

CAPE ANN Museum

Cape Ann Museum Opens Special Exhibition, *The Briny Deep: Augustus W. Bühler in Gloucester*

On view April 26 through September 30, 2024



AUGUSTUS W. BÜHLER (1852-1920), *The Man at the Wheel*, 1901, oil on canvas.
Collection of Gorton's Seafood, Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER, Mass. – On display now through September 30 in the center of the Cape Ann Museum's Fitz Henry Lane Gallery, [*The Briny Deep: Augustus Bühler in Gloucester*](#) is a special exhibition of paintings by Augustus W. Bühler that illustrates his skill at portraying Gloucester fisherman from the great age of fishing under sail.

No other artist did more during the early 20th century to shape the image of the "Gloucester Fisherman" in the popular imagination than Augustus Waldeck Bühler (1852-1920). Working from actual fishermen rather than models, Bühler's salt-sprayed compositions are at once investigations of a dangerous trade, and thrilling visions of life on the high seas.

In addition to works from the Museum's own collection, the show includes Bühler's iconic oil painting, *The Man at the Wheel* which the artist painted in 1901. This dramatic canvas depicts Gloucester

fisherman, Captain George Roberts, at the helm of a fishing schooner during heavy weather. The painting was acquired in 1905 by Gorton-Pew Fisheries, which today is known as Gorton's Seafoods. For more than a century, the painting has served as inspiration for Gorton's logo.

"Bühler's work embodies the physically challenging and often dangerous work associated with offshore fishing industry during the great age of sail" said Museum Director Oliver Barker. "We are deeply grateful to Gorton's Seafoods for lending what has become an icon in the collective creative psyche of both Gloucester and Cape Ann and delighted to bring into focus the story of Bühler's life, artistic motivations and work."

Bühler was born in New York City to parents who had fled Prussia in the face of religious persecution. He received his first art instruction in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he lived as a child. Later during the late 1880s, he studied at the Académie Julian in Paris. Prior to going abroad, Bühler and his wife began summering in Gloucester's Annisquam neighborhood where they found themselves part of a busy art colony. By the late 1890s, they had moved to Rocky Neck in East Gloucester, finding an abundance of material to paint and a community of fishermen willing to pose. For the rest of his career, Bühler made an extensive study of Gloucester fishermen and the fishing industry.

As Leon Doucette, curator of *The Briny Deep* observes, Bühler "strove for authenticity, believing it would allow his work to capture the life of fishermen for future generations."

With Bühler's works surrounded by those of 19th century American Luminist painter Fitz Henry Lane (1804-1865), the Museum offers viewers the opportunity to explore the differences and the similarities between the two artists' oeuvres, which are separated by a span of nearly four decades.

Visitors are also encouraged to visit the Library & Archives to view additional materials related to Bühler's work, this archival holding is one of over 120 distinct archival collections in the Museum's care.

The Briny Deep: Augustus Bühler in Gloucester is on view now through September 30 in Cape Ann Museum's Fitz Henry Lane Gallery. On May 9 from 5 to 6:30 p.m., the Cape Ann Museum will hold a special reception for Gorton's Seafood employees and their families to view the exhibit.

The Cape Ann Museum, founded in 1875, exists to preserve and celebrate the history and culture of the area and to keep it relevant to today's audiences. Spanning 44,000 square feet, the Museum is one of the major cultural institutions on Boston's North Shore welcoming more than 25,000 local, national, and international visitors each year to its exhibitions and programs. In addition to fine art, the Museum's collections include decorative art, textiles, artifacts from the maritime and granite industries, four historic structures, a Library & Archives and a sculpture park in the heart of downtown Gloucester. In the summer of 2021, the Museum opened the 12,000 square foot Janet & William Ellery James Center at the Cape Ann Museum Green. The campus is located on the site at the intersection of Washington and Poplar Streets in Gloucester and is open seasonally.

The Cape Ann Museum is located at 27 Pleasant Street in Gloucester and is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. General admission is \$15.00 adults, \$12.00 Cape Ann residents, seniors, and students. Youth (under 18) and Museum members are free. Cape Ann residents can visit for

*free on the first Friday (from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and second Saturday (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) of each month.
More information can be found on www.capeannmuseum.org or please call (978)283-0455 x110.*

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