

**CANADIAN  
ARCHITECT**





ANDRÉS SILVA

# BAHÁ'Í TEMPLE OF SOUTH AMERICA

**LOCATION** Santiago, Chile

**ARCHITECT** Hariri Pontarini Architects

At the heart of this building, there is a belief and an aspiration: that even now, in the fractured twenty-first century, we can respond to a human yearning to come together—to connect to one another and to something that moves the spirit.

The Bahá'í Temple of South America sits on the edge of Santiago, nestled against the spine of the Andes mountains. Commissioned by the Bahá'í House of Justice, it is the eighth and final continental Temple for the Bahá'í Faith. But central to its design is that it be a place of welcome, community and meaning for everyone.

The design brief was deceptively simple—nine sides and nine entrances; a spiritual structure open to people of all faiths. Distilled to its essence, the building seeks to come alive with embodied light. Composed of nine gracefully torqued wings bound to a central oculus, the Temple is an interplay of seemingly contradictory forces: stillness and movement, simplicity and complexity, intimacy and monumentality.

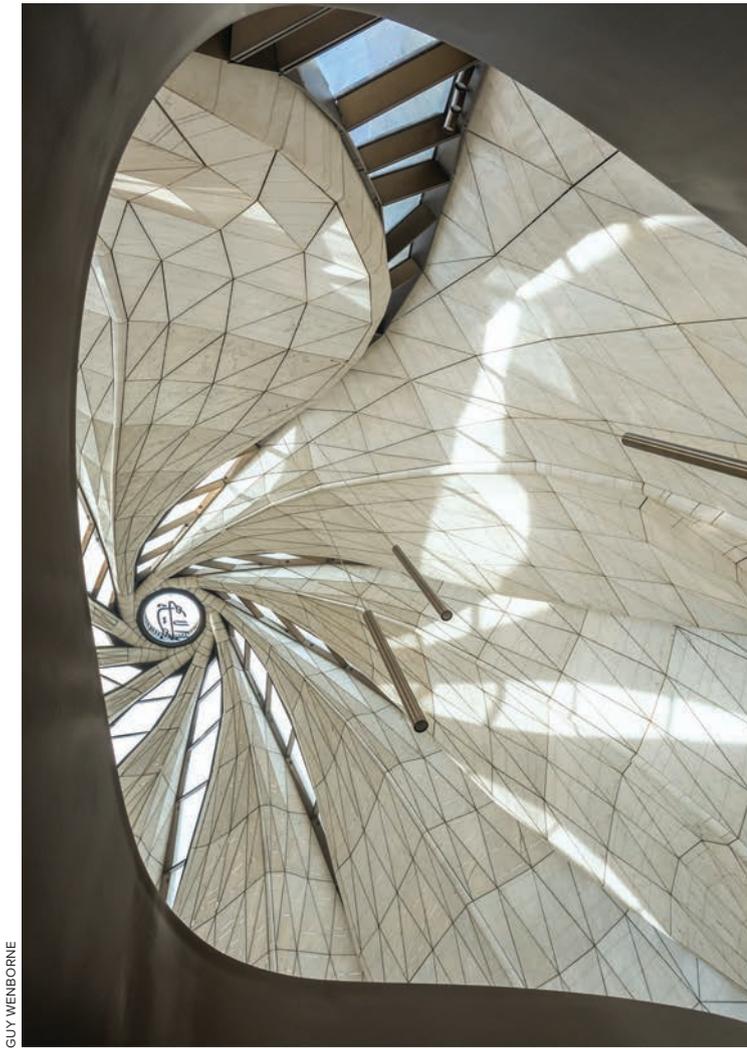
In contrast to the Temple's subtle presence on the landscape, once one is inside, the building soars. The voluminous interior is alive with soft light that filters through the cast-glass outer cladding and translucent marble inner cladding, creating a mesmerizing play of material, light and surface over the course of the day. The contoured lines of the supple wooden benches invite people to come together in quiet contem-

plation. Alcoves in the mezzanine allow visitors to seek solitude, while maintaining connection with the community below.

