



The Pedagogical Museum in Argentina: origin and vicissitudes of a renewing Institution (1883-1940)¹

El Museo Pedagógico en Argentina: nacimiento y avatares de una Institución renovadora (1883-1940)

O Museu Pedagógico da Argentina: nascimento e vicissitudes de uma instituição renovadora (1883-1940)

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Abstract

The pedagogical museums emerged in the middle of the 19th century accompanying teachers' training and the construction of the national education systems. They were centers which comprise a library with education works, legislation, and other kinds of documents, as well as school furniture and collections of teaching materials. They fostered the circulation of school ideas, practices, and materials. They had a prospective and instituting character as regards new methodologies, tooling, school policy and structure, and the express intention of building a national identity. In Argentina, the initiative to create a pedagogical museum within the scope of the National Education Council, the National School Museum, attached to the library and aimed at primary education, was understood as an engine for the political-pedagogical and material renewal of education. The museum was one of the state mechanisms in the education system to gradually take society to a level of "civilization".

Keywords: Pedagogical museum. Argentina. School renewal.

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Resumen

Los museos pedagógicos surgieron a partir de mediados del siglo XIX acompañando la formación de maestros y la construcción de los sistemas educativos nacionales. Eran centros que comprendían una biblioteca con obras de educación, legislación y otro tipo de documentos, como también mobiliario escolar y colecciones de materiales para la enseñanza. Abonaron a la circulación de ideas, prácticas y materiales escolares. Tenían un carácter prospectivo e instituyente de las nuevas metodologías, utillaje, política y estructura escolar, y la intención expresa de construir identidades nacionales. En la Argentina, la iniciativa de crear un museo pedagógico en el ámbito del Consejo Nacional de Educación, el Museo Escolar Nacional, anexo a la biblioteca y dirigido a la enseñanza primaria, fue entendida como motor para la renovación pedagógico-política y material de la educación. El museo era uno más de los mecanismos estatales dentro del sistema educativo para llevar a la sociedad, paulatinamente, a un nivel de “civilización”.

Palabras clave: Museo pedagógico. Argentina. Renovación escolar.

Resumo

Os museus pedagógicos surgiram a partir de meados do século XIX acompanhando a formação de professores e a construção dos sistemas educacionais nacionais. Eram centros que incluíam uma biblioteca com obras pedagógicas, legislação e outros tipos de documentos, bem como mobiliário escolar e acervos de material didático. Eles subscreveram a circulação de ideias, práticas e materiais escolares. Tiveram um caráter prospectivo e instituidor das novas metodologias, ferramentas, política e estrutura escolar, e a intenção expressa de construção de identidades nacionais. Na Argentina, a iniciativa de criar um museu pedagógico no âmbito do Conselho Nacional de Educação, o Museu Nacional da Escola, anexo à biblioteca e voltado para o ensino fundamental, foi entendido como um motor de renovação político-pedagógica e material da educação. O museu foi um dos mecanismos do Estado dentro do sistema educacional para levar gradualmente a sociedade a um nível de “civilização”.

Palavra-chaves: Museu pedagógico. Argentina. Renovação escolar.

About Pedagogical Museums

Firstly, we are going to spot some differences, which have not always been considered to address the subject of pedagogical museums.

The *pedagogical museums* started to emerge in the middle of the 19th century in Europe, under different names: education museum, pedagogical museum, school museum, permanent school exhibition; accompanying teachers' training and the construction of education systems. Created at the boom of the nation States constitution, the idea of renewing the pedagogical aspects of education was linked to the objective of nationality construction and the development of science and technology to foster industrial development. With the success of simultaneous and graduated teaching, the pedagogical renovation included an intuitive method articulated with fragments of positivism. This type of museum did not reduce its organization to the preservation and exhibition of pedagogical materials, but it used to have libraries, edit various publications, and research results, hold cycles of pedagogical conferences, design educational materials, etc. It was not only meant to fulfill a compiling function, but also mainly a formative and instituting, aiming at teacher improvement, pedagogical updating, and the renewal of school material culture.

Different from the previous ones, *school museums* emerged at the end of the 19th century with a didactic function: to accompany the lessons. They were formed by a series of "encyclopaedic boxes" containing objects for teaching Botany, Zoology, Anatomy and Mineralogy, classified in series and groups or by collections located in a special place at schools or in a classroom cabinet, introducing materials of flora, fauna and minerals from different sources, models for anatomy classes, natural history, and also other objects to be used in «object lessons».

