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Lea Petříková

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Sandoz Film production in Novartis Archives¹

Lea Petříková

FAMU (Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts), Prague²

Résumé

Les archives du groupe pharmaceutique Novartis sont responsables du patrimoine filmique de la société Sandoz. Ce fonds inclut environ 1300 bobines de films (450 titres). Cette note s'appuie sur une recherche dans les archives du groupe Novartis. Elle présente les caractéristiques du fonds cinématographique Sandoz. Ainsi, elle apporte un éclairage sur l'organisation de la production filmique au sein de Sandoz, en tenant compte des sources archivistiques, de l'histoire de Sandoz et du contexte socio-politique plus large dans lequel les sociétés pharmaceutiques ont déployé leur activité économique.

Mots-clés : Sandoz ; Novartis ; industrie pharmaceutique ; entreprise ; film ; fonds d'archives.

Abstract

Novartis Company Archives currently manage the Sandoz film legacy which includes about 1,300 reels of film material (450 film titles). The study, based on an archival research in the Novartis Company Archives, reports on the characteristics of the Sandoz film archive. It seeks to offer a possible insight into the system and function of the company's film production, primarily considering archival sources, and secondarily the history of Sandoz and the social-political context of corporate activities.

Keywords: Sandoz; Novartis; pharmaceuticals; company; film.

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² This study originated at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague as part of the project "Altered States of Consciousness in the Films of the Novartis Company Archive" supported by special-purpose funds intended for the specific tertiary education research provided by the Czech Ministry of Education in 2018.

Novartis, one of today's largest multinational pharmaceutical corporations, was founded in 1996 by merging two long-standing companies from the Basel territory (Switzerland) – Sandoz AG and Ciba-Geigy. Both Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy started as dye factories in the second half of the nineteenth century and eventually developed into powerful pharmaceutical players acting internationally, until their joint in the end of the past century, when the creation of Novartis followed up. Novartis, as the major participant of the global pharmaceutical market, focuses on three business areas – health care, agribusiness and nutrition, providing medicines to more than one billion patients every year (Dettwiler, 2014).

Nowadays, Novartis Company Archives in Basel (*Firmenarchiv der Novartis*) preserve the company's historical and business documents dating back to the early days of the predecessor companies. Allegedly the oldest company archives in Switzerland, as the welcoming signboard at the entrance informs, Novartis Archives also protect the film heritage of the company, meaning that an amount of film reels is stored, catalogued and gradually digitized.

Although the other subsidiary companies (CIBA, Ciba-Geigy) made industrial films as well, this note concentrates on one of the sections of the Novartis film archive only – films produced by the pharmaceutical company Sandoz. This note supplements a previous article focused on an aesthetical analysis of selected arthouse films produced by Sandoz (Petříková,

2017) by taking into account an analysis of the Basel archives itself conducted in July-August 2018. Reflecting on the most relevant sources published on the topic of the Sandoz film production so far, it seeks to report on the characteristics of the Sandoz film archive, and to offer a possible insight into the system and function of the company's film production, taking into account primarily archival resources, and secondarily the history of Sandoz and the social-political context of corporate activities. In doing so, I emphasize the archival corpus itself, analysing the accessible company materials, such as the film database and catalogues. Thus, the aim of this study is to present the current status of the archive and to contextualize its position within the company's policy in the past and today. I conclude by suggesting more general questions about Sandoz film production purposes.

Within the context of industrial film, the example of Sandoz film archive fits into the area of health film corpuses of the twentieth century, given not only by the Sandoz company orientation, but also by the characteristics of the examined archival corpus (Bonah, Cantor & Laukötter, 2018). Like other pharmaceutical and medical concerns in Europe and in the world, the Sandoz company produced a number of industrial films, and this corporate activity reflected specific needs and intentions, that were often conflicting to the general task of the health films, meant to inform and positively engage the general public. As is the case with other health film corpuses, the comprehensive study of

Sandoz film archive is an exacting task to accomplish, since additional documentation is mostly missing, the cataloguing is incomplete, and the digitization process is still in progress. These factors determine the complexity of the analysis of the film production background, that seems difficult to be clearly defined by establishing standards (function of the films, intention of the company, modes of use, etc.). However, further reflection on portions of the archive show that the Sandoz film portfolio can be interpreted in relation to social and political issues of the post-war era, thus enriching our knowledge of both industrial film history and cultural history of health³.

