



Interview ▶ Painter and sculptor with a long history, he has been dedicating himself to art for



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Àngel Calvente has monographic studies in painting and modeling at the School of Applied Arts and Crafts in Granada. And also, a drawing and sculpture course at the Academy workshop of the sculptor Joaquim Camps in Barcelona. He has been a painting and drawing teacher for 5 years at the Escaldes-Engordany Community Art Space and is the co-founder of the Xarranca artist association.

–Why did you start in the world of sculpture?

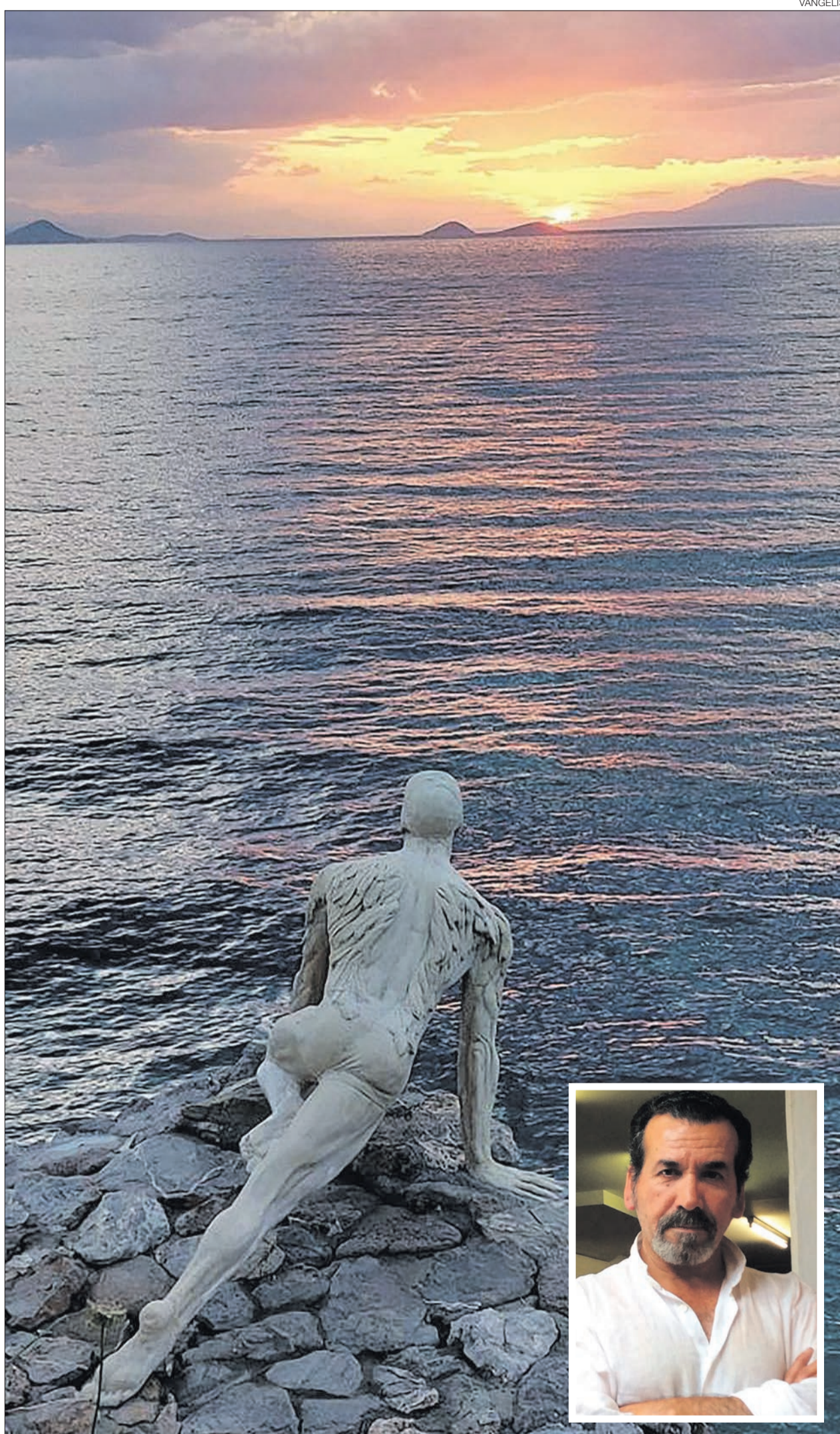
–You must think that I've been doing it all my life, I don't know if I've been doing it for 40 years and now I'm 67, but it never ends. I liked drawing from a young age, then after a while I started painting. I went to a school in Granada, and I saw how they did the modeling and I thought that was interesting and I started to make sculpture on a personal level. The first sculpture I did seriously was with Philip Lavaill, the ice lady, which is a co-production. From there I dedicated myself much more to sculpture than to painting, although I continue to paint.

