

## NEW REVIEW 2013

**Where did the inspiration for the series come from? You have a daughter yourself . . . did it spring from reading her stories/watching Disney movies, seeing her engagement with such narratives?**

Jordan, my daughter, was three at the time and was just starting to get into the 'Princess phase'. Princesses were everywhere and I too was getting introduced to them. ( I grew up in Israel in the early 70's , and was not exposed to Disney at all ). Just around the same time my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. The two events collided and made me wonder what a Princesses would look like if she had to battle a disease, struggle financially or deal with aging. I began to imagine what could happen to the Princesses later in life and after the 'happily ever after '. Naturally they would have to deal with challenges that all modern woman face.

My first idea was Rapunzel going through chemo and losing her precious hair. I began to loosely sketch and came up with ideas for the rest of the images. With a very limited budget and a lot of volunteer help, I shot the series over two years.

**What do you think of the Disney-style fairy stories, particularly as tales we tell young girls?**

Childhood should be free of adult responsibilities. It should be a time to run free, role play and explore. However parents do have the responsibility of preparing their children for the real world. I think that there is nothing wrong with a happy ending in general. It 's just that with Disney Fairy tale interpretations that always happens because of the heroics of a handsome Prince. This message is sexist and misleading to the young minds of little girls. The truth is that fairy tales were written as gruesome stories with strong messages. \_ They were not always intended for young children. The problem is that some kids don't have good parenting to back up these fantasy endings and later find reality too disappointing.

**The photographs are firmly set in the modern day: why did you want to ground that magical fairy-tale world into reality? What does having a modern context do to the images? They strongly refute the very idea of a 'happy ending' – why did you want to unsettle that notion?**

Contemporary woman today look very different than the typical Fairy tale Princesses. We are working with our partners to fulfill our financial responsibilities as well as taking care of the household. At work we are competitive and since we are no longer focused on equality in the work place we can now concentrate on being the best period! We are so busy and time seems to pass so quickly. If we get a moment to read a book or go for a walk.. that's a treat! On weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, mother's day we may have 'a fairy tale moment' but that doesn't last very long and you know that normal life is just around the corner.

Disney, not the original of the Fairy Tales, created the happily ever after motif.

I don't want to send out a negative message just a realistic one.

My main message is that this world is so complex and everyone has their own challenges to deal with. What might seem 'perfect' on the outside is most likely not.

Most people have to deal with difficult issues sometime in their lives and no one is exempt. I have friends that are wealthy but still have many difficulties in their lives...so money isn't always a cure. I have friends that are beautiful but can't seem to get it together, so beauty isn't always the answer. I have friends that are very scholarly but make unwise decisions in their personal lives...so aptitude does not always guide.

**What responses do you usually get to the series?**

Good art creates conversation and discussion so I'm really pleased that my work has sparked some controversy. There have been discussion groups on the web that go on for miles about Not so little Red. The issue revolves around how and if fast food has contributed to her obesity. Many overweight people argue that the two are not connected and battle it out to make their point. They claim that I'm stereotyping.

Jasmine was another much discussed piece. Some accused me of placing the Middle Eastern Princess as a terrorist. My intention was to display her strength and courage. She is a warrior, fighting on the front lines, just as so many woman are today in the Middle East. The interpretations are so individual and personal. The project made it's unexpected debut..(as it went viral) in 2009 Since then I've received so many letters and emails. The ones that I remember

most are not the ones praising my work but the ones that have touched people in a very personal way.!

The mother who feels overwhelmed with life, the woman who just got home from Chemo, the many parents with children obsessed with Princesses, and Princesses themselves lost in a modern and complicated world.

**Do you think our portrayal of options/role models/heroines for children are improving, or are we stuck with stories about nasty witches jealous of beautiful young princesses?**

**How old is your daughter now, and – if she's seen the pictures – what does she make of them?**

I do think that Disney is making an effort to modernize their characters, still many are saying that they are missing the mark, perhaps trying to hard and opening themselves to more criticism. I would not deprive my two daughters Jordan, 8 and Zoe, 4 of watching the Disney shows or even playing with their merchandise.!

I'm confident that they will never find inspiration in the Disney Princesses at all.

They live in a household where their parents split everything 50/50. They are not spoiled and are taught that good things don't fall from the sky. They understand that the Princesses are made up characters that live in a made up land. I'm pretty confident that my girls won't end up marrying a Prince. They love meeting Ariel, Snow White and Barbie.

However if you ask me do they understand the concepts behind the images then I'll tell you that they are not sophisticated enough yet. These images are made for adults. I question why is the Queen always evil? I would like that perception to change. Why must mature, independent and powerful women be vilified?! Can young girls aspire to be Queens rather than Princesses?

**Your Dollhouse series explores some similar territory – will you do any further series in this vein?!**

My next project looks at the role of religion in modernity.

Gods of Suburbia is currently in production.

## FOTOFLOCK.COM 2013

### **Please share with us on your interpretation of your visual style. How has it evolved over the years?**

My style at the beginning of my career was portraiture based. I got very close to my subject and focused mostly on their face. I also experimented with different film processes.

Later I pulled back and wanted to tell the whole story with a wider perspective. I kept it simple and used very little effects. Which brings me to where I am now. I attempt to tell a complicated story within one frame.

I include many details in my pieces which can either be obvious at first or discoverable to the viewer in time.

### **Connect the dots for us: You... vivid imagination ... camera... dark fine art.**

I do have a vivid imagination and not every idea works as I imagine it. When it does it's very exciting and very rewarding.

Yes my art has dark elements and many have interpreted my work over the years. I'm just glad when my work creates conversation and movement!

### **How integral are photography and post-production as separate processes that you combine to make compelling images?**

Photoshop as a tool is very useful and can really help drive the message that I'm trying to convey.

I definitely shoot as much as possible in camera . I'm not one to depend on post because most of my career was experienced before the digital revolution so I think in film.

That being said I am very glad that this technology is available and if used correctly can make or break a picture.

I work with expert photo editors to bring alive my ideas.

**Which is the most interesting 'Fallen Princess' character you have created for/in your photographs? (Can you show us the photograph and tell us about it).**

I think of them all like my children, so I like each one for different reasons. My 'favourite' one changes quite often.

