

# JUXTAPOZ

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## "KORLA" DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES IN SAN FRANCISCO

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Hammond organs were big in the 50's, and there were more than a few practitioners who smoothly played and rhythmically swayed. But not many performed the Trance Dance and wore jeweled turbans and kohl rimmed eyes. Fewer still would star in their own television show and say not a word. Korla Pandit, born John Roland Redd, a black man from Columbia, Missouri, under the tutelage of his Disney illustrator wife Beryl DeBeeson, took on the persona of East Indian swami as he embodied "divine consciousness." Eric Christensen and John Turner have made a compelling film that looks at the mid-century fascination with enchantment and exotica, a time when, as Pandit's nephew remarked, "Sammy

Davis Jr. could perform in Vegas but couldn't stay in a hotel there." Madonna had the luxury of re-inventing herself, but John Roland Redd may have had no choice.

*[Korla](#) premiered at San Francisco's [Museum of the African Diaspora](#) on August 20, 2015 and will show again in SF at the [Balboa Theater](#) on Thursday, August 27, to be followed by screenings at the [Camera 3 in San Jose](#) August 28-30.*

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