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Renegotiations

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ART IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM



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Listen!

A Sculpture in the Square and a #MeToo Monument

//Anna Rådström

Camilla Akraka's sculpture *Listen!* stands in a corner of Rådhusorget in central Umeå.¹ Three and a half meters above the ground, on a shiny stainless-steel plate, supported by five steel tubes, sits a meter-tall feline. The polyester composite body is painted with glossy car paint: Mazda's Soul Red Crystal. The jaw is cast in Nordic gold bronze alloy.² The steel base is meant to resemble a cage, meaning that the animal has broken out and is now enjoying its freedom on top of its cage.³ It flexes its muscles and throws the weight of its body forward. The throat is elongated, the ears are swept back, and the eyes are half-closed. The golden jaw is wide open: *Listen!* This permanent sculpture, a municipal monument to the #MeToo movement, firmly anchors the exclamation mark that is part of its title.

When, in this anthology, Håkan Nilsson describes the changing playing field within public art, he concludes that today it is more rare for this category of art to consist of "sculptures in the square." He also notes that "no more statues in the square" has become a mantra that characterizes the changing view of the permanent in recent decades.⁴ Unsurprisingly, this changing view, which emphasizes the temporary and the changeable, also includes the monument. For example, art scholar Jeff Werner notes that one of the trends in contemporary public art practice and discourse "is a movement away from the monument and the autonomous artwork toward temporary art and

1 The artist includes an exclamation mark in the title of the piece. I also use it here because it is an exhortation. However, in most of the sources referred to in this article, this exclamation mark does not appear. For Akraka's inclusion of the exclamation mark see: Umeå Municipality, "Listen, metoo-monument" [Listen, metoo Monument] <https://www.umea.se/umeakommun/kulturochfritid/kultur/konst/listenmetoomonument.4.2126f616dcccfd9431577b.html> (accessed 02/09/2020). Updated 11/19/2020.

2 Umeå Municipality, "Listen, metoo-monument"; Sara Meidell, "Camilla Akraka skulpterade ett vrå!" [Camilla Akraka Sculpted a Roar] *Västerbottens-Kuriren* (VK), 10/19/2019.

3 Umeå Municipality, "Listen, metoo-monument"; Umeå Municipality, "Klart med metoo-monument på Rådhusorget" [Green Light for metoo-monument in Rådhusorget] <https://via.tt.se/pressmeddelande/klart-med-metoo-monument-pa-radhusorget?publisherId=1422393&releaseId=3252651> (accessed 05/22/2020).

4 Håkan Nilsson, p. 43 and p. 181 in this anthology.



Camilla Akraka, Listen! Rådshustorget Umeå 2019. Photo: Fredrik Larsson
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social art.”⁵ Based on these kinds of assessments, *Listen!* can be seen as a work that does not quite fit into the contemporary mold, even though it was inaugurated in early November 2019 and addresses a highly topical issue. Through its dual function as a monument and a sculpture in the square, the work can be seen as an example of the less attractive contemporary component of the “temporary/permanent” dichotomy. In this chapter, however, I want to address the critical potential that the permanent can possess by drawing attention to how a work like *Listen!* can provoke focus of thought and the production of ideas.⁶

The aim of the chapter is to examine the meaning-making and place-making processes that occur when Umeå municipality, against the backdrop of the feminist #MeToo movement, positions itself against sexual harassment through Akraka’s work.⁷ I am interested in what *Listen!* does, that is, what meaning the work helps to create. I am primarily interested in the meanings it contributes in its capacity as an animal sculpture in the square and as a monument to the #MeToo movement. I look at how the animal subtly contributes to thinking about contemporary #MeToo manifestations but also about feminist history, practice and analysis. A significant part of my argument centers around what happens when the feline, which has also been categorized as a cougar, is made a symbol of a movement that predominantly includes women. The association with the feline, with the cougar, creates ambivalence. In conclusion, I note that *Listen!* has become a landmark for the city of Umeå, and that the work is used to position the Umeå municipality as a progressive cultural municipality that actively takes a stand on gender equality.⁸

5 Jeff Werner, *Postdemokratisk kultur [Postdemocratic Culture]* (Halmstad: Gidlunds förlag, 2018), p. 96.

6 See also Håkan Nilsson’s discussion of the critical potential of permanent art and its potential function as a space for reflection in a neoliberal age in which the changeable, ephemeral and flexible constitute a cornerstone, (p.14-15 in this anthology). See also Annika Öhrner’s discussion of simplistic dichotomies in the chapter “The Art of the Million Program in Today’s Living Environment.”

7 The emphasis on the meaning making and place making processes situates the chapter in the vicinity of Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe, in her *Skulptur i folkhemmet: Den offentliga skulpturens institutionalisering, referentialitet och rumsliga situationer 1940-1975 [Sculpture in the Swedish Welfare State: Institutionalisation, referentiality and spatial situations 1940-1975]*, doctoral thesis (Gothenburg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2007) and Beatrice Oroug, *Skulpturförflyttningar i det offentliga rummet: En analys av temporära konstprojekts effekter på det offentliga rummet och skulpturers betydelsebildningar [Moving Sculptures in the Public Space: An analysis of temporary art projects effects and significance on the public space and its sculptures]*, master’s thesis (Huddinge: Södertörn University, 2019).

8 The investigation that follows is based on in situ studies of *Listen!* and the square setting. The

A monument is made: a brief background

Akraka's work was inaugurated in 2019, two years after what has come to be known as the #MeToo autumn. It was claimed at the time to be Sweden's, and perhaps the world's, first #MeToo monument.⁹ The Umeå municipality erected it as a symbol of the fight against sexual harassment and it was dedicated to those who together broke the silence in connection with the metoo movement.¹⁰ The idea behind the monument was conceived by public art curator Moa Krestesen. In an interview a few days before the inauguration, she explained that the idea was an expression of the frustration that she, like others, felt "when metoo picked up steam." She also said: "It's part of my job to take the initiative and see where there might be opportunities for art. Once I took a spot on the board, it was a unanimous decision that was carried out in a lengthy process."¹¹ So the emotional response could be used within the scope of the work description and the preparation of a municipal case began. Krestesen describes the process as lengthy, but in relation to the installation of a permanent public monument to a historical event, it appears to have proceeded rather quickly. In April 2018, the Cultural Committee decided to initiate a public design procurement, and in March 2019, Akraka was awarded the contract.¹² The Cultural Committee was in agreement, but the

literature spans a register that includes art history research, critical essays and classic feminist texts. Contemporary sources for facts and opinions on Akraka's work include news reports on SVT and SR, as well as articles, columns and letters to the editor, published mainly in daily newspapers. Information is also taken from the Umeå municipality website.