For instance for the longest time Rapunzel represented the reason that I created the whole project and evoked such a strong emotional response from people so it was more favored.

Currently I'm loving Pocahontas which is full of details and elements that keep it interesting.

**What according to you makes a perfect photograph and how do you use that in your images?!**

I really don't like the term 'perfect' because I believe that there is no such thing.

It seems that what you like in a picture is so very personal. What may elicit a response or feeling for one person would not for another. That in general refers to all art.

Some pictures may have an obvious message or relay a very specific aesthetic that can capture the viewers attention. Others are not so clear at first and offer a subtext which is relatable.

**What is the best advice you have received so far about photography?**

The best advice that I received was from one of my teachers at school. He said 'get closer ' not just with your lens but get to know your subjects.

... and the best advice that I can give is proceed in your practice like race horse with blinders on. Don't look too much around you for your inspiration. It's way too easy to get pulled into trends and to become influenced by others.

**In your tryst with photography, have you formed a personal philosophy about photography? What is it?**

We are so inundated with images these days. Everyone has a camera and thinks that they can create winning pictures. If you decide to become a photographer know that it's a long haul before you accomplish what you set out to do. You must be dedicated to the craft both technically and artistically. You must become consistent and reliable.

Also if you're out to create ground breaking images then think big and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Make the impossible, possible.

**In 2012, you were awarded the Arte Laguna special prize and travelled to India on a residency. How was the experience?**

I've always wanted to travel to India. After I had my two girls I thought that dream was over and then I won the residency.

I probably didn't have as much culture shock upon arrival as many do because I have been to war torn areas and seen hardship.

What I first noticed was the amount of people sleeping on the streets, that I didn't expect.

I stayed in Mumbai most of the time and made an attempt to get a good sense of the city with the short time that I had.

I was provided with an apartment in a fairly nice district but ended up exploring in the city 'slums' and some smaller villages outside of the city.

I did go to Pune for a short time and really enjoyed it! It's still India but way more calm than Mumbai.

My sets are so complex and thus I couldn't actually shoot a piece there so I proceeded to photograph in a documentary style ( using a film camera).

However while I was there I conceived my next series and was able to collect props to bring back with me. In October the Sakshi Gallery will show 2 pieces that were inspired by my trip to India.

They are the first in my new series called Gods of Suburbia.

**Do you have any tips for photographers trying to emulate your passion and looking for advice?**

I find that a lot of young aspiring artists today are passionate but lack work ethic. When I started out I worked a lot and didn't make much or any money. That went on for years.

Now there are a lot of artists coming out of school and expecting to make the big bucks right away. I say pay your dues and don't charge too much right off the top. Get as much experience as possible and make your mistakes at the beginning without too much consequence. Work up to getting the prestige and don't take anything for granted because this world is very up and down.

**We have seen an alcoholic Cinderella, an obese Red Riding Hood and Snow White as a struggling mom. So, what are your next projects and what surprises can we expect?**

In 2011 I debuted my second large scale project called 'In The Dollhouse'. "In the Dollhouse" is a series that plays out as a narrative, peeking into the home and marriage of the world's most iconic dolls, Barbie, and her partner Ken. It offers a profound commentary on the transient nature of beauty, the difficulty of marriage and the importance of authenticity.

For this project I built a life size dollhouse. All of the elements that brought this project together demanded much attention to detail and a complex new set of problem solving came into play.

I'm in production with my next series and will exhibit my first 2 pieces in India. The other 8 will be photographed throughout this year.

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## FEMALE NETWORK 2013

### **1. What was your inspiration for “The Fallen Princesses?” What do your daughters Jordan and Zoe think of your interpretation of the Disney princesses?**

Before Fallen Princesses most of my work was documentary based. I conceived the idea for the project at a time when I was dealing with grief over news that my mother was diagnosed with breast Cancer. At the same time Jordan my daughter was just 3 yrs. and already influenced by Disney Princesses. The two events collided and made me think about the uncertainty of life and how we as parents and Disney have created a saccharine version of reality for the benefit of our young children. I began to compose each piece and incorporate messages that reflected real issues that contemporary woman face.

My daughters like that they can recognize the characters in my work however they are not sophisticated enough to understand the whole concept. I'm curious to see what they think of my work as they grow older.

### **2. What did you hope to accomplish with the series? How did you react when the photos went viral?**

I really had very little expectations when I began the project. I shot each piece at a time over a two year period.

When I was done I posted the project on JPG.com to get some feedback from my peers. I had no idea that the project would end up going viral and have such an overwhelming response.

Since it went viral in 2009 I have received hundreds of emails, some of them very personal and touching. I've been published in various magazines and newspapers. The work has received awards and recognitions, and have been shown in galleries and museums internationally.

**3. In one interview, you mentioned that you grew up in Israel. How long did you stay there for before you migrated to Canada?**

My family arrived in Canada in 1976. I was 8 yrs. and didn't speak a word of English.

I have fantastic memories of my childhood in Israel. It was a very different placeback then with little Western influences, so I didn't grow up with Fairy Tales or any Disney movies.

**4. Looking back at your own childhood there and now at your daughters' in Canada, how different was your idea of a woman's role in society from your kids' today?**

My mother stayed at home with me and my sister and my father carried the burden of providing for a family at a young age...they were both 21 when I was born.

My situation is completely different. I had my first child at 35 and took very little time off even throughout my pregnancy. My husband also works and together we balance bills and schedules. Our household is 50/50.

The kids are still young so it's hard to say but I imagine that they will grow up with different views on gender roles within the household.

**5. What do you think of women and happy endings?**

I would like to think that woman can make themselves happy. However the concept of a fairy tale happy ending is a bit ridiculous. Modern life is about constant change , woman today have to adapt and learn how to grow from adversity. Everyone must define what being 'happy' means to them and then move towards that. Some may never find happiness because of obstacles that they themselves create. Some may realize that happiness itself is an abstract notion and that changing expectations and attitudes can make a big difference.

**6. What sparked your interest in photography?**

When I was 21 I travelled to the Sinai desert with a cheap point and shoot camera.

I began to take pictures of the Beduins that live there.

I remember how thrilling it was to take the pictures and see the results. ( it was film and it took some time) it wasn't instant back then.

