



# GEARING UP: DINA GOLDSTEIN

How this fine-art photographer captures her fantastical images

by DAVID WRIGHT photography by DINA GOLDSTEIN

**Over the past decade,** Vancouver-based photographer Dina Goldstein has carved a unique niche for herself as one of the country's most playful visual storytellers. Her staged *tableaux vivants* are lush, jarring, thought-provoking and whimsical. These stylized satirical images often involve fictional characters posed in realistic situations, shining a spotlight on some puzzling aspect of the human condition.

While her recent exhibitions have toured the world and earned Goldstein countless recognitions, she launched her career in the seemingly unrelated field of photojournalism in the early 1990s. She later turned her lens toward high-realism portraiture as a commercial photographer – calling her method “photoanthropology” – eventually leading her to what she does today. “As in my earlier documentary photography, my love of storytelling continues to be the cornerstone of my work,” says the Tel Aviv-born mother of two.

Goldstein's projects entail equal measures of imagination, intuition and painstaking coordination, gobbling up months or even years from conception to completion. “First, I assemble my cast and crew,” she says, “and consult with my makeup and costuming team. I methodically scout out locations, as these will become permanent backdrops for my conceptualized scenarios.” Goldstein enlists local artisans to create the costumes and props; her shoots involve eager photography and art students – not to mention “volunteers from all walks of life.”

Given her sprawling body of work, Goldstein says it's hard to name a favourite, but the “Fallen Princesses” series will always have a special place in her heart. “It took me over two years to complete,” she says, “which I worked on while pregnant with my second daughter, Zoe. Just after giving birth, I had my first solo exhibition in 2009. I realized that my time is precious, so I made the decision to focus primarily on my art practice.” 📷



From the “Fallen Princesses” series



“In the Dollhouse,” with Barbie and Ken



From the “Gods of Suburbia” series



@DINAGOLDSTEIN

## GOLDSTEIN'S ESSENTIAL GEAR

### HER CAMERAS:

Goldstein loves her sturdy Hasselblad H3 digital for the exceptional image quality it renders, but her favourite is still the Fujifilm GA645 medium-format rangefinder film camera. “I take it with me when I travel and am always pleased with the particular look that I achieve with this camera.” She also uses a Nikon D800: “It’s an older model but solid, and these days I use it mostly for shooting video on set.”

### HER LENSES:

She calls the Hasselblad 80mm 2.8 “one all-around sharp and versatile lens,” and likes the Hasselblad 50mm 2.8 because “it’s just wide enough to include the components of a narrative without distortion.”

### HER PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE:

Goldstein works extensively with the Phocus image-processing program, which “works with Hasselblad while tethered and produces sharp outputs from the FFF files.”

### HER COMPUTER:

“It’s a 17-inch Macbook portable – great to take on location and with the Seaport computer bag. Setup on stand is so convenient.”

### HER CAMERA BAG:

She uses a Lowepro backpack whenever she travels. “It’s large enough for my travel kit and small enough to feel comfortable,” she says.

### HER LIGHTING EQUIPMENT:

Goldstein prefers White Lightning’s X600, 800 and 1200 strobes. “They’re portable, self-contained and easy to operate, so even a novice can figure these out.”