GRASS ROOTS

Cannabis from Prohibition to Prescription

Discussion Guide

Cannabis use generates strong, often divided opinions, but its story is undeniably significant. Whether you strongly support, strongly oppose, or are still trying to figure out where you stand on cannabis use, we encourage all of our visitors to explore this exhibition with an open mind.

ORIGINATION

In this section, you can trace The Cannabis Journey from Mongolia in 10,000 BC to Sonoma County in the 1800s, as well as compare actual leaves from a cannabis plant.

- What is your reaction to seeing the different uses of this plant across the world and over thousands of years?
- Were there any uses of the plant that were new to you?
- If this is your first time seeing cannabis leaves up close, what is your reaction?

CLASSIFICATION

In this section, we examine the opposing views of cannabis and the history of its classification as an illegal drug.

- Would you consider cannabis to be more, less, or equally as dangerous as the other drugs and activities made illegal in the early 1900s (alcohol, opium, cocaine, prostitution, gambling)? Why?
- If you were living in the times of Luther Burbank and Jack London, before cannabis became illegal, what would you think of it?
- The campaign to make cannabis illegal associated the drug with Mexican immigrants and African Americans. How would you compare or contrast the sociopolitical climate of today to a hundred years ago?

REVELATION

As we step into the 1960s, we reflect on the counterculture movement and the establishment of the Emerald Triangle, question marijuana's ability to enhance creativity, and examine real plants in the grow tank.

- Have you seen a cannabis plant before? What is it like to view the plants in the grow tank?
- Do you believe cannabis stimulates creativity?
- Would you have supported or opposed the early legalization efforts? Why?

MEDICATION

In the 1980s, we see the compassionate medicinal use of the drug during the AIDS crisis, learn the stories of “Brownie Mary” and the Cannabis Buyers Club, and see the legalization of medical marijuana in California in 1996.

- Do you know anyone who has used medical marijuana to aid an illness? Do you know anyone who has faked an illness to get access to medical marijuana? How do you think those stories have influenced the legalization efforts?
- In this section, we note that studies correlate heavy cannabis use to mental health issues and question whether the drug is scientifically proven “good medicine.” Recent studies have also shown that cannabis can have a harmful effect on cognitive development in adolescents. What are your thoughts? (*See back for additional resources for youth*).

COMMERCIALIZATION

In this section, we examine the effects of the passage of Prop 64 in 2016. In the side gallery, we take a look at the more comical side of cannabis and the counterculture movement.

- Have you been impacted by the passage of Prop 64?
- In the display case with the packaged products, we can see one of Mercy Wellness’s child-proof bags. With alcoholic beverage companies advertising responsible drinking, what responsibility do you think the cannabis industry has to protect its users?
- Cannabis was a prolific symbol of the counterculture movement. Now that it’s legal, do you think it will become mainstream?

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June 16 – September 15, 2019
Curated by Eric Stanley and Brian Applegarth

This exhibition is intended to create a space for visitors to engage in conversations and better understand a topic that is relevant to our region's history and our community. MSC does not promote any particular viewpoint related to the legality of cannabis use.

For additional resources and information about discussing cannabis with youth, please visit
www.museumsc.org/grass-roots

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