Museums on education, in terms of the perspective of the History of Education, are historical museums. Most of them were created at the beginning of the 1980s: others kept the institutional continuity of their start as pedagogical museums, but their objectives and functions have been modified. These museums may or may not share specific pedagogical objectives, meaning, being involved in discussions about current education or propose educational projects. In this document we are going to address the subject of pedagogical museums, especially in Argentina.

Some origins of Pedagogical Museums

The creation of several pedagogical museums in Europe and America had its origin in international exhibitions. In these, pedagogical materials for teaching, furniture, bibliography, statistics, architectural designs, etc. were presented. The main objective was the international exchange of technical and theoretical advances, relating the scientific and pedagogical development to school material expansion and production. Although educational sections have a secondary place in these exhibitions, they were enough to promote the creation of this new type of museum.

The introduction of special sections on education became more important over time. During Paris Exhibition, in 1867, school materials were presented in group X, under the heading of: "objects specially exhibited with a view to improving the population physical and moral condition". Among the materials on display were plans of school buildings, devices, instruments, models and pictures, books, atlases, publications, student works, etc.

At Paris exhibition in 1878, these materials were placed in a separate group, the II, under the heading *Education and Teaching*.

In these great events, technological advances, natural resources, and advances in education were part of the “civilizing ideal”. The past was represented as a fundamental element in a chain of progress and with a homogenizing intention, at the service of the State and the dominant bourgeois culture.

The Pedagogical Museum in Argentina

As regards Argentina, we are going to follow the evolution of the museum created within the scope of the National Education Council (NEC). This museum arose from the South American Industrial, Agricultural and Fine Arts Exhibition of 1882, in which the Pedagogical Congress was held. Although Argentina had already presented an exhibit at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1867, it was not until the creation of the National Education Council that the initiative to create a pedagogical museum was undertaken. This makes a difference with some European museums, in which the initiative to create pedagogical museums arose, at the beginning, from groups of industry workers. This is understood in a context in which large producers of school materials were located mainly in Europe and the United States and presented their works at international exhibitions.

El NEC entrusted a special commission to mount an exhibition of school objects to be presented during the South American Exhibition. The objects were collected at schools, with great difficulty, due to the short time in advance they had, according to the commission. The exhibit consisted of sewing and embroidery, drawings, calligraphy, texts, school benches and objects.

A year after the Pedagogical Congress, in 1883, the National Education Council, under the presidency of Benjamín Zorrilla, decided to create a “National School Museum” (which would have the characteristics of a pedagogical museum) attached to the library and aimed at primary education. In 1886, after three years and under the same presidency, the purposes which should guide the actions of a pedagogical museum were expressed:

Human progress, in its laborious and continuous development, does not cease to arbitrate new elements, change or modify methods, procedures, systems, always striving for improvement and pursuing the spread of human knowledge, the increase of comforts to the greatest number, which give way to new advances and new inventions every day. This fact, which can be evidenced on a daily basis as regards commerce and industries are still found in the expressions of the intellectual life of each people, and very particularly, as regards the education of youths. [...] the education of a people is the main factor to compute its state of civilization. Hence the Pedagogical Congresses and Museums, which come to represent the education sphere, what the commercial treaties and large exhibitions represent within the industrial field. [...] museums become a living source of information, a permanent exhibition of materials which are needed or used, an exhibition of the results which are obtained, and can even be a tangible sample of successive evolutions and advances in one or several countries (*El Monitor*, 1886, p.1315; we kept the original spelling; the underlying is ours).

As can be seen in the previous text, the Pedagogical Museum was conceived as an engine for the methodological and material renewal of education, an education for the majority, primary or basic. This was within a framework of a progressive and evolutionary conception of history, of a positivist nature, for a society which had to achieve the technical advances provided by science and in a framework of an industrial capitalism, intended to be developed in the national territory. It was education that would ultimately enhance society to a state of “civilization”.

But the creation of the museum, apparently, presented difficulties or it lacked the necessary support since, between 1883 and 1886, there were no major changes. The idea was being able to achieve what other pedagogical museums in the world had already achieved. In this sense, a museum, which was presented as an example, was the Pedagogical Museum of Brussels, created in 1878 and put into operation two years later.

