REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
Vol: 13.18 - August
DOI: 10.66104/xq44y329
Pages: 1-24

ARQUITETURA, EDUCAÇÃO PATRIMONIAL E SUSTENTABILIDADE: PRÁTICAS MEDIATIVAS NO MUSEU DE ARTE DE BELÉM DO PARÁ (MABE)

ARCHITECTURE, HERITAGE EDUCATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY: CULTURAL MEDIATION PRACTICES AT THE ART MUSEUM OF BELÉM DO PARÁ (MABE)

ARQUITECTURA, EDUCACIÓN PATRIMONIAL Y SOSTENIBILIDAD: PRÁCTICAS MEDIADORAS EN EL MUSEO DE ARTE DE BELÉM DO PARÁ (MABE)

Milena de Lima Wanzeller
Doutoranda em Arquitetura e Urbanismo
Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil
E-mail: wanzellermilena@gmail.com

Gilmar Wanzeller Siqueira
Doutor em Ciências Naturais (USP)
Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil
E-mail: gilmar@ufpa.br

Luiz de Jesus Dias da Silva
Doutor em Arquitetura e Urbanismo (UFPA),
Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil
E-mail: ljesusds@hotmail.com

Ronnie Anderson Nascimento de Farias
Doutor em Ciências da Informação (UFPB)
Universidade Federal da Paraíba, Brasil
E-mail: ronnie.farias@ebserh.gov.br

Maria Alice do Socorro Lima Siqueira
Doutoranda em Ciências e Meio Ambiente
Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil
E-mail: malics@yahoo.com.br

Nilza Maria Sena Barbosa
Doutoranda em Ciências e Meio Ambiente,
Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil.
E-mail: nilza41sena@hotmail.com

Rubenita Helena Carlos Marques
Doutoranda em Ciências e Meio Ambiente,

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
Vol: 13.18 - August
DOI: 10.66104/xq44y329
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Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil.
E-mail: pregoade@hotmail.com

Jucirema Corrêa Pacheco
Doutoranda em Ciências e Meio Ambiente
Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil.
E-mail: jucirema@ufpa.br

Raphael de Lima Wanzeller
Graduando em Engenharia Civil
Faculdade Ideal Wyden (FACI WYDEN), Brasil
E-mail: raphaelwan25@gmail.com

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a relação entre arquitetura, educação patrimonial e sustentabilidade a partir das práticas mediativas desenvolvidas no Museu de Arte de Belém (MABE), sediado no Palácio Antônio Lemos, no centro histórico de Belém do Pará. Parte-se do entendimento de que a arquitetura museal não é apenas suporte físico, mas componente ativo da experiência de visita, da leitura histórica do espaço urbano e da apropriação social do patrimônio cultural. A pesquisa, de abordagem qualitativa e caráter exploratório, articula revisão bibliográfica, análise documental e observação de ações educativas realizadas no MABE, com ênfase nas visitas mediadas e nas dinâmicas pedagógicas dirigidas a grupos escolares. Os resultados indicam que o projeto arquitetônico neoclássico do Palácio Antônio Lemos e seus elementos decorativos de influência Art Nouveau funcionam como dispositivos de educação patrimonial, favorecendo reflexões sobre memória, identidade e preservação ambiental no contexto amazônico. Verifica-se que a mediação cultural amplia o diálogo entre arquitetura, acervo e público, contribuindo para que o visitante reconheça o edifício histórico como bem cultural e recurso pedagógico articulado à sustentabilidade, por meio da valorização da reutilização e da restauração de edificações existentes, Conclui-se que o MABE se consolida como espaço estratégico para práticas educativas que integram arte, patrimônio e meio ambiente, no qual a qualificação dos mediadores mostrou-se um fator relevante para o potencial de participação e construção de sentidos dessas ações, ainda que o perfil formativo da equipe educativa não tenha sido sistematicamente caracterizado neste estudo.