- 9 Filippa Armstrong & Fanny Vedin, "Första #metoo-monumentet i världen" [First #metoo Monument in the World], Sveriges Radio, P4 Västerbotten, 3/22/2019, <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7181932> [accessed 02/09/20], "De bygger en ryttande puma - som monument över metoo," [They Are Building a Roaring Cougar - as a monument to metoo] *Aftonbladet* 22/3 2019, Yvonne Rittvall, "Metoo-puma väcker känslor i Umeå," [Metoo-cougar stirs emotions in Umeå] *Dagens Nyheter* (DN) 1/11/2019.
- 10 Umeå municipality, "Listen, metoo-monument."
- 11 Alexandra Granath, "Kommunen om metoo-puman: 'Konst måste få kosta'" [The Municipality on the metoo Cougar: 'Art must cost'] SVT Nyheter, Västerbotten, 10/29/2019, <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/vasterbotten/kommunen-om-metoo-puman-konst-maste-fa-kosta> [accessed 08/17/2020].
- 12 For information on the decision date, see Umeå Municipality, "Klart med metoo-monument på Rådshuset" [Green Light for metoo-monument in Rådshuset]. The municipality's call for monument proposals was aimed at active professional artists with at least 5 years of university education or equivalent. The procurement process was carried out in three stages: application; selection for the award of the sketch assignment; decision on the commission. See Umeå Municipality, "Gestaltningssupphandlingar, Uppdrag #metoo-monument på Rådshuset i Umeå," [Design Procurements, Commission #metoo-monument on Rådshuset in Umeå] <https://www.umea.se/umeakommun/kulturochfritid/kultur/konst/foryr...stnarer/gestaltningssup->

process was also fraught with conflict. Representatives of the Sweden Democrats questioned the cost of the work, and the media described the monument as a “watershed moment among citizens.”¹³

However, more than half of the cost was covered by funds from a 1970s donation from *Sparbanken* to the municipality to be used for art in Rådshuset.¹⁴ The fact that it was placed in the newly rebuilt square was thus largely due to funding. Added to this was the municipality’s awareness of the impact of the location. “The square,” the municipality writes in the assignment description, “is an important democratic meeting place all year round,” and by placing the work “in the center of town, it symbolizes an active stance of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and abuse – locally, nationally and globally.”¹⁵ The municipality thus shows an awareness of the symbolic value of public art, which is also reflected in the final assessment of Akraka’s work.

In making the selection from among the proposals submitted, the evaluation team considered the following four aspects: “aesthetic and artistic value of the material presented”; “artistic originality”; “artistic expression in relation to the purpose of the work”; and “the artist’s brief description of how they intend to approach the assignment.”¹⁶ The reasoning for the decision was published in the press release accompanying the award decision. It stated that Akraka’s proposal corresponds well with the municipality’s stance against sexual harassment; that class, gender, ethnicity and age are themes consistently

phandlingar.4.20c92392148f96bd89f18adc.html [accessed 08/01/20]. The page is now removed. It is documented by the author.

- 13 Regarding the debate in the municipal council where the cost of the #MeToo monument was questioned by the Sweden Democrats, see: Kerstin Erikson, “Het debatt om Metoo-puman i fullmäktige” [Heated Debate about Metoo-cougar in Council] *Västerbottens-Kuriren* (VK) 10/29/2019; Anne Pettersson, “Puman direkt in i hetluften” [Cougar Immediately Raises Temperatures], *Folkbladet* 10/29/2019. On the Metoo monument as a watershed moment, see: Granath, “Kommunen om metoo-puman: ‘Konst måste få kosta’” [The Municipality on the metoo Cougar: ‘Art must cost’].
- 14 Umeå Municipality, “Listen, metoo-monument.” The budget for the artwork was SEK 500,000 plus approx. SEK 100,000 for the three artists who were awarded the sketch assignment. The donation from *Sparbanken* covered approximately SEK 350,000 while the rest was taken from the culture committee’s budget for the purchase of art.
- 15 Umeå Municipality, “Gestaltningssupphandlingar, Uppdrag #metoo-monument på Rådshuset i Umeå.” op.cit.
- 16 Ibid. The evaluators included Moa Krestesen, art curator and project manager for procurement, Helena Wikström, artist representative and artistic director of Vita kuben [The White Cube], Åsa Adolfsson, art educator and Anja Boman, curator. Among the invited representatives was Jennie Forsberg, art historian and development manager for the Women’s History Museum, Umeå Municipality.

covered in her artistic practice, and that her work often challenges entrenched positions in the same way as those who broke the silence during the #MeToo movement. The reasoning concludes: “The strong visual expression of her work combined with the meaningful symbolic elements form a multi-faceted design that brings a new aesthetic approach to Umeå’s public space.”¹⁷ While the evaluators’ justification reflects the selection aspects without going into further description of the work, the press release states that the symbolic elements consist of “male-coded materials and symbols of power, such as steel, car paint and muscle mass.”¹⁸

The press release also contains wording relevant to my study, since it relates to the central categorization of the red-lacquered feline. It reads: “The artwork is called ‘Listen’ and depicts a cougar [...]”¹⁹ Another key phrase appears in an article published shortly thereafter. Krestesen is reported here as saying: “It [the cougar] is tall and I think it can also be a landmark. ‘See you at the cougar,’ one can both stand under, behind or next to it [...]”²⁰ The cougar theme is further reinforced when an accident occurred in early summer 2020. A skylift backed into *Listen!* during the renovation of the façade of city architect Fredrik Olaus Lindström’s brick-red town hall from the early 1890s (now a restaurant). Commenting on the incident, Lars Sahlin, the municipality’s deputy head of culture, said: “It was an accident. It can happen in the best of families.”²¹ The statement was probably warranted due to the fact that the restoration work was carried out by a contractor hired by the municipality, but it can also be interpreted as an expression of a desire to emphasize that the damage was not intentional. Following the damage assessment, the municipality’s website stated that *Listen!* – which was now called not only “the cougar” but also “the metoo cougar” – would be moved for repair and then returned to the square.²²

17 Umeå Municipality, “Klart med metoo-monument på Rådhusorget” [Green Light for metoo-monument in Rådhusorget]

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Anne Pettersson, “Metoo-monument ska sättas på upp på Rådhusorget: ‘Har en uppkäftighet,’” [Metoo Monument to be Put up on Rådhusorget: ‘Causes a stir’] *Folkbladet* 3/22/2019.

