

Famous portrait photographer report: angus mcbean

[Design](#), [Photography](#)



Angus McBean was born in Newbridge, Monmouthshire, Wales on 8 June 1904. Died June 9, 1990. McBean attended Monmouth School and Newport Technical College, at which time he developed an interest in photography. He worked for Liberty's Department Store in the antiques department learning restoration, while his personal life was spent in photography, mask-making and watching plays in the West End theatre. In 1932 he left Liberty's and grew his distinctive beard to symbolise the fact that he would never be a wage-slave again. He covered World War II and before the war also. McBean's masks became a talking point in social columns, and were much admired by the leading London West End photographer Hugh Cecil. Cecil offered him an assistant's post at his New Grafton Street studio where McBean learnt how to retouch large glass negatives and other useful techniques, whilst working on his own photographs in the evenings. Ivan Novello, another artist, was so impressed with McBean's romantic photographs that he commissioned him to take a set of production photographs as well. McBean had a new career and a photographic leading lady: he was to photograph Vivien Leigh on stage and in the studio for almost every performance she gave until her death thirty years later. McBean resultantly became one of the most significant portrait photographers of the 20th century, and was known as a photographer of celebrities.

In the spring of 1942 his career was temporarily ruined when he was arrested in Bath for criminal acts of homosexuality. He was sentenced to four years in prison and was released in the autumn of 1944. After the Second World War, McBean was able to successfully resume his career. There were

in effect two periods to McBean's career, his pre- and post-war phases. Pre-war he was a lot more confident in himself and experimented successfully with surrealism, indeed his work with the likes of Vivien Leigh are some of the most accessible surrealist photographic images known. Post war he reverted to a more regular style of portraiture photography, nearly always working with the entertainment and theatre profession.

Angus McBean's iconic portraits of actors and entertainers made him almost as famous as his subjects. I like Angus McBean's work because it looks very cool and the edits are really nice like the reflecting faces etc. Also it seems very unique. Not the common pictures you see every day.