

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The PRC is thrilled to present the following two concurrent exhibitions.

7 Turkish Artists: Mike Mandel and Chantal Zakari

September 13–November 12, 2011

Opening reception: Wednesday, September 21, 6:30 p.m.

Panel discussion: Thursday, October 27, 6:30 p.m. at BU CAS 522, 705 Commonwealth Ave.



Mike Mandel and Chantal Zakari from *State of Ata: The Contested Imagery of Power in Turkey*, 2010.

7 Turkish Artists: Mike Mandel & Chantal Zakari engages the social themes that define contemporary Turkey and examines the imagery of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, its revolutionary leader after World War I. This show provides a critical visual exploration of the meaning of Atatürk's imagery and how it is used in Turkish society today. He is seen as the link to Western culture. His image is being used as a symbol in opposition to the Islamist political movement.

The variety of visual strategies in the exhibition suggest the look of a group show. *7 Turkish Artists* is a humorous reference to this mistaken first glance and challenges the viewer to come to terms with the complete title *7 Turkish Artists: Mike Mandel & Chantal Zakari*. Until recently, Turkish artists who might wish to make art using imagery of Atatürk did so at the risk of violating laws protecting Atatürk's imagery punishable with years in prison. Ironically, for sculptors working in the Turkish public sphere the only opportunity for work was to receive a commission for an Atatürk statue for a government municipality. *7 Turkish Artists* is therefore also a deadpan reference to the limitation of making art about Atatürk, especially by Turkish artists.

During a thirteen year period between 1997 and 2010, artists Zakari and Mandel, one Turkish, one

American, have become engaged in this project to better understand the conflict. The artists' recent book, *The State of Ata: The Contested Imagery of Power in Turkey*, seeks to recognize the complex dynamics of a culture that 99% Muslim, but committed to secularism.

For the new Turkish Republic, the symbolic image of Atatürk is the icon that connects the citizen to the image of a modern Turkey. After his death, a great many sculptures of Atatürk were constructed across the country. Today, when a Turkish town commissions an Atatürk sculpture, it is considered a patriotic accomplishment. Atatürk busts announce the entrance of every school. His framed picture is hung in thousands of offices, shops and homes. His image pervades Turkish life. A variety of iconic images communicate the military hero, father of the country, visionary thinker, planner, teacher, religious leader, even fashion model, as he moved to reinvent every facet of Turkish life including mode of dress. With the present-day struggle between secularists, fascists, nationalists, Islamists, and the military, there is an increasing interest in using the image of Atatürk as an emblem for every political position. Atatürk may have saved the country in 1923; today his imagery is a symbol that's caught between the disparate factions of Turkish society.

This exhibition also recognizes the political battles within Turkish culture that revolve around feminine political fashion, the wearing of the scarf and even more extremely, the wearing of the black *çarsaf*. Religious dress has become a political statement that counterpoints the sexually evocative styles from Europe and the West. Ironically, the most recent Islamist fashion is a new hybrid that puts sex back into religion. What was originally meant as a cover up has now been reinvented as sexual allure.

The artists conducted interviews and collected found material from archives, gathering popular historical illustrations and found Atatürk postcards that span a thirty year period and illustrate the cult status of his image. They also commissioned commercially produced Chinese oil paintings of their digitally collaged images. The "made in China" paintings are a metaphorical and sensual counterpart to the photographs of daily life.

The second part of the show deals with the power of the imagery, the taboos and myth surrounding it. The forty-three busts reference the omnipresence of Atatürk statues throughout the country. Made out of a fragile resin plastic, these busts suggest an imperfect condition, while surrounding a painting of a statue lying on the ground. Military power is signified in the imagery of parades and vernacular photographs that romanticize military service.

Click link below to download high resolution images and captions:

<http://www.bostonphotographyfocus.org/ftp/SevenTurkishArtists.zip>

<more>

Concurrent Exhibition:

Threefold: Selections from the Indie Photobook Library

Curated by Larissa Leclair, George Slade, and Shane Lavelette

September 13–November 12, 2011

Opening reception: Wednesday, September 21, 6:30 p.m.

Larissa Leclair (founder of the Indie Photobook Library), Shane Lavalette (photographer and founder of [Lay Flat](#)), and George Slade (independent curator and writer) will curate an exhibition of photobooks at the PRC selected from the Indie Photobook Library permanent collection.

For nearly as long as there have been photographs, they have appeared in fixed sequences, pasted, printed directly, or reproduced in ink on pages bound together in some fashion – in other words, as books. Whether pocket-sized or table-sized, photographically-illustrated books have long served as an important showcase for the medium.

In the 1960s, Ed Ruscha and other artists utilized inexpensive printing facilities to create photobooks outside of mainstream publishing houses. These independent publications acted as art objects on their own terms and, from typeface to binding to printing quality, reflected the concerns of their makers. These artist books often employed photography in conceptual ways, as an extension of the anonymous, mechanical processes of publishing.

In the last decade various technologies have enabled artists to publish not only small editions of a book, but individual volumes when needed. Now, instead of a few books being made in large quantities, many books are being made in small quantities. The Indie Photobook Library (iPL), founded by Larissa Leclair in 2010, is committed to cataloging and preserving examples of the multitude of books that may never find their way into conventional library catalogues because of their modesty, or because they were often created by individual artists whose practice doesn't include conventional distribution.

Threefold reflects the idiosyncratic interests of its three curators — Shane Lavalette, Larissa Leclair, and George Slade — each adopting a unique focal point in an attempt to represent a remarkable moment in contemporary independent publishing.

About the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University

Founded in 1976, the Photographic Resource Center (PRC) at Boston University is an independent non-profit organization that serves as a vital forum for the exploration and interpretation of new work, ideas, and methods in photography and related media. The PRC presents exhibitions, fosters education, develops resources, and facilitates community interaction for local, regional, and national audiences. Cited by the Boston Globe as "one-stop shopping for the photo buff," the PRC's gallery hosts several exhibitions each year, emphasizing new ideas and trends in contemporary photography. Ranging from provocative theme-based exhibitions, such as *7 Turkish Artists*, to the highly-anticipated juried and student exhibitions, the PRC expands our understanding of the human experience through its stewardship of the photographic arts.

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