

WOMAN'S ART JOURNAL

FALL / WINTER 2022 VOLUME 43, NUMBER 2 \$15.00





(Front cover) Lucienne Bloch, *Childhood* from *The Cycle of a Woman's Life* (1936), fresco. Courtesy of the artist's heir, Lucienne Allen. Photo: Nickolas Muray.

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OLD CITY PUBLISHING, INC.

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Woman's Art Journal
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Philadelphia, PA 19123, USA
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Subscriptions Web:

<http://www.oldcitypublishing.com/journals/waj-home/>

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Woman's Art Journal (ISSN 0270-7993) is published semiannually,
Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter by Old City Publishing, Inc., a
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Subscription rates \$47.00 per year for individuals and \$126.00 per year
for institutions. Issues are shipped in May and November. Missed
issues must be reported no later than three months after shipping date
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Indexed in Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA), Art Bibliogra-
phies Modern, Arts and Humanities Citation Index (ISI) and Wilson
Full Text. The full text is also available through JSTOR's Arts &
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Woman's Art Journal is delighted to publish our current issue celebrating the careers of women artists from the early to mid-twentieth century who have received limited recognition for their achievements in muralism, abstract painting, applied arts, and design. The journal proudly draws international attention to a younger generation of Canadian contemporary artists, whose distinct artistic strategies similarly utilize a wide range of materials in textile and fiber arts in addition to painting and sculpture, and introduces our readers to critical art historical studies grounded in intersectional feminism and race.

Our feature article by Elizabeth Frasco brings deserved recognition to Marion and Grace Greenwood, Lucienne Bloch, and Ione Robinson, resourceful and ambitious artists of the 1930s who answered the "Walls Call" of the New Deal era by mastering true fresco mural painting. They garnered unique opportunities for travel to Mexico City and cultivated transnational relationships while practicing under the guidance of renowned Mexican muralists; subsequently, they brought their impressive skills to the public mural programs in New York City, securing important commissions under the Federal Art Project's Works Progress Administration. The Greenwood sisters' determination to learn fresco technique led them to provincial cities such as Morelia and Taxco, where, between 1933 and 1936, they painted five separate murals between them, earning considerable acclaim for their aesthetic visualization of Indigenous and post-revolutionary sensibilities. Upon her return to the US, Marion Greenwood completed highly accomplished murals for the Red Hook Housing Project in Brooklyn, NY. Lucienne Bloch followed a similar trajectory, making a strong feminist statement in her representation of mothers and children with her mural *The Cycle of a Woman's Life* (1935–36; see front cover).

Alice Trumbull Mason is another pioneer of the 1930s with a different goal: the promotion of abstract art. Abstraction was viewed in opposition to Surrealism or the figurative populism of mural paintings. Mason was one of the most dedicated founding members of the American Abstract Artists (AAA) group. Unlike similar artist groups dominated by men, AAA was ready to acknowledge the leadership of women. In fact, artist and fellow AAA member Ibram Lassaw eagerly explained to Joan Marter that women were viewed as essential to its organization. Mason's own essay in the AAA 1938 yearbook indicates her determination to promote abstract painting and sculpture. Notably, AAA is still in existence and periodically arranges group shows. The essay by Barbara Stehle explores the relatively unknown later works of Mason, painted after she had met Piet Mondrian. Mason's *Shutter* paintings, replete with juxtaposed narrow bands of color, owe some indebtedness to Mondrian, whose art Mason deeply admired, but also reveal her concept of "Bearings" and displacement, anticipating the hard-edge compositions of the Minimalists in the 1960s.

Roni Feinstein's retrospective essay on Mila Gokhman, a self-taught multidisciplinary artist born in Kyiv in 1934, unveils the artist's tremendous spirit and fortitude in the face of censorship and religious persecution under the Soviet Union. Gokhman's unique manipulation of leather, a precious and scarce material in the post-World War II Soviet era, led to the creation of spatially complex, abstractly woven panels that explore her reverence for

nature, landscapes, and music. Feinstein untangles Gokhman's complex biographical web through the use of archives and photographs of exhibitions and installations, including her participation in Ukrainian fashion houses, and interviews with the artist herself, now residing in Stanton, California.

Julia Skelly concludes our articles with a critical discussion of the recent artworks by Elisabeth Perrault and Oreka James, both Canadian, who, in 2021, showed in simultaneous exhibitions at a contemporary art gallery in Montreal. Skelly carefully constructs a dialogue between these distinct emerging artists through an interpretation of skin as both "a resilient and a vulnerable canvas," a feminist reading that opens spaces for marginalized and vulnerable individuals, joy and jouissance, and agency.

The excellent book reviews section, organized and edited by Alison Poe, offers a capacious understanding of women's artistic endeavors throughout modern history for professionalization, endorsement, and status. Colleen Denney's analysis elevates a discussion on gender inequities in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, the "hustle and scramble" endured by women who sold their art, and the demands placed on them by the so-called "art market." The perseverance of Spanish sculptor Luisa Roldán is examined by Liya Okroshidze in a welcomed volume from a new Getty series dedicated to women artists. Sarah Ross casts light upon a study of early modern women artists in sixteenth, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century Italy, an inclusive exhibition catalogue that builds upon the scholarship of Artemisia Gentileschi.

Addressing a book that takes to task the myths, archetypes, and canons that gave rise to the imagery and patriarchal structures throughout much of Western civilization, Kimberly Lamm's review underscores the broader purposes of feminism in today's world. The recent retrospective catalogue on Joan Semmel (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia) is explored by Tanya Augsburg, who deconstructs the subversive, painterly strategies deployed by the artist that harness the sheer sanctity of her own naked body, strategies intended to resist the viewers' objectifying gaze. Suzanne Valadon's revolutionary approach to painting the nude in the early twentieth century, and the impact of her modeling *métier* on her artistic practice, is one of the many topics tackled by Emie Diamond in her discussion of the artist's exhibition catalogue at the Barnes Foundation. Gabrielle Stecher expands the geographical and narrative histories of women in the annals of Abstract Expressionism in her coverage of two volumes on art of the 1950s, one focused on the American Midwest, the other, by Griselda Pollock, on New York painting. By contrast, Ella Nixon turns to the "simple pleasures" of Doris Lee's figurative scenes, rooted in American folklore and agricultural life; in 1935, Lee was also selected by the Department of the Treasury to paint murals for the main post office in Washington, D.C., a project supported by the WPA. Maria Elena Buszek brings a global perspective to a wide-ranging volume, *Pop Art and Beyond: Gender, Race, and Class in the Global Sixties*, foregrounding the recent queer, feminist, and postcolonial scholarship representing this period's marginalized voices.

