

Mauricio Macri **2009 Laureate Peter Zumthor** **Ceremony Speech**

Head of the Autonomous Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

Ladies and gentlemen and lovers of architecture gathered in this hall:

We are honored to host this important award—referred to as the Nobel Prize of Architecture—in a city where you will have the chance to see our rich architectural heritage, reflected not only in this building or in the San Martín Palace but also at our railway stations or at the Abasto Market, to mention just a few of the many splendid buildings scattered throughout Buenos Aires. Far be it from me to boast, but I would like to say you have made the right choice in selecting Buenos Aires as the first South American city in which to grant this important Prize. Buenos Aires is undoubtedly the most beautiful city of all.

On this special day, I also take the opportunity to tell you that some months ago we found a sunken historic galleon, which we believe was Spanish. We are about to finish our research on this shipwreck. These remains, salvaged in Puerto Madero, in an area reclaimed from the River Plate, have become a significant piece of our huge cultural heritage. So all hands on deck to restore and rehabilitate our historic sites and proudly show our city to the world! Let us hope Buenos Aires may be a pleasant surprise to more tourists, as it has been to most of those who are visiting the city. May Buenos Aires and Argentina enthrall them.

Our administration is working hard so that modern architecture—so valuable to us—and our architectural heritage may live in harmony, without endangering each other. Over these 16 months in office, we have made lots of progress in order to reach this balance. Actions have been taken to protect our historic buildings without disregarding the growth of modern developments in a traditional city like Buenos Aires. I do hope all our guests today may have the chance to get to know our city and—time permitting—to travel around Argentina as well. I am looking forward to meeting all of you again in this great city. Let me express my gratitude to each of you once again. And for first-time visitors, Buenos Aires welcomes you with open arms!

Thank you.

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