As we enter the last decade of our century, there is a great cry arising from the depths of the Earth. In the recent past, we've become more and more aware of the growing response coming from those who became serious seekers through the seventies and eighties within many different spiritual paths and practices. It's as though those in the human family who have been trained to listen are collectively hearing a similar cry. Through a variety of meditation methods and disciplines and within the context of deep transpersonal psychological work, we are experiencing the connection between our yearning for healing, balance and wholeness and a similar yearning coming from the being of the Earth. Our "Mother" is asking to be appreciated in her struggle toward wholeness and balance. Each of us holds within us a key to the guardianship of our "Mother."

Within the art world, there is a growing transformational/visionary/sacred art movement whose orientation is to create art that is an expression of this evolving consciousness of our time. More and more artists are feeling the call to use their gifts in service to the healing of our Mother Earth and her family of different life energies that are out of balance: plant, animal and human. It seems to be the role of these artists to collectively create the vision of a world in balance and harmony, to reflect to us our hope and the possibilities that we have. At the deepest levels esoterically, we know that only by creating a vision of what's possible can we consciously work toward manifesting that vision.

Many spiritual teachers conduct meditation retreats for artists and have created artistic projects that have set the tone for the development of this movement. Buddhist artists from all over the country attended a ten-day retreat in 1987 guided by Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hanh at the Ojai Foundation. Sufi Master Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan has guided Sacred Music Camps (with theater and dance) in the Alps for the past several summers. Retreats, workshop-events and festivals have been organized to bring professional artists together as models for the aspiring artists who want to work in this way. A space is created to renew the creative spirit within and receive the inspiration consciously. A supportive community embraces each artist helping her or him to take the next creative step.

These artists are approaching their work from many different perspectives and within a wide range of art forms, from the most traditional to the most experimental. In many cases, new art forms emerge
in the form of rituals and happenings that involve the public in acts of conscience. Some approach the work personally, others archetypically, others socially and politically, others psychologically, and still others integrate several perspectives spiritually. Some works are earthy and passionate, others are ethereal and subtle. Some works are abstract, others literal. Each artist brings his or her own attunement and color to this tapestry that is being collectively woven.

Imagine being surrounded by images, music, drama, poetry, stories, architecture that continually remind us of a world in perfect balance, of people of all races and religions honoring each other’s uniqueness while recognizing their essential similarities, of the natural ecological order manifesting, of people taking active responsibility for our endangered species and rainforests, of nations cooperating together in peace, of a nuclear-free planet and of a new empowerment manifesting among us to truly create the world we want to live in.

Many of these artists are recognizing the need to heal themselves in order to be purer vehicles for the expression of their highest ideals within the context of what’s authentic in their day to day experiences. They work at embodying the full range of human emotion and experience while staying connected to their divine inheritance and inspiration. They explore and work consciously to transform their wounds into honored friends, their despair into compassion, their resentment into appreciation for the richness of life.

In Transformational Theater workshops, for example, participants work with the material of their own lives and create a piece from an in-depth inner process. They weave together images, poetry, characters, scenes, sound and movement into a dramatic piece that expresses the relationship of their own transformational process with a larger global concern, an experience of the being of the Earth.

Through this honest exploration, they discover new ways of embodying and manifesting the inspiration that comes from this soul-searching process. Also, the artists working in this way consciously ask to be used for the highest good and try to get out of the way so the inspiration can come through clearly. In so doing, they are able to reach out and touch their audiences with new hope and possibility.

In order to awaken to our divinity and the divinity of others, we are being asked to recognize and affirm our true humanity, the fullness and richness of the depth and height of the human experience. We need to be supported in the totality of our life journey without judging one part as sacred and another as profane, but appreciate every step in its role within our larger path toward realization. The challenge in the most difficult times is to remember who we really are beyond our limitations while we work toward honoring, owning and transforming our pain, our rage, our confusion without humiliation and shame. We are learning to be friends to each other on our journeys and reach out to each other in kindness. We are creating opportunities to support each other in telling our stories. Jung has said that the inability to tell our stories contributes to the lack of mental health in a culture. In our society, on its edge in so many ways, deep sharing and processing of each person’s core issues and realizations by circles of friends and colleagues serve as powerful healing forces for us all.

For the growing number of people committed to the service of others, and to creating their lives as works of art, the life lessons seem to be given in more intense, in-depth ways. If we ask to be used in this way, we must be prepared to be taken through the initiations necessary to be effective instruments. If we are working for peace, then we need to know what’s authentic in their day to day experience. They work at embodying the full range of human emotion and experience while staying connected to their divine inheritance and inspiration. They explore and work consciously to transform their wounds into honored friends, their despair into compassion, their resentment into appreciation for the richness of life.

Saphira Linden has been the founder and Artistic Director of Omega Theater for 23 years. She founded and directs The Omega Arts Network of International Transformational/ Visionary/Sacred artists. As one of 11 artists nationwide whose work was selected to be the basis of a documentary film in the PBS series, “Artists in America,” she is regarded as an authority on experimental, participatory and transformational theater. Saphira has been a Representative and Guide in the Sufi Order for 19 years and guides a community with other colleagues in Boston.