

## EXHIBITION STAND OF ARCHITECTURE IN A GLOBAL DESIGN ENVIRONMENT: ICONIC BUILDINGS

*Şengül Yalçınkaya*

*Assoc. Prof. Dr. , Karadeniz Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Interior Architecture Department, Trabzon, Turkey*

**Abstract.** Globalization and consumption culture have had an impact on the urban fabric as well as on all other areas. Consumption culture plays a key role not only in social and economic life but also in physical and spatial transformation of urban space. Urban actors have developed various strategies to enable cities to survive in this environment. In this process within the global economy, cities have started hosting new avenues that promote consumption, the most salient examples of which are iconic buildings. Cities today use iconic buildings to vie with each other, to gain advantage over their competitors and to create impressive images. This process began with the Sydney Opera House, and architecture has been increasingly involved in it to build landmark structures to highlight the values of cities and to create brand cities. The aim of this study is to reveal the characteristics of iconic buildings that are increasing in number and playing an important role in the creation of brand cities. The problem is addressed by the identification of features, concepts and situations related to iconic buildings, and the analysis of an iconic building. A literature review was conducted to highlight the significant aspects of iconic buildings. Iconic buildings are mostly associated with globalization, urban space, famous architects and buildings, and means and architectural understandings. These concepts are addressed with a focus on the Heydar Aliyev Center designed by architect Zaha Hadid. Even though iconic buildings are designed as physically unique and different, their aims and design approaches are similar. However, buildings that claim to be original will start, after a period of time, to look like each other and sometimes lose their value due to globalization and rapid spread of consumption culture

**Keywords:** Globalization, Brand City, Architecture, Iconic Buildings, Zaha Hadid

**Introduction.** Globalization, which is associated with capitalism, has caused significant change and transformation throughout the world in the twentieth century. Today, globalization plays an important role in all aspects of life, especially economy, politics, culture and art. With advances in communication and transportation technology, globalization has removed national borders and transformed the world into a single place. Bauman argues that globalization divides as much as it unites because of the same reason (Bauman, 1999,8). The global flow of people, money and information has led to the reduction of basic differences and emergence of similar approaches in all areas. The ideological, administrative and cultural characteristics of globalization and capitalism have penetrated into every corner of the world (Demirer, 1997: 102). The most critical element of this system has been the city, and therefore, the discipline of architecture has been affected by it as well.

Since 1980, capital has been spreading and moving globally rather than accumulating at certain points. Capital in the cities of all sizes across the world has moved from macro-scale to micro scale, that is, from local to global (Marcuse et al., 2000: 18). There has been a wide and irreversible change in the cities, which have ceased to be the place of production and has been the surplus itself. Urban branding transforms cities into a commodity and an object of consumption. Lefebvre and Harvey argue that cities themselves are capital for the circulation of money and capital (Turhanoğlu, 2014: 73).. This is most obvious in the way the geographical, economic, gastronomic, cultural and historical values of cities are highlighted (European Commission, 2000). This is a marketing strategy by which unique and superior characteristics of cities are commercialized. Cities, which are venues of reproduction of capital, have become centers of attraction. Scott (2000) considers this both a threat and an opportunity for cities. On the one hand, renewed and redesigned physical environment and images become a cultural attraction for cities, on the other hand, they may lose their value in this process.

Globalization and neoliberal policies result in the emergence of brand cities. In this process, cities make some of their values prominent while losing others. Urban identities determined by urban and local historical, social and cultural values are disappearing. Globalization is shaping, standardizing and disidentifying our cities (Beyazıt, et al., 2013). Cities are filled with prototype buildings with the same technologies and materials supporting the urban lifestyle and serving the same purposes.

Cities, which are the venues of capitalism, have assumed new functions and missions. Nowadays, cities are crowded and have not only wide transportation networks but also high-tech multi-storey plazas, skyscrapers, luxury residences, shopping and entertainment centers which neither represent local identity nor have originality. In many parts of the world, traditional practices are replaced by global type architecture and urban practices that are not in harmony with local values and cultures (Hillier & Hanson 1988). Everything about cities, from physical structures to life style, is constructed around consumption. Museums, cultural centers, art galleries, stadiums, aquariums and night clubs are the prestigious venues of cities and the architectural structures that stand out in the globally competitive environment (Ovacık,2010,49). To promote consumption, capital is transformed through investment in cultural infrastructure in cities.

