

12-2003

Claus/claws: A journey through Leonardland's multivalent meanings

Chris Leonard
University of Texas-Pan American

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Leonard, Chris, "Claus/claws: A journey through Leonardland's multivalent meanings" (2003). *Theses and Dissertations - UTB/UTPA*. 635.

https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd/635

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations - UTB/UTPA by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact justin.white@utrgv.edu, william.flores01@utrgv.edu.

Claus/Claws: A Journey Through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings

Master of Fine Arts Exhibition Paper

by

Chris Leonard

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas - Pan American

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the terminal degree of

Master of Fine Arts

December 2003

Major Subject: Three Dimensional Fine Arts

Copyright

By

Chris Leonard

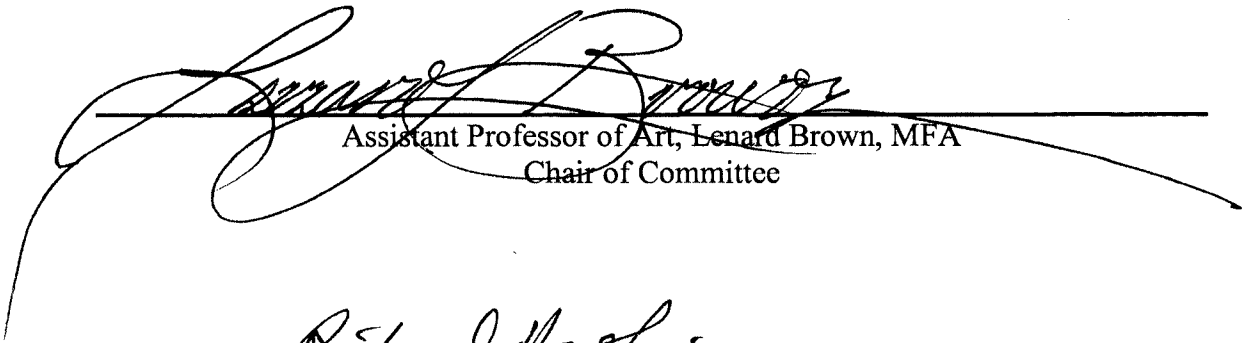
2003

Claus/Claws: A Journey Through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings

Master of Fine Arts Exhibition Paper

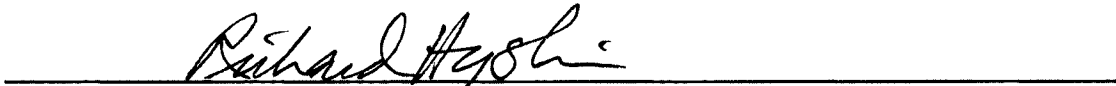
by
Chris Leonard

Approved as to style and content by:



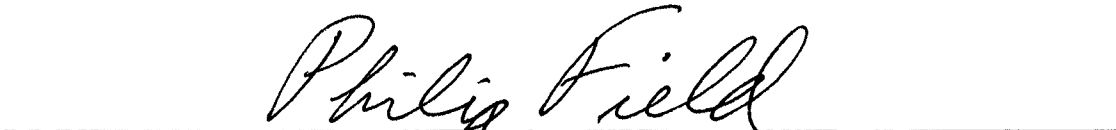
A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Leonard Brown'.

Assistant Professor of Art, Leonard Brown, MFA
Chair of Committee



A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Richard Hyslin'.

Graduate Chair and Professor of Art, Richard Hyslin, MA
Committee Member



A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Philip Field'.

Professor of Art, Philip Sidney Field, MFA
Committee Member

December 2003

Abstract

Leonard, Christopher Peter, Claus/Claws: A Journey Through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings. Master of Fine Arts (MFA), December 2003, 103 pages, 56 illustrations.

