

THE PALACE OF EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL TO BE SEEN AT THE PARIS 1900 EXHIBITION

O Palácio da Educação e a escola a ser vista na Exposição Paris 1900

El Palacio de la Educación y la escuela en la Exposición de París 1900

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Abstract: This paper examines the presence of education at the 1900 Paris Exposition through the construction of the Palace of Education, the configuration of the Retrospective Museum, and the exhibition of materials and photographic images, all of which aimed to present the school life in France and other participating countries. The exhibition allowed for a comparative analysis of the development of education at various levels across nations and the establishment of civilized centers, considered as milestones to be achieved. Based on the catalogs published for this Universal Exposition, it was possible to analyze the curators' concerns regarding the limited availability of images and materials to demonstrate the progress made in schooling, and to observe that photography was employed both as a tool for documentation and to showcase the French school of the time.

Keywords: museum; photography; architecture; Universal Exhibition.

Resumo: Analisa-se a presença da educação na Exposição Paris 1900, por meio da edificação do Palácio da Educação, da configuração do Museu Retrospectivo e da mostra de materiais e imagens fotográficas, cujo objetivo era dar a ver a vida escolar na França e nos demais países participantes. A mostra permitiu comparar o desenvolvimento do ensino em seus diversos níveis, entre as nações, e a definição de centros civilizados, considerados como patamares a serem alcançados. A partir dos catálogos editados dessa Exposição Universal, foi possível analisar uma preocupação dos curadores com a escassez de imagens e materialidades disponíveis para demonstrar os progressos auferidos na escolarização e constatar que a fotografia foi utilizada com o propósito de documentar e de mostrar a escola francesa naquele momento.

Palavras-chave: museu; fotografia; arquitetura; Exposição Universal.

Resumen: Este trabajo analiza la presencia de la educación en la Exposición de París 1900 a través de la construcción del Palacio de la Educación, la configuración del Museo Retrospectivo y la muestra de materiales e imágenes fotográficas, cuyo objetivo era dar a conocer la vida escolar en Francia y en otros países participantes. La exposición permitió comparar el desarrollo de la enseñanza en diversos niveles entre las naciones y la definición de centros civilizados, considerados como hitos a alcanzar. A partir de los catálogos editados para esta Exposición Universal, fue posible analizar la preocupación de los comisarios por la escasez de imágenes y materialidades disponibles para demostrar los avances logrados en la escolarización, y constatar que la fotografía fue utilizada con el propósito de documentar y mostrar la escuela francesa de la época.

Palabras clave: museo; fotografía; arquitectura; Exposición Universal.

INTRODUCTION

“First, education and teaching: it is through this that man enters life; education is also the source of all progress”¹ (L’Exposition de Paris, 1900, p. 1). With these words, the general curator of the 1900 Universal Exposition, held in Paris, Alfred Picard², began his presentation on the distribution of the pavilions and their themes in the Champ de Mars, according to the general plan of that great international exhibition which aimed to mark the closing of the past century and the entry of humanity into the 20th century. This exhibition, like previous universal exhibitions, brought nations together in a great didactic celebration (Kuhlmann Jr., 2001), in which the progress, especially material and technical, of the industrial age was showcased. Visitors went there to appreciate the latest innovations, such as experiments in color photography, the moving walkway, the electric oven and, among all the innovations, the star attraction: electricity (Tolet, 1986). Thus, it constituted a spectacle (Pesavento, 1997) of modernity, in which various countries displayed, through images and artifacts, what best characterized them in an unequal race: some were still colonies, others were implementing their republican systems, while others imposed themselves as colonizing empires. Although they were mainly events showcasing products and machines confined to the manufacturing world, the exhibitions reproduced, on a large scale, the phenomenon of concealment and demonstration of the social relations that enabled capitalist development. Through them, values, virtues, and ideas were transmitted, such as harmony between classes and nations and the belief in the primacy of human reason in controlling nature and in unlimited progress (Pesavento, 1997).

Not only were the fetishized goods the object of exhibition, but also the visitors belonging to the elites, the popular classes, and the middle classes, as well as the bodies of colonized peoples – the so-called “human zoos” (Abbattista, 2018), in addition to architecture, art, and popular festivals. Thus, universal expositions, although widely studied (Fontana & Pellegrino, 2015), still remain powerful as a synthesis (Dittrich, 2013) between space and time, configuring themselves as objects “good to think about” (Ory & Mei, 2018, p. 108), in which it is possible to analyze the complexity of sociocultural phenomena on a transnational scale, encompassing industrial and technological advances, ideas and practices in various domains, and international disputes arising from colonialism and imperialism.

¹ From the original: “En tête, se placent l’éducation et l’enseignement: C’est par là que l’homme entre dans la vie: c’est aussi la source de tous les progrès. (free translation by the author).

