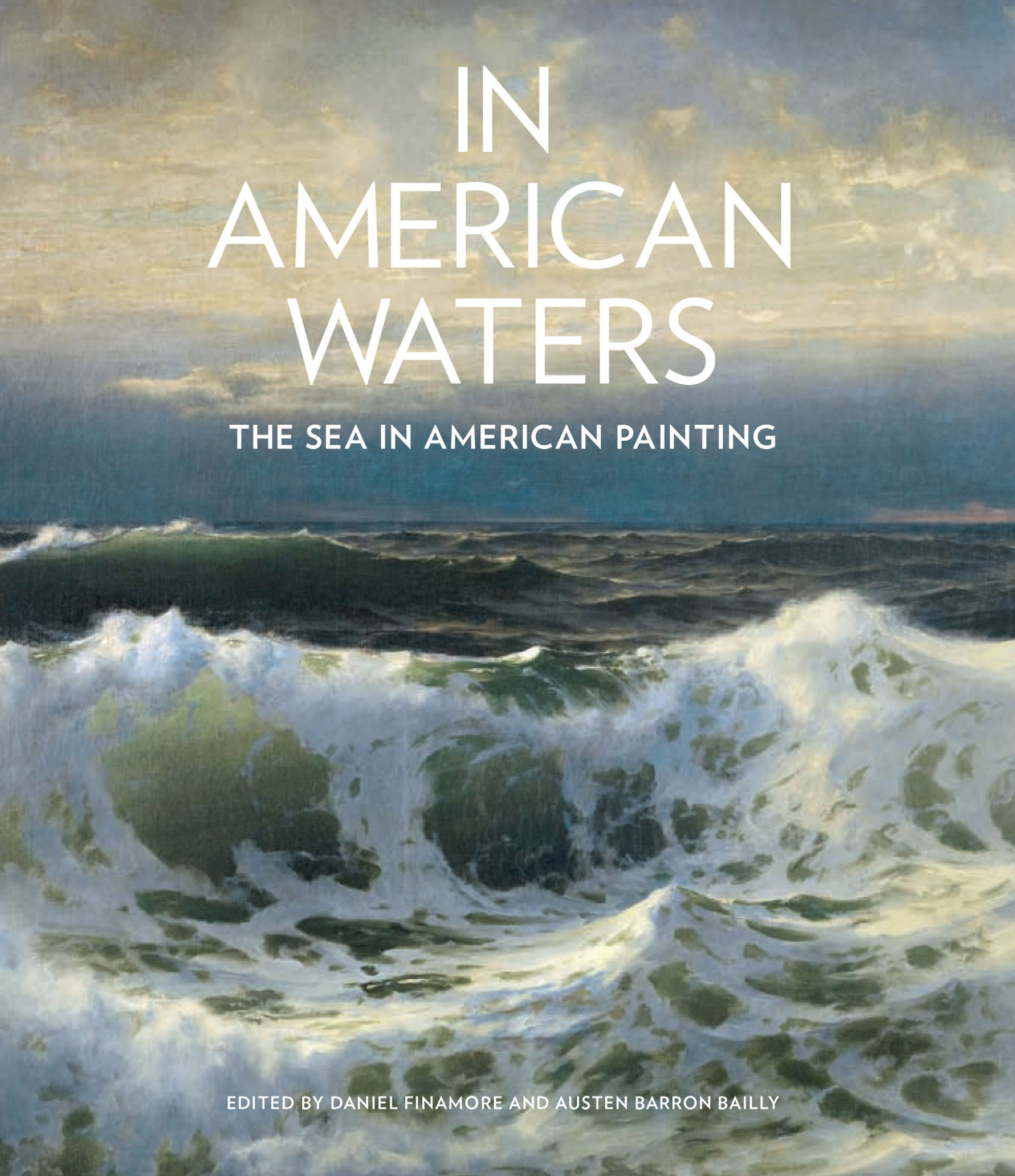

# IN AMERICAN WATERS

## THE SEA IN AMERICAN PAINTING

EDITED BY DANIEL FINAMORE AND AUSTEN BARRON BAILLY

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Edited by Daniel Finamore and Austen Barron Bailly

With contributions by Austen Barron Bailly, Mindy N. Besaw, Sarah N. Chasse,
Daniel Finamore, and George H. Schwartz

Peabody Essex Museum Salem, Massachusetts / Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Bentonville, Arkansas
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# FOREWORD

*But look! here come more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! Nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land. . . . They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in. And there they stand—miles of them—leagues. Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues—north, east, south, and west. Yet here they all unite.*

—Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*

The sea shapes America and its painters, who have long turned to it as a source of inspiration and employed it—and the vessels sailing upon it—as a symbol of the country's identity and aspirations. As the great American novelist Herman Melville, with wonderment, so keenly observed, whether people live on the coasts or far inland, they appear magnetically drawn to the water and the symbolic and emotional impact of the marine. It is especially fitting, therefore, that the Peabody Essex Museum and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art have partnered to co-organize *In American Waters: The Sea in American Painting*. This exhibition and publication offer new perspectives on the ways in which marine painting is an integral and wide-ranging form of expression of American art, culture, and environment.

