

As I See It

## TV Shows Us The Unseen

By Pat Costa



Television at its most captivating? Possibly when it sets out to divert, charm, inform and amaze, and succeeds admirably as it did with the recent offering, "The Unseen World."

The hour-long ABC science special which with the aid of special film techniques showed us the world not visible to the naked eye benefited much from the script written by science writer Isaac Asimov.

But, the real heroes of this piece were the protographers, a long list of them receiving credit at the end of the show, for the marvels they unfolded for us in the most brilliant and entrancing color.

For the two year old on up there was much to absorb. While actor Eddie Albert narrated, the hour disclosed such fascinating tidbits as how grass looks when it is growing, the unfolding of a flower, the craters in a billiard ball, the rapid wing beat of a common house fly, the one-celled amoeba and growth of a caterpillar to a butterfly.

There was more. The surface details of some planets and the myriad of stars. Underneath the water, there was a look at marine life from sea horse to shark.

Possibly the most intriguing was something we have all seen hundreds of times and yet perhaps never have seen: what happens when a single drop of water hits a larger body of water. The reaction, under the slowed eye of the camera, goes on and on and on.

Copies of this documentary deserve to be in every school system's library, to be shown as a mind expander again and again.

The New York Times has reported that "Sesame Street", the magnificent educational television show for children,

has been banned in the state of Mississippi. The reason: the fear that the integrated show might offend someone.

Someone is offended, all right, and it is this viewer, but not by "Sesame Street." I am offended, as I always am, by ignorance, feelings of self inferiority which produce prejudice and discrimination, and downright stupidity.

Speaking of "Sesame Street," wonder how many of its viewers realize that Buddy, of the Buddy and Jim zany partnership, whose professional name is Brandon Maggart, is an actor of considerable repute.

Maggart, seen not only in a flurry of current commercials, is also a co-star of Lauren Bacall in the Tony Award winning "Applause" the Broadway musical remake of "All About Eve."

## Gallery Opens Regional Show

The 1970 Rochester-Finger Lakes Exhibition — the Memorial Art Gallery's annual survey of Rochester area art — opens Saturday, May 16. The show runs through June 14.

This year's show, selected by two out-of-town judges, is somewhat smaller than the 1969 exhibition, but is still one of the Gallery's biggest shows for the year. Included are 228 objects by 175 area artists and craftsmen. Almost half of the objects are paintings. The rest are sculptures, prints, drawings, ceramics, decorative arts, and weaving. They were selected from 1260 art works entered.

Judges were Roy Moyer, artist and director of the American Federation of Arts, New York, who judged paintings, sculptures, and graphics, and Lee Nordness, director of Lee Nordness Galleries, New York, juror for crafts and decorative arts.

# John Korty . . . He's Narrowing the Gap

New York — "John Korty, the director-writer-photographer of 'riverrun,' has made a brilliant film that is a substantial contribution to keeping open the dialogue between the young people of today and their parents."

John Korty, the 32-year-old who has been making films half his life, sat in a Manhattan French restaurant reading the "Catholic Film Newsletter" review of his third feature-length film, the one that the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures said "places him among the major talents of American cinema."

NCOMP was not the first to discover Korty; in 1966, critic Judith Crist selected one of his films as "sleeper of the year" and "one of the 10 best" that year — a film hardly anyone ever saw or heard of: "Crazy Quilt." The same honors — and the same fate — greeted his second feature film, "Funnyman."

But now a major American film company, Columbia Pictures, is lifting Korty from the film "underground" by distributing his "riverrun" — the title, the small first letter, and the theme all coming from James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake."

"The first line of 'Finnegans Wake' starts, 'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay,' and it's a completion of the last line in the book," Korty explained, to indicate a never-ending continuity.

"When I made 'riverrun,' I wanted to show that birth and death are intertwined, the whole life process starting all over again, that there is always conflict and affection ending and starting all over again, between fathers and sons, wives and husbands."

Shot mostly on a sheep ranch overlooking the ocean just north of San Francisco, "riverrun" has only three main characters: a young boy and girl, both graduates of Berkeley, who choose to escape the dehumanization of city life by returning to nature, and the girl's father — a merchant seaman who comes to live with them briefly.