Architecture, which has become the most important means of globalization and consumption, emphasizes identity values based on indicators and images (Aydinli, 2004). We mostly see this in iconic buildings. Iconic buildings, the number of which is increasing day by day, have been the most widely used architectural products in urban branding. Venues have been transformed into centers of attraction through architectural means. According to Sklair (2010), a building, venue or architect can be an icon to the extent that it serves the cultural ideology of consumption. Designed mostly by star architects, iconic buildings are built by cities with the expectation of revenue. These buildings serve the city not only with their functions but also with their images.

It is perhaps too early to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of iconic buildings, which are costly structures rapidly increasing in number and transforming the cities in which they are located. However, today, iconic buildings have become an important issue in the field of architecture. In this study, key concepts were obtained from the articles in the literature of architecture related to iconic buildings. In this way, basic-common features of and content regarding icon buildings were identified. As a result of content analysis, the data were grouped under 7 main headings, which were then discussed with a focus on an iconic building. Although iconic buildings look and function differently, their point of origin, purpose of construction and the system they serve put them on a common basis.

#### WHAT ICONIC BUILDINGS BRING FORWARD: TOPICS, CONCEPTS AND ARCHITECTS

Nowadays, there are some important issues and concepts addressed together with iconic buildings. First of all, the literature of architecture was screened to determine the content related to iconic buildings. The most commonly addressed topics and concepts related to iconic buildings in theses, articles and papers were classified under 7 groups; Globalization, City, Architectural Understanding, Structures, Architects, Definitions and Means. Table 1 shows the main headings and concepts. The concepts show that iconic buildings undertake tasks other than their functions and have assumed a different representation. It is observed that iconic buildings are part of a fiction that has emerged with globalization and promoted the changing urban understanding.

Table1. Concepts related to iconic buildings

Group	Concepts
<b>Globalization</b>	Marketing strategies; <b>Being popular</b> ; Global architectural brands; <b>Commodity</b> ; Global investments; <b>Global tourism</b> ; Tourists; <b>Marketing technique</b> ; Global map; <b>Popular culture</b> ; Competitive Market
<b>City</b>	<b>Anonymized cities</b> ; Representation of cities; <b>City landmarks</b> ; City actors; <b>Local and regional values</b> ; Strategies of local government; <b>Branding cities</b> ; Rise to prominence; <b>value of attraction</b>
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Star architects</b> ; Bilbao effect; <b>Guggenheim effect</b> ; Icon buildings; <b>Symbolic buildings</b> ; Signature project; <b>Silhouette Buildings</b>
<b>Architectural understanding</b>	Metaphor; <b>New and provocative image</b> ; Individual designs; <b>Rare forms</b> ; Catchy form; <b>Groundbreaking form</b> ; Spiral or twisted forms; <b>Globular glass</b> ; Spirit of the age; <b>New and intense image</b> ; Symbolic expression; <b>Distinguishing from existing texture</b> ; Mysterious meanings; <b>Universal meanings</b> ; Distinguishing from existing texture; <b>The desire to be great</b> ; Creativity; <b>Risk factor</b> ; Surprising forms; <b>Indefinite meanings</b> ; Codes; <b>Fame</b> ; Advanced computer technology; <b>New construction technique</b> ; New materials; <b>Location-independent</b> ; Time-independent
<b>Featured buildings</b>	Selfridges Shopping Center; <b>Guggenheim Museum</b> ; Parc della Musica; <b>Music Hall</b> ; The Cathedral of Brasilia; <b>Capital Gate</b> ; Sydney Opera House; <b>Royal Ontario Museum</b>
<b>Architects</b>	Rem Koolhaas; <b>Herzog de Meuron</b> ; Peter Eisenmann; <b>Santiago Calatrava</b> ; Frank Gehry <b>Zaha Hadid</b>
<b>Means</b>	Design journals; Architectural websites; Guides

**Globalization and the City:** The main reasons for the prominence of iconic buildings are that they are not only architectural elements but also significant means in the global system. Urban life has begun to take form around consumption culture that has been associated with all social, cultural and economic areas with globalization. In this process, places have started to be used as means to encourage people to consume. Places provide space for consumption or become objects of consumption themselves.