21 Anders Wynne, “Metoo-puman skadad – tar lång tid att återställa i ursprungligt skick” [Metoo Cougar Damaged – Will take a long time to restore to its original condition], *Västerbottens kureren* (VK) 6/2/2020.

22 Umeå Municipality, “Me too-puman är skadad och flyttas för att lagas” [Me too Cougar is Damaged and is Being Moved for Repairs]. <https://www.umea.se/umeakommun/kulturochfritid/kultur/konst/arkivpumanarskadadochflyttasforattlagas.5.2adf2b2d1724e9f24668ee0.html>

The examples above communicate something different from what is simultaneously explained via a municipal website that aims to educate the public on *Listen!*. When asked why the municipality has chosen a cougar, the answer is: "The artist has not identified the species of animal; it could be a cougar and has become so in popular speech. It could also be another type of feline."²³ It is not clear what this other animal is, but according to Akraka, it could be a panther.²⁴

Design and location play a clear role in the process of creating meaning and space. Equally important are the words used in connection with the design and how this relates to the tasks assigned to it. The word "cougar," which categorizes the sculpture, has crept into municipal documents; it has found its way into "popular speech" and spread through the media, as many of the titles in the article's notations testify. The impact of categorization on meaning making cannot be ignored. A cougar is a large feline, but it is also a slang word. Regarding the latter, the word is defined in letters to the editor and columns discussing *Listen!*. It is defined in different ways: a cougar can be an attractive woman.²⁵ Alternatively: a cougar can be a sexually attractive woman.²⁶ Or: a cougar is "a mature woman who is sexually attracted to and attracts younger men."²⁷ Whatever definition is assumed, they participate in the production of meaning in which the cougar is thought to be female and therefore a (sexualized) woman.

[accessed 08/01/2020]. The page was published on 06/05/20 and has since been removed. It is documented by the author. The main part of this chapter was written before *Listen!* was returned to its place in the square and partly exists in an interstice. In this interstice, there is no reason to shift focus from presence to absence – my attention is fully directed toward the enthroned animal.

23 Umeå municipality, "Listen, metoo-monument."

24 Meidell, "Camilla Akraka skulpterade ett vrål" [Camilla Akraka Sculpted a Roar], op.cit.

25 Daniel Persson, "Ryt till mot politisk konst" [Roar Against Political Art] 11/26/2019, <https://timbro.se/smedjan/ryt-till-mot-politisk-konst/> [accessed 05/22/22].

26 Kjerstin, "Obegripligt och tankelöst med röd puma" [Incomprehensible and thoughtless with red cougar] Ordet fritt [The Word is Free], Västerbottens-Kuriren (VK) 5/7/2019.

27 Johanna Lindqvist, Friday column, "Fortsätt lyssna på hennes vrål" [Keep Listening to Her Roar], *Folkbladet* 11/1/2019.

The cougar, the feline and #MeToo

Based on the above, “cougar,” or the “#MeToo cougar,” manifests as a meaning-making guide for the general public.²⁸ If the feline had been defined as a panther, the interpretive guide would not have been the same.²⁹ But irrespective of the species chosen, one essential thing would remain – the traditional association between the woman and the animal. Accordingly, as this study delves into meaning-making in relation to #MeToo, women’s history and feminist thought, the “cougar” will be discussed alongside the non-species specific feline.

#MeToo can be traced back to 2006 in the US, when women’s rights activist Tarana Burke drew attention to sexual violence against racialized black women by consistently emphasizing the importance of adding a “me too” to every story of abuse. Eleven years later, in 2017, actor Alyssa Milano added a hashtag to “metoo,” emphasizing the use of social media. Today, #MeToo is a global movement highlighting the critical importance of speaking up and sharing individual experiences. The manifestations cast a spotlight on “a patriarchal social structure that allows the perpetrator, usually a man, to abuse his position of power by committing sexually motivated acts that vary in their degree of criminality.”³⁰ The translated description above was formulated by political scientist Maud Eduards for the *Nationalencyklopedin* and does not convey anything particularly new. Rather, it is – to paraphrase the subtitle of one of Rebecca Solnit’s books – a description of an old conflict to which a new chapter has been added. Yet, according to Solnit, the watershed moment created by #MeToo did bring something new. What was new, she notes, was not that women spoke out, but that people listened.³¹

28 Here, I borrow Dan Karholm’s line of thinking. In his discussion of what a monument can be, he argues that some form of verbal anchorage on, or in proximity to, an the monument, is one crucial aspect. Such an anchor is an inscription that serves not as title but an “interpretive guide and motive.” See “Det tomma monumentet” [The Empty Monument], in *Vad betyder verket?: konstvetenskapliga studier kring måleri, skulptur, stadsplanering och arkitektur* [What Does the Artwork Mean?: Art historical studies around painting, sculpture, urban planning and architecture], ed. Thomas Hall, Ewa Kron & Lempi Borgwik (Stockholm: Department of Art History, Stockholm University, 2001), p. 45.

29 The impact this may have on meaning making is discussed later in the chapter.

30 Maud Eduards, “me too-rörelsen,” [The me too Movement] in *Nationalencyklopedin* [NE], <https://www-ne-se.till.biblextern.sh.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/me-too-r%C3%B6relsen> (accessed 7/30/2020).

31 Rebecca Solnit, *Whose Story is This: Old Conflicts; New Chapters* (London: Granata Publications, 2019), p. 7.

Where does *Listen!* fit into all of this, apart from the fact that the sculpture/monument has also been said to have created a watershed moment? Is it not only a textbook example of biologism but also an example of anthropomorphism? Are women's accounts of abuse expressed through the jaws of the cougar? Are their experiences projected onto the feline's body? I contend the answer is no; it is not a textbook example of either, though it is an example that generates ambivalence. This is not necessarily negative, however. Ambivalence is a highly active ingredient in meaning-making processes and is central to feminist thought. The writer, philosopher and literary scholar Hélène Cixous, for example, argues for "Thinking of/on both sides."³² While Peggy Phelan, a leading scholar in performance studies, argues that feminism "makes ambivalence a necessary worldview. In these days of hideous fundamentalism, the capacity to acknowledge ambivalence is revolutionary."³³ So, while I raise the red flag for biologism and anthropomorphism, I also see that the cougar/feline in the square - the public space *par excellence* - is anchoring a call to action: *Listen!* The call harkens back to #MeToo, as well as other inseparable chapters of feminist struggle. The meaning making that unfolds is harrowing but can also be empowering.

