

Guangzhou International Finance Centre by Wilkinson Eyre Architects

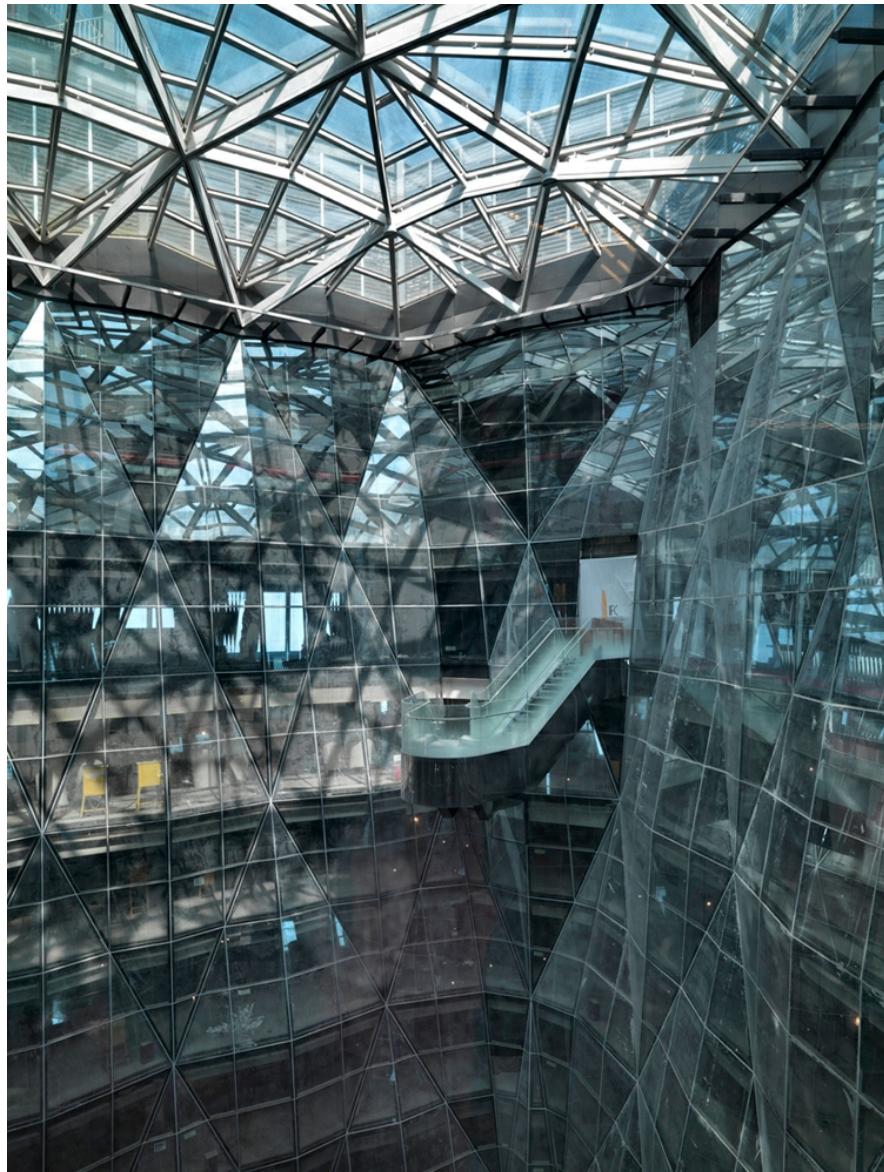
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The 103-story [Guangzhou International Finance Centre](#) designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects.
Photo: Jonathan Leijonhufvud

