

**Alfred T. Bricher (1837-1908)**

*Low Tide, Indian Rock, Narragansett, RI*

Watercolor on paper

12 ½ x 19 ¼ inches

Signed lower left

*What memory is to the servile copyist, imagination is to the true artist.*

-Alfred T. Bricher

Alfred T. Bricher was born to Elizabeth Muir and William Bricher on April 10, 1837 in Portsmouth New Hampshire. By 1858, Bricher announced himself a professional painter, though he was mainly self-taught. Bricher's subtle and serene style classified him as a premier painter of seascapes and ranked him among such other notable luminists as Martin Johnson Heade and John Frederick Kensett. He was known especially for his coastal scenes painted in Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island and Long Island between 1870 and 1890. Bricher exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Art Institute of Chicago, the Boston Athenaeum, the Brooklyn Art Association and the Boston Art Club. One can see paintings by Bricher at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Bricher developed a sensitive and skillful watercolor technique. In 1875, Appleton's *Art Journal* recorded that upon his first exhibition of watercolors, the artist was immediately admitted into the Society of Painters in Water Colors, founded seven years prior by Samuel Colman (1832-1920).<sup>1</sup> He exhibited there frequently and became a member of its Board of Control in 1874 and its Hanging Committee in 1879.<sup>2</sup> Bricher's watercolors won critical praise as one commentator wrote that he could paint water 'as liquid as Mr. W.T. Richards.'<sup>3</sup> At the 1873 annual exhibition, A.F. Bellows, W.T. Richards, R. Swain Gifford and Bricher were considered the most talented watercolorists.<sup>4</sup>

In this sun-filled watercolor, *Low Tide, Indian Rock, Narragansett, RI*, Bricher explores the elongated expansion of the ocean set against the crisp formal geometry of the rock. This piece expresses the refinement of Bricher's delicate watercolor technique.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Jeffrey R., *Alfred Thompson Bricher, 1837-1908*, (The Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1973) 18.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, 18.

<sup>3</sup> *The New York Times*, April 16, 1871 cited in Brown, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, 18.