This exhibition paper presents the linkage of apparently unrelated topic and content. This arduous task is accomplished through an exploration of opposites and an overall presentation in the form of family fun or domestic distress disguised within personal world and the overall umbrella of homonyms: Claus (as in Santa) and Claws (as in cat). The work presented is a view of Leonardland, an intensely personal vision of my family and our history melded into a proposed future as seen through a wild conglomeration of seemingly dissimilar visions comprising the eclectic cultural mix that is our life on this geographic and cultural border. The nature of the artwork itself is described as narrative and contemplative. The text first provides an introduction, which sheds light on my artistic intentions, an artist statement follows, composed of philosophy and intent propelling the artwork. A rationale for Leonardland is established through the creation and explanation of an alter ego: Leonardclaus. The text then becomes interactive with a large-scale riddle in the form of an algebra exam of sorts, a remnant from my prior (and who know maybe future) career and a body that is broken into the examination of the Leonardclaus psyche and its development coupled with the integration and multiplication of a feline family. My primary

objective in this paper is to attempt to connect the vast and far-flung forces of family life, from economics to ergonomics, to the vast and disparate imagery that made up my world through the Claus/Claws body of work. In addition the establishment of present historical precedence, present future possibility is undertaken, as well as a presentation of any personally unique technical wrinkles.

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Artist Statement	4
III. Leonardclaus: An Alter Ego	6
IV. The Development of Leonardclaus	9
V. Xmas Test O' Fun: What Has/Will Become of Him?	13
VI. The Leonardclaus Visuals, Expanded	30
VII. Claws Accompanies Claus	40
VIII. Artistic Motivation: Historical Precedent	50
IX. Wrinkles in the Artistic Process	64
X. Conclusion	67
XI. Bibliography	69
XII. Appendix – Favorite Glazes	71
XIII. Appendix – Illustrations of Works	72
XIV. Copyright Page	99
XV. Vita	100

INTRODUCTION

I want more for Christmas than my two front teeth. I already have 'em. Some folks in our family may want another four-legged friend but we've got enough of those, too. I'm fairly happy with who I am. I think I had a fairly happy childhood, decent at almost anything but only beyond good in spots. Timing has never been my strong suit. As far as art goes, I've worked at it off and on but somehow missed the spark that would ignite any dedication and purpose; always a step or two behind where I wanted to be. Perhaps I was where I should have been all along. Somehow, it seems I stayed lodged within a too small comfort zone. The parameters of life, my life, anyway, require adjustments to problematic situations. These situations could be solved, not avoided, when I receive what I consider to be a very nice Christmas gift. Some things you can't buy in the store. I know I'm not going to live forever; I really don't need to be stronger, smarter, faster-life's going by fast enough. I just need to optimize what I've got. Sometimes I wonder about what would happen if I didn't have to sleep; an extra six, seven, or eight hours would certainly make me stronger, smarter, and in a way faster. It seems like there's so little time already, why rest?

The ability to function nonstop twenty four hours a day isn't physiologically possible but if it were the things I could do..... Why not want what you already have? The gift I want maybe can't be given anyway, except in parts. I think I already have what I want; it just needs a little reconditioning. If I had more time I could place more emphasis on preventative maintenance but there we go again with wishful thinking. In any event if

you spend some time with the physical presence of *Claus/Claws* and/or the written accompaniment that follows I hope you feel that I've come to find what I was searching for. And I hope that perhaps I supplied a boost, a sparkle, or some valued vivacity to something you, too, already had.

It may be noted here that if indeed you were one of the first fifty folk to view *Claus/Claws* you could have taken home a *Passionate Purple Pan American Piranha*, billed as a potently powerful panacea. (See figure one unless you yourself possess one) Urging the possessor of the handcrafted object to not operate on ifs, buts, and wishes the fine print continued:

“Passionate Purple Pan American Piranhas are designed specifically to promote health, wealth, and all the peace, love, and joy that go along with it. Want to win the lottery? Lose weight? Get better grades? Pay less in taxes? Meet Mr. or Mrs. Right (or Wrong depending upon your desires)? Check out panacea in the dictionary and pick one of these babies up! These loyal little buddies will swim with you through your magical journey that is life and most likely will enhance its quality if hard work, dedication, and determination are forthcoming on your part.”(Leonardland Creations 2003)

Was this trinket really a panacea or something truly powerful, meaningful, and since you can wear it, interactive? It depends upon the eye of the beholder: but if powerful, meaningful, and interactive is the goal in education, I believe that art for the possibility of enlightenment should also be meaningful, powerful, and interactive, even if on a somewhat smaller scale. I am a big fan of alliteration. Not only did *Passionate Purple*