Maritime history is fundamental to the Peabody Essex Museum, founded in 1799 by the East India Marine Society in Salem, Massachusetts. That city, located sixteen miles northeast of Boston and situated at the head of one of New England's most historic harbors, gave rise to a museum whose origins and audiences echo, then as well as today, a dedication to preserving and exploring more than four hundred years of New England's maritime history and global connections. Crystal Bridges, founded in 2011 by Alice Walton to welcome all to celebrate the unfolding story of American art, is located in Bentonville, Arkansas. Nestled in the Ozarks, Bentonville is part of a mountainous region known for its abundant waterways in the form of springs, creeks, lakes, and rivers, most notably the White River originating in the Boston Mountains of northwest Arkansas and ultimately feeding into the mighty Mississippi River, which flows to the Gulf of Mexico and the oceans beyond that interconnect our world. It is from our distinct geographical positions and from our shared ambitions to expand the narratives of American art that we have embarked on this inaugural collaborative venture. The resulting project features a greater range of artists and stylistic expressions than ever before seen in an exhibition devoted to marine painting—from colonial portraiture, to naval battles, ship launches, beach frolickers, and industrial piers, to cresting waves, limitless horizons, and imaginings of the ocean bottom in between.

We applaud the comprehensive and revisionist approach of cocurators Daniel Finamore, associate director–exhibitions and The Russell W. Knight Curator of Maritime Art and History at the Peabody Essex Museum, and Austen Barron Bailly, chief curator at Crystal Bridges, and their teams. Rather than revisit the well-known themes and repeatedly discussed artists and works within the canon of American marine painting as it is traditionally defined, they have turned their attention to the ways in which contemporary perspectives are informed by marine traditions and delved into changing attitudes about the symbolic and emotional resonance of the sea in American

life and imagination, past to present. Their decidedly interdisciplinary method expands upon conventional approaches to art history and embraces aspects of fields as disparate as neuroaesthetics, linguistics, cartography, and navigation, as well as atmospheric, oceanographic, and cognitive sciences. They incorporate intersections with these areas of study, build upon specialized marine knowledge, and expand the canonical geography for marine painting well beyond its origins in the eastern United States to emphasize a more inclusive framework for American geography and cultural history. In so doing, they have been able to foreground more diverse American perspectives, while encompassing more than three centuries of artistic expression. This exhibition and publication challenge preconceptions and perceptions of both the coastal and the oceanic boundaries surrounding the idea of "American waters."

Many of the artists featured, such as William Trost Richards, were specialists, dedicated to exploring the myriad facets of the marine year upon year. Others, such as Barkley L. Hendricks, turned to the sea at particular periods of their career and as a means of escape from the rigors of another world. It is also important to recognize that the sea was perhaps an insurmountable obstacle for some artists, who never chose to tackle its challenges. For those who did, it gave rise to some of the greatest achievements in American painting. We are proud to say that the oldest continuously operating museum in the United States and one of the newest have collected and continue to collect many of these works, enabling us to create the central framework of this project, and that the core strengths of our respective collections of American painting defined its reach. Distinctive works in the Peabody Essex Museum's collection, such as Michele Felice Cornè's dramatic visual reenactment of the USS *Constitution*'s historic engagement with the HMS *Guerriere* (1812) and icons of marine painting such as James Buttersworth's *Ship* Dreadnought *Passing Sandy Hook* (1854) and George Ropes Jr.'s *Launching of the Ship* Fame (1802) encounter *Summer Day* (1911) in Crystal Bridges's collection, a double portrait painted by Salem-based Frank Weston Benson of his daughters Elisabeth and Sylvia watching a sailing race. Benson's sensibilities as an artist may well have first been awakened by some of these same marine paintings during visits to his local museum. And a contemporary monument of Crystal Bridges's collection—Amy Sherald's over-life-size portrait of four Black youths at the beach, *Precious jewels by the sea* (2019)—is evocative of the leisurely seaside experience depicted by Benson, reimagined for our time. From internationalist visual expressions to meditations on American marine spaces and people, these treasured paintings are the keel supporting the ship that is this exhibition and publication. The unexpected and beautiful selection of works conveying the potent multiplicity of perspectives and narratives in American marine painting is what deftly propels this proverbial ship forward as it endeavors to chart a new course for American art history.

This project is a prime example of what historians have identified as the oceanic turn—a shift in focus that broadens our understanding of history, in this case by erasing the outmoded notion that the sea is an obstacle between populated lands, or even that it is merely, for those with appropriate nautical technology, a highway that connects them. *In American Waters* conceives of oceanic space as a place of critical importance for personal reflection and artistic inspiration. It also acknowledges that it is a site of profound human struggle. For many, the sea remains overlooked as a crucial location where national—and personal—identity has been established, reinforced, and constantly reimagined. This project therefore redirects the emphasis on ideologies of Manifest Destiny so prevalent among art historians who have fixated upon landscape, particularly of the American West. Rather than accepting those terrains as the central defining elements of the country's nationalist tendencies and their reflection in painting, this exhibition and publication show that these tendencies extend with equal intensity into the marine. The craft and predominance of painting make it the primary choice for exploring these concepts and their limits. A wide array of American artists engaging with the sea have gravitated to the medium because of paint's allure and materiality, and because of painting's particular abilities to convey artistic skill, meaning, and attitudes about one's place in the world.

