

Antonio Solá

Antonio Solá Llansas (in Catalan Antoni Solà i Llansas) was a Spanish sculptor belonging to the neoclassical school.

He was born in Barcelona, Spain, on March 29, 1780, the fifth son of Antonio Solà, a cabinetmaker by profession, and Francesca Llansas. Although attracted by the drawing, he had to fight against the wish of his father who wanted to see him devote himself to trade and emigrate to America. Finally he managed to convince his father and he enrolled at twelve at the Free Drawing School, created in Barcelona by Junta de Comercio.



At 16, he entered the triennial general prizes competition of the Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts with a bas-relief, whose theme was *Lot recibe en la puerta de su casa a los Ángeles del Señor* (Lot receives at the door of his house the Angels of the Lord), and he won it. At the age of 18, he started working with Francisco Bover on the creation of various marble statues for a garden, working for him for two years without receiving any salary. In 1801, at the age of 21, he presented himself with a prize from the Junta de Comercio with a stay in Rome for four years to study sculpture, and won it. The Academy of San Fernando de Madrid, to which the other Spanish academies were subject, reserved the right to establish a second classification of works in the competitions for the scholarships of young artists. For this reason, all the works of the competition were sent to Madrid, and the Real Academia only approved the prize awarded to Antonio Solá.

When he was ready to leave for Rome, something unexpected arose. The Court chose Barcelona to celebrate the wedding of the Prince of Asturias (later Ferdinand VII of Spain) with a princess of Naples and the Crown Prince of Naples (later Francis I of Two Sicilies) with Isabella of Bourbon, Infanta from Spain. The Junta de Comercio on which Solá depended for his pension, forced him to stay and asked him to make various statues: two marble mermaids, to decorate rocks which served as a pedestal for a statue of Neptune (*Nereides of Casa Llotja from Mar*); two colossal portraits in bas-relief to place them at the frontispiece of the Casa del Consulado ; and a natural statue, which represents a Triton mounted on a sea horse, intended to decorate a fountain. After completing these orders and celebrating the wedding, Solá left Barcelona and arrived in Rome on May 3, 1803.

In 1808 he was briefly incarcerated, along with other Spanish artists, for refusing to recognize Joseph Bonaparte. A few years later, he made a statue of Meleagro for the 13th Duke of Alba, Carlos Miguel Fitz-James Stuart, now kept in the Madrid ducal residence, the Palacio de Liria. Among the other best-known works are the group of Daoíz and Velarde on the Plaza del Dos de Mayo in Madrid, and the Monumento a Cervantes, cast in bronze, which presides over the Plaza de las Cortes opposite the headquarters of the Congress of Deputies.

He practically worked the rest of his life in Rome where he died on June 10, 1861.

Selected works in Rome:

1835 Tomb of Félix de Aguirre. Montserrat Church in Rome .

1841: Tomb of San Juan Pignatelli. Rome.

1850: Autoretrato . Accademia di San Luca. Rome.

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