Pan American Piranha simply sound good to me as I said it but it squeezed it's way into a couple of other possible functions as well. Working in education or affiliating oneself with an educational institution also provides the attachment of some type of mascot; a symbol for super human power and strength beyond what any individual is capable of. Through this common source of luck and strength comes the linking together of kindred spirits, a collective power. Piranhas link together and swim in a school. I had grown up as an Ankeny Hawk, spent five years as a Northern Iowa Panther, and continued in this vein working within Weslaco ISD's land of the Purple Panther before beginning my studies here in the home of the Bronc. It appears that well before the much-publicized seventy fifth anniversary year (2002-2003) of existence, the UTPA mascot had originated due to mixed allegiances: the Bronc was in actuality a second hand spin off of the Southern Methodist Mustangs first used back when the institution was still known as Edinburg Junior College. Since Pan Am has grown in size and stature and our unique location is the gateway of sorts to Latin America, why not make use of a uniquely Latin American reference point? From the Amazon, how far is the jump to the Rio Grande? In any event, I felt people wouldn't continue to search for a panacea if they already had one. They'd have to move on and look for something else.

ARTIST STATEMENT

If I were decidedly effective in my artistic endeavors through action and energy I'd arrive at a sensation of elemental power. The twenty-first century in America, so many choices! But are these choices always clear? I seem to find myself meandering off into symbolic meaning, metaphysical speculation, and contemplative moods. As soon as I answer one question and solve a problem another three or five invariably show up. Some of my solutions are becoming increasingly whimsical, fanciful, or even downright nonsensical. It appears that life will keep giving me plenty of opportunity in the problem-solving category. What I want is a smile on the face, a twinkle in the eye, a healthy glow in the gut, and maybe even a friend to confide in. If I don't have these things, I've decided to make them.

What am I making? Expanding from visual ideas relating to my station in life and the surrounding of a warm family within the constant churning change of time that is our life, repeated images keep finding their way onto both canvas as well as into clay creations. Two-dimensional explorations have fed the development of figurative vessels and creatures, which apparently would fall in a "dysfunctional ware" category. We're three pets less at the Leonard household than a year ago; but four humans, five cats, a dog, and a gerbil populate our home. This "family" and the personalities they exhibit seem to fuel my need to create reflections of them/us and our history. These reflections, if and when they are finished, put my perceptions into a moment in time and into a specific space, but are they ever finished?

I don't want a label of separation. The term "artist" seems somehow too broad and narrow at the same time. Of course there can also be much interpretation open to the word cat or dog. I believe I'm a painter now working (painting?) in clay. An inquiry into the realm of ceramics appears to be an examination into a metaphor for life itself. Technique and pure science meet imagination and mystery head on-the results can be beyond ones wildest expectations or fall disappointingly short of preconceived notions. Patience, persistence, and a determination to grow, adapt, adjust become readily apparent. The ability to coordinate a number of related, yet distinct steps in the creative process, as in life, can double your energy flow or knock it in half in a hurry. Spending more than a decade teaching Algebra I, my least favorite subject during the 1976-77 school year, seems to have provided a medley of multiple possibilities. I yearn for the solution that patience and perseverance can offer. I admire practicality, function, and systematic logic, yet my imagination and impetuous and intuitive nature discover numerous roadblocks or detours. Where can organization and imagination achieve peaceful coexistence? I plan on plugging and chugging along to see if I can get closer to finding out.

LEONARDCLAUS: AN ALTER EGO

When my brush hits the canvas or when a vessel is paddled and sliced in the first steps toward becoming another of what professor Lenard Brown coined a “cat o’ lantern” my personality seems to shift into another arena. Writing and speaking are direct: words carry specific meanings. The visual format provides more wiggle room: I feel like I can present specific thoughts, images, ideas, and inventions, open them up to interpretation, and then to some degree I can slip into the background. The art I make invites both speculation and contemplation; to make the art I have purposefully created a second self of sorts, a perfect substitute or deputy. I don’t necessarily feel that this is idiosyncratic; in fact I find it quite effective. Many of the meaningful experiences in my life have been that of transcending personal boundaries and limitations through imagination. In the back yard, just as I became Chris Leonard/Pete Rose in one at bat facing Todd Hartley/Luis Tiant, then chose to be Mike Schmidt in the next while Todd shifted into Bert Blyleven mode, I’ve extended the role playing into the creation of an alter ego---the part of me that not only does a large portion of the artwork but is featured as a subject in whole or part as well. The Californian artist William T. Wiley has developed an alter ego in his art; named Mr. Unnatural in reference both to the absurdity of twentieth century man as well as twisting comic artist Robert Crumb’s cosmic misfit, Mr. Natural. Leonardclaus serves much the same function for me. Wiley is linked with the late nineteen sixties advent of Funk and Edward Lucie Smith categorizes him as a neo-surrealist in *Art in America Now* (1985, so now is then). Lucie’s inclusion of Peter

