
#WITCHTOK

**#WITCH #WITCHCRAFT #HEX #WITCHTOK #WITCHESFORBLM
#WITCHESOFINSTAGRAM #HEXWHITESUPREMACY
#HEXTHEPATRIARCHY**

SYNONYMS _____ Witchcraft activism, witch activism, hex activist, magical resistance, etc.

ANTONYM _____ #witchhunt [used predominantly by men in power to disenfranchise people (especially women*) who are speaking up publicly against social injustices]

Witches meeting in secrecy on a full moon is ancient history. Contemporary witches congregate on social media, preferably on Instagram and TikTok [see: *WitchTok*]. The witch has become an important motif for feminist, environmentalist and post-colonial reinterpretations in the early twenty-first century. This new generation of witches gathers in the real world and in digital spaces to cast spells, to hex and to organize. They combine witchcraft and activism in their manifold practices addressing different forms of sexism enacted through state violence and unjust medical, legal, colonial and capitalist legacies. This magical resistance calls for communal action against sexism, transphobia, sexual abuse, femicide, anti-black racism, and climate injustice. Within this field of inquiry queer feminist practitioners are at the forefront of diverse transnational social justice movements, broadly summarized under such terms as “witchcraft activism” and “magical resistance”.

_____ In recent years, several books have been published that focus on this intersection (mostly in the United States). They include *Witchcraft Activism: A Toolkit for Magical Resistance* (2019), written by the “witch-activist” David Salisbury (including spells for social justice, civil rights, the environment, and practical tips on everything from joining activist groups to conjuring spells for self-protection), *Magic for the Resistance: Rituals and Spells for Change* (2018) by Michael M. Hughes (the originator of the #bindtrump spell), and *Revolutionary Witchcraft: A Guide to Magical Activism* (2019) by Sarah Lyons (author, activist, and practicing witch).

_____ The recent revival and celebration of the witch can be regarded in part as a continuation of the “witchcraft activism” practiced by

groups such as the New Forest Coven, which cast spells against Adolf Hitler in 1940, the organization of several Californian covens which cast spells to end the Vietnam War in 1971, and above all the well-known feminist protest group W.I.T.C.H, which was founded on Halloween eve in 1968 by members of the New York Radical Women group. This feminist engagement with the #witch continued throughout the twentieth-century. In “The Contemporary Witch, the Historical Witch and the Witch Myth: The Witch, Subject of Appropriation of Nature and Object of the Domination of Nature” (1978), Silvia Bovenschen looks at the witch as a feminist icon of the 1970s. Such discussions were very much embedded in revisionist feminist histories emerging at the time, such as the often-quoted writings by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English on accused witches as female healers. And in her many bestselling books published in the early 1980s (e.g. *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*, 1982/1997), Starhawk [Miriam Simons] linked witchcraft practices, feminism, and direct political action. However, in current discussions it is philosopher Silvia Federici who is considered the touchstone thinker. In 1998, Federici published her seminal text *Caliban and the Witch* and more recently underpinned her (cult) status with *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women* (2018).

— Summoning these feminist understandings of the witch, contemporary witches gather online, showing that witchcraft is taking full advantage of the digital age. The commitment to social justice issues has been maintained by different witchcraft movements in recent years. Witches have become increasingly visible at protest sites since the election of Donald Trump in 2016, whether issuing daily “hexes” outside Trump tower to engaging in internationally organized, large-scale spell castings. Initiatives mostly originate online and then operate in a hybrid sphere, building bridges between digital and IRL spaces. Examples include – but are by no means limited to – the much-covered #bindtrump spell initiated by Michael M. Hughes, the casting of spells of protection for Black Lives Matter protesters under the hashtag #witchesforblm and the “hexes” against police brutality that followed the international protests in 2020. In 2016, a new initiative by the W.I.T.C.H group was established in Portland. Known as W.I.T.C.H PDX [see: witchpdx.com or [@witchpdx](https://www.instagram.com/witchpdx) on Instagram], it promotes an inclusive approach to social justice that embraces antiracism, antifascism, antipatriarchy, indigenous rights, gender self-determination, women’s liberation, trans liberation, anti-rape culture, reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental protection,

immigrant rights and many other pressing issues of our times, promising a continuous evolution of witchcraft activism in real world and digital spaces.

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