Palavras-chave: Arquitetura; Educação Patrimonial; Sustentabilidade; Mediação Cultural; MABE

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the relationship between architecture, heritage education, and sustainability through the cultural mediation practices developed at the Art Museum of Belém (MABE), housed in the Antônio Lemos Palace, in the historic center of Belém, Pará. It is based on the understanding that museum architecture is not merely a physical support, but an active component of the visitor experience, of the historical reading of urban space, and of the social appropriation of cultural heritage. The research, employing a qualitative approach of exploratory character, combines a literature review, document analysis, and observation of educational activities carried out at MABE, with emphasis on guided visits and pedagogical dynamics directed at school groups. The results indicate that the neoclassical architectural design of the Antônio Lemos Palace and its Art Nouveau–influenced decorative elements function as devices for heritage education, fostering reflections on memory, identity, and environmental preservation within the Amazonian context. It is observed that cultural mediation broadens the dialogue between architecture, collection, and audience, contributing to

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

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visitors' recognition of the historic building as both a cultural asset and a pedagogical resource linked to sustainability, through the valorization of the reuse and restoration of existing buildings. It is concluded that MABE consolidates itself as a strategic space for educational practices integrating art, heritage, and the environment, in which mediator qualification proved to be a relevant factor for the potential of participation and meaning-making in these actions, even though the educational team's training profile was not systematically characterized in this study.

Keywords: Architecture. Heritage Education. Sustainability. Cultural Mediation. MABE.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la relación entre arquitectura, educación patrimonial y sostenibilidad a partir de las prácticas mediadoras desarrolladas en el Museo de Arte de Belém (MABE), instalado en el Palacio Antônio Lemos, en el centro histórico de Belém, Pará. Se parte de la comprensión de que la arquitectura museística no constituye únicamente un soporte físico, sino un componente activo de la experiencia del visitante, de la lectura histórica del espacio urbano y de la apropiación social del patrimonio cultural. La investigación, de enfoque cualitativo y carácter exploratorio, articula revisión bibliográfica, análisis documental y observación de acciones educativas realizadas en el MABE, con énfasis en las visitas mediadas y en las dinámicas pedagógicas dirigidas a grupos escolares. Los resultados indican que el proyecto arquitectónico neoclásico del Palacio Antônio Lemos y sus elementos decorativos de influencia Art Nouveau funcionan como dispositivos de educación patrimonial, favoreciendo reflexiones sobre memoria, identidad y preservación ambiental en el contexto amazónico. Se verifica que la mediación cultural amplía el diálogo entre arquitectura, colección y público, contribuyendo a que el visitante reconozca el edificio histórico como bien cultural y recurso pedagógico vinculado a la sostenibilidad, mediante la valorización de la reutilización y restauración de edificaciones existentes. Se concluye que el MABE se consolida como un espacio estratégico para prácticas educativas que integran arte, patrimonio y medio ambiente, en el cual la cualificación de los mediadores se mostró un factor relevante para el potencial de participación y construcción de sentidos de dichas acciones, aunque el perfil formativo del equipo educativo no haya sido sistemáticamente caracterizado en este estudio.

Palabras clave: Arquitectura; Educación patrimonial; Sostenibilidad; Mediación cultural; Museo de Arte de Belém

1. Introduction

At the Art Museum of Belém (MABE), the architecture of the Antônio Lemos Palace forms an integral part of the museological experience, functioning as a device for heritage education and for reflection on sustainability, particularly when mobilized through cultural mediation practices.

Museum architecture is a central component in shaping the visitor experience, influencing how visitors perceive exhibitions and the various layers of cultural heritage present within the built space. In the case of MABE, housed in the Antônio Lemos Palace, a building of neoclassical design located in the city's historic center, the

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building itself becomes part of the mediated and preserved cultural assets, articulating artistic, urban, and environmental dimensions of Amazonian Belém.

According to the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Museums – ICOM (2004), a museum is "a permanent, non-profit institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment." Building on this definition, museums assume multiple roles in cultural and educational formation, in the construction of heritage values, and in the promotion of citizenship practices, while simultaneously ensuring the conservation of cultural assets and their communication to society.

Within this context, heritage education becomes a fundamental instrument for bringing the population closer to its architectural, artistic, and environmental legacy, mobilizing processes of perception, sensitivity, reflection, and critical appropriation of cultural assets. Heritage education works with the purpose of stimulating experiences that can form the basis for the conservation of historical-cultural heritage and the environment, recovering the histories of cultures that were part of the dynamics of different environments (Moraes, 2005, as cited in Santos; Souza, 2011, p. 80).

Over the past decades, discussions on the environment have increasingly incorporated interdisciplinary and contextualized approaches, broadening the understanding of the relationships between society and nature. In parallel, museums and cultural spaces have gained growing relevance as sites of preservation, memory, identity, and dialogue between heritage and environment, also acting as institutions that produce knowledge and provide training for diverse audiences (Wanzeller et al., 2019).

