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Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida
En las rocas. Jávea, Summer 1905

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JOAQUÍN SOROLLA Y BASTIDA

(Valencia 1863 – Madrid 1923)

EN LAS ROCAS. JÁVEA, SUMMER 1905

Signed in the lower left-hand corner

"J. Sorolla Bastida / 1905"

Oil on canvas

63 x 93,5 cm; 24 13/16 x 36 13/16 in.

Provenance

Collection of Juan Antonio Samaranch Torelló, Barcelona;

Private collection, Barcelona.

Literature

B. Pons-Sorolla, *Joaquín Sorolla: Vida y Obra*, Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico Madrid 2001, p. 230, no. 123.

Exhibition History

Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, *Exposition Sorolla y Bastida*, 12 June - 10 July 1906, no. 44 (as 'Dans les rochers, Jáver').

Barcelona, Sala Parés, *Exposición de homenaje al pintor Joaquín Sorolla, 1863–1923, con motivo del cincuentenario de su muerte*, 10 - 22 March 1973, no. 14.

Madrid, Fundación Cultural MAPFRE Vida, *A la playa. El mar como tema de la modernidad en la pintura española, 1870–1936*, 14 November 2000 - 21 January 2001, pp. 178–179 (as "A la playa").

Madrid, Palacio Real, *Sorolla. A través de la luz*, 17 February – 30 June 2023 (extended to 24 September 2023), cat. 18.

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We would like to thank Blanca Pons-Sorolla for the information provided for the cataloguing of the above artwork.

During the prolific summer of 1905 in Jávea, Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida brought to completion thirty paintings of medium and large size and realized many more sketches.¹ This coastal town between Alicante and Valencia proved to be a great source of inspiration for the artist and marked a most fertile moment for the development of his technique, which encouraged a grandiose production, both in number and in quality. The crystalline waters and golden rocky shores of Jávea welcomed the entrance to the colourist's palette of vivid tones of red and orange and supported Sorolla's growth in the study of light. These works did not witness an increase in the number of colours employed as compared to his previous production; rather, Sorolla expanded the number of nuances of the same colour and opted for stronger contrasts. The artist's extraordinary ability to capture and retain images of daily life and their related emotions is skilfully released and captured on canvas through swift brushstrokes. Sorolla himself shared his dedication to a rapid style of painting of *en plein air* subjects, which attempts to chase the ever-changing state of the surrounding natural environment and reproduce it through juxtapositions of colour on canvas. In the artist's own words:

It would be impossible for me to paint slowly in the open air, even if I wanted to... There is nothing motionless in what surrounds us. The sea ripples at every instant; the cloud changes shape as it shifts position; the rope hanging from that boat sways gently; that boy jumps; those little trees bend their branches and lift them again... But even if everything were petrified and still, it would be enough for the sun to move—which it does constantly—to give things a different appearance... One must paint quickly, for how much is lost—fleeting things that can never be found again!²

Nestled in the natural context of *En las rocas. Jávea*, Sorolla depicts the members of his family. Among them is also the little Joaquín, portrayed while swimming. This *oeuvre* appears reproduced in one of the panoramic views of the Grand Salon of the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris during the Sorolla exhibition in 1906 (AFMS 81315).

¹ B. Pons-Sorolla, *Joaquín Sorolla: Vida y Obra*, Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico Madrid 2001, 228.

² Quoted by Bernardino de Pantorba. See B. Pons-Sorolla, *Joaquín Sorolla: Vida y Obra*, Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico Madrid 2001, 230.

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