

The A, B, C's of Art/Sci - Class 1

Getting into the headspace of the art/sci competition and choosing your subject.
Beginning the Research of your project. Learning what questions you need to answer.

Congratulations! You have completed step 1, you are considering learning about and possibly entering Art/Sci!!! Now onto step 2. The first thing you need to realize is that the Trimaris Art/Sci competition is an academic competition where you will be judged based on your project. You will be judged against yourself! You can learn about, recreate and display all kinds of things in the SCA. Just like you can learn to fight heavy, but this does not mean every fighter is meant to fight in the Crown Lyst!

Understanding that A/S is an academic competition where you will be judged, critiqued, commented on and possibly criticized is a vital part of this process. The judges are there for two basic reasons 1) to review your project and then evaluate your performance based on a set of criteria and 2) to provide constructive commentary and helpful hints so that you can IMPROVE your knowledge and skill on the subject you are entering.

Remember the SCA is a game. Entering art/sci is a game. In order to do well when playing a game you must know AND play by the rules. Make yourself aware of what is expected. Additionally, there are many categories you can enter. When you are preparing your project for display make sure you examine all of the categories. Then ensure that you are entering in the most appropriate for your entry. The category that your subject is entered will determine what the judges will be judging you on. By following this class series, we are not guaranteeing you a perfect score. However it should help you understand the processes of developing, researching and entering an art/sci competition. There are many steps to entering art/sci. Take one at a time, don't get ahead of yourself and try not to get overwhelmed. This IS fun, if it is not, step back and take another look and come ask for help!

So what to do first? Make a list of all of the things you think you might want to enter!

Category I am interested in: _____

Subject I would like to work on: _____

Any questions? _____

Next read through the possible divisions and categories. This may help you narrow down your project (or create new ones). <https://sites.google.com/site/trimarisartsscience/arts-and-science-faire-information/kingdom-art-sci-divisions-categories-by-division>

1 Division I: Performance

1.1 Dance

1.2 Dramatic Performance

1.3 Music

1.4 Street or Court Performance

1.5 Period Activities

2 Division II: Textile and Needle Arts

2.1 Textile Arts: Application

2.2 Textile Arts: Construction

2.3 Costume

3 Division III: Technological Sciences

3.1 Armor

3.2 Musical Instrument Making

3.3 Metalwork

3.4 Woodwork

3.5 Miscellaneous Technological Sciences

4 Division IV: Studio Arts & Sciences

4.1 Ceramics, Glass & Pottery

4.2 Fine Arts

4.3 Jewelry & Ornamental Work

4.4 Leather Arts

4.5 Paper Arts

4.6 Miscellaneous Studio Arts

5 Division V: Domestic Arts & Sciences

5.1 Animal Arts

5.2 Beverages

5.3 Food Preparation

5.4 Games & Toys

5.5 Herb Craft

5.6 Horticulture

5.7 Household Arts

5.8 Miscellaneous Domestic Arts

6 Division VI: Written Works

6.1 Annotated Bibliography

6.2 Music Composition

6.3 Poetry

6.4 Research Paper

6.5 Prose

7 Division VII: Society Arts

7.1 Body of Work Displays

7.2 Heraldic Display

7.3 Models

7.4 Persona Displays

7.5 SCA Ambiance

7.6 Teaching Display or Demonstrations

7.7 Tents & Pavilions

8 Division VIII: Children and Youth

8.1 Young elementary

8.2 Elementary

8.3 Middle School

8.4 High School

Next, look at the list and see if it can be simplified. There are many topics that are broad long term projects that if attempted all at once, while possible, can prove to be a bad experience.

For example: I would like to make a German Renaissance outfit

Can this be simplified? YES!!! There are so many parts. First you need to do a little research to find out what the different parts are. You can then split it up and tackle one part per art/sci entry.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1) Hemd/Chemise | 6) Sleeves | 11) Laces |
| 2) Petticoat | 7) Apron | 12) Stockings |
| 3) Kirtle | 8) Hair net | 13) Garters |
| 4) Underskirt | 9) Coif/hair wrap | 14) Jewelry |
| 5) Over dress | 10) Hat | 15) Gloves |

You can see there are many parts to putting together a German outfit.

The second question is: what kind of skill do I already possess in this subject?

If you have NEVER sewn anything before, perhaps starting with the gown is not the right place. However, starting with the apron would be. Of course even that can be broken down into smaller segments: stitches, cartridge pleating, weaving the band, decoration.

Ok, so you have decided to make an apron. Now what?

The most incorrect assumption about art/sci is the need to write a thesis research paper. Documentation IS very important to art/sci. However, the documentation is only the written copy of what you should have already done when you researched your subject. It can be written and presented in MANY formats. The most important things are that it is accurate, complete, appropriate, legible and well organized.

Documentation is difficult when one or more of the following things happen:

1. The project is made first then researched. Often this results in the artisan learning he/she created the subject incorrectly.
2. The project is left until the last minute and therefore “thrown together”.
3. The subject is never researched therefore the “meat” of documentation does not exist.
4. OR the research was not written down as it was found, making the entrant have to “re-find” the information again.

