



# The Camera's Eye Never Blinks

A photojournalist uses technology to create her art

dy Tuzon

From the outside, the colorful abode of Charr Crail appears to be an inviting abode. But indoors this colorful domicile bursts with colors and the professional photographer's artistic creations. Crail, a native of Florida, moved to Sacramento in the 1980s. For nearly 30 years, she has lived in this Midtown dwelling, where she finds comfort in this urban neighborhood's diverse architecture and its

perfect spot for a self-proclaimed "creatively insatiable" Crail is a general practitioner who is hired to shoot everything from portraits to rock concerts, and she has appeared in numerous magazines, area galleries and on

Crail does not brag, but when asked about this blue-eyed, copper-haired woman, she mentions her work in the likes of *Parade*, *World and the Wall Street Journal*. She has several awards to her credit, including one for "Best Photo Illustrator Goddess" according to *Sacramento Bee* review.

Through a portfolio of Crail's work, you'll not find any landscapes à la Ansel Adams. Instead, it is a study of faces, bodies in the human race at large, in black-and-white, some nude. The subjects are those she's taken and manipulated into unique



Charr Crail in front of the lens

"Landscapes are beautiful. However, I'd much rather see the landscape of a face or body," says Crail. "That, to me, is exquisite, constantly changing and always interesting. Nothing on this earth is more interesting to me than people."

Since she was a child, Crail says, she has been creating. In high school, she took both photography and art classes. Some years ago, when she

Crail says she went back to her roots and started producing pen-and-ink drawings using her photographs as canvases.

Photography has always been Crail's base. Even when she put down the camera a couple of years ago to create several dozen wildly popular, hand-painted silk scarves, she still ended up taking pictures of models wearing her textile art pieces.

Crail has worked as a photojournalist for area newspapers including the *Groves Citizen*, *Roseville Bee*, and *Sacramento Bee*. In the 1990s, she took a photojournalism course for the Neighbors division. When Neighbors offices merged with the *Bee's*, she stayed on—

"I realized I wanted to be a photographer and not an editor," Crail, whose business is now

Crail continues to create art images with her photographs. Thanks to digital technology, she now uses her computer instead of pen and ink. Crail enjoys how this technology affords her in the creative process. She doesn't see whether something works or doesn't—almost instantly. She shares her work just as quickly as her weblogs.

"I am inspired by my camera to take (an image) further," she says. "I'll see something through a photojournalist eye."

In addition to her freelance work and her art, Crail maintains three different web projects. *Eye Street Chronicles* is a site celebrating her adventures as a photographer. She describes a backstage view of the people she meets and things she photographs. The site combines her photography with journal-like entries and is one of Sacramento area's top 25 websites.

Crail also maintains a site called *Moonlighting*, an in-depth look at people she photographs and how they live double lives in order to pursue their creative passions.

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Crail says, that she is taking  
break from the site while she  
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She writes, “(I believe) that I can have what I want despite the odds. This unfailing notion is both a blessing and a bugaboo! When it works—and it often does—it’s glorious. When it doesn’t, I may be momentarily crushed but then the glimmer begins again—the spark of hope ignites and a new approach considered.”

Crail likens her Web sites to self-publishing and her audience is global.

“Strangers around the world see my photographs and that, to me, is so exciting,” says Crail. “The online world is just fun.”

*To view Charr Crail’s weblogs, go to [charrmer.blogspot.com/](http://charrmer.blogspot.com/); [moonlighters.blogspot.com/](http://moonlighters.blogspot.com/); and [moderndaysaint.blogspot.com/](http://moderndaysaint.blogspot.com/) ●*