–Tell me about your beginnings, how were your first steps in the world of art?

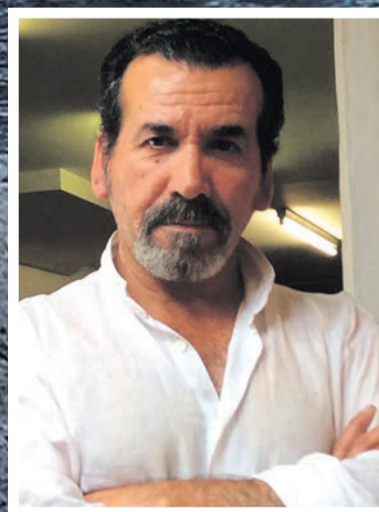
–This is a vocation, at school I got high grades in plastic subjects. My father always instilled in me the world of drawing, as he also liked to draw. I decided to really dedicate myself when I was 28 years old, when I did my first exhibition, just after arriving from school in Granada.

I went with a sculptor called Joaquim Camp to an academy in Barcelona and he prepared me, he did a lot of drawings, I was 19 at the time, and I got bored, I could see that I wasn't making progress with what I wanted to do and I left. Then I returned to Andorra and after the military service, which happened to me in Ibiza, there I dedicated myself to taking portraits of the beaches, I took more than 2,000 anyway, I am not exaggerating. I've also done a lot of them in Andorra and everywhere, in Chile and France, but I've done a lot of them and there came a point when I got tired.

The portrait is something very special, you have to know the person, you have to do some studies, some sketches and people don't give you that opportunity, because they practically don't have time. Then I had to do it with very small photographs. I remember a rather large painting of 3 meters with a drawing of the whole family. I had to make the composition with 200 passport photos, something very complicated. You have to love the portrait otherwise it doesn't work, and there came a point where I said, I don't en-



VANGELIS



Àngel Calvente

Sculptor

«Art is the basis of the culture of life, of the human being»

joy doing this yet.

–What are your influences when creating? What is it that inspires you?

–Depends on what you live in fact in 2000 I did an exhibition on the human condition and it was entitled 'Humans', I always work on this question the human condition and everything that it implies. The last works I have done in painting and sculpture with exhibition here in the country in Brussels, the whole complete collection are three series, they talk about communication and its consequences. I really wanted to bring these three series together and make an exhibition.

–What is the quality that has always presided over your sculptures?

–I express myself through anatomy, expressions, mimicry. I always start from human anatomy. Of the landscape too, but it is more secondary.

–Where can we see your works?

–Within my career, the least I have done are exhibitions, even though I have a fairly large curriculum vitae. I have a lot of public works: the Ice Lady, the hands that form the bond located in Sant Julià de Lòria in Plaça de la Germandat, a giant hand with a black character in tribute to the victims of Covid-19, also in the same parish. In Ordino I have 28 pieces in Bosc Viu, that is a montage that they did a competition and I did a theme called roots and I won. They are a series of itinerant sculptures through a forest. Then 25 years ago I did a project at Jardins de Juberrí that lasted seven years, but I got tired and left it and then the owner of the project continued it in her own way. There are some sculptures that are okay, it's a bit chaotic, but it's very successful. In Encamp I also did the reaper. In the Plaça de l'Hospital nostra senyora de Meritxell there are some hands that I made, but they have not been taken care of and are very deteriorated, the Rotary Club commissioned me to make the sculpture. In the diamond building, I have another sculpture that was commissioned from me, the dream of one of the owners turned into a sculpture. I also have sculptures in China, Canada (Quebec) and Greece.

