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| **Campobello, Nellie (1900-1986) and Campobello, Gloria (1911-1968)** |
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| Sisters Nellie and Gloria Campobello migrated from Northern Mexico to Mexico City in 1923 where they became influential figures in the development of Mexican dance and the professionalization of dancers. During the 1930s, as dancers, choreographers, teachers, and dance administrators, the Campobello sisters joined the government’s efforts to develop a Mexican dance form that could reflect the country’s modern aspirations and revolutionary ideals, a nationalist project that started with the armed uprising of 1910. During this revolutionary period, their work reflected the *mestizo* modernism that Mexican muralists and musicians had been articulating since the early 1920s by combining elements from European modernist aesthetics and Mexico’s indigenous cultures. The Campobellos participated in government-sponsored cultural missions that consisted of brigades of artists and teachers who, as part of Mexico’s post-revolutionary project, travelled to rural areas in order to educate indigenous populations, in subjects ranging from literacy to agricultural techniques. These nationalist efforts prompted artists and teachers like Nellie and Gloria to document traditional and indigenous costumes, crafts, musical rhythms and dances as symbols of an emerging national identity. The Campobello sisters and others used these materials in combination with ballet and other movement techniques in order to compose choreographic works representative of the nation. Gloria Campobello eventually became Mexico’s prima ballerina and the two sisters founded the Ballet of Mexico City in 1941. In addition to her work in dance, Nellie Campobello wrote several books and was the only female writer who published narrations of the Mexican revolution based on her own experience as a child. |
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The Campobellos participated in government-sponsored cultural missions that consisted of brigades of artists and teachers who, as part of Mexico’s post-revolutionary project, travelled to rural areas in order to educate indigenous populations, in subjects ranging from literacy to agricultural techniques. These nationalist efforts prompted artists and teachers like Nellie and Gloria to document traditional and indigenous costumes, crafts, musical rhythms and dances as symbols of an emerging national identity. The Campobello sisters and others used these materials in combination with ballet and other movement techniques in order to compose choreographic works representative of the nation. Gloria Campobello eventually became Mexico’s prima ballerina and the two sisters founded the Ballet of Mexico City in 1941. In addition to her work in dance, Nellie Campobello wrote several books and was the only female writer who published narrations of the Mexican revolution based on her own experience as a child. Training Gloria Campobello was born Gloria Campbell Luna to Jesús Campbell Morton and Rafaela Luna. Her stepsister, Nellie Campobello, born to Felipe de Jesús Moya and Rafaela Luna, was named Francisca Ernestina Moya Luna at birth. When Gloria and Nellie arrived in Mexico City in 1923, they became known as the Campbell sisters as they associated themselves with the British settled in the city.  As in many other countries during the 1920s, innovations by the Ballets Russes served as the model of the modern in Mexico. Thus during this time, ballet was considered the most fundamental and artistically sophisticated dance training in Mexico City. Training was imparted in private lessons by foreign teachers who had usually arrived in the country as dancers with visiting companies from Italy, Russia, Poland, and the United States. Gloria Campobello began her training with the Italian sisters, Amelia, Adela, and Linda Acosta. Her sister Nellie then joined her and the two continued training together with Carmen Galé, Stanislava Mol Potapovitch, Carol Adamchevsky, and Eleonor Wallace. The Campobello sisters joined Lettie Carroll’s private dance school and debuted in her company in 1927. With Carroll, a dance teacher from the United States who mostly worked with the daughters of the Mexican elites and members of enclaves of foreigners living in the city, they continued training in ballet and began to