Sandoz and the case of LSD

Sandoz's forerunner, Chemische Fabrik Kern & Sandoz, was founded in 1886 in Basel, Switzerland, by Alfred Kern, a skillful chemist, and Edouard-Constant Sandoz, a businessman. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the chemical company, primarily specialized in the dye industry, took a risk and included pharmaceutical research in the company profile. The research was launched in 1917 with the appointment of Professor Arthur Stoll, a well-known scientist working with natural remedies.

After the switch from the dye to the pharmaceutical industry, the Sandoz company – initially under the brand Chemische Fabrik vormals Sandoz, and Sandoz AG later on – pursued the production of medicines and other industrial chemicals (e.g. agrichemicals). Among multiple successful discoveries and subsequent products – Calcium-Sandoz, Parlodel, or Bellergal to name but a few – one of the drugs stepped out of the line: LSD.

No other medical substance from the rich Sandoz portfolio (and possibly from any pharmaceutical company in general) gained more of a cult status in the general public of the twentieth century than LSD, the infamous abbreviation of lysergic acid diethylamide. It was at the Sandoz Laboratories where Albert Hofmann, continuing in Stoll's work, first synthesized the derivate in 1938 and, five years later, re-examined and tested the alkaloid on himself (Dettwiler, 2014). The so-called Hofmann's "Bicycle Day" proved LSD's psychotropic effect on mind. The discovery of LSD's psychedelic properties opened a new chapter for Sandoz and the whole pharmaceutical industry – a psychedelic chapter that was only meant to last for the brief period of another twenty years, until the 1960s. LSD was further researched and, shortly after the discovery of its characteristics, introduced under the name "Delysid" to the expert community as a ground-breaking drug used in psychiatry to cure various mental diseases – depression, schizophrenia, and others. Psychopharmacology thus became one of the major interests of

³ See in this thematic issue the box [*encadré*] on Sandoz film production dealing with psychiatric topics, by the same author.

the corporate research of Sandoz; other psychoactive drugs were developed and launched onto the market (e.g. psilocybin under the name Indocybin). Subsequently, the research and production of psychedelics expanded internationally. Over the following years, LSD was further examined in the United States, Great Britain or in Czechoslovakia (Novak, 1997). Especially, the latter stands out due to the exceptionally long period of LSD's legality in the country lasting until 1974. Czechoslovakia even engaged in its own production of the substance under the name "Lysergamide" (Winkler, Gorman & Kočárová, 2016).

In the United States, the drug notably increased in popularity in the late 1950s and, even more, in the 1960s. The psychologist Timothy Leary started up his academic research focused on psychedelic substances at the Harvard University, alongside his colleagues Richard Alpert and Ralph Metzner. Their activities at Harvard were discontinued with controversies in 1963; afterwards Leary and the group transferred to Millbrook, New York, where they founded an experimental center and continued to research psychedelics until 1968. Meanwhile the recreational use of LSD and other psychotropics progressively became a mainstream fashion, associated with the counterculture movement, psychedelic subculture and the hippie community. According to Steven J. Novak, LSD's transformation from a medical experiment to a cultural phenomenon began not in the early 1960s, but already in

the late 1950s when writers and thinkers Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard redefined their psychedelic experience in the role of clinically tested subjects as a mystical experience (Novak, 1997). This paradigm shift in the interpretation of the then mostly unfamiliar substance helped to spread psychedelics among the general public. Sandoz Laboratories, however, provided the American medical professionals with samples of LSD already in 1949 to attract their attention and provoke further research activities. It seems that the expansion of the popular recreational use in the 1960s outreached the company's anticipation (Novak, 1997), exclusively targeting at professional audience (psychologists, psychiatrists, and other medics).

This paradoxical moment crucially defined the ambiguous response that the newly discovered substance stirred up – on one hand, the Sandoz Laboratories intended to put LSD into general psychopharmacological practice and to promote its monitored use, on the other Hofmann's "*problem child*" got out of control rather fast and the company drew back as the backlash grew stronger between the years 1964 and 1966⁴. First, Sandoz stopped its shipments to the USA in 1965 and, one year later, LSD was prohibited by the US government. Regarding the industrial production, Sandoz held the patents on LSD only

4 Hofmann A. (2009), *LSD: My Problem Child: Reflections on Secret Drugs, Mysticism and Science*, Santa Cruz: MAPS.

until 1963⁵. The production was stopped shortly afterwards. Thus, the recreational use became illegal, even though the academic and medical research dedicated to psychedelics actively continued throughout the following years in some countries (e.g. the case of Czechoslovakia mentioned above).

