#MeToo in Sweden: Museum Collections, Digital Archiving and Hashtag Visuality

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ABSTRACT
In October 2017, the Nordic Museum in Stockholm launched its *#metoo* collection. The aim was to capture the viral #MeToo campaign that in Sweden has been likened to a (feminist) revolution. Based on archival research, interviews and media analysis, this article explores public submissions to the *#metoo* collection and analyses the museum's rationale for collecting what is considered to be difficult cultural heritage. Noting the absence of images in the collection, the article argues that the iconic hashtag #MeToo constitutes an alternative form of digital visuality, here termed hashtag visuality. Hashtag visuality, the article suggests, is an emerging form of visual representation that captures the multimodal logic of social media, blurring distinctions between texts and images. In Sweden, #MeToo hashtag visuality reveals the contradictory prevalence of structural sexism and sexual violence in a country with a national self-image of gender equality and a self-proclaimed feminist government, while affirming feminist agency.

Introduction: #MeToo Demonstrations and the Nordic Museum Collection[1]

Felicia's left arm was in a cast, an injury resulting from her bodily reaction to what she considered to be a man's offensive behaviour. A few days earlier she had been sitting in her office when she saw a man outside the window, urinating against the glass. 'I just had enough, I did not want to see his penis, what gave him the right to such public exposure!' she recalled. She had walked up to the window, banging hard on it to alert the man. Unfortunately, the glass shattered and Felicia's arm got injured. She was now on sick leave, she explained when we met for an interview on 15 November 2017. Despite her injury, Felicia was lugging around a heavy backpack, with a laptop

and other necessities. Her energetic spirit seemed unabated, as she talked about her involvement in the #MeToo campaign.

On Sunday 22 October 2017, just a week after the #MeToo hashtag went viral on social media, #MeToo demonstrations were held in different cities around Sweden. Felicia Wittenberg, 27 years old, organised a manifestation in Visby, which attracted some 80 people as well as local media. The time pressure had been considerable; she only had 90 h to organise the event, getting the required permits, organising speakers and promoting the event. But it all went well, Felicia reflected, dozens of people had stayed for the duration of the event, two and a half hours in cold wind. In Stockholm, the MeToo demonstration attracted some 3,000 people and considerable media coverage. It was rapidly organised by Gabriella Ohlzon and Carolin Solskär, young women who similarly to Felicia felt it was important to take the movement outside online media. Both Felicia and Gabriella used social media to organise the demonstrations, creating Facebook event pages. Gabriella, 23 years old, also set up a MeToo Sweden Instagram and a MeToo Sweden Facebook page. While Felicia and Gabriella were busy preparing demonstrations, the Nordic Museum launched a #metoo collection to capture the unfolding viral campaign.

In this article, I will focus on the #metoo collection by the Nordic Museum in Stockholm as an empirical basis for a discussion of feminist agency, digital archiving and hashtag visuality. In Sweden, a country with a national self-image of gender equality and with a self-proclaimed feminist government, the #MeToo campaign has been likened to a (feminist) revolution. This is not to suggest that sexual violence is a bigger problem in Sweden than other parts of the world. Rather, by making the problem visible through what I call hashtag visuality, #MeToo has made a profound impact on how sexual assault is discussed and acted upon. At the judicial level, #MeToo helped push through a Sexual Consent Law in July 2018, while in everyday discourse #MeToo has become a way of periodising a historical shift in how sexual abuse and sexism is dealt with, most notably with far more visibility. Swedish scholars have suggested that it was Sweden's readiness for feminism, including a powerful civil society infrastructure and high levels of digitalisation that made #MeToo so revolutionary (Måve 2018; Svallfors 2018). While contextualising #MeToo in relation to feminist agency in Sweden, I will focus on the campaign as a form of digital cultural heritage.[2]

This article draws on a case study in a larger project focusing on how memory institutions can collect social media photography. The Collecting Social Photo project is a collaborative effort between museums, archives and researchers, which uses case studies to explore different collection and outreach methods.[3] As an anthropologist involved in this project, I have chosen to probe the #metoo collection in greater detail. The empirical material for this article includes recorded interviews with Felicia Wittenberg and Gabriella Ohlzon, two #MeToo campaigners I got in touch with through the project, as well as Kajsa Hartig, project manager at the Nordic Museum. I have also attended two #MeToo panel debates in Stockholm: a debate among media professionals at the House of Culture, another one on black feminism at the CinemAfrica Film Festival. To capture #MeToo in the media, I have followed media coverage in Sweden, from televised news and debates to online discussions. In addition to going through the digital archives of the Nordic Museum's #metoo collection, I have

participated in some Facebook groups, reviewed online petitions and read books with #MeToo testimonies (Lissman 2017; Lundeteg & van Luik 2017; Pascalidou 2017).

Theorising #MeToo: Online Feminist Activism, Digital Archives and Hashtag Visuality

The #MeToo hashtag went viral around the world shortly after it was posted on Twitter on 15 October 2017 by American actress Alyssa Milano who wrote: 'If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote "Me too" as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.' Her tweet came shortly after numerous actresses had made public allegations of sexual abuse against film producer Harvey Weinstein. Within hours, women around the world posted #MeToo, sometimes copying the original tweet, sometimes sharing their own stories of sexual harassment and assault. As the hashtag went viral it soon became known that it had originally been created by Tarana Burke in the US in 2006, in her efforts to empower women, especially women of colour who had experienced sexual abuse.