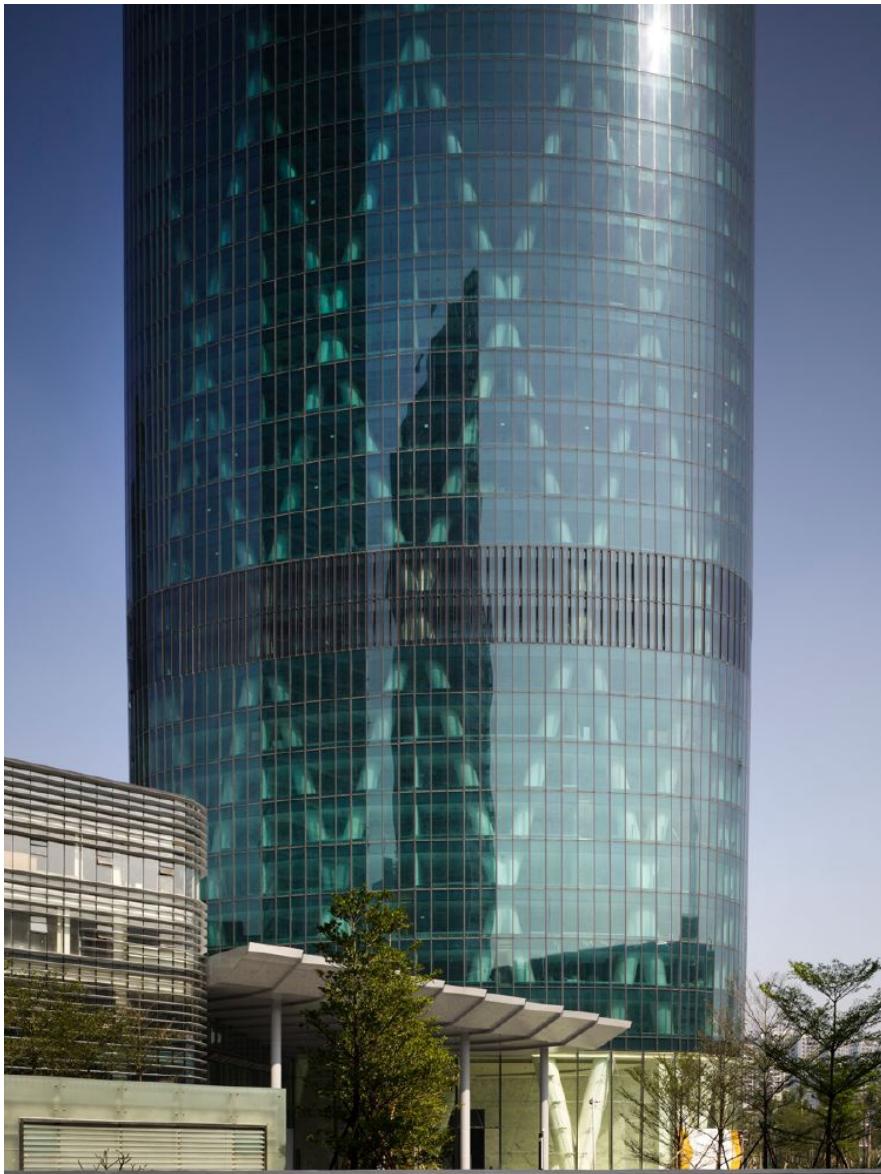
Designed by [Wilkinson Eyre Architects](#), the [Guangzhou International Finance Centre](#) in Guangzhou, China has won the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) 2012 Lubetkin Prize for the best new international building.

The Guangzhou International Finance Centre in China is a 440-meter (1,440-foot) tower. It has a mixture of uses including office space, a luxury hotel and a top floor sightseeing area. At ground level, the tower connects with a substantial podium complex containing a retail mall, conference center, and high-end apartments.



An atrium of the Guangzhou International Finance Center. Photo: Jonathan Leijonhufvud

The main tower is 66 floors of offices and 38 floors of a Four Seasons hotel arranged around a dramatic tapering atrium. For all the smoothness of its curving skin, the building expresses its diagonal grid structure through its glazed facades, as well as internally to the user of every office and hotel room.



