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Joseph Brodsky Museum Set to Open in St. Petersburg

By Daniel Kozin

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The museum, in Brodsky's old communal apartment, will open to the public in May.



brodskymuseum.com

ST. PETERSBURG — After years of negotiations and fundraising efforts, the Joseph Brodsky Museum is finally set to open in the poet's hometown.

The memorial museum will be housed in the *kommunalka*, or communal apartment, at 24 Liteiny Prospekt where the Nobel laureate lived with his parents before his forced emigration in 1972.

The museum's official opening is scheduled for May 24, the poet's birthday. Until then, it will host limited excursions and events while the renovation work is completed.

The opening was stalled for years because the current residents of the communal apartment refused to sell. With the help of sponsors, organizers were eventually able to purchase four of

the five rooms of the apartment and bought an adjacent flat to make room for the museum.

Brodsky wrote about his experiences in the cramped communal residence for The New York Review of Books in a 1986 essay titled “In a Room and a Half.”

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The apartment has undergone extensive restoration work in partnership with the Anna Akhmatova museum, with the old walls, ceiling, stucco work and creaky floorboards of Brodsky’s time all brought back to life.

Akhmatova was Brodsky’s mentor and friend, and until the new museum opens, the Akhmatova museum has been housing a reconstruction of the poet’s study in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where he lived for many years while teaching at Mount Holyoke College.

Brodsky is considered to be one of the most brilliant Russian poets of the 20th century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987.

While in the Soviet Union, he was denounced in a notorious show trial, which sparked an international campaign of support by literary figures and eventually resulted in a commuted sentence. He was exiled to the far north for two years and then returned to Leningrad until his emigration.

Brodsky never returned to the Soviet Union or saw his parents again.

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