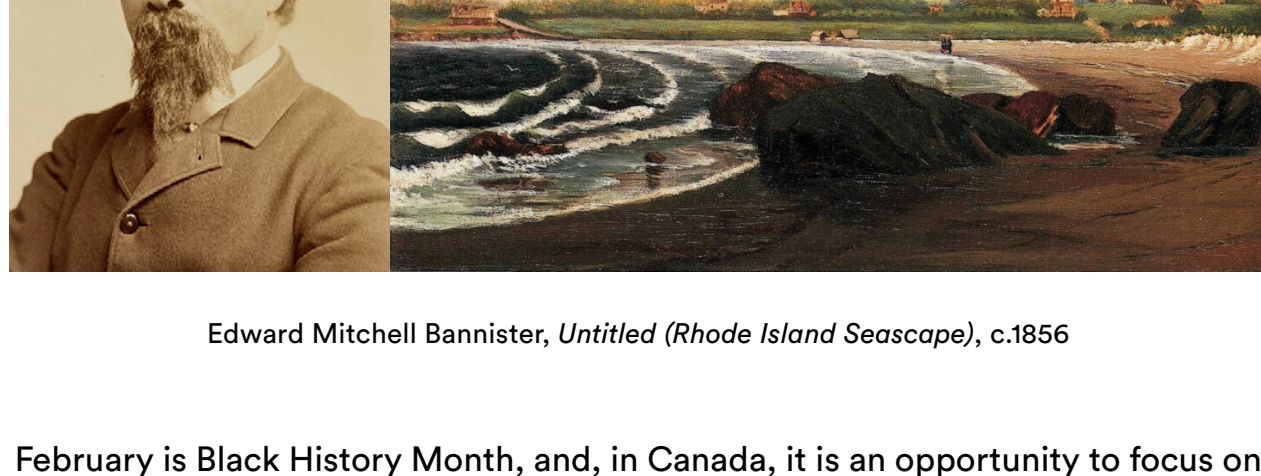


## EDWARD MITCHELL BANNISTER A VISIONARY CANADIAN CREATOR

In celebration of Black History Month,  
we are shining a light on the remarkable  
work of this inspiring 19th-century painter