Selz's 1967 description of the purpose (if there is one) or at least context of the San Francisco, California based Funk seems to propel my artwork (as well as Wiley's and a number of living, breathing, producing artists from this arena and era) three-plus decades later:

“Dada set out to attack and combat the moral hypocrisy of the public; Surrealism in its prodigious publications and manifestos and programs helped to establish a new and irrational order based on the revolutionary but contradictory doctrines of Marx and /Freud, but Funk does not care about public morality. It's concerns are of a highly personal nature; the artists know too well that a fraudulent morality is a fact of their world, and they have no illusions that they can change it. If these artists express anything at all, it is senselessness, absurdity, and fun, they delight in nonsense, they abandon all the straight jackets of rationality, and with an intuitive sense of humor they present their own elemental feelings and visceral processes. If there is any morality, ‘it is for you to find out.’”

I haven't quite come to grips with the fact that fraudulent morality is a fact of our world. I know it's present (or not present, as the case might be); I just feel it's an individual choice as to what degree one must be aware of or reconciled to this apparent given. Hence the rise of Leonardclaus: a bit of crass consumerism, a hint at religious possibility, and the promise of Christmas day and unlimited possibility (times 365 days year) as viewed through the eyes of a child. Spending time teaching high school algebra is essentially spending time building and teaching problem solving skills; there are plenty of answers for everyone “to find out”. The framework of my paint and clay is a world

that is very real and dear to me. I, or Leonardclaus, am still presenting plenty of opportunities for the viewer to search and keep finding and sorting things out. Lucie-Smith describes the personal nature of Wiley's art; his work

“admits the spectator to a quirky universe with its own rules. Its mixture of personal obsession and satirical commentary finds unexpected parallel in the work that Dali was producing at the height of his most surrealist period in the 30s, though otherwise the two artists do not at all resemble one another in style.”(58)

I don't wish to consider my work necessarily first and foremost surreal. Instead I would present the position that it is more closely aligned with the heart of Wiley's work. A quirky universe with it's own rules is also the heart of my art, but everyone is invited. My world can become yours just as Chris Leonard has become Leonardclaus.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEONARDCLAUS

'Who are *you*?' said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I--I hardly know, sir, just at present-- at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the Caterpillar sternly. 'Explain yourself!'

'I can't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, sir' said Alice, 'because I'm not myself, you see.'

-Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Hopeless romantics keep hoping that

Someday will come

-Steve Earle

Chris Leonard-that's me, was born in the capital city of Iowa-Des Moines in 1962. Much of my life can be explained but if I went about it directly no one would believe it. For example, Chris Ohden was born in 1962, and in 1973, Chris Leonard was created. What I've tried to create through both two and three dimensional media is a

continuum of domestic drama arising from a variety of family and friends, a blur of images that become even more important to me as time passed and continues to pass all too quickly. Though born in Des Moines, I am an Ankeny, Iowa native. It's not a little Podunk town in the middle of nowhere. It's now a near suburb of Des Moines, and even if you've never been there it is certainly somewhere. I really like Iowa, much of my dreaming in my artwork could be about Iowa. But the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the hill or other side of the Red River. I haven't had to shovel snow for years, haven't seen snow for over half a decade. Despite the fact that my mother is twice divorced and my father passed away during my first grade year, growing up in Ankeny may have been almost too nice and idyllic. It could be considered even nicer and much more expensive now, but at its core it was a John Deere town. Keith D. Hopkins, superintendent of schools lived on one side of us; The Hartley's (Ben was a forklift operator at Firestone) were on the other. One could say that the Moy brothers, the Guzman brothers, and the Jones family did provide a pinch of ethnic diversity. It was a mixed bag but we were all somehow strangely alike.