Thoughtprints

The concept "thoughtprints" signals the imprint of the cougar/feline on thinking while indicating that the activity of thinking itself also leaves traces.³⁴ Thinking, argues cultural theorist Mieke Bal, is neither individual, particular nor bound to the time in which ideas are articulated. The life of thoughts is similar to the life of images: they are both enduring but also changeable and are maintained

32 Hélène Cixous & Mireille Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous: Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 25.

33 Peggy Phelan, "Feminism Makes Ambivalence a Necessary Worldview," *ArtForum*, 2 (2003) p. 149. I have drawn on both Cixous' and Phelan's ideas about ambivalence in an earlier text. See "Ambivalens och ett 'emellan': Reflektioner genom och runtomkring ett av Annika von Hausswolffs fotografier" [Ambivalence and an 'In Between': Reflections through and around one of Annika von Hausswolff's photographs], in *Att känna sig fram: Känslor i humanistisk genusforskning*, [To Feel One's Way: Feelings in gender studies within the humanities] ed. Annelie Bränström Öhman, Maria Jönsson & Ingeborg Svensson (Umeå: h:ström-Text och kultur, 2011), pp. 168-189.

34 The concept appears in critical animal studies based on Jacques Derrida. See Anne E Berger & Martha Segarra's "Thoughtprints," *Critical Studies*, 35 (2011), pp. 3-22.

collectively. They are subject to debate and thus provoke thinking that is not primarily *about* the world but takes place *with, through* and *in* the world, including its visual manifestations. We do not “read” the thoughts conveyed in an image but create it and interact with it.³⁵ Bal’s performatively rooted reasoning is significant for the thinking that occurs here, even though *Listen!* is not an image but a public sculpture that also serves as a monument.

In her analysis of the work on the redesign of Stortorget in Kalmar in the early 2000s, architect Catharina Gabrielsson highlights the following: “The geometric pattern on the surface of the manhole cover is reminiscent of a large paw print, as if a monster has wandered over the site; monster derives from (Latin) *monere* to show, urge or recall, the etymological roots of the monument.”³⁶ Based on this observation and linguistic derivation, the cougar in Rådhusorget in Umeå can be likened to a monster. It does not leave indexical paw prints on the stone pavement, but its red, muscular and big jawed appearance creates a presence that envelops the space. From its elevated, distant position in a corner of the square, it can also be said to be reminiscent of something else.

When I discuss *Listen!* in the context of the cougar and the feline, it inevitably highlights the part of Western women’s history that has struggled for centuries with associations to the animal, to the female. The struggle can be traced in the classic and indispensable writing of the author and philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). When clarifying her own position in relation to men, she feels compelled to emphasize that she is a woman, doing so while referring to the “government of the physical world”, where “it is observable that the female in point of strength is, in general, inferior to the male. This is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be suspended or abrogated in favour of woman.”³⁷

The struggle takes center stage almost 160 years later when the philosopher

35 Mike Bal, “Thinking in Film,” in *Thinking in the World*, ed. Jill Bennet & Mary Zournazi (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2020), p. 173.

36 Catharina Gabrielsson, *Att göra skillnad: Det offentliga rummet som medium för konst, arkitektur och politiska föreställningar* [*To Make a Difference: Public Space as a medium for art, architecture and concepts of the political*] doctoral thesis (Stockholm: Royal Institute of Technology, 2007), p. 398.

37 Mary Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects”, in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd & Marilyn Butler volume 5, (London: William Pickering 1989), p. 74.

Simone de Beauvoir writes her seminal analysis in *The Second Sex* (1949). Like Wollstonecraft, she proclaims her biological sex and addresses the female-male dichotomy. Though, in her case the tone is different. The study is divided into two books. The first book, *Facts and Myths* begins with a discussion of “Destiny”. The first chapter of this part is called “The Data of Biology” and begins with a definitional question:

Woman? Very simple, say the fanciers of simple formulas; she is a womb, an ovary; she is female – this word is sufficient to define her. In the mouth of a man the epithet female has the sound of an insult, yet he is not ashamed of his animal nature; on the contrary, he is proud if someone says of him: ‘He is a male!’ The term ‘female’ is derogatory not because it emphasizes woman’s animality, but because it imprisons her in her sex [...].³⁸

Beauvoir then proceeds at a brisk pace and in colorful language with a litany of clichéd descriptions of the behavior of different species of females to show the man’s distaste and fear of castration, but also his imaginative powers of sexual conquest and domination. As for the latter, she writes: “[...] the most superb wild beasts – the tigress, the lioness, the panther – bed down slavishly under the imperial embrace of the male.”³⁹ The analysis does not explicitly include the cougar, but it does point to reasons why the idea production surrounding “the female” causes friction. There are elements not only of biologism but also of sexism – even the strongest female is subordinated to the male. Biology as a woman’s destiny did not end after Beauvoir had dissected it, but where she had used the female feline to paint a linguistic picture of submission, seven decades later Camilla Akraka brings out a sculptural feline that signals the radical opposite and thus disrupts the “law of nature” described above. When Akraka designed the proposal for *Listen!*, she was already working with a feline theme. An example of this can be found in her solo exhibition *Colonial Rooms at Passagen* in Linköping (2014). This included three panthers (*Sisters*) and a bull. The constellation was described by one critic as follows:

38 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 35. The second book of the study is “Woman’s Life Today”.

39 Ibid.

Three female panthers walking in a circle (the feminine) and a toppled bull (obviously the masculine) create a dramatic scene. The patterns of fixed structures, in the encounter with the three-dimensional animals, subtly here become a metaphor for movement and change of - perhaps position and power?⁴⁰

The gender choreography staged here differs from the scene of submission in the chapter "The Data of Biology". Here it is the regal male bull, one of the symbols of male potency, that is in a vulnerable position.