I'm a people person so it was easy for me to approach people and ask to take their pictures.

## **7. Can you name three women who inspire you and why?**

Today I am inspired by all sorts of artists and thinkers that are not held back and speak their minds.

Woman that most impress me are the ones that share personal stories in order to make a real difference in the world.

-Woman working around the world to promote gender equality.

-Woman who have come from modest backgrounds and have made something of themselves.

-Woman who balance their work life and dedicate themselves equally to their family and community.

## **8. What's a typical day for you like?**

Well it starts with a crazy morning at home getting the kids out to school. I will admit that I sometimes go back to sleep, because I love having the quiet alone time in the morning. Three days a week I head to the gym.

Then its off to the studio where I answer emails and get some business done.

When I'm in production I'll work with a few interns to collect items and firm up plans. Sometimes I will have an assignment and have to photograph.

I pick up my little one from daycare in the late afternoon and head home to organize dinner. Dinner, Bath, Bed...more mommy duties.

After the kids are in bed I may come back to the studio to work some more.

Then some TV to relax and bed....often too late!

## **9. Is it harder for women to break into the photography industry? How so?**

I am fortunate to be in a field where woman were the pioneers and were highly respected from the start. I believe that it is an equal opportunity industry up to a point. Woman definitely have a different eye than men ( it's scientifically proven) , they may also have an advantage when dealing with people, and often appear more trustworthy. The competition, just like in any other industry, begins when large amounts of money is involved. For instance big accounts are more often offered to male photographers. Perhaps it's about confidence? Woman can be less ambitious and less vicious when it comes to powering ahead, that may be the reason.

## **13. What's next for Dina Goldstein?**

*I've started conceptualizing my new project 'Gods of Suburbia'*

It's another production intensive project so there is a lot of work to be done before I start shooting.

## INTERRUPT MAGAZINE 2013

### **1. How did you pick the princesses fates?**

My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and at the time that my 3 yr. old was exposed to the Disney Princesses culture. We read books and watched movies which my daughter really loved...not necessarily because of the Princess characters but because of the dramatic stories and ugly witches.

I started thinking that these Disney Princesses really didn't have to deal with issues like Cancer etc.. because ultimately there was a happily ever after and besides we really never followed their life past their youth. Reality is that today we find ourselves not only dealing with equal financial responsibilities but also taking care of the household. At work we are competitive and since we are no longer fighting for our equality we fight to be the best, period! We are so busy and time seems to pass so quickly. If we get a moment to read a book or go for a walk.. that's a treat. On weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, mother's day we may have 'a fairy tale moment' but that doesn't last very long and you know that normal life is just around the corner. I began to do some research which lead to my fascination with the origins of Fairy tales. I explored the original brothers Grimm's, Hans Christian Andersen stories and found that they have very dark and sometimes gruesome aspects, not always concluded by a happy ending. Disney of course made some changes and created the happy ending. I imagined Disney's perfect Princesses juxtaposed with real issues that were affecting women around me, such as illness, addiction and self-image issues. ....I dreamt up different stories, environments and backstories for each Princess and the project was conceived.

### **2. If you could, what would you change about the princess fantasies our culture propagates?**

I question why is the Queen always evil? I would like that perception to change. Why must mature, independent and powerful women be vilified? Can young girls aspire to be Queens rather than Princesses?

### **3. Which photo incited the biggest reaction?**

Good art creates conversation and discussion so I'm really pleased that my work has sparked some controversy. There have been discussion groups on the web that go on for miles about Not so little Red. The issue revolves around how and if fast food has contributed to her obesity. Many overweight people argue that the two are not connected and battle it out to make their point. They claim that I'm stereotyping.

Jasmine was another much discussed piece. Some accused me of placing the Middle Eastern Princess as a terrorist. My intention was to display her strength and courage. She is a warrior, fighting on the front lines, just as so many women are today in the Middle East. The interpretations are so individual and personal.

### **4. What was your goal for this project?**

I wanted each piece to tell a complete story and yet be recognized as an integral part of a larger body of work. I wanted my messages to be clearly understood no matter of culture, class or gender.

### **5. When you were shooting the photos did you think they'd resonate with so many people and provoke such a huge response?**

The project made it's unexpected debut..(as it went viral) in 2009! Since then I've received so many letters and emails. The ones that I remember most are not the ones praising my work but the ones that have touched people in a very personal way. The mother who feels overwhelmed with life, the woman who just got home from Chemo, the many parents with children obsessed with Princesses.

### **6. Disney recently tried to make Princess Merida more feminine, and outrage against the move was so widespread that a petition was even started. What do you think a real world Princess Merida's fate would be?**

Well I'm sure that they did their market research and discovered that she wasn't feminine enough. Whatever that means?!

What do they have to alter to give her more sex appeal?!

Wasn't she created to change the stereotype of the average Disney Princess? Are they back peddling?

### **7. Did you want to be a princess when you were a child?**

I grew up in Israel in the early 70's.

At that time I was not exposed to the Disney versions of Princesses. I grew up with Biblical stories and Jewish fables. I remember loving Pippi Longstocking. I wanted to explore and I remember played a lot outside.

### **8. As a mother, how do you think the Disney princesses influence your own children and their friends?**

I would not deprive my girls of watching the Disney shows or even buying their merchandise.

I'm confident that they will never find inspiration in the Disney Princesses at all.

They live in a household where their parents split everything 50/50. They are not spoiled and are taught that good things don't fall from the sky. They understand that the Princesses are made up characters that live in a made up land. I'm pretty confident that my girls won't end up marrying a Prince.

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## NOOR 2013

### **If you had to pick a favorite part of your process, what would it be?**

I enjoy the conceptual process as it allows to me imagine what could be possible. Also the finished process which is still magic to me after all of these years.

### **If you're not taking portraits, what is your next favorite subject?**

I love to travel and take pictures. It lets me explore, meet interesting people and step out of my comfort zone.!

### **Are you interested in other types of art, painting, dancing, video graphic design...?**

I enjoy painting although my work is more abstract and decorative than anything...I would never assume that it good!!

