

Educational Experiences during the “Special Period” (ca.1990) in Cuba

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Arts Education in Cuba

- Revolutionary Period
 - Expansion of artistic education and prioritization from 1961
 - Incorporation of music, dance and visual arts disciplines in primary education (1975)
 - Creation of the Escuela Nacional de Arte System ENA (National Schools of Arts) 1962 – Music, Visual Arts, Theatre, Ballet, Dance, Circus
 - Creation of Specialized Artistic Elementary System (Vocational Schools)

ISA – Instituto Superior de Arte University of the Arts

- Created in 1976 for three disciplines: music, visual arts, and theatre. It recently added Media Arts (FAMCA) and four units outside Havana

Specialized Artistic Education

Music Example

- VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS - Music Children enter Vocational Music Schools between ages 6-10 and complete K 1-9. Schools are available at the province (state) level.
- NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF ART - After a competitive process, selected students move to the National Schools of Art to complete professional training and grades K 10-12. Schools are available only at the regional level.
- UNIVERSITY - After a competitive process, selected students are admitted at ISA, University of the Arts, the only institution of higher education in the arts in Cuba.

Cuban Curricula and Soviet Support (Music)

- Musical educational model was copied and supported by and large by the Soviet Union.
- The music curricula favored the formation of trained musicians in classical and the Western European tradition.
- Disciplines such as jazz, afro-Cuban, or traditional Cuban music were not particularly thought as strong within the music curricula, but as a co-curricular or extra-curricular activity.

Special Period – Periodo Especial of 1990

- The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and the toughening of the American Embargo (Torricelli and Helms-Burton law) brought very negative economic consequences.

Effects for the Arts During the Special Period

- Decreased resources for the arts made for increased creativity
- Artistic diaspora and artistic migration becomes relevant and intentional
- Use of artistic skills to seek personal and national economic relief: support to Afro-Cuban and traditional Cuban influences, export of artistic talent and artistic products



Thank you!