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Joaquín Sorolla
(Valencia 1863 – Madrid 1923)

Boats Stranded on the Beach

ca. 1900

oil on canvas, grains of sand

18 x 30 cm.;

7 1/8 x 11 7/8 in.

Provenance

Private collection, Barcelona.

Literature

Blanca Pons-Sorolla, *Sorolla. Catálogo razonado. Colección de pinturas del Museo Sorolla*, Madrid, El Viso, 2019, cat. no. BPS 4496.

Francisco Pons-Sorolla, *Sorolla: his Painting and his Family*. in Edmund Peel (Ed.), *The Painter. Joaquín Sorolla*, London, Philip Wilson Publishers, 1989.

Luis Díez, José y Barón, Javier, *Joaquín Sorolla 1863-1923*. Museo del Prado, Madrid, 2009, pg. 385

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Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida is one of Spain's leading artists in the last decades of the 19th century, whose style has often been defined as a variant of Impressionism. He was born on February 27, 1863 and at age two he and his little sister were orphaned. As he showed an early talent for drawing and painting, he was admitted to the Academy of San Carlos in Valencia at age fifteen. In January 1885, he left for Rome, a decision that would be decisive for the further development of his work. His teachers included Francisco Pradilla (1848-1921), José Villegas (1844-1921) and his countryman Emilio Sala (1850-1910), three consecrated masters in painting of academic tradition. The Spanish painter was impressed by the works of realist artists such as Adolf Menzel and Jules Bastien-Lepage, among others. In April of the same year, he travelled to Paris with his friend and later adviser Pedro Gil Moreno de Mora (1860-1930). In this first experience in France, Sorolla was fascinated with the work of Bastien Lepage, which especially influenced his way of understanding figures in the open air.

After his stay abroad, he and his wife Clotilde García decided to move to Madrid in 1890. Until 1900, Sorolla participated in salons and collective exhibitions all over Europe. His style slowly but steadily changed into what today is defined as post-impressionist luminist. In fact, he exhibited in Paris in 1906 at the Galeries Georges Petit, where the public was introduced to an original personality, inherently different from the Impressionists. After this success, the painter continued to send his works to other European capitals, such as Berlin and London, which contributed to his newfound fame. Soon his career would reach a higher peak when he exhibited in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Buffalo and

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Boston in 1909, with immense success, which led to him painting a portrait of President Taft in Washington DC.

During most of his life, Sorolla painted for two long sessions a day: in the morning and in the afternoon, usually in the clarity of natural light outdoors. The artist developed an extraordinary fluency of technique, which is attested to by over 4,000 paintings and sketches in oil or watercolour and around 8,000 drawings. As Francisco Pons Sorolla, Director of the Sorolla Museum until 1973 and the artist's grandson, claims: "He had the necessary sensuality with which to capture the life and beauty of the world around him. His aspiration was to reproduce in his paintings all that he was capable of seeing and loving."¹

In the summer of 1908, Sorolla settled in Valencia with his family. During that year he painted the most beautiful beach scenes of his long artistic career. However, he had difficulty in painting due to the frequent storms that soiled the colour of the sea². These beach scenes, probably the most characteristic theme of the Valencian painter, featured children and young people on the seashore, always exalting an atmosphere of happiness and peacefulness, highlighting the colour of the Mediterranean coasts.

¹ Pons Sorolla, Francisco. "Sorolla: his Painting and his Family", in Edmund Peel (Ed.), *The Painter. Joaquín Sorolla*, London, Philip Wilson Publishers, 1989.

² Luis Díez, José y Barón, Javier (2009): "Joaquín Sorolla 1863-1923", Museo del Prado, Madrid, pg. 385.