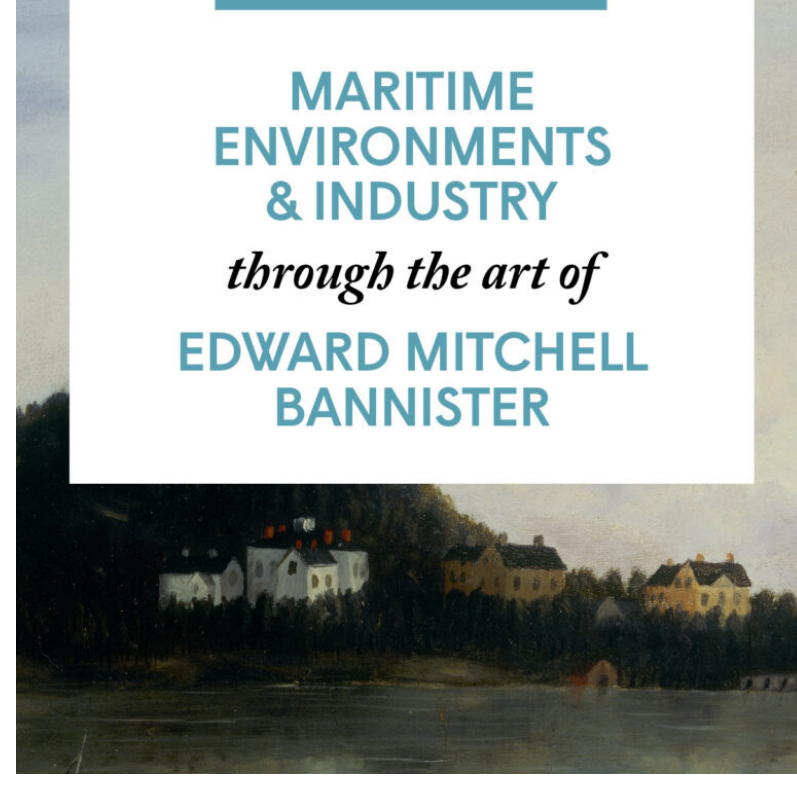


Edward Mitchell Bannister, *Untitled (Rhode Island Seascape)*, c.1856

February is Black History Month, and, in Canada, it is an opportunity to focus on the incalculable successes of Black Canadian individuals and communities and their contributions to the past, present, and future of our country. To celebrate this month, we are looking at the work of a remarkable historical figure: the nineteenth-century Black Canadian American painter Edward Mitchell Bannister (1828–1901). Born in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Bannister spent the early part of his career in Boston before moving to Providence, where he was celebrated for his seascapes, portraits, and genre paintings. He achieved extraordinary success as an artist despite facing social barriers as a Black man living in a racially segregated society that had only recently abolished slavery; he once stated: "I have been sustained by an inborn love of art and accomplished all I have undertaken through the severest struggles." Over a century later, Bannister's passion for visual representation remains palpable, and we are delighted to dedicate this week's newsletter to his remarkable body of work.

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

### Coastal Considerations



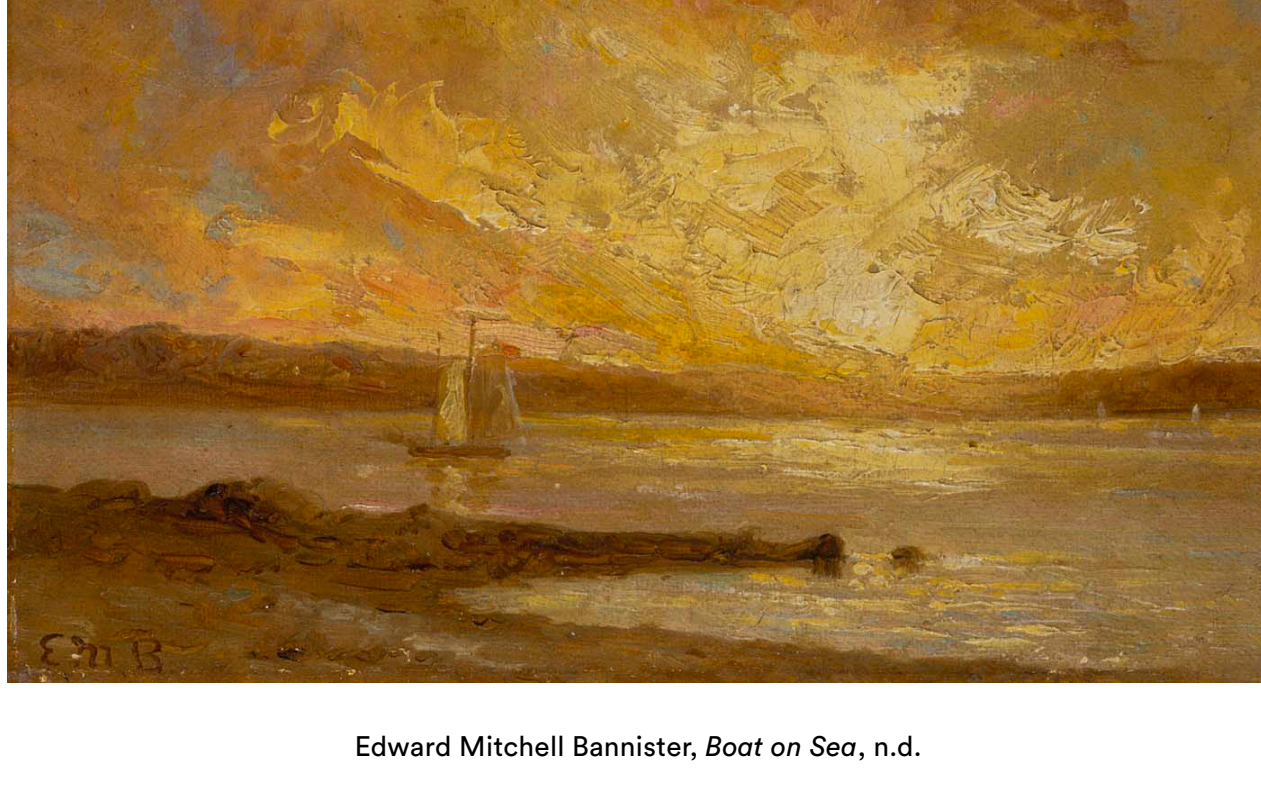
Grades 9 to 12  
Canadian studies, Biology, Oceans, and more