### **As an artist, I know you most probably take inspiration from everywhere, consciously or subconsciously, especially with the Fallen Princesses series. Besides that, do you remember any specific things that really inspired you to do a certain shoot?**

I am working on a new project now Gods of Suburbia of which I am drawing for personal experiences and memories from my past.

### **What drives you to create more photos, to keep going out and doing such arduous shoots?**

that ´s a good question??? I guess that I am committed to create original work because it satisfies me both on a personal and professional level.

### **You serve as a role model to a lot of budding photographers, if you could say anything to them what would it be?**

I find that a lot of young aspiring artists today are passionate but lack work ethic. When I started out I worked a lot and didn't make much or any money. That went on for years. Now there are a lot of artists coming out of school and expecting to make the big bucks.

## **What made you decide to turn your creative pastime into a career?**

I always photographed my own personal, work even while I while shooting commercially. There are so many concepts that I want to realize and so I'm thrilled I can now focus on my art work full time.!

My favorite camera is Fuji 6X45 (medium format range finder auto focus). This camera is like an old friend. I always travel with it.!

For the conceptual work I shoot with Hasselblad with a Phase 1 60 mega back. These days I work with a medium format digital camera.!

## **What's the most important part of an image to you?**

It's important for me that the viewer understands my message. It can happen right away or over time with a little bit of investigation and study.

## **When you do a shoot, how far ahead do you plan? Have you got every shot planned weeks before the shoot or does it just happen and come together?**

The shoots usually take a few weeks to come together.

First I start with the right subject (person to play the role) and this can happen right away or take months. Next I focus on the location, which I consider a crucial element in my work. Then it's a matter of gathering all of the talent (makeup artist, wardrobe, assistants etc..) and finding a time that works for everyone. I rely on volunteer help and that can sometimes be a challenge.

I say pay your dues and don't charge too much right off the top. Get as much experience as possible and make your mistakes at the beginning without too much consequence. Work up to getting the prestigious jobs.

## **Any ideal place you'd like to go shoot?**

There are many places in the world that I'd love to travel to and have not had the chance to as of yet.

Cuba, Africa, Fiji...to name a few.

## **What have your experiences as a photographer taught you?**

Mostly to stay open to new experiences and always keep experiment.!

### **What is your favorite work of art?**

It's like asking what's your favourite song, favorite movie...there are so many but I'm really into Pop Surrealism right now.

### **Do you prefer to shoot inside or outside, and a particular time of day, and why?**

Each shoot demands it's own set of needs. For me it's always different every time. I don't like to photograph in the rain but sometimes I must for the sake of the picture.

### **Of your own pieces, which do you like best, why?**

Again this is a hard question because I like many of them and all for different reasons. They are like my children and It's hard to choose and favour. Some that are special to me are Rapunzel- Fallen Princesses, Margaret - Trackrecord, Haircut - In The Dollhouse.

### **What message do you want to convey with your work?**

The messages are clear in my pictures.

Mostly I want to explore the human condition and the concept of PERFECT.!

### **What part of your life, or thing, or person, or event in your life has been/is most important to you?**

Meeting my husband and the birth of my two daughters.

### **What do you feel gives your work an individual and recognizable signature?**

The concepts and executions. My ideas and the choices I make to realize my vision.

### **Have you collaborated with other artists, and what is that like? If not, would you like to? Why?**

I collaborate with other artist all of the time. My current work is a group effort where the magic of makeup artists, wardrobe and set comes alive.

Before that I photographed a series called 'David' where I photographed one model over a 10 year period. Together with David and other artist I created a very compelling and experimental series.

**Anything else at all that you would like to say about your work or anything at all.**

I am always trying to evolve personally and professionally. My next series is in the making and I'm excited to premier it when it's finished.



### **What was the inspiration for the "Fallen Princesses"-series?**

The series debuted in 2009. Since then I have told the story thousands of times.! but I'll tell it once more.

It was 2007 and my oldest daughter Jordan, now 7, was 3 yrs old.

As I new mother I discovered the 'princess phenomena' as Jordan and her friends began to take interest in Fairy Tale Princesses specifically Disney characters. There is a huge market that revolves around this stage of a little girl's life and their first interaction with popular culture and branding.

At the same time my mother was diagnosed with breast Cancer. It was an emotional and blue period.

I began to image these Princesses as characters in a scene that takes place in modern times.

### **Who are they in today's world?**

Now they've grown up and become real woman in a modern society. And the happily ever....just belongs in Fairytales.

### **What is the message behind it?**

I truly believe that we are all products of our circumstance. I always remember that when I see unfortunate people. I think ....in another world, another time that could have been me.

### **How was the reaction? Was there any controversy?**

Good art creates conversation and discussion so I'm really pleased that my work has sparked some controversy.

I did have a issue with the model release of the 'Prince' in the Sleeping Beauty image. I had to do some crafty work to resolve this issue. ITs a great story...in my book of course.

There have also been discussion groups on the web that go on for miles about Not so little Red. The issue revolves around how and if fast food has contributed to her obesity. Many overweight people argue that the two are not connected and battle it out to make their point. They claim that I'm stereotyping.

Jasmine was another much discussed piece. Some accused me of placing the Middle Eastern Princess as a terrorist. My intention was to display her strength and courage. She is a a warrior, fighting on the front lines, just as so many woman are today in Iraq. In general I'm interested in hearing what people have to say but I'm not taking anything personally.

## **Did you get a call from Disney?**

Disney posted them on their site along with Annie's Disney series.!!  
The pictures continue to find their way around the Internet for years. I was fine with it until there was some manipulation and suddenly Ariel was sushie...a cute idea but not mine.

## **When did you start your career as a photographer? What's your history?**

I started photography at 23yrs; I was young and very eager. At the time I was surrounded by all kinds of artist; Musicians, actors , painters, photogs. I had a world of material to photograph. I set up a studio in my apartment and went for it. I worked part time at a photo supply store and in my spare time photographed anything and everything. I could get discounts at the store on equipment and processing so it really helped me out. At the beginning I thought that I wanted to be a photojournalist so I traveled to Gaza and the Westbank in hopes of getting some good material that would help me break in. I came back from the Middle East with some good images and a new prospective. I soon realized that the sometimes isolated and often dangerous world of photojournalism was not for me. I am a people person and really need my friends and family around me. I think that it was good for me to understand that early on in my career. Instead I began to pursue editorial and serial photography, which was more suited for me.

