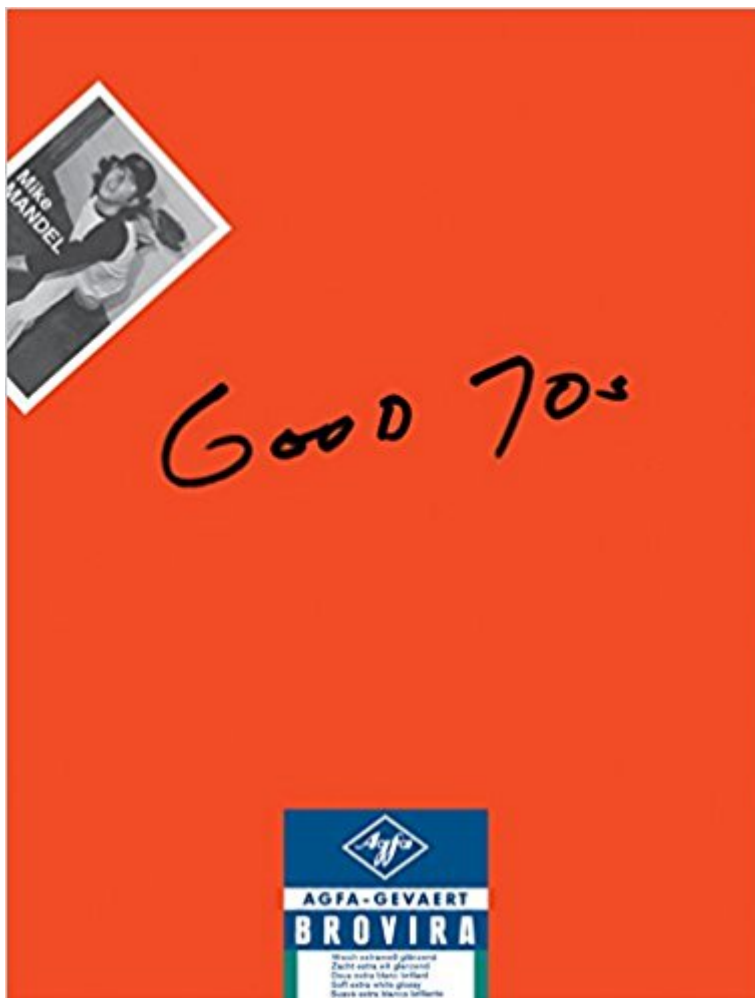


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Mike Mandel: Good 70s



Synopsis

Mike Mandel is best known for his project Baseball-Photographer Trading Cards, as well as his collaborations with the late Larry Sultan. Mandel employs conceptual structures and social commentary underneath a playful presentation. For the Baseball-Photographer Trading Cards, Mandel traveled across the US in 1974, posing 134 photographers and curators as ball players, and photographing them. Participants included famous figures (Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Harry Callahan, Minor White, Aaron Siskind, William Eggleston, Ed Ruscha, John Szarkowski) as well as lesser-known artists. Cards were made of each participant, and included "stats" such as height, weight, home, favorite camera and a personal statement. The original cards were sold in packs of ten. This boxed collection--published in a limited edition of 1,000 copies--contains facsimiles of Mandel's original publications, long out of print, including the Baseball-Photographer Trading Cards, *Myself: Timed Exposures*, *Seven Never Before Seen Portraits of Edward Weston*, plus previously unpublished work such as *Motel Postcards*, *People in Cars* and *Mrs. Kilpatric*, and ephemera from the projects, including selected facsimile contact sheets from the baseball photo shoots, a letter to Mandel from Charis Wilson regarding Edward Weston and a pack of ten of the original 1975 baseball cards. Mike Mandel (born 1950) is an artist who has been working primarily with photography since the early 1970s. He teaches at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and is a recent visiting lecturer in the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard. A retrospective of his work is scheduled for 2017 at SFMOMA.

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Customer Reviews

Great concept. Great execution.