² Alfred Picard was born in Strasbourg on December 21, 1844; in 1862, he entered the École Polytechnique. He carried out various military works, for which he received the Knight’s Cross of the Legion of Honor. He applied for military administration and, in 1880, in the central administration, he was successively director of cabinet and personnel, director of roads, mines and navigation, as well as director general of bridges and roads, etc. In the Council of State, Picard presided over the section on public works, agriculture and commerce during the 1900 Exhibition. In 1899, he was appointed rapporteur of the Universal Exhibition, and his report became a monument, according to Xavier Ryckelynck (1989).

In this sense, seeking to encompass all domains of human knowledge, the exhibition was conceived according to a didactic orientation, inherited from an encyclopedic concern, and aimed to inform, explain, inventory, classify, catalog, and synthesize, in order to teach visitors. The pedagogical character went beyond the objects on display and reached the ideals of behavior and lifestyle of the urban bourgeoisie, which had as its backdrop the renovated Paris and, also the magical and illuminated world of modernity provided by the various exhibition spaces.

Thus, as this was a great educational event, it is not surprising that, among the pavilions, according to Picard, education received considerable attention from the organizers of the Grand Exhibition, as this theme had been present since the 1862 exhibition (Dittrich, 2013). This was the perfect space to disseminate new theories and pedagogical methods, as well as to promote new teaching materials produced on an industrial scale by European companies such as the French Maison Deyrolle, the German Hagemann, and the Austrian Hölzels Verlagsbuchhandlung, among others (Cioato, 2021). From 1876 onwards, the exhibitions began to organize educational congresses and became a space for sociability among those involved in instruction at their different levels (Dittrich, 2013). Thanks to this intense exchange and the gathering of a large quantity and variety of materials from participating countries, it was precisely the Universal Expositions that gave rise to the creation and implementation of national educational museums in several countries, such as the London Exposition, which originated the South Kensington Museum; the Vienna Exposition, which stimulated the creation of the Austrian Educational Museum and the Royal Museum of Instruction and Education in Rome; the Paris Expositions, which boosted the creation of the French Educational Museum, among others (Author, 2019).

Thus, the transnational circulation of knowledge and educational materials is central to studies that have analyzed or were related to the universal exhibitions (Dittrich, 2013), and they are present as well in investigations into national pedagogical museums (Majault, 1978; Guillemeau, 1979; Poucet, 1996; Fontaine & Matasci, 2015; Author, 2015, 2019). Notwithstanding, there is still much to investigate and write about the relationship between education and the 1900 Universal Exhibition. In this sense, the purpose of this article is to analyze, on the one hand, the architectural aspects related to the Palace of Education and Teaching, a building specially constructed to house the material to be exhibited on this subject, both from France as the host country and from the foreign delegations that went to Paris. On the other hand, besides the construction of an exclusive space dedicated to education, it is interesting to analyze the composition of the exhibition inside this building, especially the Retrospective Museum or Centenary Museum, responsible for addressing the past times of school and teaching, and the photographic collection Paris 1900, produced by the Pedagogical Museum of Paris with the intention of showing the progress of France in education.

To achieve these objectives, the catalogs³ of the 1900 Exposition, consulted at the Paris City Hall Library, the National Archives, and the National Museum of Education of France (Rouen)⁴, were sought for clues to understand the construction of this Palace and the organization of the exhibition carried out inside. Several of these catalogs were published with the intention of presenting the exhibition to visitors, especially through photographic images, and also to that great event, or in the words of Jean Vermont, author of the introductory text to the "Golden Book of the 1900 Exposition": "to be a sincere historian of this short but glorious page of history"⁵ (Bibliothèque du Hotel de Ville de Paris, 1900).

Like the Golden Book, these catalogs were produced by different publishing houses, and some of them contain the signatures of authors invited to leave their descriptions and impressions of the aspects seen at the Exhibition. Some of them are photographic albums and contain only images, accompanied by their respective captions. These publications, constituted by the scrutinizing gaze of the present as documents and monuments of this historical event, provide clues to problematize the aspects considered relevant to gain visibility in the exhibition, whether concerning the finishing century, shown in a retrospective exhibition, or from the perspective of the approaching century. In addition to these catalogs, the photographic collection Paris 1900, from the National Museum of Education of France, produced for the exhibition that bears its name, was consulted.

The article is divided into three sections, besides this introduction: in the first, I address the construction of the Palace of Education and the display of materials presented during the 1900 Universal Exhibition; in the second, I analyze the prelude of the exhibition on education, called the Retrospective Museum, which aimed to address the history of education in the last century; finally, I analyze the Paris 1900 photographic collection, belonging to the Pedagogical Museum of France, which aimed to do a broad survey of schools and school life in that country to be featured in the Great Exhibition.

The three aspects discussed here support the argument of a concern that wants to give materiality and visuality to education at the 1900 Exhibition. In the convergence of these three aspects when looking—architecture, museum, and photography—values and ideas were activated to be produced and disseminated.

³ Although some of these publications are titled as books or catalogs, I considered the last designation more appropriate, given that its content deals with an exhibition that was held.