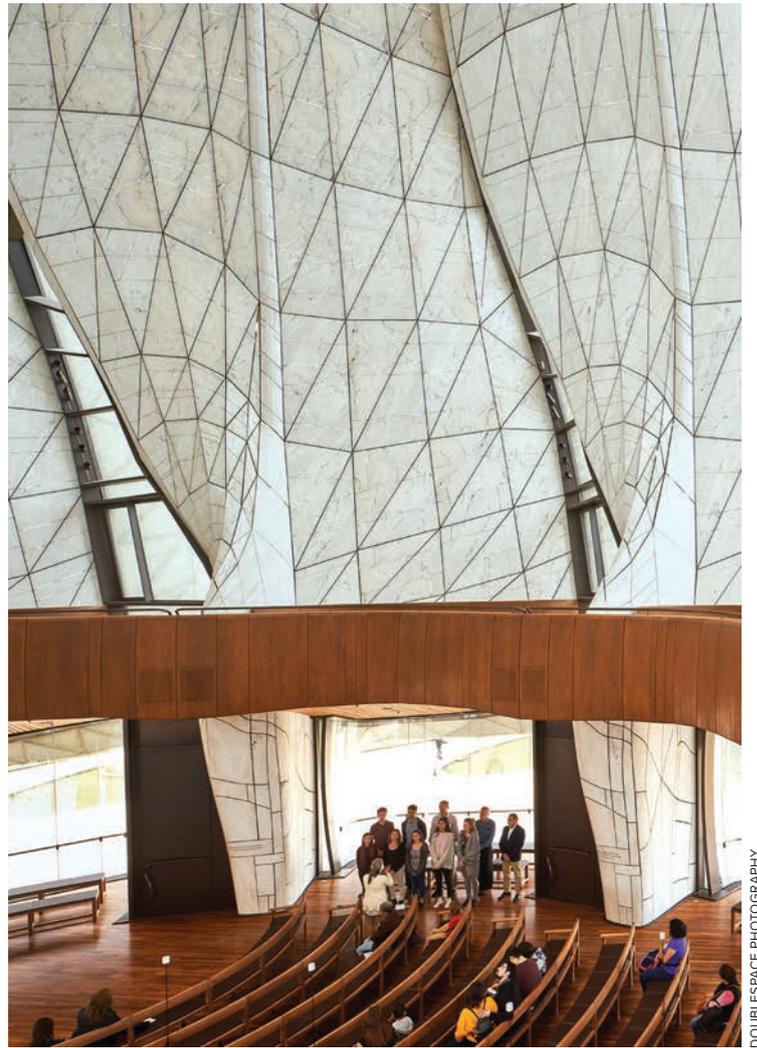
Given the intimacy and delicacy of the Temple, it is easy to overlook the complex design, material innovation, engineering and construction required to bring the building to fruition. A four-year exploration into a new exterior cladding material, capable of withstanding large temperature fluctuations, led to the creation of cast glass made from borosilicate rods. The Temple's wings are supported by a steel superstructure with friction pendulum base isolators. The structure is engineered to maximize daylighting while allowing the Temple to endure for a 400-year lifespan in an active seismic zone—part of the mandate from the client.

The Temple treads lightly on its environment. Its mass, material and unique double-shell cladding enable mostly passive heating and cooling. In the summer, all of its windows and doors open to provide natural ventilation. An underground tunnel is used as an earth tube to bring in cool air in a stack loop cycle; hot air is exhausted through operable louvres at the top of the oculus. In the winter, the mass of the Temple's cladding stores and releases solar energy, to heat the occupied area.