train in jazz, tap, and other dance forms. Nellie and Gloria then conducted intensive research in Mexican traditional and indigenous dances, which they learned and taught throughout their careers. In some of her early works, Nellie Campobello experimented with movement and sought to create her own dance vocabulary because she did not want to imitate other performers. Perhaps as a gesture of patriotic revelry, Nellie and Gloria eventually relinquished ‘Campbell’ as their adopted and given last names respectively and became the Campobello sisters, as they aligned their dance work with the government’s post-revolutionary nationalist project. Major Contributions to the Field and to Modernism Through their research, choreographic experiments, and teaching work, Nellie and Gloria Campobello promoted a combination of different dance techniques as part of institutional efforts in the professionalization of Mexican dancers. After leaving Carroll’s company in 1929, they formed a duet with Nellie playing masculine roles in regional Mexican dances traditionally performed by a man and a woman. Their interest in Mexican traditional and indigenous dances and rhythms as well as their fieldwork through the cultural missions positioned them during the 1930s as experts in these forms of expressive culture. In 1930, they became dance teachers in the *Sección de Música y Bailes Nacionales del Departamento de Bellas Artes* directed by the *Secretaria de Educacion Publica* (National Dances and Music Section of the Department of Fine Arts directed by the Secretariat of Public Education). Nellie Campobello also taught at the *Escuela del Estudiante Indígena* (School of the Indigenous Student) and Gloria also offered instruction at the *Escuela Corregidora de Querétaro* (The Mayoress of Querétaro School). The Campobello sisters joined the teaching faculty at the *Escuela de Plástica Dinámica* (School of Dynamic Plastic Art), the first institutional effort in the professionalization of Mexican dancers. After this school was disbanded, Nellie was appointed assistant to the director, Carlos Merida, of the newly instituted *Escuela de Danza* (School of Dance) in 1932, where she was joined by Gloria. In 1937, Nellie Campobello was designated director of the School of Dance, which eventually became *Escuela Nacional de Danza* (National School of Dance) and later *Escuela Nacional de Danza Nellie y Gloria Campobello* (The Nellie and Gloria Campobello National School of Dance). Nellie’s directorship spanned almost fifty years from1937 to 1983. Gloria continued choreographing and teaching Mexican traditional dances and rhythms as well as ballet.  During the 1930s, the Campobellos contributed to the articulation of Mexican modernism, characterized by the combination of European aesthetic elements with a fervent nationalism fuelled by the country’s revolutionary ideals. This nationalist *mestizo* modernism was constituted by cultural productions that could be distinctively Mexican while having universal appeal. Although the Campobello sisters relied on ballet technique as foundational for dance training, as it was customary in Mexico at the time, they also experimented with movement in their mass dances, which were choreographic works for hundreds of performers. In collaboration with visual artists and musicians, Nellie and Gloria premiered one such mass dance, *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* (*Symbolic Ballet 30-30*), in an open stadium in November 20, 1931, as part of the programme to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. In 1935, the mass dance was performed again for thousands of people, including President Lázaro Cárdenas, at the National Stadium to celebrate the Day of the Soldier. This mass dance included 400 women dressed in red, 200 female sowers, 200 peasants, 200 soldiers and 200 laborers performing alongside a multitude of musicians, police officers, and teachers and students from elementary, secondary and trade schools. The dance choreographed three phases emblematic of revolutionary movements: a phase of armed struggle, a period of unification through labour and increased peace, and ending with the final stage of liberation from oppression. As a modernized dance in Mexico during the 1930s, *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* effectively represented the unification of the Mexican working classes while claiming affinity and solidarity with an international movement for global socialist revolution.  