We commend the ways in which Finamore and Bailly and their talented colleagues rose to the unique challenges posed by the obstacles that arose throughout 2020 to realize this exhibition and publication and to produce these fresh perspectives on American marine painting. These efforts were aided by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, whose ongoing support of our institutions and investment in our communities enrich us all. Sponsors of the Peabody Essex Museum installation include dedicated members of the maritime art and history visiting committee, in particular Sam and Tracey Byrne, Lee Campbell Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Thaddeus R. Gillespie, Connie and Stan Grayson, Mr. and Mrs. Ulf Heide, Tim and Joanie Ingraham, Mr. and Mrs. William J. Kneisel, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen S. Lash, Angus and Leslie Littlejohn, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart W. Pratt, Abby and Gene Record, Chip and Susan Robie, and Mr. and Mrs. Ernst von Metszch, as well as Fiduciary Trust Company, the Salem Marine Society, and Amanda Clark MacMullan. Sponsors at Crystal Bridges include Citizens Bank and Sarah and Jeff Teague. To Crystal Bridges founder and Board chairwoman Alice Walton, whose deep love and appreciation of American painting and American history underscore this entire project, we express our profound thanks.

Elements that one might expect in any maritime project such as accounts of seafaring life, industry, and conflict are indeed to be found in *In American Waters*, but a view from the masthead spots additional key thematic strands that enliven this book and exhibition. The visions and social realities of labor and leisure by and on the sea

reveal it to be a contested place of competing perceptions and aspirations that express a spectrum of human emotion and experience. We marvel at the ways in which maritime paintings are particularly adept at evoking sonic qualities—the relentlessly repetitive crashing of surf upon a beach, the pounding of wooden treenails into beams in a shipyard, and sailors calling out to one another from a ship's deck or high in the rigging. And we have become attuned to the signaled noises of human activity such as the tolling of bells, laborers' chanteys, and cannon fire, which can register the same emotional power as that of the open ocean with only the wind whistling over wave tops. May the power of marine painting and the perspectives from the beach to the horizon transport you.

Stuart W. Pratt
Chair, Board of Trustees
Peabody Essex Museum

Rod Bigelow
Executive Director and Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer,
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art


# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In light of all that has transpired since this project was conceived, we happily yield to the temptation to think about this exhibition and publication like a sea voyage. Turbulent at times due to unforeseen circumstances, the journey to realize *In American Waters: The Sea in American Painting* has been guided by a united and stalwart crew, undeterred by setbacks ranging from the impacts of a global pandemic to staff changes at our respective institutions. These evolving conditions encouraged all involved to develop a kind of mariner's mentality characterized by steadfast determination, patience, creativity, and endurance.

We are deeply grateful to our chief navigators in this endeavor, Brian P. Kennedy, formerly The Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Director and CEO, Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), and Rod Bigelow, Executive Director and Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. They saw the value in joining forces and co-organizing *In American Waters* to move the project full speed ahead. In light of this inaugural collaboration between our two institutions and the subject matter of this project, John Wilmerding, professor emeritus of American art and adjunct curator, Princeton University Art Museum, deserves special recognition for his contributions to the field. In 1968 the Peabody Museum of Salem published Wilmerding's classic study *A History of American Marine Painting*, a point of departure for our current undertaking, and today Wilmerding serves as a member of the


Crystal Bridges Board of Trustees. At PEM, we are especially grateful for the leadership of Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, formerly The James B. and Mary Lou Hawkes Deputy Director and Chief Curator, whose long-standing belief in a broader vision for maritime art helped inspire us to launch this project.

The present study has been aided by the superb research and collaboration of Sarah N. Chasse and George H. Schwartz, associate curators at PEM. Their invaluable contributions, from checklist development to essays within this volume, speak not only to their individual expertise and camaraderie but also to their wide-ranging knowledge of the traditions and histories of American maritime history and art. The production of this book was ably coordinated by a team of many at PEM and the University of Arkansas Press. Special acknowledgment must be given to Rebecca Bednarz, PEM's editor for exhibition research and publishing, for her expansive role as managing editor and for stepping into the breach in the face of gale-force winds. Additional key project support from Priscilla Danforth, director of exhibition planning and display, and Caitlin Lowrie, exhibition project coordinator, helped us course correct and find smooth sailing. The book's editor, Michelle Piranio, seamlessly wove together all the content, which was given beautiful form by book designer Jena Sher. Thanks go to Kathy Tarantola for photography of the PEM works; Edward C. Robison III, photographer for Crystal Bridges; and Pam Moffat for image permissions. We offer special gratitude to former PEM publishing staff members Kathy Fredrickson, who expertly plotted our initial course for production and collaboration with the press, and Claire Blechman, who contributed to the early development of this book.