We name below the sections which that museum brought together, so as to observe the characteristics a “typical” pedagogical museum should have: Administration, legislation, statistics; school materials; teaching tools; cosmography and geography; history; natural sciences; drawing; language knowledge; various sciences (gymnastics, music, hygiene, morals, writing, etc.; pedagogical magazines) and manual works.

In Argentina, that model was still far from being reached. Two years went by; in December 1888, the National Education Council approved the *School Museum Regulations*, as part of the National Teachers’ Library: The institution’s regulations ensure the museum responds to the objective of being a communication form of everything related to primary education:

S. 1°. The National School Museum, established in the capital of the Republic, is aimed at spreading as far as possible the knowledge of the subjects which comprise the various areas of Public Instruction, especially for the Common Primary Instruction, entrusted to it.

S. 2°. The repository of the National Education Department will be formed by a double collection of teaching materials which include the foundations of the School Museum. (*School Museum Regulation*, *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, 1889, No 147, p. 334)

To compile collections, the regulation contemplates the actions of both, the national and provincial State, and also the resources from loans or private donations.

Regarding the public to whom the museum was intended, on the one hand it was thought for school students and, on the other, for trained or trainee teachers.

It is not clear, from the text of the article, what would be the experience the students might have in the museum; the only thing which comes out is the intention that the schoolchildren observe what was presented in it. Now, analyzing the inventory made a year and a half later, we understand that this museum responded more to the model of a pedagogical museum than to that of a school museum.

One of the main objectives was spreading the intuitive method, which is evidenced in the profuse collection of posters, maps, tables, and pictures, as well as in the introduction of natural sciences in the curricula.

The lack of materials related to the teaching of national history is also noticed, since at that time these materials of local production did not yet exist. This is evidenced in the reviews of Mercante (1893) and Senet (1896) in their respective publications.

Resuming the museum inventory, we can perceive in it the intention to “modernize” and “sanitize” school practices through architecture, furniture, or the use of certain school objects. The school conditions in several districts of the country showed deficiencies in terms of architecture, teaching materials supply, furniture, teacher training, and implemented methods.

In 1893, Argentina participated in the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, to which it sent part of the material available in the museum: Legislation, regulations, programs, furniture, texts, memoirs, reports, censuses, buildings, conferences, teachers and students’ pieces of work.

The articulation of the intuitive method with Argentine naturalist positivism indicated the orientation the pedagogical museum was going to have in Argentina. “The experimental intuitive method works with primary education, applied to the various subjects it comprises and very singularly in the object lessons and on the natural sciences [...]” (“Mr. Guillermo Navarro's Conference”, in *El Monitor*, 1894, p. 1,167). This relation fostered the use of objects in classrooms expressed in two aspects: the development of the so-called *object lessons*, as a subject and the promotion of collections or *school museums* within schools.

The Pedagogical Museum in “Corridors”

The pedagogical museum was under construction for several years: “The school museum has already acquired the appearance of such” (*El Monitor*, 1898, p. 92). The introduction of a new discipline is significant: manual work, although the need to take manual work into school disciplines had already been expressed previously.

The museum collection was moved in 1903 to the National Education Council’s new building (PIC. 1), it occupied the top floor of the National Teachers’ Library (PIC. 2). By then it had 693 objects and had been visited by 441 people. Also, due to the lending system for teachers, there are 856 “natural objects, plastic imitations or posters for intuitive teaching”. “It exhibits everything that can help to facilitate intuitive teaching” (*El Monitor*, 1903, p. 64).

Picture 1: National Education Council’s new building



Source: <http://www.cienciayfe.com.ar/buenosaires/mirarx2.php?nroid=767>

Picture 2: National Teachers' Library

Source: El Monitor, 1904: 1.379.

According to a report from the museum itself, by 1904 it was making progress. The meaning given to the word *progress* was based on the number of visitors (187 more than the previous year), the number of lendings (248 more than the previous year) and the increase in its collections (65 objects, 23 by donation, 37 by purchase, 2 from the school object and text storage and 3 sent by the Council). For this period, the museum is defined as a *complementary* institution for primary school and as a museum that reinforces the lending more than the exhibition.

By 1910, twenty-seven years had passed since the decision to create a national pedagogical museum with a prospective and instituting identity so as to create and consolidate the education system, renewing the political and pedagogical aspects of education. However, in all that time the museum did not have a suitable place. In its recent years, it only had the National Education Council's corridors: a very different story from that experienced by some pedagogical museums in other places, such as France, Belgium and Uruguay, institutions which appeared as role models.