## **One basic principle to live by:**

You have 1 life to live.  
Two decisions I regret:  
Both are too personal to divulge.  
Three things I believe in:  
My Family, My work, This incredible Universe we live in.

## **Four things that are worth living for:**

My Family, My work, and the Unknown  
Five things that everyone should know about me:  
My kids are miracles.  
I've been with my husband Jonas for 20 YRS.  
I'm very sentimental but don't suffer fools easily.  
I love my friends.  
My career is just starting again after 20yrs....REBIRTH.

## LE MONDE 2012

### **Can you tell me a bit about yourself?**

I live in Vancouver, B.C. with my husband Jonas and my two girls Jordan, 7 Zoe, 3 and our dog Taco. I have been a professional photographer and Artist for 20 years, this year marks my 20th anniversary.

I am originally from Israel and immigrated to Canada when I was a young child.!

### **How did the idea for Fallen princesses came up? Why did you do it? What was the inspiration for it?**

Jordan, my daughter, was three at the time and was just starting to get into the 'Princess phase'. Princesses were everywhere and I too was getting introduced to them. ( I grew up in Israel in the early 70's , and was not exposed to Disney at all ).

Just around the same time my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. The two events collided and made me wonder what a Princesses would look like if she had to battle a disease, struggle financially or deal with aging. I began to imagine what could happen to the Princesses later in life and after the happily ever after. Naturally they would have to deal with challenges that all modern woman face.

My first idea was Rapunzel going through chemo and losing her precious hair . I began to loosely sketch and came up with ideas for the rest of the images. With a very limited budget and a lot of volunteer help, I shot the series over two years.

### **When did you finish Fallen Princesses? (the year) How long did it take you to do it?**

I started the project in 2007 and completed it in 2009. Each piece took several months to collect or make the costumes, cast and find the perfect location.

### **Can you tell me a bit about the process/ production of the shoots?**

I began to do some research which lead to my fascination with the origins of Fairy tales. I explored the original brothers Grimm's, Hans Christian Andersen stories and found that they have very dark and sometimes gruesome aspects, not always concluded by a happy ending. Disney of course made some changes

and created the happy ending. I began to imagine Disney's perfect Princesses juxtaposed with real issues that were affecting women around me, such as illness, addiction and self-image issues. ....I dreamt up different stories for each Princess and voila a series began.

I found the Princesses in all sorts of places, mostly in Vancouver. I met Snow White at a wedding, Cinderella was a hostess at a restaurant, Red was a clerk at a lingerie store, Rapunzel and Pea were models, Belle is an actress and a friend. Jasmine was cast through Craig's list and shot in L.A. I met Ariel at a fashion show and Beauty was also cast from Craig's list. Some took me a long time to find and others just appeared out of the blue. They were brought to life by Vicky Chan, who brilliantly did the makeup, hair and styling.

### **What is the message behind Fallen Princesses?**

My Fallen Princesses series was born out of deep personal pain, when I raged against the "happily ever after" motif we are spoon fed since childhood. The series created metaphor out of the myths of fairy tales, forcing the viewer to contemplate real life: failed dreams, pollution and ocean degradation, war, obesity, the extinction of indigenous cultures, cancer and the fallacy of chasing eternal youth. By embracing the textures and colours created by Walt Disney, which built a multi-billion dollar empire exploiting these fairy tales, Fallen Princesses exposed the consumerism that has negated the morality of these ancient parables. It also begged the question, "how do we define the concept of 'good' and how do we live a 'good' life?"

### **Is it a critic about what Disney makes us believe? Do you believe childhood is an adult fraud? Do you think the "happily ever after" message Disney are sending to us as kids is a good thing or not?**

Childhood should be free of adult responsibilities. It should be a time to run free, role play and explore. However parents do have the responsibility of preparing their children for the real world.

In order to explain why nobody lives happily ever after, neither in fairy tales nor in real life, and why nobody should invest their time and energy believing in a "happily ever after" realm, This is not to say that we cannot be happy in our lives. Rather, I should like to suggest that the fairy-tale notion about happiness must be radically turned on its head if we are to glimpse the myths of happiness

perpetuated by the canonical fairy tales and culture industry and to determine what happiness means.!

## **What does Disney mean to you?**

I think that there is nothing wrong with a happy ending in general. Its just that with Disney Fairy tale interpretations that always happens because of the heroics of a handsome Prince. This message is sexist and misleading to the young minds of little girls. The truth is that fairy tales were written as gruesome stories with strong messages. \_ They were not always intended for young children. The problem is that some kids don't have good parenting to back up these fantasy endings and later find reality too disappointing.!

## **Are you a fallen princess?**

I was always a hard worker and got my first job at 13 years. I saved up for anything that I wanted and realized the value of money at a young age. By the age of 18 I was living on my own and supporting myself. My parents helped me out with some photography equipment at the beginning but the rest I managed on my own. I am definitely not a Princess and I haven't been disappointed by life because my expectations were never out of reach. I made goals for myself and slowly worked towards achieving them. I still do. I am a fierce realist and try to have a positive outlook on life and humanity in general.!

## **Did you ever have any problems with Disney? Did they ever contact you regarding your work?**

No not at all. They actually put my work up on their web site...next to Annie Leiboviz's Disney photos.

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**1. Who is Dina Goldstein? Tell me about your journey into photography.**

Dina is a wife, mother and artist. I was a photographer before being a wife and mother so I have a very strong bond to my profession. I began my journey as a young person traveling and photographing anything that caught my eye. I studied for a while and then jumped right into a career. I began working for a weekly newspaper and then went on to shoot for magazines. I also work on ad campaigns and anything interesting that comes my way. Now I'm mostly concentrated on my fine art work.!

**2. What guides your creative output? Do you have a photography philosophy or mantra?**

Inspiration comes to me unexpected. Sometimes its viable and sometimes its rubbish. I usually sit with a concept for a few days and then decide if it's going to work. I am also limited with budgets because I fund everything on my own ...so I have to stay practical.

**3. Do you ever reflect yourself in your work?**

I think that every artist is reflected in his or her work. In my case I'm making a social commentary within my photos. I'm expressing my opinions and fears.!

