



## **Chikankari**

### **A Lucknawi Tradition**

**Paola Manfredi**

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- A book dedicated to the incredible Chikankari style of embroidery, which remains relatively unknown in the west
- Engages with the history and cultural relevance of Chikankari
- Showcases a number of these beautiful traditional Indian embroideries, drawn from both public and private collections

Chikankari is one of India's finest traditional embroideries, evoking Lucknawi culture and the elegant courts of the Awadh Nawabs. Chikankari appeared in Lucknow in the late 18th century and its exquisite aesthetic and craftsmanship has sustained the tradition to this day, through changing patronage and market trends. Chikankari is not just embroidery. The style is based on a creative blend of delicate embroidery, and impeccable dressmaking and sewing techniques; these components come together to create art that is legendary for its elegance and finesse. This beautifully illustrated book showcases unknown gems from personal and public collections, and brings to life the history of this unique craft tradition. Various chapters describe the mysterious origins of the craft, the range of costumes, the inspirations behind common Chikankari motifs, the time-honored elaborate production process, and the bewildering array of stitches that raised this craft to its status as a truly exceptional art form.

Born in Italy, **Paola Manfredi** has lived and worked in India for over thirty years. With a background in ethnology, she is passionate about textiles and deeply interested in the history of textile exchanges between East and West. Combining scholarly learning with approachability, she has worked with communities to promote the excellence of South Asian craftsmanship, particularly in Aary, Chikankari from Lucknow, and Nakshi Kantha from East Bengal (today Bangladesh). Manfredi is associated with a number of international organizations involved with textiles, crafts development and conservation. Her work has been shown in exclusive exhibitions in India and abroad.