Special curatorial thanks go, at PEM, to Karen Kramer, curator of Native American and oceanic art and culture, for sharing her expertise and making critical connections between this project and Native art, artists, and communities, and to Trevor Smith, associate director–multisensory experience and curator of the present tense, for his expert guidance on contemporary works for the exhibition. At Crystal Bridges, Mindy N. Besaw, curator, American art and director of fellowships and research, deepened connections for this project between land and sea in American art and culture through her essay in this volume, and Lauren Haynes, director of artist initiatives and curator, contemporary art, made pivotal suggestions that shaped our approaches to the contemporary artists in the exhibition.

Many members of the exhibition and collections management teams at each institution contributed significantly to realizing this project. At PEM, we heartily thank Tedi Asher, neuroscience researcher; John D. Childs, director of collections and the Ann C. Pingree Director of the Phillips Library; Kathleen Corcoran, director of institutional giving; Mollie Denhard, exhibition preparator; Liz Gardner, former interpretation planner; Cristy Hebert, former evaluation associate;

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We are grateful to the volunteers, interns, and fellows who have assisted with research over the course of the project. Our thanks to James Vaccarino and Joan Vaughan Ingraham for their thorough investigations in newspapers and other sources of the careers of marine artists and the reception of their works. Grace Ksander and Kathleen Lee, former PEM interns, and Joshua Johnson, former Art Bridges fellow at Crystal Bridges, provided invaluable research assistance. Art historian Francesca Soriano conducted inspired scholarly research to support the development of Bailly's essay on horizons.

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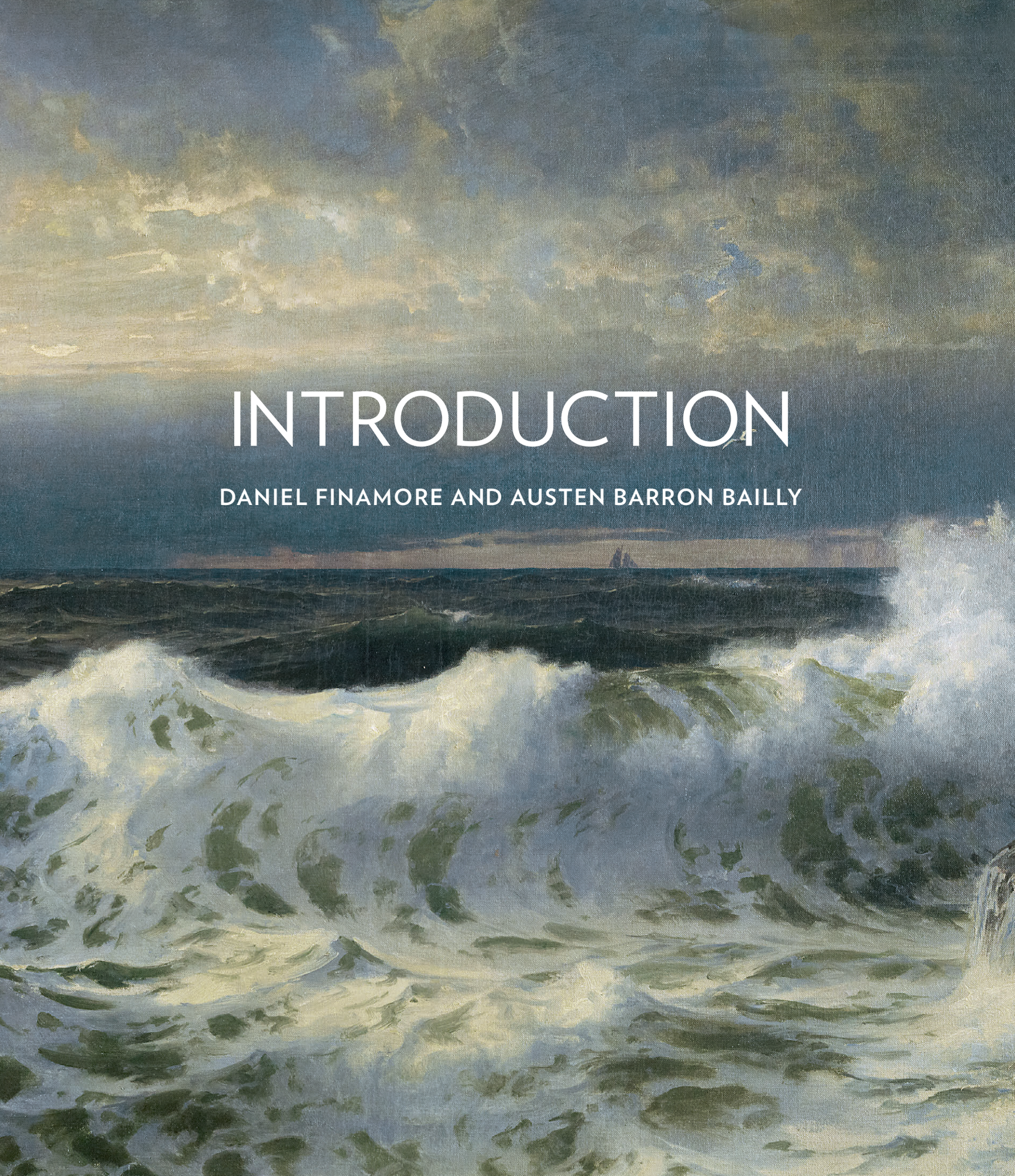
Many artists today engage deeply with the sea and its histories, continuing and reimagining American art traditions. We are very pleased to feature works by Nick Cave, Valerie Hegarty, Kerry James Marshall, Kent Monkman, Clifford Ross, Amy Sherald, and Kay WalkingStick in this book, and wish to thank them for the opportunity to do so.

