

**SA553730**

## William Huggins, 1820 – 1884 Portrait of a Victorian Conchologist wearing Lace Mop Cap, Ruff and Jewelry

Price

**GBP 4,500**

| USD \$6,089 | EUR 5,265

**Item Reference: SA553730****Date of manufacture: 19th Century**

Dimensions

Height = 77 cm (30.3")

Width = 64 cm (25.2")

Depth = 3 cm (1.2")

## Description

William Huggins, 1820 – 1884 Portrait of a Victorian Conchologist wearing Lace Mop Cap, Ruff and Jewelry oil on canvas 30 x 25 in. (76.20 x 63.50 cm.) Throughout the nineteenth-century the mania for seashells steadily swelled; they featured on Christmas cards, and adorned countless keepsakes, jewellery, and furniture. The Gradgrind nursery in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* is equipped with a "little conchological cabinet, a little metallurgical cabinet, and a little mineralogical cabinet", whilst, inspired by works of natural history, men and women scoured the seashore for conchological specimens. Conchology, unlike other branches of natural history such as zoology or mineralogy was easily accessible to everyone, and did not require specialist equipment. It also had the added bonus of including inanimate specimens that were not subject to disease or decay. George Spratt's composite caricature of 'The Conchologist' offers a personification of the craze – a woman, fashioned from shells of marine life, is depicted scanning the sea-side for her kin: her basket is filled with sprigs of seaweed and various tide pool treasures. Her rather ineffectual sun-bonnet looks to be crafted...

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## Seller Details

### Artware Fineart

18 La Gare 51 Surrey Row London SE1 0BZ United Kingdom

Tel: 07958 699 645

International Tel: +44 7958 699 645

