

Philip Taaffe

THADDAEUS ROPAC

Paris

Philip Taaffe's ornamental canvases of textilelike patterns have earned him a reputation as one of contemporary art's most graceful and sensuous artists. In this, his first solo show in Paris, Taaffe presented a sumptuous series of large-scale paintings (dating from 2000–1), adding to his already diverse repertoire.

Taaffe has long used painting, collage, and printing techniques to create overlapping images and unusual color combinations. As in previous works, his imagery here derived from disparate cultural sources, including Egyptian hieroglyphs, Celtic manuscripts, Pompeian frescoes, Arabic and Japanese calligraphy, and American wrought-iron work. His new paintings also include less culturally specific motifs, such as spirals and wheels and forms in nature—butterflies, snakes, insects, seeds, ferns, and fish. In *Terpsichore*, rows of animal skulls with open jaws float on a dark background. *Composition with Gemstones* features a cluster of precious stones rendered in pinks, soft blues, and pale greens.

Several paintings reflect Taaffe's longtime admiration for Op art. *Toccata*, for instance, depicts hard-edge geometric designs in primary reds and blues that are overlaid on spirals in pastel yellow and orange tones. It's a vibrating, mesmerizing, almost dizzying composition, and

one that characterizes Taaffe's consistently stunning and complexly decorative body of work. —Laurie Attias



Philip Taaffe,
Toccata, 2001, mixed
media on canvas,
126" x 117".
Thaddaeus Ropac.