The exhibition in Linköping reveals that her work deals with colonial spaces, which means working with both history and the present, and with issues of identity and power.⁴¹ The work with these spaces can be linked to the artist's own experiences. Akraka, who was born in London in 1968 and grew up in Stockholm, where she studied at the Royal College of Art, explains in an interview with cultural editor Sara Meidell how the experience of being black and growing up in Sweden in the 1970s contributed to her decision to apply for the Umeå municipality's monument assignment. She says: "Being considered less worthy because of who you were born as, is what the metoo movement is fundamentally protesting against."⁴²

In the interview, Meidell raises the issue of the word "cougar." She obviously has the slang word in mind and seems to find it problematic. Meidell asks Akraka how she sees "an objectifying concept about women" coming to symbolize what #MeToo stands for. To this, the artist replies that it can be argued that the term is being reclaimed. But at the same time, she says, it is interesting that the feline has been interpreted as a cougar and not a panther, which was also an option.

40 Lotta Ekfeldt, "Med fokus på det koloniala" [With Focus on the Colonial], *Om konst: konstnärer skriver om konst* [On Art: Artists write about art], 09/01/2019, <https://omkonst.se/14-akraka-camilla.shtml> [accessed 05/22/20].

41 Two years after *Colonial Rooms*, *Sisters* was exhibited at Vallentuna Kulturhus. According to the title of one of the exhibition's press items, the three panther females now represented "the clash between the colonial era and the present and the encounter between African and Scandinavian nature." See Anna Wilson, "Pantersyster till Konstkuben," [Panther Sisters to Konstkuben] *Mitt i Kungsholmen* 08/16/2016, <https://www.mitti.se/nyheter/pantersyster-till-konstkuben/lmphtml394407/> (accessed 07/27/2020). Akraka has also carried out *Shades of the Tiger* (2019), a public sculpture commission for the Agora activity center in Skäggetorp, Linköping, which is funded by the municipal real estate company Lejonfastigheter. See Susanne Hasselqvist, "Tiger till Skäggetorp" [Tiger to Skäggetorp] in *Corren* 02/17/2017, <https://corren.se/nyheter/linkoping/tiger-till-skaggetorp-om4508708.aspx> (accessed 11/20/28).

42 Meidell, "Camilla Akraka skulpterade ett vrål" [Camilla Akraka Sculpted a Roar], op.cit.

The intention of the proposal, she says, was to “broaden the idea of the feline – a panther can also be a black jaguar or a leopard, it’s just a matter of pigmentation.”⁴³ Here, she is presumably referring to the fact that an excess of the color pigment melanin can cause leopards and jaguars, for example, to turn black instead of spotted.⁴⁴ This means we cannot base our categorizations of felines on their pigmentation. But there is uncertainty surrounding how to interpret the “just pigment” statement in the context surrounding *Listen!*. The #MeToo movement began through Burke’s efforts to make visible sexual violence against racialized black women but has broadened to include others. Is Akraka’s statement alluding to this and emphasizing the universality of her work beyond issues of race (and gender)?⁴⁵ In other words, is she saying that #MeToo affects and concerns everyone?

When a work is introduced to its audience, the artist’s intentions are not decisive for the viewers’ production of meaning, and Akraka’s intention to “broaden the concept of the feline” seems to have gone unnoticed. Instead, a gender-specific slang word gets stuck in the minds of the viewers, which must be reclaimed for use in the context of #MeToo. Reclaiming a term that, after all, may never have been one’s own, is neither straightforward nor without its perils. Words matter and they tend to carry baggage, or as filmmaker and writer Trinh T. Minh-ha puts it: “Words empty out with age. Die and rise again, accordingly invested with new meanings, and always equipped with a secondhand memory.”⁴⁶ *Listen!* has given rise to a process to reclaim the word “cougar.” This can be considered as a form of “empowerment in action.”

In the spring of 2019, shortly after the assessment panel announced its choice of Akraka’s work, art historian Katrin Steen wrote a column contrasting the cougar with the lion – the ubiquitous symbol of power in history and in the public sphere. The lion is described both as a male with a thick mane and as a female member of the pride, but no gender

43 Ibid.

44 Roland Johansson, “Kattdjur – evolutionens mästerverk” [“Felines - Evolution's masterpiece,”] *WWF Magasin*, 1 (2020), p. 19.

45 Akraka’s statement about the black panther can also be associated with the Black Panther Party, which was formed in the United States in the mid-1960s. When viewed in relation to this party and to the recent Black Lives Matter movement, it is not a question of “just pigment.”

46 Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Difference: A Special Third World Women Issue,” *Feminist Review*, 25:2 (1987), p. 5. The power of words became well known through the work of philosopher J.L. Austin. See *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

definitions are made for the cougar. This does not mean, however, that it necessarily remains genderless. If the reader has the slang word “cougar” in her or his vocabulary, the association with the female easily comes to mind. The cougar is said to sneak into the game but once in the square it attracts attention. Steen describes how it roars, flexes its muscles and gets ready to attack while reminding us of #MeToo and the ongoing struggle. However, the cougar’s roar is said to be possibly drowned out by delighted cheers.⁴⁷

Steen’s short and popular chronicle stimulates thoughts about the square as a stage where performative actions take place. They play out physically in reality or imaginatively inside the head of the person standing or moving across the square. A square is, as Umeå municipality and many others point out, an important democratic meeting place, but it is also “the arena of power *per se*.”⁴⁸ Power can take many forms, including gendered power structures. In feminist practice and theory, this form of power is of course something that is analyzed and challenged. Two important tools in this work are the voice and the gaze. These tools are used both practically and analytically.

Listen! is placed in the south-east corner of Rådhusorget. In the north-west corner one finds Sean Henry’s sculpture *Standing Man*. Henry’s silent, solitary male figure arrived temporarily in the square via Andersson Sandström gallery in 2007 and immediately aroused photographic fervor and nurturing feelings. Over the years, the lone man has been fitted with a hat and scarf as protection against the often cold weather. The sculpture was then purchased by Umeå municipality in 2008 and has since found a permanent home in its corner, apart from a period in 2016-2017 when the square was being rebuilt. A contributor, whose real concern is to call for nameplates for the two works, notes the eye-catching constellation that has been staged. He refers to *Listen!* as “cougar,” and wonders if there is a pedagogical motivation behind the lack of information, describing the scene as follows: “Two distinctive poles of male and female talking to, or possibly past, each other across the square.”⁴⁹ The question of pedagogy is highly relevant, and

47 Katrin Steen, “En puma tar plats bland lejonerna” [A Cougar is Taking Place Among the Lions], *Folkbladet* 04/02/2019. For a broader and deeper discussion of the lion’s role in public space, see Oscar Svanelid’s chapter “Safety Art: On art as a security/safety measure for public spaces” in this anthology.

