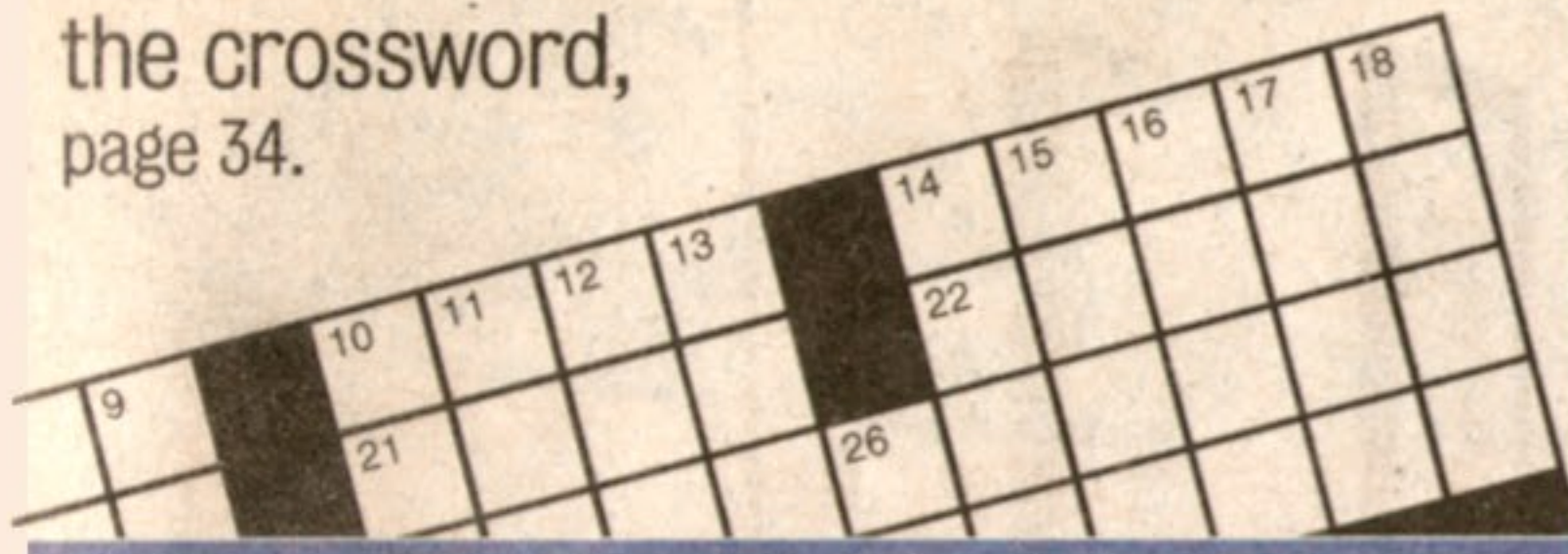


"Creator's Comment" on the crossword, page 34.



Arts



Vadim Bora — from the heart

Russian artist featured in Arts Warehouse exhibit

His art has been described by critics as "exuberant expressionism" and "brilliant Russian expressionism." But in fact, Vadim Bora doesn't classify his work as any 'ism.' His art is simply meant to cause feeling.

"Audiences will give their own classification and whatever 'ism' they want to give my work," said the Russian-born artist Vadim Bora. "Whatever I'm feeling is what comes out of my heart — I'm expressing my heart."

BY KAREN GHIZZONI
contributing writer

Sculptor and painter Vadim Bora was born in North Ossetia, a republic in the Caucasus Mountains of Southern Russia, known for its cultural atmosphere. He graduated from Vladikavkaz College of Art, and attended three years at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts.

Laughing as he remembers drawing on the walls or sculpting in the sand at the age of 3 or 4, Bora said there was never any doubt that he would be an artist.

Today, at the age of 51, and living in Asheville, N.C., Vadim Bora is an accomplished artist whose works are in the permanent

collections of museums in Russia and in private and corporate collections worldwide. He was awarded permanent residency by the U.S. Government under the coveted status of "Person with Extraordinary Abilities."

Works of art by Vadim Bora is part of the "In the Russian Tradition" gallery exhibit in the Arts Warehouse at the Anderson Arts Center. The pieces show all



the influences of his life chapters, Bora said. His native area in the Caucasus Mountains is evident in his allegorical works and much of his figurative work and sculpture. His portraits, landscapes and general techniques come from his classical education in St. Petersburg. The newest chapter in his life — the influences of America — is evident in his landscapes and observational drawings.

When Vadim Bora came to America 12 years ago, he brought with him his culture, his environment and his childhood. Now, living in a new environment, new art and new cultures, Bora said he is observing art and the depth of American art, while keeping his principles and training. He describes his art as an expression of his ideas, feelings and thoughts.

"I appreciate the depth of American culture — it keeps me on the edge of both Russian and American cultures," Bora

said. "Being in America has changed my art to the degree of what's going on around me."

Bora has been described as having an instinctive ability to capture emotion, humor, philosophy, meaning and purpose in his paintings, drawings and sculptures. His self portraits capture the essence of emotion from within himself.

Bora said he doesn't look in a mirror when painting self-



"Self-Portrait with Closed Eyes"

Photos by Michelle Mogavero/Staff

portrayals.

"I'm looking at myself, fantasizing what I'll look like at 90," he said describing one of his self-portraits. "Nobody knows what the future will bring — we fantasize."

Bora also creates in series or cycles of paintings, such as "The Great Flood," which is on display at the Arts Warehouse. He compares his themed series to that of a playwright who has a story to tell using different scenes. For Bora, each painting is a different 'scene'; a new 'actor' in the story he has to tell. The story is not complete just because he finishes one painting, yet one painting is not dependent on the other to tell the story.

"It's a language, and each painting can be appreciated on its own — each is an accomplished piece of art," he said.

In 1998, Bora opened his own studio-gallery in downtown Asheville. He likes having his studio next to his gallery because he doesn't mind visitors watching him work. His gallery has an exhibition for local artists, giving them a chance to show off their artwork. When not working on his own pieces, Bora enjoys

teaching. He teaches students to be honest and strong so they'll be ready for the criticism that comes with art.

"To succeed as an artist they need to be committed to art if they want to be a good artist," he said. "They need a lot of guts and be tough. It's a mechanical process, so what's going on around them affects their art."

But some things have to come natural. When an artist doesn't have that instinct that the piece they are working on is finished and they keep working and adding to it, the piece becomes over worked.

"When I am painting I have a momentum, a feeling inside that I can't explain," Bora said. "When that momentum is gone, then I am finished with that piece."

The "In the Russian Tradition" exhibit is part of Anderson's month-long Russian Cultural Festival. Throughout the month of January, a series of arts and educational events are scheduled to celebrate the culture of the Russian people.

The gallery exhibit also features Russian artists Nikolai Glukhov, Vyacheslav Zagonek and Vladimir Zagonek. The exhibit runs through Feb. 26.