

Bait and (S)witch

Meghan Trainor

There are a lot of things to know about the artist, researcher, technologist, thinker, meme-maker, Meghan Elizabeth Trainor. She is from Seattle. She is a talented and incisive media artist. She has a day job as a Digital Strategist. She was one of the first people on earth to get a subcutaneous RFID tag installed in her arm — as an art project.

There are also a lot of things to not know, or know are not true, about Meghan Elizabeth Trainor: she does not want us to forget how masculinist hero-making has erased the roles that women, and femme folks and witchcraft have played in the development of modern technologies and technological thinking. She did not record the novelty pop tune All About That Bass, as she is not a 25 year-old singer-songwriter from Nantucket, Massachusetts, although she is often mistaken for one, online.

For those who are unaware, Meghan Trainor is also the name of a famous pop star. You are forgiven for being unaware if you are not presently a tween or tween-adjacent.

For a number of years of Meghan Elizabeth Trainor the media artist's life has seen her being contacted by confused, youthful fans of the pop star, who are known as "Megatronz", contacting her for free concert tickets, sending her emoji-strewn declarations of love and occasionally — and this is true — getting phone calls from Island Records executives offering to fly her to Hawaii for a meeting, only to awkwardly pull out of the dialogue upon realizing that she is a weirdo artist from Seattle who sometimes injects technology into her body.

For a few years Meghan tried to avoid what she calls the "Michael Bolton from Office Space" problem, instead immersing herself in the creation of speculative medieval robotics for the purposes of creating a female-centered mythology around the discovery of electricity. She then realised that the overlap of Meghan Elizabeth Trainor's media artist digital space with Meghan Trainor pop-star's was something she was going to

need to deal with for a very long time. What good could be made of a situation in which legions of lost pop fans find their way to the incorrect social media stream? For Meghan Elizabeth Trainor, the only logical answer was to embark on a meme campaign, operating in the hope that a few of the young, predominantly female fans might pause for a moment before a vision of a female-centered relationship to technology, one that sits in the same space as unicorns, ouija boards and spider magic. She admits that it “might not work”, and in the meantime does rehearsals for an occasional stand up comedy gig about the whole conundrum, that she may never have the courage to do. Her explicit goals, nonetheless, include having girls feel a cultural ownership of technology. Rather than being “supported” in embarking on what is projected as a male dominated arena, Trainor inverts this idea. Her computer science is weaving, and women own weaving, thus women own computer science, etc.

If anything gets hashtagged with #meghantrainor, it invariably attracts throngs of “megatronz”, getting hoisted into the fan base social media ecosystem. Inverse slippage also occurs, as non-English speaking fans of American pop music, or social media bots, are less likely to catch the not-so-subtle content differences between homonymous authors and accounts — hashtags like #meghantrainorwitchmemes can wind up next to heavily stylised photos of everyone’s favourite all-American, blond-haired songbird.

Meghan Elizabeth Trainor, whose social media account registration dates predate pop star Meghan Trainor’s tenth birthday, has been accused by some of being an imposter. Her accounts have been shut off and she has been locked out of what are nearly life essential services in contemporary American culture. (See [Woman Locked Out of YouTube, Gmail, and Twitter for Having Same Name as Pop Star](#) on Gizmodo, for further reference.) Her digital self, her online self-presentation, and her very claim to be the person whom she has always been, have been called into question by the bearers of corporate, technological authority — Youtube, Gmail, Twitter. She remains somehow unverifiable, as in a post-authentic world

it is the number of people who believe something, and how vocal those people are, that makes it true. Within this spurious landscape, our Trainor, the real Trainor, stands up and develops alternate indicators of a history of technology, electricity and technoculture that might have been.

Included here are just over a dozen witch memes, created and selected for you, dear reader by Meghan Elizabeth Trainor. Each meme is like a puzzle for the viewer, a pointer to a secret history that they can discover, invent or inhabit. Some are obvious jokes, yet others seek to challenge our view of “science” and “superstitious witchcraft” as distinct, rather than partner in historical moments of “enlightenment”. An [exhaustive collection](#) of these can be found in their more natural environment, on Instagram, using the hashtag [#meghantrainorwitchmemes](#).