Joan Marter and Aliza Edelman
Editors, *Woman's Art Journal*

SPIRIT LIVES WHEREVER IT CHOOSES

THE ART OF MILA GOKHMAN

By Roni Feinstein

Residing in a tiny and cramped government-subsidized apartment in Stanton, California, is a remarkable artist of soaring creativity. Mila Gokhman (b. 1934), still vivacious, resilient, and technically adventurous in her approach, had once achieved, against all odds, a measure of success as an artist and designer in Eastern Europe. The chief curator of the Taras Shevchenko National Museum, Yuliia Shylenko, recalls the artist's 1993 retrospective at the museum: "The exhibition of Mila Gokhman's works became a real sensation and an extremely bright event in the museum space of Kyiv."¹ In 2000, hoping that her art would attain wider exposure internationally, Gokhman abandoned her established ties and moved to the United States, where, instead, she has spent the past two decades working in obscurity. At age eighty-eight, she has continued to make art on a daily basis. Inspired by nature, poetry, and music, she creates meticulously crafted, abstract collages of cut and pasted paper that radiate life, joy, and movement. She also produces beaded necklaces of beauty, variety, and invention (Fig. 1).

Although Gokhman was forced to leave the bulk of her work behind when she emigrated from Ukraine to the US, it was thanks to a small bribe given to a Ukrainian official that enabled her to carry an astonishing amount of her most prized work to her new home. Stacked against walls and crammed into closets in her small apartment is a veritable treasure trove of work dating back a half-century: not only paper collages created since her arrival in 2000, but a large collection of leather relief panels executed during the early years of her career, which are brilliantly accomplished works widely varied in expression, execution, and design. Stockpiled in boxes and stuffed into drawers is a cache of leather necklaces, bracelets, purses, belts, vests, and more—pieces she made independently, as well as for leading designers at the Kyiv Fashion House.

Spirit Lives Wherever It Chooses (дух живет где хочет) is the title given by the Russian writer, Lyudmila Svershskova, to an essay written thirty years ago on the occasion of Gokhman's aforementioned midcareer retrospective at the Shevchenko Museum in Kyiv.² This title has proven apt and all-too-prophetic. Despite the obstacles she has encountered, Gokhman's life-affirming and seemingly invincible spirit radiates from her art. The second chapter of her life, realized in



Fig. 1. Mila Gokhman wearing a beaded necklace (c. 2009). Photo: Michele Mattei, Los Angeles (2020). Courtesy of Mila Gokhman.

the US, has been one of poverty and ill health, and while indigence has been a constant presence, the first chapter of her career posed daunting challenges of a different kind.

Gokhman's art has its origins in the Soviet Union of fifty years ago, where independent art, techniques, and the spirit were repressed and aroused suspicion. As a self-trained artist unaffiliated with official art academies and, more significantly, as a Jew, Gokhman was an outsider who not only struggled for recognition and exposure, but for materials and for the very right to be an artist. In the Soviet Union, where it was mandated that all work be in support of the government, Gokhman worked for herself. Moreover, from the moment she began to make art in the mid-1960s, Gokhman blatantly defied the dictates of Socialist Realism and the blandness of Soviet life. At a time when galleries and museums were filled with paintings of farmers and steelworkers in gilded frames, Gokhman indulged in an art that was abstract, lyrical, and improvisational. As Svershkova wrote, Gokhman "stood against the [Soviet] system in much more substantial ways than authors of popular brochures and tracts, because she chose opposition of a different level and meaning—a *spiritual* opposition.... Under the conditions of Soviet life, when the principles of Socialist Realism were mandatory, even the names of Mila's panels—*Eye of the Universe*, *Symphony*, *Spheres*—looked criminal. Choosing an approach of philosophical abstraction required courage, daring, and persistence."³

The recent exhibition, *Painting in Excess: Kyiv's Art Revival, 1986–1993*, presented at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, did not include Gokhman's work (nor did the organizing curators know about her).⁴ The show and its accompanying catalogue nevertheless shed light on the reception of her art. The exhibition, which drew largely from the Zimmerli's extensive collection of Russian and Soviet Nonconformist Art, examined art created in the Ukrainian capital during and immediately following the period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* ushered in by Mikhail Gorbachev. It was explained that while these policies—extending from 1985 until the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991—resulted in an openness to the West, a loosening of restrictions, and even the rise of a politically engaged, openly critical art in most of the Soviet bloc, the Communist Party head in Ukraine towed the *old* party line and was in fact responsible for the imprisonment of artists and writers during the 1960s and 1970s.⁵ Although Ukraine gained independence in December 1991, the period that followed was one of disorganization and corruption. The situation and policies of 1986 to 1993 in Kyiv led to an underground flowering of artistic work in predominantly figurative but also abstract styles as well as the formation of numerous artists' groups that exhibited together (often clandestinely) and supported one another's work. As the exhibition title underscores, most of the artists who were affiliated at this time were painters, among them Arsen Savadov, Georgii Senchenko, Tiberiy Silvashi, and Valeria Troubina (b. 1966), and many were alumni of official art academies. As evidenced by this exhibition, the art in Eastern Europe made during the Soviet and early post-Soviet era has only just begun to be studied.

Gokhman stood apart from these groups, just as she was at a remove from the official Union of Artists, the government-sanctioned trade union of men and women active in various fields of the visual arts, committed to certain ethical, aesthetic,

and ideological objectives. She pursued abstraction with an independent vision, yet her work was presented in a string of solo exhibitions at major museums, former palaces, and other major venues, in Tallinn, Estonia, St. Petersburg (then Leningrad), and Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, from 1972 to 2000, a period that extends from the highly restrictive Soviet era to the "loosening" period of Gorbachev's leadership and through the chaotic decade of the 1990s. This individualistic presence and standing was because Gokhman worked in the highly unusual medium of leather.⁶ From early in her career, she produced leather reliefs but also jewelry, hats, belts, purses, and related objects. Gokhman was free from the restrictions placed on painters because her work was relegated to the categories of craft and applied art.

Leatherwork has a long and distinguished history in Eastern Europe. Gokhman's technically innovative use of this medium was valued both for its beauty and the artistic visualization it offered craftspeople and designers producing in the service of the state. Even as Gokhman saw herself—as did various art writers and critics—as a fine artist "on the highest level" for her creation of leather reliefs and paper collages, it was within the field of applied arts that she received recognition as a pioneer and was able to exhibit her work on a scale and in a manner from which other artists—particularly *outsider*, Jewish, and abstract artists—were prevented and barred.⁷ In spite of her success, Gokhman's career has suffered categorically, further marginalized as one of applied art or craft, and thus lost to history. The resurrection of Gokhman's past has been complicated by the turmoil of the present moment—the fact that Russia, for months, threatened and then permeated Ukraine's borders—as well as by the historical period in which her art was first shown and created. Most of the museums and major venues where she had exhibitions are no longer extant or were reconfigured after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and few records survive. Some exhibition materials, archived by the Taras Shevchenko National Museum in Kyiv, came to light during the preparation of this article. Additional sources used to construct Gokhman's history include installation and other photographs in the artist's collection; a half-dozen magazine articles of the 1980s and 1990s; a recent study of the Ukrainian fashion houses in the Soviet era; accounts given by a few of the artist's colleagues; and the memories of the artist herself. However, the greatest resource resides in the vast accumulation of work in Gokhman's possession.