Cities have become more important than nations in establishing the relationship between cities and iconic buildings in the globalized system. Cities increase their global market share through their images and brands. They compete with each other and use architecture to that end. They, however, need iconic buildings to stay in the global race. Examples show that sometimes a building can change the fate of a city. What was discovered by chance with the Sydney Opera House designed by Jørn Utzon has been executed as a conscious approach with the Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gery. To come out of the crisis during the de-industrialization period, Frank Gehry was asked to design the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. This trend was then observed in small and medium-sized cities such as Lisbon, Porto, and Genoa. This transformation is observed today in less developed cities such as Beijing, Zaragoza, Cairo and Abu Dhabi as well as in large cities such as London. Today, many cities around the world use similar strategies and come into prominence with iconic buildings. Abu Dhabi is a current example of this.

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is a rich city with oil reserves. With the economic crisis in 2008 and the globalization of art, the city became an extension of new contemporary art fairs, cultural centers and new

markets (Akay, 2013). The cultural tourism image of the city is constructed by signature projects such as Pritzker Award-winning buildings designed by star architects such as Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster, Frank Gehry, Tadao Ando and Zaha Hadid in all major projects on Saadiyat Island (El-Amrousin and Biln, 2017). The aim of the projects in Abu Dhabi is to create new centers and a spatial focus with the famous buildings of famous architects in order to have an artificial image and to increase its visibility in the world.

**Architectural Understanding, Architects and Buildings:** The two most important factors that allow iconic buildings to come into prominence are their architectural understanding and designers. Iconic buildings have similar architectural characteristics. The common features of iconic buildings across the globe are their unorthodox forms, their desire to be great, their ambiguous meaning and codes and their new forms and materials. The general purpose of icon buildings is to create an urban image through contemporary architecture. Architectural functions that will attract the global capital and support tourism are determined, and buildings, especially culture and sports facilities, are designed by the world famous architects.

Some of the architects who designed iconic buildings are Donald McNeill, Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry, Renzo Piano, Norman Foster, Daniel Libeskind and Santiago Calatrava. Some of the famous iconic buildings today are the Milwaukee Art Museum, Burj Khalifa, 30 St Mary Ax, CCTV Headquarters, Capital Gate, Royal Ontario Museum, Museo Soumaya, Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and Selfridges.

**Definitions:** The most widely used concept to describe such buildings is the “iconic building.” In architecture, the term can be defined as famous buildings that are detached from the urban context. Smith (2005) defines iconic buildings as buildings that serve as landmarks and argues that they represent the whole of the city. Iconic architecture can be conceptualized as the dominant projects of the international capitalist class.

Another concept is “Bilbao Effect” or “Guggenheim Effect.” The Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry for the Bilbao festival in Spain, brought fame and tourists to the city. The museum was opened in 1997 and increased the number of tourists to 1.3 million within a year (Jencks, 2005). What the term “Bilbao Effect” emphasizes is that a single building can change the socio-economic fate of a city (Yargıç, 2009). The success of the Guggenheim Museum has led to the construction of similar buildings in cities around the world. Since these buildings are designed by famous architects, they make the concepts of “star architect” and “signature project” a current issue.

**Means:** Another feature of iconic buildings is that they are frequently spoken of. Smith (2005) argues that iconic buildings are constantly replicated in books, postcards, media or travel brochures and become powerful representations. For example, Berman (2003: 90) states that the Empire State Building, the Eiffel Tower and the Brandenburg Gate are the unique architectural symbols and iconic buildings of New York City, Paris and Berlin, respectively. These and similar iconic buildings reach the masses through media. It is also possible to see these buildings on social media and architectural websites.

Globalization has allowed iconic buildings, which have survived from the past to the present day, to continue their existence as monumental buildings of the twenty-first century. Although iconic buildings have common features, each has a different story.

#### **WHAT AN ICONIC BUILDING BRINGS FORWARD: HEYDAR ALIYEV CULTURAL CENTER**

The city of Baku, located on the west side of the Caspian Sea, dates back to the ancient times. Located on the Silk Road, the city has many oil deposits. It became one of the most important industrial centers of the USSR, especially after the revolution of 1917. After Azerbaijan declared its independence in 1991, Baku became the capital, and industrial and cultural center of the country.