Mike Mandel's track record shows that he is one of the most original living artists in the USA--bar none. His early works are already classics and highly sought after, often rising in cost to extremely lofty heights. This collection of "Good 70s" is a welcome box of conceptual diamonds at an extremely reasonable price. The attitude and trends that Mandel initiated--photographers' baseball cards, *Myself* (precursor to the 'selfie' of almost half a century later), among a host of other projects--all here in this exquisitely produced box set--have held up and become distinguished for their tongue-in-cheek subtlety and creative thinking. Southern California art of the time has only recently become recognized as world class, especially since the Getty Museum's groundbreaking 60 simultaneous exhibits titled "Pacific Standard Time" (2011-12). Along with Ed Ruscha, Chris Burden and John Baldessari, Mike Mandel, Larry Sultan and others are now being taken as equals to the high-minded seriousness of the East Coast notables belonging to the Abstract Expressionist and Minimalist Movements. As contemporary young artists now flock to Los Angeles and start claiming it as an art capital on par with New York and Paris, they are discovering the roots of their sensibility in artists such as Mandel and his illustrious 1970s work. Mandel's more recent collaborations with Chantal Zakari are equally impressive, but I imagine it will take the art world a while to catch up to them, as it has taken critics decades to appreciate fully his '70s work, now in focus and beloved by the art community. This limited-edition box set will definitely rise in value--it's a clever investment as well as a treasure chest of joy awaiting the perspicacious viewer. In my opinion, Mike Mandel's "Good '70s" is the most important box set by an artist since the renowned "Box in a Valise" (from or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy in 1935-41). This assessment is in no way an exaggeration, because I believe firmly that his art is unique, inimitable and enduring. To pass through this world as an artist is something special, and few do it with as much grace and aplomb as Mike Mandel.

Wow! I first purchased an original set of the photog baseball cards, when they were first made in the 70's. There are so many things I love about this book/collection. OK, you get a full set of the cards (facsimile) plus an actual unopened packs WITH the bubble gum! Mandel's softcover books, postcards, and poster are right from the time. And personal letters. the packaging is perfect, as the Agfa-esque box has the right nostalgic feel, with high quality construction. I highly recco this collection for the joy of photography of a certain era. OK, I love the baseball cards with my heroes.

Always have.

This collection, aside from being welcome, is long overdue. Mandel is one of the most inventive photo-artists, prefiguring the current rage for self-publishing with his idiosyncratic offerings of the 1970s. Best known for *Evidence*, a collaboration with the late Larry Sultan, he turned much of his creative energy into producing inexpensive but influential books, postcards, and a set of "famous" photographer baseball cards. Like *Evidence*, they settled into collections and libraries and for many years have been available only from rare-book dealers at high prices. This collection, some reprints, some projects published for the first time, reveals fully the fertile imagination and quirky vision of Mandel, expands our understanding of his work and the times, and reveals why his under-the-radar conceptual practice has influenced several generations of contemporary artists.

"GOOD 70s" is an excellent and long overdue chance for people to experience firsthand Mike Mandel's innovative body of works from the 1970s. Well known across the world for his collaboration with the late Larry Sultan in the groundbreaking book *Evidence*, this box set prominently features all 135 cards from Mandel's celebrated project "The Baseball-Photographer Trading Cards." The sheer volume of these cards, often recognized for their imaginative uses of appropriation and humor, reveal the tremendous amount of labor that actually went into the seemingly straightforward undertaking. This box set also includes the long out-of-print but important projects (such as *Myself: Timed Exposures* and *Seven Never Before Seen Portraits of Edward Weston*) as well as a suite of previously unpublished works that testify to the strength and consistency of Mandel's conceptual vision during that decade. In retrospect, the works featured in this box set become all the more extraordinary when one considers that such experimental approaches were not common in the art photography at that time. "GOOD 70s" provides us an opportunity to revisit a historically significant body of works that has become more relevant with recent developments in photography. It is also a valuable contribution to the field of photobook with its ingenious presentation and suggests new possibilities in the genre.

Buy this box set now while you can get it. It brings together in one package, several visionary projects by this brilliant artist. GOOD 70S combines projects that foreshadow the work of mail artists, typologists, selfies, and also shows Mandel's ability as a picture maker in the People in Cars poster. Some reviewers have been confused by Mandel's dry wit and sense of the absurd. Maybe they will get it if they look harder.

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