



**Matilha Cultural and the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum  
present exclusive exhibition *History of Cannabis, a Forbidden Plant*  
in São Paulo, Brazil**

*With objects from the collection of the museum in Amsterdam,  
the artistic and historic expo reveals the history, culture and economy of the cannabis plant*

**Amsterdam, May 2014**

A unique partnership between Matilha Cultural São Paulo and the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum (Amsterdam, The Netherlands/Barcelona, Spain), is bringing, for the first time in Latin America, an exhibition about the cannabis plant: **History of Cannabis, a Forbidden Plant**. The project involves a documentary and artistic presentation on Cannabis Sativa L. – also known as hemp or marijuana – and its numerous traditional and contemporary uses. A selection of pictures and objects from the collection of the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum will relate about the history of the plant, its social and cultural development, as well the last hundred years of prohibition. The show opens on May 13th, 2014, at 07:00 pm, and runs until July 4th, 2014. Access will be restricted to adults (18+).

It is the first time that the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum sends works from its collection to a venue outside of Europe. The exhibition in São Paulo presents historic and modern objects: old medicine bottles, antique hemp processing tools, rare reefer madness books from the fifties, hemp ropes, old and modern textiles and state of the art bioplastic made of hemp fiber, as well as photos and documents. No THC containing objects will be on show and all import was carried in strict accordance to the Brazilian customs legislation.

To further delve into the issue, the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum has designed collages especially for the exhibition at Matilha Cultural. These cover cannabis history on four themes: **medical**, highlighting the historic use of cannabis as a medicine and its potential for the future; **industrial**, which shows how widely industrial hemp was grown and processed throughout the ages and how this plant can serve humankind in days to come; **cultural**, showing recreational cannabis use in diverse cultures worldwide and its modern counterparts; and **prohibition**, with the hysteria that brought the international War on Drugs into being and current debates and policies of cannabis criminalization. A timeline portraying key moments of the history of the plant complements the visual exhibition, which will occupy the entire second floor of Matilha's facilities.

Ben Dronkers, founder of the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum, Sensi Seeds (the oldest and one of the largest cannabis seed banks in Europe) and HempFlax (a Dutch company which grows and processes hemp fiber for industrial use) states: "The aim of the museum is to inform people about the significance of hemp, hash and marijuana, not only in the coffee shops of Amsterdam, but as a worldwide, cultural and natural phenomenon. We are thrilled to have this opportunity to show the people in Latin America works from our collection and spread knowledge about cannabis and appreciation for the history, present and future of this exceptional plant."



A timeline exposing the relationship of the cannabis plant with the development of society complements the exhibition, with content from the special edition "The Marihuana Revolution", published by SuperInteressante magazine (April). A national section of the show is brought by the first Brazilian publication on cannabis, SemSemente magazine, with books, flyers and memorabilia from the marihuana legalization movement in the country in the last two decades.

History of Cannabis, a Forbidden Plant will be on show for two months, and during this period, a series of debates and lectures, as well as movies and documentaries related to the issue will take place at Matilha's theater. Specialists will be invited for public conversations on cannabis and health, culture and politics. Among names confirmed to participate are neuroscientist Carl Hart, from Columbia University in the USA; Prof. Henrique Carneiro, from the History School of Sao Paulo University; Renato Filev, neurobiologist and medical cannabis researcher, member of Maconhabras expert group; Alessandra Oberling, anthropologist and member of Pense Livre network; and patients who use cannabis as medicine, to share their personal experiences.

"We believe that this project can educate the people on the history and diverse traditional uses of the cannabis plant, which are largely unknown to the Brazilian people. By doing so, it directly contributes to break taboos and normalize the discussion on drugs, so that we can in fact develop policies that guarantee public health, citizen security and quality of life to the population. This project is not about promoting cannabis use, but rather bringing on a debate on the current cannabis laws that seem to cause more social harm than the consumption of the drug", says Rebeca Lerer from Matilha Cultural. "We desperately need to address the end of the war on drugs to reduce violence in this country".



