

Design Resource

Aari Zardozi - Ahmedabad, Gujarat

The Art of Needle Stitching Work

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Ranjitha M. C.

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/aari-zardozi-ahmedabad-gujarat>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
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Introduction

Ahmedabad is located on the banks of the Sabarmati River. It is the largest city in Gujarat and has witnessed the rule of many dynasties, right from the Sultanate and Mughal rule to Maratha and British rule. There is a remarkable tale associated with Ahmedabad city. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Muslim Muzaffarid dynasty was ruling the Gujarat state. Once king Sultan Ahmed Shah was standing and enjoying the beautiful sight of River Sabarmati and he observed a small hare chasing a big ferocious dog. He keeps on thinking about that incident and he approached a spiritual leader for an explanation. Then he explained that it is the individuality of this holy land, which develops such rare qualities in its people. The king Sultan got so impressed with the uniqueness of this land and set up the capital of Gujarat on 4th march 1411, hence the name Ahmedabad. Whereas in the 1960s, the capital changed to the well-planned city of Gandhinagar. River Sabarmati divided Ahmedabad into eastern and western regions. Ahmedabad has developed as one of the important centers of trade and textile manufacturing and it is the second-largest cotton producer in India.

Aari Zardozi is a form of embroidery, that originated in Persia whereas “zar” means gold and “dozi” means embroidery. Mughal conquerors introduced this heavy and unique style of hand embroidery to India. In the Mughal era, Aari Zardozi’s works were used to decorate tent walls in the form of wall-hangings as well as an accessory for royal elephants and horses. Various styles of hand embroideries are handed down from generation to generation. Aari Zardozi’s works differ from other traditional embroideries like Chikankari, Sujni, Kantha, Kasuti, Toda and Mirror embroidery etc. The Muslim communities residing in India initially executed Aari Zardozi’s work. These Aari Zardozi designs vary from place to place.

Artisan Mr. Shahid Ansari from Ahmedabad, who got this unique skill from his forefathers, has practised for the past 22 years. Previously he was making zardozi designs for bridal collections and also for some showroom order works later on the invention of Computer designs and machine embroidery affected many of these craft people. Then he thought to give a new vision to Aari zardozi’s artwork and he started to make embroider of famous monuments of India.

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Detailed hand embroidery, which signifies the Parliament of India.

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Mr. Shahid Ansari showing one of his best works, which shows the eleven signatures of Mahatma Gandhi.



Aari and zardozi hand embroidery portrays NID (National Institute of Design).



Simple hand embroidery of flower with unique colour combination.

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Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.

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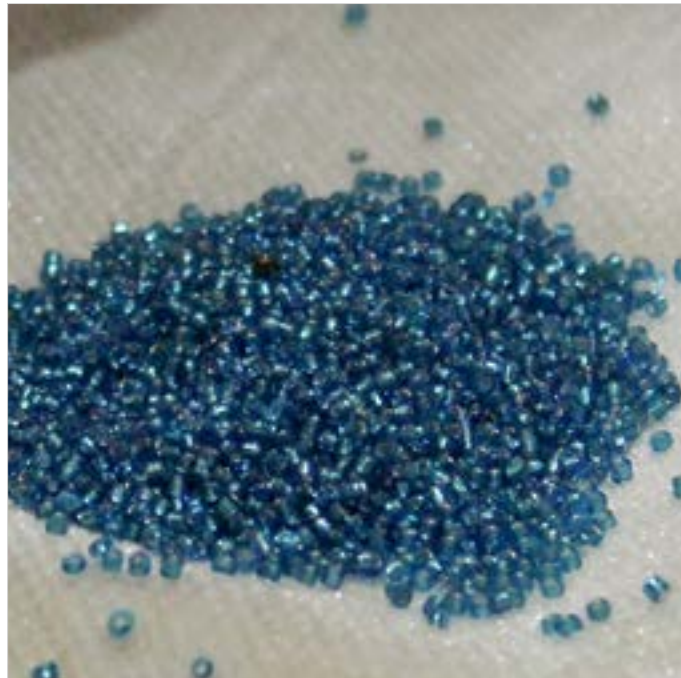
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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used for Aari zardozi hand embroidery:

- **Round Wooden Frame:** It is used to fix plain cloth for stiffness.
- **Aari (needle):** It is used to the sharp hook-shaped needle used to embroider the fabric.
- **Silk Thread:** It is a basic material for hand embroidery.
- **Fabric:** Cotton velvet cloth is used to embroider the required design.
- **Sequin Beads:** It is used to enhance the design.
- **Tailor's Chalk:** It is used to draw designs on framed fabric.