⁴ This article is one of the results of postdoctoral research carried out in 2014 at the University of Paris 3, Sorbonne Nouvelle, under the supervision of François Mairesse, to whom I express my gratitude.

⁵ From the original: "être l'historien sincère de cette courte mais glorieuse page d'histoire" (free translation by the author).

THE PALACE OF EDUCATION AND TEACHING

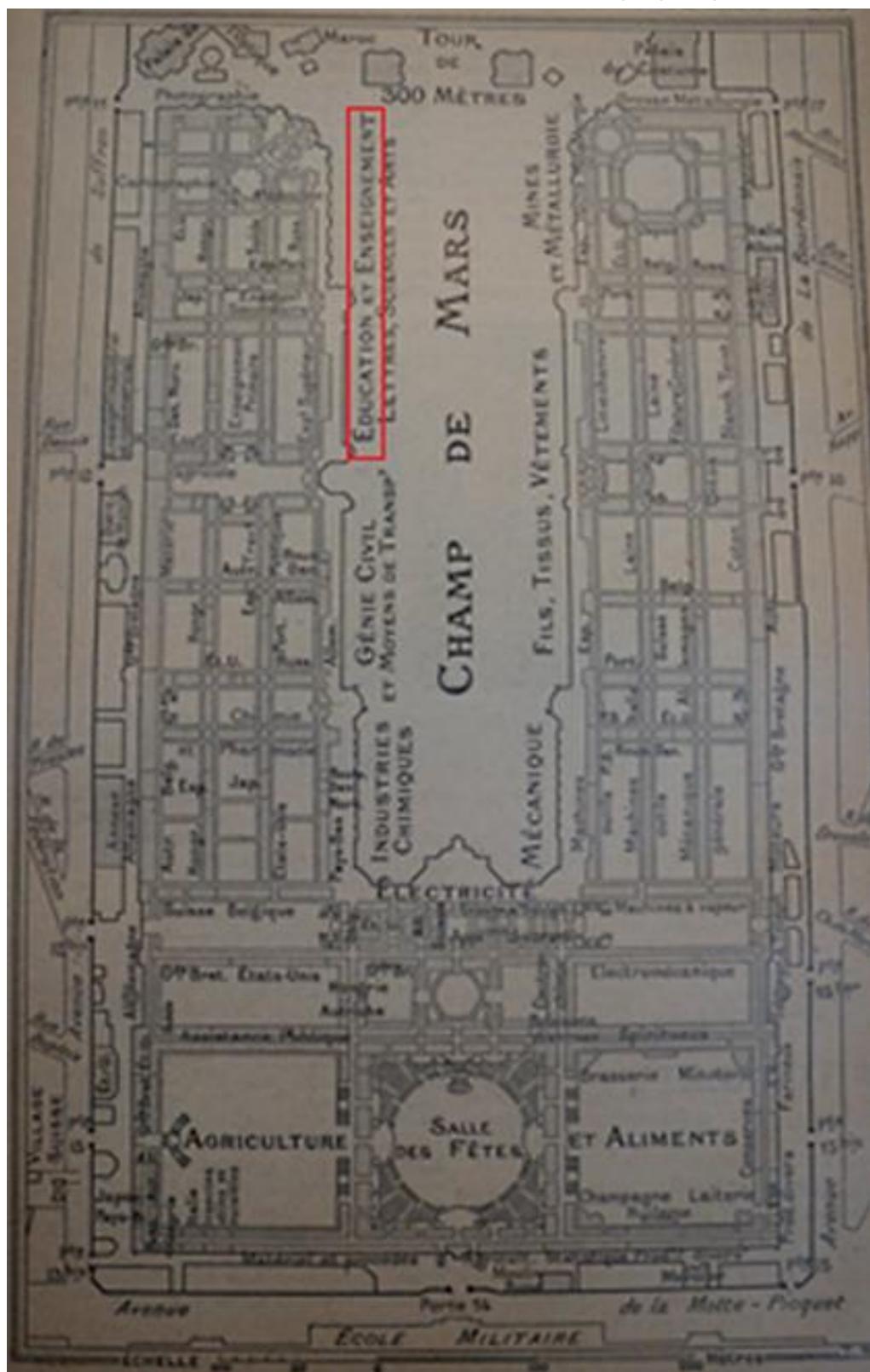
The Palace of Education received several names in the researched documents: Palace of Teaching and Materials for Sciences, Letters and Arts, simply Palace of Teaching or Palace of Education, or even the long name of Palace of Education, Teaching and General Procedures for Letters, Sciences and Arts.

The building was constructed at the entrance to the Champ de Mars, next to the Eiffel Tower, opposite the Palace of Mines and Metallurgy (Figures 1, 2). The location of the building related to education in the spatial context of the Great Exhibition demonstrates the importance attributed to the desired pedagogical aspect. It was a reinforced concrete structure, whose innovation and economy had become widespread in that context and had substituted the prominence of iron and glass in previous major exhibitions, in which the Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower were the biggest attractions. The architect Louis Sortais⁶ conceived a building that was largely open to big circulation, with four large facades, two of which were overlapping open porticoes (Picard, 1903). Arcades, balustrades, columns, a dome, and stained-glass windows updated the building to the Art Nouveau style prevalent at the time.

