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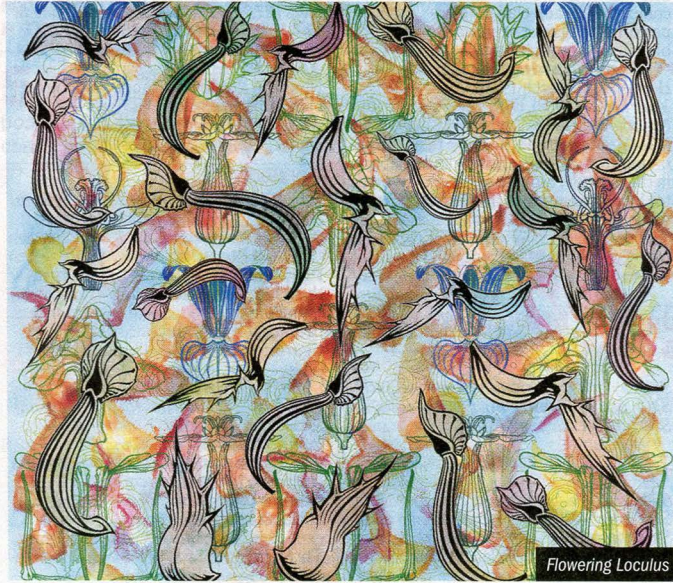
Philip Taaffe, "Recent Work"



Luhring Augustine, through June 15
(see Chelsea)

For more than 25 years, Philip Taaffe has been creating paintings in which referential images—borrowed from various cultural and scientific sources that pique his curiosity—are layered together with invented motifs. Taaffe takes an almost fetishistic delight in the wide-ranging techniques, conjuring dense compositions with riveting, mysterious effects.

His debut show with Luhring Augustine features works from the past three years. *Earth Star 1* lays a series of white, abstracted shapes over a colorful backdrop made from repeated photos of Viking jewelry. *Nymphaeum* blends together pictures of plankton, seaweed and other undersea plant life, using silk screen and collage. *Illuminated Constellation* combines a pattern of starbursts with another one resembling an ancient mosaic, while in *Scribe*, feathery spokes of radiating quill pens seem to spin in place, suggesting a medieval manuscript page filtered through a trippy Op Art prism.



Flowering Loculus

Similarly, *Thorn Heads* mashes together Expressionist passages of paint and silhouetted images of Roman nails to evoke the Passion of Christ, while the imprint of a carved wooden Buddhist halo is stamped across *Asuka*

Nimbus, a grid of monotypes made to benefit Visual AIDS. Taaffe's latest outing offers further proof, as if any were needed, of his ability to boil down disparate interests into singularly compelling works of art.—Paul Laster