



OGDEN MUSEUM
OF SOUTHERN ART

O-original Art Activities: Found Object Broom Sculpture Inspired by Friendswood Brooms



Friendswood Brooms, *Untitled*, 2003

Using natural wood or antler handles, the Gates family wraps and binds the broomcorn using traditional techniques inspired by Shaker and Appalachian designs. The Gates family practices a technique of binding dating back to the 1790s, using just one nail and pressure to wrap string around natural broomcorn, a special type of sorghum, to secure it to the handle with no glue, tape or other type of adhesive. The broom actually begins with a walk in the woods, though, searching for the perfect branch, vine or shed antler to make the handle. “Nature does all the work. I just show it off a little bit,” Marlow says.

Friendswood Brooms are often used in wedding rituals, religious ceremonies or cleansing rituals. They can be used to sweep the floors clean of both dirt and bad luck. They can also be simply viewed as beautiful sculptural objects – art brooms for art’s sake.

Get inspired by nature and create paper broom sculpture.

Supplies List:

Color Paper, Found Object or Cardboard Tube, String or Wire, Scissors, Tape

Instructions

Step 1: With the permission of a parent or guardian take a walk in nature, your backyard or your neighborhood. Look for something that inspires you. Maybe it’s a specific branch, **found object** or something else that can be used as a small broom handle. If you’re not able to go for a walk, search your home for something that can be used instead, maybe the cardboard tube of a toilet or paper towel roll?

Step 2: What color broom do you want to make? Choose a piece of paper in that color. Lay the paper down horizontally (long ways).

Step 3: On the left end of the paper, place your object a few inches in from the top. Use tape to secure the left end of the paper to your object. Roll your object across the paper. Once you get to the end of the paper use tape to hold it in place.

Step 4: Use scissors to cut a long piece of string. Tightly tie the piece of string around your object where the top of the paper is (double knot it). Leave some length to the beginning of the string. Now wrap the longer part of the string around the paper until you reach the end of where the object is or start to run out of string. Leave enough length to tie the end of the string to the beginning of the string where you tied the knot.

Step 5: Use scissors to cut the paper into strips to create the bristles of the **sculpture**. Trim the length of the paper if needed. Crumple the paper and cut the tips of the bristles on an angle to add more texture to the broom.

Vocabulary

Found Object - a thing that someone else has given or thrown away that is often repurposed by artists

Sculpture - an artwork made from materials such as glass, wood, clay, metal that is 3D

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