

# MY TALE OF THE BOOTH

One would surmise, by viewing my other photography or visiting my home, that I have an interest in history and pretty much anything dating from before 1950: I live in a 104-year-old home, I collect antiques, I enjoy shooting pinup-style photography and have an entire wardrobe and props from that era. Old photographs of all my earliest ancestors are framed on my walls, among a collection of antique photos of dogs and humans together, peppered with a collection of anthropomorphic animal art.

In 2006, inspired by my obsession with vintage photos, I began a photo booth series of dogs for a local pit bull rescue group. I sat two dogs in front of some old curtains I had that reminded me of old photo booth drapes. The results were so much better than I expected! These two dogs were such great friends that I didn't need to use any of the tricks I'd learned over years of pet photography. The dogs automatically started licking each other, and upon editing, I realized how much they looked like young lovers sneaking in a little make out session behind the auditorium.

Everyone I shared it with loved this shot, so, flattered by all the interest people had expressed, I began experimenting with different backdrops and different dogs. I first built something out of PVC so that I could adjust the height based on the size of the dogs as well as transport it easily. I played around with this for a few years and then put the project aside. But in November of 2013, my beloved dog, DeeDee, passed away at age fifteen. I never took pictures of myself with her. I've since regretted it, so the following February, I organized an event to photograph people with their four-legged loves in the booth for Valentine's Day. Knowing how receptive people were to the original photo booth shots, I figured this would be a fun campaign.



Sure enough, these shots were a huge success too, and so began the process for the book.

My husband custom-built a more suitable photo booth for the dogs, with the same dimensions as a real booth. We surrounded it in curtains so that we had access to it from all sides but, if the well-behaved-dog gods saw fit, we could immerse them completely in a 100 percent genuine photo booth experience and seclude them. Using the real dimensions created the authentic look of a photo booth. The camera angle was always the same and the seating area was always consistent, so if they moved toward the lens or to the left or right, they were outside of the frame or out of focus, just like the real deal.

Each successive shoot kept producing amazing images. The more I did it the more amazed I became at the wonderful ways the dogs expressed themselves behind the curtain. They not only waited patiently for the camera once the curtains were drawn, they began interacting with each other in the same spontaneous way longtime friends do once the money is inserted and the countdown starts. Sure, the dogs didn't know they were being photographed, but it didn't matter. They were unable to resist socializing with one another and expressing their affection or curiosity.

The photos began capturing the personalities of the different breeds, the humor they shared in the photo booth, the friendship they projected and desired, their willingness to adapt and improvise, their innate sense of concern and wonder and love, and above all, their flawless parody of the human condition with all its warts and freckles. The dogs began sticking their tongues out at each other, laughing, yawning, howling, sneezing, frowning, making awkward facial expressions, walking out of the frame, etc. In a nutshell, they nailed it!

I was thrilled with the results from these shoots, but I couldn't have imagined what was going to happen next . . .

















