

Our Voice

Is it appropriate to make comparisons between today and a time so long past as the Middle Ages? Today, people are no longer burned at the stake for heresy, but, they are vilified, among other things, to satisfy political, economic, security, and ideological interests that promote banning some psychoactive substances, among them, cannabis. Today's doctors and scientists, who bring to light this plant's benefits for medicinal as well as —and why not?— recreational use, could be the equivalents of the witches of old. In the first decades of this century, we are living between prohibitionism and freedom, as one of the authors in this issue writes.

A principle we hold very dear at this magazine has been to make space for the plurality of voices that make up North American society in general, and Mexico's in particular. Showing what is done, thought, and said in Mexico from different perspectives contributes to breaking down the stereotypes that sometimes exist in our culture using informed knowledge. With the desire to deconstruct stigmatization, we conceived the idea of dedicating our magazine's issue 120 to presenting different versions, visions, and arguments about the cultivation, use, and consumption of this plant. An entire culture has been created around it for decades, and in the 1970s, Bob Marley led the way in Rastafarianism, calling it the “wisdom weed.” From the standpoint of anthropology, botany, science, law, politics, companies, human rights, activism, and art, the articles in this issue converge in a single space: a place of respect and freedom.

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The years keep going by —a little over a hundred— and those in power continue imposing stigmatizing narratives about marijuana and other psychoactive substances. In different ways, these stigmas have stealthily sought to eat away at the lives of people who have historically been vulnerable simply because they consume these substances. This has often deadlocked their bodies, since the stigma has been so voracious and the safety nets so weak that the battle has seemed lost before it started. These insatiable narratives are constructed and reproduced through the media, legislation, inside families, in educational institutions themselves, and, of course, in governments and international bodies worldwide.

In North America, the stigmas, accompanied by disqualification, human rights violations, and criminalization, have impacted above all those identified with diverse groups such as Afro-descendants, Latin Americans, Asians, indigenous people, those of mixed race, or marginalized groups that live in our cities' peripheries.

Fortunately, however, these stigmas are also faced, dealt with, and confronted from different spaces and using different resources. Cannabis resistance has been supported with solidarity and sisterhood, self-organization, the generation of information from the source, and in popular and artistic expressions in order to be inclusive, approach the peripheries, the dissidences, in the very spaces where they resonate the most.

Voices of Mexico, then, is dedicating a space to the intentionally silenced voices, but voices embraced by experience, by wisdom. These voices, the incarnation of cannabis diversities, invite us to



journey through the articles in this issue: a mosaic of colors, textures, and dimensions that inject an antidote to the stigmatization, information created based on their own experiences and reflections from different spaces. Women, men, artists, students, activists, researchers, and people involved in the different branches of human knowledge offer us in their stories the chance to familiarize ourselves with different perspectives that enrich us as part of humanity. This allows us to rip away from our eyes the veil that the dominant discourses have interposed between us and cannabis.

In this issue, “Cannabis Speaks Out,” we find approaches that range from the international drug control regime’s analysis of the manipulation of psycho-tropical substances for their commercialization, prioritizing U.S. pharmaceutical industry interests to the detriment of non-hegemonic cultures that have been using psychoactive plants for thousands of years, to the promotion of private at-home cultivation as a form of resistance to the voracious corporate market. Other outstanding articles show through their authors’ experiences how important cannabis is in the lives of thousands of people: “The Queen of the Flowers. A Story of Love and Self-Discovery,” “From Vulnerability to Defending Cannabis Rights,” and “One Hundred Years of Clandestine Medicine in Mexico,” just to name a few. But we also find articles that take us to the problems and ways of dealing with them in places like British Columbia, Colorado, and others in Canada, the United States and Mexico. Finally, we cannot leave out the scientific and spiritual perspectives: the first, in the article “*Cannabis Sativa L.* Misunderstood,” and the second, documented in the experience in the use of “Saint Rose” among the Otomís of the Tepehua Otomí Mountains.