The entrance door was a monument that occupied a large part of the main facade and invited people to enter the building (Figures 3, 4). Completing the architectural features was the sculptural decoration, composed of three high reliefs: the first contained female figures representing the arts (painting, sculpture, architecture, engraving) around the figure of Apollo (symbol of music and poetry); in the second, a young woman represented the Letters (printing, typography, posters, newspapers, etc.); finally, a sculptural group composed of a woman and two children represented the sciences (photography, geography, astronomy, electricity, industry) (Picard, 1903). This way, the monumental building and its sculptures highlighted the prevailing ideas in the great exhibition and in the current context, in which the progress achieved by science and industry was allied with artistic knowledge of more ancient tradition. The theme of education, when receiving these attributes in its architectural embodiment, highlighted the pedagogical character not only of the Palace itself, but of the exhibition as a whole.

⁶ Student at the School of Fine Arts; winner of the grand prize in Rome, in 1890, according to: L'Exposition de Paris (1900): publiée avec la collaboration d'écrivains..., op. cit., p. 179.

Figure 1 - Map of the Paris 1900 Exposition, on the Champ de Mars, highlighting the Palace of Education



Note. From *Le livre d'or de l'Exposition de 1900* (Bibliothèque de l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris, 1900, p. 301).

Figure 2 - Reinforced concrete construction of the Palace of Education – South facade, park and exterior portico (original caption)



Note. From *L'Exposition de Paris (1900): Publiée avec la collaboration d'écrivains spéciaux et des meilleurs artistes* (1900, p. 271).

Figure 3 - Reinforced concrete construction of the Palace of Education – South facade, park and exterior portico (original caption)



Note. From Archives nationales de France (n.d.).

Figure 4 - Main facade of the Palace of Education



Phot. Larger

PALAIS DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT
Motif d'angle et porche

Nota. From *Exposition universelle internationale de 1900 à Paris: Rapport général administratif et technique* (Picard, 1903, n. p.).

The Palace entrance was marked by an elliptical vestibule and a large octagonal hall, both covered by a fluted dome twenty meters high with six arches. Inside, six columns supported a platform eight meters in diameter, which gave access to three galleries of nine meters each, parallel to the great axis of the Campus Martius, and two halls of twenty-seven meters (Figure 5). To visit the Palace, it was necessary to go along, on the ground floor, three longitudinal aisles that made up six alignments and, in total, eight times the width of the building. On the upper floor, there were four longitudinal galleries, plus six transverse ones. As it was necessary to walk a long way, the organizers of the exhibition invited the public to prepare their legs and start at the wide staircases or the walkways available to visitors.

Figure 5 - Large polygonal hall of the Palace of Education



Note From *L'Exposition de Paris (1900): Publiée avec la collaboration d'écrivains spéciaux et des meilleurs artistes* (1900, p. 242).

The Palace of Education housed six classes from Group 1, related to the set of human knowledge, and eight more classes from Group 3, composed of materials related to literature, science, and the arts. The classification of each group was based

on the idea of offering a comprehensive view of the industry in question, in this case, education, science, literature, and the arts, considered to be related.

The division into six classes of Group 1 comprised general primary, secondary, and higher education; in addition to specialized agricultural, industrial, commercial, and artistic education, the latter consisting of work from the National School of Fine Arts, the schools attached to the Sèvres, Gobelins, and Aubusson manufactories, and the schools of the French provinces.

The organizers suggested starting the visit on the first floor, in order to follow the various levels of education, from preschool to university (Bibliothèque, 1900). The primary education section consisted of official exhibitions from the French Ministry of Education and independent exhibitors. In the first case, there were preschools; primary, elementary, and higher schools; teacher training colleges for both sexes, with their work and methods; adult education courses; and popular courses and lectures. For each local school with a single teacher, a model classroom was shown, probably through photographic images (Musée Nation de l'Éducation, 1900). Besides that, a classroom was set up on site, including a blackboard, lectern, school desks, library, plaster models, walls covered with boards, charts, and maps, etc. (Paris Exposition, 1900). The classroom configuration, thus, constituted the material form for giving visibility to the theme of education. On the one hand, this decorated space represented a specific area dedicated to the education of young people and children, and on the other hand, it demonstrated advances in pedagogical modernization through appropriate furniture and updated teaching materials, along with teaching through images, as can be seen in the aforementioned maps and wall displays.

Secondary education was represented by the lycées and colleges for boys and girls, as well as the schools of the Legion of Honor. Higher education was represented by the universities of France, which exhibited the theses of their doctors; the instruments, equipment, and products of their professors; photographs of their laboratories, lecture halls, and meteorological and astronomical observations of the moon. The Paris Museum of Natural History, the École Normale Supérieure, teaching associations, and societies of scholars completed the innovations of the last quarter of the century.