This article revitalizes an artist of formidable power and vision whose work enriches the histories of both art and design, and whose life is as complexly interwoven as the strands of leather in her stunning and innovative relief panels. These reliefs are not Gokhman's only works of significance, yet their original material approach deserves further discussion, and several are examined in considerable detail. In both the first and second chapters of her career, Gokhman's lifelong devotion to her work and the creative process triumphed over her circumstances, leading her to produce art that is technically accomplished, highly expressive, and imbued with strength, meaning, and irrepressible spirit.

Gokhman was born in Kyiv in 1934, the only child of a father trained as an engineer, and a mother who taught kindergarten. Among her early memories is the bombing that began the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, which coincided with her seventh birthday, on June 22, 1941. Three months later, approximately 34,000 Jews were massacred in Kyiv's Babi Yar ravine on September 29 and 30, 1941.⁸ Although Gokhman wanted to attend university to study literature and languages, her choices as a Jew were limited. In 1960, she earned a certificate in civil engineering, a profession that accorded her official status and a salary. Dissatisfied with the prospect of designing bridges, she abandoned engineering by 1966 to pursue her passion for art. She was to work independently henceforth without pay and official sanction, supported by her parents, with whom she lived well into her sixties. Initially, Gokhman had a brief stint working in window and interior floral design, and while she was soon to focus her practice on other materials and processes, she incorporated artificial flowers, tree branches, and great swaths of fabric in the installation of her exhibitions for decades to come.

When visiting a friend in Tallinn, Gokhman met a woman who worked in a leather factory. In her spare time, the woman made childlike panels showing girls with flowing hair made from leather waste. Noting Gokhman's interest, the woman gave her a bag of scraps and some glue. The next day, Gokhman constructed her first leather assemblage. The date January 7, 1967, is etched in her memory: the day of her rebirth when she found the direction of her art. Utilizing scraps of this scarce, luxury material, Gokhman began to construct small, intricately developed low-relief panels on cardboard. In some, the leather is glued down in relatively flat, parallel lines, juxtaposed with arcs. In others, it is variously layered, twisted, crimped, coiled, and woven in such a way as to exploit its plasticity, at times extending half an inch or more above the backing. She colored most of her found materials using silk and leather dyes and developed a vast palette. While most of the pieces are purely abstract, some evoke or more directly represent landscapes, plants, and flowers. In Gokhman's earliest surviving relief, the red and black *Tulip* (1967; Pl. 13), narrow strips of leather give form to a flower in an image of studied asymmetry that suggests possible folk art sources. In other early works, such as the diptych *Two Compositions in Yellow* of 1968 (Fig. 2), Gokhman adapts the techniques of weaving and lacing belonging to ancient leathercraft traditions. By 1969, Gokhman's panels exhibit an astounding manipulation of leather, the material wholly open and compliant to improvisation at the service of her vision. A wide range of imagery and expression evokes still broader frames of reference to Constructivist abstraction and Symbolist landscape painting.

Two very different works, each entitled *Spheres*, date to 1972. One, a grid of four panels (Fig. 3), dynamically engages an optical and spatial play among each section by overlapping



Fig. 2. Mila Gokhman, *Two Compositions in Yellow* (1968), right panel of diptych, leather and leather dyes, 7 1/2" x 7 1/2". © Mila Gokhman.



Fig. 3. Mila Gokhman, *Spheres* (1972 and 1975), leather and leather dyes (quadriptych), each panel, 12 1/2" x 12 1/2". © Mila Gokhman.

semicircles and arcs in closely valued tones. Comparatively, this work evokes important examples set by earlier avant-garde women Russian Constructivists, many of whom were



Fig. 4. Mila Gokhman, *Golden Rain (Manna from Heaven to the Suffering Earth)* (1973), leather and leather dyes, 7 1/2" x 17 1/4". © Mila Gokhman.

also textile designers, such as Lyubov Popova's (1889–1924) *Space Force Construction* paintings of the early 1920s, and more strongly, Vavara Stepanova's (1894–1958) bold, geometric fabric designs of the same period in which intersecting patterns are layered to create optical effects. Gokhman's other *Spheres* (1972; Pl. 14), a horizontal triptych, features in the center panel a tulip form surrounded by symmetrically radiating disks in gradated red, orange, and tan colors. The flanking panels present similarly vibrating patterns that appear as almost otherworldly visions, recalling the spiritual forces rooted in the planets and in nature that are referenced in the abstractions of Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944) and American artist Agnes Pelton (1881–1961), both of whom explored transcendental ideas in their paintings.⁹

Gokhman's reverence for nature is intuitive and personal, and radically apart from Theosophy and other such spiritual and religious movements followed by other modern artists in the early twentieth century, yet there remain transcendentalist reverberations in her quadriptych *Symphony* (1972; Pl. 15). Each panel—*Galaxies of the Heart*, *Rhythms*, *Dawning*, and *Etude*—features a distinct motif and approach, but the four are united through the common use of leather strips and a harmonious palette in earth colors: various shades of brown, rust, terracotta, ocher, and forest green, with marigold and beige on the right-hand panels. This complex work shows the sheer variety of ways that leather is layered over each panel's surface. Reading from left to right, there is a tightly coiled mass set upon a rolling plane; a series of black crimped bars, each with a tight spiral at one end, superimposed upon a seemingly free-floating network of concentric ovals that suggest a cluster of abstractions, perhaps flowers; graceful

wisps unravel across the surface of a radiant sunrise; and stiffly bent vertical forms, akin to organic reeds, rest against a rectilinear ground. This piece holistically evokes the magic and wonders of the natural world, from the haphazard ground cover and vegetation to the glories of sunrise, the redolence of the forest, earth, and soil.

Gokhman's *Sunset in the Golosievo Forest* (1972; Pl. 16) offers another improvisation on what is notably a landscape, the golden light of a sunset glimpsed through a dark tangle of undergrowth and trees, an illumination seemingly mirrored in the surface of the forest's lake in Kyiv. The leather strips spiral, weave, and dance across the surface of this piece, many rising high above the plane. Kyiv's Golosievo Forest was dear to Gokhman's heart; she called it her "inspiration," explaining, "The trees were my saviors from vulnerable events of Soviet reality."¹⁰ *Golden Rain* (or *Manna from Heaven to the Suffering Earth*, 1973; Fig. 4) is yet another *tour de force*. A landscape featuring a series of rolling hills, the entire surface is animated with great twists, coils, and spirals of leather. The top half of the composition does not consist of the characteristic parallel strips seen elsewhere, but of a flat piece of leather through which tiny golden bands have been punched repeatedly from the back, forming a series of arching lines, presumably the "golden rain." The undulating rhythms and roiling quality of the composition call to mind the animated skies of Vincent van Gogh, Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893), and the swirling linear patterns seen in the abstract watercolor paintings of the British Spiritualist medium Georgiana Houghton of the 1860s and 1870s.¹¹ The subtitle of Gokhman's work—*Manna from Heaven*—is a reference to the food that God miraculously provided to the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness.