–What materials do you like to work with?

–What I have worked on the most is resin with minerals and bronze which is cast, it is the technique that is currently used the least because it is a very expensive process. Although I've also dabbled in ceramics and stained glass, and lately I'm really enjoying wood. I have also worked with macael marble, from Almeria, which is very pleasant to the touch and to the eye it is very white, not as much as Ferrara. And with bronze powder also called cold cast.

It is easier to make sculpture than painting, because in sculpture you already have the volume and in painting you have to interpret it with perspectives and it is more complicated.

-Is there any work of which you are particularly proud?

-Always the last thing I do. When a little time passes, they end up not liking me because I'm evolving. It is always the last by logic, because you are moving forward in life and you are learning and what you reflect in the last sculpture has more experience than the previous ones. Then I think the message reaches people much more.

The one in the diamond building, The Embassy Store, makes me particularly excited. It is a dream of the owner of the building, Rosa Pons. She wanted to talk about the people who have worked for Andorra, a recognition of the people who have made Andorra what it is.

-What can we find if we visit you in your studio?

-Painting, sculpture, drawings, sketches, molds. I have over 400 works in stock.

-Are you currently making any sculptures? If so, what does your work evoke?

-I want to continue with this story of the characters, recovering the wood that fell from the storms two years ago in the summer. Nature can recover on its own if we follow this philosophy of tranquility and peace. And I want to continue with the same story, in which people at the time thought that the world was ending, and it is not for that long. In my work there is always constructive criticism, talk about what is happening in the world around me, and I want to try to send this message that everything can be better, and can be recovered.

Now I'm with a collection that I started two summers ago when the-

re was a beastly storm that knocked down many trees, especially in the Engolasters area of Escaldes-Engordany, and I appreciated a beastly wreckage, and I think about talking about it, I have several facts. I recovered trunks from fallen trees and made mythological beings and characters that have taken the name given by Spanish meteorologists to storms, such as El Niño and Elsa, and started a collection with these figures.

-What is sculpture for you?

-It is there where I can reflect who I am, my experiences and what I want to tell my audience. Artists, sculptors and painters bring the work to the people, if not what is the point? It has to reach people, it is my form

of expression, my way of living.

-Tell us something about your various facets as a sculptor and painter.

-The day you want to go there, be there if you are lucky enough to see it, here in the country. It is a project that I worked on for a year and a half with the help of my partner and my son for a man called Jaume Moles. This man has a collection of forges, handmade iron items, he has between 500 and 1000 pieces. We met one day because I needed some material and he has two very large warehouses of hardware in the direction of Os de Civís, and he asked me if I could design a museum for him to put all his pieces, he has bought pieces that they were going to Japan, which are unique. I made the mu-

seum for him from scratch, all the interior design with various sculptures that talk about forging, iron, the design of stained glass windows, sets. This project should have been inaugurated seven years ago and we made a very comprehensive documentary that people can see on the web, it is called the forge and it was never inaugurated. The project is worth watching for the collection and design we did.