48 Jeff Werner, *Postdemokratisk kultur [Postdemocratic Culture]*, op.cit., p. 38.

49 Anders (Verner) Kristoffersson, *Ordet fritt: “Varför anonyma konstverk på Rådhusorget?”* [The Word is Free: “Why anonymous works of art on Rådhusorget?”], *Västerbottens kuriren* (VK)

not just in terms of nameplates. It seems unlikely that the diagonal across Rådshustorget, which both connects and distances, was not taken into account in the installation of *Listen!* My interpretation is that the mute, solitary man, by being clearly addressed by the feline, is forced into a relationship. As I stand beneath the cougar, I trace an imaginary roar that is flung diagonally across the square. The roar hits one side of *Standing man's* face. Here a connection arises with the other tool mentioned above: the gaze. The scene created and the imaginary diagonal roar evokes an interesting association with artist Barbara Kruger's iconic photomontage *Untitled (Your gaze hits the side of my face)* (1981). But where Kruger's work addresses the problem of the ubiquitous male gaze, here it raises questions about the roar of the female cougar and its reception. Does the roar enter the ear of the closed male figure?

A golden jaw

On the aforementioned municipal website dedicated to *Listen!* the question is asked: "Why does it roar, cougars can't roar?" The municipality answers: "But art can roar, art is free to be shaped and to express itself in a different way than reality."⁵⁰ Despite the municipality's ode to the freedom of art, it becomes clear here how a categorization ("cougar") can limit a voice, a roar.

The author and art critic John Berger is one of many who have discussed the relationship between the human and non-human animals. In this discussion the question of language is fundamental. He writes that the animal's "lack of common language, its silence, guarantees its distance, its distinctness, its exclusion, from and of man."⁵¹ Berger here uses "man" as a stand-in for the "human being". If his formulation were to be slightly reworked and placed in relation to the scene in Rådshustorget, the following could be suggested: the language of the

03/18/2020.

50 Umeå Municipality, "Listen, metoo-monument." Here it would be possible to debate the municipality's ambition to educate its citizens, and to insert Hanno Rauterberg's assertion that the emancipatory effect of the #MeToo movement lies in the fact that it does not have to wait for the help of institutions. But such a discussion is not within the scope of this chapter. See Hanno Rauterberg, *Hur fri är konsten? Den nya kulturstriden och liberalismens kris [How Free is Art? The New Cultural Clash and the Crisis of Liberalism]* (Gothenburg: Daidalos, 2019), p. 91.

51 John Berger, *About Looking [Electronic resource]* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011) pp. 11-12.

female human exists, she is not silent, nevertheless there is a distance, a distinction, her exclusion from and of man (in reference to biology). To this can be added a short passage from Jacques Rancière's *Ten Theses on Politics*. In the eighth thesis, Rancière explains an effective ruling technique, a sure way to deny another political animal (i.e., a human being) agency. If there is someone you do not want to acknowledge as a political being, you should start by not acknowledging them as the bearer of politicalness, you should not seek to understand what is being said, nor should you hear the utterance made.⁵² Such a technique throws the speaker out of balance unless they are in a position to directly resist by demanding that their thoughts be heard. This domination technique can be used in different situations, including when sexual abuse and harassment have been reported during the age of #MeToo.

As early as the 1970s, social psychologist Berit Ås analyzed techniques of domination, including invisibilization. In the early 2000s, the *Empowerment Network at Stockholm University* (ENSU) took on the task of challenging these techniques and developed both counterstrategies and what they called affirmation techniques. Consequently, the domination technique of invisibility was countered by the counterstrategy of claiming space, and this strategy was reinforced by an affirmation technique aimed at visibility.⁵³ Similar strategies become relevant when voice and listening are emphasized.

A cougar can thus, according to Umeå municipality's website, not roar. No, but it has a call. A special issue of *WWF Magasin* takes a closer look at all the world's cats. They are described as evolution's masterpieces and are said to be famous for their calls. The lion, the leopard and the jaguar roar. And while the tiger does not roar, it has a mighty call. The cougar, on the other hand, "has a famous scream that sounds a bit like a woman in distress."⁵⁴ The description does not specify whether this applies to females as well as males, but it fits poorly with the roar supposed to emanate from the golden jaw. I suggest, however, the sound can be linked on a metaphorical level to the #MeToo monument's task of memorializing. It recalls what Rebecca Solnit points out, namely that feminism, like other human rights movements, has consisted of a

52 Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," *Theory and Event*, 5:2 (2001), p. 10.

53 Louise Andersson & Anna Lena Lindgren, "Feministiska perspektiv på konstpedagogik" [Feminist Perspectives on Art Education], in *Konstfeminism: Strategier och effekter i Sverige från 1970-talet till idag* [Art Feminism: Strategies and Consequences in Sweden from the 1970s to the present], ed. Anna Nyström, Louise Andersson et.al. (Stockholm: Atlas, 2005), p. 169.

54 Johansson, "Kattdjur – evolutionens mästerverk" ["Felines - Evolution's masterpiece,"] op.sit. p.17

process whereby voices have been amplified until they have carried the weight by themselves; through solidarity, weaker voices come together so that they are powerful enough to stand up to those whom Solnit calls dictators.⁵⁵ This process of the gathering force of the dominated, which I argue is made possible by the technique of affirmation, is a prerequisite for the kind of impact that #MeToo has had and continues to have.

The process of empowerment is a fundamental part of feminism's work to ensure that women are ready, willing and able to make their voices heard.⁵⁶ *Listen!* gives a reminder of the process of sharing experiences but also of how those who do not have experiences to share react when they learn about those of others. The reminder makes clear that there were those who listened even before #MeToo. The Swedish translation (*Våldtäkt*) of Susan Brownmiller's seismic and eye-opening study on rape was published in 1977, three years after it was first published in the US under the longer title *Against Our Will. Men, Women and Rape*. The study begins with "A Personal Statement." The first lines read: "The question most often asked of me while I was writing this book was short, direct and irritating. 'Have you ever been raped?' My answer was equally direct: 'No'."⁵⁷ Brownmiller describes how listening to those who had these experiences fundamentally changed her perception of what rape is and motivated her to write the book, which in turn changed many other people's views.