Baku is a multicultural city with traces of Turkish Islamic architecture. Bearing strong and unique identity values, Baku has neoclassical buildings that decorate the old boulevards formed by the traces of the old city and the Soviet era. The identity of Baku reflects the period of the Soviet Union. With the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan, Baku moved away from normative Soviet modernism and invested heavily in modern architecture. Baku has buildings from the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Century Shirvanshah period, long blocks of housing built by German prisoners during World War II, Russian-era buildings and hi-tech buildings that have a worldwide impact (Ataoglu, 2017). Today, it has buildings that profoundly transform its silhouette. They work with world-renowned architecture firms for the construction of these buildings.

Iconic buildings were built to create landmarks, to develop an urban brand and to improve the recognition of the city. Some of the recently constructed icon buildings for the modern urban image are the Flag Tower, the Crystal Hall, the Flame Towers and the Heydar Aliyev International Airport (Fig. 1).



Heydar Aliyev International Airport



the Crystal Hall



the Flame Towers

Figure 1. Examples of iconic buildings in Baku (URL1, 2019; URL2, 2019; URL3, 2019)

Today, with the winds of globalization, Baku is under the influence of current trends reflecting the modern urban image with iconic buildings, which are urban attraction centers. The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center located on Heydar Aliyev Boulevard in Baku is one of the most prominent of these buildings. It has become part of the global city image of Baku. The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center, which is one of the most important contemporary architectural works in the world, was opened in 2013. Its architectural features are its rare form, metaphorical nature, catchy form, spiral or twisted form, ability to be distinguished from existing texture, greatness and new construction technique. With its unusual line and wavy form, it has a mystical appearance. It is likened to the mountain where Heydar Aliyev was born, the waves of the Caspian Sea, the image emerged with the shaking of the carpet or a shark. It is, therefore, an important example of organic architecture. It has a fluid structure between its surroundings and interiors. The fluctuation, breakage and fragmentation on the building envelope are carefully designed to welcome and lead users (URL4, 2019). From the building envelope to the interior solutions, an effective and integrated design approach has been adopted. Where the walls, floors, ceiling and roof start and where they end is not clearly defined, allowing the elements transforming into each other. The use of only one color also supports this. The distinction between the facade and the city square and the distinction among the interior elements is obscure. It looks different from traditional architectural structures. This provides users with different perspectives from within and without (Savaşır and Tuğrul, 2014). With its modern construction, it meets numerous purposes and offers visitors uninterrupted wide areas. It has a strong plastic effect (Telyakar, 2018), which is provided by an advanced technological coating material, Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete, used on the space frame system and the skeleton formed with wrapped reinforced concrete (Frearson, 2013). 15,000 different sized composite panels are used on the outer envelope. With its unusual form, it makes a mention of itself in terms of its contributions to the urban fabric (Figure 2).

The building is often spoken of not only because of its architecture but also because of its designer. Zaha Hadid, who has a worldwide reputation, has left her mark on today's architecture with the awards that she has won and the architectural language that she has developed. Her unique style has attracted attention, which won her the Pritzker Architecture Award in 2004 and RIBA's Stirling Award in 2010 and 2011. She was honored with the Japanese Art Foundation Praemium Imperiale and was declared a UNESCO Artist for Peace. She was included in TIME's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2010 (Gür, 2016). She received the best design award at the 2014 London Design Museum Awards for her design of the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center. The most important reason for her recognition is her unique style of continuity between architecture and urban environment and new spatial forms (Açııcı, 2018, 525). She brings the walls, floor planes and roofs and transparency together with a unique organization and creates spaces that flow into each other. Her works show that architecture is an art and that imagination always exists. In addition to building designs in different parts of the world, she also has different product designs such as table, vase and shoes. Some of her iconic buildings are the Guangzhou Opera House, MAXXI: 21st Century Museum of Art, King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (Figure 3). The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center started to be spoken of and heard about worldwide as it was designed by Zaha Hadid, who is such an influential and important architect. The building is still spoken of with its architect, architecture and events.