In Brazil, and particularly in the Amazon region, the history of museums linked to the preservation of cultural assets dates back to the colonial period, gained momentum with the arrival of the Portuguese court, and became consolidated from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. However, many Amazonian

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

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museums still face challenges in keeping pace with social, technological, and environmental transformations, lacking professional staff specialized in Museology and Heritage, which has repercussions for the quality of cultural mediation and educational actions.

In the Amazon, and particularly in Belém, museums face the challenge of articulating heritage preservation, educational function, and sensitivity to the region's specific social and environmental characteristics. Many of these spaces still face structural limitations and a shortage of specialized professionals, which directly affects the cultural mediation and educational actions developed for the public.

Given this context, this article analyzes MABE as a museological space in which architecture, heritage education, and sustainability are articulated through the cultural mediation practices carried out in permanent and temporary exhibitions. It investigates the architectural and stylistic characteristics of the Antônio Lemos Palace; its insertion into Belém's historic urban fabric; and the mediation strategies that bring architecture closer to the museological experience, with particular attention to visits conducted with school groups.

The study seeks to understand to what extent cultural mediation at MABE contributes to the appreciation of cultural and environmental heritage in the Amazonian context, and which elements of museum pedagogy showed greater potential for participation and meaning-making in audience formation, in the situations observed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 History of the Art Museum of Belém (MABE) and the Antônio Lemos Palace

The building that houses MABE, the Antônio Lemos Palace, is a product of the rubber boom, a period of intense economic expansion in the Amazon during the second half of the nineteenth century. Begun in 1860 and inaugurated in 1885, the palace was built to house the Municipal Intendancy of Belém, and became popularly

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

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known as the "Blue Palace" (*Palacete Azul*) due to the color of its façades (Figure 1). Only in the 1950s did it come to be called the Antônio Lemos Palace, in honor of the intendant responsible for extensive urban renewal and modernization efforts in the city between 1897 and 1911.

Figure 1: Partial view of the Art Museum of Belém (MABE).



Source: Bassalo (2008).

Located in the historic center of Belém, the building faces Dom Pedro II Square, with its rear facing Felipe Patroni Square, amid other buildings linked to the state Judiciary and Legislature. Its style, identified as "Brazilian imperial," falls within late neoclassicism, featuring a symmetrical façade, Tuscan columns, triangular pediments, and restrained ornamentation.

Inside, notable features include staircases made of lioz marble, two internal courtyards, and large halls, configuring spaces that combine monumentality with administrative functionality (Figure 2).

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Figure 2: View of the staircases and internal courtyard of the Art Museum of Belém do Pará



Source: Research data (2019).

Throughout its history, the Antônio Lemos Palace housed different functions, including the three municipal branches of government, undergoing renovations that in many instances altered original features. By the 1990s, the building was in precarious condition, leading the Municipality of Belém to undertake a restoration project with support from the Banco do Brasil Foundation. MABE was established in 1991 as a department of the Cultural Foundation of the Municipality of Belém (FUMBEL) and inaugurated in 1994, following the completion of the restoration (FUMBEL, 1994; Britto, 2009).

The restoration project, begun in 1989, mobilized a technical team from the Municipality and external consultants, combining architectural conservation efforts with the adaptation of the building for museological and cultural leisure use. Bassalo (2008) notes that the Antônio Lemos Palace, in neoclassical style, constitutes one of the most sumptuous examples of the architecture of the second half of the nineteenth century in Belém, recognized as protected heritage at the federal, state, and municipal levels.

The core of MABE's collection originates from the former Municipal Pinacoteca and the Museum of the City of Belém, bringing together an expressive body of works by local, national, and foreign artists spanning primarily the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. It includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, and applied arts in furniture, crystal, glass, and porcelain, in addition to a growing

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contemporary art collection and specialized bibliography on art, memory, and heritage (Bassalo, 2008; FUMBEL, 1994).

Decorative elements associated with the Art Nouveau repertoire are strikingly present in the hydraulic tile floors, ornamented with wave-like patterns and interlacing lines, giving the building's interior spaces a decorative character distinct from the sobriety of the neoclassical façade. It should be noted that the presence of these motifs in the flooring does not, on its own, allow the entire interior of the building to be characterized as an Art Nouveau work, since the architectural structure, spatial distribution, and other constructive elements of the palace remain affiliated with the neoclassical repertoire; this is therefore a stylistic palimpsest, rather than a single stylistic unity.