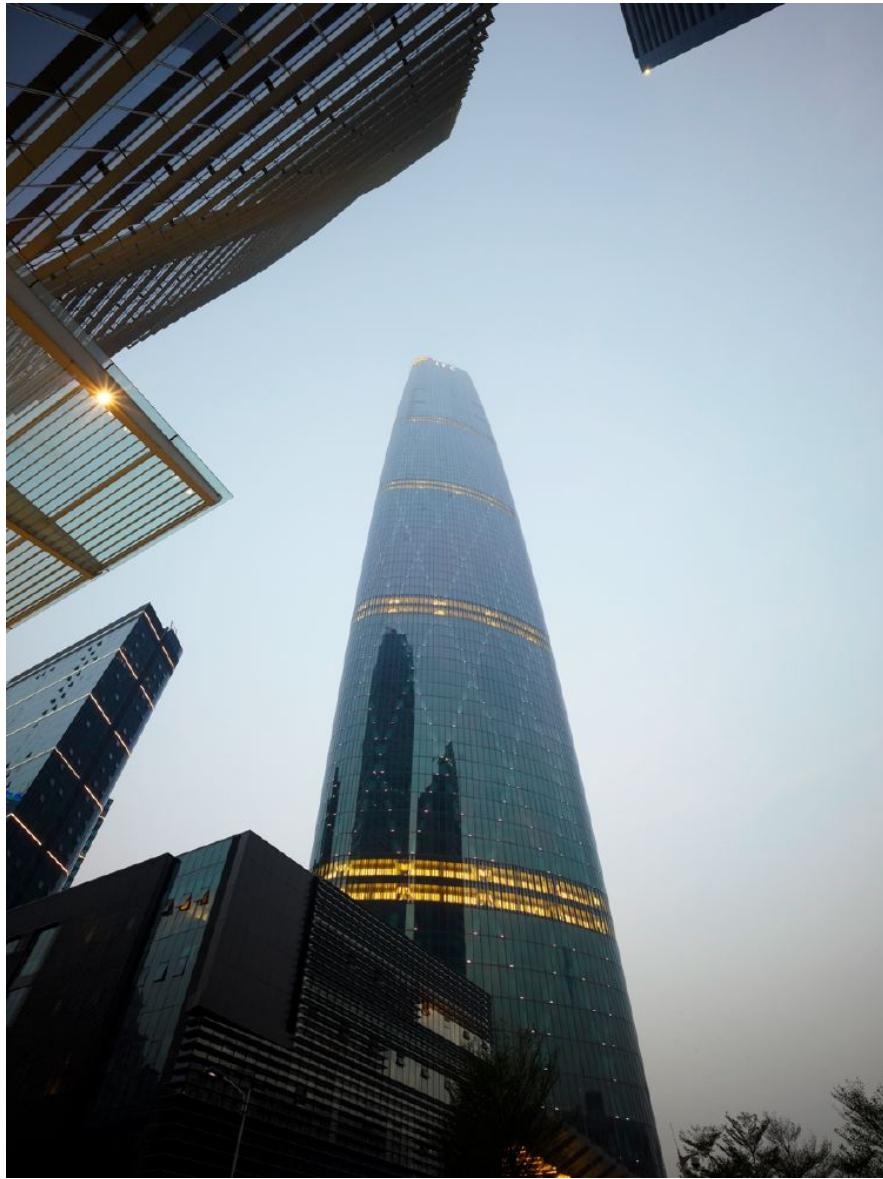
The diagonal steel structural grid of the tower is visible through its glazed facade. Photo: Christian Richters

Originally planned as one of a matching pair of towers on either side of a pedestrian boulevard leading to the [Guangzhou Opera House](#) by [Zaha Hadid](#), it was also designed with a double skin. That fell victim to the client's understandable desire for more floor space. Instead the sun protection that a double skin would have afforded has had to be built into the glass – hence the dark grey appearance.

The three buildings other [shortlisted](#) projects were:

- One KL, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by SCDA Architects

- [Solaris](#), Singapore by [TR Hamzah and Yeang](#) and [CPG](#)
- [Sperone Westwater](#), Bowery, New York by [Foster + Partners](#)



The Guangzhou International Finance Centre has an ovoid plan that widens and then narrows as the building rises. Photo: Christian Rieters

Judge Angela Brady said of the building:

"With exceptional vision and skill, Wilkinson Eyre Architects have given their clients and the city of Guangzhou an outstanding new 103 story landmark. The tower's diamond shaped structure, exposed throughout the offices, atrium and hotel, looks simple but is the hugely complex key to the success of this building. It not only allows the dramatic tapering atrium and raked floors but brings environmental benefits by using 20% less steel than similar buildings."

The 2012 RIBA Lubetkin Prize jury was chaired by RIBA President Angela Brady with architects Deborah Saunt,

Cindy Walters, Philip Gumuchdjian and RIBA Head of Awards Tony Chapman.

The RIBA Lubetkin Prize is named after architect Berthold Lubetkin (1901 - 1990). The winner is presented with a unique cast concrete plaque, based loosely on Lubetkin's design for the Penguin Pool at London Zoo, designed and made by the artist Petr Weigl.

Project Credits

Architect: [Wilkinson Eyre Architects](#) Client: Guangzhou Yuexiu City Construction Structural
Engineer: Arup Services Engineer: Arup Contractor: China State Construction Corporation Contract
Value: £600 million Date of completion: June 2011 Gross internal area: 380,000 square meters (4.09
million square feet)

Source: Architecture Week People & Places Blog