

Design Resource

Chikankari Embroidery of Lucknow II

The Craft of Floral Embroidery

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Mr. J. Antony William and
Ms. Anushree Kumar
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://dsource.in/resource/chikankari-embroidery-lucknow-ii>

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3. Making Process
4. Products
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Introduction

Lucknow- the state capital of Uttar Pradesh is world renowned for its traditional Chikankari Embroidery. Chikankari is the embroidery work done with the white cotton thread on fine white cotton material. Chikankari is also called as shadow work. The word 'Chikan' is basically derived from Persian word 'Chikeen'. In earlier days, the Chikankari embroidery is traditionally done on mulmul- fine muslin cotton. Due to non-availability of mulmul, now-a-days this work is done on cotton, wool, chiffon, crepe, organde chiffon and silk clothes using contrast color threads. The origin of Chikankari is initiated by the influence of intricate carving patterns of Mughal architecture during their period. The Chikan work in Lucknow is older than 200 years and later it is patronized by Nawabs. There are 5000 families involved in Chikankari embroidery in and around villages of Lucknow. The artisans belong to local Muslim community. Nearly 90% of Chikankari work is done by women professionally. Delhi, Mumbai are the other centers for Chikankari work.



Elaborate intricate design in Kurta's border.



Different colors of threads are used to define different stitches.

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Phool Chameli stitch scattered all over sari.



Mixture of all traditional stitches like Phanda, jaali, murri and meharki.



Pure Mulmul cotton kurta in Chikan work.



Senior master artisan (national awardee) involved in embroidery work.

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Details of Crochet work.



Simple tool which is used to create good design/ motif.

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Chikan work in Mango motif.



Heavy Chikankari embroidery done on sari pallu.

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Craftsman engaged in block printing.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Highly elaborated work is done using simple tools to embellish beautiful motifs/ designs on plain cloth. Traditionally, the Chikan work has been done only on white cotton cloth. Later, it has been done using various types of clothes to meet the market trend.

Raw Materials:

- Types of fabrics like cotton, silk, chiffon, crepe, georgette, wool, orange chiffon are used to do the embroidery work.
- Cotton thread is traditionally used to create the design patterns over the cloth.
- Golden zari, silver zari, wool are the types of threads also used to do the Chikankari embroidery.
- Indigo color used in printing process.
- River water used to wash the clothes to clear the printing marks.
- Starch is used to obtain the stiffness for cotton clothes.

List of Tools:

- Sui- needle is the important tool which plays a major role in Chikankari work.
- A circular shaped frame is used to hold the cloth as it obtains tautness. These frames are made with cloth as well as wood as per the need.
- Wooden blocks are used to print the design on plain cloth.
- A rectangular wooden table used as support during printing process.
- Containers are used while washing the cloth after completion of stitching work.

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Cotton thread used to stitch.



Colored cotton threads.



Gold and silver threads are also used to create the motif designs on the cloth.



Different colors of silk threads and zari-golden thread.

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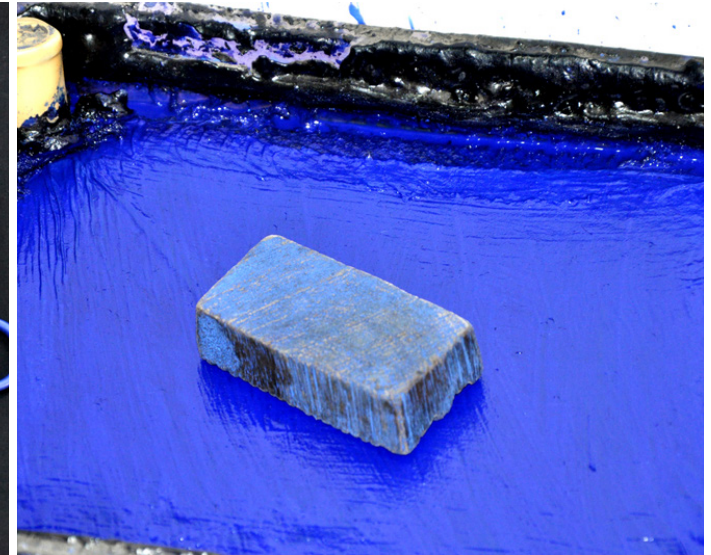
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Cloth frame, scissors and needle.



Indigo color used for printing.



