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Claude Monet (French, 1840–1926)

*Madame Louis Joachim Gaudibert*, 1868

Oil on canvas; 85 7/16 x 54 9/16 in. (217 x 138.5 cm)

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Acquired thanks to an anonymous Canadian gift, 1951

The silhouette depicted in the painting is an example of Victorian Silhouette. During the Victorian era clothes were often symbolized one's place in society. Foremost it was classified in terms of social class. This look is mainly achieved by wearing a tightly corset paired with skirt

which included embroideries and trims over layers of petticoats. However, the garments were not comfortable. The fabrics and the layers were worn as a symbol of wealth. The main element of this dress is the bustle which creates an exaggerated horizontal protrusion at the back. Bustles comes in all shapes and sizes. This particular prop gave woman's an elegant posture. They were constructed with steel while others resembled colorful cushions. Bustles were often stuffed with horsehair, down and even straw to achieve the desired fullness. The color of the dress is olive with white embroidery work including patterns of pleats falling down. The women paired a colorful shawl to compliment her outfit.

From my observation the women look very elegant and well-coordinated. However, I think the dress is uncomfortable to wear. This is not a casual everyday wear. During the activity when I tried on a fitted garment, it gave me a nice posture. As much as I loved the look, I was not comfortable with the garment having it on. The fitted garment didn't shape my curves but hugged on me like a glove. As women we often get misinterpreted with the idea, sexiest are the tightest. We often try to squeeze into tight jeans, where we have to suck in our stomach to get the button to close. As a woman, we were taught to accept the ideology of beauty is pain but Its less likely to consider how pain could be negatively impacting our health. Starting from harmful chemicals in our makeup to back problems caused by high heels, many these beauty rituals are doing more harm to our bodies than we think. The worst part is that it can interfere with our circulation.

In the article "Corsets and Bustles," physical wellbeing and body comfort were booming to new creations combining luxury with a concern for health and fitness. Dr Gustave Jaeger promoted that woolen clothing is a better option for health. He stated that wearing natural

undyed wool next to the skin was a healthy alternative to silk or cotton leaving the skin dry and warm. In 1890s Jaeger was marketing a range of woollen underwear including 'Sanitary Woollen Corsets' for women. The woollen Jaeger corset consists adjustable shoulder straps and front buttoning making it more comfortable to wear.

In conclusion thinking that you need to wear tight clothes to feel sexy or give that perfect hourglass figure can be damaging to your health and self-esteem. Instead we should aim for wearing the right size. Comfortable loose-fitting clothes are some great ways to optimize our wardrobe for better health, confidence and yet remaining stylish.