

# Darren Smith

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## Artist Biography

As the international design editor for *National Geographic Magazine*, Darren Smith uses his editorial eye and attention to detail. He applies the same skills to astonishing results in his handmade photo mosaics. Using hundreds or thousands of small fragments of his photographs, he painstakingly rebuilds new 'realities' from the pictures.

Smith draws his visual vocabulary from unusual landscapes that cross cultural and religious boundaries. His position with *National Geographic Magazine* often takes him to diverse foreign locales. Architecture, people, statues, natural phenomena and city life, photographed in the artist's travels, appear as formal elements in his compositions.

Frustrated by the limitations of traditional photography, but also disappointed in the plastic appearance of digitally manipulated images, he created his mosaic technique to have his own way of remixing reality, to transform a mechanical medium with the hand, creating surreal new worlds of intense detail and optimism.

His recent body of work, *Cross & Ladder*, will open as a solo exhibition in March 2009 at Honfleur Gallery in Washington, D.C. This collection is a study of two elements, the Cross and the Ladder, both symbols of humankind's desire to transcend our place in the world, either spiritually or intellectually. The cross is an icon for religion and faith. In counterpoint, Smith uses the ladder to represent science and its rational, step-by-step pursuit of knowledge. The ladder symbol is rooted in a discovery of modern science, the double helix of DNA. From abortion to stem cell research to gay rights, the most pressing cultural debates of our time are wars between religion and science, clashes of faith and reason.

Smith's work has been featured in solo and group shows in Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maryland, and Paris, France. His artwork is in private collections on both sides of the Atlantic. Honors to date include Second Place, National Arts Program from the National Press Club (2007), and an Equal Award (2006) and Marker Award (2005) from the Art League, Torpedo Factory. He is represented by Honfleur Gallery ([www.honfleurgallery.com](http://www.honfleurgallery.com)) and lives and works in Washington, D.C., with his wife and daughter.