**4. Your work is all about strong visuals that provoke nostalgic emotions and the pursuit of our disillusioned dreams. Are you trying to distort or reinvent our perception of the childhood fairytales that we've all grown up on?**

I'm definitely not trying to reinvent our childhood fairytales..just to add a modern and relevant twist to the stories. In most of the fairytales we only follow the characters to their weddings. They have met their prince and now they ride off into the sunset and live 'happily ever after'. So what happens next?...does it stay perfect for long or does real life kick in?...I imagine what may happen next...of course with a brutally honest conclusion.

**5. In the Middle East, although each childhood has their share comprised of Disney animations, there are also many other local cartoon characters more familiar and/or culturally relevant to a Pan-Arab audience. Do you think your work on "fallen princesses" is universally relevant, or speaks to a specific national/cultural audience?**

I know that my series is relatable by all nations because of the major international interest that I have enjoyed. India, China, Brazil, Australia, South Africa... The princesses are there to drive the point that life does not always end as expected...but I use them symbolically because they are popular and recognizable in many cultures. They represent a myth that those who are victimized will eventually find a happy ending. They are women facing a modern life with real problems.

**6. What are some of the negative and positive criticisms you've received on this specific series of work?**

Most of the feedback has been positive and encouraging. Jasmine and Red Riding hood have been the most controversial. With Jasmine some people interpreted her as being an Arab at war or even a terrorist. That was not my intention. She was simply portraying a strong female warrior on the front lines. She symbolizes female soldiers around the world. Red Riding hood is carrying fast food in her basket. I had some criticism from obese people who felt that food was not the reason for their weight issues. My intention was that we live in a world where our time is limited and our feeding habits have changed. We sometimes have to turn to fast food, which is not always the healthy choice.!

**7. What would you have done if you weren't a photographer?**

I'm a people person so I would have worked with people in some way or another. What else are you working on at the moment, and what do your fans have to look forward to? I'm trying to get another project underway ...but there is much planning and it's taking longer than anticipated.

**8. Is there anything I haven't asked that you would like to share with our readers or would like our readers to know about you?!**

Many students and assistants volunteered their time. The very talented Vicky Chan did all of the makeup and hair!

[http://vickyleechan.com/!](http://vickyleechan.com/)

Some of the costumes were custom made also from people that volunteered their services. This was a true creative effort done on a shoestring budget.!

## EL HERALDO 2012

**This project of yours went viral on the internet, was written about extensively, what was the reason of it's huge success?**

This was a big surprise for me. I posted the series on JPG magazine just to get some feedback from my peers. It was then taken and posted on several sites. From there it went viral and the response was overwhelming. I was inundated with letters and media requests.

I was touched with the personal notes written by all sorts of people telling me how my work affected them in a profound way.

Our world is full of images that are created by ad agencies. These images portray the perfect couple, perfect homes, perfect children etc...

I think that my images portray the truth about life and its complexities. That everyone deals with challenges and that although this earth is so full of beauty there is also darkness that enters our lives once in a while. Its good to recognize this and find the humor in it. ...even if it's Dark Humor.

**Can you tell me the awards that you won and the articles that experts in the field of Fairytale literature analyzed.**

I have won several awards and most recently I travelled to India on a residency from Arte Laguna in Italy.

Please see these essays written about my work by experts in the field of fairy tale literature.

**Aren't fairytales meant to be escape routine from reality?**

Real Fairytales are quite dark and often end up tragic. You must be referring to the Disney versions, which have been modified and twisted to include a happy ending.

## CARGOH 2010

### **Tell us a little about your history as a photographer. Where did you get your start?!**

I started photography at 22yrs; I was young and very eager. At the time I was surrounded by all kinds of artist; Musicians, actors , painters, photogs. I had a world of material to photograph. I set up a studio in my apartment and went for it.! I worked part time at a photo supply store and in my spare time photographed anything and everything. I could get discounts at the store on equipment and processing so it really helped me out. At the beginning I thought that I wanted to be a photojournalist so I traveled to Gaza and the Westbank in hopes of getting some good material that would help me break in. I came back from the Middle East with some good images and a new prospective. I soon realized that the sometimes isolated and often dangerous world of photojournalism was not for me. I am a people person and really need my friends and family around me. I think that it was good for me to understand that early on in my career. Instead I began to pursue editorial photography, which was more suited for me.

### **2. How did you come up with the concept for Fallen Princesses? What was the inspiration for the series?!**

Jordan, my daughter, was three at the time and was just starting to get into the 'Princess phase'. Princesses were everywhere and I too was getting introduced to them. ( I grew up in Israel in the early 70's , and was not exposed to Disney at all ).

Just around the same time my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. The two events collided and made me wonder what a Princesses would look like if she had to battle a disease, struggle financially or deal with aging. I began to imagine what could happen to the Princesses later in life and after the happily ever after. Naturally they would have to deal with challenges that all modern woman face.!

My first idea was Rapunzel going through chemo and loosing her precious hair . I began to loosely sketch and came up with ideas for the rest of the images. With a very limited budget and a lot of volunteer help, I shot the series over two years.

### **3. What is the message behind the series? Show women that real life happens to everyone, even princesses?**

I am a fierce realist so I wanted the Princesses to be in real life situations with problems of their own. But now the series has developed a life of its own and there is so much discussion around each scenario. The interpretations are so individual and personal.

### **4. How was the overall reaction? Did you ever get a call from Disney?**

I posted the pictures on [JPG.com](http://JPG.com) to get some feedback from my peers. Without my knowledge the series was posted on the web. I began to get so many emails and blog interview requests. Overnight the Princesses made their way around the world and went viral.

Disney posted them on their site along with Annie's Disney series.

The pictures continue to find their way around the Internet. I was fine with it until there was some manipulation and suddenly Ariel was sushie...a cute idea but not mine.

### **5. Was there any controversy around any of the images?**

Good art creates conversation and discussion so I'm really pleased that my work has sparked some controversy. There have been discussion groups on the web that go on for miles about Not so little Red. The issue revolves around how and if fast food has contributed to her obesity. Many overweight people argue that the two are not connected and battle it out to make their point. They claim that I'm stereotyping.

