Earth Echo
AFFECTIVE REFLECTION
Question the image, you said. And I did.

But the image is a collage, made of fragments, of carefully chosen parts, joined together, juxtaposed, having to co-exist, to be on the same plane; so each bit gave me a different reply.

Question the image, you said. But before I do that, I need to know what to ask. This is hard. I see every day how hard it is, as we enquire (how are you?) without expecting a true answer (on a scale of 1 to 10, I am a 4 today, tired, a bit below par). I also see how we ask questions to hear ourselves ask them, rather than to listen to anyone’s responses. I see how questions are thrown in without observing that. If you learn one thing from my writing, let it be this: notice.

There is a fragment of a starry sky, with lighter patches, maybe the Milky Way. There is a darker portion, with a waning crescent moon, just like it was last night. The meeting points between fragments, carved or straight, are sharp, surgical, seamless to the untrained eye but tactile. And yes, there is texture too, I would say some of it is fine bark and some of it, if it had been in colour, would be shiny. Like thick golden sap, or bright green, lush lichen. But I cannot know, as the image is in black and white, making it of another time. There is a part with a perfect, light circle, maybe another moon, full this time. Imagine if we could see two moons at once, our attention spread in the circle, which one would I pick? We cannot often look at two things at once, even though I am trying to see my night sky. Which one would I pick? We cannot often look at two things at once, even though I am trying to see my night sky. Which one would I pick?

There are fragments of concretive architecture, bits of mind, while also looking at the image (sometimes, it is possible). There are fragments of concretive architecture, bits of mind, while also looking at the image (sometimes, it is possible). There are fragments of concretive architecture, bits of mind, while also looking at the image (sometimes, it is possible).

All this is beginning to sound like a dream. Condensations and displacements. Bits joined together in an impossible space that nonetheless makes sense in its own way. This is the magic of collage: it shows possibilities we have not yet even acknowledged as potentials. And it is always changing, constantly moving, forever becoming. Like our unconscious, like the earth, even when we sleep, even when we are not looking at it. By this continuous, unfolding, collage is transformative. These are not my thoughts. Art critic Brian O’Doherty said collage is unstoppable, unfolding, collage is transformative. These are not my thoughts.

Others have said it is like modernism, political, critical, spontaneous, mallable, linked to language and metaphorical thinking, analytical, piecemeal, reflective, disruptive, reconfiguring.

So far, I have been avoiding the task you set me and I have only asked one question of this image. What do I notice? Somewhere, not that long ago, I wrote that analyzing art is an illusion, and that art, actually, analyses us, at least in some way. I believe the psychoanalytic sense, so maybe this collage is posing questions to me. What do I see? What do I avoid seeing? The psychoanalytic sense, so maybe this collage is posing questions to me. What do I see? What do I avoid seeing? The psychoanalytic sense, so maybe this collage is posing questions to me. What do I see? What do I avoid seeing?

How do my eyes travel on the image? Do I recognize any fragments? Is anything happening in the image? What stories do I tell myself about it? What parts of it are like a mirror, where I see myself, or an echo, where I hear myself? Is it still there? Does it trap me? Does it reverse me? What position is the image putting me in? Am I the dreamer, or in the dream? When I close my eyes, is it still there?

Answering them is the work of a lifetime. To be honest, I would rather sit here and listen to the music it makes, the music the myths are dancing to.

But then you asked me to write about it. And I did.

Laura Gonzales
Pum would like to give her special thanks to

Dr Gordon Barclay. Psychiatry/Integrative Therapy MA, DRCOG, MRCGP, MRCP, MPhil, MRCPsych. Dr. Barclay trained first as a GP, and afterwards took a PhD in psychopharmacology. He is now Chief Psychologist at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and Honorary Consultant in Psychiatry at the University of Manchester. He has a particular interest in autism and has published extensively on the subject.

Jonathan Delafell-Butt is Director of the Laboratory for Innovation in Autism where he blends technological advance into everyday life for children and adults. He is a member of the Long-term Neurodevelopmental Disorders Team at the University of Manchester, and is also actively involved in training and supervision related to working therapeutically with children and adults with autistic spectrum conditions. He is currently working on a new clinical trial funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to assess the effectiveness of Risperidone in treating children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

Dr Laura Gonzalez is a clinical psychologist at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh. She has been invited to speak at international symposia (WPEF in New York, CAA in Chicago, Medical Museum in Copenhagen). She has published several books on autism and has also written several books and performed with various dance companies, including Michael Clark. Her work explores knowledge and the body of the autistic through text, voice, dance and video. She is currently translating Freud's case histories into performance.

Dr Joe Long, who Pum calls Dr Joe, is a social anthropologist and currently Research Manager at Scottish Autism. Dr Joe's work has included ethnographic research in Siberia and he now draws on his background in social care to underpin applied research in autism services.

Dr Peter Byrne from my student days in the mid 1960s when one of my postgraduate tutor suggested I look at the work held by the CTI department in the local psychiatric hospital, to the transfer of the Scottish Art Extraordinary Collection. Her works includes, for example, the study of human cultures and their impact on the environment, and she has written extensively on the subject. Pum is also an artist and has been recognised for her work with children and young people, including the award-winning project "The Sound of Silence". She has also worked with artists and companies, including Michael Clark.

Gordon Kennedy is a writer and composer based in Glasgow. His primary writing field is poetry - "the result of language against the tyranny of language". His music practice involves a core of breath & sound in a virtual landscape of electronic instruments made from recordings of the physical landscape. He is also one half of the electronic music duo The Crazy Twins, who release work on the London-based FangBondz label. https://www.facebook.com/thecrazytwins/

Mairi attended the Raisin, BFA, and Duncan of Jordanstone MFA before beginning a career in disability equality in the arts. She is now, amongst many things, a theatre producer. Mairi is also a friend and supporter of Pum's and Pum always encourages the artist in her work.

Sound collages available online http://organica.uk/earthecho. The sound collages are collaborative pieces between pum and Gordon Kennedy of "arranged soundscapes".

With thanks to Wild Island Cin for their sponsorship of Earth Echo