#MeToo resembled other online social movements, especially hashtag feminist activism, as documented in recent research. Anthropologists have highlighted how social movements of hashtag activism use both online and offline forms of protest (Juris 2012; Bonilla & Rosa 2015). Feminist scholars have interrogated the discursive power of hashtag feminism (Clark 2016), especially feminist counter-narratives to dominant ideologies about sexual violence (Thrift 2014; Harp et al. 2017), while illustrating how online campaigns often take place in hybrid media systems that include online as well as mainstream media (Lokot 2018).

While building on this body of scholarly work, this article focuses on the Nordic Museum's *#metoo* collection in relation to digital archiving and hashtag visuality. Earlier research on online feminist activism has recognised how hashtags can mobilise the creation of a 'digital archive' of 'personal testimonials' (Thrift 2014: 1091), as well as the multifaceted effects of a 'hashtag's aggregation of personal stories' (Clark 2016: 10), pointing to the disruptive role of social media in 'collective memory making' (Harp et al 2017: 13–14), and in shifting the tone of public debate (Lokot 2018: 814). While exploring similar features in #MeToo in a Swedish context, I will combine feminist scholarship with digital and visual anthropology, especially the anthropology of digital archives and digital visuality. As Geismar has suggested, social media platforms contain an 'archival logic,' they enable the 'possibility of registering or archiving a slice of reality that was absent in the traditional archive, and in so doing makes it possible to incorporate that into circuits of value and the production of meaning' (Geismar 2017: 341). Although Geismar focuses on Instagram, I extend her argument on digital archiving to social media in general, as exemplified by the #MeToo campaign, which ran across a variety of social media platforms. Moreover, building on anthropological research on digital visuality (e.g. Uimonen 2013; Miller 2015; GomézCruz & Lehmus-kallio 2016; Favero 2018), I nuance the tendency to focus on the visual turn in social media through the ubiquity of images, arguing for a new form of digital visuality, namely *hashtag visuality*.

Hashtag visuality captures how certain hashtags function as iconic images, a form of visual representation that blurs the distinction between text and images. In the case of #MeToo, the hashtag made visible what is typically invisible to the public eye, from violent sexual abuse to discriminatory sexist structures. Embodying feminist agency, #MeToo shows the political potency of hashtag visuality, while its spread across different media platforms affirms the multimodal logic of digitally mediated social activism.

#MeToo and Feminist Agency in Sweden

In Sweden, #MeToo spread like wildfire through social media, and the viral campaign quickly caught the attention of broadcast and print media. Similarly to other feminist campaigns, #MeToo made visible (*synliggöra*) the prevalence of sexual violence, while contextualising it as a structural problem. Thousands of women shared their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, and sexism in general. These narratives were not challenged, nor validated; instead they were classified as testimonies (*vittnesmål*). Women insisted on their right to speak, thus breaking what was considered to be a culture of silence (*tystnadskultur*). As women spoke out, they shifted the blame (*skuld*) to men, insisting that it should be male perpetrators who carried the shame (*skam*) of sexual assault. Through rapidly organised demonstrations in 13 cities across Sweden on 22 October, the movement gained further momentum and more intensive media coverage. Some women spoke out in mass media, accusing media professionals and members of the cultural elite for sexual assault, resulting in resignations by some high profile men. Petitions (*upprop*) were quickly organised by various professional sectors, often collecting support in closed Facebook groups and then publishing results through mainstream media. Petitions by other groups followed, including marginalised social groups. Over 60,000 signatures were collected, from 65 petitions, most of them from different professional sectors, signifying the high number of professional women in Sweden. The petitions used satirical hashtags, like #tystnadtagning (silenceaction) and #visjungerut (#wesingout) that creatively summarised the point, while signalling collective action organised around hashtags. At the same time, more women were speaking out and sharing their testimonies on social media. Before the end of 2017, three books were published with testimonies (Lissman 2017; Lundeteg & van Luik 2017; Pascalidou 2017). Meanwhile, individual narratives continued to be collected through dedicated Facebook groups, the largest one being *#AllaVi* (#AllofUs) with over 49,000 members in December 2017.

As #MeToo gained momentum, media discourse in Sweden shifted from referring to it as a campaign (*kampanj*) and movement (*rörelse*) to revolt (*uppror*) and revolution (*revolution*). A female media professional referred to #MeToo as a revolution as early as 11 November 2017 (Helena Lindblad, Dagens Nyheter) and well-known feminist professor Ebba Witt-Brattström called #MeToo 'world-historical and a tsunami warning' (Thornéus, *Aftonbladet*, 20 November 2017). Similarly, international media referred to #MeToo in Sweden in terms of 'a tsunami, a revolution, a historical turnaround' (Joleby, *Omni*, 27 November 2017). In the three books that were published,

#MeToo was also referred to as a revolution. When I asked Gabriella Ohlzon if #MeToo was a revolution, she answered 'Yes, what else would you call it? This is the biggest thing that has happened since women got the right to vote!' This was on 17 February 2018, 4 months after #MeToo went viral on social media.

