



## Set Of 5 Unmounted Shell Cameos, Late 19th And 20th Centuries



160 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Width : 2

Height : 3

### Description

Set of 5 shell cameos depicting a woman's profile, a raw shell, and 3 small, finely carved flowers.

Late 19th and 20th centuries. Dimensions:

Woman's profile: H 3 x W 2 cm, shell: H 3 x W

2.4 cm, flowers: approximately 1 cm in diameter.

A shell cameo is a low-relief sculpture carved from a marine shell, often used to create elegant and classic jewelry. These shells, such as those of

the *Cassis madagascariensis*, have contrasting layers of color, allowing for the carving of

visually appealing designs. Shell cameos are generally more fragile than those carved from

stone, with a pinkish-orange background and a white or cream foreground. Cameos have a rich

and fascinating history, dating back to antiquity.

Origins in Antiquity The first cameos appeared as early as the 6th century BC in Greece, where they

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were carved from semi-precious stones such as onyx and sardonyx. They often depicted mythological or heroic figures and were used as ornaments or seals. Under the Roman Empire This art reached its zenith. Cameos, worn by the elite, symbolized power and refinement. Masterpieces such as the "Grand Camée de France" date from this period. Middle Ages and Renaissance During the Middle Ages, the art of cameo declined but was revived during the Renaissance thanks to Italian artistic influence. Cameos became prestigious objects prized by European royal courts, notably by Queen Elizabeth I and Napoleon Bonaparte, who founded a school dedicated to this art in 1804. Evolution in the 19th Century In the 19th century, cameos experienced a resurgence in popularity. To meet growing demand, less expensive materials like glass or shell were used. They became fashion accessories for all social classes. Today, after a period of neglect, cameos are back in vogue in contemporary jewelry, blending tradition and modernity.