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### **Historic Washington Embassy's Cultural Center Takes a Modern Turn**

*The Venezuelan Bolivarian Hall in Embassy Row Reopens with a Bold New Performance Space*

(Washington, DC) – After a two-year reconstruction process, the Venezuelan Embassy is re-inaugurating its cultural center and performance space, the Bolivarian Hall. The Embassy commissioned up and coming Iraqi architect Aseel Albanna to design this important renovation within an historic building on Massachusetts Avenue in the heart of embassy row. This modern space joins a growing wave of new international cultural centers in the city, as embassies seek to engage in more public and cultural diplomacy.

Renovations Unlimited, Inc. ([renunlimited.com](http://renunlimited.com)), a Washington, D.C.-based general contractor with expertise in high-end, historic renovation and restoration, oversaw the first phase of construction.

“Our goal was to create a space for today’s artists – both those who push the boundaries of culture and music as well as those rooted in popular traditions,” said Patricia Abdelnour, Cultural Attaché. “We wanted a hall where young and old in the Washington area would feel at home.”

The original performance space opened in 2003, but structural problems forced the reconstruction, and an opportunity to completely redesign the space.

The Embassy chose local architect Aseel Albanna to transform the Hall into a venue dedicated to promote cultural exchanges and dialogue among Washington’s diverse communities.

“We selected an imaginative architect who we felt had a respect for the history of the building and a sense of tradition, but who also likes to push boundaries and take chances,” said Ms. Abdelnour. “We were excited by Ms. Albanna’s original vision and concept for the space, and now that it is ready to welcome the public, we are even more thrilled with her design.”

“The biggest challenge was to work within the physical constraints of the historic structure and to create a timeless space conducive to the flow of artistic spirit,” said Ms. Albanna. “I sought to emphasize the free forms, the depth and openness that Venezuelan culture reflects and apply organic, modern touches that would appeal to artists and audiences alike.”

“Albanna’s design was brilliant and her execution and management of the process was fantastic,” said Ms. Abdelnour. “She showed great attention to detail and solved the endless technical challenges imposed by the original design and construction of the building. The result is an exciting new facility that expands our ability to serve as a great venue for the neighborhood and the city.”

The Bolivarian Hall was originally designed as office space in the first embassy building built on Mass Ave. in the late 1930s. The Bolivarian Hall opened for public performances in 2003. The space has hosted countless performances by musicians and artists from all across the globe.

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PHOTOS  
Before



After