The 'revolutionary' character of #MeToo captures the embodiment of feminist agency in this instance of hashtag activism. If agency is broadly viewed as 'the socioculturally mediated ability to act,' language is clearly a form of social action with considerable 'linguistic agency' (Ahearn 2001: 111–112). In feminist anthropology, the 'performative power' of narratives is well recognised and the question of 'narrative and cultural representation' is of critical importance (Kramer 2016: 78). More specifically, feminist anthropologists have concerned themselves with cultural representation to break through and diversify 'dominant cultural narratives,' such as 'rape culture,' which has been defined as 'a set of cultural discourses that naturalise and encourage rape' (Ibid.). Drawing on this emphasis on narrative agency and representation in feminist scholarship, I would argue that feminist agency played a key role in the discursive framing of #MeToo in Sweden. Whether or not participants in the campaign identified as feminists, #MeToo built upon and expanded feminist agency in the sense that the dominant narrative was based on a feminist understanding of sexual violence.

The interpretation of sexual violence through a feminist lens made #MeToo a powerful force of feminist agency in Sweden. In a scholarly overview of social theories on men and violence published by the Swedish authority for youth (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*), the conceptualisation of sexual violence as a *continuum* from rape and physical abuse to sexist remarks and harassment has been attributed to feminist theory, even radical feminism (Gottzén 2013: 17). In the #MeToo campaign, it was this broader interpretation of sexual violence that set the tone for action, as women shared stories of a wide range of experiences, from sexist remarks to sexual assault and rape. These stories corroborated the findings of feminist scholarship on men's violence against women in Sweden, which had used the holistic continuum approach to draw attention to the pervasiveness of sexual violence (e.g. Lundgren et al. 2001). Such critical feminist studies had been rather controversial, and scholars in the aforementioned study were accused of 'devil feminism' in media (Nilsson 2009: 13). But the thrust of the #MeToo campaign validated what feminist scholars and activists had asserted for decades, namely that sexual violence was all too commonplace, as a result of prevailing patriarchal structures.

Feminist agency in #MeToo can also be related to feminist politics in Sweden, especially the country's self-proclaimed feminist government. After the 2014 elections, the new government (a coalition of leftist parties) declared itself to be 'the first feminist government in the world,' with gender equality being a central priority, closely related to democracy and welfare.[4] This political endorsement of feminism was pronounced in the government's feminist foreign policy, but it also reverberated domestically, for instance through the education system.

In December 2015, a Swedish translation of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* was distributed for free to all high school students, along with a teacher's guide on gender equality (Uimonen 2016). More poignantly, even

before the feminist government came into power, feminist movements had influenced policies and laws on sexual violence. For instance, in what has been referred to as Nordic state feminism, commercial sex has been included in the continuum of men's violence against women, with prostitutes categorised as victims of gendered power structures, while clients are categorised as perpetrators and criminalised accordingly (Vuolajärvi 2019).

Although #MeToo focused on women's experiences of sexual violence, the campaign did not exclude men. The demonstration in Gotland was co-organised with *Mansforum Gotland*, a social service for men, and in Stockholm the civil society organisations *Män för Jämställdhet* (Men for Gender Equality) and *Make Equal* participated. While welcoming the participation of men, campaigners applied the 'Ladies first' principle, Felicia explained. She referred to statistics from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (*Brottsförebyggande rådet*), which reported that 98% of all suspected rapists were men (cf. Gottzén 2013: 5). While recognising that men can also be victims of sexual violence, Felicia used this oft cited statistic to underline that women are the most affected (*vi drabbas värst*), therefore it was important to let women speak out. Similarly, Gabriella underlined that 'men must be included in the conversation,' since #MeToo is about 'structural problems,' especially 'patriarchal structures,' for which 'everyone has responsibility.' She was critically aware of how feminist struggles were sometimes perceived as women who hate men, portraying men as awful and women as victims. But when it comes to patriarchy, she noted that 'women are also guilty, they bring up men, influencing their behaviour.' Thus she actively involved men in #MeToo.

As much as #MeToo reverberated widely in Sweden, it was far from uncontroversial, as exemplified by tensions between mass media and social media. While mass media focused on scandals erupting in the cultural elite, social media carried the voices of ordinary women, while facilitating political mobilisation. These tensions were discussed in the panel *#MeToo-a media court?,* organised on international women's day on 8 March 2018 at the House of Culture in Stockholm City. The panellists were female representatives from TV (*SVT*) and press (*Expressen* and *Aftonbladet*) and a representative for the Facebook group *#AllaVi*. While all media representatives stated that they welcomed #MeToo and professed to be feminists, they quickly launched into a heated debate about how the media had failed to follow professional ethics. Individual men had been publicly exposed, their names on newspaper placards, with devastating effects. They emphasised it was 'populism' not 'professionalism,' pushed by 'social media activism.' When the male moderator finally turned to the *#AllaVi* representative, she was furious about the discussion being all about 'vendettas between media,' rather than #MeToo. Herself a journalist, she had been appalled by media's lack of ethics when publishing names of alleged perpetrators. She emphasised that in *#AllaVi*, names of perpetrators were not published, since contrary to 'media logic,' #MeToo did not build on gossip and celebrities. The ensuing discussion focused on differences between established media and social media. This heated panel discussion exemplifies how debates on sexual violence in Sweden have been rather antagonistic, shifting between feminist critiques of gendered power (*könsmakt*) to allegations that such approaches amount to

unconstructive blamestorming (*skuldbeläggande*), even leading to witch hunts (*häxjakt*) on innocent men (Nilsson 2009: 22). Reinvigorated through social media, these controversies played out in the #MeToo campaign. Even so, it was primarily stories that rearticulated the campaign's feminist agency that the Nordic Museum received in its digital archives, as discussed below.