Another description is given by Maria-Pia Boëthius in *Skylla sig själv: En bok om våldtäkt (Blaming yourself. A book about rape)*. Here, traumatic experiences are described while the *Sexualbrottsutredningens* (Sexual Offences Inquiry's) proposal for a new legal wording on rape is opposed. The first chapter begins with a description of Sweden's first so-called sensitivity training course for women at the Tylösand beach resort in January 1975. Boëthius, who was one of the participants, recalls how they talked, compared stories and rejoiced in the discovery that they were not "crazy."⁵⁸ Other women had the same experiences; they were not alone. Thus, this was, *avant la lettre*, a clear moment of "me too". The first edition of the book was published in 1976 and the

55 Solnit, *Whose Story is This*, op.cit., p. 36.

56 I am referring to the song "Befrielsen är nära" [Liberation is near] in Margareta Garpe and Suzanne Osten's 1974 play *Jösses flickor [Jeez Girls!]*.

57 Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will. Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Fawcett Books, 1975), p. 7.

58 Maria Pia Boëthius, *Skylla sig själv: En bok om våldtäkt [Blaming Oneself. A book about rape]*, 2nd edition. (Stockholm: Liber Förlag, 1981), pp. 7-8.

second edition came out in 1981. In the new preface to the otherwise unedited text, Boëthius writes: “Today I understand that it is already a piece of the puzzle in Swedish women’s history. Time moves fast. What happened barely five years ago is already ‘history’.”⁵⁹

In the assignment description that follows the design procurement for the #MeToo monument on Rådhusorget, Umeå municipality writes that there is a before and an after #MeToo. The future monument is described as a “contemporary document” and a brief contemporary historical background is given with references to Tarana Burke and the #MeToo autumn of 2017.⁶⁰ When historian Kerstin Nordlander receives a quick question from a journalist about the #MeToo monument, she expresses criticism of the idea and argues that Umeå municipality is acting too soon. #MeToo is an important movement, but it is not yet possible to know whether it will lead to change, she says. In order to bring about change, she believes that it is new legislation that is needed. And she continues, “[t]he risk is that in five years, no one will know what the metoo cougar stands for. Then the monument will just be a cat sitting in the square [...]”⁶¹

Presently, it is not possible to speak fully of a “post-MeToo”; the movement is still creating ripples and facing a backlash. But just because it is not yet possible to talk about an after does not mean that it is impossible to talk about #MeToo. It is also possible, as journalist Alexandra Pascalidou does, to adopt the perspective of a different moment in time. When the anthology *Me too: så går vi vidare – Röster, redskap och råd* [*Me Too: Moving Forward – Voices, tools and advice*] was published in 2017, she was asked whether it was too soon to publish the book. Was there not a risk that important stories would be excluded? Pascalidou replied: “It’s not too early. It’s too late.”⁶²

Debating whether it is too early or too late to recognize, or document, an ongoing event is beyond the scope of this chapter. What is important

59 Ibid., p. 5.

60 Umeå Municipality, “Gestaltningssupphandlingar, Uppdrag #metoo-monument på Rådhusorget i Umeå” [Design procurement, Commission #metoo monument in Rådhusorget in Umeå]. As Sjöholm Skrubbe points out, it is not possible to make a general distinction between a memorial and a monument. The word monument comes from the Latin *monumentum* meaning memorial (see Sjöholm Skrubbe 2007, footnote 44, p. 326).

61 Rittvall, “Metoo-puma väcker känslor i Umeå” [Metoo Cougar Stirs Emotions in Umeå], op.cit.

62 Johanna Palm, “Pascalidou om nya boken: Årtusenden av tystnad och tabu bryts äntligen” [Pascalidou on the New Book: Millennia of silence and taboo finally broken], SVT Nyheter 11/3/2017, <https://www.svt.se/kultur/metoo-sa-gar-vi-vidare-alexandra-pascalidou> (accessed 11/29/20).

here is the meaning-making of which *Listen!* is a part and the history that accompanies it. A monument that ceases to memorialize is no longer a monument in the strictest sense of the term, and it matters little whether the feline is called a cougar or a panther. It is impossible to know what future meaning-making processes the monument will be a part of, but that meaning-making will continue is fairly certain. *Listen!* is therefore built to stand the test of time. The work has its sights set on permanence and continuous relevance.

The exclamation mark on the square

In her comprehensive study of public sculptures in the Swedish public domain from 1940-1975, art scholar Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe highlights depictions of animals as a common motif. Animals native to Sweden dominate: bears, deer and sometimes lynx. The sculptures, often depicting cubs playing or females with cubs, are found on school grounds, in public parks and residential areas. This, writes Sjöholm Skrubbe, “means that it is easy to see these sculptures as a kind of fable – that is, that the themes in the sculptures can be transferred to a large extent to the human condition.”⁶³ For example, in residential areas, the relationship between female/mother and kid/child is a common theme, leading to the metaphorical reference to stereotypical notions of the woman as mother and the home as her domain.⁶⁴ Sjöholm Skrubbe thus shows how a sculptural choreography of gender, under the guise of the animal, is played out in the era of *Folkhemmet* (the golden age of the welfare state).

Today, *Folkhemmet* has more or less been dismantled, but the animal has not disappeared. In November 2019, it arrives at Rådhusstorget in the heart of Umeå. The feline, a stranger to Sweden, has been equipped to withstand the cold climate of the Västerbotten region in the north of the country. The animal sculpture firmly anchors the exclamation mark in its title: *Listen!* As a monument, the work recalls something that has occurred, but something that also remains active in the present. A feminist and politically charged choreography unfolds around the cougar in the square, which differs from the more low-key gender choreography described by Sjöholm Skrubbe.

63 Sjöholm Skrubbe, *Skulptur i folkhemmet* [*Sculpture in the Swedish Welfare State*] op.cit., p. 185.

64 Ibid., p. 186.

When *Listen!* was inaugurated, hundreds of people were in attendance.

