


**THE
OKLAHOMAN**



Works by Swedish photographer on view at Oklahoma City art gallery

"Focus on Light," a small show of pictures by Stockholm photographer Hakan Strand, that are especially effective in black-and-white, is on display at Visions in the Paseo Art Gallery. A professional photographer since 1991, Strand is romantic yet restrained, creating austere, ethereal and atmospheric effects in his compositions, which are a tribute to the wintry climate where he lives.

A photo of an empty road, a lonely lamp post and "Dark Trees Along the Snowy Path" has an almost existential impact, which is reinforced by three starkly simplified images from his "Snow Scene" series.

Water becomes a key and sometimes an almost magical element in many of Strand's other photographs. A waterfall in Iceland becomes a "Flowing Vail," for example, while triangular "Black Mountains" in the Faroe Islands create ghostly reflections in the waters surrounding them in a second fine photo.

There is also something uncanny about a rock "Shaped by Water," on a fragile base that looks sculptural, rising from misty Norwegian waters, framed by foreground and background rock formations.

Dark rocks rising from quiet, nearly white water in Sweden, leading toward a distant, flat horizon line, suggests "Stepping Stones" for some mythic giant from the mists of history in his photo of that title.

Rising from the water, too, but more like Roman numerals or Asian calligraphy, are the remaining support structures of an abandoned Swedish "Broken Bridge," which actually does seem to lead nowhere.

Powerfully reminding us of the sacrifices required in World War II are the simple white crosses in the foreground of a picture taken at the "American Cemetery" in Colleville-sur-Mer, Normandie, France. Placed in the foreground, too, is a bright "Gondola Reflection" on a bright day in Venice, in a composition which has a nearly cubistic feeling.

The dark rectangular corner of a grassy enclosure separating what may be a pool or man-made body of water from the sea in France gives viewers a lesson in "La Geometrie" in one of two larger photos. "White Wisps" of fog cover what appears to be a partly submerged pier in the second photo, whose visual impact is greatly enhanced by its larger format.

The show of Strand's limited edition, low light, long exposure photographs is highly recommended during its run through Oct. 30.

— John Brandenburg