While Sandoz's fame outside of the pharmaceutical industry grew with the repute of LSD, the firm also turned to new marketing/promotional strategies and embarked on film production (Petříková, 2017).

Sandoz Film Production

Pharmaceutical companies in France began to incorporate film production into their marketing practices as early as the 1920s, e.g. the company Laboratoires Fumouze (Lefebvre, 2014). However, it wasn't until the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s that the pharmaceutical industry as a whole turned to cinema practice as a means of marketing strategies (Lefebvre, 2011). Sandoz started producing films in the 1950s as well, managing to present an ambitious project defining its promotional strategies. In the end of the 1950s, Sandoz opened a specialized institution dedicated exclusively to film: the Cinémathèque Sandoz. Located in Paris, this department of "film service" became a multi-functional place on its own, combin-

ing several institutional activities. It functioned as a film library, distribution center of medical films (of not only Sandoz origin) and as a hub of the Sandoz original film production (Lefebvre, 2014). The Cinémathèque financed production of new film titles that were distributed afterwards within the company's net of professional contacts (Bonah, 2015). The institution also published the *Médecine/Cinéma* journal, oriented on medical film, that served both for promotional and informative purposes and as a discussion platform for the involved professionals⁶.

Both stages of the process of Sandoz film creation (production and distribution) held a special position and formulated a distinctive model for other pharmaceutical companies. In the pre-war era of industrial film, trust of the company was put in the personality of the director, who was fully responsible for the final result. After the establishment of the Cinémathèque, this approach was superseded by a new system: Sandoz commissioned a director or a production company to make the film in collaboration with an expert-physician, often a renowned one, who guaranteed high standard of the film and its informative quality. Thus, physicians acted as supervisors and also influenced the content of the film works; sometimes the films were even made after their proposals (Petříková, 2017).

⁵ *Idem*.

⁶ The *Médecine/Cinéma* journal was published from 1968 to 1978, in 36 issues. On this, see the interview hold by Thierry Lefebvre with the journal's former publication director Gérard Leblanc (Leblanc, 2009).

Even though medical experts mostly co-authored the promotional output, overall the films did not contain an obvious promotional message or direct hints at pharmaceutical products. Moreover, as will be suggested further, they were characterized by aesthetic qualities, attractive topics (frequently non-medical) and inventive form. This relative freedom of expression was a consequence of the newly applied rules of the film production, supported by the Cinémathèque, and also of the specific distributional strategy. Although Sandoz financed a variety of promotional strategies (the *Médecine/Cinéma* journal and other), the film production seemed to stand at the forefront (Lefebvre, 2014).

Films produced by the Sandoz company were not intended for regular distributional or public screenings; by contrast, the films circulated only within the professional environment, which meant medical and pharmaceutical conferences, fairs and special, non-public events organized by Sandoz – and again, these screenings were open for the medical and pharmaceutical professionals (Bonah, 2015). As Bonah points out, during these occasions, Sandoz films worked effectively in a newly discovered zone between entertainment and scientific information, attracting professionals to both enjoy themselves and imbibe knowledge on new products, methods of treatment or internal feelings of their patients (*ibid.*). The aim was not only to advertise activities of the company, but to create a broader image of Sandoz as

a sophisticated patron of arts (Lefebvre, 2009). As Bonah observes, the use of film in the pharmaceutical marketing in the post-war era was defined by the turn to scientific promotion – film advertisements were replaced by films meant for professionals (scientists, physicians, merchants etc.), that cultivated the audience, albeit professional, rather than simply offering products. The production system, introduced by Sandoz, was quickly adapted by other pharmaceutical concerns, including Ciba-Geigy (Bonah, 2015). Sandoz further accomplished this aim by means of its peculiar film production, which can be regarded as a remarkable example of merging commerce and art (Petříková, 2017).

In terms of aesthetic innovation, one of Sandoz's directors particularly stood out – Éric Duvivier, originally a failed student of medicine, eventually a self-made man of the medical film, directed and co-produced the majority of Sandoz films focused on the topic of psychiatry and psychology⁷. Duvivier, creating Sandoz films in collaboration with his own production company ScienceFilm, was able to communicate abstract topics of psychic diseases or mental states through almost experimental visions, that could have appeared incomprehensible; however, thanks to Duvivier's affiliation to the medical experts, who took part in

7 See in this thematic issue the text by Ch. Bonah “‘Réserve strictement au corps médical’: l’industrie pharmaceutique, les sociétés de production audiovisuelle d’Éric Duvivier et les stratégies de marketing scientifique, 1950-1980”.

the projects, the courageous shape of his films was not so affected by the needs of industrial marketing (Lefebvre, 2014).

