2. MONUMENT TO JOAQUÍN SOROLLA

TOURIST ROUTE AROUND CABANYAL-EL CANYAMELAR-CAP DE FRANÇA

GENERAL MAP OF THE ROUTE



SITUATION OF THE TOURIST RESOURCE





Joaquin Sorolla (1863-1923) painter, writer and sculptor, contemporary of Blasco Ibáñez (1867-1928) and Mariano Benlliure (1862-1927), favourite sons of Valencia, were linked by artistic activity and strong ties of friendship, also united by their ideological commitment to the society of the time. All three were linked to the Poblados Marítimos.

Sorolla carried out a large part of his pictorial activity depicting scenes of maritime València. Proof of this is that recently, Professor Josep Vicent Boira has discovered the location of his studio in Eugenia Viñes street, near the Pòsit Progrés de Pescadors.

In accordance with the painter's wishes, a monument to Sorolla was built on the beach of El Cabanyal near the Casa dels Bous and the Pósit Progrés de Pescadors, incorporating the marble bust donated a year earlier by the sculptor Mariano Benlliure. It was promoted by the Circle of Fine Arts and the València City Council, which in 1925 commissioned the architect Francisco Mora, author, among other buildings, of the Mercado de Colón, the Palacio de la Exposición and the Casa Consistorial itself.

On 7 March 1932, the foundation stone was laid for the sculptural ensemble in his memory on the Malvarrosa beach, where the master had painted so admirably. It consisted of a hemicycle of 10 Tuscan columns on a pedestal of white stone and oak, with access via ramps and light stairs with a few steps, joined by an entablature with the inscription "Valencia to Sorolla", all with views of the Mediterranean Sea.

The colonnade came from purchases made by Sorolla for the construction of a Palace of Fine Arts, planned in 1919 by Goerlich in Llano del Remedio, which was never built for lack of resources. It was finally inaugurated on 31 December 1933 between the former Termas Victoria and the Asilo de Nuestra Señora del Carmen, with Sorolla's son Mariano Benlliure, the Valencian Minister of Industry and Trade Ricardo Samper, the Mayor of Valencia, the architects Mora and Goerlich and a large audience in attendance. A decade after his death, the Valencian people finally settled their debt with one of their most illustrious sons.

The flood of 1957 and poor conservation devastated the complex, which remained in ruins for several years.

In 1963 the monument was moved to the Plaza de la Armada Española, now the Plaza de la Semana Santa Marinera, but only the bust was kept. However, the current location lacks a direct connection with the sea, which is the key to evoking and remembering both the figure of Joaquín Sorolla and his painting.

In 1974, the present monument was improved with gardens, fountains, lighting and a pool, and the frame of the main door of the building demolished at the end of the 1960s and designed by the architect Mora, which used to be the headquarters of the Banco Hispano Americano, now Banco de Santander, in Calle de las Barcas, was also added. At Goerlich's request, this façade was dismantled and relocated to the part behind the bust of Sorolla in order to give the monumental ensemble greater importance. The dedication reads: "JOAQUIN SOROLLA BASTIDA 1863-1923 YEAR 1974".

After a boom period, the development of the railway diverted tourism to other northern coastal areas, leading to a progressive environmental and urban deterioration of the area. With the decline, the facilities for thermal cures in the Parthenon, which was not bombed, were closed. The spa finally closed its doors in 1993.

Between 2002 and 2005, a new luxury hotel with neoclassical lines was built, which has nothing to do with the iconic image of the old spa. The project, the work of the architects Nebot, Alfaro and Amorrortu, was born out of a desire to restore the area to its former splendour and, taking as a basis the architectural model of the pavilions that housed the old spa, the reconstruction of what was still standing was carried out. Today, only one of the temples, the swimming pools and the perimeter wall remain from the original complex.

PICTURES



Photo 1: The original monument Source: https://www.levante-emv.com/valencia/2023/01/09/monumento-sorolla-vuelta-cabanyal-80879768.html



Photo 2: Another image of the old situation of the monument. Source: https://valenciaplaza.com/el-pp-propone-reconstruir-el-monumento-a-sorolla-en-el-cabanyal



Photo 3: State of the monument after the flood of 1957. Source: https://www.levante-emv.com/valencia/2008/02/08/pspv-solicita-recupere-monumento-sorolla-13477413.html