Though Bannister's oeuvre was wide-ranging and encompassed everything from portraits to still life paintings, he was particularly admired for his representations of landscapes and seascapes—many of which depicted the coastal communities and cities he lived in and near. Inspired by his connection to these settings, our Teacher Resource Guide invites students to explore the vibrant ecology of maritime environments and people's historical and contemporary relationships to them. Through a careful examination of his paintings, students gain a deeper understanding of the interconnections that bring Bannister's paintings to life.

Download the Teacher Resource Guide [here](#).

### AVENUES TO EXPLORE

### Sublime Seascapes



Edward Mitchell Bannister, *Boat on Sea*, n.d.

Bannister's artistic prowess is evidenced in his mastery of the picturesque, a style that combines ordered, idyllic, and awe-inspiring elements to emphasize the power of nature, as seen in seascapes like this one. He often achieved this effect through experimental depictions of expansive views and vistas and dramatic renditions of the sky. Works like this are an inspiring starting point for classroom projects that take students into the nineteenth-century world that Bannister was a part of through a consideration of the lands, waters, and skies that he brought to life in remarkably vivid ways.

Bannister's experimentation with Impressionist style and the technique of impasto was a point of inspiration for one of the winning student works from ACI's 2021 [Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge](#).

See the online exhibition [here](#).

### Poignant Portraits



Edward Mitchell Bannister, *Portrait of Christiana Carteaux Bannister*, c.1860

In this work, Bannister's abilities as a skilled portrait painter are on full display. This tender likeness represents Bannister's wife, Christiana Carteaux Bannister, three years after they married. Of Narragansett descent, she was the successful owner of beauty salons in Boston and Providence, and Bannister attributed much of his success to her support, remarking: "I would have made out very poorly had it not been for her, and my greatest successes have come through her." Historical portraits are a wonderful way to bring the past into the present and encourage students to gain an understanding of the people and communities that populated the world before them.

Read more in ACI's online exhibition *Edward Mitchell Bannister: Artist and Abolitionist* [here](#).

### Equestrian Experiments



Edward Mitchell Bannister, *Governor Sprague's White Horse*, 1869

Set in a stable, this equestrian work is packed with dramatic tension: a man rests one hand on the back of a white horse, looking to make eye contact as the animal resists, lifting its leg in protest. During the three decades that Bannister lived in Providence, he cultivated an impressive circle of patrons—including, notably, the former governor of Rhode Island, William Sprague IV, whose horse is pictured here. The painting reflects the popularity of animal depictions in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as Bannister's ability to take on new equestrian challenges in his paintings.

Read more about this work [here](#).

As a bilingual organization, we are proud to offer our materials in both French and English, including this newsletter. Use the sign-up links below to receive emails in your preferred language.

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### About the Art Canada Institute

Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multivocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a [digital library](#), and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

Visit us at [aci-iac.ca](http://aci-iac.ca)

### Thank You to Our Benefactors

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If you would like to support our important work, please see [this page](#).

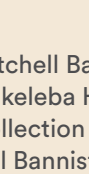
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