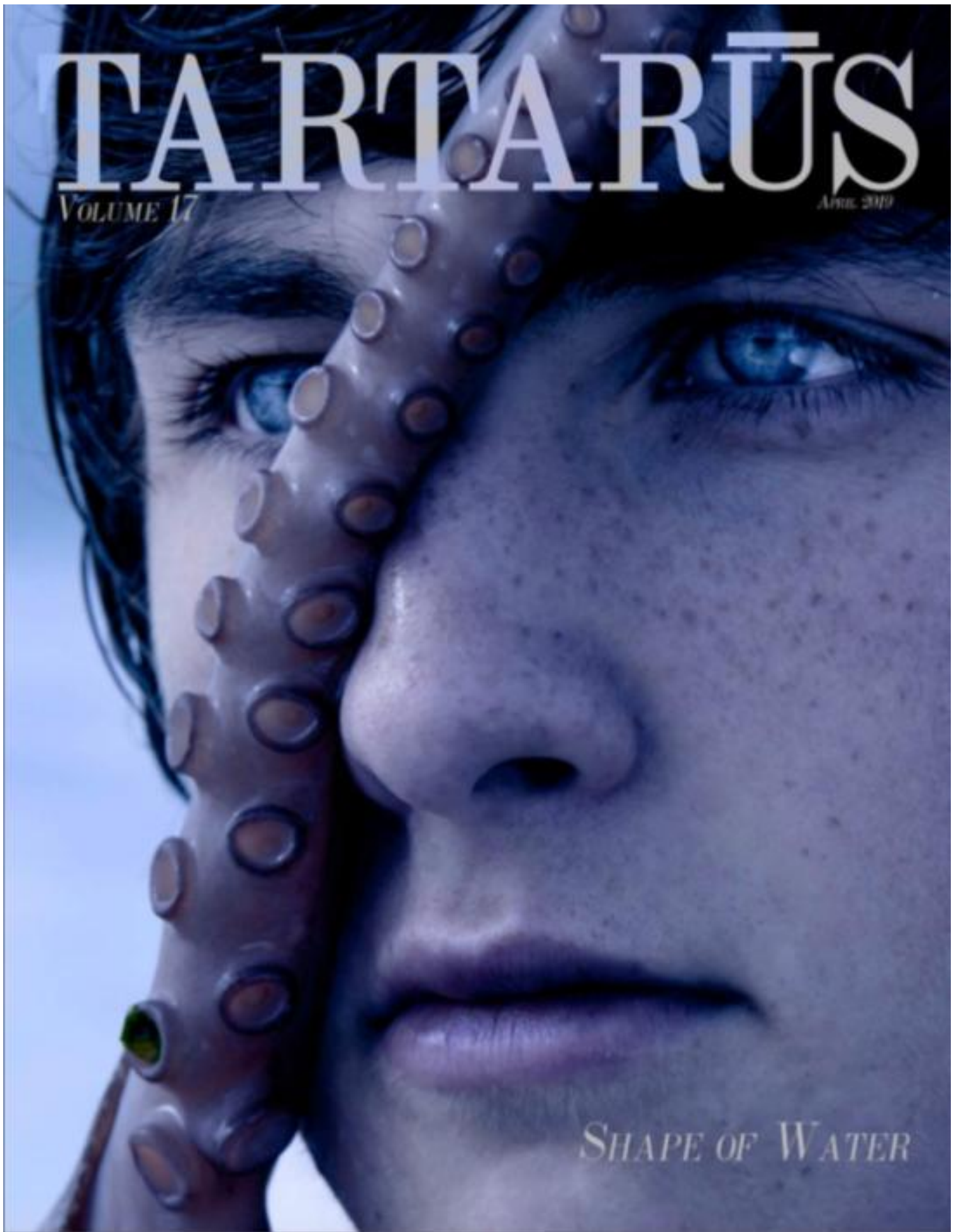


# TARTARŪS

VOLUME 17

April 2019

SHAPE OF WATER





Diogo Duarte's  
**The Dream**  
**Of**  
Fisherman  
Story by Jen Fout



“Ms. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself”. - Virginia Woolf – that’s Diego Duarte’s favourite quote. “Anything that is hidden inspires and excites me. The absurdity and contradictions of human behaviour fascinate me. That is fundamentally the one thing that inspires me because every time I experience it, every time I catch a glimpse of something that has been hiding I feel privileged almost as if I have been let into a huge secret. Eiko Ishioka hugely inspires me. Simply because her clothes tap right into my overly dramatic and sometimes absurdist and histrionic personality. I absolutely adore her works. She was (and still is) a true source of inspiration for me; I think I could probably look at her costumes for hours. McQueen’s designs also do this for me, he and Eiko were a huge loss to the art world.” He continues that fashion and photography go hand in hand, “They are both languages I (and everybody else) use to communicate with the world. Funnily enough both are often dismissed as being frivolous, superficial and ‘throw away’ but I don’t see them like that at all - they are so incredibly powerful at provoking emotion in people. We see someone wearing a tracksuit and we feel something, we construct an entire person based on how they look. Photography does exactly the same but in a different way. It’s when I combine the two that I truly feel in my element. I’m not necessarily talking about high fashion only; I’m talking about clothes (or lack thereof) and how they can elevate a mood, a message or an emotion in a photograph.

Duarte completed a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Criminology at Coventry University in the United Kingdom in 2010 and started working with people with mental health illness straight away. In fact, the first time he volunteered at a psychiatric hospital he was only 17 years old and as you can imagine he didn’t have the career path you’d expect from an artist. However his interest in photography was always there. “I was doing self-portraits at 14 or 15 but just really experimenting with a lot of things and making a lot of mistakes. In the end, I decided not to pursue this professionally, at least not until I was in my mid twenties because an artist career is not really a thing people do from where I’m from; it’s never really presented to you as an option, let alone a realistic one. Portugal [Duarte’s home country] is still a somewhat a conservative country on several fronts and given I had a rather traditional upbringing I thought I’d just choose something more straightforward and psychology felt like the next best thing.” Diego continues, “Looking back, I am glad I went into psychology though because I’m certain my style and approach to photography would have been very different otherwise. Working in the mental health field (I specialised in suicide prevention) opened me up to a world I wasn’t aware of so.

