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Witches Own Without (W.O.W)
New Group Exhibition at Current Plans

Opening Reception: 9/9/2022, 6pm

Exhibition Period: 9/9 — 6/11/2022

Current Plans, 2/F, 13 Wong Chuk Street, Sham Shui Po, KL, Hong Kong

Participants: Mirwan Andan, S.Yiyao Chao, Ysabelle Cheung, Olivia Chow, eteam (Franziska Lamprecht + Hajoe Moderegger), Christopher K. Ho, Pararailing (Jie Shao, Sixing Xu, Xuecan Ye), Peng Ke, Xiaoshi Qin, Qu Chang, Studio Hik, Yuk King Tan, Wang Tuo, Wong Binghao, X Zhu-Nowell

Curated by Wong Kit Yi, Eunice Tsang and Lok Wong

When it comes to introducing a project about witches and spells, it feels imperative to start with a point about spell-ing. Witches don't practice magic. They practice magick!

The 'k' at the end changes the energy of the word, and is a mental cue for us to think more in terms of the spiritual than of the clever or contrived. Many witches insist on this spelling to differentiate what they do from magicians' stage magic. Magick often involves spending considerable time building up energy and focusing that energy, before releasing it into the universe in the direction of a goal.

We are currently in the midst of a witchery renaissance here in Hong Kong. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of New Age practitioners since 2014, when the Umbrella Movement took place. Part of the attraction may lie with the fact that witchcraft and the New Age practices it has influenced are free-flowing in form, with no central governing authority and a rich collage of denominations to choose from. A notably similar phenomenon was seen in the US in the 1960s, where increased interest in all things New Age emerged following the spread of anti-establishment and countercultural movements. New Age beliefs and practices were likely appreciated as alternative source of meaning and spirituality that are not tied to hierarchical or authoritarian institutions.

Hongkongers have experienced a lot in the past few years, from dynamic social movements to dramatic political changes to stringent pandemic measures. It would not be surprising if the continued increase of witchery interest stems from young people's desire for a means to cope with the stress of living through uncertain times. When most of the dominant knowledge production in the modern world tends to be constrained by two major influences: mainstream religion and scientific materialism,

witchcraft and the traditions it has shaped offer us knowledge that sits outside the shadow of these influences, for which they are sadly often scorned or mocked.

To turn to the site and the labor behind this project, Current Plans is located in a tong lau in Sham Shui Po, sandwiched between the commercial space below and residential space above. Its distinct but humble architecture complements well 'Witches Own Without (W.O.W)', which involves more than 18 participants. Some of these participants' primary professions are in writing and/or curating, and several of them will be contributing artwork for the first time ever.

This project is not meant to simply counter the mainstream depiction of witches, but hopefully to open up more ways to witch. The following ways are put forward by different participants in the project: To listen to plants and water; to question what technology wants from us; to rest and challenge the idea of productivity/non-productivity within the capitalist system; to advocate for minority/non-binary art workers in the art world; to make and share space; to exchange knowledge; to reflect on the contemporary landscape politically, socially, personally; to free shamanism from appropriations that rob it of its power; to be a witch.

The title *Witches Own Without* deliberately appears to be an incomplete sentence, so as to allow anyone and everyone to complete it in their own way. But one possible way to complete it for today: witches own without possessing. Through collective ownership, we can own something without necessarily possessing it. When we selfishly possess something, it can also possess us, like a spell. Witches would likely know enough to be wary of such spells or undo them.

Witches Own Without (W.O.W) **Current Plans 新群展**

開幕酒會: 9/9/2022, 6pm

展期: 9/9 — 6/11/2022

黃竹街13號德安樓2樓Current Plans

巫術團: Mirwan Andan 馬讓·安登, S.Yiyao Chao 周亦瑤, Ysabelle Cheung 張伊婷, Olivia Chow 周宛昀, eteam (Franziska Lamprecht + Hajoe Moderegger), Christopher K. Ho 何恩懷, Pararailing (Jie Shao, Sixing Xu, Xuecan Ye) 欄杆外(邵捷、徐思行、葉雪榮), Peng Ke 彭可, Xiaoshi Qin 覃小詩, Qu Chang 瞿暢, Studio Hik, Yuk King Tan 陳玉瓊, Wang Tuo 王拓, Wong Binghao, X Zhu-Nowell 朱筱蕤

項目由Wong Kit Yi 黃潔宜, Eunice Tsang 曾智愛怡 及 Lok Wong 王天樂策劃

在介紹一個關於巫術和咒語的計劃時, 不得不從字源開始說起。巫師施展的並非魔術 (magic), 而是魔法 (magick) !

魔法 (magick) 結尾的字母「k」不但改變了這個字的能量，同時亦是一個線索，提示我們要多從靈性角度思考，而不是因循慣常的傳統邏輯。很多巫師堅持使用這個拼寫，來區分他們的魔法儀式與魔術師的舞台魔術。為了施展魔法，巫師通常需要投注很多時間累積和集中能量，然後朝着目標把這股能量釋放到宇宙。

現今香港是巫術復興的溫床：自2014年的雨傘運動發生以來，新紀元運動 (New Age Movement) 的支持者數量迅速增加。巫術與新紀元運動之所以如此備受追捧，可能是因為兩者都有著自由流動的意識形態，既沒有權力中心，亦包羅不同學說。1960年代，隨著反建制和非主流文化運動席捲美國，當地亦出現相似的現象，人們對新紀元運動的各種事物產生興趣。正因為新紀元運動的信念和活動與專制階級制度無關，人們視此為意義與靈力的另類源泉。

從社會運動和政治形勢變化，以至嚴厲的防疫措施，香港人在過去幾年經歷了很多。如果將年輕人對巫術的持續關注，理解為渴望找到應付生活壓力的方法，或許更容易讓我們去理解。現代知識生產深受主流宗教和唯物主義限制，而巫術則往往在鄙視和嘲笑的背景聲中遠離這些藩籬，在陰翳處給予我們不受限制的知識。

讓我們把焦點轉向展覽場地：Current Plans位於深水埗唐樓，夾縫於上層的住宅和下層的商業空間。其獨特而樸素的建築與Witches Own Without (W.O.W) 的跨界定位相輔相成。這個項目涉及超過18位參加者，有些正職從事寫作或策展，其中有些人更是首次嘗試創作視覺藝術作品。

展覽目的並不只是要抗衡主流社會對「巫」的描述，而是希望為巫術開拓更多實踐途徑。項目參與者提出以下方式：聆聽植物和水的聲音；詰問科技想從我們身上得到什麼；以休憩挑戰資本主義制度內生產力/非生產力的觀念；為少數/非二元藝術工作者發聲；創造和共享空間；交流知識；從政治、社會及個人角度反思當代面貌；把薩滿從剝奪其力量的挪用中解放；成爲一個巫師。

「Witches Own Without」這個標題故意以未完成的方式示現，以便讓任何人都能以自己的方式參與完成命名它。若然要在此處為它舉隅填充則可以說：巫師擁有但不佔有 (Witches Own Without Possessing)；透過共同擁有某事物，我們能分享而毋須佔有它。當我們自我地佔有某物，它同時也可以囚禁我們，就像一個咒語一樣——巫師應有足夠的知識去警惕或解除這類咒語。

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