Sequin beads are used to enhance the embroidery work.



Tailor's chalk is used to make temporary markings on fabric.

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Silk threads are used for Aari zardozi hand embroidery.



Aari (needle), shaped like a hook at the tip used to embroider.



Round wooden frame is used to fix the basic cloth for stiffness.

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Making Process

Aari zardozi is purely a hand embroidery that involves the decoration of fabric with a needle, colourful yarn, pearls, beads, quills and sequins etc. My passion for hand embroidery led to great experimentation with numerous styles and designs. The actual zardozi embroidery was done with pure thin gold and silver wires. In ancient times artisans were using real gold thread for embroidering the fabric. There are three types of zari such as real zari which is made of real gold and silver, imitation zari made of silver-coated copper wire and metallic zari which is made of polyester metallised film. Now, these gold and silver wires are replaced with silk threads but the art remains the same. Aari Zardozi's work involves the application of plenty of beads using a needle that is shaped like a hook at the tip.

The tools consist of Aari hooks, round wooden frames, silk threads, sequin beads and basic cloth. Initially, the plain fabric that has to be embroidered is framed tightly to the round wooden frame. Most of the artisans prefer silk or locally made satin (Gajji) and cotton velvet for Aari Zardozi according to the requirement and the purpose. Once this has been done, the required patterns or designs are created directly on the fabric with the tailor's chalk. In the beginning, the artisan starts with the usual Aari chain stitch. Aari zardozi stitches are done by holding the thread with a finger at the reverse of the framed fabric and an Aari hook, a sharp-pointed awl-like needle, is held on the top. The artisan starts embroidering the outline of the design and then an Aari hook is pierced through the cloth to pull up the thread from the backside of the framed cloth to tighten the previous stitch. Different varieties of hooks are used to embroider the fabric according to the design and thickness of the cloth. These stitches are much similar to the cobbler's stitch and the process of embroidering is repeated until the required design is formed on the surface of the fabric. Finally, sequin beads are stitched by picking the beads using an Aari hook and then stitched to enrich the artwork.

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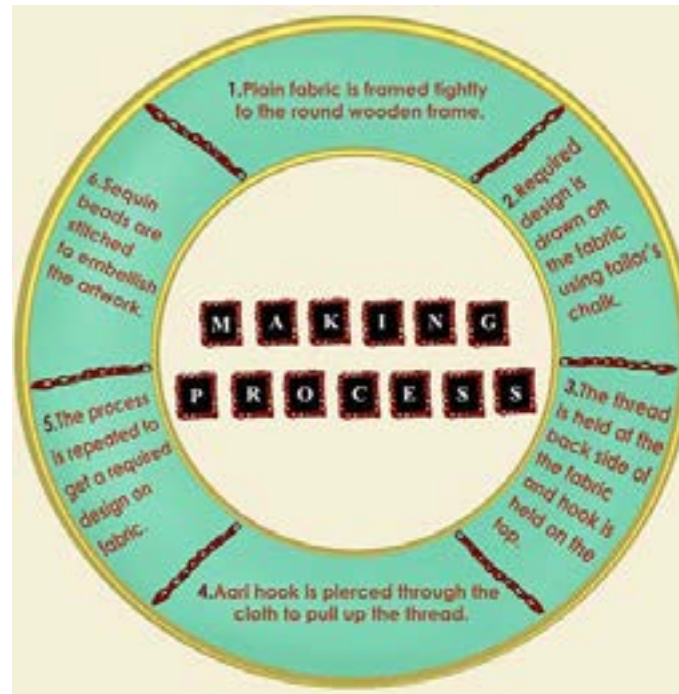
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Flow Chart:



Artisan attaching fabric to the round wooden frame.



Black colour fabric is fixed to the round wooden frame.

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Required design or pattern is drawn on the fabric.



Silk thread is pierced through the fabric.



The silk thread is held with a finger and carried to the upper side to secure the previous stitch.



Seed beads are picked through the Aari hook.