The maintenance of the palace's administrative function as the seat of the municipal government, combined with its museological use, makes it unique among the city's public buildings. According to Bassalo (2008), part of the building's interior flooring consists of tiles ornamented with wave-like and interlacing patterns associated with the Art Nouveau decorative repertoire (Figure 3).

Figure 3: View of the flooring in the central area of the Art Museum of Belém do Pará



Source: Research data (2019).

The documentation consulted in this study does not allow us to determine with precision whether these tiles are part of the palace's original design, completed in

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REMUNOM
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1885, or were incorporated during later renovations; this constitutes a documentary gap that should be explored in future architectural and historical-constructive surveys, based on primary sources, restoration project records, and documentation of interventions carried out on the building.

2.2 Museums, Heritage, Memory, and Mediation in the Amazon

Chagas and Nascimento (2008) point out that, from modernity to the contemporary scene, museums are characterized by their capacity for metamorphosis, adapting their functions and discourses to historical and social conditions, as well as by their mediating vocation between times, spaces, social groups, and diverse cultures. In this sense, museums can be metaphorically understood as "bridges" connecting imaginaries, narratives, and objects, articulating symbolic and material dimensions.

In the field of Brazilian museum policy, particularly from the 2000s onward, there has been a strengthening of legal instruments, such as the Museum Statute (Law No. 11,904/2009) and the creation of the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM), which consolidate guidelines for the management, preservation, and communication of collections. In the North region of Brazil, however, the shortage of professional museologists and the territorial dispersion of cultural facilities pose challenges to the effective implementation of these policies (COREM – 6th Region, 2002).

In the state of Pará, the growing number of museums throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries — including the Museum of Image and Sound (MIS), the Museum of the Federal University of Pará (MUFPA), the Museum of the State of Pará (MEP), the Círio Museum, MABE itself, and other institutions integrated into the Integrated System of Museums and Memorials of the State Secretariat of Culture — reveals an expansion of spaces dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, many of these spaces are still building their

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educational vocation in dialogue with local demands, structural shortcomings, and the specificities of the Amazonian reality.

In this context, mediation should not be understood merely as the transmission of information, but as a relational practice capable of producing meaning, stimulating critical interpretation, and bringing visitors closer to material and symbolic heritage.

At MABE, cultural mediation extends beyond the interpretation of displayed works to incorporate architecture as an object of discourse. Educational practices use the building as material evidence through which to address: (a) the influence of Italian neoclassicism and nineteenth-century revivalism on urban form; (b) transformations in use over time; and (c) the importance of preserving historic buildings as a strategy for cultural and environmental sustainability.

2.3 Neoclassical Architecture, Urban Identity, and Sustainability

Neoclassicism, widespread in Brazil throughout the nineteenth century, revives principles of symmetry, proportion, and sobriety derived from the Greco-Roman tradition, often associated with Enlightenment ideals of rationality, order, and progress (Murray, 1965; Duarte et al., 2022). In the case of the Antônio Lemos Palace, these principles are manifested in the façade's composition, the hierarchy of internal spaces, and the volumetric relationship with its surroundings, making it a representative example of the public architecture of the period.

Studies on Brazilian neoclassical architectural heritage, such as that by Duarte et al. (2022) on the Casa de Frontaria Azulejada, reveal the recurrence of a "shared language" among public buildings in different cities, characterized by symmetrical façades, colonnades, pediments, and the use of noble materials. In Belém, this language intertwines with Art Nouveau decorative elements in flooring and furniture, composing a stylistic palimpsest that reflects the cultural dynamism of the rubber boom era.

It is important to distinguish, within the scope of this study, different dimensions of sustainability as applied to the built heritage. Cultural sustainability refers to the

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preservation of memory, identity, and symbolic values associated with the building. Urban sustainability relates to the maintenance of the city's historic fabric and landscape, avoiding the loss of character of the built surroundings. Environmental sustainability, in the strict sense, involves measurable impacts, such as energy consumption, climatic performance, and the life cycle of the materials used in construction and restoration. The present study focuses predominantly on the first two dimensions — cultural and urban — since the measurement of environmental impacts was not the object of this research.

