations, photos and videos, as well as newspapers and magazines dedicated to this topic are also on display.

Temporary exhibitions. Since its opening, the Heydar Aliyev Center has hosted numerous exhibitions of works by world-famous photographers, sculptors, artists, and designers. Among them is the American pop art artist Andy Warhol. The exhibition held in Azerbaijan for the first time featured more than a hundred works by the artist, including Warhol's short films. An exhibition of prominent Azerbaijani painter Tahir Salahov, recognized as one of the founders of the "severe style" in painting, featured more than 100 works, as well as his works depicted on carpets. A large-scale exhibition of Zurab Tsereteli has also been held within the halls of the Center. Works of German nature photographer Theo Allofs and Mexican sculptor George Marin have also been demonstrated.

The interior of the Cultural Center represents a special look at the creative research of artists. Each exposi-

tion fits into it and, as it were, continues the inherent originality of the architect, who always noted the desire for the future. And this is why contemporary art "exists" so organically in venues chosen specifically for it. Moving from floor to floor, visitors to the Center immerse in a kind of kaleidoscope, where each transition is a new picture made up of works of art by authors whose names are firmly associated with world culture. Therefore, the legacy of Salvador Dali softly flows into a personal exhibition of Turkish abstract artist Devrim Erbil, while "Hyperrealistic Sculpture. Almost Alive" is in harmony with the exposition of art dolls from 16 countries of the world. Thematic exhibitions of famous representatives of contemporary art, which the Center hosts at its numerous venues, reveal the connection between cultures of different countries and peoples in time and space. For example, the joint Azerbaijani-Latvian exhibition "Between Heaven and Earth" with the participation of works by Reza Deghati and Ieva Krūmina. It was within the walls of the Cultural Center that the unique



masterpieces of Azerbaijani and oriental collections of the Sardar Palace in Iravan from the Georgian National Museum “Masterpieces of History” and “Modernism and Fashion” sparked. Here one could see graffiti by Brazilian Nina Pandolfo, pictorial works by the Bahraini artist, a member of the royal family, Sheikh Rashid al Khalifa, and icon-painting masterpieces and religious sculptures from the State Tretyakov Gallery and the Museum of Russian Icons.

Concerts, performances, conferences and symposiums. It has to be said that the multi-layer composition of the Heydar Aliyev Center architecturally visualizes the

versatility of the events being held there. The center often becomes a concert venue as well. The Auditorium, whose interior is sheathed in Canadian oak wood, is distinguished by amazing acoustics. Actors of the Moscow Musical Theater “Helikon-Opera”, the Vienna Strauss Orchestra, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, the eight-time Grammy winners “Take 6”, world opera stars, famous music bands and soloists performed under these unusual vaults. The music album “Voice of Karabakh”, a project that clearly reflected the postulate that music has no boundaries or language barriers, was presented here as well.



The Auditorium stage itself has repeatedly become a platform for accumulating important messages to society. Numerous international conferences and forums with the participation of country leaders, meetings of delegations and discussions – each clearly demonstrating what role the “word” plays in global civilization. For example, Sadhguru’s worldview is woven into Global Influencer Day.

In the year of the 100th anniversary of the birth of National Leader Heydar Aliyev,



the Center became a point of attraction for citizens of the country and numerous visitors. A series of ceremonial events and a comprehensive public collection of personal items and gifts that give authentic perception of stories and memories of the great son of Azerbaijan provide a unique opportunity to appreciate the genius of one of the recognized world leaders who dedicated his life to serving the Motherland. The legacy left by Heydar Aliyev is inexhaustible.

Over the years of operation, the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center has become a recognized platform where the most significant and outstanding events have taken place. Each event held at the Center underlines the deep thought inherent in this unique complex that art is the ambassador of multiculturalism, which permeates the historical course of Azerbaijan, which is included in an important "artery" of economic ties. To this day, it is a land where different nationalities and religions coexist peacefully, making up an amazing symbiosis and thus, giving birth to a unique authenticity our country is proud of. This has always been in the center of attention for Heydar Aliyev, whose name is forever symbolically soldered by the flying "stroke" of semantic content set by Zaha Hadid back at the design stage. And now, for eleven years, a continuous line has been followed through everything that happens within the walls of her architectural brainchild.

Rooted in the depths of history with soft swiftness of curves pointed towards the future, incorporating the synthesis of incredible solutions and the embodiment of bold fantasies... Attractive and not giving an answer to understand what form it has, the ensemble of the Center is harmoniously formless and therefore amazingly beautiful ... It is a kind of a bridge for the dialogue of cultures, understandable without translation and proving unity in diversity.

"For me, it was an opportunity to get off the ground, spread my wings," said Zaha Hadid about the project of the Heydar Aliyev Center in Baku. Her creation has no analogues in the world, it has become a serious statement to the world about the self-sufficiency and ambitions of Azerbaijan. The center has been described as an alien flower, as if it were a giant sea wave. It has been compared to a sand dune and a spaceship of the distant future.

If we look through the reviews left on many platforms on the Internet, almost every one notes its uniqueness. The Heydar Aliyev Center, which has become one of the new symbols of the Azerbaijani capital, has an amazing appeal. And there is something special in it for each of those who have personally seen this architectural miracle at least once. ✨