Sandoz Films in Novartis Archives

Currently, the Sandoz film heritage is preserved in the Novartis Company Archives, alongside other archival material of the Novartis company. According to its archivist, Philipp Gafner, Sandoz film archives are comprised of approximately one thousand, three hundred film reels of four hundred, fifty titles produced by the company. Digitization has recently started and still continues – as of 2018, and the expected term of completion is 2020⁸.

The archives are accessible to the expert community; digitized films are stored on hard drives and can be watched on the researcher's own laptop only. The archives don't provide researchers with the possibility of screenings of film material.

Regarding archival cataloguing, in 2015, the Archives put together a database of preserved Sandoz films in the form of a table, showing following item categories: title, language, run time, group and archive number⁹. One thousand and three

hundred and eleven items are stated in the list (archive numbers from SA_1 to SA_1310), with one thousand fifty-nine items already digitized (see Figure 1).

As for additional archival materials concerning Sandoz film production, three period catalogues are available. No other documents on film are included in the archives; just random promotional photos or film posters can be found in the general archive.

Analysing the film database, several facts clarifying the Sandoz film production background appear. The films were produced in multiple language versions. For instance, the film *The Burning Ear* was made in French, English and Spanish versions; while *Congenital fragility of bone* in German, French, English, Spanish and Italian versions. Almost all the films in the list were produced in at least two language versions. This effort proves that Sandoz targeted at an international audience even in its film production.

The database also shows that films were also made in different technical copies – from comparing the digitized versions of the same films it seems obvious, that various technical characteristics differ (colour quality, etc.), however some of the variations could originate in the digitalizing process as well. The item category “Group” indicates how many versions (both language and technical) were made – for example *Stilled Life* exists in ten versions. Nevertheless the “Group” item category is

⁸ Personal interview with Philipp Gafner, 2/08/2018.

⁹ Haas Ch. (2015), *Filmarchiv Sandoz – Gesamtverzeichnis*, Basel: Firmenarchiv der Novartis AG, unpublished catalogue.

Filmarchiv Sandoz - Gesamtverzeichnis					
	A	B	C	D	E
1070	The hip - discussion on treatment, optical sound	English	16mins		1069
1071	La cadera - posibilidades terapeuticas, sonido magnético, castellana	Spanish	17mins		1070
1072	La cadera - posibilidades terapeuticas, sonido optico, castellana	Spanish	17mins		1071
1073	La cadera - posibilidades terapeuticas, sonido optico, castellana	Spanish	17mins		1072
1074	La cadera - posibilidades terapeuticas, sonido optico, castellana	Spanish	17mins		1073
1075	La cadera - posibilidades terapeuticas, sonido optico, castellana	Spanish	17mins		1074
1076	Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, magnetischer Ton	German	22mins		1075
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, magnetischer Ton	German	22mins		1076
1077					
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, optischer Ton	German	22mins		1077
1078					
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, optischer Ton	German	22mins		1078
1079					
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 1. Teil, optischer Ton	German	22mins		1079
1080					
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 1. Teil, optischer Ton	German	22mins		1080
1081					
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 2. Teil -	German	21mins		1081
1082	Therapeutische Diskussion, magnetischer Ton				
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 2. Teil -	German	21mins		1082
1083	Diskussion, magnetischer Ton				
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 2. Teil -	German	21mins		1083
1084	Diskussion, optischer Ton				
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 2. Teil -	German	21mins		1084
1085	Diskussion, optischer Ton				
	Die Lendenwirbelsäule - Topographische Diagnostik in der Rheumatologie, 2. Teil -	German	21mins		1085
1086	Diskussion, optischer Ton				
1087	Le rachis lombaire, son optique	French	22mins		1086
1088	Le rachis lombaire: discussion therapeutique, son optique	French	17mins		1087
1089	Topographical diagnosis in rheumatology - the lumbar spine, magnetic sound	English	22mins		1088
1090	Topographical diagnosis in rheumatology - the lumbar spine, optical sound	English	22mins		1089
1091	Topographical diagnosis in rheumatology - the lumbar spine, optical sound	English	22mins		1090
1092	Topographical diagnosis in rheumatology - the lumbar spine, optical sound	English	22mins		1091
1093	The lumbar spine - discussion on treatment, magnetic sound	English	12mins		1092
	Topographical diagnosis in rheumatology - the lumbar spine, discussion on treatment, optical sound	English	12mins		1093
1094	optical sound				

