Like pebbles in a stream smoothed by erosion, the Guangzhou Opera House sits in perfect harmony with its riverside location. The Opera House is at the heart of Guangzhou’s cultural development. Its unique twin-boulder design enhances the city by opening it to the Pearl River, unifying the adjacent cultural buildings with the towers of international finance in Guangzhou’s Zhujiang new town.

The 1,800-seat auditorium of the Opera House houses the very latest acoustic technology, and the smaller 400-seat multifunction hall is designed for performance art, opera and concerts in the round.

The design evolved from the concepts of a natural landscape and the fascinating interplay between architecture and nature; engaging with the principles of erosion, geology and topography. The Guangzhou Opera House design has been particularly influenced by river valleys – and the way in which they are transformed by erosion.

Fold lines in this landscape define territories and zones within the Opera House, cutting dramatic interior and exterior canyons for circulation, lobbies and cafes, and allowing natural light to penetrate deep into the building. Smooth transitions between disparate elements and different levels continue this landscape analogy. Custom moulded glass-fibre reinforced gypsum (GFRC) units have been used for the interior of the auditorium to continue the architectural language of fluidity and seamlessness.
The Guangzhou Opera House has been the catalyst for the development of cultural facilities in the city including new museums, library and archive. The Opera House design is the latest realization of Zaha Hadid Architects’ unique exploration of contextual urban relationships, combining the cultural traditions that have shaped Guangzhou’s history, with the ambition and optimism that will create its future.