Fig. 5. Mila Gokhman, Accessories for clothing (c. 1990), leather and leather dyes (garnet). © Mila Gokhman.

This is the singular direct reference pertaining to Judaism found in her art (another is found in the small 1968 leather relief, *Jacob's Ladder*). Gokhman recalls that she was reading the Bible at the time, having been led to do so less from a religious connection than because the Russian poetry of Boris Pasternak and others had piqued her curiosity. She also remembers thinking that her life was greatly constrained, but that her spiritual life was the rain—the manna from heaven—that had sustained her.

Remarkably, about thirty of Gokhman's early leather panels remain in her possession, including a series of tiny leather ovals executed from 1967 to 1991.¹² In spring 1973, some of these pieces were presented in her first solo show, *Spring Sprouts*, which took place in the Flower Pavilion (or Conservatory of Model Floriculture) in Tallinn, an exhibition and performance space within a large city park overlooking the sea. Gokhman hung fabric on the walls as backgrounds for her then unframed pieces and utilized branches to display a few belts and pendants. Although the exhibition was apparently widely covered in the newspapers and on television, the reports have not yet publicly surfaced. Gokhman had just begun to create the intricately handmade leather jewelry and accessories that were displayed in *Spring Sprouts*, an endeavor originally prompted, she says, by a shortage of the leather needed to make even small panels. The earliest pendants in her collection, from the early 1970s, some with beads, semiprecious stones, or ceramic details, are symmetrical and appear stiff and tightly controlled. Rapidly, however, Gokhman was working with greater freedom and fluency, her leather pieces exuding an ease and lyricism and her floral improvisations and asymmetrical abstractions employing not only black and brown shades, but a wide range of luscious jewel tones—garnet, malachite, and amethyst (Fig. 5). The organic forms, trailing tendrils, and whiplash curves seen in many of these pieces find a precedent in the



Fig. 6. Mila Gokhman, Black leather wearable with onyx "button" (c.1986). Photo: Alexei Kolmykov, Kyiv (1991).

ornamental style and characteristics of Art Nouveau from the turn of the twentieth century. Gokhman's decorative accessories can stand alone as fully realized works of art.

From the late 1980s through the early 1990s, her designs grew bolder and more elaborate. These highly sensuous *wearables* responded to the curves of the female form that supported them. In contrast to the tightly configured works that preceded them, these compositions are more open, scale is increased, and elements are loose and pliable. As Gokhman was quoted in an article of 1994, "My leather jewelry is not in any way connected with fashion. It is the art of shaping, glorifying the beauty of the human body. In this sense, it relates to the art of abstraction in the same way as most of my easel works. It is also akin to music."¹³ This sense of bodily abstraction is epitomized in the 1991 photograph (Fig. 6) by famed Moscow photographer Alexei Kolmykov; it shows Gokhman's leather wearable (from around 1986) positioned on a woman's back, an elaborate form of a musical clef recalling Man Ray's *Le Violon d'Ingres* (The Violin of Ingres) of 1924.¹⁴

In the early 1970s, when Gokhman began creating leather accessories for personal use in the Soviet Union, any private or public display of such luxuries was chancy and disreputable. Perhaps nothing better exemplifies the tenor of that time than the rash conduct of Svetlana Titova, the director of the Kyiv House of Fashion Design in 1973. Titova threw her precious jewelry into the foundation of the fashion house's new building as it was being laid, a symbolic act intended to demonstrate the renunciation of privately held luxury items



Fig. 7. Installation photograph displaying leather pendants, belts, bracelets, rings, brooches, and purses from Mila Gokhman's solo exhibition *Plasticity and Color*, Yelagin Palace, St. Petersburg, 1981–82.

for the greater good.¹⁵ Gokhman worked at this fashion house from about 1973 until it closed in the early 1990s, producing meticulously handcrafted leather jewelry, belts, and items not intended for widespread public consumption. Instead, she collaborated with leading designers, such as Lydia Avdeeva, who specialized in dresses, and Hertz Mepen, who fabricated coats and outerwear, producing samples for public display within the Soviet Union and for international fashion shows and exhibitions. As Olha Korniienko wrote in her 2021 article on Ukrainian fashion houses, "Particular importance was attached to these exhibition collections, because the garments made by the Ukrainian fashion houses represented not only the republic, but the whole country."¹⁶ Each piece of clothing and accompanying accessories existed only in singular versions, prepared for a particular model or "clothing demonstrator."¹⁷ Gokhman received neither pay for her work nor official recognition, but she was compensated instead with leather, a state-controlled commodity that she could use to create her own jewelry, accessories, and reliefs.

A Hungarian-style coat designed by Hertz Mepen, with leather details and pendant constructed by Gokhman, was featured on the front and back covers of the Autumn 1983 issue of *Kpaca i Moda* (Beauty and Fashion), one of the most popular and widely distributed magazines in the Soviet Ukraine. Only Mepen's name was credited. Gokhman reports that she worked day and night for months applying elaborate leather details on another coat by Mepen, later shown in

several international festivals that were received with widespread acclaim. She recalls Mepen saying that only he would be listed as the primary designer, "as it was impossible to list two Jewish names."¹⁸ Nevertheless, Gokhman was able to display this same coat as her own design on two occasions: once in her first major show in Kyiv in 1989, and later in her retrospective *Twenty-Six Long Years* at the Shevchenko Museum in 1993. For these exhibitions, as well as for her last appearance at the Kyiv Planetarium Gallery in 2000, there were corresponding fashion shows of Gokhman's jewelry and other designs, organized as special events at the openings and during the course of the venue. Dress designer Avdeeva sent her clothing and her "clothing demonstrators" for these presentations; and the artist's friends and museum staff also modeled Gokhman's independently produced designs.