Jasmine was another much discussed piece. Some accused me of placing the Middle Eastern Princess as a terrorist. My intention was to display her strength and courage. She is a warrior, fighting on the front lines, just as so many woman are today in the Middle East. In general I'm interested in hearing what people have to say but I'm not taking anything personally.

### **6. How did you cast such perfect looking characters to play the various roles?**

I found the Princesses in all sorts of places, mostly in Vancouver. I met Snow White at a wedding, Cinderella was a hostess at a restaurant, Red was a clerk at a lingerie store, Rapunzel and Pea were models, Belle is an actress and a friend. Jasmine was cast through Craig's list and shot in L.A. I met Ariel at a fashion

show and Beauty was also cast from Craig's list. Some took me a long time to find and others just appeared out of the blue. They were brought to life by **Vicky Chan**, who brilliantly executed the makeup, hair and styling.!

### **7. Where did you shoot the images?**

I shot the images at various locations around Vancouver. I did a lot of scouting then I did a lot of begging, borrowing and bargaining.!

### **8. At Cargoh, our community is made up of independent artists and designers. Any advice for a young creative getting started?**

I find that a lot of young aspiring artists today are passionate but lack work ethic. When I started out I worked a lot and didn't make much or any money. That went on for years.!

Now there are a lot of artists coming out of school and expecting to make the big bucks right away.!

I say pay your dues and don't charge too much right off the top. Get as much experience as possible and make your mistakes at the beginning without too much consequence. Work up to getting the prestigious jobs. !

### **10. What next? We'd love to see more**

I'm in the production for my next series.

## VENUS ZINE 2010

### **1. Full Name?**

Dina Goldstein (my married name is Quastel)!

### **2. Age? 40ish**

### **3. Current Location? Have you always lived here?**

Vancouver since a young age.

### **4. How did you start making art?**

I became my career at an early age...22 and have been working as a photographer ever since.

### **5. What do you choose photography as your medium? How does it work to your advantage portraying your subjects over other mediums?**

I love to paint as well but my true passion is photography. I love the interaction between myself and the subject, the ever changing locations and themes.

### **6. What inspired you for the Fallen Princesses piece?**

Last year my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. The news hit me very hard and I was a little depressed. This was exactly at the time that my 3 yr. old was exposed by her friends to Disney Princesses. We read books and watched movies which my daughter really loved...not necessarily because of the Princess characters but because of the intense stories and ugly witches. I started thinking that these Disney Princesses really didn't have to deal with issues like Cancer etc.. because ultimately there was a happily ever after and besides we really never followed their life past their youth. I began to do some research which lead to my fascination with the origins of Fairy tales. I explored the original brothers Grimm's, Hans Christian Andersen stories and found that they have very dark and sometimes gruesome aspects, not always concluded by a happy ending. Disney of course made some changes and created the happy ending. I began to imagine Disney's perfect Princesses juxtaposed with real issues that were affecting women around me, such as illness, addiction and self-image issues. ....I dreamt up different stories for each Princess and voila a series began.

## **8. Who is the intended audience for Fallen Princesses?**

Everyone and anyone who is inspired by art....and has a good sense of humor.

## **9. Can you describe the meaning behind the Snow White piece and the Jasmine piece? Not only what they are about, but how did you select what you were going to put into the scene? What was the creative process like doing these pieces?!**

Snow White is about domestic bliss gone realistic. As anyone with children knows, life can get hectic and challenging. Snow White married the Prince, had many children with him and ended up in suburbia. Maybe the Prince lost the Kingdom (as Kingdoms do get conquered often) and now they cannot afford nannies and other domestic help. The Prince is a good guy but cannot help watching Polo on a Sunday afternoon...after-all he now works all week and is tired by the weekend.

Jasmine finds her strength as she defends her country. This piece speaks to the current disarray taking place in the Middle East. Like many woman today she is now in the front line, equal to men in combat.

## **10. Where will we be able to see your art? What galleries and when?**

I am currently being exhibited in a traveling show at the Musée de la Femme. I do have gallery representation and that information can be found on my website.

## **11. What artists inspire you the most? What artists are your heroes?**

Many artists and types of art inspire me. I love and respect all forms of arts and crafts.

I try not to be influenced by artists around me and sometimes wear blinders to maintain focus.

I just saw an exhibit of Classic Dutch painters ...The detail and attention to light was most inspiring.

Celebrated artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals and Gerard Ter Borch created haunting portraits that capture in fine detail the lavish clothing, jewellery

and ornate interiors of their patrons. Artists Karel du Jardin, Adriaen van Ostade and Johannes Vermeer , Jan Steen and Pieter de Hooch created extremely detailed scenes of daily life including humorous scenes of children's games or peasants drinking and dancing.

I don't have any artist 'Heros' - Good artists that have succeeded commercially are just lucky...of course there are so many talented people out there that didn't get a break!

## **12. What people or things have inspired your artwork the most?**

I started out most inspired by Diane Arbus ,Margaret Bourke White, Dorothea Lang. Also many more Life photographers, as my first love is photojournalism and documentary photography.!

Today the challenge is to be original, as mostly everything has been done! I'm involved in a few photo communities on line and am always on the lookout for people working on original projects.

## **13. What would you like people to take away after viewing Fallen Princesses?**

Its important to recognize that I mean no harm to Disney and its Princesses. They are lovely and cheerful. In my scenarios they are symbols of fantasy placed in my vision of a dark reality.

## **14. What was the hardest part about creating the Fallen Princesses series?**

Lack of money, lack of time.

## **15. What do you hate the most about the art world?**

Value is often determined for all the wrong reasons.

## NERDSOCIETY 2009

**1) You mentioned that you weren't too familiar with Disney fairy tales! while growing up. It was 3 year old kids (your kids?) that introduced you to it. What was your first reaction when you found out about the "happy ending" formula to Disney stories?**

I think that there is nothing wrong with a happy ending. Its just that with Disney that always happens because of the heroics of a handsome Prince. This message is sexist and misleading to the young minds of little girls. The truth is that fairy tales were written as gruesome stories with strong messages. \_ They were not always intended for young children. The problem is that some kids don't have good parenting to back up these fantasy endings and later find reality too disappointing.

