



Nicolaus Christopher Matthes

Still life with shells

Nicolaus Christopher Matthes (Hamburg 1729 - 1796)

Oil on oak wood

37 x 46,5 cm

Collecting exotic snails was a noble activity in the 17th and 18th centuries. Sea shells in particular, such as those in the present still life, were found in many collections of rarities and natural objects and demonstrated the owner's wealth and education. Sea snails, for example, were seen as a sign of vanity and the transience of life.