While Gokhman had no money, she nevertheless cut quite the exotic figure and was known for her personal sense of style and taste. She not only wore her own elaborately configured leather jewelry and accessories, but produced clothing of her own design, collaborating with friends who were seamstresses or knitting machine operators, to create unique garments. Gokhman's next solo show was held at the Architect's Union in St. Petersburg in May 1981. Leather reliefs were exhibited with the belts, pendants, purses, and additional pieces, all displayed on gray linen panels. Gokhman's visual presence in the city was greatly expanded when St. Petersburg's historic Yelagin Palace mounted a major one-person show entitled

Plasticity and Color, on view for five months beginning in September 1981. Her exhibition was installed in the domed third-floor gallery of this majestic former summer palace, built in 1822 on a landscaped island in the Palladian style for the mother of Alexander I. Large hand-painted placards, announcing the exhibition and featuring Gokhman's necklace, were hung throughout the vast park and its surrounding environs. According to the artist, the KGB canceled the opening reception at the last moment. (She is uncertain whether her lack of official status or Jewishness, or both, was at issue.) Nevertheless, the exhibition remained on view and was widely seen and reviewed. These reviews have yet to be uncovered, and the Yelagin Palace, which has since reinvented itself several times in the intervening years, has no surviving records.¹⁹

Gokhman, however, has a collection of black and white photographs of the installation. Some images show double-sided, freestanding panels covered with gray linen displaying her leather reliefs (among them *Sunset in the Golosievo Forest*). Other photographs reveal gray linen panels on wooden frames, originally constructed for the Architect's Union exhibition, resting flat upon a sea of low pedestals, on top of which are presented leather pendants, belts, purses, bracelets, rings, and even a book cover and vase (Fig. 7). Glass vitrines, positioned on either side of the larger installation, held a vest and purse, one set garnet in color, the other green.

In 1983, Gokhman had a one-day show of her leatherwork in the Moscow offices of *Dekorativnoye Iskusstvo* (Decorative Art), the Soviet Union's most respected magazine of art and design. One of its leading writers, Irina Uvarova, wrote in a later (1986) issue:

The collection allows one to talk about 1: mastery of the craft—it is exceptional; 2: color, saturated and dense, but occasionally transparent; 3: dedication to one material—leather.... One can also talk about small leather études, fanciful otherworldly landscapes, where material and color play a sophisticated game.... But through all the things useful or intellectual and abstract, one very strong theme is pulsing through. It takes the form of a pendant, or a brooch, or an unknown flower. Perhaps they do not feel themselves as phenomena of applied art; instead, they wait for a dress to come to them ... (If they even care about such insignificant things as dresses).... *They are beautiful in a higher sense, and their occasionally painful affect is full of the absolute vitality of art* (emphasis added).²⁰

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, several Ukrainian fashion and design magazines featured Gokhman's leather work in copiously illustrated articles, with many of her pieces captured in multiple double-page editorial spreads. While her leather panels were occasionally illustrated, the focus was on her jewelry and other wearable accessories. Notable in these articles is the openly sexualized appearance of female nudes draped in Gokhman's wearables, a presentation frequently encouraged by the artist, as she served as the stylist for many of these fashion shoots. In some, the woman's body is shown from the back, as in Kolmykov's 1991 photograph, while other images are stylized frontally, the breasts bared. The

publication of these photographs reflects the move away from the prudery of the Soviet era that occurred in the 1990s.

Svershkova's 1998 article—from which this essay takes its title—was the last to be published on Gokhman's work in the Eastern European press. Although it illustrated many jewelry pieces and accessories, and only a single leather relief, Svershkova offered the following assertion:

By the way, Mila's creative search began with panels. Once one realizes this, it all becomes clear: the sources of Mila Gokhman's art stem from painterly and not applied impulse. And the abstract nature of leather "canvases" turns out to be not an aesthetic game of an applied artist (not even an enormously talented one), but something born and realized from an internal thought, an embodiment of an internal concept. This is the proper order. The jewelry pieces are a continuation of the technology of the panels, the concentrated result of the same creative and intellectual drive.²¹

Like Uvarova, Svershkova recognized Gokhman's work in the applied arts as a "higher" art indistinguishable from her artistic production and inseparable from the painterly and constructive.

In the late 1970s, Gokhman had expanded her practice by making collages. The artist meticulously cut a wide array of shapes and lines in plain and patterned papers that drift, float, overlap, and collide. Working with paper solved the problem of leather's unavailability and allowed her to compose materially with enhanced gestural freedom on a larger scale. As Gokhman offered, "Unlike leather, which is structurally dense, similar to mosaic, paper allows for flying lightness of lines."²² Henri Matisse's cut-outs, which offer strong precedents for her cut-paper works, were known to her (many examples by Matisse entered the Hermitage Museum collection in 1968), although Gokhman claims that she was more strongly drawn to the paintings of his early career. Several postcard reproductions of Vasily Kandinsky's abstract work currently sit in frames on Gokhman's shelves in her California residence. Kandinsky is a great and continuing influence, the inner spirituality of his working method and the musicality of his improvisations holding particular appeal.

Alongside themes from nature, music is a primary source of inspiration for Gokhman. Many works are dedicated to figures in the worlds of music and dance—of the eighteen pieces currently in her possession executed between 1977 and 1995, all but five directly reference music or dance in their titles or dedications. Moreover, she employs line, shape, and color to evoke music's abstract rhythms, utilizing multipanel paper collages with each panel serving as the equivalent of a different movement within a musical score. The earliest surviving collage in her collection, *From Chaos to Harmony* (1977; Fig. 8), is a five-panel work, each panel smaller than 6 x 4 inches. The work's narrative development reads from left to right, beginning with a panel filled with a frenzied accumulation of coiled shapes in gray, black, and royal blue, and ending with two gray marks quietly disposed, a movement from density to scarcity. This

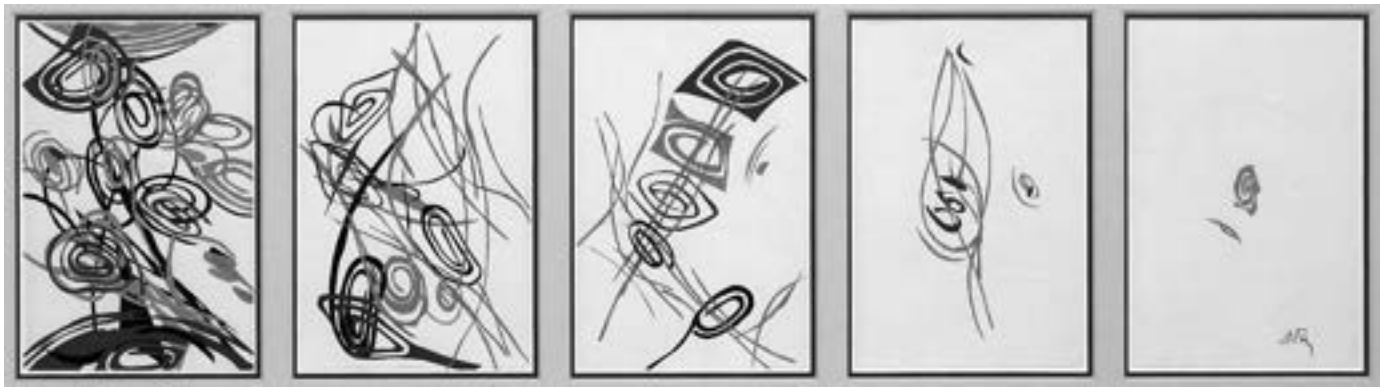


Fig. 8. Mila Gokhman, *From Chaos to Harmony* (1977), cut and pasted paper, five panels, each 5 3/4" x 3 3/4". © Mila Gokhman.

