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!