Wooden Block used to print the big Buti.



Wooden frame and needle play a major role in the craft.

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Big rectangular block used to print the series patterns.



Block used to print borders.



Plane cotton cloth used as basic raw material.

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Making Process

Stages involved in making process are:

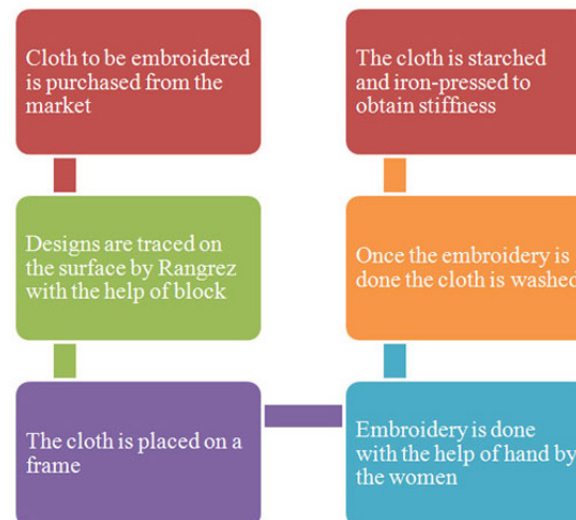
1. Block printing
2. Embroidery work
3. Washing

Block Printing: Initially, the design to be worked is printed on the plain fabric. The wooden block is dipped in the color solution which is made by mixing glue and indigo. Then it is printed on the fabric. There will be different blocks for butis, floral patterns and borders. In Lucknow, the printing process is done by separate group of artisans who mainly concentrate in printing. The printed fabric is now ready for the embroidery work.

Embroidery work: The embroidery is done over the printed design pattern using needle and thread. The artisan creates traditional patterns using different techniques. Different types of stitches can be made in one product.

Washing: Washing is the final stage of production process. The fabric after embroidery work is first soaked in water and then washed to remove the block printed blue color. Then it is starched and ironed to obtain stiffness. The final product is now ready for the market.

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Initially, the design to be stitched is block printed.



Separate blocks are used to create Mukesh (type of motif) work.



The design printed cloth is ready to start stitching on it.



The cloth is fixed to the frame.

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The frame also helps in avoiding the contact with already worked parts.



Inserting the thread into the needle.



Stitching is done following the already traced design on the cloth.



Tracing helps to define the design accurately.

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Closer view of Phanda motif.



Jaali work created by pulling the cloth slightly on stretched cloth.



Detailed view of Jaali work.



Chikankari work done on Kurta (top).

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Rich traditional work on table cloth.

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Products

Beautiful and intricate designs are created with great artistic skill. The design patterns range from small butis to elaborate floral motifs. Chikankari embroidery basically done on saris, suits, dress materials, tops, lahenga, dupattas, sherwanis, chudidaars, salwars and skirts. Now-a-days, Chikankari work is not only restricted to Kurtas and saris it is also done on sofa covers, dining covers, bed sheets. Sherwani (top that looks similar to men's Sherwani) for ladies is a recent innovation in the craft. Most of the design motifs are inspired by flowers, leaves, buds, fruits and stems of trees. The Jaali work is mainly influenced by Mughal architectures.



Award winning art piece displayed at artisan's place.
Table mat in Chikankari work.

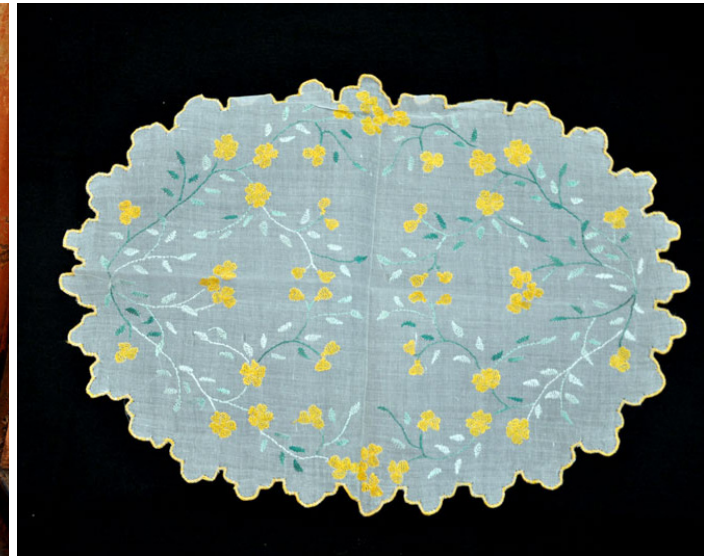


Table mat in Chikankari work.