piece is dedicated to the composer Valentyn Silvestrov, whose musical works have been characterized as involving "a fading into nothingness."²³ Silvestrov was the husband of Gokhman's dear friend, the musicologist Larissa Bondarenko, and several of the artist's pieces are devoted to them.²⁴ His recorded music was played in the galleries of her retrospective at the Shevchenko Museum in 1993. As an inherently abstract art, music was freer from the demands of Soviet Socialist Realism that constrained the visual arts. Gokhman's contemporaries, composers like Silvestrov, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Mark Pekarsky, were able to experiment with influences from the West, like serialism and aleatory music, and to have their work performed, since they occupied "the gray space between legal and illegal" during the Soviet era.²⁵

Gokhman's triptych, *Improvisation* (1991; Fig. 9), is dedicated to Mark Pekarsky, a close acquaintance who was a famous Jewish Muscovite percussionist and conductor, and the director of the renowned Percussion Instruments Ensemble (founded in 1976). Each panel was envisioned as a score for musical improvisation by Pekarsky's ensemble. The trailing, undulating

lines in varying colors and patterns connote sound waves and appear to signal different degrees of emphasis and volume. The circular forms in the center panel suggest, strikingly, the crash of cymbals. Gokhman produced this work when it was suggested that Pekarsky's ensemble play to accompany her planned exhibition at the Central House of Artists in Moscow.²⁶ Unfortunately, the exhibition never happened; Gokhman later learned that she was expected to pay a substantial fee to use the installation space. She devoted collages to other important figures in the Russian musical world of her day, including the choreographer Boris Eifman, whose associated prima ballerinas and dancers were among her circle of friends, and the composer Sofia Gubaidulina, whom she did not know, but admired. A collage dedicated to Gubaidulina, *Musical Journey* (1989), consists of a single panel on which a blue swatch horizontally bisects the bright green ground and thin red lines dance in arcs and swirls around the surface.

Several of Gokhman's collages from 1991 refer in their titles and compositional rhythms to the musical genres of jazz and blues. She recalls attending concerts of American jazz



Fig. 9. Mila Gokhman, *Improvisation* (c. 1991), cut and pasted paper (triptych), each panel 12 1/2" x 9". © Mila Gokhman.



Fig. 10. Mila Gokhman, *The Small Corners of My Garden (which I don't possess)* (2019), cut and pasted paper with watercolor, 11 1/4" x 11 1/4". © Mila Gokhman.

musicians in Kyiv at that time.²⁷ That year saw the independence of Ukraine and an opening of art, culture, and society to influences from abroad.²⁸ However, not only did Ukraine not loosen its strict control of art and culture during Gorbachev's time, but throughout her livelihood in Eastern Europe, Ukraine remained notoriously antisemitic. When Gokhman left engineering to become an artist, she lost her government salary and official status, essentially becoming a "non-person," and maintains that it was "sheer luck" that she was never sent to a labor camp. Although she had the occasional lover, she never married or had children.²⁹ The papers enabling Gokhman to immigrate to the United States arrived in 1991, but she decided to stay until 2000 because this period was the beginning of Ukraine's autonomy. While there was much chaos, uncertainty, and corruption, this era was also a sign of great promise in the literal sense, as Gokhman received numerous promises for the exposure of her art. While she experienced a host of disappointments, a few opportunities came through.³⁰

Gokhman's first solo exhibition in her native Kyiv was in 1989 at the Museum of History, Podil, which was headed by an architect and located in what was once the rectory of the Florovsky Monastery. (In 1991 the space was again repurposed, with no surviving records of her exhibition.) In 1993, her mid-career retrospective, *Twenty-Six Long Years*, was held in three large halls in the Shevchenko Museum, Kyiv, and featured leather-work, paper collages, and floral improvisations—installation works consisting of fresh and artificial flowers, tree stumps and branches, draped fabric, among other pieces. This month-long exhibition had both opening and closing receptions attended by members of the new government and foreign diplomats. Museum officials delivered welcoming and laudatory speeches, including one by the well-known art critic and collector Igor



Fig. 11. Mila Gokhman, *Light & Shadow #6* (2021), cut and pasted paper and watercolor, 14" x 11". © Mila Gokhman.

Dychenko.³¹ Both receptions included concerts in the exhibition space by renowned musicians—among them Oleg Kudryashov, flutist and conductor of the Kyiv Chamber Orchestra. The concerts were followed by a fashion show with women showcasing Gokhman's leather jewelry and accessories.³²

Gokhman's final show in Ukraine's capital, called her "farewell show" by the artist, was presented in the Kyiv Planetarium Gallery in 2000. She was promised this exhibition for several years, but the director, a respected art critic, was famously antisemitic. It was not until the artist was packed and ready to leave for the United States that she was invited to install her work in all media. Gokhman mounted the exhibition, deinstalled two days before her flight, and carefully packed the work back into suitcases. Again, no gallery records exist, but a photograph shows Gokhman at the opening, speaking into a microphone before a large crowd and television cameras.³³

In 2000, Gokhman left Kyiv for Southern California with her mother, moving into the small apartment that she still occupies.³⁴ However, lacking art world connections, her only exhibition of note during her first two decades in the United States was a small, two-person show at the California State Fullerton Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, in 2010, which came about when a professor saw and admired her work.³⁵ Through decades of continued obscurity, she never stopped working, producing an extended series of elaborately beaded necklaces, and cut and pasted paper pieces, mostly in

thematic series.³⁶ As she said recently, “Art is my religion. It has helped me overcome disease and be happy in what I was doing, despite my art not being seen.”³⁷

