

Notes for guidance – Patterns of Fashion Award

The Patterns of Fashion Award honours the work of the dress historian Janet Arnold (1932-1998), a founder member of the Society. The Awards are an important part of the Costume Society's output that promotes the high standard of craft and artistry that they produce.

- The competition is for a reconstruction, not an interpretation. Student should aim to reconstruct a garment from one of Janet Arnold's *Patterns of Fashion* books or Norah's Waugh's *Cut of Men's Clothes* and *Cut of Women's Clothes*, as far as possible to the pattern specifications – not to a contemporary figure or to a scaled down size.
- Please note, if you use the new editions of *Patterns of Fashion* published by The School of Historical Dress, you must correctly cite the creator of the pattern if not Janet Arnold. There are many new contributors who use Arnold's methodology to create new knowledge about historical dress. It is good academic practice to correctly credit your sources.
- The garment will be judged on silhouette, line and period accuracy in construction and material choices, relative to the chosen pattern.
- Wherever possible students should have viewed an original garment of a similar style, as the patterns can be challenging to interpret. Students should also consult further scholarship such as the work being undertaken by Jenny Tiramani. Access to museums and archives can be difficult with many major collections closed for moves and renovations. This will be considered in the judging. Please refer to the list below for possible alternative sources.
- The judges will be looking at construction techniques, styling, silhouette, and period accuracy rather than assessing colour and fibre content. However, whichever fabric is selected, it should have a similar weight, drape and handle to the original garment.
- Garments dated before the introduction of the sewing machine should be entirely hand sewn.
- The garment should be displayed on a stand with suitable period underpinning to achieve the correct silhouette and photographed for submission. The judges will take account of this display in their consideration of accuracy. It may be necessary to use a smaller stand that has been padded to achieve the correct proportions.
- Photographs are required to assist the judges by showing all relevant views, including the inside of the garment, and any detailed finishes highlighted by Janet Arnold's and Norah Waugh's primary research. Judges will be looking at how the garment sits on the stand in order to produce an accurate silhouette.
- Students must also submit up to five photos of the completed garment in high resolution (min 300 dpi) to support the judging process and for use in Costume Society associated media.
- Students will also submit a PDF documenting the making process. We suggest creating a PowerPoint, which you can save as a PDF. **The page count is maximum 20 pages.** Your document should be carefully curated and demonstrate your making process through research, analysis and application to your costume. Include slides showing the Janet Arnold or Norah Waugh pattern that you have chosen, and detailed photos of your costume as explained above.

- o Judging will take place during the summer of 2026, usually at the Costume Society's Annual General Meeting.

Deadlines

Monday 8th December 2025

Deadline for submitting Application form.

Please complete applications using this Google form

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfLmQR4HbJv9n1c9a_aAEhQAtqjqaM13rW_OUdY6OAaPRkyjQ/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=107959030321066385689

Monday 25^h January 2026

Deadline for submitting final PDF, photos and Image Release Form

Please email to: patternsawards@costumesociety.org.uk

Shortlisting

The Awards team aim to shortlist by the end of February 2026. The three selected finalists will be invited to submit their finished garments and accompanying film (see below) for judging in July 2026 as part of a Costume Society event (dates, format and location to be confirmed).

We also ask the three finalists to make a short 3-minute film (MP4) showing their finished costume and discussing the process of making it. Why was the Janet Arnold or Norah Waugh pattern chosen? What were the problems encountered when using it? What has worked best in the making? What was the most difficult and how were these problems resolved? The films will be used as part of the final judging. They will also be uploaded to the Costume society YouTube site for viewing by members.

The deadline for films is: 8th June 2025

Please email to: patternsawards@costumesociety.org.uk

Viewing original garments from Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*.

Sadly, many of the garments featured in Janet Arnold's books are now too fragile to be handled, and we encourage students to find similar garments of the same date to view.

Like Norah Waugh and Janet Arnold, you will have to find under-explored collection pieces to inform your work. It is worth checking with your local museum, as many hold collections of historic garments. Many Universities and Colleges also have useful collections of historic dress.

Collections that may be of use;

John Bright Collection (London)

<https://www.thejohnbrightcollection.co.uk/>

[Gawthorpe Hall \(Burnley\)](#)

<https://www.gawthorpetextiles.org.uk/>

[Hopkins Foundation Collection](#)

https://hopkinscostumetrust.org/wiki/Main_Page

[Worthing Museum \(Sussex\)](#)

<https://wtm.uk/collections/costume/>

[Olive Matthews Chertsey \(Surrey\)](#)

<https://chertseymuseum.org/Fashion>

[Nottingham Museums](#)

<https://nottinghammuseums.org.uk/category/collections/costume-textiles/>

[The Blandford Fashion Museum](#)

<https://blandfordfashionmuseum.co.uk/home/>

[Platt Hall](#)

<http://www.platthall.org/>

Suggested Bibliography

Cut and Construction of Historical Dress

Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 1: The content, cut, construction and context of Englishwomen's dress c.1720-1860*, London: The School of Historical Dress, 2021

Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 2: The content, cut, construction and context of women's dress c.1860-1940*, London, The School of Historical Dress, 2022

Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 3: the cut and construction of clothes for men and women 1560-1620*, London: Macmillan, 1985/1987

Janet Arnold, Jenny Tiramani & Santina M Levey, *Patterns of Fashion 4: the cut and construction of linen shirts, smocks, neckwear, headwear and accessories for men and women c.1540-1660*, London: Macmillan, 2008

Janet Arnold, Jenny Tiramani, Luca Costigliolo, Sebastien Passot, Armelle Lucas and Johannes Pietsch, *Patterns of Fashion 5: The content, cut, construction and context of bodies, stays, hoops and rumps c. 1595-1795*, London, The School of Historical Dress, 2019

Janet Arnold, Jenny Tiramani, Luca Costigliolo, Sebastien Passot, Armelle Lucas and Johannes Pietsch, *Patterns of Fashion 6: The content, cut, construction and context of European women's dress c.1695-1795*, London, The School of Historical Dress, 2022

Norah Waugh, *The cut of women's Clothes: 1600-1930*, London: Faber and Faber, 1994.

Norah Waugh, *The cut of men's clothes: 1600-1914*, London: Faber and Faber, 1994

The following books may assist in the interpretation of the Janet Arnold patterns:

Melanie Braun et al, *Seventeenth-Century Men's Dress Patterns, 1600-1630*, London: V&A & Thames & Hudson, 2016

Caroline Johnson, *The King's Servants: Men's Dress at the accession of Henry VIII*, Guildford: Fat Goose Press, 2009
Ninya Mikhaila & Jane Malcolm-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor*, London: Batsford, 2006
Linda Baumgarten & John Watson, *Costume Close-up: Clothing Construction and Pattern 1750-1790*, Colonial Williamsburg & Quite Specific Media, 1999

The following titles will provide background on the scholarly context for making, re-making and examining historic dress as research methodologies;

Alexndra Kim and Ingrid Mida, *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object Based Research in Fashion*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015

Hilary Davidson, *The Embodied Turn: Making and Remaking Dress as an Academic Practice*, *Fashion Theory*, 23:3, 329-362, 2019

Hilary Davidson, *Reconstructing Jane Austen's Silk Pelisse, 1812-1814*, *Costume*, 49:2, 198-223, 2015

This article is open access and can be found here;

<https://www.eupublishing.com/doi/10.1179/0590887615Z.00000000076>

You should read widely about dress in the period that you are reconstructing, and we encourage you to use the wealth of material published in *Costume* the Journal of the Costume Society. The full archive of which can be accessed by society members here;

<https://costumesociety.org.uk/journal>