And finally, we thank Michelle, Jonathan, Oliver, Lee, Madeleine, and Jane for being our ports in the storm of 2020.

Daniel Finamore
Associate Director–Exhibitions and The Russell W. Knight Curator of Maritime Art and History, Peabody Essex Museum

Austen Barron Bailly
Chief Curator, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art



# INTRODUCTION

DANIEL FINAMORE AND AUSTEN BARRON BAILLY

**IN 1885 EDWARD MORAN WAS CONSIDERED AMERICA'S** finest marine painter. At the height of his career, he undertook his last major project, a grand pictorial summation of America's historical trajectory stemming from an exceptional relationship with the sea. He called this nationalistic endeavor *Historical Paintings Representing Important Epochs in the Maritime History of the United States*.[1] The series strove to present thirteen moments leading to the nation's establishment, and he addressed European exploration with *Landing of Lief Erickson [*sic*] in the New World in the Year 1001*, *The Debarkation of Columbus (Morning of October 12th, 1492)*, and *Midnight Mass on the Mississippi, Over the Body of Ferdinand De Soto, 1542*. He followed with events that traditionally have been viewed as formative to America's nation-building, such as the landing of the pilgrims, the first recognition of the US flag overseas, naval wars from Tripoli to the War of 1812, and the development of iron warships—while avoiding the Civil War itself. The series culminated with *Return of the Conquerors* to portray the close of the Spanish-American War.

The series was displayed in the Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, and then offered unsuccessfully at a Philadelphia art gallery, never finding a buyer. And following Moran's death, the group of thirteen paintings was the only lot left unsold at his estate auction.[2] In 1904 the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibited the paintings in New York, followed by a lengthy run at the first National Gallery of Art (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum) in Washington, DC, but neither institution acquired them. Despite claims that the works were "monumental in their character and importance," bills to authorize their purchase by Congress never passed.[3] Moran's codification of American history as an imperial maritime enterprise expressive of national achievement and personal heroism was moot.

To look anew at American marine painting, *In American Waters* reckons with Moran's ideologies and rhetoric in an attempt to move beyond them. We have studied and analyzed the colonial and Eurocentric origins of marine painting with the goal of challenging the assumption that marine painting is defined solely by them or is limited in focus to visual representations of the sea and ships in the tradition of nineteenth-century realism. Congress's unwillingness to embrace Moran's project is one backdrop to this new study of American marine painting. Today we recognize that the exceptionalist, nationalist, indeed imperialist character of Moran's series more than a century ago still fails to address the ways in which the sea symbolizes far more wide-ranging expressions of American ambition, opportunity, and invention.

A prime example of these revisionist approaches to American marine narratives is *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)* (2019; figs. 1a, 1b) by Kent Monkman (Cree). Commissioned for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Great Hall and exhibited 115 years after the presentation of Moran's marine history paintings at the museum, *mistikôsiwak* rebalances the crucial relationships in marine painting between narrative, history, emotion, and authenticity. In his pair of grand history paintings—titled *Welcoming the Newcomers* and *Resurgence of the People*—Monkman reverses the canonical gaze represented by a project such as Moran's to, in the artist's words, "reflect, at least as an Indigenous person, what this colonial history has meant to us. As an artist, I wanted to bring Indigenous experience into this canon of art history."[4]

Finding connection with Monkman's stated belief in "the power of painting" and love of the "language of painting," *In American Waters* is a collaborative and interdisciplinary project that combines art history, marine history, and even neuroscience to encompass greater geographical breadth, a diverse range of artists and artistic expressions, and a more inclusive vision for American marine painting and American art more broadly.[5] To these ends, this exhibition is the first to grapple with how attitudes about the sea may be manifest in works that are not traditional seascapes. Rather than hew narrowly to the seascape as the defining feature of marine painting, we look to legacies of the Middle Passage, immigrants' points of entry, industry and political conflict, and sailor culture, as well as to visions of the undersea world and abstraction.