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Shadow work done on ladies top.



Elegant Kairi-Mango motif done on sari.



Dress material in scattered mango motif on it.

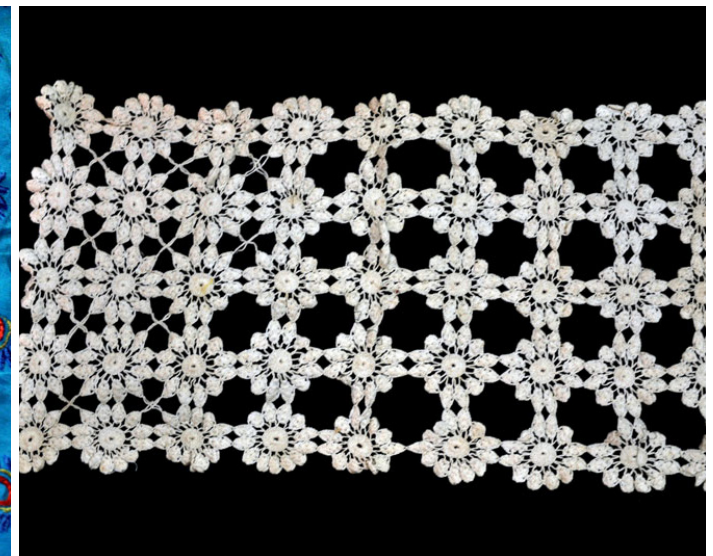


Table cloth with Crochet work.

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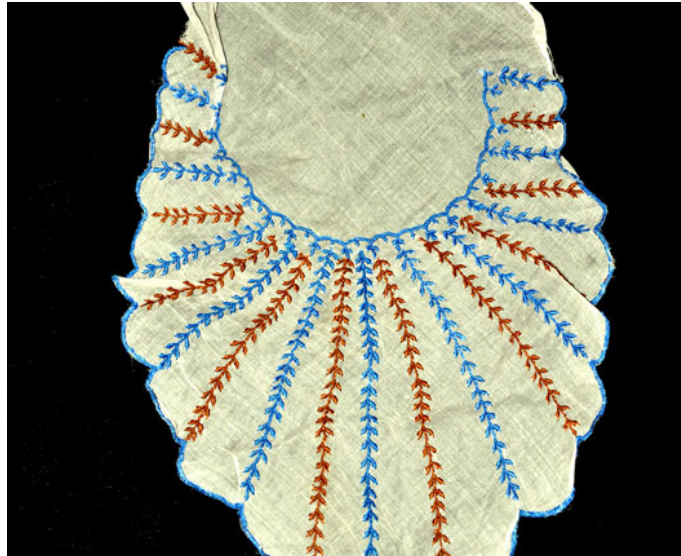
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Neck design of ladies dress material.



Tea coaster.



Preferably Chikankari work is done on light color cloths.



Machine made Chikankari embroidery.

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Chain stitch done on sari.



Hanky in rich Kairi motif.



Graceful neck design of a kurta.



The long neck design is locally called Raani haar.

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Tiny Silver knots created in sari locally called Mukesh.



Bale work done on handkerchief.

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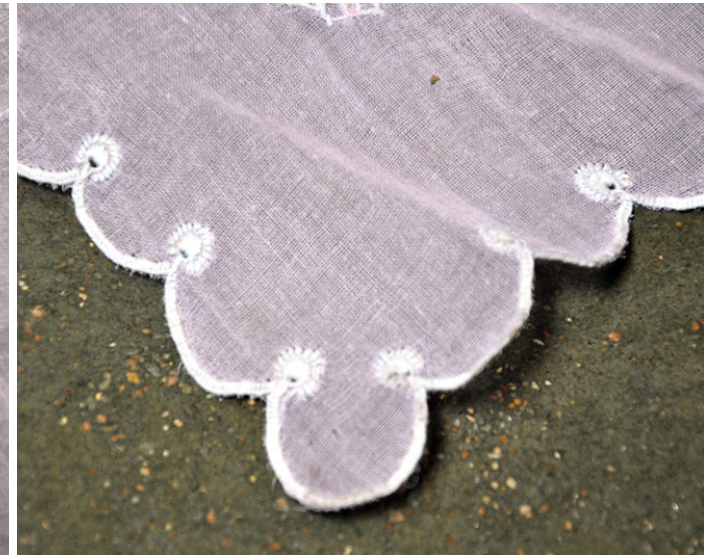
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Stitches