If you want to know what my upbringing was like watch *The Bad News Bears*. I highly recommend it. (This is the very era of my youth, I too could have climbed a tree so Walter Matheau would have to talk me down. I didn't play baseball until sixth grade and was lumped with mostly fourth and fifth graders. But we were like the big Big Red machine and under the direction of Dale Cairns were unbeaten and tied once heading into the playoff tournament when a tornado walloped Ankeny and suspended play for the remainder of the year.), cross it with Fred Savage in the late eighties series *The Wonder Years* and throw in a pinch of Steven King's *The Body* from *Four Seasons* (which also

became a movie: *Stand By Me*) and you'd have a reasonable facsimile of life at 421 SE Third Street. There was plenty of stuff to do and plenty of people to do it with. One could ride a bike to the library, the swimming pool, or four mile creek. You could always find something to do at home, too. Or mom would find something for you if you were out of ideas and wanted to watch TV. I became a pretty good high school two miler but my favorite sport of all time was and still is whiffle ball in the back yard.

After toying with tempera paint through my high school years, I received a BFA with an emphasis in painting from the University of Northern Iowa in 1985. At Northern Iowa I had some great teachers; Frje Echeverria is still providing encouragement. I studied along side Steve Gerberich, who in my opinion is the biggest thing in Iowa since Grant Wood, and Duane Slick who currently chairs the painting department at the Rhode Island School of Design. Gerb returns my cards and correspondence, Duane doesn't. I don't know what that necessarily means but we had a great group of painters and one of my favorite trades of all time was for the Mark McCright I have in my living room. I have no idea where he is now though his wife was heading to Iowa for grad school and I got a bit lost in the late eighties so.....

I delivered pizzas; substitute taught, became certified in math with the assistance of my engineer-head brothers and headed south in a two-car caravan driving a Fiesta (how appropriate) followed by an Escort with Kelly Houlihan and an Aaron growing inside of her. I spent much time and energy teaching math, heavily relying on the Creative Publications offerings: Algebra and Pre Algebra with Pizazz. Taas? TEKS? Get a hold of these presentations and you'll be set for life. I decided to make my own little Test O' Funs complete with various illustrations and stale puns which became a tradition of sorts

in rooms D32 and P6. When I had a chance to teach a bit of art it was the encouragement of teachers gone by and the possibility of what could be that propelled an abandoned longing for making additional artistic endeavors: order out of chaos and chaos out of order once again began to take root. This coupled with the fact that our current home here on Charles Circle (which we've advertised as: You can't get any closer to UTPA!) was a rental house yet my renters weren't necessarily paying rent led to what I thought was an entirely logical decision to head back to school full time, in art, and do clay which I hadn't really touched except to make whistles with Art I kids at school. I didn't even know how to fire an electric kiln. Many opportunities for learning were then entirely possible.

Somewhere in three and a half decades of life, I had gradually developed too narrow scope of possibilities; a set of self imposed limitations due to a fear of failure. Residues of unresolved conflict coupled with a resistance or inability to accept change also seemed to increase with each passing year. The seasons in south Texas were not clearly marked by the climatic changes of my Midwestern youth so the years began to blur into one another. What possibly could I, a self-invented Leonardclaus do about such obstinate obstacles in the elusive pursuit of excellence? What I did I'd like to share with you. I didn't patent the Test O' Fun but I should have. I could easily still be doing the same thing that supplied a paycheck if it weren't for that nagging feeling of doubt. I do have the same family. And life is full of new starts. If there is a key to the meaning of my art it is a search. Just what am I searching for?

XMAS TEST O' FUN: WHAT HAS/WILL BECOME OF HIM?

When you find yourself in a hole, the first rule is to quit digging.

-What "they" say in West Texas

Our brains are dead and leaking puss;

But who the hell cares?

Excellence must pursue us!

-Chris Leonard

Happy are those who find wisdom,

And those who get understanding,

For her income is better than silver,

And her revenue is better than gold.

She is more precious than jewels,

And nothing you can desire can compare to her.