During the extended period of quarantine in 2020, Gokhman conceived of an unrealized exhibition called *Mila's Garden* consisting of paper collages that explored themes of nature, among them the poignantly titled *The Small Corners of My Garden (which I don't possess)* of 2019 (Fig. 10). The project features photographs of nude models adorned with elaborate crowns of artificial flowers made by Gokhman and draped in cascades of her beaded jewelry. Subsequently, Gokhman produced a stunning series of fifteen paper collages, *Light & Shadow* (2021; Fig. 11), which express, according to the artist, her “spiritual opposition to the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, while conveying the joys of liberation and hope.” The *spirit* that emanates from this series, as in her other works, does not involve spirituality in any formal sense. Emulating the healing and uplift derived from poetry, nature, and music, Gokhman seeks to communicate a sense of lightness and freedom in her work by improvising with free-flowing lines and confetti-like compositions. In the *Light & Shadow* collages, a wide variety of plain and patterned textured papers, cut in circles, arcs, and squiggles, and a recurrent conical shape, dynamically array across the paper surface to conjure plays of space and depth. These works, while structurally divergent, are united by a tonal palette of orange, brown, and yellow, with black and white and touches of watercolor. Gokhman envisioned the series both as exhibition materials and as large-scale book illustrations, where the images would be interspersed with English and Russian poetry by an international roster of inspirational writers throughout her lifetime, among them Pasternak, Rainer Maria Rilke, William Blake, and Juan Ramón Jiménez. While the book project has yet to be successfully realized, a modest exhibition, including the *Light & Shadow* collages, together with a selection of earlier works, was presented in the gallery of the Merage JCC in Newport Beach, California, from April 24 to May 23, 2022.³⁸ The Russian invasion of her homeland weighs heavily on the artist, whose many friends remain in Kyiv. The spirit with which she defied the Soviet system fifty years ago burns in her still.

In her ninth decade, Gokhman's creative energies continue to flow. Her artistic production is astounding in its originality, vision, and technical perfection, and her spirit and perseverance through the many years of seclusion and frustrated aspirations are no less inspiring as a life force radiating from her art. “Spirit Lives Wherever It Chooses” is intended as a new beginning and investigation: to discover works that have been lost, to unearth museum archives, to uncover newspaper reviews and television footage, and to interview potential contacts. For the meantime, the accumulated energy of a lifetime of work pulsates against the walls of Gokhman's tiny apartment, waiting to be set free upon the world. ●

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Notes

1. Yuliia Shylenko, e-mail to the author, Feb. 18, 2022.
2. The title of the present article is the English translation (from Russian) of the one used by Lyudmila Svershkova for her profusely illustrated and brilliantly articulated article on Mila Gokhman, which appeared in *Yehupets Literary Almanac* 4 (Kyiv: Institute of Judaic Studies, 1998), 278–92. It is appropriated here with Svershkova's permission. Although Svershkova's article was written in 1993, at the time of Gokhman's retrospective exhibition at the Shevchenko Museum, it did not appear in print until five years later.
3. Ibid. Svershkova's article and additional texts in Russian quoted here were translated by Gokhman's nephew, David Tsal; original page numbers are indicated, where possible.
4. Julia Tulovsky, curator of Russian and Nonconformist Art, Zimmerli Art Museum, telephone conversation with the author, Jan. 29, 2022.
5. Olena Martynyuk, “Painting Ukrainian Perestroika: A Parade of Excesses,” in *Painting in Excess: Kyiv's Art Revival, 1985–1993*, exh. cat. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, Zimmerli Art Museum, 2021), 12.
6. Tulovsky, co-curator of *Painting in Excess*, noted with interest that while Gokhman was unknown to her, several handsome wood panels, featuring strips of leather, were also found among the early works of her father, Alexander Konstantinov (1953–2019), a Muscovite artist known for creating large public and architectural projects. Gokhman began working with leather in 1967 and exhibiting in 1973, so it seems likely that his works post-date hers by several years. Tulovsky, telephone conversation.
7. Women artists working in the categories of craft and design have historically found their work marginalized or ignored. A comprehensive retrospective that brilliantly addressed this issue was the recent landmark show, *Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction*, which originated at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2021.
8. On March 1, 2022, Russian bombs damaged the Holocaust memorial at the site. Gokhman's family survived the Nazi invasion of Kyiv (the Babi Yar Massacre), having moved eastward to the Ural Mountains shortly before. Her father, a manager of a plant that manufactured electronic components (important for the war effort), was relocated. The family endured harsh conditions until they returned, in 1944, to Kyiv, a city destroyed by the war.
9. While they are of a wholly different scale, media, and intended placement, see, for example, the bilateral symmetry and radiating forms of Hilma af Klint's paintings, *Group X, Altarpieces, Nos. 1–3* (1915), oil and metal leaf on canvas, approx. 93 1/2 x 70 5/8 in., in Tracey Bashkoff, ed., *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2018), 161–63.
10. Mila Gokhman on the Golosievo Forest, “Statements,” Sept. 7, 2020, <https://www.milagokhman.art>, accessed June 20, 2021. The mood and composition of *Sunset in the Golosievo Forest* recall Piet Mondrian's *Woods near Oele* (1908), in Gemeentemuseum den Haag, The Hague, Netherlands.
11. For information on this long overlooked Victorian painter, whose abstract works predate by several decades those of Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Hilma af Klint, see Ernst Vegelin and Barnaby Wright, eds., *Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings* (London: The Courtauld Gallery and Paul Hoberton Publishing, 2016).
12. Gokhman reports that countless other leather panels have been variously lost: either given to museums and curators, exhibited and never returned to her, presented as gifts to friends, or left behind, too bulky to transport.
13. Gokhman, “Statements,” 2002, <https://www.milagokhman.art>, accessed June 20, 2021.
14. Gokhman designed the piece in hopes of it being shown to the French designer Yves Saint Laurent in 1986–87, during the

