

Ghosh\_Abstract

**Project Title:** Fabricating Social Worlds: Women's Embroidered Kantha from Colonial Bengal

**Abstract:**

Kanthas, quilted textiles created and embroidered by Bengali women of elite as well as impoverished circumstances, and Hindu and Muslim religious orientation, have long captured the Bengali imagination. Quotidian articles of daily intimate use, when embellished with intricate embroidery they are valued as family heirlooms, celebrated by national poets, and most recently, commodified in craft emporia. My project analyzes the fabrics as sites where gender, class, and domestic identities were constituted and interrogated in nineteenth-century Bengal. I argue that they yield glimpses into the everyday lives, intimate relationships, and the social worlds shaped and negotiated by their makers before the earliest literary and autobiographical works by women are published.