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It's not too late to go pro

Costa Mesa photographer has been shooting pictures her whole life, but is taking her art to a professional level at 60.

By Britney Barnes

Updated: Thursday, January 7, 2010 10:01 PM PST
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Walking through her house, which is a mixture of modern and vintage, pretty and eclectic, Karin Crook points out her photographs that line the walls.

A steel staircase in Madrid, the Pointe Vecchio bridge in Florence, or the view out a window in Dublin are just a few of the subjects of Crook's art. Remembering, really seeing the world, is part of what draws her to photography.

Sitting with her eyes closed in class one day in middle school, a teacher asked the students if they could remember the color of the walls. Crook said she couldn't.

"I realized I needed to start looking at things and registering what it is, and I think photography is an aid for that," she said.

Crook, 60, of Costa Mesa, has taken a chance and decided to try her hand at professional photography. When most people start settling down and getting ready to finish up their careers, Crook is just getting started.

Although she's just starting shooting professionally, Crook said she has been taking pictures her whole life.

She started out during car trips with her family in the '60s, taking pictures from through the car window.

"My whole family would tease me because all I would get was blurry shots of cows," she said.

Despite the blurry bovines, Crook kept on taking pictures, but never considered pursuing it professionally until a friend pushed her into it. Rather insistently, the friend encouraged Crook to enter her pictures in the Orange County Fair in 2005.

Crook won second place and an honorable mention in the amateur competition and came back every year until she won Best in Show, First in Category, Division Winner and Jurors Choice in the professional division for her photograph of a steel staircase in Madrid in 2009.

"One of the pieces that she showed ended up winning pretty much everything you could win," said Anne Nutten, the owner of Anne's Boutique Wines in Costa Mesa.

Since then, Crook has exhibited her photos in different shows and been accepted into an international competition, but she wants to do more.

Crook said she wants to get more into the Los Angeles and international art scene and ultimately wants to have her work exhibited in a museum.

"It doesn't matter so much what other people think," she said. "I want to do it to be inventive and creative and grow."

The photographs in her house aren't pictures that people want to buy, Crook said.

Most people want pretty photos to hang on their walls, but, she said, she doesn't want to take



Karin Crook with some of her photography that has been placed in Anne's Boutique and Memphis Cafe. She will exhibit in the No Woman Stands Alone V show.

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"pretty" photos.

She prefers to capture layered images through her lens of cities that are crumbling.

"I think she tries to push the boundaries of photo further than just trying to take pretty pictures," Nutten said.

If You Go

Saturday: Artist's Choice from 3 to 5 p.m. at Anne's Boutique Wines at 270 E. 17th St. No. 14 in Costa Mesa. Cost: \$5

Feb. 5 to March 27: "No Woman Stands Alone V," a multi-artist exhibit at Copperwood Artware at 148A North Glassell St. in Orange. Go to www.copperwoodartware.com for more information.

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