- presentation of the designer's work in Moscow and St. Petersburg (a wish never realized). Klymykov's photograph accompanied Svershkova's article of 1998.
15. Image and caption illustrated in Olha Korniienko, "Ukrainian Fashion Houses as Centers of Soviet Fashion Representation," *Hungarian Historical Review* 10, no. 3 (2021): 506, https://hunghist.org/images/Korniienko_doi2.pdf, accessed June 20, 2021.
 16. *Ibid.*, 513.
 17. *Ibid.*, 514.
 18. Iryna Danylevska, who founded Ukrainian Fashion Week in 1997, recalled in a 2016 interview that during the Soviet era in Ukraine, "Hertz Mepen ... was awarded with 'Gold Scissors' by Pierre Cardin, but he could not go to Paris to take the award. He was a Jew and it was forbidden for him to leave the country." Danylevska, quoted in "Iryna Danylevska about Ukrainian Fashion," *Destinations UA*, Feb. 11, 2016, <https://destinations.com.ua/faces/iryna-danylevska-about-ukrainian-fashion>, accessed June 20, 2021.
 19. Tatiana Ershova, Deputy Director for Museum Activities of Kirov Central Park I, Yelagin Museum, stated: "It was very interesting to know that an exhibition of such a wonderful artist as Mila Gokhman was held in our palace. The museum ... was organized only in 1987; before that there were exhibition halls in the palace and there was no archive of exhibitions held...." Ershova, e-mail to the author, Jan. 13, 2022.
 20. Irina Uvarova, "Leather Sculpture of Mila Gokhman," *Dekorativnoye Iskusstvo* (Moscow) (Decorative Art), no. 10 (1986): 24–25. The poor quality of photographs from the 1983 showing delayed publication of the article until 1986, when better images were obtained.
 21. Lyudmila Svershkova, "Spirit Lives Wherever It Chooses," *Yehupets Literary Almanac* 4 (Kyiv: Institute of Judaic Studies, 1998), 278–92.
 22. Mila Gokhman, "Life Statement" (unpublished text, Nov. 1, 2021), Mila Gokhman Archive, Stanton, CA.
 23. Valentyn Silvestrov's music is characterized as "fading into nothingness" or "into toneless whispers," in Raymond Tuttle, review of *Requiem for Larissa*, by Silverstov, *Classical Net*, 2004, <http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/e/ecm01778a.php>, accessed June 20, 2021.
 24. Gokhman's three-panel paper collage, *Requiem for Larissa*, made at the time of her friend's early death in 1996, shares a title with Silvestrov's musical composition composed between 1997 and 1999.
 25. For a fascinating and comprehensive study of music by Gokhman's contemporaries that occupied this "gray space" during the Soviet period, see Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009).
 26. For information about exhibitions of Soviet, Russian, and Western art at the Central House of Artists in Moscow during this period, and for a comprehensive account of international exchanges, see Kate Fowle and Ruth Addison, eds., *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade 1986–1996* (Moscow: Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2016).
 27. The history of jazz in the Soviet Union is recounted in S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union* (St. Petersburg, FL: Limelight Publishers, 2004).
 28. From the time she began creating art in the late 1960s, Gokhman's circle of friends in Eastern Europe consisted of artists, designers, writers, musicians, and dancers. All were members of a bohemian underground or, as Gokhman identifies it, "the intelligentsia." Many had been university trained or schooled in official academies of art or music, but they broke away from the doctrines of the proletarian dictatorship and the demands of Socialist Realism to pursue their own paths. Gokhman saw many of her colleagues' nonconformist work banned and her friends imprisoned, sent to labor camps, or even killed. A great many of Gokhman's friends and colleagues, Jewish and otherwise, chose to immigrate to Israel, the US, Germany, and elsewhere.
 29. She continued to live in her parents' apartment through the time she moved to the US with her mother in 2000, her father having died after a long illness a few years before.
 30. As Gokhman recalls, "I was promised exhibitions in different countries, films, and special laboratories exploring the possibilities and properties of leather." Conversation with the author, Stanton, CA, Nov. 8, 2021. Among the missed opportunities was an offer in the late 1980s, when she was courted by Moskovskaya Palitra (Moscow Palette), one of the first commercial galleries in the Soviet Union, founded in collaboration with the Soviet Ministry of Culture in 1989 to take Soviet work abroad. (A physical space opened in Moscow in 1994.) At the time, she thought that she would soon be leaving Kyiv (her papers came through in 1991), so she declined their offer to handle her work. For more on Moscow Palette, see the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art's Russian Art Archive Network, <https://russianartarchive.net/en/catalogue/collection/moscow-palette-gallery-archive>, accessed Sept. 1, 2022.
 31. In 2015, Igor Dychenko's extensive collection of paintings and drawings was donated by his widow, Valeria Virsca, to the state-owned Mystetskyi Arsenal (Art Arsenal) in Kyiv. (The catalogue of this collection is available in Ukrainian at http://uartlib.org/downloads/DychenkoCatalogue_uartlib.org.pdf.) No works by Gokhman were included in this donation, but Dychenko specifically collected work in all media by Jewish artists. The author was in communication via email with Olha Melnyk, curator of the Museum Collection, with regard to the Dychenko family's possession of any of Gokhman's works. The war intervened this correspondence.
 32. Yuliia Shylenko, currently chief curator of the museum, recalled in her email to the author, Feb. 18, 2022: "For the first time in the museum, the opening was like an extravaganza, a vivid action, rather than a static statement.... Mila attracted us, young researchers at the Taras Shevchenko Museum, as models who demonstrated her products. She personally picked out accessories for each of us that emphasized our individuality. It was a fascinating experience, the memories of which will be remembered for a lifetime." Gokhman recalls that the opening banquet, sponsored by a bank, offered food and drink in abundance at a time of famine in Kyiv.
 33. In an email dated Jan. 26, 2022, Dirdovskaya, Kyiv Planetarium Director, wrote to the author: "Since 2000, the planetarium has been reorganized and repaired. That is why no information about the exhibition you are interested in, as well as about many other events, has been saved."
 34. Within the year, her mother's dementia was so advanced that she was moved into a nursing home.
 35. The exhibition was organized by Mike McGee, Professor of Art History, California State University, Fullerton, and founder of Grand Central Art Center, a University satellite, in downtown Santa Ana. Despite her indigent circumstances, she has managed to care for her works elaborately, in anticipation of an exhibition.
 36. Gokhman's jewelry, other accessories, and clothing designs were extensively documented by Phillip Ritchie, a professional photographer based in Costa Mesa, CA, who became aware of Gokhman's work through the Grand Central Art Center exhibition. Ritchie hired models and photographed Gokhman's designs with Gokhman serving as stylist. He self-published a small catalogue, *Mila Gokhman: Fifty Years of Design*: <https://imageevent.com/reddoorstudio/milagokhman>. In June 2011, Ritchie also produced a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZDbpZTpjBA>.
 37. Gokhman, conversation with the author, Stanton, CA, Sept. 15, 2020.
 38. On April 24, 2022, a special sale was held to benefit Ukrainian humanitarian relief, with more than two dozen collages and a large collection of jewelry donated by Gokhman.



Pl. 12. Alice Trumbull Mason, *Suspension Points (Surface Winds)* (1959), oil on canvas, 29 7/8" x 36 1/8". Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, Lawrence H. Bloedel Bequest (77.1.31). © 2022 Emily Mason | Alice Trumbull Mason Foundation/ARS.



Pl. 13. Mila Gokhman, *Tulip* (1967), leather and leather dyes, 7 3/4" x 7 3/4". © Mila Gokhman.



Pl. 14. Mila Gokhman, *Spheres* (1972), leather and leather dyes (triptych), each panel 5 1/2" x 5 1/2". © Mila Gokhman.



Pl. 15. Mila Gokhman, *Symphony* (1972) (quadriptych, left to right): *Galaxies of the Heart*, *Rhythms*, *Dawning*, *Etude*, leather and leather dyes, each panel 9" x 7 1/4". © Mila Gokhman.



Pl. 16. Mila Gokhman, *Sunset in Golosievo Forest* (1972), leather and leather dyes, 8 1/2" x 17". © Mila Gokhman.



Pl. 17. Elisabeth Perrault, *Ma peau de 24 ans* (My Skin at the Age of 24) (2020), canvas, polyester, and pressed flowers, 72" x 50" x 5". Collection of the artist; courtesy of Projet Pangée, Montreal.
Photo: Jean-Michael Seminaro.