

Собрание произведений Врубеля в Третьяковской галерее пополнилось ранее неизвестным портретом Насти Врубель, сестры художника, приобретенным у ее внучки. Передававшийся по материнской линии портрет всегда хранился в семье, ранее он не публиковался.

Упоминание о портрете Насти существует в письме отца Врубеля к дочери Анне, сестре и близкому другу художника, от 19 апреля 1894 года. Весной 1894 года Врубель по просьбе С.И.Мамонтова сопровождал его сына Сергея в Италию на лечение. Обратный путь по морю, из Генуи через Сицилию, Грецию и Константинополь, привел художника в Одессу, где в то время жила семья его отца. Там Врубель провел последнюю декаду апреля и первую половину мая.

Из письма отца художника:

«Миша ... гостит у нас со среды ... Миша привез с собой около 20 разных видов, им самим написанных во время последнего путешествия. Некоторые из них очень хороши. Кроме того, Миша написал у нас портрет-фантазию Насти» (Врубель. Переписка. Воспоминания о художнике. Изд. 2-е. Л., 1976. С. 123–124).

Определение отцом Врубеля реалистического портрета с натуры как «фантазии», по-видимому, относилось к романтической авторской интерпретации внешности модели (этот прием нам хорошо знаком по портретам Н.И.Забелы-Врубель, написанным позже). Волосы девушки собраны наподобие прически древней римлянки. Кроме того, владелица портрета сохранила устную семейную легенду, согласно которой Врубель вначале



Анастасия Александровна Врубель. Фото

Anastasia Vruble. Photography

написал Настю с обнаженными плечами. Недовольство родителей заставило художника изобразить платье. Задуманная трактовка портретного образа объясняется приверженностью Врубеля в 90-е годы к классической античности: портрет исполнен вскоре после знаменитого триптиха – панно «Суд Париса» (1893, ГТГ). Сказались и непосредственные впечатления художника от Италии и Греции, предшествовавшие его появлению в Одессе.

Надышавшись воздухом Средиземноморья, Врубель увидел в своей юной сестре черты, роднящие ее с прекрасными женскими образами античности: четкий профиль, красивая шея,

Портрет-фантазия Михаила Врубеля Mikhail Vruble: A Fantasia Portrait

Елена Жукова
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This year the Tretyakov Gallery can boast of a new addition to its Vruble collection, which is known as one of the most representative in the world. The new acquisition is "Portrait of Nastya Vruble" – Nastya being the shortened, affectionate name for Anastasia, who was the painter's half-sister. It had been a family treasure traditionally passed on from mother to daughter, and was acquired by the Gallery from Anastasia's granddaughter; the work is printed here for the first time.

In the spring of 1894 Mikhail Vruble visited Italy, when he accompanied the son of the famous connoisseur of art Savva Mamontov while the former was there for medical treatment. On his return journey, crossing the Mediterranean from Genoa to Sicily, and then past Greece to Istanbul and into the Black Sea, the artist made a month-long – from the end of April to the middle of May – stay in Odessa, where his father's family lived.

The portrait is mentioned in a

letter of 19 April 1894 written by the painter's father to his daughter Anna, a good and devoted friend of Mikhail Vruble. As the "Memoirs", published in 1976, state, his father wrote:

"Misha... has been staying with us since Wednesday... Misha brought about 20 different views painted by him during his latest voyage. Some of them are very good. Besides, Misha made a fantasia portrait of Nastya" (Vruble. Perepiska. Vospominaniya o khudozhnike. Leningrad. 1976. pp. 123–124)

What is described in the letter as a "fantasia" may refer to the romantic interpretation of the sitter's appearance; the portrait itself is undoubtedly painted in a realistic manner. Its marked romanticism is familiar from Vruble's portraits of his wife, Nadezhda Zabela-Vruble, dating from a few years later.

The sitter's hair is tied in an antique knot, typical for classical images of women. It is also known from the previous owners of the picture that there was a legend in the family that at first Vruble

depicted the girl with bare shoulders, but her parents protested: convention at the time did not permit a young girl to wear such low-necked dresses in public. The painter had to submit and "dressed" his model in a more conventional garment.

The treatment of the sitter's image suggests that in the 1890s Vruble was interested in classical art; all the more so, given that "Portrait of Nastya Vruble" followed the triptych "The Judgement of Paris" (1893, in the collection of the Tretyakov Gallery), the subject and manner of which reveal similar tendencies. The artist's impressions of Italy and Greece which he had visited during his recent journey must have influenced the general style of the portrait too.

The engaging atmosphere of Mediterranean culture may have inspired Vruble to see something in his half-sister's clear-cut profile, the fine line of her neck, marble-pale smoothness of skin and the proud poise that resembles that of the beautiful women of classical times. The sitter, just 17 years old,

is portrayed in warm brown hues in a light blue dress, and with a turquoise band in her hair accentuating her tender age and the grace of her youth. The pattern on her dress echoes the device of the girl's hair curls, which is so typical of Vruble's mosaic brushwork. Its confident, energetic strokes and the vivid expression of the depiction are intended to breathe life into the image, to make the young girl look fresh and alive. This picture, despite its small size, is considered one of the best portraits by the great painter.

