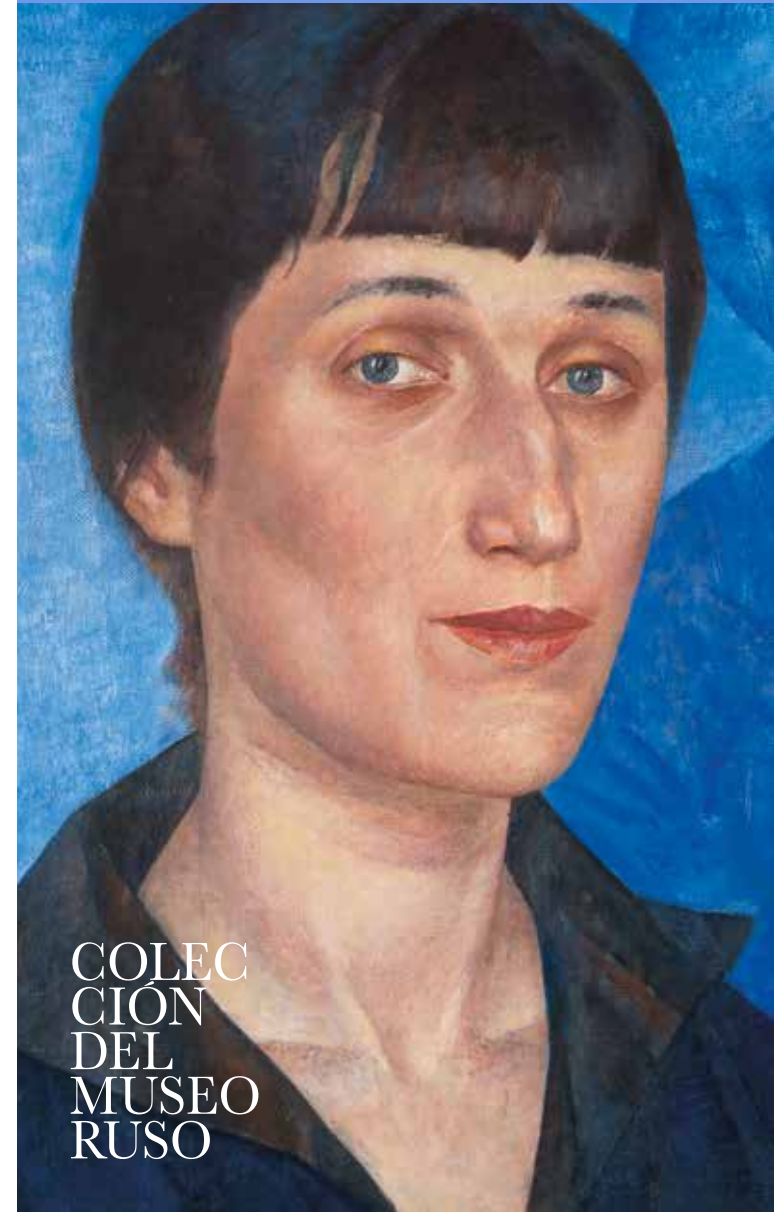




ANNA AKHMATOVA

POETRY AND LIFE

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The great 20th-century Russian poetess Anna Akhmatova (1889–1965) lived a rather long life. The trials that fell to Russia's lot in the 20th century directly affected both her destiny and poetic oeuvre.

Already famous in the early 1910s, Akhmatova attracted wide attention not only for her poetry. Her unusual and memorable appearance, attire and comportment led to a fashion trend of her own creation. It's no accident that in verses devoted to her by various poets we find not only veneration of her talent but also delight at her physical appearance. Naturally, Akhmatova attracted the attention of



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artists as well. She was drawn, painted and sculpted by many, including such outstanding figures as Amedeo Modigliani, Nathan Altman and Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin.

Akhmatova both loved and was beloved by others, and the men in her life experienced just as she did all the ordeals of Russian existence in the 20th century. Poet and ethnographer Nikolay Gumilyov (1886–1921) was shot in 1921. Avant-garde composer Arthur Lourie (1891–1966) was forced to emigrate from the land of Soviets in 1922. Nikolai Punin (1888–1953), a wellknown art historian and critic, was imprisoned twice and died in confinement. Akhmatova's son Lev (1912–1992), later to become a well-known ethnologist, was also twice imprisoned.

Akhmatova wasn't indifferent to the fates of her current and former husbands. She spent hours standing in prison queues to hand them messages or a little food to eat. Akhmatova's verses reflect all her tears and grief for each innocent victim. A few years before her death, Akhmatova met and befriended the young poet Joseph Brodsky (1940–1996). When Brodsky was arrested, she was tormented by the thought that their friendship had harmed him. "They'll say he's anti-Soviet because Akhmatova educated him," she said.

When Brodsky was freed on 25 September 1965, she wrote in her diary: "This is a great and heartwarming joy." Brodsky, who left the USSR in 1972, always recalled Akhmatova and was thought to have named his daughter Anna after her.

Gathered together in this small exhibition in Malaga are the best lifetime portraits of Anna Akhmatova and the men who surrounded her created by such outstanding artists of the first half of the 20th century as Nathan Altman, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, Pyotr Miturich and Kazimir Malevich. Also on display are photographs and verses by Akhmatova and other poets of her era.



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