

Participatory Experience (Maggie Rosine, Paulette Day, Suzanne LeRoy)

1) Introduction to the second portrait of Mrs. Mary Brown Tyler (*Mrs. T in Cream Silk, No.2*), 1920, painted by the American artist George Bellows. This portrait was compared to the first portrait, *Mrs. T in Wine Silk*, 1919, also painted by George Bellows.

Theme: Lasting Impressions



Mrs. T. in Cream Silk, No.2, 1920
George Bellows
Oil on canvas
60.33



Mrs. T in Wine Silk, 1919
George Bellows
Oil on canvas
Hirschorn Museum

We divided the group into two smaller groups of seven each; both groups assembled the same puzzle image of *Mrs. T in Wine Silk*. The only difference was in the shape of the puzzle pieces: one group had traditional pieces with nubs and crooks and the other group had diagonal shapes and forms. The puzzle pieces were presented to each group in a box that served as the frame for the completed puzzle. Each box had an image of *Mrs. T in Wine Silk*, for guidance. A Victorian poem about marriage was also included in the box for the groups to read together.

After assembling the puzzle, Victorian props were passed out for a tactile experience of the wedding dress in *Mrs. T in Cream Silk, No. 2*. The props we used for this experience, corset, fan, brooch, and gloves were part of the necessary accessories a Victorian lady would not be without. They were as much a part of her identity as her facial features and helped form her appearance and persona. When the public is able to handle props connected with the art they are viewing, the props help create a tactile connection to their visual observances and in the case of Mrs. T, a connection to her and the artist's interpretation of her personality.