The specialized literature on adaptive reuse indicates that the restoration and reuse of existing buildings has the potential to reduce environmental impacts associated with new construction and to avoid the waste of energy embodied in existing materials, in addition to contributing to the maintenance of identity references in the urban landscape. These benefits, however, are presented here as theoretical foundations widely discussed in the field of heritage conservation, and not as results measured in the case of MABE, since this study did not carry out a life-cycle assessment, an energy consumption survey, or an analysis of the building's climatic performance. In the Amazonian context, where climatic and socio-environmental issues are central, the conservation of MABE exemplifies, from a qualitative standpoint, how architectural preservation policies can engage with the appreciation of cultural and natural environments, even though empirical evidence of specific environmental benefits remains an agenda for future research.

Belém's equatorial climate, characterized by high relative humidity and intense rainfall for much of the year, poses specific challenges to the conservation of historic buildings in the Amazon region, such as accelerated deterioration of surface finishes, the need for constant maintenance of drainage and roofing systems, and particular attention to natural ventilation in publicly used spaces. Although the technical characterization of the Antônio Lemos Palace's climatic performance was not the object of this research, it is acknowledged that such environmental conditions form part of the broader context within which the building's conservation takes place,

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constituting a relevant agenda for future technical studies in architecture and heritage conservation in the Amazon.

3. Methodology

Regarding its methodological procedure, the research is classified as exploratory, seeking to develop, clarify, and refine concepts and ideas associated with the relationship between architecture, heritage education, sustainability, and cultural mediation in museums (Gil, 2014). This is a qualitative case study of exploratory character, employing participant observation, since the first author acted simultaneously as a cultural mediator and researcher in the educational activities analyzed, accumulating the roles of mediator, observer, and interpreter of the data collected.

This research was conducted in 2019, within the scope of educational activities of a non-experimental nature, and was not submitted to a research ethics committee. No informed consent documents were formalized with the legal guardians of the underage students, nor was an assent form obtained from the students themselves, nor was specific formal authorization secured for the use of images in scientific publication. This absence of formal documentation constitutes a relevant limitation of the study, acknowledged by the authors, and was taken into account in the decision to remove the photographs that would allow the identification of participants. For future research involving school groups, prior submission to a research ethics committee is recommended, together with the formalization of consent and assent, in accordance with the guidelines currently in force for research involving human subjects.

The methodological procedures comprise three main axes.

3.1 Bibliographic and Documentary Review

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Specialized literature on Museology, Cultural Heritage, Art History, and Architecture was surveyed, with particular attention to works on neoclassicism, Art Nouveau in Belém, cultural mediation, and museum education (Bassalo, 2008; Britto, 2009; Grinspum, 2014; Bizerra et al., 2008; Martins, 2005; Pinto, 2012). Institutional documents from FUMBEL, as well as reports and dissertations on MABE and heritage policy in Belém, were also consulted.

3.2 Field Research at MABE

Systematic observation of the museum's facilities was conducted, with photographic records of façades, staircases, internal courtyards, hydraulic-tile floors, and exhibition spaces, integrating architectural analysis with museological interpretation. Mediated visits directed at school groups were followed, with attention to the mediator's role, the discursive strategies employed, and how architecture was incorporated into the educational narrative. The first author also developed mediation activities with high school students, including closing dynamics for the visits.

Field observations were recorded by means of a field journal and photographic records of the activities, conducted by the first author. At the time of data collection, there was no formally structured observation guide, nor were recording categories defined a priori; the analytical categories presented in this article were constructed retrospectively, based on the review and systematization of the available records, in dialogue with the theoretical framework consulted. This retrospective reconstruction is acknowledged as a methodological limitation of the study, addressed in the Limitations section. Table 1 presents the number of participants and the characterization of the study corpus.

Table 1: Set of data and subjects effectively studied in this research.

Item	Description
Period of activity	2019 (exact month not systematically recorded at the time of data collection)
Institution of origin	Public and technical school in the metropolitan region of Belém
Number of classes	3
Approximate number of participants	Approximately 75 students (about 25 per class)

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Age group	High school (age group not precisely recorded)
Exhibition visited	Not systematically recorded
Duration of visits	Not systematically recorded
Type of mediation	Guided visit with closing dynamic

Source: Research data (2019).

The data presented in Table 1 reflect the information available in the research records; the absence of systematization for some fields at the time of data collection is acknowledged as a limitation of the study, discussed in the Limitations section.

