

Here is what he shares with us:

The blessing and curse of my life in films is that I love it all—comedies and dramas, documentaries and animation, children’s films and sophisticated adult fare. I started as an animator at sixteen, did still photography in college, then political documentaries and eventually dramatic features.

Against the conventional wisdom, I made my base Northern California rather than Los Angeles and wrote, produced and directed three independent feature films, all with un- known actors. Each of them gained film festival attention and international distribution. THE CRAZY QUILT was the best known of these. FUNNYMAN and RIVERRUN were also done in this period.

Other feature films I directed include ALEX & THE GYPSY with Jack Lemmon, Genevieve Bujold and James Woods, OLIVER’S STORY with Candice Bergen and Ryan O’Neal, and TWICE UPON A TIME, a satirical animated feature, made with the Lumage cut-out process which I developed over several years doing Sesame Street clips. My first documentary, on a Quaker vigil at the Pentagon in 1960 was titled THE LANGUAGE OF FACES and won prizes in eleven film festivals. Of the following documentaries I made, WHO ARE THE DEBOLTS AND WHERE DID THEY GET 19 KIDS? became best known, the first film to win both an Oscar and an Emmy. Another Emmy award was for directing THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN with Cicely Tyson as an ex-slave recounting 110 years of American history. Critic Pauline Kael called it “perhaps the finest film made for American television.”

Other films for television have included FAREWELL TO MANZANAR on the Japanese-American internment camps, which was selected for the Humanitas Award, A CHRISTMAS WITHOUT SNOW with John Houseman, RESTING PLACE, a Hallmark special, featuring John Lithgow and Morgan Freeman, LINE OF FIRE, the story of Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center and LONG ROAD HOME on migrant labor conditions in the 1930s. More recent dramatic projects were THEY, inspired by a Rudyard Kipling story and featuring Vanessa Redgrave, GETTING OUT, based on the play by Marsha Norman with Rebecca deMornay and Ellen Burstyn, REDWOOD CURTAIN, adapted from the play by Lanford Wilson and starring Jeff Daniels, John Lithgow and Lea Solonga and OKLAHOMA CITY: A SURVIVOR’S STORY with Kathy Baker.

My film of a John Updike short story, THE MUSIC SCHOOL, was one of the pilot projects responsible for launching the American Short Story series on PBS.

I am now working in digital video on documentaries while writing screenplays for low- budget independent production in Northern California.

Signed, **John Korty**

Some other interesting things to know as well about Mr. Korty (I love the Internet, don't you):

John Korty's name may not be as famous as other Bay Area Hollywood holdouts but he has made many movies from his Marin County base. In 1966 his CRAZY QUILT won praise and found audiences who appreciated an alternative to the slick studio output. He followed it the next year with FUNNYMAN. So impressed were producers that he soon found himself at the helm of numerous highly praised TV movies including GO ASK ALICE, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN, FAREWELL TO MANZANAR, THE EWOK ADVENTURE, EYE ON THE SPARROW, and WINNIE to name a few. His theatrical ventures include an animated feature TWICE UPON A TIME that the studio didn't know how to market even though it was produced by George Lucas, Jack Lemmon in ALEX & THE GYPSY and the Academy Award winning WHO ARE THE DEBOLTS? AND WHERE DID THEY GET NINETEEN KIDS?

From the **SF Balboa Theater website** (2004 film showing)

The Birth of American Zoetrope

"It takes no imagination to live within your means."

-- Francis Ford Coppola

Coppola suggested he and Lucas form their own company and base it in San Francisco. Lucas immediately agreed. Growing up in nearby Modesto, San Francisco was comfortable territory to Lucas. While Coppola was finishing *The Rain People*, Lucas substituted for him at a 1968 San Francisco forum for high school English teachers called "Film in Relation to the Printed Word." There Lucas met John Korty, the only filmmaker actually making a living directing movies in San Francisco at the time. Lucas contacted Coppola immediately. Korty was actually doing what Lucas and Coppola were talking about. Coppola visited Korty's well-equipped facility and became convinced he and Lucas were on the right path.

Excerpted from associatedcontent.com

The dream was called Zoetrope. Literally, its Greek root signifies "life

movement.” To film archivists, the zoetrope is familiar as one of the earliest precursors of the cinema – a drum circumscribed with images which when revolved rapidly gives the illusion of movement. Coppola yearned to go back to the basics, to create an environment where young, independent filmmakers could work with state-of-the-art equipment without the disagreeable pressures of the big studio environment.

When we made *Rain People* we had this unusual format, a very small caravan that could strike anywhere. We began to feel like Robin Hood and his band, we really had the filmmaking machine in our hands and it didn't need to be in Hollywood, it could be anywhere. So then we thought, well, if we can do it successfully on the road out of a few cars and things, imagine if we went to a beautiful city like San Francisco and implanted ourselves as a filmmaking community. We would have independence, and we'd still be close enough to LA to be able to draw on talent from there.

Two visits finally convinced Francis that Zoetrope was feasible. The first took place on Independence Day 1968, when along with George Lucas and Ron Colby, he drove up to John Korty's mini-studio at Stinson Beach. They had come straight from the final days of shooting *The Rain People* and were exhausted. But the revelation that Korty's cottage industry actually functioned was exciting. Korty had already made an impact in the States and on the European festival circuit with independent, oddball movies like *The Crazy Quilt* and *Funnyman*. Indiana-born, he was genial, laid-back and persistent, a survivor beyond the system and above the Underground. His equipment may not have been perfect, but it was at least all under the roof of his massive barn. Coppola and Lucas told him that the studio looked like a fulfillment of their fantasies.

Excerpted from filminfocus.com

Info about the animated film [Twice Upon a Time](#) that Mr. Korty co-directed is here:

<http://wardomatic.blogspot.com/2007/09/twice-upon-time-movie-that-time-forgot.html>

And we have this film available on DVD at the museum gift shop (our own David Kiehn has a cameo talking about Broncho Billy Anderson and the Niles connection to Bay Area filmmaking)

FOG CITY MAVERICKS [explores and applauds the extraordinary cinematic achievements of San Francisco Bay Area filmmakers, with notable attention to the way in which their lives and work mirror the spirit of invention and independence that makes the Bay Area such a unique cultural and artistic](#)

community. A few of the awe-inspiring iconoclastic filmmakers featured in the documentary include Bruce Conner, Carroll Ballard, Chris Columbus, Clint Eastwood, Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, John Korty, John Lasseter, Phil Kaufman, Walter Murch, Sofia Coppola and Saul Zaentz. (2007, 119 min.)