When Ramos Mejía entered to the National Education Council, there was a new impulse for the museum, reinforcing the sense of a *school museum*, a way that, as we explained, had begun to spread in schools in Argentina. But it was not only a response to political-pedagogical or didactic problems: the creation of school museums and pedagogical museums took place at a time when the question of "nationality construction" became an increasing priority.

Sarmiento School Museum (1910-1940)

Sarmiento School Museum was the continuity of the National School Museum of the National Education Council, not only because of its institutional dependence, but also because of its structure.

As part of the commemoration of the First Centennial of May Revolution, the National Education Council, chaired by Ramos Mejía, organized, among other initiatives, a School Exhibition, and a Historical Museum. The commemoration took place in a festive and hostile atmosphere. Within the context of Western nations, the Centennial in Argentina is placed in the temporal framework of the construction of national identities which began in the middle of the 19th century until the culmination of the First World War, characterized by identity homogenization processes headed mainly by ruling elites within industrialization and urbanization contexts. Added to this panorama, as a counterpart, the emergence of an internationalist labor movement, which would find its

limits in the defense of the homeland in danger, as happened during the First World War. As for Argentina, two important aspects must be considered:

- The wave of immigration it had received during the last quarter of the 19th century. Immigrants were providers of labor for a rapidly expanding market.
- The crisis of the oligarchy, which had begun in the 1890s, revealing a growing illegitimacy of its authority and the struggle between factions within it.

In this context, and perhaps supported by the proximity of the Centennial celebrations, there was a nationalism entrenchment.

One of the main characteristics of Ramos Mejía's management was the administrative expansion, through the increase of state agents and controls aimed at consolidating the bureaucracy, maintaining a strong and centralized leadership of its president.

Curricula were re-organized with “national and patriotic” objectives; the obligation to be Argentine or become naturalized to work as a teacher and the appeal to the power of image through the museum creation, the “pedagogy of statues” and the production of school materials. Each school had to procure the means for an “objective teaching of history”; various objects such as portraits, weapons, posters.

In this context, the creation of a School Historical Museum and a School Exhibition were projected, both of which would become part of the future Sarmiento School Museum. The School Historical Museum, consisted of Geographic maps in color or relief, photographic reproduction of old geographic charters, topographic plans, historical scenes.

On its part, the School Exhibition would comprise the selected material the schools worked on during 1910 and, with a series of pictures and reliefs on national history, which the Council bought from Carlos M. Biedma.

Once the exhibition ended, the Council decided the exhibits of the School Historical Museum and the School Exhibition would remain open during the months of summer break (December and January) so it could be visited by the teachers of Territories and Colonies, for which “they will receive the ticket free of charge” (Ramos Mejía, 1910).

This is how the idea of turning both exhibitions into a museum was conceived” [...] where all the topics in the programs would be objectified, giving special attention [...] to National History” (Ramos Mejía, 1910, p. 423).

Sarmiento School Museum arose with the materials of the National School Museum, which was operating in the NEC and, with the exhibits prepared for the Centennial of the School Historical Museum and the School Exhibition. In addition, the patrimony inherited from the Pedagogical Museum, which depended on the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction and materials acquired in the United States, were added.

Ramos Mejía tried to give the new museum an orientation that would reinforce the concept of a *school museum*:

To meet the current demands of instruction, showing copies and pictures grouped according to the subject with a scientific criterion is not enough, but it is necessary to offer a place where school intelligence is really exercised not only by observing but also by working, not only passively but also actively; in a word, that the museum be the future, practical and experimental school for teacher and student (Ramos Mejía, 1910: 242; the underlying is ours).

Therefore, it proposed a museum-school, oriented both to the student and the teacher:

It is, above all, a teaching center intended to develop teaching in an easy, pleasant, fast, and comprehensive way. [...] The museum is not only the house where they learn their scientific knowledge [...], but a place where study habits will be acquired, [...] and they will comfort their spirit with the examples of national heroes and the teachers' lessons (Ramos Mejía, 1910, p. 424).

Apart from functioning as a school museum model alongside the museums built or to be built at schools, it would fulfill the function of a pedagogical museum, as regards its objective of teacher training. The potential public which was being thought of when the project was developed were primary school students, teachers, and teacher training students.