Online Testimonies at the Nordic Museum: #Metoo at https://minnen.se

On Saturday 21 October 2017, a day before the #MeToo demonstrations took place around Sweden, the Nordic Museum launched the online collection *#metoo* at https://minnen.se (memories), a site dedicated to collecting stories from the general public on various themes.[5] Individuals were encouraged to help the museum document the #MeToo campaign by sharing their impressions of and involvement in the campaign. In the instructions for the collection, people were encouraged to write anonymously or only use their first name. They could choose to make their stories public and/or submit them to the archives for research. People were dissuaded from writing personal details about other people and the museum appealed to ethical reasons when deciding to un-publish stories that were too personal (although these would still be archived for future research). Images could also be submitted. While understanding the significance of capturing viral campaigns, the museum did not foresee the cultural embeddedness and political power of hashtag visuality.

Through the *minnen* website, some 170 stories were collected, 66 of them public. My analysis is limited to public submissions, to ensure a transparent research process, while respecting the integrity of non-public submissions.[6] The day after the launch, 10 public entries were submitted, followed by 24 entries in the next few days, reaching 49 published stories in the first two weeks. As of November the numbers dwindled to one per day or one every few weeks, reaching 64 by 22 December. The last public submission is dated 18 April 2018, six months after the launch and three months after the penultimate submission on 1 January 2018. All public submissions except one (archive code 2) are in Swedish, and the excerpts below are my own translations. The archive code refers to the codes used on the public web site.[7]

Not surprisingly, most of the 66 public stories were submitted by women, only three by men, and all of the women had been involved in the campaign in one way or another. Only a fraction had participated in the demonstrations (5 women), but almost all of them had posted in social media, 59 in total (1 responded no, 6 did not clarify). Facebook and Instagram were the most common platforms used, typically by posting the hashtag, sometimes sharing other peoples' stories, a few posting their own stories of sexual abuse. Although social media was commonly used for open sharing, some women had also opted for closed online groups. A few had signed petitions, some had written to print media. Women had also discussed sexual harassment and abuse with their families, friends and colleagues.

The great majority of women who submitted stories had experienced sexual harassment or abuse, which motivated them to be part of the campaign. Their submissions echoed common trends in the #MeToo campaign: memories of personal experiences,

reflections on the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and abuse, sense of urgency in speaking out and courage gained from women's collective efforts (cf Lissman 2017, Lundeteg & van Luik 2017, Pascalidou 2017). Reiterating the campaign's narrative of feminist agency, women pointed to structural problems, shifting the blame to men.

> Because it is incredibly important to show how sick the normalisation of sexual harassment and abuse is. That men get away with the excuse: 'It was not so dangerous,' 'you exaggerate' etc. The boys will be boys-mentality has to go! (Woman born 1980, archive code 21)

> Because it affects everyone, women as well as men. I am so insanely tired of all harassments, guilt trips. All the touching, sexual insinuations about agreeing, show some willingness just because I am a woman. A rape has left mental imprints that will not go away. Psychological and physical abuse at home by alcoholic father. That is why I feel uncomfortable to go out in the evenings when it is dark. (Woman born 1969, archive code 61)

> To also enlighten the people who are outside the feminist sphere I easily create around myself that this is a reality. To make people reflect on what abuse actually is. So many of us have been subjected to violence and assault etc. I have been touched, beaten and sexually exploited. I will not take the blame. I refuse and now we show how many we are and that men need to take responsibility. Men need to take the blame. It is high time. (Woman born 1998, archive code 62)

Unexpectedly, the *minnen* collection thus captured testimonies of sexual abuse, 'survivorship stories' that turned the collection into a digital archive of 'public testimony' (Clark 2016: 11). Personal memories of sexual assault were often shared in response to the 'why' they participated in the campaign, but they were also shared in response to 'how' they participated.

> Why: I want to share my experience to draw attention to how widespread the problem is.

> How: I posted a picture on Instagram taken at the hospital ward for rape. One can only see parts of my face, which is swollen and scratched and my arm that is covered in bruises. (Woman born 1976, archive code 30)

> Why: To change the world for my daughters' sake. I never want them to experience something similar or something even worse [testimony follows]

> How: I testified on Facebook. (Woman born 1971, archive code 79)

These testimonies served as a form of witnessing, making visible sexual harassment and violence through hashtag visuality. They echoed common themes in #MeToo testimonies in Sweden: sexual assaults by close relations, incest and child abuse, sexual harassment in public, gendered power relations and male domination (cf. Lissman 2017; Lundeteg & van Luik 2017; Pascalidou 2017). The narrative style was often factual, recounting experiences of sexual abuse in chronological order, often spanning a lifetime, all too often starting at a young age. The tone was also emotional, conveying feelings of shame, helplessness and confusion as well as anger and resolve. The testimonies captured a highly reflexive process, as narrators looked back on their lives through the lens of #MeToo, the hashtag serving as a trigger for the public sharing of intimate experiences, from seemingly trivial sexist remarks to painful memories of assault and rape (cf. Lokot 2018). Through their testimonies, women spoke out in the 'voice of

the witness' rather than 'the victim,' which is an important shift in how sexual violence is approached, moving away from women being 'reduced to sexualised objects to which damage has been done' (Theidon 2016: 195). Instead, women reclaimed agency over the production of their own stories, while challenging public understandings of sexual violence (Clark 2016: 11–13). Anonymity added further agency to the testimonies: the lack of real names exposed relations rather than individuals (husbands, fathers, grandfathers, brothers, friends, classmates, colleagues, strangers), while the magnitude of testimonies pointed to structural problems, thus asserting the campaign's feminist agency.

