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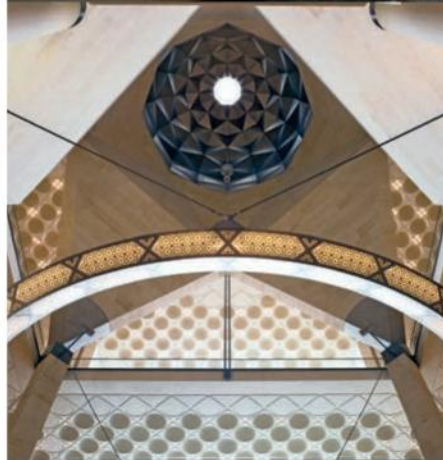
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ART HOUSE

WE NOW KNOW ARCHITECTURAL SHOWPIECES HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM A CITY'S FORTUNES. CAPE TOWN IS THE LATEST TO DELIVER A KNOCKOUT PUNCH

When British architect Thomas Heatherwick unveiled extravagant plans for a contemporary African art museum in Cape Town at the 2014 Design Indaba festival, it was a pivotal moment. This vision was to take the hulk of a former grain silo and carve out the continent's place in the art world with the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa. 'It is imperative that the discourse around African art is led by Africa,' said the museum's director Mark Coetzee.

And Heatherwick's colossal cathedral, set around a soaring, curving atrium, is a fitting setting. Modern art from across the continent and the diaspora will be shown in 80 galleries across nine floors when it opens on 22 September. Works include Angolan artist Edson Chagas's *Luanda*, *Encyclopedic City*, which won the Golden Lion at the 2013 Venice Biennale, Swaziland-born Nandipha Mntambo's nebulous sculptures hewn from cowhide, and Zimbabwean exile Kudzanai Chiurai's politically charged *Revelations* and *Genesis* series. Of course, the poster boy for architecture's transformative potential is the Gehry-designed Guggenheim, which proved its pulling power after opening in 1997. Since then, many projects – including IM Pei's Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Sir David Chipperfield's Turner Contemporary in Margate and David Adjaye's Aishti Foundation in Beirut – have sought to re-create 'the Bilbao effect' and shift the centres of cultural gravity. And while there was never any need for Zeitz MOCAA to lure travellers to this winter-sun hotspot, it will redefine Cape Town as a heavyweight hub on the international art scene. SARAH KHAN



Clockwise from top left, Cape Town's Zeitz MOCAA, a museum with its own hotel, The Silo, above it; the terracotta-tiled Aishti Foundation, which opened in Beirut last year; the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Bilbao; a ceiling detail at the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID CROOKES; CARLOS LUJAN/GALLERY STOCK; B O'KANE/ALAMY; GUILLAUME ZICCARRELLI