

**Chris Leonard** was born in Des Moines, Iowa in **1962**. He currently lives and works in McAllen, Texas where he is a ceramics instructor at South Texas College. Leonard earned a BFA in Painting with additional hours to complete the Art Education Sequence from the University of Northern Iowa in 1985. With work and dreams inspired by Chicago's Hairy Who and most forms of expressionistic excess, unable to find firm grounding substitute teaching or delivering pizzas in the Des Moines area, he quickly departed for the Rio Grande Valley of Texas in 1987 after expanding his educational certification. In the borderlands of the late twentieth century he quickly began to illustrate high school algebra test O' funs, paint it up on the patio or garage, and make big plans while living life inch by inch.

At the completion of his fourteenth year of public school teaching at the dawn of the twenty-first century, Mr. Leonard returned to school full-time at the University of Texas Pan American and dove into their fledgling MFA program, finishing studies in 2003. Leonard then briefly taught foundations courses at his alma mater, UTPA and began to show in larger circles while juggling teaching, a family of four with pets piled on top, and finding time and space to make a productive studio practice. Chris joined the South Texas College art faculty in 2009 following service as a sabbatical replacement in the UTPA ceramics department as a full time lecturer from 2006-2009. Leonard now teaches ceramics at the South Texas College's Pecan Campus and has helped to coordinate their South Texas Ceramic Showdown for the past decade featuring collaborative talent shown from participating schools in and outside of the Lone Star State as well as workshops and exhibitions from established ceramic artists. As the twenty-first century rolls on, work that blends his Midwestern upbringing with media mixed in several directions continues to show fairly steadily on both sides of the Rio Grande where he has now spent half of his life.