

John Byam

February 1 – March 16, 2013

Opening Reception: February 1st 6-8pm

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to introduce the work of John Byam.

A reception will be held February 1, during the run of the Outsider Art Fair. For over half a century Byam has been quietly developing drawings and sculptural objects into a personal iconography. This exhibition marks one of the few occasions the artist's work has been on public view and is only the second solo presentation of his work ever. It is his first in New York City.

Using combinations of wood, sawdust, glue, paint and ink, Byam has produced three-dimensional objects that while recognizable, remain equivocal. Byam's sculptural work follows in a long tradition of woodcarving in rural America, however, his use of sawdust mixed with a glue binder lends many of the objects a soft focus, giving them the appearance of emerging or slipping from view. This is also reflected in the artist's choice of imagery that at times indicates a personal longing for travel and exploration beyond his daily life. Conversely, Byam's works on paper, utilizing a variety of materials including pencil, crayon, and marker, often include portraits and written commentary, and speak clearly and directly about contemporary culture and its fascination with media and celebrity.

Born in Oneonta, New York in 1929, Byam spent a large part of his life assisting his parents in the daily operations of the family-owned trailer court. In the late 1940s Byam went to work for the Delaware and Hudson Railway, then served two years with the U.S.

military stationed in Japan during the Korean War. In 1952 he returned home to his parents and took several jobs, including one as a part-time gravedigger for a local cemetery.

He continues to produce work from his residence in an assisted living facility in upstate New York.