Among the private exhibitors, there were teaching associations; educational institutes; cooperatives and various groups linked to social education; merchants selling all kinds of school supplies, such as furniture, textbooks, blackboards, notebooks, paper, pens, calligraphy methods, etc. Scientific missions were also highlighted, such as the excavations of the School of Athens, the restoration of the Delphi treasure, and the archaeological missions to Tunisia and Mexico. Collections of weapons, insects, and shells comprised the material gathered to be shown to the public. According to the organizers, the section on missions to foreign lands, such as

Russian Asia, Patagonia, Cambodia, and Siam, Foa, in Equatorial Africa, was the one that most captivated visitors.

In the display cases, objects were presented as a way of unveiling the African continent: clothing, medicines, household and precision instruments, photographic material, fishing tools, hunting weapons, and ammunition.

That way, artifacts from cultures foreign to Europeans were presented alongside collections of fish and shells from Lake Tanganyika, monkeys, antelopes and colorful butterflies, monstrous skulls of hippos and crocodiles and lion heads, deer with two heads or only one eye, horses with six legs, Siamese pigs, trophies of the explorer in continents still in the process of colonization. This variety of elements was brought together in the Palace as a sample of the colonizing education of the 20th century, in a context in which studies on different peoples were not distinguished from studies on flora and fauna and were grouped together in the broad spectrum of Natural History (Schwarcz, 1993).

The Exhibition also included various personal works on the theme of teaching and education, submitted by numerous members of primary education, at the invitation of the French Ministry of Public Instruction. According to the circular sent, these works could cover archaeology, local geology, interesting topics in natural sciences, folklore, ethnic customs, among others. Thus, dolls dressed in typical provincial clothing were exhibited, as well as geological materials and a manual on object lessons, works produced by teachers or principals of French schools.

The abundance and variety of instruments, objects, and documents exhibited in the Palace, according to the organizers, required the public to make several visits to the site (Paris Exposition, 1900). In Group 3, on the ground floor, artifacts from French classes were exhibited (typography, library, precision instruments, coins and medals, musical instruments, artistic and theatrical material), in addition to a retrospective exhibition on the book and on precision instruments. On the same floor, the material on special artistic education was situated (class 4, of Group 1). On the first floor, the classrooms: photography, surgery, geography, music were located. There were also on display two coining presses for the 1900 Exhibition commemorative coins, which were available for sale to the public, as well as various instruments for music, theater, photography, typography; precision instruments for mathematics and astronomy; medical and surgical instruments; a library, among other things.

The foreign sections were distributed along two floors: on the ground floor, exhibitors from the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, and Austria; on the first floor, exhibitors from Spain, Portugal, Japan, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Hungary, Great Britain, Germany, and Russia exhibited on both floors. The Russian delegation was situated in the first longitudinal wing, on the Champ-de-Mars side. It exhibited notebooks and student work, as well as photographs, including many

stereoscopic ones, from the universities, gymnasiums, royal schools, and primary schools of that empire. Sweden highlighted schools for the Sami people, gymnastics instruction, and works from the Stockholm School of Decorative Arts. Spain and Portugal showcased their centuries-old universities. Great Britain and the United States displayed statistics and photographs, while Germany preferred to show musical instruments, surgical instruments, precision instruments, and optical glassware.

Therefore, based on the analyzed documents, it is clear that, on the one hand, education was considered a concern worthy of having a special and exclusive building at the Great Exhibition of 1900, as it represented an investment to be made for the progress of nations; on the other hand, it is possible to observe hierarchical differentiations among nations and peoples from an evolutionary and Eurocentric perspective. Furthermore, the Palace of Education reinforced the pedagogical character of the exhibition as a whole, as synthesis of the objectives sought by the event for the different domains achieved by the rapidly developing industrial capitalism and the progress of nations considered civilized.

THE RETROSPECTIVE MUSEUM

The 1900 Exhibition, like its predecessors, fostered a pedagogical desire to stimulate the development of nations through comparisons, a practice present in the 20th century, especially during missions abroad and pedagogical congresses (Matasci, 2016). The main way of comparison was limited to the progress measured in the present, with countries placed on a scale, in which the civilized nations were at the apex and whose level should be reached. Furthermore, the exhibitions served to conceal conflicts between modern states, whether in the competition for technology or markets. Thus, the festive occasion was a time to exalt, in the realm of philosophical and legal debates, the rapprochement and peace between peoples, while, outside the pavilions, the asymmetries of the international division of labor, the conflicts between states, and the advances of European neocolonialism were accentuated (Hardman, 2005), which would result, among other factors, in the impending First World War.

However, comparisons should also be made with past times, in order to educate for history and for the changes achieved, especially in the technical and industrial domain. According to Maria Inês Turazzi (1995), in this sense, the prevailing view of history in that context was effective in demonstrating, through a chronological linearity, the oppositions between backwardness and progress, barbarism and civilization.