The first author's dual position as mediator and researcher allowed privileged access to the museum's educational dynamics, but also implies a potential confirmatory bias in the interpretation of the data, insofar as the researcher was professionally involved in the very actions analyzed. To mitigate this risk, the field records were reviewed jointly with the other authors and co-authors of the research, seeking to distinguish description from interpretation in the notes and to cross-check the mediator-researcher's impressions against the photographic records and the theoretical framework consulted.

3.3 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Mediation Practices

The observations were recorded in a field journal by the first author, encompassing descriptions of the mediators' speech, the questions posed by students, the spatial arrangement of the groups, and reactions to specific architectural elements. The analytical categories (mediation centered on the artwork versus mediation centered on architecture; the relationship between physical space and visitor experience; the articulation between cultural and environmental heritage) emerged from the repeated reading of these records, in dialogue with the theoretical framework adopted, and were not defined a priori.

Field records were organized into analytical categories, such as: (a) mediation centered on artworks versus mediation centered on architecture; (b) the relationship between physical space, exhibition layout, and visitor experience; and (c) strategies for articulating cultural and environmental heritage. Empirical data were then articulated with the theoretical framework in order to identify the potentials and limits

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of the cultural mediation practices at MABE, particularly with regard to heritage education and sustainability.

The research does not aim to conduct a quantitative evaluation of audience numbers or impact, but rather to build an analytical understanding of the concrete practices observed, offering a foundation for subsequent studies with a broader scope.

This research was conducted in 2019, within the scope of educational activities of a non-experimental nature, and was not submitted to a research ethics committee. No informed consent documents were formalized with the legal guardians of the underage students, no assent form was obtained from the students themselves, no formal institutional authorization was secured from the participating school, nor was specific authorization obtained for the use of images in scientific publication. Given this absence of documentation, it was decided to remove from the manuscript the photographs that would allow the identification of the students participating in the activities, retaining only the textual account of the pedagogical dynamics developed. This documentary gap constitutes a relevant limitation of the study, also addressed in the Limitations section, and reinforces the recommendation that future research involving school groups be submitted in advance to a research ethics committee, with due formalization of consent, assent, and institutional authorization, in accordance with the guidelines currently in force for research involving human subjects.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Architecture of the Antônio Lemos Palace: Neoclassical Influences, Constructive Elements, and Relationship with the Environment

The architectural analysis of the Antônio Lemos Palace reveals strong adherence to neoclassical canons in the composition of the façade: rigorous symmetry, Tuscan columns distributed in a regular rhythm, triangular pediments, and restrained ornamentation. These features align with what Murray (1965) describes as a pursuit of harmony and order, associated with values of rationality and stability.

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Inside, the lioz-marble staircases, spacious halls, and internal courtyards organize the circulation flows that articulate the administrative and cultural functions. The hydraulic-tile floors, with their wave-like and interlacing motifs, evidence the presence of an Art Nouveau decorative repertoire, without this implying that the entire interior should be characterized in this style, creating a contrast between the neoclassical sobriety predominant in the building's structure and the decorative fluidity of these specific elements, as observed by Bassalo (2008).

From an environmental and urban standpoint, the building is situated in an area of intense historical and symbolic significance, surrounded by squares and public institutional buildings. The preservation of the palace and its adaptation for museological use exemplify sustainability practices linked to the reuse of existing buildings, namely: the reduction of environmental impacts by avoiding demolition and new construction; the appreciation of the historic urban fabric, maintaining landscape and identity references; and the promotion of cultural and educational use, expanding the building's social function beyond its administrative role.

By being incorporated into tourist and educational itineraries in the Cidade Velha district, MABE contributes to reshaping the neighborhood's use, historically marked by residential and commercial functions, toward a concentration of cultural and political institutions.

The coexistence of administrative and museological functions within the same building carries practical implications that deserve discussion. From the standpoint of public access, visitor circulation coexists with the flow of municipal staff and administrative routines, which may entail restrictions on visiting hours and limitations on access to certain areas of the palace, particularly those still occupied by municipal offices or departments.

In terms of conservation, continuous administrative use imposes additional challenges to the preservation of original elements, such as floors, staircases, and finishes, which are subject to a daily traffic flow that exceeds that typical of an exclusively museological space.

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REMUNOM
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Regarding exhibition setup, sharing the building with administrative activities may constrain the availability of halls and reduce museographic flexibility in the arrangement of the collection. From the standpoint of historical interpretation, however, the persistence of the palace's original administrative function preserves a trait of authenticity uncommon among museumified buildings, allowing visitors to experience the palace as a living space, still articulated to the power dynamics that gave rise to it, rather than merely as the static backdrop of a closed past.