Chikankari embroidery consists of 40 different types of stitches. Among them, the five basic stitches are Phanda-small circular dot, Jaali, tepchi-the running stitch, murri and bakhia- the most common and popular stitch that gives the shadow effect. Dhoom, Gol-Murri, Janjeera, Keel, Kangan-bangle, Dhania Patti, Murri lambi -the murri stitch ends with sharp point, Karan Phool, Karan, Kapkapi, Bijli, Ghas Patti, Rozan, Meharki, Kaj, Phool chameli, Chane ki patti, Balda, Jora, Penchni, Kauri. Sidhaul jaali, Makra, Mandrazi, Bulbul Chashm, Phool Jaali and Tajmahal are the varieties of Jaali work. Hathkati and bank jaali are the straight line jaali works.



Kairi- mango motif with fine Phanda, Jaali and Hathkati work.



Border in Bijli work.

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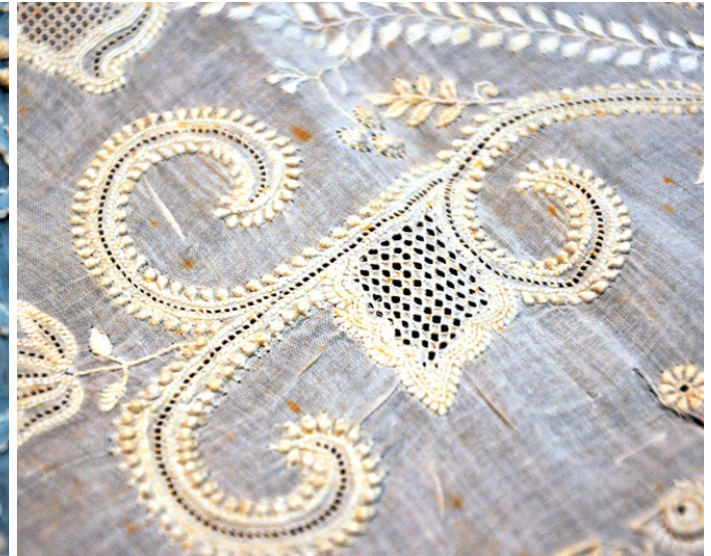
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Phanda and jaal work done on sari.



The magnificent look of Hathkati, jaali and phanda stitches.



Eye captivating Phanda knots, Bhakia shadows and Bijli flowers.



Fascinating flower design in shadow stitch.

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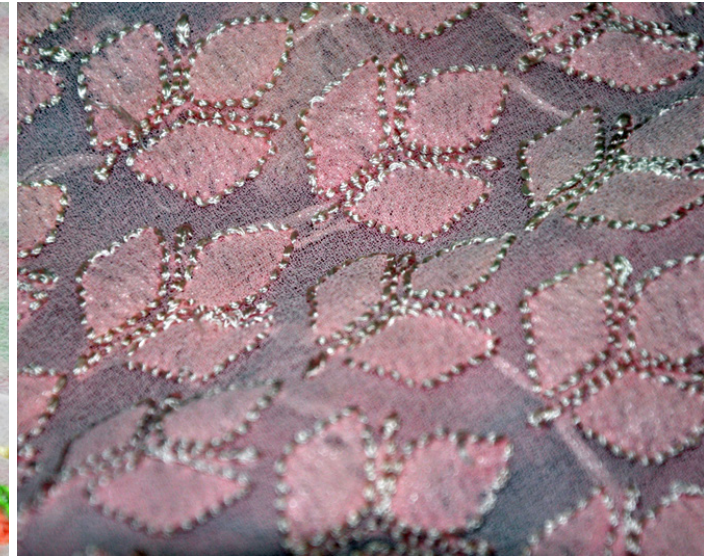
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Bright hues in Ghas patti, Phanda and gol-murri stitches.



Shadow work.



Chain stitch in silver sheen.



Another shadow and Phanda work.

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Sidhaul Jaali and Kangan work.

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Contact Details

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