Public witnessing signalled a shift from personal to collective memory making, as hashtag visuality prompted collective action and political mobilisation, by way of online media. Research has shown that social media can be used to provide counter narratives to mass media's hegemonic portrayal of sexual violence, offering alternative collective memories (Harp et al. 2017). In Sweden, #MeToo interrupted common rape narratives of strangers as perpetrators, especially racist and islamophobic discourses on male refugees as abusive strangers, showing instead the prevalence of sexual violence in close relations among ethnic Swedes. Women also refused the blame typically placed on them, shifting the blame to the perpetrator. Through #MeToo, collective memory making by women thus affirmed a feminist re-articulation of rape narratives, advancing feminist agency well beyond feminist circles.

The collection only captured three public submissions by men. Two expressed empathy and underlined the importance of discussing the subject, while one was motivated by his perceived need for counter arguments. The first man to submit emphasised sympathy and love, stating he was going to participate in the demonstration in Stockholm. While acknowledging that he had also been sexually abused, he had chosen to be quiet on social media so as not to divert the attention from women (Man born 1966, archive code 1). The second one underlined the importance of bringing the issue to the surface and documented the demonstration in Gothenburg by submitting six photos (Man born 1969, archive code 7). The third one submitted a long text, criticising the media for exposing individuals and thus destroying their lives, which he likened to a witch hunt (*häxjakt*). While acknowledging the truth in women's stories, he placed the blame on women, accusing them of dressing in a sexually provocative manner that men would naturally (biologically) react to (Man, unknown year of birth, archive code 56). While his views echoed common rape narratives prior to #MeToo, his voice was clearly a minority voice, even among men's submissions.

Digital Archiving, Mediated Museum Collections and the Challenge of Representation

The *#metoo* collection was rapidly put together by Kajsa Hartig, at the time head of the unit for digital interaction at the Nordic Museum and project manager of *Collecting Social Photo*.

n our interview on 28 February 2018, Kajsa recollected that she had not planned to organise a collection, since the *minnen* web site was about to be updated. But when a journalist called her on Friday 20 October 2017, two days before the demonstrations,

asking if the museum was going to do something, Kajsa decided to act, thinking 'If media is interested, this is probably bigger than we have recognised.' She posted the collection the following day, along with sponsored posts in social media. On Monday, Kajsa was interviewed for Swedish Radio, which published the interview on 24 October, under the heading '#MeToo is curated by the Nordic Museum' (*#Metoo bevaras av Nordiska Museet*).[8] The news bureau TT picked up the story, which spread internationally, even reaching the actress Alyssa Milano who tweeted about it, Kajsa recollected. Despite the media coverage, Kajsa found that the collection did not have as much impact (*genomslag*) as an earlier collection following the terror attack in Stockholm in April 2018, which had generated over 500 submitted photographs. She attributed the difference to other #MeToo collections taking place and the museum's limited readiness (*beredskap*). Even so, she was positive about the *#metoo* collection's societal value, which she assessed in terms of democratic representation:

> A viral campaign is a rather new phenomenon, with many more making their voices heard. There have probably been as many people suffering [sexual assault] in the past, but we have not understood it because their voices were not heard, and now suddenly this is made visible. So the phenomenon in itself is very exciting. But also by extension, it is this kind of material, testimonies and stories, in this case experiences of sexual abuse and harassment that museums need to collect from a broader group. We need to reach out to more people and get better representation in our material, because historically it has been a small group that has decided what is to become archive material, and we need to change that. We really need to adapt a more democratic perspective; more people should be able to make their voices heard.

The rationale behind the *#metoo* collection captures how museum collections of digital cultural heritage interplay with theories of sociality modelled on access and openness (Geismar 2012: 269). On the one hand, social media is perceived to give voice to more people, thus achieving more inclusive 'archival representations' (Zeitlyn 2012: 463). In the case of *#metoo*, the collection of testimonies certainly augmented the museum's material on sexual abuse, which was limited to a small number of items, like a woman's police report on rape from the nineteenth century, one of the first of its kind, and an alarm clock from a woman who had been sexually violated, Kajsa reflected, 'We have small glimpses, but suddenly we can get a much broader picture.' On the other hand, social media collections also require a degree of readiness from the museums and the results may not be what they expected, since digital technologies 'impose new forms and orders on existing museum practices' (Geismar 2017: 269). 'Since there was very little time and we did not plan a collection, we did not really choose that angle, to collect women's experiences of sexual violence, but instead we collected women's and men's experiences of the viral campaign,' Kajsa recalled. But to her surprise, many submissions contained personal testimonies, 'people wanted to tell their experiences, which is a lesson,' she concluded.

The submission of personal experiences of sexual abuse for a museum collection on the *#metoo* campaign exemplifies how hashtag visuality can create 'unruly archives' (Geismar 2017). Rather than following the instructions of the collection, to share their experiences of the campaign, many women posted their experiences of sexual abuse. This reinterpretation of the museum collection points to interesting interlinkages

between social media and digital archives. Since hashtags are recursive and unruly archival tools (Ibid. 337), they intercept with user perceptions of the cultural meaning of the hashtag. In the case of #MeToo, the hashtag was associated with a collective effort to make visible sexual violence through individual testimonies, an instance of politically potent hashtag visuality. For those who came across the Nordic Museum's *#metoo* collection, the *minnen* site offered yet another platform for documenting their stories, in this case a trusted public institute's digital archive, thus ensuring that their individual stories were archived in the public domain.

