



# a natural state

**Artist: Tom Boozer**

**Video 1: Spotlight (The Interview)**

Boozer: I can remember stripping big thick chunks of bark off of longleaf pine trees and carving little boats out of them and then carving little masts and sailing them down this creek that we used to live by. So that...I, I guess that's really about the first time I picked up a pocketknife...and I was probably about six or seven years old.

As I developed more of an interest in working with wood, I became associated with Olin Ballentine when I was about nine years old. Olin passed away last year, but was a well-known woodworker, boat-builder, furniture-maker. He made a lot of traps for catching exotic animals. But anything that was made out of wood, he could make it.

I consider myself a folk artist, you know? In fact, decoys, believe it or not, have, have been claimed...or are claimed to be the finest folk art...American folk art, simply because it is the oldest American folk art. We, we actually learned decoy-making from the Native...the American Native.

My shop is basically open. And while I'm working during the day, I can always hear the birds. I can hear the squirrels, see the squirrels. There's rabbits running through the yard, deer running through the yard from time to time.

I, I, I think anybody that really claims to be an artist has a, a very special connection to nature, especially artists that work with natural materials, wood, and hand tools. And, and, again, especially artists, or artisans, that produce a traditional craft because those crafts really evolved from making utilitarian implements. Anything that could be used on the farm was typically made by the owner of that farm. And, and it evolved into an art form. A lot of it evolve, evolve, evolved into an art form.