This ambiguity between administrative and cultural use ultimately affects the social appropriation of the building by the local population, which historically associates the palace both with the seat of municipal power and, more recently, with a space of artistic and educational enjoyment, configuring a sense of belonging that is itself in transformation.

4.2 Cultural Mediation and Pedagogical Practices at MABE

The field research results show that cultural mediation at MABE occurs primarily through guided visits, in which the educational team acts as an interlocutor between the collection, the architecture, and the public. In line with Grinspum (2014), mediation is understood not as the mere transmission of information, but as a device for constructing narratives and activating sensitive and reflective experiences.

Educators adopt an approach that combines elements of curatorship, art history, and museum pedagogy, employing strategies such as contextualized presentation of the artworks and the building, articulating the history of the rubber boom, Belém's modernization processes, and the palace's transformation into a museum; exploration of the arrangement of works within the rooms and their relationship to the architectural space, highlighting how the exhibition narrative relies on the building's materiality; and posing open-ended questions to the public, encouraging personal readings of the works and the space, in line with Martins (2005), who defines mediation as a sensitive encounter.

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
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In the mediated visits observed, particularly with school groups, the mediator is presented as the "voice of the institution" (Bizerra et al., 2008), responsible for facilitating comprehension of exhibition content, giving visibility to the museum's social function, and fostering connections between students' everyday lives and the themes addressed in the exhibitions.

The cultural mediation practices adopted in this research included closing dynamics that required participants to synthesize and interpret their experience, such as assigning a title to the visited exhibition, choosing words to represent the experience, and producing written or visual records. These dynamics function as moments of collective reflection, encouraging students to express themselves and take a stance in relation to the collection and the space.

The research conducted at MABE clearly demonstrates this engagement and the importance and necessity of the mediator within the museum, since it is through mediators that visitors come to know not only the content of the museum, but also its organization, its architecture, and its social function.

Being a source of questioning in the face of the artwork is the role of the mediator; after all, several terms can be understood as synonyms for the act of mediating: to provoke, expand, awaken, exchange, instigate, motivate/stimulate, facilitate/favor, enrich, develop, create, pass on, guide, diagnose, conduct/lead, support, actualize, assist, show, objectify, supply, articulate, incorporate, inform (Martins, 2005).

In the research conducted at MABE, this interface between mediation, creation, and interpretation was clearly identified. The main purpose of the actions developed was to offer conditions for each participant to construct their own meanings, share perceptions, and expand collective dialogue around the works and the museological space. This seems to correspond to the very intention embedded in the artist's own words, which implicate us in the work itself.

4.3 Heritage Education, Sustainability, and Audience Formation

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
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The articulation between architecture and cultural mediation at MABE reveals significant potential for heritage education. By highlighting that the palace itself is an "object" of the museum, mediating actions broaden visitors' understanding of architectural heritage and its importance in constructing urban memory.

The discourses of the mediating actions observed emphasize the need to preserve historic buildings as a means of maintaining identity references; the relevance of restoring and adapting buildings as a practice aligned with sustainability, insofar as it reuses existing structures; and the connection between the city's history, the rubber boom, and the artistic movements present in the collection, such as Art Nouveau.

From the standpoint of museum pedagogy, the results indicate that ongoing training for educators is an essential condition for integrating concepts of heritage, sustainability, and art in an articulated manner, in dialogue with diverse audiences; that the mediations which showed greater potential for participation and meaning-making, in the situations observed, were those that avoided lengthy oral presentations and extensive exhibition texts, favoring the construction of meaning through dialogue with visitors and interactive practices; and that the presence of school groups, accompanied by teachers, requires coordination between the school's pedagogical planning and the museum's educational proposal.

In line with Cazelli et al. (2003), it should be noted that, although exhibitions cannot rely exclusively on mediating actions to be understood, human mediation is one of the most powerful ways to bring the public closer to elaborated scientific and artistic knowledge, particularly in contexts where prior familiarity with art and heritage is limited.

Within the museological space, the mediator, although guided by the exhibition's proposal and the general training of the art-education team, always makes transformations and appropriations of the proposals directed at the receiver, particularly when dealing with images in mediation contexts with school groups. In

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
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the work carried out at MABE, this transformative dimension of mediation was clearly observed.

