

**CHANTAL ZAKARI**  
chantal@thecorner.net

**MFA , 1992** The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

**BFA, 1990** The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

*Full-time Regular Faculty member* **School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

born 1968 in Izmir, Turkey

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

Chantal Zakari is an interdisciplinary artist, designer and art educator; a Turkish-Levantine (and recent US citizen) now residing in the Boston area. In her work she draws upon contemporary social issues by making connections through personal narratives, history and popular culture.

Her early books *Bill: A Dime Novel* (1992) and *Reading TIME* (1991) are one of a kind, hand crafted objects while she worked concurrently on creating hyper narratives for the Web with *I.D.* (1993-94). She collaborated on a journal *The Turk and The Jew* with her husband Mike Mandel while he lived in Pullman WA and she in Chicago IL, a piece in which they used the web as a means to communicate daily and further explore their cultural differences. In 1998 they published the work as an artists' book with the same title.

Combining her skills as a graphic designer and an artist, her works often culminates in the form of an artist's book. In 2001 under the pseudonym "*show-n-tell*" she began a 4 year long performance and documentation of a webcam community where people meet to have virtual sex. This resulted in her book *webAffairs* (2005), a photo/text narrative of her experiences in virtual space. It comments on our relationship to technology, the objectification of the body, personal surveillance tools and gender performativity.

Mandel and Zakari collaborated for 15 years on a body of work about the conflict between secularist culture and the Islamist movement in Turkey. Their journey, which began in 1997, has resulted in photographic images, video interviews, and public performances. In 2010 they published an encyclopedic artists' book, *The State of Ata*, followed later by a conceptual exhibit **7 Turkish Artists**.

The couple ran an election campaign for town council, as an activist performance piece in their hometown in 2011, in order to protest Walmart's attempt to move in. After a successful six-month battle which included the production and design of a billboard, in the spring of 2012, Walmart decided to pull out.

In 2012 they were invited to participate in the "*Al-Mutannabi Street Starts Here*" book art collection and created *They Came to Baghdad* (2012). The book has been touring with the show in the US, Europe and the Middle East. A copy of the collection is also housed in the National Library of Iraq in Baghdad.

In response to the manhunt and lockdown of April 19, 2013, in their hometown of Watertown MA, the couple designed and produced a series of commemorative plates *Shelter in Plates*. Using a shopify store they sold (at cost value) hundreds of plates to local residents in order to protest the seige. Their recent artists' book *Lock-down Archive* will be published early in 2015.

Zakari is a full time faculty member at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston where she chairs the Graphic Arts area. She was an associate member of the Goat Island performance group from 1995 until 2009 when the group dispersed. She has interpreted their work into print material including two instructional books *School Book 1* and *School Book 2*. She also practices as a graphic designer developing identity packages and collateral material for non-profit organizations. Currently she is serving as a board member of Belmont World Film. Her work is in the collection of Yale University, The Addison Gallery of American Art, Getty Research Institute Library. She has had solo shows, book readings and performances nationally and internationally.