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Structures
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Saturday
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Art

Feininger's photos open Saturday at SNOMNH

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The black-and-white photography of world traveler Andreas Feininger hasn't been seen in a major exhibition for more than 25 years, but it's coming to Norman for the remainder of this year.

His work brings life and amazing detail to what would seem like typical elements found in nature — tiny veins of a leaf, conical chambers of shells, the curve of a snake's spine, among others.

And 61 of his pieces will be on display at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History beginning Saturday and running through Jan. 17. The exhibit is titled "Structures of Nature: Photographs by Andreas Feininger."

The exhibit will be enhanced with objects from several of the museum's collections. Also, the museum has produced a brief video documenting how museum scientists use the latest in microscope technology, including use of the scanning electron microscope to magnify objects up to 50,000 times closer than the unaided eye can see them.

Feininger brings some of those images as close as he can with his work. The artist, who died in 1999 at age 93, was born in Paris and raised in Germany. He was highly influenced by the Bauhaus, where his father, American artist Lyonel Feininger, taught prior to World War II.

The family returned to the United States in 1939, and Feininger joined the staff of *Life* magazine as a photographer in 1943. He shot more than 140 photo essays in his 20 years there.

After his retirement in 1963, Feininger began publishing books of his work, with an emphasis on nature photography. Those books include the simply-titled "Trees" in 1968, "Shells" in 1972 and "Leaves" in 1984, as well as several books comparing the similarities in design and structure like "In a Grain of Sand: Exploring Nature by Design" in 1986.

His work has been housed in several major photography collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany.

"Structures of Nature" is organized by the University of Richmond Museums in Virginia and circulated by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C. The photos are part of the permanent collection of the Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center at the University of Richmond Museums and were generously given by the Feininger family and the Bonni Benrubi Gallery in New York.

For more information on the exhibit and other programs at the museum, visit the Sam Noble Web site at www.snomnh.ou.edu. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.



MINUTE MARVELS: Andreas Feininger, pictured at far left, emphasized nature in his photographs from the '60s through the '80s. Left, a feather and, below, a grasshopper's wing are shown.

pop photos provided