The chair of the Culture Committee, Helena Smith (Social democrat politician), Camilla Akra and Ida Östensson from Make Equal and co-founder of the consent movement, Fatta, gave speeches. According to an article in the daily press, Östensson called *Listen!* “a contemporary document dedicated to us who broke the silence.” She also informed the audience that “there are a hundred rapes a day. This means that at some point during my speech, a girl or woman will probably be raped.”⁶⁵ During the inauguration, the group Mäkt performed and included *Listen!* (called cougar) in one of their songs.⁶⁶ There was also a performance entitled *Kort kjol (Short Skirt)*.⁶⁷ The performance was the result of artist Gunilla Samberg’s art education work. In connection with her exhibition *Som kropp - till Marie och Marlene (Like a body - for Marie and Marlene)* at the municipal art gallery in Umeå, workshops were held for young women (16-18 years).⁶⁸ On the opening day of *Listen!*, the young women took over the square. In doing so, they joined previous actions in feminist art. For example, in the early 2000s, the artist group High Heel Sisters invited women to walk with them for an hour across Sergels torg in Stockholm. “Feel like you own the place,” was the invitation.⁶⁹ A cumulative effect continues almost twenty years later at Rådhusorget.

Epilogue

Listen! is used today. An active user is Umeå municipality, the commissioning body for the #MeToo monument. The same year that *Listen!* was inaugurated, the municipality of Umeå was said to invest the most in culture per inhabitant in Sweden.⁷⁰ Gender equality work

65 Sigrid Törnqvist, "Hundratals slöt upp för Metoo-pumans invigning" [Hundreds Turned up for the Metoo Cougar's Inauguration] *Folkbladet*, 11/4/2019, Sigrid Törnqvist, *Västerbottens-Kuriren* (VK) 11/4/2019.

66 Ibid.

67 See Cultural Secretary Anja Boman's answers to Håkan Nilsson's questions about Umeå municipality's investments in temporary art in the chapter "Temporary Liaisons and Far-reaching Convergences: Public art under municipal auspices" in this anthology.

68 "kort kjol" (short skirt) <https://gunillasamberg.com/2019/11/05/kortkjol/> (accessed 09/08/21).

69 Eva Hallin, "Med motstånd mot förändring": Samtal med Sapphos Döttrar, High Heel Sisters, Johanna Gustafsson och Fia-Stina Sandlund" [With Resistance to Change: Conversations with Sappho's Daughters, High Heel Sisters, Johanna Gustafsson and Fia-Stina Sandlund], in *Konst-feminism [Art Feminism]*, p. 159.

70 *Nyistan: En tidning för alla nya i Umeå kommun*, [NewInTown: A magazine for everyone who is new in Umeå Municipality], 2019, p. 6.

through culture has been part of the municipality's profiling efforts for a number of years. During its stint as the Capital of Culture 2014, the Museum of Women's History was inaugurated and presented as "a new and unique museum in Sweden."⁷¹ The museum, which is run by the municipality, is located in the cultural building Väven on the Ume River not far from Rådhusorget and *Listen!*. Much like the municipal #MeToo monument, the museum is also said to be a call "for action."⁷² There is an "empowerment ambition." But the ambition does not only cover the "gender equality issue" but also the attractiveness and potential for growth of the city of Umeå in general. In this, *Listen!* plays a prominent role. The sculpture/monument (the new aesthetic element in Umeå's public space) is the face of the tourist industry via *Visit Umeå*. Here *Listen!* serves both as a marker of the municipality's stance against sexual harassment and as a cover image for a brochure for an art tour in Umeå's city center.⁷³ In another context, Akra's work is used to promote Umeå as "the city that speaks out for gender equality." With an eye on population growth (200,000 inhabitants by 2050), the municipality emphasizes gender equality as a "natural part of sustainable urban development."⁷⁴ Here, *Listen!* is not only tasked with memorializing the #MeToo movement, it is also expected to attract people to the city.⁷⁵

Listen! has become a landmark and as such seems to be involved in identity building, with elements of empowerment even reaching beyond the auspices of the municipality. The #MeToo cougar is tattooed on the arm of a well-known Umeå resident, and a columnist with roots in the punk scene exclaims that she is proud to live in Umeå because of the cougar. Another columnist writes: "So beat your chests, residents of Västerbotten. Whether you hate the red #metoo cougar or not. Disruptive art is the best thing we can have because it is evidence that we live in a society where you and your children and grandchildren are

71 Nyistan: *En tidning för alla nya i Umeå kommun*, [*NewInTown: A magazine for everyone who is new in Umeå Municipality*], 2014, p. 3.

72 Ibid.

73 Umeå Municipality, Visit Umeå, "Metoo-monumentet", <https://visitumea.se/sv/metoo-monumentet-listen> (accessed 07/06/2020), Umeå kommun, "Konstrunda i Umeå centrum" [Art Tour in Umeå center].

74 Umeå Municipality, "Staden som ryter för jämställdhet" [The City that roars for Gender Equality], <https://www.umea.se/platswebbar/flyttatillumea/arkiv/nyhetsarkiv/nyheter/stadensomryterforjamstallldhet.55d9221f0174f9921146e4c.html> (accessed 12/01/2020).

75 Compare, e.g., with Håkan Nilsson's discussion of public art, cities and suburbs in the chapter "Public Art: An attempt to navigate" in this anthology.

allowed [...].”⁷⁶ But *Listen!* also comes up in crisis contexts. The feline has appeared in cartoon form on a banner during a demonstration against cuts in Region Västerbotten’s ASTA clinic in Umeå. In a short article (in which *Listen!* is called both “cougar” and “Metoo cougar”), one of the participants in the demonstration is quoted saying: “Given all the experience we now have of violence and abuse against women, it actually feels a bit absurd to have to do this sort of thing [...].”⁷⁷ The banner with the familiar red feline serves as a reminder that there is a struggle going on beyond Rådshustorget in the center of the city. *Listen!*⁷⁸

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- 76 Anna Sundelin, “Umeåprofil har #Metoo-puman på sin arm - 'Jag bär den med stolthet'” [Notable Umeå Resident Has the #MeToo-cougar on Her Arm - 'I wear it with pride'] *Affärsliv* 24 [Business Life 24], in *Västerbottens-Kuriren* (VK) 4/5/2019; Erica Sjöström, “Punkiga puman passar perfekt” [Punk Cougar a Perfect Fit], *Västerbottens-Kuriren* (VK) 11/8/2019, Jonas Danielsson, “Se till att akta er för mjäkig kultur” [Beware of Soft Culture], *Folkbladet* 12/6/2019.
- 77 Niclas Holmlund, “Umeåbor i manifestation för hotad Asta-mottagning” [Umeå Residents in Demonstration for Threatened Asta Clinic], *Västerbottens-Kuriren* (VK) 06/02/2019.
- 78 *Listen!* has been back on Rådshustorget since December 2020. It is now accompanied by a plate which explains the monument’s purpose. The exclamation mark is included in the title.