

Peter Caine
The Life Cycle of Venus

FROSCH&CO is pleased to present *The Life Cycle of Venus*, featuring NY based artist Peter Caine in his fourth solo exhibition with the gallery.

We live in a society of the image. History feels flat—that which is dead is already risen, and the real is no longer real but pure appearance. As simulacra explode into all aspects of the social realm, from the state to systems of value to our senses of self, a culture war rages at our doorsteps. In this iconoclastic vision of the American zeitgeist, Peter Caine's provocative explorations of the cultural and political landscape come to life in a surreal environment of animatronic installations.

The Life Cycle of Venus's titular kinetic sculpture reveals the absurdity of contemporary political theater. Constructed over the course of two years and partially inspired by the 2023 remake of the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale, the central work in the exhibition reimagines Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* as the birth, life, and death of a Black mermaid. By making the goddess Black, the artist pokes fun at the moral panic over a mythical creature's race while also exposing how the aestheticization of politics distracts from real attacks on women's rights. Fantastically colored, childlike mermaids flank the goddess of love like Cupid, her offspring with the god of war, allegorizing the unholy marriage of American ideals and the military industrial complex. Caine's Venus emerges from a shell with a lid rather than the half shell in Botticelli's depiction, mirroring the ouroboros-like nature of her plight. Her path is cyclical, much like the media circus encompassing her.

A series of real US flags overpainted with classical Americana surround Venus like a crowd of onlookers. By weaving sci-fi imagery into scenes occupied by modern political figures and religious relics, Caine co-opts the language of conspiracy theorists and media pundits to convey his unique vision of American imperialism and the popular imaginary. Importantly, the flags themselves are completely obscured and merely act as backing for religious and political icons, betraying the fact that we no longer venerate the idea behind the flag but its image. And yet we fear that, if we smash our idols, there may be nothing sacred underlying them.

Peter Caine began making art while recovering from an injury at the US Naval Hospital in Jacksonville, FL. Not long after enrolling at the Kansas Art Institute, he moved to New York City. His work has been included in exhibitions such as Greater New York 2005 at MoMA PS1 (Caine's installation "Overseer" was a highlight of the show) and Silicone Valley (MoMA PS1, 2007). The artist has also showed at Jack the Pelican Presents, Derek Eller Gallery, ATM Gallery, and Exit Art. Reviews of Caine's installations have appeared in The New York Times, The Brooklyn Rail, The New York Post, Art News, and Art Forum.

Peter Caine's art extends from the gallery to his YouTube channel, @PeterCaineDogtraining. The artist shares his wit and wisdom regularly, including his production of *The Life Cycle of Venus*, so be certain to continue the exhibition experience by exploring his video works online. You can also find him on Instagram (@petercainedogtraining1), TikTok (@petercainedogtraining1) and OnlyFans (@petercainedogtraining1).