## Context

Matilha Cultural is hosting this groundbreaking project on an important moment on the drug policy debate in Latin America and the world. Twenty-one USA states and Washington DC have already legalized medical cannabis, and since January 1<sup>st</sup>, cannabis is legal to buy in Washington and Colorado for adult use. In December 2013, Uruguay became the first country in the world to fully regulate and put under state control the whole chain of production of cannabis, challenging the international UN conventions. Furthermore, a political process led by presidents of Colombia, Guatemala and others has been exposing the failure of the war on drugs and the need to look into more effective alternatives in Latin America. Even the Organization of American States, is pushing for drug policy reform at the regional level.

Meanwhile, Brazil faces the reality of cannabis being the most consumed illegal drug in the country, representing a major source of income to organized crime. The social conditions of the majority of the Brazilian population make it easy to recruit new agents to the profitable illicit drug market. Today Brazil has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest incarcerated population in the world and a record of over 50,000 violent homicides a year.

“More than 40 years of war have not translated into reducing consumption; quite the contrary, they brought disastrous consequences to public health and security, fuelling corruption and human rights violations. Furthermore, we continue to downplay or ignore the growing evidence that cannabis causes less harm than legally regulated drugs like alcohol and tobacco, not to mention the medical benefits of the drug”, denounces Rebeca Lerer.

In the first months of 2014, the discussion in Brazil seems to be finally gaining some momentum. Two bills proposing cannabis regulation have been presented at National Congress, and a third project, proposed via internet with more than 20,000 signatures in less than a week, has been accepted by the Human Rights Commission of the Federal Senate. The bill PLC 37/2010, which maintains the criminalization of drug use, increases minimum mandatory sentencing for drug offenses and promotes involuntary treatment for addiction, is under analysis since last year and with little chances to be voted any time soon.

In early April, the Brazilian justice authorized the import of Canabidiol (CBD extract) as a response to the severe epilepsy case of the girl Any Fischer, that gained media and social networks after the documentary ILEGAL was launched. Any, 5 years old, became the first legal patient for medical cannabis in the country.

## Cinema

The House I live in (USA, 2013) first time in Brazil; Breaking the Taboo (Brazil, 2010); Cortina de Fumaça (Brazil, 2011); Ilegal (Brazil, 2014); Weed (Sanjay Gupta, CNN, USA, 2013); Waiting to Inhale (USA, 2005); What if Cannabis cured cancer (USA, 2010)



### **About Matilha Cultural**

Matilha Cultural is an independent, non-profit culture center in downtown Sao Paulo. Operating since 2009, the space is managed by a group of professionals from different backgrounds and promotes cultural productions and social, environmental and human rights causes from Brazil and abroad.

[www.matilhacultural.com.br](http://www.matilhacultural.com.br)

### **About the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum**

Created in 1985, the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum, from Amsterdam, The Netherlands, is maintained by the Dronkers BV group, that controls Sensi Seeds (the oldest and one of the largest cannabis seed banks in Europe and the main supplier of medical cannabis in Holland) and HempFlax, a company which grows and processes industrial hemp to be used, for example as plastics in cars or as building materials. With a museum also in Barcelona, Spain, the Hash Marihuana & Hemp Museum present permanent exhibitions on the history and use of cannabis around the world and function as information centers on the issue, receiving an average 100,000 visitors per year.

([www.hashmuseum.com](http://www.hashmuseum.com), [www.sensiseeds.com](http://www.sensiseeds.com), [www.hempflax.com](http://www.hempflax.com)).

### **History of Cannabis: a Forbidden Plant @ Matilha Cultural**

**Opening: 13/05/2014, 7 pm**

**On Show: May 14th – July 4<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**Free entrance for adults (18+) – dogs are welcome**

### **MATILHA CULTURAL**

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Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday 12h - 20h/ Saturdays: 14h - 20h

Wi-fi Free

[www.matilhacultural.com.br](http://www.matilhacultural.com.br)

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### **Information to the press**

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