



GETTING THE HANG OF COLOR

Monday, February 4, 2008 – Ponda (India) Mangeshi Temple

15.445241,73.966936

The idea suddenly flashes through my mind that there must be a connection between Indian minimalism when it comes to applying safety standards and maximalism when using gaudy colors, since color not only means the joy of living but also protection, on the one hand for this life, and on the other for the transition into the next one. This certainly holds true for those colors that one can associate with a Hindu divinity – indeed, consequently for quite a few, as there are a good deal more gods in the Hindu pantheon than numbers on the Pantone color fan.

The two painters at work in front of me on a tower of the Mangeshi temple in Ponda are therefore in twofold danger, because first of all they are standing on a ramshackle stage about fifteen meters above the gateway, and secondly because at the moment they only have a kind of varnish on their brushes, as the

painting of the wall has long since been completed. And: Those who plunge to their death with a colorless brush, hence irreligiously, hardly have a good hand of cards when they are about to be reborn.

In Western Europe there are no gods that regulate the reincarnation traffic; our temples are therefore only guardedly colorful. The only exception that occurs to me is the Cappella del Barolo, which Sol LeWitt painted with stripes and waves in 1999, a colorfully tipsy slap in the pale face of the Piemonte. In the West, we seem to need artists in order to fully get the hang of color. Does one have to conclude that art also constitutes the security gap in our system? One could love it for that reason.

Translated from German by Rebecca van Dyck.

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