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hariri pontarini architects

bahá'í mother temple for south america

site A one-third-acre lot in Santiago, Chile.

program A temple for gatherings of the Bahá'í faith, with a main sanctuary capable of seating 600 worshippers, nine alcoves for private or small-group meditation, a mezzanine, and nine exterior prayer gardens.

solution Hariri Pontarini's design is the winner of a two-phase international competition that challenged entrants to consider a sacred space that does not conform to the architectural typologies of any other religion. The Bahá'í faith requires its temples to have nine sides and a dome, among other particulars, but they are not designed to accommodate specific rituals or even clergy.

For the Santiago temple, which serves all of South America, Hariri Pontarini designed a dome of nine translucent alabaster and cast-glass sails, which will be manufactured abroad and transported to the site. Bronze tracery and woodwork ornament the 100-foot-high main interior space, which is encircled by a continuous mezzanine of cast concrete.

The footprint of the building occupies only 8,600 square feet. A lily pond and nine prayer gardens occupy the remainder of the site.

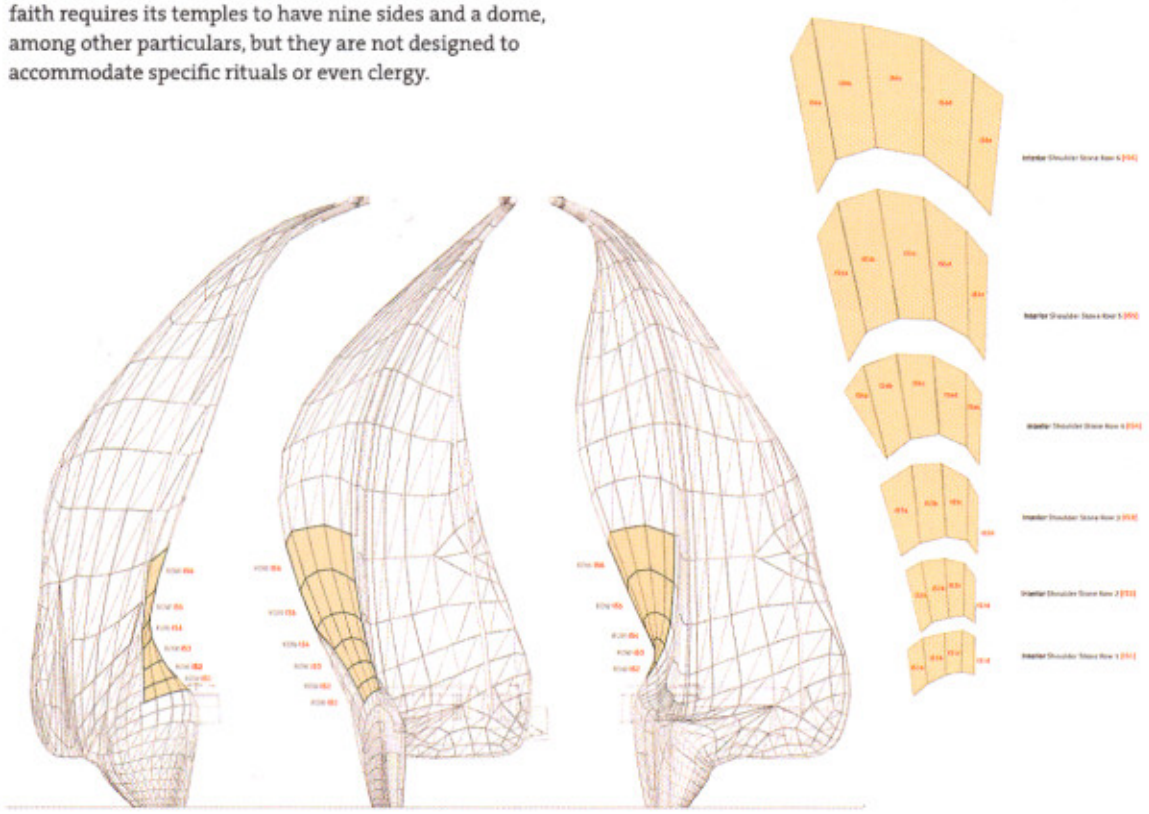
Project: Bahá'í Mother Temple for South America