-Proverbs 3:13-17

May I further introduce you to Leonardclaus? He may provide some illumination into the inner workings of his alter ego, Chris Leonardski-Leonard and the array of paint and clay presented in Claus/Claws: A Journey through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings. It

may be of special note that for quite some time Weslaco High School located at 1005 West Pike housed a variety of ever changing Leonardlands. Chris Leonard pushed a cart from room to room for a total of five years before landing in room D32 where a semi permanent home gave rise to a rush of Friday Test O' Funs. Mr. Leonard then drifted, or was assigned to Portable 6 at in what is now the "All American City" (Once an All American City, always an All American City, right?) of Weslaco, Texas. This leaky termite infested cubicle with a door that opened to the outside world, sun, rain, wind and all really *was* Leonardland. From 8:00 to 5:00 or so. Of course the whole Leonard crew hung out at 202 Audrey Drive, a real live pleasure palace with a pool, a swing set, and a pair of refrigerators. In 2001, two and a half years after the composition of the Christmas Test O' Fun of which you are about to partake, Leonardclaus didn't have what he'd asked for so he went in search of it. Leonardland was relocated to 1711 Charles Circle here in Edinburg, a former All American City which seems to cling to this past glory as a double winner, constantly trying to create some sort of mystical aural from those 1995 and 2000 winning years until eternity. Such seem to be the tragicomic consequences of Leonard's life. Perhaps some day he will have the opportunity to live in an All American City, not just own property there. But he has his art, his health, his family, and his family's pets. The quest by Leonardclaus continued, this time X's, O's and dollars were replaced by a journey in paint and clay. (See *Leonardclaus Tunes Out* and *Leonardclaws Tunes In* figures two and three) Nothing in life is easy and if you want to know what and why I'm doing what I'm doing, this puzzle has specific answers that still hold true. If you can find them you may have a grasp on the inescapable reality that all the rest of my questions seemingly lead to more questions. If I do unearth an answer I'm hoping it will lead to

more answers. Read on.

A Revisited Christmas Test O' Fun Time, Featuring the Twelve Limericks of Christmas--
--Leonardclaus AKA Chris Leonard is *still* looking for that perfect gift.

So what do you have to do? Sharpen a couple pencils, grab a calculator if you wish and heat up the gray matter. Because your results do matter! We'll even make it a little more challenging in our customization here. This Xmas Test O' Fun is a JUMBLE! How do you like them apples? Eleven problems with twenty-two possible answers. Once your eleven answers are selected, unscramble the letters to see what our not so jolly little Leonardclaus needs this Christmas. Hopefully, it won't wear out for a while.

If you yourself are in need of the same gift ideas as Leonardclaus and toiling on the Test O' Fun is frustrating enough to wear out your old one, the answers won't be given away but you can send the author a self addressed stamped envelope for a copy of the solutions-currently he resides at 1711 Charles Circle/Edinburg, TX 78541. In any event, enjoy yourself and have a merry little or Texas-sized Christmas and let the Test O' Fun begin! (You must use a *Christmas Card Code Key* as a supplement, see figure four. Do NOT write on it, or on this thesis paper either, and put it back in the envelope where you found it (please).)

We'll warm you up with an easy one. Sort of a Pete Rose sure shot single that is fumbled into a three-bagger. If you know a little about how to get the sum of a geometric series and how to make unit conversions you'll be well on your way:

Leonardclaus is investing his time wisely to create a Semester One Exam O' Fun for some students who think the term Exam O' Fun is an oxymoron. I am aware that I could insert a comment here but a sensible success subscriber scoffs at such suggestion. Are you spitting? Back to your problem: Quickly assembling a code key, Leonardclaus debates between the following two limericks:

There's a jolly old elf from north of Quebec,
 He's got a cool sleigh that's faster than heck.
 One night: He'll visit all the good girls and boys,
 Silently fills all their stockings with toys.
 Will he find you on his list? He will check!

And

There's a giant round elf living north of Ontario
 Delivers toys, eats a lot, favorite phrase: "Ho, ho, ho!"
 To make your Christmas merry and nice:
 Take your time on this test and check everything twice,
 Or else all you'll get is a big fat zero!

Leonardclaus spits out his first limerick in a lightning-like thirty seconds flat. He begins to slow on the second and it takes 90 seconds. He makes a third in four and one-half

minutes, but the fourth limerick really begins to drag: Thirteen and one-half minutes. If this continues, how long would it take Leonardclaus to write the twelve Limericks of Christmas?

It'd be a total of 1) _____ days 2) _____ hours and 3) _____ minutes.

Folks, it appears that Leonardclaus will be limericking longer than three months! And Christmas, as you know, is just around the corner. Leonardclaus can do much better than that. Let's see if he included a few more on this here test.