**2) For the "Fallen Princesses" series, how did you to come up with the idea?**

I came up with the series when right after my mother was diagnosed with breast Cancer. At the same time my daughter was 3 and just getting into the Princesses. She would play with her friends, dress up and watch the movies.! I began to wonder what it would be like for those Princesses if they got sick, lost their money, lost their prince etc..

**3) Once you got the idea, how long did the process take from beginning to end? Can you inform us what process you took in(hiring models, finding locations, post process)?**

It took me about a two years to complete the series. I got pregnant and sick at #7 so the last three were made a little later.

I first conceive the idea but playing with 'what if?'... What would happen to Snow White after the Prince carried her away. What if they lost the kingdom and had to lead a normal life?. What if the PRince lost his job and Snow White had no help with kids? What if they had to live in suburbia?

I then have to find the perfect person to play the part. Get the costumes perfect and work on locations and props.

Post really depends on what has to be added to make the concept work.

**4) When I first saw the pictures, it made me laugh. But when I analyzed it several more times, there's social commentary behind it. What did you want the viewers to get out of it?**

Every one of them has a strong social message but with a touch of humor..so you were right to giggle. I'm finding that there are many interpretations of my work and that's fine. Art is meant to elicit discussion and debate.!

I have learned not to take the radical opinions to heart...as I have read so many comments on web sites around the world. When someone assumes that I made Jasmine into a terrorist...I try to reply and explain my real intension...but I can't do this for every one.

**6) My favorite one is Ariel in the aquarium because it shows how superficial society can be. Which one is your favorite and why?**

Rapunzel is my favourite. It is the reason that I began the project and my first conception. I think its the most emotionally provoking image in the series.

**7) You've been getting plenty of praises for the project, what are the most memorable comments you've gotten?**

I've received so many letters and emails. The ones that I remember most are not the ones praising my work but the ones that have touched people in a very personal way.!

The mother who feels overwhelmed with life, the woman who just got home from Chemo, the many parents with children obsessed with Princesses.

**8) Have your kids seen the pics and what did they think of it?**

Both my daughters have seen the series. Jordan is 8 and Zoe is 4. They enjoy recognizing their favorite characters in my work. !

They don't grasp the whole concept or the messages behind the work. They are not sophisticated enough right now...but one day....

**9) What's your favorite Disney movie?**

I like them all!...but Snow White is up there

## BETHANY K. - STUDENT INTERVIEW 2010

### **1. What do you believe the definition of a 'fairytale' is?**

A fairytale is a story based on an imaginary tale combined with old truths. Throughout time it changes and acquires elements that come from what is modern at the time.

### **2. Do you believe that Disney Princesses are good role models for younger generations growing up? why/why not?**

They usually get fascinated with the princesses at a young age (3-5). At this age they are not grasping the underlined story of the Disneyfied fairytale or the hidden lessons that it attempts to relay. They are captivated by the characters who always start out destitute and find a happy ending. Unfortunately the princesses are always saved by a male hero who sweeps them away to their happily ever after. Are these woman good role models for modern woman? I don't think so. Are all young girls going to grow up and assume that they have nothing to worry about because at some point a Prince will sweep them away to happiness? Probably not. It all depends on the parenting that accompanies these external influences. In a modern society most woman are carving out their own living and men are getting comfortable with that. The Disney fairytale might see itself dated and not relevant to a more sophisticated youth.

### **3. As a mother, would you encourage your own children to use Disney's Princesses as inspirations and models for their future hopes and dreams?**

I would not deprive my girls of watching the Disney shows or even buying their merchandise. I'm confident that they would never find inspiration in the Disney Princesses at all. They live in a household where their parents split everything 50/50. They are not spoiled and are taught that good things don't fall from the sky. They understand that the Princesses are made up characters that live in a made up land. I'm pretty confident that my girls won't end up marrying a Prince.

### **4. Do you believe your upbringing in Israel during the 70's without Disney and the strong ideals that are associated with their fairytales, affected your goals and aspirations in life? (e.g. were you growing up wanting your 'perfect' prince and a 'perfect' life or were these not even thoughts for you as a young girl?)**

I never experienced Disney fairytales at all. If I had would I be a different person now?...I'm not convinced. I'm a very pragmatic sort and most likely would have been either way.

**5. During your childhood, can you remember who or what you looked up to?**

As a young girl I very much looked up to my Aunt. She was educated and independent. She made me feel special and loved.!

**6. What was your inspiration for the 'Fallen Princesses' concept?**

Jordan, my daughter, was three at the time and was just starting to get into the 'Princess phase'. Princesses were everywhere and I too was getting introduced to them. Just around the same time my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. The two events collided and made me wonder what a Princesses would look like if she had to battle a disease, struggle financially or deal with aging. I began to imagine what could happen to the Princesses later in life and after the happily ever after. Naturally they would have to deal with challenges that all modern woman face.

My first idea was Rapunzel going through chemo and loosing her precious hair . I began to loosely sketch and came up with ideas for the rest of the images. With a very limited budget and a lot of volunteer help, I shot the series over two years.

**7. Do you believe Disney and their beloved princesses are allowing young people to lose touch with reality and the hardships of life?**

People naturally discover that life is not based on fairytales. Sometimes we all need to be entertained and to be submerged in a make-believe land where everything will work out for the best.

**8. What lessons or messages did you set out to portray through the photographs you produced in the 'Fallen Princess' series?**

I basically wanted to create scenarios that people could relate with, real issues and challenges that people face. I wanted the images to be dark and yet maintain a sense of humour. The messages are subjective and are often interpreted that way.

**9. Although each person has their own personal interpretation and ideas regarding your work, did you have a specific feeling you were aiming to achieve from the viewers?**

Good art creates conversation and discussion so I'm really pleased that my work has sparked some controversy. There have been discussion groups on the web that go on for miles about Not so little Red. The issue revolves around how and if fast food has contributed to her obesity. Many overweight people argue that the two are not connected and battle it out to make their point. They claim that I'm stereotyping.

Jasmine was another much discussed piece. Some accused me of placing the Middle Eastern Princess as a terrorist. My intention was to display her strength and courage. She is a warrior, fighting on the front lines, just as so many woman are today in Iraq. In general I'm interested in hearing what people have to say but I'm not taking anything personally.