

Felipe Jesus Consalvos

December 16 – January 29, 2011

Opening reception: December 16, 6-8 PM

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of the work of Felipe Jesus Consalvos, the first ever in New York. The display will feature his trademark large-scale collages, several which are double-sided, and a selection of sculptural objects – including a grouping of collaged kaleidoscopes and binoculars, a guitar and jeweled violin.

A Cuban immigrant and professional cigar roller, Felipe Jesus Consalvos' entire oeuvre was discovered at a garage sale in West Philadelphia in the early 1980s. Consisting of approximately 825 collaged artworks both sculptural and two-dimensional – on paper, found photographs, musical instruments – his compositions are covered with cigar bands, cut out images of political figures, gorillas, elephants, American classic cars, high society women, beer cans and postage stamps.

Consalvos elevated the vernacular tradition of cigar band collage to a highly systemized and obsessive practice. The cigar bands serve as prosceniums, or stage sets, containing his imaginary worlds of collaged action within. Scholar Brendan Greaves has called Consalvos' collages "ribald" and "mischievous". His work reveals a wry viewpoint on American culture – consumerism and excess, power and hegemony – frequently explored through playful compositions of sourced American (political) icons; US Presidents are often portrayed in drag and dunce caps. "Staccato headlines and stagy compositions at once celebrate and eviscerate the icons of American history, betraying a deep skepticism of American milk-and-honey mythology, particularly presidents," writes Greaves.

Felipe Jesus Consalvos was born in Cuba in 1891 and emigrated to the United States in the early 1920s with his young wife and son, settling first in Miami, then Brooklyn and ultimately in Philadelphia. Consalvos' biography has been pieced together from translated family letters, photographs and statements, and is informed by clues and physical materials used in his artwork (newspaper clippings, postage stamps, magazine advertisements, refuse, American currency and cigar bands). There is no evidence that Consalvos created his art while living in Cuba. Subsequently, all surviving work has been attributed circa 1920s-1950s.

Felipe Jesus Consalvos' works are in many private and public collections including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the High Museum of Art (Atlanta) and the American Folk Art Museum (New York). All works in the exhibition are presented courtesy of Doodletown Farms LLC and Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia.