

REVIEWS



his new series of large works is alive with increasingly dense surfaces and deep colors. Indeed, Taaffe creates spaces that alternately snap into focus with surface ornament or recede into abstract depths. *Garden of Extinct Leaves* (2006), for example, features a grid of transfers of brilliant green leaves overlaying abstract purple shapes stamped onto a pale yellow background. The intriguing *Dryadie Figures* (2004–2006) moves into more assertively figurative territory, although that makes it no less confounding. What might be stone towers sit before a vivid, bright blue sky covered in asterisk-like azure stars. Transfers of grasses line the bottom of the canvas, creating a Pop pastoral. It's an inviting version of paradise that refers both to Japanese graphics and naive stone carving. While most of Taaffe's work here is oriented in terms of columns or horizontal divisions, the pink-and-blue marbled background dominates *Caravanserai* (2006). Various abstract bursts of color form a flickering pattern, but it's as if Taaffe is allowing the retinal pleasure of his work to escape its usual strictures and wash over us, unbound and seductive.

—DAVID COGGINS

PHILIP TAAFFE

GAGOSIAN

Philip Taaffe uses graphic elements of Op art to create rich and refined paintings. He strikes an impressive balance between decorative patterns and vivid, commanding textures, and



PHILIP TAAFFE, GARDEN OF EXTINGUISHED LEAVES, 2006. MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS, 119 3/4 X 104 IN. COURTESY GAGOSIAN GALLERY, NEW YORK. © PHILIP TAAFFE.