

EDWARD HENRY POTTHAST

American, 1857–1927

*Bathers in the Surf (Coney Island,
N. Y.), 1910–1927*

Oil on board

On loan from The Owens Foundation

Edward Henry Potthast, who began taking art classes in Cincinnati and later studied with Impressionist painters in Paris and Munich, focused much of his work on painted beach scenes of the American Northeast. Potthast's tightly controlled drawing, understanding of color, and free brush handling won the admiration of critics. Like his contemporaries in France, Potthast painted outdoors in small sketches, and later worked them into full compositions in his studio.

In this painting, figures stand in a circular composition with colored caps. Cropped out of location and time – we see no landmarks, only the reflection of the sun – the beach scene stands alone as an idyllic moment, held together with yellow accents.