The Temple has become the embodiment of the community's aspirations. The building draws people from all walks of life; its impact has extended further than the design team could have imagined. It holds an important place within the Chilean social landscape, hosting community clubs, youth outreach programs, and children's activities in partnership with local schools. Since opening in October 2016, it has wel-



GUY WENBORNE

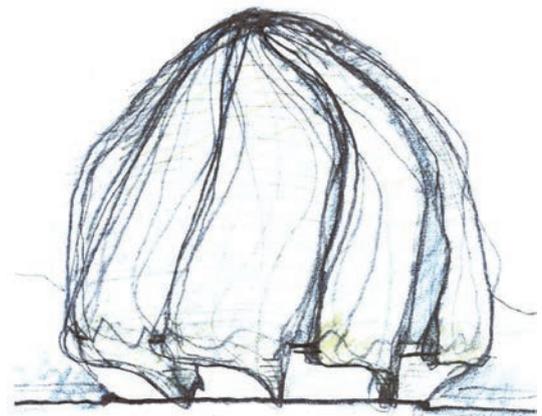


DOUBLESAPCE PHOTOGRAPHY

comed over 1.4 million visitors from around the globe. One hopes that the Temple continues to be a timeless place where people feel at home, able to hold their beliefs amongst others.

**:: Jury ::** This building is brave, unexpected, and playful—a spectacular beacon on a hillside outside Santiago, Chile. The jury admired the translucency and magical complexity of its form, whose idiosyncrasies and deviations grow organically from a controlled radial geometry. This level of technical virtuosity is unusual coming out of Canada’s architectural production, which makes the Temple a good envoy for promoting Canada’s design expertise on the world’s stage. ▲

**PROJECT TEAM** SIAMAK HARIRI (PARTNER-IN-CHARGE), DORON MEINHARD, JUSTIN HUANG FORD, TIAGO MASROUR, TÁHIRIH VIVEROS, MICHAEL BOXER, GEORGE SIMIONOPOULOS, ROSTAM SOHAILI, JIN-YI MCMILLEN, JAEGAP CHUNG, ADRIANA BALEN, JOHN COOK, MEHRDAD TAVAK-KOLIAN, DONALD PETERS, JIMMY FARRINGTON, MIREN ETXEZARRETA-ARANBURU, JEFF STRAUSS | **CLIENT** THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CHILE | **LOCAL ARCHITECT** BEN-KAL Y LARRAIN ARQUITECTOS | **SUPERSTRUCTURE AND CLADDING** GARTNER STEEL AND GLASS GMBH | **CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT** DESARROLLO Y CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL TEMPLO BAHÁ'Í DE SUDAMÉRICA LTDA. | **GLASS CLADDING** JEFF GOODMAN STUDIO, CBD GLASS | **STONE FABRICATION** EDM | **WOOD FABRICATION** MERRITT WOODWORK | **LANDSCAPE** JUAN GRIMM | **STRUCTURAL** SIMPSON GUMPERTZ & HEGER, HALCROW YOLLES (CH2M HILL), EXP, PATRICIO BERTHOLET M., VMB INGENIERÍA ESTRUCTURAL | **MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL** MMM GROUP, ELEKTRICA, GHD | **PLUMBING** VIDELA & ASOCIADOS | **HVAC** THE OPS GROUP, GHD, CR INGENIERÍA | **LIGHTING** LIMARI LIGHTING DESIGN LTDA., ISOMETRIX | **ACOUSTICS** VERÓNICA WULF | **WAYFINDING** ENTRO COMMUNICATIONS | **OCCUPANCY** OCTOBER 1, 2016 | **BUDGET** \$36 M



SIAMAK HARIRI

**OPPOSITE** A landscaped garden with reflecting pools radiates outwards from the Temple, conceived as a nine-sided structure with nine entrances. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** The luminous envelope includes an outer shell of translucent marble and an inner shell of bespoke cast-glass panels; hand-finished materials such as walnut, leather and patinaed bronze bring a warm textural quality to the interiors; an early design development sketch of the Temple.