

HISTORY IN ART

Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida 1863–1923

20 July 2022

1863 – Joaquín Sorolla is born in Valencia.

1865 – Both his parents die of cholera and he is adopted by his mother's sister and husband.

1873 – He shows an early talent for art and he is soon sent for instruction by a variety of teachers.

1880 – Begins exhibiting his paintings including at the Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes in Madrid. Studies great works at the Prado.

1881 – Is accepted by the Academy of Fine Arts in his native Valencia.

1884 – Exhibits a large-scale history painting depicting the uprising against the French in Madrid on 2 May 1808, a subject that his compatriot Goya also painted. It is later acquired by the Spanish government.

1885 – Travels to Rome on a grant to study painting. Also spends time in Paris, where he sees the work of contemporary artists. Two that particularly impress him are the Naturalist Jules Bastien-Lepage and the German Realist artist Adolph Menzel.

1888 – Marries Clotilde Garcia del Castillo in Valencia. In future years, they have three children.

1890 – They move to Madrid where Sorolla produces a number of artworks that in the following years are exhibited in international exhibitions not only in Madrid but also in other European cities, and even in Buenos Aires. He begins to receive many portrait commissions.

1895 – Despite living in Madrid, he returns frequently to his birthplace, Valencia, and paints many scenes of people by the sea, including those working in the fishing industry. He adopts the approach of the French Impressionists, painting en plein air to get the light conditions accurately. His painting *Return from Fishing* is exhibited at the Paris Salon and subsequently purchased by the French state, a great accolade for a non-French artist.

1900 – Wins a medal of honour at the Exposition Universelle in Paris with his painting *Sad Inheritance*, which also wins a medal at the national exhibition in Madrid. In the new century, he continues painting works on the seashore but is now more focused on people enjoying themselves rather than working.

1908 – The Grafton Galleries in London hold an exhibition of his works and a banquet is held at the Royal Academy in his honour.

1909 – He is invited by the Hispanic Society of America to stage an exhibition in New York and it is a huge success. He also has the opportunity to show his work in further exhibitions in Mexico and Latin America.

1911 – Begins a series of works called *Visions of Spain* commissioned by the Hispanic Society.

1915 – Experiences health problems which trouble him for the rest of his life.

1920 – Suffers a serious stroke while painting and is never able to paint again.

1923 – Sorolla dies.