In capturing the #MeToo viral campaign as it unfolded, the Nordic Museum's *#metoo* collection was the first action taken by a museum, but not the only one. Whereas the Nordic Museum responded rapidly, within the first week of the viral campaign, other museums covered #MeToo months later, especially on International Women's Day on 8 March 2018. For instance, the Technical Museum (Tekniska museet) inaugurated the exhibition 'Digital Now #4: A code that changes the world #metoo' (*En kod som förändrar världen #metoo*), featuring the mobile phone that sent the first #MeToo tweet in Sweden, along with a graphic visualisation of the online campaign.[9] The Historical Museum (*Historiska museet*) hosted a widely publicised press conference, with representatives of 65 #MeToo petitions and the Minister for Gender Equality.[10]

The fact that several museums highlighted the #MeToo campaign is indicative of ongoing transformations in the cultural heritage sector in Sweden. In a recent article, Silvén (2018) reflects on progressions among Swedish and Nordic museums over the last few decades, noting how critical museology and critical heritage studies have made museums more responsive to contemporary issues. She mentions the collection of #MeToo testimonies as an example of 'difficult heritage,' that is 'records of contested and problematic incidents and conditions in contemporary society' that museums have collected over the last two decades (Ibid. 123). But cultural heritage continues to be a 'contested subject,' especially with the 'current growth of nationalist and right-wing forces,' and Silvén concludes that 'the pressure will increase on museums – as reliable and independent knowledge institutions – to use their specific tools in defence of historical truth, human rights and fair representation' (Ibid. 127).

While the form and content of the *#metoo* collection contributes to the digital archiving of critical cultural heritage, even difficult heritage, the challenge of representation remains to be solved. Based on her overview of submissions, Kajsa noted that they were rather similar, suggesting that the collection reached a limited audience. 'It is mostly Swedish names and probably a rather classic museum audience,' Kajsa reflected, mentioning the culture lady (*kulturtanten*) as an example of the stereotypical museum visitor: middle-aged, white, ethnically Swedish female. 'We do not reach out broadly, except in a few exceptional contexts' she reflected 'It is a major dilemma for museums.' Although the collection contained a large number of submissions by younger women, thus diverging from the stereotypical *kulturtant*, it was not considered to be representative of the population at large.

The challenge of representation has been a contested issue in the #MeToo campaign in Sweden, pointing to racialized, classed and gendered inequalities that affect digital

archiving. Kajsa's concern about outreach and representation shows how museums have become preoccupied with 'contemporary issues concerning diversity and public participation' as well as 'representation of minorities' (Silven 2018: 123). In the #MeToo campaign, a concerted effort was made to show that the problem of sexual violence affects women in all segments of society. For instance, the #MeToo books that were published by the end of 2017 emphasised the breadth and inclusiveness of testimonies (Lissman 2017; Lundeteg & van Luik 2017), underlining that the stories were told by 'women of different ages, professions, class and culture' (Pascalidou 2017: 10). But in a Black Feminist Panel on #MeToo organised at the CinemAfrica 2018 film festival on 3 March 2018, I noted that several participants stated that they felt excluded from what they perceived to be 'white feminist' online advocacy that showed little interest in discussions on racialized sexism. A few of them even took a pause from social media, since it was all about 'the white woman.' This sense of exclusion is indicative of the many layers of social stratification and power relations that intersect with digital archiving, challenging ideals of democratic representation.

#MeToo Imagery and Hashtag Visuality

Although the Nordic Museum's #metoo collection was included as a case study in the *Collecting Social Photo* project, very few photographs were submitted. Out of the 66 public submissions, only eight contained photographs. Four submissions had photographs from demonstrations in different cities in Sweden, three of them with factual captions, e.g. 'From demonstration at Sergels Torg,' one with a slogan 'Together we are many, together we are strong' (*Tillsammans är vi många, tillsammans är vi starka*). Two submissions had more abstract photographs without captions: one showing an image of four stones holding hands and one with a raised hand, which could be interpreted as a visual expression of solidarity and struggle (archive code 24), the other one a black and white photograph of a road on a bridge, leading into a foggy distance, which connected with a despairing poem at the end of the testimony (archive code 44). Two submissions had images of #MeToo, creative renderings of the campaign's hashtag. One showed a collage of Instagram images with the caption 'From my insta-story: 'He is the one who should be ashamed' (*Från min insta-story: 'Det är han som ska skämmas.'*), capturing narrative reflections on the campaign, against a background of pink flower petals (archive code 54). Interestingly, one submission showed seven photographs of different table cloths embroidered with ME TOO. In response to how she had participated in the campaign, the submitter explained (archive code 6):

> I wrote 'me too' on Facebook and embroidered the same on table cloths. To remind ourselves in our homes, our family members and everyone who visits us. Embroidery does not swipe past to be replaced by a dinner, a kitten or a meme [common images in social media]. The embroidery is there to stay. On the drawer, on the table or on the wall or where you want.

The submitted photographs are interesting in their diversity of visual representation, from factual photographic evidence to images of material permanence. The majority depict demonstrations, thus responding to the instructions of the collection, offering

photographic documentation of the campaign. Some images also depict media productions, a radio interview and an Instagram story, documenting the campaign's hybrid media environment. The indexical character of these photographs can be compared with the more abstract character of the photographs of stones and the bridge, visual representations of solidarity and suffering, and the material manifestation of the embroidered table cloth. The diversity in submitted photographs shows the complexity of the campaign, visualised through images.

