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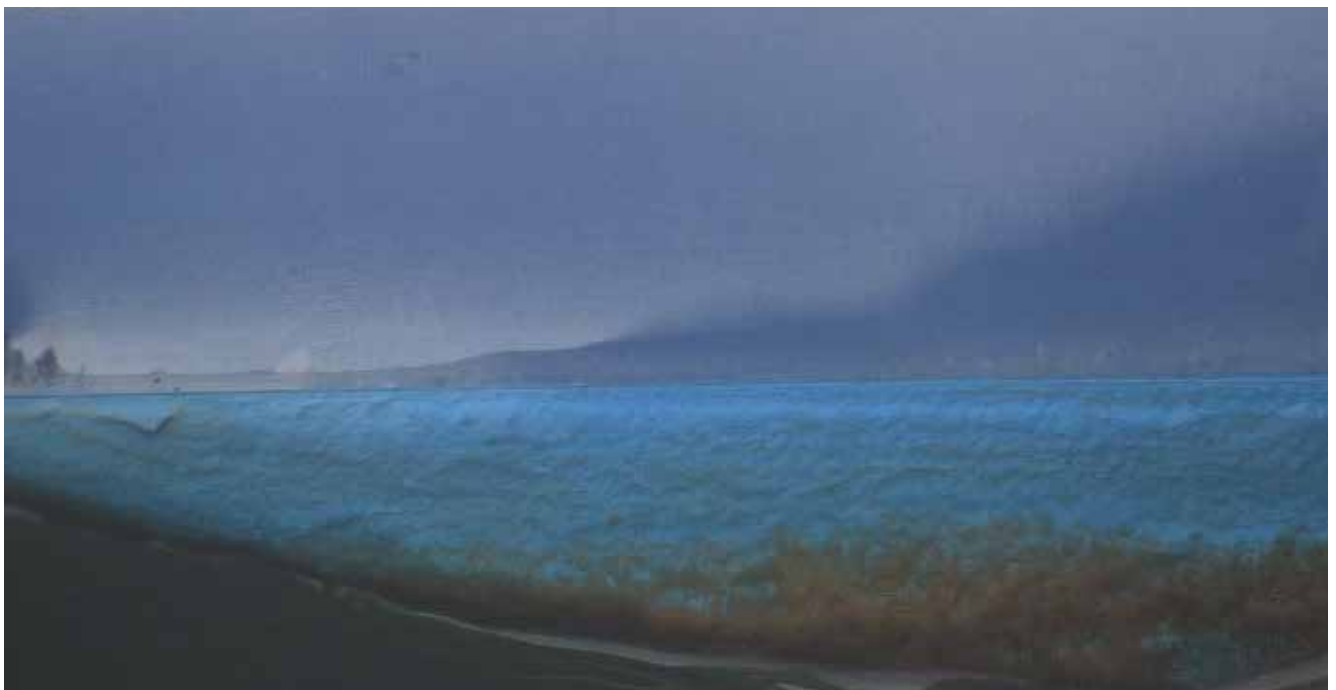




HULL OF A SCENE

*Photographer Barry Beder finds art in a very unexpected place—
below the waterline of some hardworking vessels.*

By Brooklyn Moore
Images by Barry Beder, HullScapes




Neck deep in the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean, Barry Beder precariously held his camera above the water near the *R/V Atlantis* ship. However, in the midst of his excitement over hoping to capture the perfect image, he lost his balance and ended up in the water himself—a hazard that occasionally comes with his chosen hobby.

Beder was in his kayak, capturing what he called “HullScapes”—the creative artform in which he photographs boat hulls that have altered over time due to the creative ways that water, and even perhaps the effects that microscopic sea creatures have had on his subjects. His unique photography showcases the colors, textures, and often the idiosyncrasies that occur in nature on the hulls of boats.

While he does not like to self-identify, Beder is most definitely an artist and photography is his chosen medium. Before his move into creative expression, Beder worked as a sports psychologist and stress management consultant. But, after a company buyout, he was left disappointed in the increased bureaucracy in his profession. At a crossroads, Beder realized this was a good at time as any for a change.

Standing with a friend on the deck of a home in Falmouth that overlooked Washburn Island, Beder came to the realization that Cape Cod was the place for him. “I resigned and retired, and I stayed on the Cape. My wife and I moved down here from Boston, and I haven’t looked back. I love the Cape in general and specifically where I am in Falmouth—everything about the water and





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the beauty, the birds and the fish. It's just beautiful," Beder says.

Sometime after his relocation, Beder was walking his dog in his new neighborhood when he spotted an interesting boat hull in a nearby yard. He recalls, "I looked at it and I couldn't believe it from a distance. I actually thought that somebody had hired artists to paint this beautiful seascape on a boat. I figured no one would believe me if I tried to explain it, so I took a picture. I showed it to my wife who thought it was beautiful, which was so encouraging."

Beder's artform, which he aptly has named HullScapes, took off from there. With the eye of an artist, Beder began to find the same beauty in hulls as a sunset or sunrise. His photos are pure in that he refrains from editing techniques

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beyond simply cropping. All of his photos are the exact representation of what his eye sees.

Beder did not attend any art school or have an artistic upbringing, but he did find a community of supportive artists on the Cape at Chalkboard Studios in Barnstable, headed by Rich Neal and Jackie Reeves. While most artists in the group are painters, they foster a friendly community and help each other think outside the box.

The group at Chalkboard Studios encouraged Beder to experiment with new angles, printing mediums and sizing. Although he started his photography with just an iPhone, a new Sony camera has helped Beder capture more detail and improve focus.

HullScapes can feature anything from the reflection of the natural



environment around a boat to the chemical reactions between paint and the water. But all HullScapes are a depiction of the interaction between humans and nature—like the intersection of science and art, Beder says.

Because of the superfluous number of boats on the Cape, Beder never strays far for his photography.

Beautiful hulls can be found everywhere he says, but the Cape has something special.

“The ocean seems to collaborate with us,” Beder remarks.

One boat in Beder’s neighborhood is seemingly abandoned. The little wooden skiff washes back and forth in the tide, capturing more color and designs. Beder says the photographs

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of the skiff resemble Japanese prints more than the hull of a boat.

Boats are human inventions, crafted with care and skill, yet once afloat, they are at the mercy of nature's whims. The residue, marks, and reflections that adorn their hulls are a representation of our interaction with that nature.

"Scum is a horrible word, it's one of the worst adjectives in the English language," Beder says. Yet, biofouling removal is a 4-billion-dollar industry in the United States. "But it's beautiful and it's everywhere." With his images, Beder seeks to convince others of its beauty before they wash it away.

"Art is one way we have defined as a way to reach people on a different level, because you can only talk science at them for

so long. When people see how beautiful their dirty hulls look and understand the science behind it, they learn to understand and respect their environment even more, and love its beauty." 🌊

Barry Beder has presented his work at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Cape Cod Maritime Museum as well as the Art Centers in both Falmouth and Cotuit, Cultural Center of Cape Cod, and the Cape Cod Museum of Art. To view more of his art and learn about upcoming news and exhibits, visit hullscapes.org.

Brooklyn Moore, a 2023 summer intern, will be a senior at Northwestern University this fall. She stays connected to the Cape through her freelance assignments.



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