The task consisted of providing the means for each participant engaged in a mediating action to create, so that their creation would stimulate the participation of others, thereby building dialogues that broadened points of view and generated new meanings, as well as opening new channels of reception. Perhaps this stimulus toward creation and experimentation resonates with the artist's own intention of framing their work as a space for questioning and reinvention. One such pedagogical dynamic was carried out with three classes of high school students from a technical school in the metropolitan region of Belém do Pará, totaling approximately 75 students.

The educational work carried out at MABE included mediation strategies that involved, at the end of each visit, dynamic proposals aimed at synthesizing thoughts or ideas and prompting new reflections.

5. Conclusion

The study demonstrated that, at MABE, the architecture of the Antônio Lemos Palace is not limited to the function of physical support, constituting instead a fundamental element of the museological experience and of heritage education in Belém. The combination of neoclassical language, decorative elements associated with the Art Nouveau repertoire, and its location within the historic center gives the building a reference role in the urban landscape, whose preservation is closely linked to contemporary concerns with sustainability and memory. When incorporated into mediation practices, this architecture broadens visitors' understanding of urban memory, cultural preservation, and sustainability, consolidating the museum as a formative space in which cultural mediation articulates art, heritage, and the environment.

The mediating practices developed at MABE suggest that the integration of architecture, collection, and public contributes significantly to the potential of heritage

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
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education, in the situations observed. By recognizing the building as a cultural asset and a teaching resource, mediators broaden the scope of meaning of the visits, fostering reflection on history, identity, and environmental conservation in the Amazonian context.

It is concluded that heritage education in art museums such as MABE is strengthened when architecture is explicitly incorporated into mediation itineraries, not merely as a backdrop, but as an object of historical and aesthetic interpretation. Likewise, sustainability, understood in a broad sense, includes the preservation of historic buildings, their adaptation to contemporary uses, and the promotion of educational practices aimed at conserving cultural and natural assets.

In this process, the planning of visits and dialogue with educational institutions prove to be relevant conditions for the museum to function as a formative space and a locus for building heritage consciousness. Mediator qualification proved, in the observations conducted, to be a factor associated with the quality of mediation, even though the training profile and professional development trajectory of MABE's educational team were not systematically surveyed in this research, constituting a gap to be explored in future studies.

This study presents limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results and defining future research agendas. First, this is a case study confined to a single museological institution, which restricts the generalization of the observations to other museums in the Amazon region or to the field of heritage education more broadly. Second, the field data were collected in 2019, and the mediation practices described here correspond to that specific period, and cannot be automatically attributed to the current conditions of MABE, since the institution may have undergone changes in its staff, exhibition programming, or educational strategies since then.

A third limitation stems from the absence of longitudinal follow-up of participants; it was not possible to verify whether the reflections and interpretations produced during the mediated visits translated into lasting changes in perception or behavior with regard to cultural and environmental heritage. Related to this limitation

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
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is the absence of structured interviews or formal evaluation instruments applied to visitors, which restricts the research to a qualitative record based largely on the mediator-researcher's observation, without systematic triangulation with the perspective expressed directly by the students themselves.

A fourth limitation, already mentioned in the Methodology section, concerns the first author's direct involvement in the very mediation activities analyzed, which, despite the strategies adopted to mitigate confirmatory bias, does not entirely eliminate the researcher's implication in the phenomenon studied. Finally, it should be noted that this study neither aimed at, nor had the methodological instruments to, quantitatively measure the environmental impact of preserving the Antônio Lemos Palace — such as energy consumption, climatic performance, or life-cycle assessment of materials — nor to evaluate, in the strict sense, the pedagogical effectiveness of the mediation strategies observed.

The environmental and educational benefits discussed throughout this article should therefore be understood as potentials identified through the literature and qualitative observation, rather than as empirically measured results. These gaps point to future research agendas, which may include comparative studies across museums, longitudinal monitoring of audiences, the application of formal evaluation instruments with visitors, and technical surveys of the building's environmental performance.

For MABE and other museums in the Amazon, it is recommended that continuing education programs for mediators be strengthened, that educational materials linking architecture, art, and the environment be developed, and that partnerships with schools, universities, and social movements engaged with heritage and sustainability be expanded.

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REMUNOM
ISSN 2178-6925

Received: 10/07/2026 - **Accepted:** 11/08/2026
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