From this perspective, each group in the exhibition had a small museum as its entrance, composed of artifacts specially selected to demonstrate the progress made since 1800 in the field in question. This small historical exhibition, organized by

groups, replaced a larger historical exhibition organized at the 1899 Exhibition, which, according to the organizers, attracted only specialists and scholars. To overcome the low public interest at that time, in this new edition, the idea was that each thematic group would present its retrospective museum. In this way, the general public entering the pavilions would necessarily also pass through the historical exhibitions related to the theme displayed there (Turazzi, 1995).

The Retrospective Museum or Centenary Museum of Education⁷ was located in the third longitudinal wing of the Palace. On the walls hung portraits of notable pedagogues from previous centuries and ministers of public instruction from the contemporary century; miniatures and engravings with images of school life from other times; old student notebooks; old textbooks; old theses. A display case in the center of the room exhibited curious documents, regulations, and school notes from famous people.

The report from the French installation committee provides clues about the objectives of the exhibition dedicated to instruction, called the Retrospective Museum of Group 1 Education & Teaching. This committee was composed of a president, a secretary, an editor, and 11 other members, all linked to instruction, in roles such as teachers, editors, directors, members of academies, among other professions. According to the report, the Retrospective Museum should present how the current division of classes in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education were in the past. The overall objective was to allow for a comparison between past and present, in order to glimpse the progress achieved.

Furthermore, within the framework of the intuitive teaching perspective in vogue at that time, the aim was to bring the public closer to the educational industry by putting them in contact with antique objects and their transformations and improvements over time, with the intention of sensitizing visitors to the difficulties inherent in the manufacturing process.

The committee, on the other hand, noted the challenge of presenting the complex aspects of national instruction using the language of an exhibition. Many particularities could only be explained by resorting to the characteristic writing of books or documents. Thus, the exhibition, as it could be seen, would present national instruction in a partial and incomplete way. Despite the obstacles, the committee considered that it was its role to create a museum and not a library. Based on this decision, the French exhibition was configured with books, documents, portraits, plans and views of buildings, uniforms and scenes of daily life. An indispensable collection of books - comprising the great original treatises on Pedagogy (such as Rabelais, Montaigne, Fenelon, Condorcet and Rousseau), works on the History of Education and rare or curious examples of school textbooks. Among the documents there were photographic reproductions (such as: a plaque commemorating the laying

⁷ In the original: Musée Retrospectif or Musée Centenal

of the first stone of the Sorbonne in 1614, posters of the faculties); plans and views of public instruction establishments (design of the church buildings and the facade of the Sorbonne, photographs of the Paris Observatory and the Collège de France, etc.); drawings and photographs of teachers' and students' uniforms; paintings, engravings or caricatures of scenes representing teachers and students; portraits, mainly engravings, of great educators, such as Rabelais, Montaigne, Fenelon and Bossuet.

For the members of the committee, these last elements truly constituted the idea of a museum. However, they attributed the scarcity of images depicting schools to the general disinterest, and also the artists' disinterest, in education in old France. They also noted that other groups at the Great Exhibition had access to collectors who helped gather materials to be displayed, which was not the case for the education group, with rare exceptions, including objects belonging to the Hartmann and F. Carnot collection, the Louvre Museum, and the Collège de France. Thus, the organizers highlighted the difficulties of presenting the theme of education through material objects and not only through various writings. Apparently, the curators wished to show the daily life of schools in bygone eras; however, artistic images were rare, as they explained (Musée, 1900).

THE PARIS 1900 PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

Figure 6 - The Teaching Palace - Photography Exhibition (original caption)



Note. From *L'Exposition de Paris (1900): Publiée avec la collaboration d'écrivains spéciaux et des meilleurs artistes* (1900, p. 256).

In one of the catalogs of the Paris 1900 Exhibition, it was possible to locate a photographic image with the caption "Palace of Education – photography exhibition,"⁸ focusing on a detail of one of the Palace's balconies, in which it is possible to observe, in the background, paintings with images arranged on the walls of one of the rooms. Based on the caption, I considered them to be photographic images from this exhibition. In the catalogs consulted, I did not find a description specifically of this exhibition or the images that composed it. Photography, as a technical tool, was present precisely in this pavilion because it was part of Group 3.

When researching in the photo library of the National Museum of Education, I came across the "Paris 1900 Collection."⁹ The name indicates that this collection was produced by the Pedagogical Museum to be featured in the Universal Exhibition. Unfortunately, I could not find any information in the National Archives¹⁰ documentation regarding the photographers' authorship or further details about this undertaking, which resulted in the production of 389 images. Nor were any documents with information about this collection located in Rouen.

Despite the scarcity of data on the production of this collection, I consider it plausible that these images were exhibited at the Palace of Education during the Paris 1900 Exhibition, and that they constituted an extensive photographic documentary survey done through the different regions of France, which represents nowadays the memory and visual heritage of the school system in that country. While I do not have more information about the production of these images, aspects relevant to the study of photography¹¹, I can, however, inquire whether the initiative to carry out such a survey came from the Pedagogical Museum itself or from the Ministry of Education to which the museum was linked, precisely with the aim of having visual images in order to show the advances in schooling in the regions of France.