Even so, the small number of photographs is worth noting, given the prevalence of visual images in social media. One of the rationales of the *Collecting Social Photo* project is the ubiquity of photographs in social media, pointing to new forms of visual cultural heritage. Indeed, anthropologists have documented the visual turn in everyday life and social media (e.g. Favero 2014, 2018; Gómez & Lehmuskallio 2016), while research on Instagram and Facebook emphasises visual communication and visual identity formation (e.g. Uimonen 2013, Miller 2015). Anthropological research on online activism has underlined the use of memes and staged photographs, showing how 'these images represent an act of solidarity' (Bonilla & Rosa 2015: 8), and how 'the viral spread of images' in social and mass media fuel social movements (Juris 2012: 261). Interestingly, feminist studies of hashtag feminism have primarily focused on discourse and narration, storytelling through words rather than images (e.g. Clark 2016; Harp et al. 2017; Lokot 2018). Even the conceptualisation of these online campaigns as 'feminist meme events' has little to say about images (Thrift 2014). So where does this leave the relative absence of photographs in the *#metoo* collection?

> 'They are conspicuous by their absence. Very few images. There are no images of sexual assault,' Felicia responded when I asked her about images in the #MeToo campaign. Reiterating the campaign's discursive frame of feminist agency, she explained that sexual assault covered a whole spectrum, from shabby jokes and verbal harassment to physical abuse and violence. 'We have not seen any images of harassment or what I call shabby culture and behaviour,' she reflected. 'There are very few images of assault when we talk about assault. The images we see are these: texts. It is a hashtag, #MeToo,' Felicia concluded, 'because this is a narrative focused thing (*berättelsefokuserad sak*),' adding 'the power of the written word (*det skrivna ordets makt*).' As we talked, she googled images of MeToo, noting some images from demonstrations, while remarking on the absence of images of assault as something 'good,' adding 'I don't know if you are allowed to share such images any which way.'

The particularities of MeToo imagery demand a more nuanced appraisal of digital visuality, capturing the interplay of images and text in digitally mediated forms of visual representation. In his recent work on images in digital habitats, Favero builds on Ingold's use of the Greek term *ekphrasis* to capture 'the capacity of words to evoke images' (Favero 2018: 107). He discusses the circular exchange of images and stories to illustrate the '*ekphrastic*, multimodal nature of our memories' (Ibid., 108). I would push this argument further, suggesting that it is not just the verbal description of images that characterises the multimodality of memory, but that text has the capacity to function as images, even replacing them.

I would argue that the #MeToo hashtag performed like an iconic image, a widely recognised form of visual representation. Just like iconic photographs, the hashtag

constituted a powerful form of digital visuality, replacing and substituting photographs and other images (cf. Uimonen 2017). In some cases, the hashtag was visually portrayed as a social media feature. For instance, in the news reporting on Nordic Museum's #metoo collection, the Swedish Radio website showed a photograph of a mobile phone with an image of the words ME TOO on the screen, a photograph attributed to the news bureau TT. As described above, the hashtag was also embroidered on table cloth, a material form of visual representation that was remediated through photographs submitted to the Nordic Museum's digital archive. In both instances, the hashtag symbol was removed, illustrating the iconic value of the text itself.

It is worth underlining that #MeToo highlighted a social phenomenon that is typically not captured through images, thus rendering visible what is usually kept invisible. As much as images nowadays 'permeate all aspects of our lives,' not least as a result of 'the confluence of digital and visual technologies and practices' (Favero 2018: 2), there is something to be said for the absence of images depicting certain aspects of social life. Sexual violence is a case in point, understandably so, and as Felicia reflected, this is a good thing. Testimonies submitted to the Nordic Museum certainly contained graphic descriptions of sexual violence, words that captured horrific acts. But these testimonies were not accompanied by photographs. Instead they used words to describe actions, feelings and relations.

Interestingly enough, #MeToo features on social media platforms like Instagram, which is a distinctly visual interface. The *metoosweden* account on Instagram that Gabriella set up in conjunction with the demonstrations in October 2017 has 10,000 followers.[11] The page contains over 600 posts, a visual collage of text and images, including screen shots of media coverage, news snippets on petitions, and photographs of demonstrations. 'An image says more than a thousand words,' Gabriella reflected, when we discussed her #MeToo Instagram account during our interview, explaining how she used Instagram strategically to reach out with news articles and stories. 'On Instagram, people scroll through the flow,' she explained, as opposed to Facebook which was mostly used for events, ads and messenger. 'But Facebook continues to grow in the number of users, also reaching up in age,' Gabriella recalled that users aged 65+ had doubled in 2017, 'so it's good to be on Facebook because it has a broader target audience.' 'But I think the combination is the best,' she concluded. Other media actors were also impressed by her communication strategies. On 23 March 2018, Gabriella Ohlzon proudly announced on the #MeToo Sweden Facebook page that the #MeToo movement had received *The Honorary Award for 2018* by Sweden's Communicators.