When you research your subject you will find there may be certain aspects of your project that cannot not be re-created identically as they were in period. This is NOT a problem! The purpose of research is to learn how the subject was made, why it was used, who used it...etc. Once you have answered these questions, then it is up to the artisan to decide what “period” methods they want to choose. Many things affect this decision. However, if you can use the period method, try!

Sometimes, mundane laws prohibit a project from being completely period. For example, in parts of the United States, distilling alcohol is illegal. Therefore a substitution would be necessary for any art/sci project that would require the use of a distilled ingredient. According to SCA art/sci rules, the score cannot be affected because of mundane law. There are other reasons such as the level of your entry, health, financial and availability, that may factor into your choice not use a period material or method. There is NOTHING wrong with this AS LONG AS it is written in your documentation! If you want to make a silk banner and want to use synthetic “Silkesence” because it was cheaper, more durable and you already owned some, go right ahead. However, you must include what would have been used in period and then compare it to what you used and explain your choices. Obviously the closer you are to what was used in period (unless it is against the law) the better.

A simple way to do this is to set up a chart. This is a great tool to use as you are researching.

TOOLS, INGREDIENTS, METHODS, MATERIALS	WHAT THEY DID IN PERIOD	REFERENCE SOURCE	WHAT I DID	REASON
EXAMPLE: APRON				
Thread	Linen	Textiles book pg. 8 paragraph 3	Cotton thread	Cheap and I owned some already
Fabric	Linen	Extent example National German museum # 1234	Linen	I had some and it is what they used in period

Under the materials column you should list EVERY item that is necessary to make the subject. This should include ingredients, tools, patterns, skills and many other things. If you have to pick it up or have the knowledge of it, "it" should be listed as a material/method.

Under material/method, list exactly that. As you learn how even the smallest detail was accomplished, WRITE IT DOWN! Then record down where you read or learned it. This is most important!!! As you are reading, studying researching, keep a record of the information as you find it. The worst thing is to know you had found documentation but then cannot find it later. If you find a source write down the basic information so you can make your bibliography later: the title of the source, author, year printed, page # you were studying, publisher, ISBN # if applicable. You don't need to create your bibliography entry right now, but be able to locate the information later. Basically you want to be able to look up and find the statement that you reference in your grid if you need to.

Once you begin to make your reproduction you will fill in the last two columns. At this point you may find that you lack some of the research to finish the project. BEFORE CONTINUING, go back to the books. Sometimes the information just isn't out there. So we use educated guesses to come to the conclusion and decision we use in our projects. For example: you cannot find an extant example (an actual period item that still exists today) of an apron, however you have multiple paintings, illuminations, sculpture and writings that describe them. You know that they had a band to tie it around the waist. You do find head coverings, made of linen with ties, from your same country and period. You can assume that the style of ties that were used on the head coverings could have been used on aprons. There, an educated and supported guess!

Where to find documentation? This is most people's hardest obstacle to overcome. Obviously the library is a good place to start for generic information-the basics. THEN EXPAND YOUR MIND! Get copies of other people's bibliographies, look at the bibliographies listed in the back of books and then look those sources up. Check museums and their catalogs, checkout living history groups, yahoo groups, Wikipedia (while not a good ending source, SOMETIMES, they have good places to start. Check inventories and lists of household/business ledgers, just guild roles, church records, private collections...the list is actually pretty big!

Take the subject and think about all of the people that item would have touched. Who used it then? Bring it into the modern day. Who uses it now? Let's say you are going to learn about bookbinding. Your basics are the cover, the paper and the binding. You should find out where the bookbinder would get all of the ingredients. Is the cover made of leather, if so where did the leather come from? What was the process of turning the animal into a piece of leather you can use? Where did the paper come from? Was it paper from fiber, if so who grew the plant to make the fiber? And so on. You don't necessarily have to recreate all of these steps, but you should be aware of them and record them in your documentation. If you write down all of the possible questions before you start researching, it will give you a place to start. Remember the level of your project also affects just how in depth you choose to research.

Answering the Who, What, When, Where, How and Why about all aspects of your projects will help you get all of the steps too! One place that can help you start in forming these questions is the art/sci forms. There are judging forms for each level and for the first two levels, Novice and Journeyman, there are fill-in-the-blank forms. However, you should have all of the answers already in your documentation. The questions are:

When and where is this object from?

How was it made in period? What ingredients were used?

How did you make it and why? Please list all ingredients

What was it used for?

What was it made out of? Please list all period ingredients?

What did you make it out of and why? Any substitutions?

Remember, before you begin acquiring materials or making your project you want to have as much of the research done first as possible! The worst feeling is discovering after you have made it, if only I had done "X" instead it would have been more period!

Getting started can seem intimidating, but break it down into little steps and you can do it!

Art/Sci is fun!!!

Please continue to Class #2!