The Museum Materializes

In 1911, Carlos M. Biedma took up as the director (honorary) of the museum and, as deputy director Luis María Jordán, former director of the Pedagogical Museum dependent on the Ministry. In July, the Sarmiento School Museum opened to the public.

The scope and category Ramos Mejía wanted to give the museum were reflected in its constitution. It was housed at Sarmiento school (Callao 450), one of those buildings rated as "palace schools", located in a central place in Buenos Aires city and very close to Sarmiento Palace, where the National Education Council worked.

The idea of the museum-school was thus materialized: "It could be said that it is a great school, provided with an enormous amount of teaching material and where the largest possible number of students will frequently attend their lessons" (*El Monitor*, 1911: 156). It would be a "model school" to consolidate a "normalism" with a scientific and intuitive base.

Just a year after its creation, the museum started to get criticism and the space provided for the museum in 1910, little by little, was going to suffer constrictions. Without the political support of his mentors, particularly Ramos Mejía, the museum's fortunes would change. At first, on February 12th, 1913, the Council's Presidency was authorized (through file 1,231) to adopt the necessary measures so that from March 1, Sarmiento School would reopen in its own premises, on Callao 450, having to project at the same time what was related a better functioning of the Sarmiento School Museum. Days later, on February 15th (file 1,441): "Since the enrollment obtained by school N° 4 of C. E. 1° is scarce," it is resolved that the School Decoration Office would work in the same building. Finally, in 1914 Sarmiento N° 9 Normal School was founded in the building, which still continues to operate, and the museum was located at 1081 Charcas Street.²

From data collected in *El Monitor* magazine, we could observe that the museum continued working by holding public acts, conferences, and master classes, such as: "The purpose of primary school", "Class on expression graphics", "Procedures used in the education of children who attend schools for weak children", "Conference on school savings" (1915). Monthly lectures on principles and teaching practices were held for principals and teachers (1918), and they also participated in international exhibitions: "The Jury of the International Exhibition held in San Francisco (USA), in 1915, has awarded MES a silver medal, with a corresponding diploma, for its collaboration in the area of Education within the Argentine Republic, for that Exhibition" (*El Monitor* N° 529, 1917, p. 183).

² That block in Buenos Aires city no longer exists, due to the works carried out in order to build Avenida 9 de Julio during the presidency of Agustín P. Justo, starting in 1937.

This kind of activities show that the Sarmiento Museum continued to be a pedagogical institution, but other activities confirm it was also a school museum. Under the *ad honorem* direction of María A. Torrá, on June 30th, 1916, the "Children's Room" was inaugurated in the Sarmiento School Museum, "whose museum-school trend is reinforced with this new and sympathetic idea" (*El Monitor*, 1916, p.58). In the museum's program for 1918, it was considered "To receive daily visits from schools or grades, preparing in each case an appropriate program of classes for the age and capacity of the visiting children" (*El Monitor*, 1918, p.12).

Some Argentine intellectuals pointed out that the Sarmiento Museum differed from the pedagogical museum, as defined in America or Europe. In this sense, the general technical inspector Reyes M. Salinas defended, in the Children's Room opening speech, that the Sarmiento Museum had been given the name of a school museum instead of a pedagogical one, because

It should not be a storage of old things used by children and teachers from other times or of things that are somehow related to education, but a true school environment in which the soul of things is revived to set as an example, of verification and study (*El Monitor*, 1916, p. 59)³.

The museum had to be projected as a model of what a *school museum* should be in each school, but, at the same time, it was proposed as a pedagogical museum, that is, a model of materiality and school practices that were to be instituted.

Luis María Jordán, deputy director of the museum since 1911, became its director in 1919. He was a defender in the articulation of two concepts of the museum: the school museum, based on the methodology of intuitive teaching, and the pedagogical museum, oriented to teachers' training and improvement. During those years, problems and disputes continued to arise regarding the location of the museum. In November 1920, the conferences, which had been interrupted by premise restoration, were resumed and in 1921, ten years after its creation, the problems, which had affected the institution since its origin, continued: the lack of adequate premises, complete materials, and technical staff. To deal with this situation, lending methodology was strengthened.

