

ARTFORUM

New York

Wingate Paine

STEVEN KASHER GALLERY

521 West 23rd Street, Second Floor

December 11–January 17

This exhibition begins with a kiss, almond eyes open. With each image, the tale of seduction unfolds through tousled hair and sheets, gently parted lips and legs. [Wingate Paine](#)'s Venus performs for the enamored photographer and for her fictitious, decidedly straight and male lover—the viewer. How innocent this patriarchal scopophilia seems today. In 1966, Paine assembled his seminal collection of photographs in the book *Mirror of Venus*, with texts by director [Federico Fellini](#) and writer [Françoise Sagan](#). He could not have known that a mere forty years later, the seemingly immortal concept he nurtured—eroticism—would no longer be resting blissfully on her nuptial pillow, but would be rather on her death bed, suffocated by hard-core pornography and the digital age of unlimited access. He could also not have known that his gloriously natural Carla, Scarlet, and Sandra, whom he was too restrained to fully expose, would be waxed bare, replaced with silicone and peroxide. "Venus Revisited," Paine's first solo exhibition, combines classic images from his book with never-before-seen vintage prints from the artist's personal archive. The show sparkles with humor, mystery, and, most of all, sincerity. Affixed to the gallery wall, a quote by Fellini prophetically begs, "Why can't we always live in a house full of women like this?" I'm sorry, Federico, but they don't live here anymore.



Wingate Paine, *Mirror of Venus* (cover image), 1964–65, gelatin silver print, 20 x 16".