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THE STATE OF ATA

the contested imagery of power in Turkey
Mike Mandel & Chantal Zakari



8 x 9.25 inches
272 pages
in English
with a Turkish translation
hardbound
includes a 16 page insert
Taxi Rides, a photo novella

TheStateOfAta.info

In *The State of Ata* artists Mike Mandel and Chantal Zakari examine the contemporary imagery of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey's revolutionary leader after World War I. From 1923 until his death in 1938, by the sheer force of his personality and his command of the military, he fashioned Turkish culture through the prism of his vision for a secular state. He created a new sense of nationalism, exiled the Sultan and diminished the power of religion by abolishing the Sunni Muslim Caliphate. The wearing of religious clothing was banned in public. In an effort to identify Turkey as a modern and Western state, Mustafa Kemal dropped the Arabic alphabet in favor of Latin characters, expanded secular public education, and new rights for women. He required that everyone adopt a last name and his became "Atatürk," ancestor of all Turks.

Between 1997 and 2009, Mandel and Zakari, one American, the other Turkish, have employed the imagery of Atatürk to create a portrait of all sides of the body politic: the symbol of the secular revolutionary hero, the power of the state that resides with the military, and in opposition, the demands for renewed religious political expression symbolized by the Islamist scarf. *The State of Ata* weaves together the artists' photographs of Turkish society, the public imagery and sculptural presence of Atatürk, documentation of their own interventions and performances, interviews, and a collection of archival and popular imagery. The book is conceived as a collection of books within books: a photo book, a school book, a diary, a fantasy album of military portraits.

Mike Mandel, (MFA, San Francisco Art Institute, 1974) has published nine photo-based books since the early 70's, including *Myself: Timed Exposures*, 1971, *Seven Never Before Published Portraits of Edward Weston*, 1974, the *Baseball-Photographer Trading Cards*, 1975, and *Making Good Time*, 1989. In 1977 Larry Sultan and Mandel authored *Evidence*, a photo narrative comprised only of found images that has been recognized as a seminal artists' book and a precursor to subsequent postmodern strategies of photographic practice. *Evidence* was re-published in 2004 by D.A.P. In 1989 Mandel authored *Making Good Time*, counterpointing photographic efficiency studies made for industry by Frank and Lillian Gilbreth in the early part of the 20th century with his own time/motion photographs.

Over a period of twenty-five years, Larry Sultan and Mandel designed both temporary (billboards) and permanent (mosaic) artworks specifically for public sites. Since the early '90s Mandel has focused his work within the sphere of public art. In this work he has recognized the documentary power of photography and has developed strategies to translate photographic imagery into large-scale ceramic and glass mosaic tile murals. Some of his commissions include works for the Atlanta Federal Center, San Francisco International Airport, The Administration for Children's Services in New York, among many other projects for city agencies and universities throughout the United States.

Mike Mandel has been a recipient of several NEA grants and a Fulbright Fellowship. In 2005 his work was exhibited in the Berlin Biennale and recently in 2009, at PhotoEspaña in Madrid. He currently teaches within the photography program at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Chantal Zakari (MFA, Art Institute of Chicago, 1992) is a Turkish-Levantine artist living in the U.S. She was trained as a designer and an artist. She published *The Turk & The Jew*, in 1998 with Mandel, a book based on the web-narrative by the same title, which was launched in 1996. In 2005, using a pseudonym, she self-published *webAffairs*, a documentary of a web community. She has had solo shows of her work in the U.S. and in Turkey. She has given book readings in the form of performances in the U.K., Netherlands, Canada and the U.S.

As a designer, Zakari's client list includes, AIA Chicago, Field Museum, University of Chicago, Randolph Street Gallery, Mexican Fine Arts Center, Latino Nutrition Coalition, and Harvard Medical School - Alternative Medicine. She was the art director for *P-form* magazine until 1998. She was also an associate member of the Goat Island performance group from 1995-2009.

Since 1997 Zakari has been a full-time faculty member at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and has chaired the Text & Image Arts Area.

18

Eighteen publications

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