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Figure 1 - Haas Ch. (2015). Filmarchiv Sandoz – Gesamtverzeichnis

[Basel : Firmenarchiv der Novartis AG. Unpublished catalogue]

stated only in approximately 30% of the archival fonds (400/1310). This situation complicates orientation in the database, as well as the fact, that some films appear outside of their groups, so a precise number of films enlisted in the database (and preserved by the Archives) cannot be verified.

The database does not give any further information on the films – no summaries or annotations are added. Also, the system of cataloguing seems unclear. The items are not arranged in alphabetical order. Any further categories (year, category, genre) cannot be detected.

Therefore, the only method of gathering information on the listed films is to connect the database items to the three present Sandoz film catalogues. One of the catalogues, *Sandoz Film Katalog*, in German and in paperback edition, lacks any bibliographical description; just the address of the company is stated¹⁰. The catalogue *Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz*¹¹, in French, also in paperback edition, is dated “*édition 1983*” and thus implies that it possibly presents one of

¹⁰ *Sandoz Film Katalog* (n.d.), Basel: Sandoz Produkte.

¹¹ *Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz*, édition 1983, Condé-sur-Escaut: Carlo Descamps.

the series of the catalogues, that were regularly published¹². The last catalogue, dated September 1982, simply entitled *Film Catalogue*, is not bound and provides texts in English¹³. The presence of three catalogues in three different language versions, suggests once more, that the international film distribution was important for the company's marketing politics.

The catalogues are organized in the same manner of categorization, using medical terms to define thematic focus of the films. *Film Catalogue* cites seventeen categories (see Table 1)¹⁴.

The other catalogues used similar categories. In *Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz*, films are divided into twenty-two chapters, as following: anatomy, anesthesiology/reanimatology, cardiology/angiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, gerontology, haematology, infectious maladies and parasites, neurology and neurochirurgie, legal medicine, ophthalmology, gynaecology, orthopedy/traumatology, otorhinolaryngology, pedagogy and public health, podiatry and genetics,

pharmacology, psychiatry, rheumatology, urology, pneumophthisiology, and various.

The category psychiatry is distinguished by the most entries – forty titles, a part of them (more than a quarter) directed by Éric Duvivier and/or co-produced by his companies ScienceFilm or Films Art et Science, Duvivier's early production company (Lefebvre, 2014).

Comparing the three catalogues, neither categories, nor the described films match completely. Each of the catalogue presents a specific corpus of films – some of the titles are included in all of the catalogues, others appear just once. The same situation is repeated in the case of Novartis Company Archives' film database of Sandoz production. Not all of the films, contained in the catalogues, can be found in the database and vice versa.

Also, analysis of the psychiatry category in the catalogues shows that the films' affiliation with the thematic chapters is not consistent either – e.g. the title *Sleep and Narcolepsy* can be found within different categories in the catalogues, psychiatry (*Film Catalogue*) and neurology (*Sandoz Film Katalog*, *Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz*).

Concluding on the cataloguing, the existence of catalogues in different languages proves that Sandoz counted on international audience. In the preface of *Films médico-scientifiques*, as well as in each issue of the *Médecine/Cinéma* journal, we read: “*Films are available*

¹² Currently, major libraries don't own issues of the catalogues. Neither Bibliothèque nationale de France, nor Bibliothèque nationale suisse or Deutsche Nationalbibliothek owns a Sandoz catalogue, regardless of its language. However, it is possible to trace a few second-hand copies online, e.g. *Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz: édition 1973*, which potentially confirms the presumption that the catalogues were published regularly.

¹³ *Film Catalogue* (1982).

¹⁴ *Idem*.

