



# a natural state

**Artist: Peter Werner**

**Video 2: Process, Part A: Starting**

Werner: OK. Well, we're going to get started making a broom. And, as you can see, I have all my high-tech equipment with me.

I start with just a little brass nail that's probably an inch to three-quarters of an inch, and I just pound it in a little bit until I actually have just a little bit of a stub left that I can put my string on. And then I have my high-tech spool of thread that I wound, just like a bobbin for sewers. And what I do with that slipknot is put it over my nail and pull it tight. And then I'm ready to go.

The first thing that I do is I make sure that, when I put my stick down here, that I have all of the cord coming toward me. And then I just start picking up pieces of broom corn, and I stick the first piece on and second piece and third piece, until I get the whole layer covered up all the way around. And every now and then, I pull on it...put another piece in.

And I have to put this on a specific place. If I put it on this stalk area here and put pressure on with this string, it would just rip right through it. But as long as I put it on the broom corn...the actual bristles here...it stays nice, and I don't need to worry about that. But I just keep putting pieces in until I get all the way around.

A lot of these pieces—like this one—look trashy, but I always put the trashy pieces on the first layer, and then they get covered up. So I...a broom maker doesn't really ever throw anything away. They use absolutely every piece of broom straw for some purpose.

OK. Once I get completely around, I pull nice and tight on it to make sure that it's not going to fall off the broom handle. And then I go around five times and I...if you ask me why five times, I would tell you, "I don't know. It is because that's the way my master broom maker, Ralph Gates, taught me. And so I'm doing exactly like what he taught me."