



EDITORIAL NOTE: CONSCIOUSNESS AND ART

I once heard a TV interviewer ask a Balinese artist why he thought there were so many artists concentrated on the small island of Bali. He explained that almost everyone he met there seemed to be an artist. The Balinese man replied: "It's not that there are so many artists in Bali, it's that we all seek to do everything as artistically as possible." I wondered how much more spiritual one could get.

This edition is a compilation of pieces by a photographer, an advocate, an academic, a writer, a musician, a member of a religious community, a filmmaker, all sharing essentially their perspective of what is spiritual art, and what makes art spiritual. They share a commonality notwithstanding the different approaches reflected through their diverse and often multiple disciplines. They speak

of "connection" to source, to divinity, to a higher power, to the heart; they speak of "reverence" for the ancient, for the sensuous, palpable presence of the ancient; they speak of "universality" through the transcendence of denominations. This is art that is truly interfaith in its scope.

Throughout this issue, you will hear these harmonic chords being struck in the refrain of certain themes. Among others, Michael Green writes about art's "positive transformative powers" and Sister Germaine describes art as "the gift that God has given". Through these and the other voices, we understand that spirituality and creativity are integrally linked. **To create in truth is to celebrate and to reveal the sacred.** It is all about love, devotion and reverence, and that is universal, and that is nondenominational.

In November of 1993, the Temple of Understanding sponsored the "Sacred in the Arts" conference, concerts and exhibits at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Through our programs and our newsletters, the Temple is providing a forum to express the many manifestations of spirituality. In future newsletters we will explore the connection of spirituality in our world: ecology, media and health.

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TO SEE A WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND
AND HEAVEN IN A WILD FLOWER,
HOLD INFINITY IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND
AND ETERNITY IN AN HOUR.

-WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

Drawing the crowds crossing 79th Street at Park, or Canal Street at Broadway, or some intersection of the Faubourg Saint Honore or the Ginza, scribbling them down on my sketch pad in their infinite differentiation, I see the radical differences in a crowd of humans as mere variations on the theme of our sameness. I happen to be the variation that must scribble it down, the one who mirrors, yes, becomes, every single face in that crowd. I see it living its brief life in an all too vulnerable body. The plural of Man - whatever the gender - must be our cruelest delusion. There is no plural: "In all faces is visible the Face of faces, veiled as in a riddle." (Nicholas of Cusa).

Mirroring that polyform riddle, that fleetingness of Being, seeing and drawing fuse into a single, undivided act, "seeing/drawing." **At times, it can be so heartrending that a tear drops on the drawing and spoils it.**

While seeing/drawing, I am in total contact with the world around me and via it with whom - or what - I am. Becoming that tree, that chicken scratching earth, that cat twitching her ears at ghostly stirrings, becoming the big black fly on the windowpane struggling to overcome

AN EYE STILL IN LOVE



The Cathedral of Antwerp, Belgium, May 1, 1995

Frederick Franck, artist and author of a score of books from the classic The Zen Of Seeing (Random House, 1974) to his latest, Fingers Pointing Toward the Sacred (Beacon Point Press), lives in Warwick, NY where, with his wife, Claske, he converted a late-18th century

awareness and my own consciousness that must be a particularly human mode of Something universal, kosmos-wide. It must be this human mode that makes it unthinkable - for whatever reason - to kill someone in that crowd, or cat, or chicken or even the big black fly that now lies on its back on my windowsill rubbing its hands in flyish resignation: it must be my age . . .

This may sound crazily sentimental to anyone used to looking at the world without seeing it. For the one who sees, and moreover draws what he sees, who sees the evanescent awesomeness of Being, it is neither crazy nor sentimental. It is just That. Seeing/drawing disarms you, makes you even relatively harmless.

I am often asked to explain the contrast between my spidery pen drawings and the quite massive steel constructs, as for instance the "Seven Generations" and the "Hiroshima - the Unkillable Human" - on the Cathedral of St. John the Divine grounds. Then I can say only that I do not know, but suspect that the confrontation, the identification with these thousands of faces drawn, somehow converts, condenses itself into these steel "signs" which therefore I don't call "sculptures," but icons: win-