CATEGORY N°	CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ITEMS
1	Cardiovascular/Pulmonary system	17
2	Endocrinology	3
3	Gastroenterology	1
4	Gerontology	4
5	Gynaecology/Obstetrics	11
6	Haematology	5
7	Immunology/Allergology	6
8	Investigational and therapeutic techniques	4
9	Neurology	8
10	Obesity	2
11	Osteopathology	4
12	Paediatrics	3
13	Psychiatry	14
14	Child psychiatry	3
15	Rheumatology	4
16	Toxicology	1
17	Miscellaneous	3

Table 1 - Analysis of the categories in *Film Catalogue*

CATALOGUE	PSYCHIATRY CATEGORY (No. of items)	RELATED CATEGORIES CHILD PSYCHIATRY (No. of items)	IN TOTAL (PSYCHIATRY CATEGORIES)
<i>Film Catalogue</i>	14	3	17
<i>Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz</i>	40	-	40
<i>Sandoz Film Katalog</i>	17	3	20

Table 2 - Comparison of the three catalogues in relation to the category psychiatry

for the members of *Corps Médical et Pharmaceutique* for their scientific meetings.”¹⁵ Thus said, this statement indicates that films from the catalogue were at disposal for the members of scientific institutions, medical authorities, etc., to be used on scientific occasions only.

Moreover, research in both catalogues and digitized films shows an important characteristic of Sandoz production that has not been mentioned yet in any of the preceding studies – Sandoz was a multi-national company, therefore aimed, through its film production, at an international audience. Not only that the same films were made in various language versions to be distributable internationally, but also different films were produced for different countries. It seems that the French production, represented by the Cinémathèque Sandoz in Paris, was not the only national production. The Sandoz production includes foreign films of various origin – Swiss, French, American, German, Japanese and others. Taking into account the sponsorship of Sandoz, by the notion of origin we mean here primarily combination of the nationality of the director and of the production company that co-produced the film (if there was any at all). The portfolio covered even international productions – e.g. the film *Imaginary Dwellings* (*Demeures imaginaires* or *Imaginäre Behausungen* in the other language variants), documenting three examples of architecture influenced by mental

illness in the USA, Germany and France, was supervised by professors and physicians coming from all of the three countries: prof. Irene Jakab from Pittsburgh, doc. Kurt Behrends from Düsseldorf and doc. Gaston Ferdière from Paris¹⁶.

Sandoz was also involved in film co-productions as a minor producer (in contrary to the most of the production where the company figured as a major producer); and cooperated on different productions as well – a particular example of this case was a short documentary from 1971, *Acid*, produced by Encyclopaedia Britannica Films in the USA. Sandoz can be noticed as one of the cooperation partners in the credits, alongside various universities, e.g. Albert Einstein College of Medicine. The exploration of the archival films and the catalogues thus revealed a significant role of the Sandoz international film production demonstrated on the film production – films originally produced outside of France, that has been considered the center of Sandoz film production up to now; film created internationally and international co-productions or co-operations.

Conclusion

Not a surprising fact is that the current state of knowledge of the Sandoz film portfolio is influenced by the company's internal policies and commercial in-

¹⁵ *Films médico-scientifiques Sandoz*, édition 1983, Condé-sur-Escaut: Carlo Descamps.

¹⁶ *Film Catalogue* (1983).

terests. One of the biggest pharmaceutical concerns operating throughout the world, the company doesn't show much interest in its cinematographic legacy (and some chapters of its corporate history), according to the state of cataloguing and research made on the corpus. While the digitization process is not finished and the potential researchers are not provided with the facilities to analyze film copies from the archives, the catalogue is yet to be completed and fully analyzed. However, despite the incomplete archival corpus, some specific parts of the portfolio emerged to show thematic focus on rather ambiguous topics, such as the concept of altered states of consciousness¹⁷.

To conclude, Sandoz Film Archives represent a remarkable corpus of artworks, rich in terms of both quantity (more than 1300 items) and specific quality (genre diverse industrial films with aesthetic characteristics), that encourages a deeper historical, thematic and aesthetic research focused on specific creators, genres or periods of production. The Sandoz portfolio also stands at the crossroads of several chapters of the Sandoz corporate background – specifically the production of psychoactive drugs and its subsequent termination.

Drawing on Elsaesser's claim, that utility films have to be interpreted in connection to the circumstances of their

production and the subsequent use (Elsaesser, 2009), the proposed insight into the Sandoz Archives indicates that the company used the film medium for specific purposes of efficient marketing strategies. These objectives were apparently commercial – to promote the company's products among medical professionals. Nevertheless, other aspects played a significant role as well. Sandoz educated medical professionals using screenings of ambitious films, that weren't strictly informative. And at the same time, the company performed as a prestigious institution, offering interesting cultural programs, also publishing a specialized film magazine.

¹⁷ See in this thematic issue the box [*encadré*] on Sandoz film production dealing with psychiatric topics, by the same author.

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