Having made these reservations, I will now face the challenge of pointing out some characteristics of these images, as well as proposing analytical aspects about

⁸ It is important to emphasize that photography exhibitors in general, as well as films, were also displayed on the first floor of the Palace of Education, but they were part of section 12, Group III General Instruments and Procedures of Letters, Sciences and Arts, according to Tolet (1986).

⁹ I had local access to the Mnemosyne database and the inventory in effect in 2014, but it is also possible to access the individual images of this collection on the museum's website: [Les collections - MUNAÉ \(reseau-canope.fr\)](http://Les collections - MUNAÉ (reseau-canope.fr)). Unfortunately, there is no way to search for the Paris 1900 collection, which would greatly facilitate the researcher's work; it is necessary to search by year and identify the related images. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the kind and helpful service of the museum's management, researchers, and staff.

¹⁰ The historical documentation about the Pedagogical Museum is located in the National Archives, in Saint-Denis.

¹¹ Beyond the analysis of images, one of the fruitful possibilities for investigating photography from the perspective of historical studies involves mapping aspects linked to its social circuit: production (authors, agencies, clients, techniques, etc.); circulation through carte de visite, postcards, photo albums, illustrated magazines, advertising, etc.; reception, appropriation, and agency of images. For more information, see: Meneses (2003, 2005) and Mauad (2008), among many others.

them in order to demonstrate that they were in line with the purposes of the Universal Exhibition to give visibility to the educational theme.

There are several locations in France covered by this photographic repertoire, including: Bordeaux, Lyon, Bouches-du-Rhône, Scey-sur-Saône, Port-sur-Saône, Mousserolles, Saint-Pierre d'Irube, Grenoble, Gironde, Pont-à-Mousson, Saint-Christophe, Laval, Beauvais, Angers, Cussac, Ladignac, Soux-Albats, Mouy, Marvejol, among others.

A recurring theme in these images is the exterior view of the school building, especially the main facades, presented diagonally to emphasize the building's volume, or from a central viewpoint. It is not surprising that many of these images depict school buildings, as these became a symbol of republican education during that period. In France, the Guizot Law of 1833 mandated the opening of a school in communes with more than 500 inhabitants. The Falloux Law of 1850, in turn, also made it mandatory for communes to allocate resources for the establishment of schools. However, small towns had difficulties in implementing the legal requirements. Until the end of the Second Empire, French territory had 70,000 schools, many of them small, cold, and unsanitary—that is, poorly adapted for school use (Rozinoer, 2012). It was only during the Third Republic that the construction of buildings specifically for schools intensified (Rozinoer, 2012). The law that established a fund in 1878 for the construction of schools was decisive in ensuring that communes had schools suited to the prescriptions of modern pedagogy. This determination was combined with the laws of 1881-1882, which made education free, secular, and compulsory. Thus, the following decades saw a boom in school construction, reaching 85,000 in 1900 (Rozinoer, 2012), the year of the Great Universal Exhibition. In that context, according to Toulier (1982), the school was considered an emblematic place of secular education, and its monumental character aimed to distinguish it from other buildings in its surroundings, so as to engage the students' gaze. Hence the importance of the inclusion in photographic images to show, at the Universal Exhibition, the progress of public education achieved by the French nation of the Third Republic.

Besides the school building, some photographic images focus on interior spaces, such as classrooms, the refectory, or the canteen, as well as many images showing classes in gymnastics, botany, chemistry, handicrafts, stenography, horticulture, music, drawing, singing, among others. In these images, male and female students are present, whether studying a particular lesson, performing the movements of gymnastics classes, visiting a rural farm, or chatting with a local artisan. In this way, these images show the subjects of education: children, young people, teachers, foremen, and also school principals. The division of schools between boys and girls is visible in the images, studying in different classrooms, separated by walls, and different entrances in the school building; however, the presence of mixed schools is not uncommon, authorized in those cases where there were not enough

teachers to separate boys from girls, in which case they were separated in the classroom itself.

At the dawn of the 20th century, it was no coincidence that photography was the chosen method to show aspects of instruction in France. The discovery of photography in the mid-19th century allowed humanity to experience a new relationship between space and time, in which a specific spatial configuration, "a rectangle that cuts out the visible" (Machado, 1984), could be immortalized and frozen in an instant. This way, photography offered the possibility of preserving moments of memory that could be acquired as souvenirs and kept for posterity (Turazzi, 1995). Conceived with the capacity to faithfully record the visualized space, photography was assigned a documentary function¹² from its earliest decades. Urban transformations, in particular, could be recorded by a medium that allowed the capture of the passage of time, characteristic of the new bourgeois order that was consolidating. Large photographic survey projects were carried out in this context in cities in various countries aligned with the capabilities of this technical device. The State and its various institutions positioned itself as a major documenter through photography, especially of the works and achievements carried out by certain governments. In this sense, photography fulfilled the role of ensuring control over the referent very well, "the thing that one wants to seize at any cost, to fix, catalog, archive and keep under control, within reach" (Machado, 1984).