*In American Waters* also contends with the country's nationalist tendencies and their reflection in American painting, which is traditionally bound up with notions of Manifest Destiny and landscapes depicting appropriated and colonized land but extends just as forcefully into the marine.[6] Consider Henry Reuterdahl's *Passing of United States Fleet in the Straits of Magellan, the Morning of February 8, 1908* (1910; fig. 2), which portrays the US Navy's "Great White Fleet" of sixteen battleships at the southern tip of South America that allows passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.[7] The battleships, each painted white, and their support vessels circumnavigated the globe on a "diplomatic" cruise from 1907 to 1909, intending to show the world the country's modern naval strength and ability to protect American interests in all international waters. President Theodore Roosevelt, who subscribed to the naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan's ideas about the necessity of sea power in empire building, directed the undertaking, one of the navy's most ambitious peacetime endeavors.[8] Roosevelt selected the Swedish-born Reuterdahl to document it as an official navy artist to be embedded with the crew of the USS *Minnesota*. Reuterdahl was an artist of high public profile, having produced many navy recruiting posters that were seen by millions, and remained a successful illustrator-correspondent for popular magazines. As a sailor-artist aboard the vessel, he was able to observe the other ships in formation and capture a distinct perspective of the entire fleet as a twisting line steaming through the narrow strait, which European explorers once traversed.

American paintings of the sea can define and look at America's borders—and beyond—in aesthetically and conceptually varied ways. A work such as Aaron Douglas's *Into Bondage* (fig. 3), one of the murals he made for the lobby of the Hall of Negro Life at the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas, suggests how American marine

Figures 1a and 1b Kent Monkman (born 1965), *Welcoming the Newcomers* (top), 2019, and *Resurgence of the People* (bottom), 2019, from the installation *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 132 × 264 in. (335.3 × 670.6 cm) each, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase, Donald R. Sobey Foundation CAF Canada Project Gift, 2020

Figure 2 Henry Reuterdahl (1871–1925), *Passing of United States Fleet in the Straits of Magellan, the Morning of February 8, 1908*, 1910, oil on canvas, 40 × 67 in. (101.6 × 170.2 cm), United States Naval Academy Museum, gift of Mrs. William S. Sims, USNAM 1950.005 (cat. no. 62)


Figure 3 Aaron Douglas (1899–1979), *Into Bondage*, 1936, oil on canvas, 60 3/8 × 60 1/2 in. (153.4 × 153.7 cm), National Gallery of Art, Corcoran Collection, museum purchase and partial gift from Thurlow Evans Tibbs Jr., The Evans-Tibbs Collection, 2014.79.17


Figure 4 Harry Fenn (1845–1911), *The Interior of Walker and Bro. Counting Room, 17 Merchants Row, Boston*, 1893, ink and wash on paper, 13 × 17 ½ in. (33 × 44.5 cm), Bowdoin College Museum of Art, bequest of Miss Mary Sophia Walker, 1904.34

painting can offer artists a more complex means of picturing the nation's experiences, values, and aspirations. As a leading artist of the Harlem Renaissance, Douglas contended with the cultural memory of the Middle Passage to create a visionary composition within the context of his portrayal of the contributions of African Americans to the nation. At the center of the radiating concentric circles extending across the composition, the smallest but brightest circle is bisected by the horizon, with just a portion of the slave ship and the shackled bodies within its sphere. The focal point of the composition is the horizon and the beyond, which will forever bear traces of the memory of the embarkation depicted. Several of the figures turn toward a star and a ray of light in the sky that, for Douglas, represented the divine light of inspiration. In the mural, the artist effectively created an early expression of Afrofuturism, a conceptual vision of a new Black future that he connected to these defining marine voyages.

This juxtaposition of Reuterdahl and Douglas is intended to elucidate how divergently American artists have been inspired to capture the beauty, violence, strength, and poetry of the sea relative to national identity. This exhibition and publication delve into more than 250 years of American painting. We seek to illuminate the range and continuum of American histories and American artists' interest in the sea as a subject, a symbol, and an emotional catalyst that can shape and transform identities, attitudes, and cultural values.[9] The influence of the sea on American life, along the coast and far inland, has been embraced by many major artists like Monkman working today, including Valerie Hegarty (fig. 102), Kerry James Marshall (figs. 24, 122), Clifford Ross (fig. 114), Amy Sherald (fig. 123), Kay WalkingStick (fig. 18), and Nick Cave, whose *Sea Sick* (2014; fig. 106) viscerally confronts and innovatively reclaims the art historical traditions and historical legacies examined here. These artists' engagement with marine themes and traditions has resulted in paintings and objects of outstanding technical and aesthetic achievement and of utmost significance for American culture. Yet their works and those of their predecessors have not always been appreciated from a perspective that emphasizes American identity, experiences, or values as tied to the sea.

