

ARTIST STATEMENT

My first close encounter with the *Mytilus edulis*, the Common Blue Mussel of Maine, took place during what was to be a 2-3 hour solo kayaking trip which a sudden and blanketing opaque fog transformed into a 2 -1/2 day adventure.

Fortunately I had a few years of experience paddling the Atlantic and knew to pack for sudden and unexpected circumstances; A tent, lantern, sleeping bag, camp stove, a pot and pasta, garlic, hard cheese, olive oil, guitar, book, and a bottle or two of a decent Red wine.

When the kayak scrape and bumped into rocks I knew I had hit the outer limits of one of the Maine Island Trail's 3000 islands. Finding my way to the Leaside I secured the kayak on the tiny beach to a sturdy limb of a tree. The island, my home until the fog lifted, was no bigger than my Tribeca loft. It took only a few minutes for me to explore the entire outer circumference. Shoreside rocks housing grape like clusters of mussels that I eagerly detached and carried off with a pot full of ice cold Atlantic sea water. Put to a roiling boil and popped in about 30 mussels, before harvesting a couple of fists fulls of Sea Beans and with a well-earned appetite sat down on a log to enjoy a huge plateful of fresh Atlantic boiled mussels. Nearly have way thru dinner and a bottle of wine I realized that I had forgotten fresh water and my compass. No telling how long I would have to live cause with the fog the way it was, there was no way to no which way was which. Corked the wine for one more night; no worries about the mussels, or sea beans, but needed to be careful about the wine.

Normally my attention would be drawn out to sea looking/listening for seals and porpoises as well as staying tuned for the great blow-hole exhalation of a passing blue whale. Or if the night sky were clear, I'd stretch out on my back, gazing to the up to the jewel like sparkle of the Maine night sky, feeling so close like I could reach up and touch each star as if I be up there with them (come to think of it I am) and so are you.

My days and nights paddling in and around the welcoming Maine Island Trail are inextricably bound to my heart. Twenty-five years later, 2015, in the Project Room, I attempted to offer my sincere obeisance to the *Mighty Blue Mussel of Maine*. I titled the show and a subsequent homage in 2019;

***AN EXTRAVAGANZA OF OBSCURITY**

The image below (2019), celebrating the flawless beauty of natures hand, so far superior to my labored Project Room 2015 installation (4years prior) makes me ponder what took me so long? Oh, well, better late than never.

Hallelujah!

Ken Wade

KEN WADE

Extravaganza of Obscurity

Part 4



EXTRAVAGANZA OF OBSCURITY, mix/m, 16x16", 2019.

WestBeth-Hall Gallery

June 1-30, 2019

WestBeth Artist Housing, main lobby, access 24/7