Jordán also pointed out lending as a quality of the Sarmiento School Museum which differentiated from the pedagogical museums in Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil, which did not lend material, since they responded to a kind of pedagogical museums focused on presenting a collection of objects which showed the evolution of pedagogical science. In the United States, only a few museums lent material; the one in Paris, on its part, "lends some and only gives the opportunity to consult books". Some Swiss cantons have museums with a circulating character, "but the administrative process is cumbersome and school material is limited" (Jordán in *El Monitor*, N° 588, 1921, pp.162-163). Before the Great War, Germans had first order establishments, but the regime of lending material had not been generalized among them. Beside the above said, Jordán mentions school museums in Russia (Petrograd), Japan (Tokyo), Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Portugal, Holland, Greece, and Denmark, but points out that "none of these lends the material". In 1936, Calos A. Salinas was in charge of the museum, and it continued offering teachers' training, taxidermy classes and other techniques, besides receiving groups of teachers and students and lending materials to them. At the same time, on the initiative of NEC, the creation of regional pedagogical museums in provinces and territories was urged, as subsidiaries of the Sarmiento School Museum⁴. However, the

³ At the end of 1916, he was director of the José Berrutti museum, and deputy director of Luis María Jordán.

⁴ NEC Resolution on June 5th, 1936, in *El Monitor* No 762, p.118

magazine *La Obra* published a strong criticism of the museum: “The thing is that the Sarmiento Museum does not provide the service it was expected to offer when its creation was proposed. It only accomplishes part of its mission: it is a museum. And a museum of dead things” (“Regional school museums in provinces and territories”, in *La Obra*, 1936, p. 384). According to this publication, the museum was only used for “model” classes carried out by normal school students, but schools did not receive any benefit, since they were not informed about the material the museum had.

In 1940, being Pedro M. Ledesma president of the NEC, the Council published the file⁵ which would end the museum's history. “1°. Replace the dependency name *Sarmiento School Museum* with the name *Domingo Faustino Sarmiento School Illustration, Decoration and Cinematography Office*” (*El Monitor*, 1940, p. 162).

End of a Cycle

What happened between the manifest desire for the museum to be “a living organism, in direct relation to the teachers and schools in the region” and to “eliminate the solemn and sumptuous character”, as Luis María Jordán wanted, and the “museum of dead things”, as it was described in *La Obra* magazine? And above all, why did it cease to exist?

We think that the museum closure is not explained with pedagogical or didactic reasons, since the intuitive method was still in force and, both the representatives of the New School movement and the more teachers, despite the differences in their practices, used this method and school museums for their classes.

On the one hand, we understand schools were already providing themselves with teaching materials, mainly posters, but also other kinds of objects, which comprise large or small school museums. As a result, requests to the Sarmiento School Museum began to slowly decrease.

Table 1: Lendings and Visitors at the Sarmiento School Museum

Year	Lendings	Visitors
1903	856	441
1904	1104	628
1911	4500	s/d
1912	10,000	s/d
1913	18,900	s/d
April 1924	10,210	3,221
October 1924	12,641	5,196
April 1926	6,403	2,757

Data built based on the Education Monitor

The data we have are few and partial (Table 1.); however, we can make some assumptions from them. If during the whole year 1903, there were 856 lendings made by what was the National School Museum and, in 1924, becoming the Sarmiento School Museum, there were 12,641 lendings in only one month (October), we can agree on the fact that, between both dates, there was an important increase in its activities, as far as lendings are concerned. The same happens if we consider the number of visitors: 441 during 1903 and 5,196 during October 1924. In the span of twenty years, the museum grew. Now, if we

⁵ File 29375/M/938, in *El Monitor* No 816, p. 162.

compare the months of April 1924 and 1926 in terms of visitors and lendings, we observe a substantial decline in the last date. The greatest demand in orders was for posters: 3,800 during April 1924, 4,900 during October of the same year, 3,200 in April 1926.

On the other hand, it is significant that the closure of the Sarmiento Museum coincided with the official inauguration of the Argentine Museum for Primary School at Bernasconi Institute, in 1939 on the initiative of Rosario Vera Peñaloza, a big school museum with enough financial support.

By 1939, the Sarmiento School Museum did not have an appropriate space for exhibitions and within the NEC budget, the split for the museum was the lowest considering splits for other departments, and in that year, it also registered “sales” apart from the school material lendings it had been giving to different schools in the capital city, territories, provinces, and regional museums. This may be a consequence of the dismantling the museum was undergoing.

Finally, we think that the prospective and instituting character that the NEC pedagogical museum had at the beginning, was no longer necessary at the end of the 1930s: the system foundations had already been laid. The intuitive method spread and implementation and, the construction of a national identity through materials built for and in Argentina were objectives already achieved.

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