## **AUTHENTICITY AND IMAGINATION:** ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES OF AMERICAN MARINE PAINTING

Even before marine art was produced locally, seascape paintings were included among items imported from Europe to decorate houses in the latest style. In 1750 the artist and merchant Gerardus Duyckinck II offered fresh from abroad "a very fine Assortment of Glass Pictures, prospects, History, Sea Skips and Land Skips." Appropriately, the sale took place "on the Dock, between the Old Slip, and Coentjes Market."[10] Nearly two decades later, a native-born Cape Codder named Christian Remick advertised in the *Boston Gazette* that he was "lately from Spain" and available to create "Sea Pieces, Perspective Views, Geographical Plans of Harbours, Sea-Coasts, &c."[11]

The European port painters who created detailed broadside portrayals of ships during their brief visits from other parts of the world also spurred early American marine painting. Artists began painting these images, usually in watercolor and including details of hull shape, carved decorations, and sail and rigging arrangements, in Marseille, Copenhagen, Valletta, and other European harbor towns around 1800, a time coincident with the increased arrival of independently owned American merchant ships. This new demand may well have been generated by these Americans, who saw their ships as symbols both of personal pride in their own business operations and of their nation's emerging commercial influence. Many of these paintings returned to the United States, emblazoned with the names of the ship's masters or crewmen who likely commissioned them. With their standard compositional format and modest scale, they hung in both homes and marine business offices (fig. 4), and likely served as informal templates for the early American ship portraits of artists such as Benjamin Franklin West (fig. 75).

A distinctively American vision of the sea and independent artistic identity developed out of, but also in opposition to, the influence of European colonial powers and artists. Although the civic architecture of the nation was neoclassical, critics of the decorations for the Senate Naval Committee Room at the US Capitol, for example, took a nativist perspective, with one arguing that an Italian artist who had contributed murals perpetuated "the cast-off absurdities of the Old World, which to us have no meaning." He suggested the value in featuring "our own schooners, clippers, steamboats, flatboats and Indian canoes" as well as "our warlike and our peaceful triumphs on the water, from the battles of Paul Jones to the successful race of the yacht America . . . together with every navigating characteristic of the nation, from the Hudson River raft to the Mississippi steamboat."[12] Another critic grumbled about "that disagreeable yellowish hue" that is "peculiar to English coast scenery" in the works of the British-born Philadelphia artist George Bonfield, noting that they "reveal the secrets of his birth. . . . His vessels are all foreign designs, though they fly American flags." Seeking "a genuine American aspect," the critic lamented that "Mr. Bonfield paints from Nature, but not from our Nature."[13] Conversely, in Europe, criticism of the American display at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris highlighted the conflicted understanding of what constituted "American" scenery. Critics expected landscapes and saw none, and they further found the exhibition regrettably devoid of marine painting. Particularly missed was the work of William Bradford, whose arctic views had come to international attention and praise for "the conviction of their perfect truth," effectively making the unimaginably extreme and remote environment of the arctic accessible and believable to viewers (fig. 95).[14]

During the later nineteenth century, the relationship of marine art to marine technology was frequently perceived to be seamless, and

Figure 5 "American Masterpieces in Marine Art," photograph from John W. Ryckman, *Report of the International Maritime Exhibition, Boston 1889–90* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1890), 117, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum

scientific accuracy became a defining feature of a marine painting's authenticity. The International Maritime Exhibition, held in Boston in 1889–90, was primarily an industrial exposition, promoting a wide range of inventions and improvements in maritime technology, including models of new designs for steamships, engines, lifeboats, windlasses, and self-leveling ship berths. The exhibition generated "unexpected interest . . . even in remote interior States and Territories."[15] In addition to the maritime industry displays, the exhibition attracted visitors with "very greatly relished bait for the landsmen and women of Boston"—an art exhibition containing 260 oil paintings "exclusively of the sea," including works by leading American artists Fitz Henry Lane, William Trost Richards, Thomas Eakins, Edward Moran, and Thomas Moran, and four paintings by William Formby Halsall (fig. 5).[16]

Advanced technology was integral to Halsall's way of painting, and he studied the vessels he painted to ensure the accuracy of his presentation (fig. 7). His painting of the *Vigilant* (fig. 6), the winning boat in the 1893 America's Cup races, intentionally portrays the yacht in an unconventional manner that highlights its radical design attributes, rather than in a typical broadside view that would show off the complete sail plan or hull profile. The yacht was the first America's Cup contender built entirely of metal, with a hull of polished bronze. The painting shows the *Vigilant* in the final downwind leg, the bow tilted at a steep angle as the yacht surfs down a wave at breathtaking speed. The artist emphasizes the extreme, indeed risky, amount of sail the boat carried, featuring the enormous spinnaker on its pole that extends directly toward the viewer, while the mainsail is angled away. No competitor is in sight, as the crew seizes its chance to harness the full force of the heavy winds and run the boat away from most of the spectator fleet to victory, with only one diesel-powered boat to witness the feat.