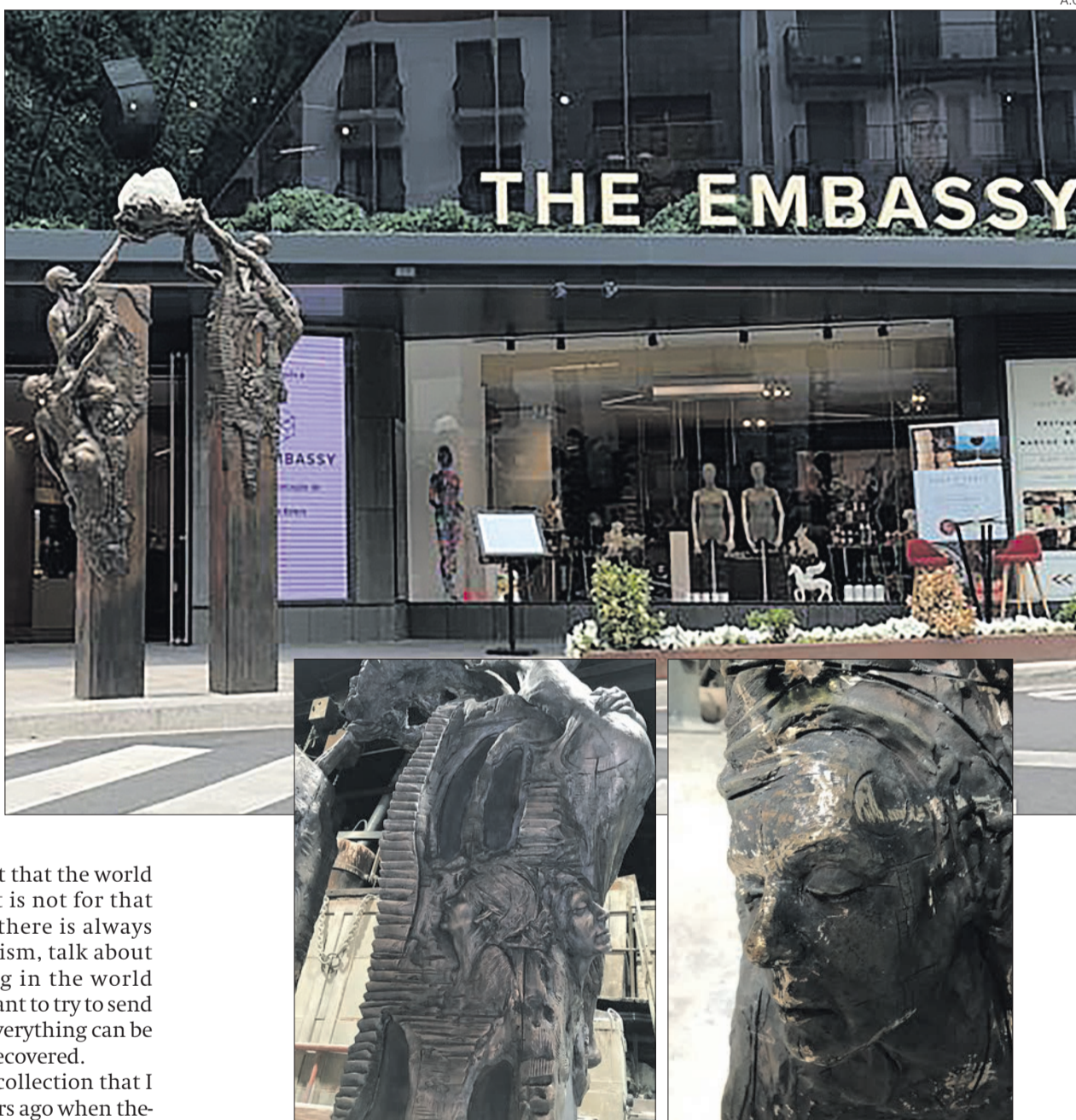
-Any professional challenges that you have left to fulfill?

-I have never set myself challenges, what I do always do, is the months when I don't have a job I prepare projects for the Municipality of Andorra la Vella and present them. All the works I have in the country are from competitions that I have won or private commissions.

-What do you think is the best and the worst in the world of art?

-The worst thing is the market that exists, it confuses people a lot, to make an artist famous you have to do a whole marketing thing, even if there has to be a base and professionalism. They set unrealistic prices for the works and they are inaccessible, it is a way for art not to reach people. Only people who have a lot of money buy art.

Without art we would have nothing, and that is the best. Art is the basis of the culture of life, of the human being. Without art, the human being would not exist, everything starts from here. From art we have been able to explain prehistory, if we had not found these artistic representations how would we know how people lived before? It is the current artistic expression of each era, as experienced in each moment of history, ancient, modern and contemporary. It is the reflection of society. ≡



► Sculpture representing Rosa Pons' dream, a recognition of the people who have made Andorra what it is, located at the entrance to The Embassy Store building.

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