Public education is one of the preferred themes of these surveys, whether for the images to compose reports and albums (Souza, 2001; Vidal & Abdala, 2005; Lugon, 2006; Author, 2015), or to appear in regional, national, or universal exhibitions, as was the case of the Paris 1900 Collection, produced by the Pedagogical Museum of France. This way, these images were produced in accordance with a particular worldview prevalent in that context, and in line with the technical peculiarities provided by photography. The school building, in this sense, through photography, is reconfigured as a symbolic image of the values of republican education and exhibited to other countries at the Universal Exhibition. In this act of showing, the exhibition operated, once again, as a didactic resource of comparison, in which nations were arranged on an evolutionary scale, where the ideal to be achieved was located in civilized nations. According to Turazzi (1995):

In this respect, therefore, photography played its role within an exhibition with many advantages over the other groups and classes of objects present. Firstly, because photography, so cosmopolitan since its inception, was perhaps the most international of the presences, allowing a specific type of comparison among almost all participating countries; secondly, because photographic images

¹² In the first decades of the 20th century, it will be even possible to identify a style of documentary photography, cf. Olivier Lugon (2011).

could, at the same time, illustrate comparisons and contrasts in other spaces of an exhibition, in the other classes of objects; and thirdly, because the photographic language, possessing unparalleled credibility, was one of the most effective resources for making the didacticism of the spectacle itself convincing. (Turazzi, 1995, p. 63).

Furthermore, the photographic images of daily school life offered a means that aligned with the visibility required by the exhibition. Thus, photography also came to fill a gap in artistic representations (paintings, engravings, prints, etc.) and artifacts from schools of other times, so demanded by the organizers of the exhibition.

In this way, the Paris 1900 photographic collection constitutes one of the most expressive visual and material legacies of the Universal Exhibition in the field of education, since the Palace of Education, as an ephemeral building, was lost forever, just as tracing the materials exhibited there would be a herculean task, with an antiquarian flavor and without much utility for the knowledge of the history of education. Unfortunately, we do not have written records that clarify the reasons for such a mission, nor do we know the photographers in charge of this task. We also lack data on the arrival and reception of these professionals in schools, or on the reactions—which may have been of fear, astonishment, or curiosity—of children, young people, teachers, and principals when faced with the camera, perhaps a novelty for many, perhaps already known to some. However, we can imagine the reasons for this photographic survey that recorded the situation of schools *in situ* during that period; we can also look at these images and scrutinize their meanings for the history of education.

FINAL REMARKS

The three aspects discussed here—the construction of the Palace of Education, the Retrospective Museum, and the Paris 1900 Photographic Collection—possess attributes that made them fundamental in showcasing the progress in education achieved by France and other nations at the 1900 Universal Exhibition. Although materiality is emphasized when studies refer to school artifacts exhibited at universal exhibitions, documents indicate that when dealing with the past of education, these images and material items were scarce. This is not a fact dissociated from the very concern with gathering the materials resulting from the large exhibitions, which gave rise to educational museums in various countries, even though the intention of preservation was not among the objectives of these spaces, which were especially geared towards the training of educators and students.

In the convergence of these three devices for viewing—architecture, museum, and photography—it was possible to construct an imaginary world to be enjoyed by visitors to the exhibition, in which values of belief in the progress of humanity were produced and disseminated, especially with education being seen as the means to guide new generations towards the desired civilizing ideals. Produced specifically for the Grand Exhibition, little remains of the building and the museum, known only through written or visual clues. However, the school photographs remain. As we look at them, they also look at us (Didi-Huberman, 2020). In this encounter of gazes, perhaps much more can still be discovered about the education of a time we can no longer reach but only imagine with the aid of the vestiges that remain.

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Received on: 2024.11.18

Approved on: 2025.11.16

Published on: 2026.02.03

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PEER REVIEW ROUNDS:

R1: two invitations; no reviews received.
R2: two invitations; two reviews received.
R3: two invitations; no reviews received.
R4: three invitations; one review received.

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Possamai, Z. R. The Palace of Education and the school to be seen at the Paris 1900 Exhibition. *Revista Brasileira de História da Educação*, 26, e399. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.4025/rbhe.v26.2026.e399en>

FUNDING:

The RBHE has financial support from the Brazilian Society of History of Education (SBHE) and the Editorial Program (Call No. 30/2023) of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

This article is one of the outcomes of postdoctoral research carried out in 2014 at Paris 3 University, with funding from the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

LICENSING:

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TRANSLATION:

This article was translated by Denise Sampil, with financial support from CAPES' Academic Excellence Program (PROEX).

DATA AVAILABILITY:

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.