

# STILLPOINT

A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

## DWELLING

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### STEPH HARTOP



*Tarantism*

*Dwelling: in this dark behind the eyes.*

I am tracing your face from memory now; line drawing on the back of drawn eyes. Kept your cans for melting, but they aren't these, underexposed in silver nitrate. I read it treats nosebleeds. An antiseptic, *for removing the dead or dying tissues on wounds*. This is the place we pool to now, touching and tapping obsidian screens till the reflections fix. *For maximum sensitivity the plate must be exposed while still wet and developed immediately.*

*Dwelling: in this space we breathe.*

I never met Kahdija Saye, we worked for the same artist at different times, but I was given her old desk space in the studio and admired her work from afar. Sunlight caught in silver on black coated aluminium sheets. *We're undone by each other.* I look at these and think of her. Her tintypes and that June: the tower burning, her darkroom inside.

Collodion is the binder in this process, a diluted nitrocellulose also called guncotton; after pouring it on the aluminium plate you lower into a silver bath to sensitise, she had described this part as *a kind of baptism*.

The 'cassette' cladding failed; the design of its aluminium composite panels favoured boxed air gaps over rivets and consistently failed fire tests for twelve years. The 'cleaner' aesthetic of these gaps formed *flaming pools of plastic* that were warned to *burn like paper, burn with the fuel power of a 19,000 litre truck of oil*.

I look at my hands coloured with silver nitrate and reckon again; this messy desire, those flames that claimed the horizon that summer after midnight, that June I sat in her chair.

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*Steph Hartop* is an artist based in London. She received her BA in Fine Art & History of Art from Goldsmiths. Her work has appeared in exhibitions at Kunsthal Charlottenberg, Copenhagen; Bodega, New York; and screened at Göteborg Film Festival, Sweden.

Other images from the series *Dwelling* were previously published alongside Derek Owusu's short fiction piece [Grey Area](#), in Issue 007: DESIRE of *Stillpoint Magazine*.

The writing and additional photographs presented in Supporters Issue 2: SILENCE complete the series.

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