I became hyper aware of other people’s inner, often hidden, inner worlds and over time that shaped my approach to photography. The subjects I choose to photograph are a direct consequence of going down that career path. At the risk of sounding incredibly cliché, I am going to say that photography found me. It chose me. If I had truly chosen, I would have chosen something infinitely easier to make a career out of. So in a way, I do it because I can’t see myself doing something else at this point in my life so I have no choice other than to do that. I don’t know how else to put it because I cannot remember ever making a decision to pick it up. It’s not like I was looking for a hobby; it just happened in such an organic way. In my teens I developed a strong urge to see myself in a photograph, to be someone else, to become someone else and to be somewhere else and photography was there to enable that to happen. I discovered photography at a time in my life when I was going through a lot of bullying and I was just coming to terms with the fact that I was probably gay. I couldn’t be myself anywhere but I could be myself in the privacy of my photographs. It was only a matter of using the camera in my dad’s cupboard. The editorial on these pages was inspired by several traditional Japanese folk stories that deal with innocence, seduction and death, about a boy and his fish. More than a point to make, Diogo says he wanted to “convey a particular emotion or a state of mind so from that point of view, it is

not a narrative in the traditional sense of the word. Colour was such an important part of creating these images because I feel they really catapult you emotionally to the place where this boy is and connect you with who he might be.” When it comes to style Duarte has much to say but this is what really sticks out, “I think it’s any photographer’s highest ambition to develop a style so I’m always cautious about talking about ‘my’ style. It’s hard to see a style when you are so close to it but I suppose I could start defining it by my approach to photography. I have such a varied body of work but with very similar over-arching themes. I tend to use a lot of colour, which is curious given I tend to wear just black.” Currently Duarte is working on a huge project that crosses into installation and performance but he says he can’t really give too much away. “It’s the first time I’m collaborating with another artist on a large body of work, Victoria Thomasas -Wood, a set designer I met 6 years ago in a completely serendipitous way, by asking her for a lighter in some random London pub. We’re working on creating a faux cult/religion, which will hopefully debut later on in the year under a pseudonym.” Now that’s something that we can definitely get behind. ●