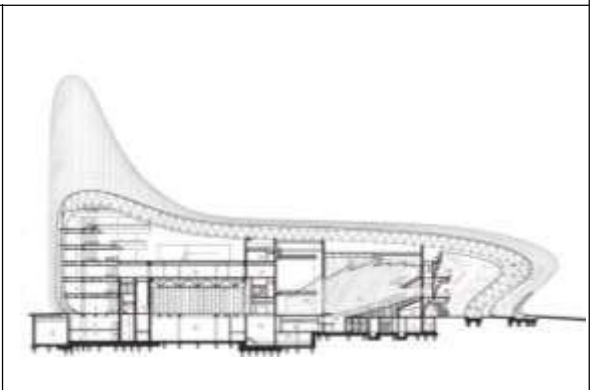
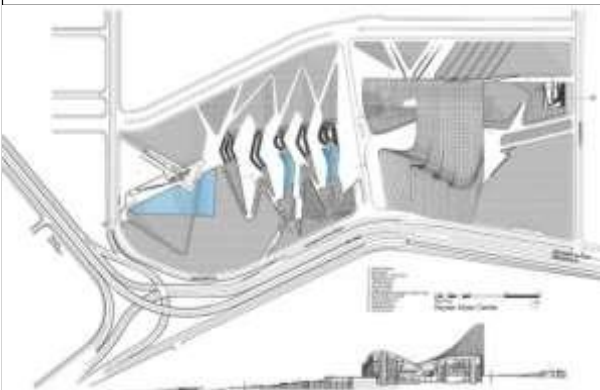


Figure 2. Drawings and Visuals of The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center (URL5,2019; URL6,2019; URL7, 2019; URL8, 2019)



King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Centre



Guangzhou Opera House



Port House

Figure 3. Designs by Zaha Hadid, (URL9,2019; URL10,2019; URL11, 2019)

With its impressive form, the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center designed by Zaha Hadid has made a worldwide recognition in a short time. It is regarded by travel guide websites as one of the must see spots in Baku and included in

sightseeing tours. It has been a building in front of which everyone visiting Baku wants to take a photograph. It is frequently addressed in the literature of architecture and used as an effective element in the promotion of the city on a national and international scale (Figure 4). Consequently, although the region where it was built was not very popular, it has become famous and increased the brand value of the city.



Figure 4. An 2012 Azerbaijani stamp with an image of the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center (URL12, 2019)

## CONCLUSION

This study assessed the general status and the reason for the emergence of iconic buildings that have become central figures of consumption and an exhibition stand of architecture in the global design environment. The study analyzed the characteristics of iconic buildings with a focus on the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center, which is one of the latest designs of Zaha Hadid. The data can be summarized as follows;

Capitalism turns everything into a commodity. Architecture is used as a means of presenting the indicators of the age of consumption to society. Architecture forges a bond with consumption in two ways; (1) architecture creates spaces for consumption and (2) architectural works become commodities. These bonds that architecture establishes with consumption result in formal, functional and formal differences and innovations in architectural works. An architectural work becomes a symbol of the person, institution or city that it represents, and moreover, assumes numerous meanings and tasks. Buildings that turn into commodities through media are spoken of with reference to their distinctness, greatness, tallness, eminence and uniqueness, and thus, attract the capital.

While change and transformation in cities cause them to lose their originality, consumption culture causes alienation. Iconic buildings are significant for the future of architecture because they reflect the technological developments of the era and allow designers to make what they imagine into a reality. With their interesting forms, images and marketability, iconic buildings have become one of the most widely used architectural means by urban actors. On the other hand, the brand city concept that iconic buildings serve is an artificial image. Today, the global prevalence and popularity of iconic buildings can be regarded as fashion of a temporary kind. Given the fact that what is new is consumed and becomes obsolete faster than ever before, it is not easy to predict what will become of iconic buildings in the future. There is no doubt that architecture will be transformed by the problems encountered in the flow and transformation of capital in the capitalist system. We will live and see to what iconic buildings fulfilling their duties properly today will evolve in the future. However, the fact stands that being permanent requires having a cultural value. To achieve this, the significance of locality, which is the greatest richness, should also be taken into account when highlighting the characteristics of the era.

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