He cannot fathom their lifestyle — no telephone, their vegetarian diet, etc. — not to mention the discovery that his daughter and the boy are not formally married, despite the fact she is pregnant and — to



John Korty at Work.

top it off — the boy plans to deliver the baby himself.

The climax is the realistically-photographed childbirth — which the audience has been prepared for by a ewe's giving birth to a lamb earlier in the film — and the almost simultaneous death of the girl's father.

What makes this film so different from the many others that have commented on the generation gap is that "riverrun" is about seemingly real people and not the dreary stereotypes that one usually meets in this kind of film," said the "Catholic Film Newsletter."

"The film presents its young people not so much as being in the right as searching for the right," the review continued. "Nor is the older generation seen as being corrupt as much as they are presented as being unable to face the contradictions in their own way of life. Rather than smugness for either group, the film ends with the birth of a new generation and hope for the future."

Korty nodded agreement. "I deliberately made all three people equal in sympathy," he said. "I purposely didn't want to make a film limited to people under 30. That's the greatest fault of films like 'The Gradu-

ate,' making everyone over 30 look like a fool."

Indeed, the film ends with the young father, seemingly ignored by the new mother, trying to get her attention and wondering whether their lives will be the same again.

"You can only make a good film about something you have some doubts about," Korty said. "You can't make a good film on something about which you're certain and know all the answers. That becomes a propaganda film."

He also made an Oscar-nominated short for the American Cancer Society, "Breaking the Habit," and once made animated films for NBC-TV's "Exploring" series, which was an early "Sesame Street" kind of program.

Korty pointed to one sentence in the "Catholic Film Newsletter" review: "If films are to make us perceive reality much more clearly than we can by our normal vision, then he has made a great film which is visually one revelation after another."

"That's the key word for what I'm trying to do in my work," Korty said. "Revelation."

(Catholic Press Features)

## The CRITIC

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### A Parish Campaign?

Cartoonist Martin Murphy uses the cover of the May-June Critic magazine to take a look at a time when bishops may be popularly elected amid hoopla. (RNS)

COURIER 2

## Catholic Movie Office Lashes, Lauds Film Industry

New York — (RNS) — The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures has sharply criticized the Code and Rating Program of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

The system, under which the MPAA places a lettered-rating on a film to indicate its suitability for children, is in a "chaotic state," according to the Catholic film office.

It maintained that the MPAA rating plan "is quickly becoming an economic servant of the industry rather than the reliable channel of information to the public its designers intended."

Criticism of the MPAA rating system was voiced by the agency in the April 30 issue of the Catholic Film Newsletter.

The semi-monthly publication, which reviews newly released motion pictures, also paid tribute to what it said was a "new depth and maturity" in contemporary films.

"Film deserves the respect

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of religiously committed men because at its best it participates in one of man's noblest acts, that of creation," said the editorial.

The basic problem with the rating system according to the NCOMP, "is that in today's fragmented film industry effective and responsible leadership (however conscientiously sought after) is no longer possible."

This vacuum, the film agency declared, must be filled by parents who should realize that they have an "excellent opportunity to educate their children through the experience and discussion of contemporary motion pictures."

"On the one hand," it said, "this implies a parental openness to the more serious themes and issues posed by films of quality, and willingness on their part to occasionally patronize these films in order to be informed."

"On the other hand parents are urged to consult reliable

and responsible publications which address themselves to the new films."

Noting that the '60s saw a major transition in audience and film product "so that today the vast majority of films are being made for the young and being seen by them," the NCOMP gave this forecast for the '70s: "There is every indication that the expanding communications revolution of the '70s will concentrate its focus on youth. If motion pictures are to play a vital and positive role in the education of the young in these coming years, it will only be as the result of an active involvement in the medium by all segments of our society."

### TV MASS

Celebrant of the Sunday TV Mass (Channel 10, 8:30 a.m.) on May 17 will be Father Albert Gaelens of Aquinas Institute. Lay commentator will be Dr. Gregory Riley, Aquinas 1959.