



Monsters & Madonnas

William Mortensen

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William Mortensen (1897 - 1965) was one of the most well-known and respected photographers in America in the 1930's. He worked primarily in Southern California as a Hollywood and studio portraitist and later taught his methods and ideas to younger generations. Mortensen's obscurity today is mainly due to his championing of Pictorialism, a force within photography that promoted retouching, hand-worked negatives, chemical washes, and an artistic, painterly approach that soon faded with the advance of modernism. He was considered an anachronism, an outsider in a field that rejected theatrical set-ups, retouching and imaginative subject matter. "Monsters & Madonnas," originally published in 1936, was a distilled manifesto of his thoughts and a response to the dominance of straight photography. This 1967 edition includes color plates which did not appear in the original publication.

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