Environmental specificity of American coasts has been another marker of accuracy, allowing certain locations to be readily identified. But that motivation to realistic representation extends beyond the shore and to an artist's ability to paint water and waves. The marine painter Mauritz F. H. de Haas was quoted as saying, "Waves in deep water have one distinctive aspect, waves in soundings another, waves along the shore another. In mid-ocean, for instance, they are rounder and hill-like; near the land they become sharp and broken up."[17] In 1854 a prominent art critic especially extolled the work of Lane, who frequently painted coastal scenes from the perspective of looking landward from a boat, noting that "his pictures are in great demand; hitherto chiefly among sea-faring men, but now winning way in other circles."[18] The critic perceived a dichotomy between the desires of sailors and the broader public. Adhering to strict accuracy conveyed the authenticity of lived experience, which was a necessary attribute of a successful marine painting; the public, however, responded more to free artistic expression that built upon these skills:

> His pictures early delighted sailors by their perfect truth. Lane knows the name and place of every rope on a vessel; he knows the construction, the anatomy, the expression—and to a seaman every thing that sails has expression and individuality—he knows how she will stand under this rig, before this wind; how she looks seen stern foremost, bow foremost, to windward, to leeward, in all changes and guises; and, master of his detail, he has earned his money thus far mostly painting "portraits" of vessels for sailors and ship-owners.[19]

The critic, however, faults Lane for both the extent of his embrace of authenticity and the limitations to imagination it imposed. In Lane's early portraits he finds a "too great literalness of treatment," while never having crossed the Atlantic has prevented him from experiencing and painting "what God has done far out in the awful ocean where he has never been."[20] Bradford, on the other hand, was praised for making it "his business to study from the life the scenes he paints, at whatever cost of money, toil, or exposure. Thus far, the most distinctive development of American art has been in this direction."[21] The emphasis on physical hardship involved in acquiring the requisite experience to qualify an artist's work as truly marine led a later critic to acknowledge that "very few of our artists who have undertaken marine subjects, have thought it worthwhile to master the details of the science of navigation and hence they make the most deplorable mistakes in the rig of their watercraft. Perhaps none but a professional sailor could ever gain that thorough knowledge of the sea."[22]

Sailors, in fact, were trained to make many types of sketches in order to help followers envision coastal locations over water, hazards to be avoided, safe approaches into harbors, and wartime engagements (fig. 8). Ink and watercolor were the predominant media for American marine painting during the eighteenth century; they were less expensive and more portable than oil and were instrumental to navigational training for sailors, which promoted the inclusion of illustrations in sea journals to convey important information regarding a voyage. Sailors also utilized the media to illustrate elements of their daily entries, such as a ship's physical attributes or a precise arrangement of their ship's sails (fig. 9). Detailed painted depictions of specific incidents may have been of particular use during depositions that involved insurance claims. Accuracy and believability of detail would have been paramount in all of these situations. In the twentieth century, and early in his career, Norman Rockwell played with these traditions. In *For a Good Boy* (fig. 10), created for a 1922 cover of the *Literary Digest*, a retired sailor constructs a symbol of his former profession in miniature, paying close attention to the accuracy of the ship's deck fittings. The low light in the room and the look of fascination on the face of the boy watching the process lend an air of mystery, authenticity, and nostalgia to the scene in which the old mariner revives his specialized and worldly maritime knowledge to make the ship model that Rockwell paints.

It is important to recognize the exclusive boundaries that are established by such an emphasis on accuracy of detail and firsthand experience as measures of authenticity. Their limits also are reached when focus on the technical outweighs the dynamism of a ship in constant motion, eliminating its excitement as a living entity. In a 1903 review reprinted widely across the nation, a critic complained about the common overemphasis on detail in paintings created by sailors: "It is an axiom with sailors that there never was a man who put in three years before the mast who did not think he could paint a ship better than the most skillful landlubber that ever wielded a brush. . . . But the ships painted by sailors look like they were caught fast in frost tipped waves. There is absolutely no life or any suggestion of motion about them even when represented as going under full sail."[23]

Rockwell's blurring of the boundaries between the genres of ship and human portraiture to evoke maritime expertise echo earlier tendencies to ignore distinctions between paintings of marine subjects and other forms of American art, all of which were publicly exhibited together throughout the nineteenth century. From its first exhibition in 1827, the Boston Athenaeum included marine works by Thomas Birch and Washington Allston, including *Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea* (fig. 83), which was displayed with the subtitle *Pilot Boat Going Off*.[24] The American Art-Union in New York displayed four works by James Edward Buttersworth in 1850, including *Distant View of the Battery*, selling several others in 1851 and 1852, as well as one by Lane.[25] Works by marine specialists Bonfield and James Hamilton were interspersed prominently among the landscapes, portraits, and genre scenes at many of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual exhibitions.[26]

From at least the 1910s, marine subjects have also been singled out for exhibitions of specialized thematic focus, particularly to illustrate and commemorate historical events. Some organized the paintings in chronological order by the date each ship was launched. Others restricted their selection of works to those produced during the time the ships were afloat, thus emphasizing the veracity of first-hand experience.[27] But for most of the last century these works have been segregated from their integral place in broader American art contexts, which have privileged seascapes such as William Trost Richards's *Along the Shore* (1903; fig. 12) and adopted them more readily into the canon. Beginning in the 1850s, Richards began painting marine scenes that he based on extensive observations throughout his career of coastlines and their properties of light, fluidity, and texture. Reflecting upon a lifetime of artistic engagement with the visual and sonic effects of water and surf, Richards wrote that "all the saddest and wildest noises of nature are reproduced by the surf."[28] The emotional underpinnings and interpretations of Richards's seascapes have overshadowed the artist's connections to the marine traditions of direct observation and technical mastery that enabled him to render