

Let it roar

by CATHY GRINDROD

*Listen. This is the sound of hope.
Thousands of women say thank you
to all those who came before,
who didn't ask nicely,
who smiled to confuse their enemies -
to Emmeline, Sylvia, Christabel
and to all of the others
through one-hundred years, reaching
villages, towns, cities, countries, continents,
in streets, on screens;
in stripes of living, breathing colour,
in green, white, violet,
with one step forward, another, another.
Among home-made streamers and signs,
joining cheering crowds,
one-hundred groups of women, strong,
holding high one-hundred banners,
respond to the call,
come to London to gather in friendship,
one group boarding a brimming bus,
with a banner crafted with needles and natter,
with tassels, sequins and smiles,
sewing a sentence as words become deeds -
one message chosen together,
each taking one letter to make her own -
one Bolsover woman, one vote,
one voice*

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listen. This is the sound of hope.
Let it roar.*

Commissioned by Junction Arts and inspired by the PROCESSIONS march in London on 10th June 2018. PROCESSIONS was a UK-wide mass participation artwork marking 100 years of women's suffrage, produced by Artichoke and commissioned by 14-18 NOW, based on an idea by Darrell Vydellingum.