A talented 14-year-old artist from Kabardino-Balkaria has indeed become a national wealth. And his paintings were almost completely sold out in just two days.

Amir Ivazov, a young artist from Nalchik, is an incredibly talented and highly versatile person. Amir was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at the age of 5. But already, from the age of two, his mother, Renata Sokhova, took care of the diversified development of her son. She hired an art teacher for him. Also, Amir regularly swims, and he has a special love for horses. He has been in hippotherapy for a long time. There were successes in athletics, sculpting from clay, and he enjoys animation. He started to be highly interested in photography recently, and his parents bought him a camera, still not professional to practice first.

Today we talked with Amir’s mother, Renata, and art teacher Elmira Karmokova.

**– Renata, when did Amir start painting?**

– Amir was 2 years old, and I hired the first teacher for home studying. They drew on sand and semolina, and that teacher was the first to notice that my son could draw images and sketches. She noted that Amir has an evident aptitude for drawing. I didn’t take it too seriously but didn’t ignore this moment either. Periodically we found art teachers and continued to study. When my son was 5 years old, he drew very well. But his talent has been genuinely revealed over the past two years in the studio with Elmira Karmokova. Elmira taught him how to work on canvas with acrylic paint.

**– What inspires Amir to paint?**

– I was always surprised that Amir sings a song that he associates with this picture when he draws. Musical accompaniment, in his case, is a must. I think this also indicates that he enjoys the process. And he sings beautifully!

Each painting is associated with some person. So, for example, he says, “I am doing this painting for my grandmother.” And he sings the song following what he draws.

**– So, it is some people who inspire him?**

– I can’t say for sure that they inspire him. I recently noticed that he binds his work to a particular person explicitly associated with this picture. Usually, he tells why he dedicated his piece of art to a specific person and somehow unusually connects it.

**– Amir recently had an exhibition, which, of course, is undoubtedly an extraordinary event for a 14-year-old boy. How did he like this experience? Did you manage to sell the paintings?**

– Amir took the exhibition very well. He felt that he was a star, and all these people came especially for him and behaved with dignity. I was worried that a large crowd of people would annoy him, as he usually doesn’t like the commotion. But this time, Amir felt that all this was dedicated to him. And now he says that he wants to arrange another exhibition.

We sold almost all the paintings in 2 days of the exhibition. But most importantly, we were able to achieve our primary goal – to give the event maximum publicity and show that there are many talented people with autism, including children.

Almost all local media have written about this exhibition, and a TV program about Amir will be released soon. The leaders of our republic and other public people supported us by buying Amir’s paintings. The event was held at a remarkably high level. For us, that was a highlight of the year.

**– Who mainly bought the paintings?**

– The spouse of the Head of Republic bought a lot of the artwork. She purchased eight paintings. Other people from the republic’s leadership purchased five canvas, and a businessman bought five pictures at once. And, of course, friends and acquaintances who wanted to have Amir’s paintings in their homes. But even they did not expect that they would see such high-quality artworks at the exhibition. Everyone was amazed.

**– Is there a painting that Amir loves the most?**

– Amir loves all his works. But perhaps his most beloved painting is “Rain Man”, in which he expressed an idea of the world and how people with autism feel it. There is loneliness and bright colours – emotions and protection under the umbrella. It is his world, in which, probably, there is no place for others. I believe that people with ASD will understand, and each will find themselves in this picture. “Rain Man” is a profound work; everyone sees something of their own in it.

**– Elmira, how did you start working with Amir? Do you specialize in working with children with special needs?**

– I work with different children. But when I started teaching five years ago in one of the centres, they immediately offered me a job with special children. And at that moment I did not understand at all what to do! So it became a challenge for me to involve a child with special needs in the art.

About two years ago, Amir and his mother came to my studio, and he immediately impressed me; in a couple of seconds, he completed the task precisely as he had been asked. I was surprised at how well he sees the form. Initially, Amir had basic skills. So I decided to support the existing knowledge base, develop his skills, and introduce techniques that he did not know. For example, we tried to work with a palette knife, and Amir enjoyed it. He constantly reminds me about painting with it more.

**– What do you consider the most important in your work?**

– It is significant for the teacher not to impose any rules on such children. Strict adherence to the rules can kill uniqueness and discourage the desire to do something. Special children have heartfelt works, and generally, I think that art is a therapy for the viewer. In those paintings, I think everyone will be able to recognize themselves.

I want to mention talent as well. I don’t want people to think that talent is like winning the lottery and that the child was born lucky. Amir is a hardworking child; I have never heard from him that he does not want to study today. We have classes every Tuesday, and he always asks if there will be more this week? He needs to know in advance that we will continue to study. There was a situation when Amir got sick, but it was so vital for him to finish the work that he did not agree to go home until he signed the picture. However, it was clear that he was not feeling well.

**– Renata, what plans does Amir make for the future? Does he want to devote himself entirely to art?**

– We are discussing this topic, according to how Amir can support a conversation. I have told him that it would be good to learn how to work with children who have the same diagnosis. For example, teach to draw because no one can explain it to them better than you. He supports this idea, and in the classroom, he is already trying to educate young children with Elmira.

We wish Amir great creative success, and we will support the young artist on our Autstraction art platform.

You can view and purchase the collection of Amir Ivazov in the “Gallery” section.