I’m sure that after undertaking this journey through the passionate words the authors use to write these articles, our vision of cannabis and everything involving it will be much stronger in the process of deconstructing stigmas.

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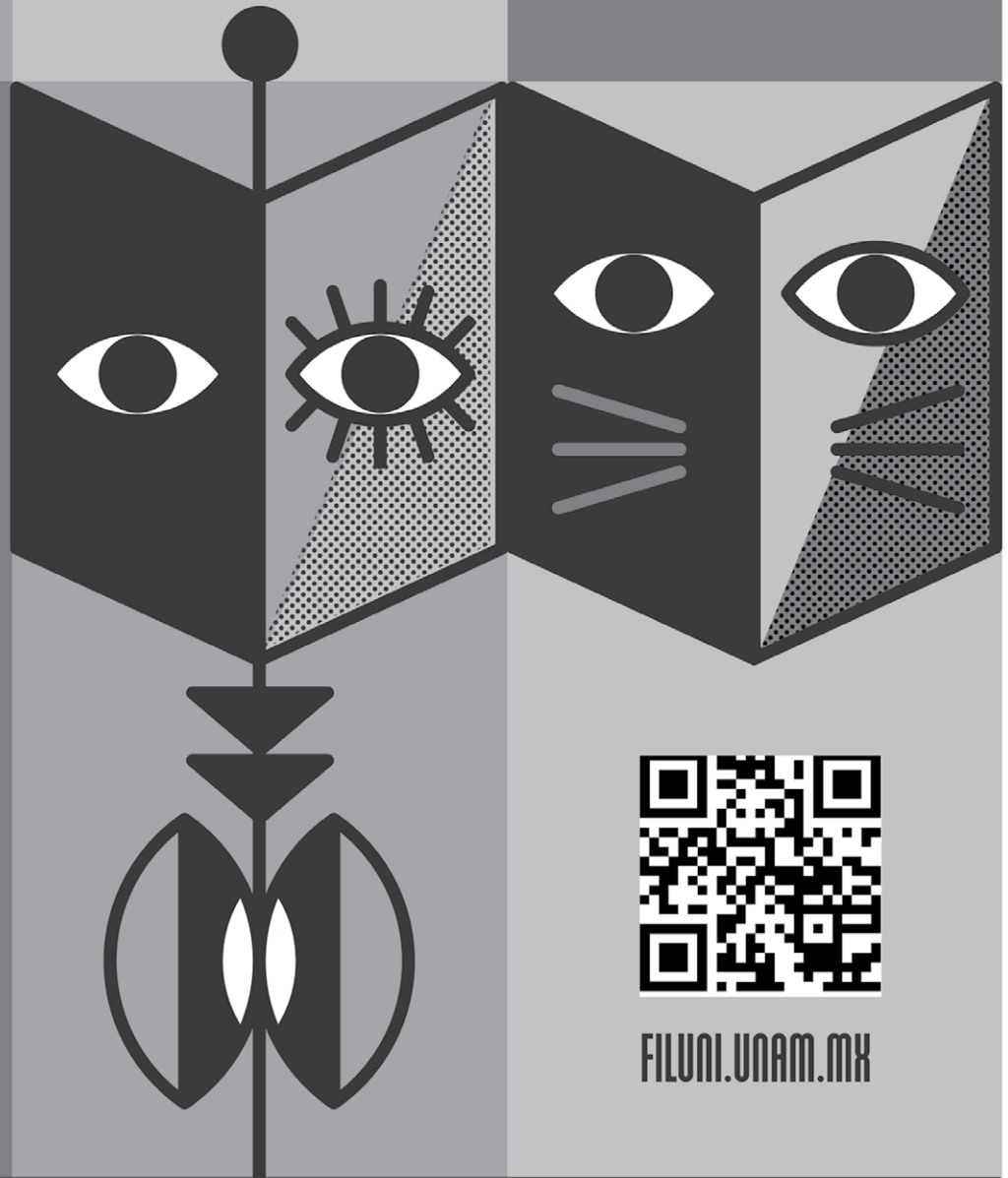


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