For those of you who are wondering , Leonardclaus selects the first limerick for his studious scholars because it sounds just a tad more positive. And Leonardclaus likes to be both positive and polite! If he didn't he could have used this one:

Way up north on the North Pole beyond British Columbia

There's a toy-makin' elf, I wonder who could it be, huh?

It's old St. Nick if you want the truth

He delivers Christmas toys from Weslaco to Duluth.

You're a scumbag? What'll you get? I sure wouldn't want to be ya!

Unbeknownst to our South Texas friend who picked Limerick #1, Santa's cool sleigh is no longer faster than heck. It's not even faster than the Rollin' Blue Thunder that Leonardclaus thunders down the road with. Unfortunately, Santa's old faithful friend is

kaput and all the Rudolf's in the world couldn't guide his sleigh tonight or any other night.

Santa is in a bind and must agree to what's known in the business as a South Pole Smart Buy: A twenty four hour minimum rental with a charge of \$5.00 per hour for the first three hours, \$10.00 per hour for the second three hours, \$20.00 per hour for the third three hours, and so on. How much dough is Santa going to have to shell out for a twenty-four hour rental?

4) _____ in cold (get it) hard cash.

That's an awful lot of cash. It is for me anyway and it must be for Santa. As Leonardclaus was rolling the Mercury up and down the road to WHS this AM he heard on the AM that Santa held up a bank in Albuquerque. What's next, Mrs. Claus knocking over a savings and loan in Austin? Maybe they can have the Claus kids robbing banks, too. I don't know how much cash was taken but I do know this: If the kooky Claus clan can enlist six elves to rob a few more banks from Ann Arbor to Atlanta the amount that each bandit would need to contribute to the sleigh rental fund would drop by \$17.00 per bank robber. It may become so affordable that they could hit liquor and convenience stores, too. How convenient! How many kids do Santa and Mrs. Claus have, anyway?

5) They have _____ children. That's a handful. Let us press on!

There's a roly-poly toy maker up northa Manitoba
 It's cold up there, you know, further north than North Dakota
 "Why live where it's cold?" I've gotta ask.
 But first things first: Lets do some math.
 We'll find out if you know what you're supposed ta!

Why live where it's cold indeed! And just why did Santa slip into such dire straights?
 Robbing banks and joints that sell beer? What for? In order to spread prescribed
 Christmas cheer! If he'd have checked the antifreeze this may not have happened: He
 would have found out that the radiator holds 10 liters and that the manufacturer's
 specifications require that it be maintained with a 50% antifreeze solution. To be sure, it
 did hold a full 10 liters of fluid, but it was only a 20% antifreeze solution. How many
 liters could have been drawn off and replaced with the 80% antifreeze solution that was
 just sitting on the shelf in order to give him the exact 10 liters of a 50% solution that is
 required?

6) That would be _____ liters, sir!

Santa certainly has a slew of sleigh problems "up there". How about ol' Leonardclaus
 "down here"? Christmas should be a time of joy but for a Packer fan this may be a black
 and blue Christmas:

Red bought the Vikes, they're starting to win, when are they movin' down to Texas?

Red likes his coach, Dennis Green, he knows his O's and X's.

In Green Bay who can stop Reggie White

Replace the fallen this past Monday Night?

Do you know what a Tyrannosaurus Rex is?

The Packers seem to be losing not just games but a significant portion of their team each week, too. If the Packer roster loses 20% of its roster to injuries with each passing game, how many games will it take until just one lone Packer remains? Yes, you'd have to know how many Packers we started out with. Hold on a sec while Leonardclaus pulls the 1998 Green Bay Packer Yearbook off of the shelf. Ahah! On pages fifty-six and fifty-seven there are fifty-seven Packers shown. Sure, this includes people like Eugene Robinson and Don Beebe who could be helping the Green Bay cause this Year, but let's concentrate of the number 57, okie dokie?

7) Rounded to the nearest game it would be _____ games.

This number appears to be longer than the regular season schedule. Win all these games and they could be remembered with the 72 Dolphins. Shouldn't they replace some of these guys if and when, if not before they reach the playoffs? They are gonna make the playoffs smart guy.

