



Echoes of Her: Women and Creativity Unbound
An anthology of works from Elyssar Press and LABRC coming soon.

“Keeping Vigil in the Sacred Corner: From Rhombus to Goddess” by Andrea Mozarowski
(to be published in the aforementioned anthology)

In post-Perestroika Ukraine, in my ancestral village of Mozhary, the pre-Christian Goddess *Mokosh* was delivered into my hands by my aunts and village women, who had woven her numinous figure from the bast fibre, hemp, on treadle looms, producing sacred and talismanic objects. Her name means *moisture/goddess of life-giving moisture/regeneration* (Gimbutas). This is a story of the interdependence of the seeing subject and visual object.

She appears as an arresting crimson figure in a protective warrior stance, arms akimbo and glowing with the energy of a pulsating rhombus at her core. In my view, Mokosh embodies the dialectic arising from repressive forces, or efforts on the part of an individual or family to disremember the tragic past (Brown) and the restorative, creative forces in natural and human systems. Woven as she is by women dwellers in a historically violent region of Ukraine, she testifies to the bonds between women (anyone who identifies as woman) and their status as knowers and protectors.

“There is no region in this world that does not develop its culture of ornaments in daily and ritual life” (Gombrich, Eibl-Eibesfeld & Sutterlin). The paper explores the lineage of sacred symbology of a shape-shifting goddess in geometric ornamentation, and her ceaseless dance of quantum entanglement as a mortar; a spinning top; a figurine with a lozenge at the waist, inscribed by a diagonal cross; a queen’s sieve portraits. Through them, “memory can step around – across – upon [sic]” (Dickinson) and we can remember ourselves.

To conclude, I will “place” the woven cloth in the sacred corner, where Mokosh awaits the return of warriors and families and counter the “survivor’s story” that the displaced, wounded, and marginalized can never return. As Mary Matossian proclaimed in her ground-breaking essay, “The Goddess Cult reinforced the values of fertility, nurture, and healing in a violent world.”