



Garrett's humorous "Wrong Booth" shows the kind of transformation that can occur in a photo booth.

BY THOMAS CRONE  
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For photo booth artist Steve "Mixup" Howard, planning a gathering for those who share his passion not only involves the art in question, but also a "grand name."  
 "When you get two people together it's a meeting," says Howard, of Nottingham, England. "When you get three, it's a convention."

From humble beginnings in 1999, the International Photobooth Convention is still trying to take that next step into mass appeal. Then again, photo booth art probably attracts its own select audience, a burgeoning group that's found a sense of community in recent times. Over the past seven years, the annual convention — and the term "convention" is used very loosely here — has become the place for fans and artists of the photo booth to meet, greet and, with gear on-hand, actually work on new projects.

Stopping at Souard's Mad Art Gallery last Monday and Tuesday, the free convention was in America for the second time, after several stops in England, one in New York City and even a trip to Yugoslavia. For the 2005 event, Howard passed off a large share of the work to St. Louis' primary champion of the photo booth, local artist Tim Garrett.

All four of Garrett's photo booths were operating last week, spitting out hundreds of images, in both black-and-white and color, giving fans and artists a chance to view the different species of machines in use in the United States.

Nakki Goranin was one of the national artists on hand to share perspectives on the history and current uses of the photo booth. She's putting together a historical overview of the machines, featuring vintage photographs, a project that she hopes to have published soon.

"What's kept it going all these years is fun," said Goranin, a Vermont-based photographer and artist. "It's fun, it's classic, it's classic."  
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St. Louis artist Tim Garrett used 400 uncut photo strips to create "Heather," which was displayed at the 7th International Photobooth Convention at the Mad Art Gallery in Souard.



BRIAN MEACHAM

**Where to find it**

Looking for a photobooth fix? Check out:

■ **Photobooth.net:** It includes a locator to many of the machines in use through the country, plus numerous fun features.

■ **Photoboothsll.com:** St. Louisan Tim Garrett's page for renting his machines, plus some of his artwork.

■ **Mixup.org.uk:** A wildly colorful home page and gallery for the United Kingdom's leading advocate of photo booth art.

Steve "Mixup" Howard (left) of Nottingham, England, the world's driving force in photo booth art, discusses his work with Lindsey Durway, who moved to St. Louis recently from Austin, Texas.



# Booth

## *Art in four quick clicks*

*Continued from C1*

it's immediate. You'll always have people loving it."

Brian Meacham of Cambridge, Mass., gave a lecture on the use of photo booths in modern cinema. Working with the Harvard Film Archive, Meacham summed up the fun ways in which the machines have popped up in cinematic moments, from "The Terminator" to "The Karate Kid" to "The Replacement Killers," plus a variety of Richard Lester-directed films.

"He used photo booths as far back as 1963 with 'A Hard Day's Night' and all the way through 1983, with 'Superman 3,'" said Meacham. "I never noticed how often they were used in film until I starting actually looking for them."

After Meacham's lecture and video presentation last Monday night, attendees watched a showing of the recent French cult classic "Amelie," which prominently features a train station photo booth. Jermaine Wilson, 11, of St. Louis,

spent much of Tuesday afternoon collecting photo booth shots, including various series of himself with props such as a toy shark, a fedora and plant clippings.

"I had fun," Jermaine said, clutching nearly 30 shots. "I enjoyed the black-and-white machines, because you could get more pictures."

Later that evening, several dozen St. Louisans and a few visitors made heavy use of the free machines, while the Tim Vatterott jazz trio performed. Though the crowd wasn't huge, it was remarkably enthusiastic. The room's vibe couldn't have been more upbeat, as people flitted from booth to booth playing with props and building little "narratives" into their photos.

Garrett, who donated the use of the machines and all of the supplies, said his out-of-pocket expenses were worth the festive nature of the convention. The event also was a departure from carting the machines to his usual jobs at weddings, anniversary parties and high school proms.

"I was happy to do it," he said. "Even working with a wedding, I enjoy the pleasure that people derive from the photo booth."

*Thomas Crone is a St. Louis writer.*