Client: The International Bahá'í Community

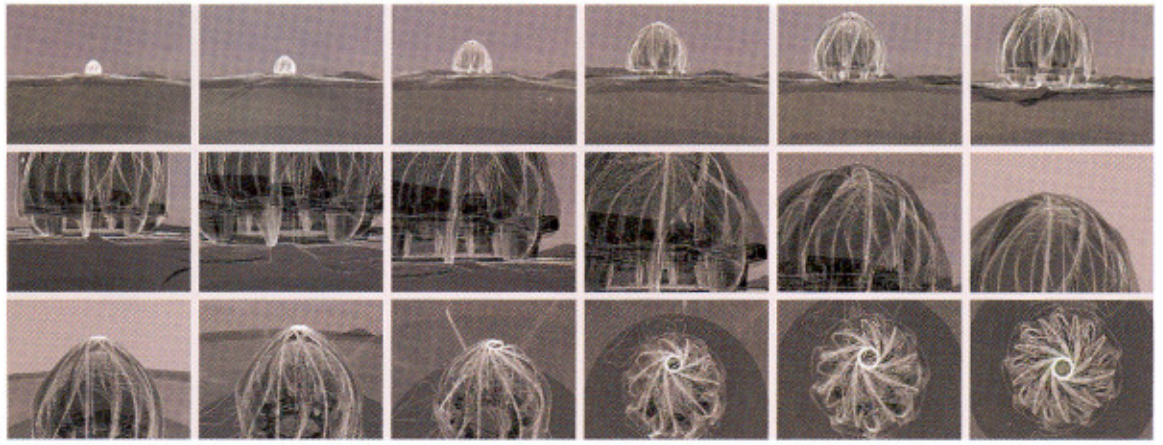
Architect: Hariri Pontarini Architects—Siamak Hariri (partner-in-charge); Michael Boxer (associate-in-charge); Justin Ford, Adriana Balen, Tiago Masrour, Tahirih Viveros, George Simionopoulos, Mehrdad Tavakkolian, Jaegap Chung, Naomi Kriss, Donald Peters (project team)

Consultants: Soheil Mosun (custom architectural manufacturer); Trow Associates (building science); Juan Grimm (landscape)

Engineers: Carruthers & Wallace (structural engineer)—Chris Andrews (principal); Gunnar Heisler Engineer (mechanical/electrical engineer)



1 To determine the final composition of the dome's alabaster and cast-glass leaves, the architect conducted a series of panelization studies, beginning with a MAYA NURBS model and then adding fragmentation to take into account both aesthetics and material-sizing limitations.

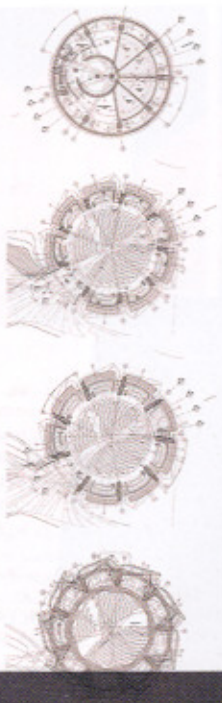


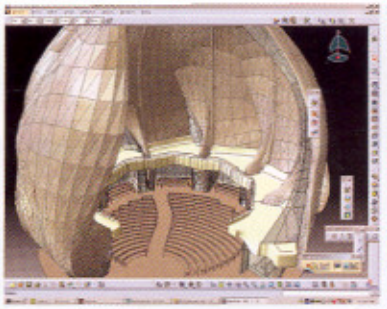
2 A series of model views made with MAYA software, in preparation for an animated fly-through.

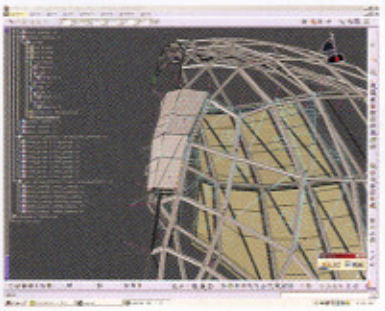
3 The structure's organic, almost floral, form is evident in a series of plans cut at increasingly higher points in the space (from top to bottom).

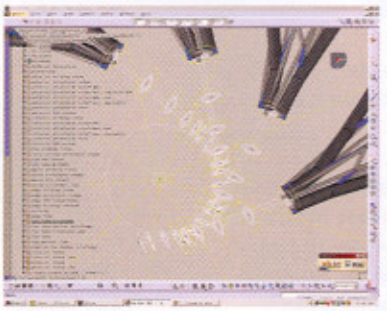
4 Screen captures of CATIA modeling that occured as the project transitioned into design development.

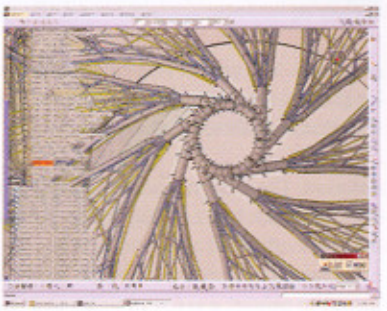
5 The layering of faceted cast glass over milled alabaster panels supported by a tubular-frame system ensures the transparency that makes the structure so compelling at night.











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I have to acknowledge all the research. This whole structural-material theory would make the building really light and translucent.

Yung Ho Chang

THE ARCHITECT

Firm: Hariri Pontarini Architects, Toronto

Principal: Siamak Hariri

Employees: More than 30

Year Founded: 1994

Recent Work: Student Services Center, York University, Toronto

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