Although the painting requires some general conservation work, including the removal of dirt, grime and other accretions from its varnish layer – which means it is likely to stay with restorers for some time – it will surely become a gem in the collection, as soon as it regains its original brightness and the freshness of its colours.

There is interest too in the biography of the subject herself. Anastasia Vruble was born in Vilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania) on 2 April

1877, and was the artist's half-sister. She was the youngest daughter of Alexander Vruble and his second wife, Yelizaveta Vessel. Anastasia's life proved her to be a woman of character, which is felt in the determined expression of her face masterly conveyed in the portrait. When she was young Anastasia was known for her sculpture, though she did not work professionally.

She was married twice. Her first husband, Eugeny Khodorovich, a Navy officer, died a hero of the siege of Port Arthur, while Anastasia herself was allegedly a

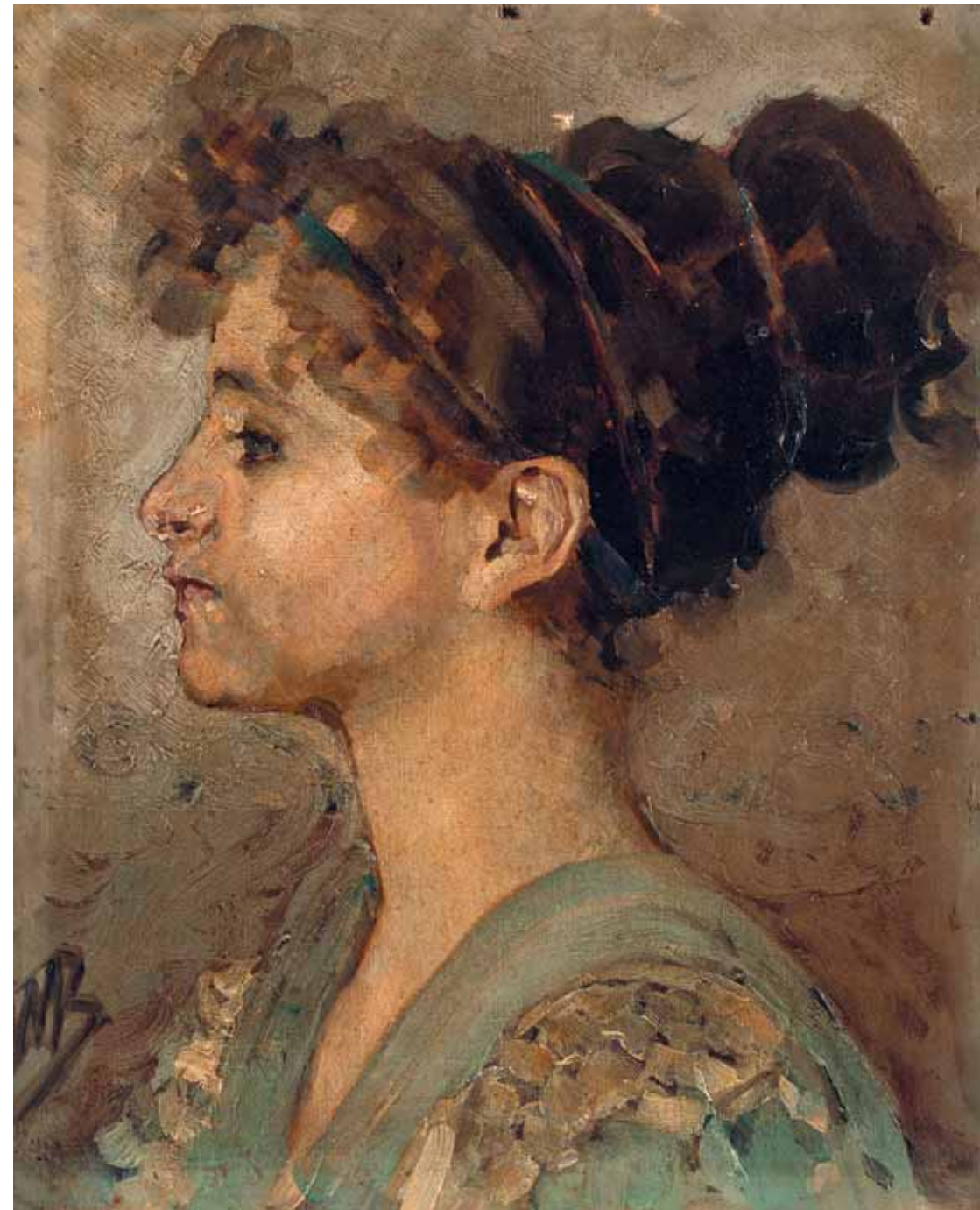
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Портрет Насти Врубель. 1894
Холст, масло. 35×28,5
ГТГ. Публикуется впервые

Portrait of Nastya Vruble. 1894
Oil on canvas. 35 by 28.5 cm
State Tretyakov Gallery
Printed for the first time

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