



WEB EXCLUSIVE

Los Angeles Artist & Writer Carolyn Campbell Launches “City Of Immortals,” An Online Tribute To The Incomparable Père Lachaise Cemetery In Paris, France

By West Hollywood Lifestyle

TIMED TO DEBUT ON ALL SOULS DAY, THE PROJECT ALSO INCLUDES THE RELEASE OF A HIGHLY DETAILED THREE-TOUR MAP FEATURING 77 OF THE MOST CELEBRATED SPIRITS IN RESIDENCE

“I seldom go out, but when I feel myself flagging I go out and cheer myself up in Père Lachaise...

while seeking out the dead I see nothing but the living.” – Honoré de Balzac, who is interred there



Arguably the most famous resting place in the world, **Père Lachaise Cemetery** is a 107-acre labyrinth housing an eternal “salon” of luminaries from the worlds of art, design, literature, the performing arts and more. It is also a magnificent open-air museum of sculpture and architecture spanning more than two centuries. Los Angeles-based writer and artist **Carolyn Campbell’s** fascination with it began in 1981, with a bargain flight to Paris and a pilgrimage to Oscar Wilde’s tomb. “I never did find Wilde’s grave on that first trip,” says Campbell. “I was so mesmerized by the thousands of gravesites celebrating greats including Colette, **Jim Morrison, Edith Piaf**, Isadora Duncan, Frédéric Chopin, and Amedeo Modigliani that I had to return the following year to seek out his monument.” Today, it remains a wonderful obsession for Campbell, and she’s channeled her enthusiasm – and voluminous research and extensive photography – into an online project **launching Nov. 2** in commemoration of All Souls Day, ***City of Immortals: The Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris*** www.cityofimmortals.com

“It gives me great pleasure to share the beauty and mystery of Père Lachaise Cemetery with others,” says Campbell, who wrote the website’s text as well as supplying her own photography. “The legacy of the cultural icons, rebels, intellectuals, innovators and rule-breakers buried there reminds me of the importance of taking risks and giving voice to whatever creative contribution you leave behind.”

Campbell acknowledges that a major challenge for taphophiles – a.k.a. cemetery enthusiasts and tombstone tourists – is navigating the eye-popping expanse of Père Lachaise in search of specific gravesites. “When you have limited time, it’s crucial to know where you are going and what you are looking for,” she says, adding, “Yet, honestly, sometimes getting lost is as rewarding as arriving at your original destination.”

After more than three decades of sketching charts and diagrams, and locating hard-to-find plots with the help of cemetery staff and fellow graveyard lovers, Campbell created her own **highly-detailed, three-tour map**. Assisted by a professional cartographer, she features itineraries stopping by 77 of the most famous creative spirits interred in this world-renowned Necropolis. The large-format, full color, fold-out map may be ordered via this website link: cityofimmortals.com/buy-map

The project web site also features an illustrated history of the cemetery (founded by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1804); the sculptors and architects who created the 19th-century monuments; background on the restoration of famous tombs; plus a blog with guest contributors who share their adventures and images about Père Lachaise. The resources page includes recommendations for books, films, and other cemeteries to explore around the globe. Tours, lectures, and a variety of interdisciplinary adventures are in the planning stages, plus a browser -based GPS tour app will be available in 2018.

Campbell's initial visits to Père Lachaise began when she worked at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in the early '80s. "The museum's conservator, Robert Wiles, moonlighted as a travel agent and got me an incredible deal on a charter flight to Paris. I only had to pay the tax!" she says. Campbell's soon unrelenting passion was furthered by encouragement from her mentor, the late *New York Times* art critic and fellow Francophile John Russell, and cooperation from the French government dating back to the time of Prime Minister François Mitterrand.

It was an auspicious beginning for an endeavor that would not only have Campbell cross an ocean but a continent as well. "Who knew when I moved to Los Angeles in the mid-80s that I would have the opportunity to meet people who had personal connections to Père Lachaise, including [Ray Manzarek](#), keyboard player of The Doors, and Merlin Holland, Oscar Wilde's only grandson?"

Currently, Campbell is also part of Micol Hebron's international traveling exhibition ***(en)Gendered (in)Equity: The Gallery Tally Project***. It is now on view [through January 21, 2018](#) as part of *Starless Midnight* – an exhibition co-curated by [Edgar Arceneaux](#) and Laurence Sillars at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in London. Her photographs shot at Père Lachaise are among the carefully curated images by many artists that represent the poor tally of female to male artists exhibited in galleries worldwide.

About Carolyn Campbell:

Born in Washington, D.C., now a resident of West Hollywood, Campbell began taking photographic portraits and urban still-life pieces while attending art school when her mother gave her a Rolleicord camera. Her work with other artists at UCLA and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. led her to explore the relationship between the arts and political culture in her photography.