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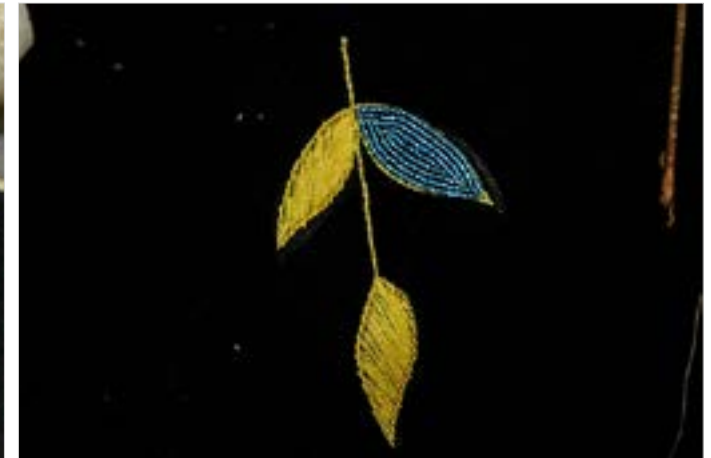
Adding the beads to give a regal effect.



A fine Aari hook and thread is used to make chain stitches with beads.



Artisan enhancing the embroidery by adding beads.



Aari zardozi hand embroidery.

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Products

Indian Aari Zardozi has made its own recognition in the world. These zardozi works are expensive types of embroidery because of the fabric and materials used. Mr. Shahid Ansari from Ahmedabad is a well-known artisan who has experience of 22 years and is famous for his unique style of working with Aari Zardozi. He believes that these monuments are heritage as well as Aari Zardozi so he combined them together in his artwork. He captured famous Monuments of India in his artwork by giving a traditional Aari Zardozi attire. For the past three to four years he did 40 artworks using 50 different types of techniques. 'Wheel of life' (Gandhiji's Satyagraha) and 'Eleven signatures of Gandhiji' are the most famous Aari Zardozi artworks made of real gold threads. The price for the artwork starts from INR15,000 to a lakh.



Aari hand embroidery of Red fort, Delhi.

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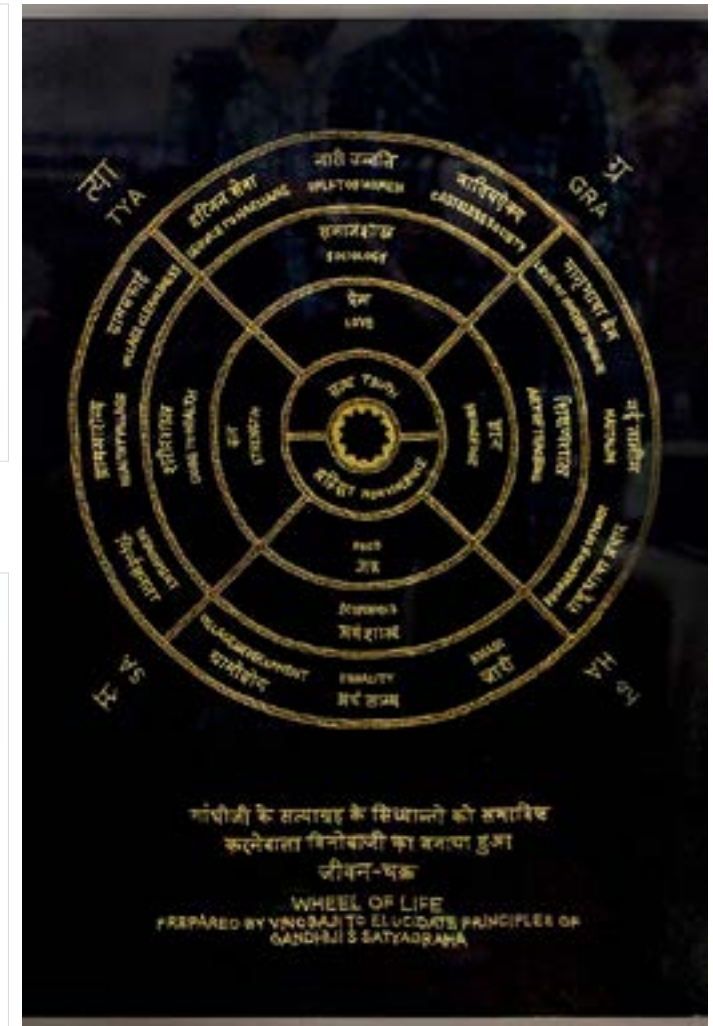
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Hand embroidery, which shows the scenic architecture of Rashtrapati bhavan.



Jama Masjid (Jama Mosque) of New Delhi, a holy place for Muslim devotees.



Wheel of Life, created by Mr.Vinobaji to explain the principles of Gandhiji's Satyagraha.

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Video



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