This mass dance marked Nellie and Gloria Campobello’s commitment to join institutionalized efforts that put art in the service of the people as part of the Mexican government’s revolutionary agenda and its accompanying social policies. During this period, Nellie also authored several books with themes pertaining to the Mexican Revolution, a topic that no other woman in her time addressed. Her writing from this time includes a compilation of poems, *Yo* ( *I* ) (1929); *Cartucho* (*Cartridge*, 1931); *Las Manos de Mamá* (*My Mom’s Hands*), illustrated by José Clemente Orozco (1937); *Apuntes Sobre la Vida Militar de Francisco Villa* (*Notes about the Military Life of Francisco Villa*, 1940); *Tres Poemas* (*Three Poems*, 1957); and *Mis Libros* (*My Books*, 1960).  In 1940, Nellie and Gloria Campobello co-authored, *Ritmos Indígenas de México* (*Indigenous Rhythms of Mexico*), a book that compiled part of their field research findings on Mexican traditional and indigenous dances and rhythms. Legacy Gloria and Nellie Campobello were influential in legitimizing dance as a profession and serious art in Mexico. They helped establish a practice of combining Mexican traditional and indigenous dances and rhythms with other dance forms for mass dances and for the concert stage. As teachers, they trained the first generations of Mexican dancers who adopted modern techniques exported from the U.S. in the early 1940s thereby redirecting the course of concert dance in the country. During the 1930s, their work was instrumental in developing Mexico’s unique artistic modernism, which set the bases for the cultural development of modern Mexico.  The Campobello sisters’ legacy remains palpable not only in the book they co-authored, and the ones Nellie published, but also in the Nellie and Gloria Campobello National School of Dance which still offers specializations in contemporary dance as well as on Mexican folkloric and Spanish dances. List of Choreographic Works *Ballet Yaqui* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1931)  *Venadito* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1931)  *Ballet Simbólico 30-30* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1931)  *Bailes Itsmeños* (Nellie Campobello, 1932)  *La Danza de los Malinches* (Gloria Campobello, 1932)  *La Virgen y las Fieras* (Gloria Campobello, 1932)  *Cinco Pasos de Danza* (Gloria Campobello, 1934)  *Barricada* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1935)  *Clarin* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1935)  *Jarabe Michoacano* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1935)  *Ballet Simbólico Simiente* (Nellie Campobello, 1935)  *Baile Tehuano Antiguo* (Nellie Campobello, 1935)  *Baile Tehuano Moderno* (Nellie Campobello, 1935)  *Jarana* (Gloria Campobello, 1935)  *Tierra* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1936)  *Ofrenda y Danza Ritual* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1936)  *Ballet Simbólico Revolucionario 30-30* (Nellie Campobello, 1936)  *Uchben X’Coholte* (Gloria Campobello, 1936)  *Ballets Mexicanos* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1937)  *Ballet Mexicano* (Nellie Campobello, 1937)  *La Sandunga* (Gloria Campobello, 1937)  *La Casada Infiel* (Gloria Campobello, 1937)  *Dos Estampas o Ballet Tarahumara* (Gloria Campobello, 1937)  *En la Escuela o Una Clase de Técnica Clásica* (Gloria Campobello, 1937)  *Ballet Simbólico Español* (Nellie Campobello and Ernesto Agüero, 1938)  *Danza de los Malinches* (Gloria Campobello, 1937)  *Evocación* (Gloria Campobello, 1938)  *Sobre el Danubio* (Gloria Campobello, 1938)  *Amanecer* (Gloria Campobello, 1938)  *Ballet Tarahumara* (Gloria Campobello, 1938)  *Andante* Favorito (Gloria Campobello, 1938)  *Suite* (Nellie and Gloria Campobello, 1938)  *Andante* (Gloria Campobello, 1940)  *Fuensanta* (Nellie Campobello,1943)  *El Espectro de la Rosa* (Nellie Campobello, 1943)  *Obertura Republicana* (Nelllie Campobello, 1943)  *Alameda* 1900 (Gloria Campobello, 1943)  *Umbral* (Gloria Campobello, 1943)  *Vespertina* (Nellie Campobello, 1945)  *Ixtepec* (Nellie Campobello, 1945)  *Pausa* (Gloria Campobello, 1945)  *Circo Orrín* (Gloria Campobello, 1945)  *Feria* (Nellie Campobello, 1947)  *Presencia* (Nellie Campobello, 1947) |
| Further reading:  (Escuela Nacional de Danza Nellie Y Gloria Campobello) |