Communication and outreach have been crucial for #MeToo activists like Gabriella, which explains the use of different social media platforms and mixed forms of visual representation. Her use of Instagram was not determined by visual material but rather by perceived changes in user behaviour, as she reflected above. But since Instagram is a visual interface, she configured information accordingly, using screen shots and visual snippets to post news and other textual forms of visual representation. This is comparable to the campaign *Svart Kvinna* (Black Woman), where personal stories were posted on Instagram capturing black women's experiences of 'sexualised,

exoticised and racist' actions in Sweden (Ndow Norrby 2015: 10). Preceding #MeToo, *Svart Kvinna* showed the popularity of Instagram in collecting stories, textual representations of personal experiences that functioned as testimonies, making visible the structural oppression and objectification of racialized women in Sweden.

The digital visuality of iconic hashtags clearly adds to the complexity of digital archiving. Geismar has discussed the hashtag in terms of 'a textual artefact of access,' an archival tool that connects photographs on Instagram through a 'user-generated classificatory system' (2017: 336). She notes how the 'clustering of images around hashtags also generates a shared visual sensibility around events.' As discussed here, #MeToo has performed like an iconic image, providing a shared visual sensibility around a social movement. But the hashtag has not only functioned as a textual artefact, the hashtag itself has become a visual artefact, a form of digital visuality that can be described as hashtag visuality.

Hashtag visuality broadens our understanding of digital visuality, capturing not only form but also process. Digital visuality is typically used in reference to images, denoting the ubiquity of photographs in digital media, whereas hashtag visuality is a textual form of visual representation. I am using the term hashtag visuality to capture visuality as a process through which something is made visible, a process that is cultural as well as political. In the case of #MeToo, the hashtag exemplifies representation as a 'visual metaphor' in the 'cultural sense of seeing one reflected back to oneself in popular discourses,' thus going beyond 'representation in the political sense of having one's voice heard' (Kramer 2016: 76). And it is the cultural process of representation that makes hashtag visuality so politically potent, as it can link individuals in new forms of social protest and collective memory making.

I am conceptualising #MeToo in terms of hashtag visuality to capture the dialectics of social media and digital archiving. The multimodal logic of social media brings forth user-generated content that blurs distinctions between texts and images. Social media users readily remix content; conflating different expressive genres and forms of representation, while defying the classificatory logic of social media platforms. As argued here, textual archival tools can even perform like visual artefacts, as exemplified by iconic hashtags like #MeToo, while visual interfaces like Instagram are used as platforms for written stories. This is not a question of images taking over in digitally mediated interaction, but rather that text and images converge in new forms of digital visuality, creating truly unruly digital archives.

Concluding Remarks: #MeToo, #Knytblus and Digital Cultural Heritage

Within six months after it started, it became clear that the hashtag visuality of #MeToo had impacted one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in Sweden, the Swedish Academy, even cancelling the Nobel Prize for literature in 2018.[12] After months of public exposure of misconduct, including alleged sexual assault, the Academy had fallen into disrepute, and several of its members had resigned. When the Permanent Secretary Sara Danius resigned, feminists reacted loudly at what was perceived to be deep seated sexism in the Academy: a woman having to take the fall for men's bad

behaviour. Within days, a campaign was set in motion, this time using female attire as a symbolic rallying cry: *knytblus* (bow blouse).

The Nordic museum launched the collection *#knytblus #knytblusförsara* in conjunction with demonstrations on 13 April 2018. A total of 67 public submissions were received, 64 of them within a week, mostly from women, two from men. Unlike the *#metoo* collection, all submissions contained images, typically portrait photographs of the submitting man or woman wearing a bow blouse. Statements centered on support for Sara Danius as a professional woman and anger at patriarchal structures. Three of the submissions made specific reference to #MeToo: how women internationally had testified about sexual assault, how it could be described as a massive roar from women, and how it showed that many were tired of patriarchal structures. Even without explicit references, it was clear that #MeToo had inspired the *#knytblus* campaign, encouraging collective feminist agency.

While the *#metoo* and *#knytblus* collections capture online campaigns of feminist agency, they also illustrate the complexities of digital cultural heritage. In this article I have discussed the unruly archival logic of social media, as exemplified by the collection of personal testimonies in the Nordic Museum's *#metoo* collection. I have also highlighted some of the challenges museums face in collecting such difficult cultural heritage, not least when it comes to ideals of democratic representation in digital archiving. While noting the diversity of visual representations in submitted photographs, I have also discussed the absence of images in the *#metoo* collection. At a time when anthropologists, myself included, are paying attention to the ubiquity of images in social media, there is something to be said for new forms of digital visuality, such as hashtag visuality. I have suggested that iconic hashtags like #MeToo can be conceptualised as visual artefacts, to capture the multimodal archival logic of social media. Such complex archival tools clearly raise a number of challenges for memory institutions intent on collecting digital cultural heritage. At the same time, they offer productive entry points for an anthropological understanding of digital cultures in the making.

Notes

6. Researchers are of course welcome to go through all submissions, which is one of the stated aims of the collection, but I have chosen to limit my analysis to public submissions.
7. https://minnen.se/tema/metoo.
8. https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=478&artikel=6804617.
9. https://www.tekniskamuseet.se/en/discover/exhibitions/digital-now/.
10. https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/65-metoo-grupper-lamnar-kravlista-till-regeringen.
11. https://www.instagram.com/metoosweden/.
12. By May 2019, three books were published in Sweden, voicing critique against #MeToo and defending the Swedish Academy, all of them written by members of Sweden's cultural elite. While these publications have been noted by mainstream media, it is doubtful whether they manage to sway public opinion, given the advancement of feminist agency. https://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/a/BRw5Vv/litterar-metoo-kritik.

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