



## MONTANA TRAILS GALLERY

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### **Brett J. Smith**

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If there was ever an artist who captured today's sporting experience with yesterday's sense of adventure, it is Brett Smith. Born on March 19, 1958 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Smith is now considered to be among the best in his field.

"In his early years, Smith was introduced to the sporting life by his grandfather who exposed him to the gentlemen's sport of quail hunting in the Longleaf Pine country of east Texas. Later he discovered a calling for sitting in cold wet marshes and swamps hunting ducks. This became his true passion and a great source of inspiration for his later works.

His early introduction to sporting art came from his father who worked professionally as an illustrator and moonlighted as a fine artist contributing paintings for covers of the early outdoor and western magazines. In college as a fine art major, Smith realized that the contemporary art curriculum would not equip him with the background needed to pursue the area that interested him most-commercial illustration.

It was at that time that he enrolled in the Famous Artist School that stressed painting and drawing of the human figure and designing pictures that tell stories. Unhappy with the direction of his college experience, Smith left school and began a career on his own as a commercial illustrator. Realizing that the majority of work in this field originated out of New York City, he acquired an artist representative and began working for a wide variety of corporate and editorial clients. After a few years, he decided to try his hand at "easel" painting for the fine art market. As subjects for his paintings he chooses familiar landscapes and acquaintances he has made over years of hunting and fishing across the country.



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Sportsmen nationwide collect his work because it is not only visually exciting but also authentic and brings to bear his intimate knowledge of his sporting experience. He is one of the few artists who brings an ageless nostalgia to his subjects. By looking back to the early illustrators such as Howard Pyle and N. C. Wyeth for inspiration, he manages to distance himself from his contemporaries. As he puts it, "What is important in these outdoor paintings is mood, a feeling of how things were and still can be. The idea is to convey the natural ruggedness of the sport without missing the subtle nuances that make the experience personal".

Smith's preferred medium is transparent watercolor or oil paints. The subject usually dictates the medium used. He uses oils for large complex scenes. Watercolors are used when more spontaneous results are desired. Working in three dimensions, he recently completed his first bronze sculpture of a fly fisherman.

Brett Smith also employs the timeless art of etching to create the luster of an ageless sporting scene. Although it is a painstaking process, it can produce an antiquated appearance that cannot be duplicated in any other medium when successful. With over 150 images to date he knows enough to realize that you never "master" this process but only learn more with each experience.

Smith's paintings hang in some of the most prestigious collections throughout the country. His work has been featured in such publications as Gray's Sporting Journal, Ducks Unlimited magazine, Sporting Classics, Shooting Sportsman, and Double Gun Journal. He has contributed to several books most recently a reprint of William Faulkner's classic "Big Woods". Smith has been recognized for his work with such organizations as GCCA, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society, Ducks Unlimited, and many others. He divides his time with his wife Cindy and two children in Covington, Louisiana and Noxon, Montana.