The clock is ticking while they're taking a licking. When Leonardclaus scans the classifieds at the crack of dawn one Friday, there it is: Squeezed between adds for

various meat packers, Leonardclaus spots a recruitment for the Green Bay Packers. Leonardclaus reads this one closely and discovers that open tryouts are scheduled for the following Sunday afternoon at 12:00 sharp in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This is a fantastic opportunity for Leonardclaus! He fulfills his obligation to create mucho success at WHS with a little sneak out the door and quick exit out the back of Panther Drive. Just a bit early at 3:00 Sharp. Darrin Sharper needs some help and is WHS coming to a standstill without him? How about with him? The Tracer/Rollin Blue Thunder charges down Highway 281 at top speed but soon a brutal north wind kicks in. Leonardclaus's speed is thusly reduced by one third when he's covered only thirty percent of his 2,000-mile journey. Regardless, the Rollin Blue Thunder thunders on and reaches Lambeau Field at 12:00 PM Sunday as Scheduled. What is the top speed of Rollin' Blue Thunder?

8) Rollin Blue Thunder has a top speed of _____ mile per hour.

There is absolutely no time to stop along the way in the homeland of Ioway— Leonardclaus just makes it. Let's be more specific: He makes the 12:00 time deadline but the tryouts do not go very well for our protagonist. He has enough time during his effort in the 40 yard dash to recite the story about the Christmas gift at age seven—the football with Bart Starr's autograph that was immediately put into service on a snowy afternoon with the ball being washed perfectly clean.

Coach Holmgren asks, "Son (Actually he says *old* man), who are you trying to kid?"

Following the lead of one of his most annoying students, one who desecrated all

limericks when facing a Test O' Fun with the following,

“Study? Prepare for success? Partyin’ is my focus.

Listen to old Leonardclaus spoutin’ out his hocus-pocus.

Math? We like to drink and smoke-

But don’t worry man, my brain ain’t broke,

But this test will really *smoke* us!”

, Leonardclaus employs “the echo”: “*Older* man, who are you trying to kid?”

When told he could cover Randy Moss on the day that Santa can fly he begins to lose control.

“You don’t believe in me, and you don’t believe in Santa either?!?!?”

Even though he’ll be a Packer fan forever and he’s really not that old, Leonardclaus really rips into his

could be coach:

“Santa lives a way up north, way up above Nantucket,

He’s delivered toys for many a year, he’ll never kick the bucket.

Dennis Green’s wearing an awfully big grin,

Will we see the Pack in the big one again?

You guys are going nowhere, man, just #%@* it!”

Not a very happy ending, I know but there may be one for you. Moved to tears by the

tale of the lost Starr script, Brett Favre offers up some coupons for freebies at his very own Bret's Brat n Brew so you won't be required to calculate the price for either brats, brews, or cheese filled pretzels. No matter how long it takes to reach Weslaco again, at least Leonardclaus has some fuel for his return trip and you can save time and move on to the next puzzling question in this here puzzle.

Returning to the Crown Jewel of the Valley, Leonardclaus loses himself in his lame limericks and loses sight of those things that make the Casa del Leonard run smoothly. Suddenly, it's Sunday and the Packers are on TV! Unfortunately, he's intercepted with an outline of several honey do's and don'ts.

Jolly old St. Nick is busy making toys from dusk to dawn;

He's got himself a factory up north of Saskatchewan.

That's way up there, we're way down here, how will the man deliver?

Why choose to live in such a place that makes one shake and shiver?

Hell, I don't know but if you want to watch the game you better mow the lawn!

Mow the lawn? Who has time for that? Leonardclaus has more important stuff to do, it's called "writing curriculum". What this specifically is, I don't know but let's compare it to an understandable task such as having a pump fill a pool. Leonardclaus can "write a complete curriculum"/fill a pool in 10 hours. Unfortunately Weslacocrats can "create needs for revision and documentation" in 14 hours. Let us compare the Weslacocrat effort to that of draining of a pool. If you read this over again you will see that our pool

is being filled faster than it is being emptied: Leonardclaus is faster than the Weslacocrats and there is light at the end of the tunnel. If Leonardclaus works on “writing a complete curriculum”/filling a pool for two hours before the Weslacocrats begin “creating needs for revision and appropriate documentation”/draining the pool, how long will it take for this curriculum to be written?

- 9) It would take _____ hours for the curriculum to be written. A small price to pay in the pursuit of excellence. And if excellence doesn't shape up there will be a lawsuit of excellence.

Perhaps that was a little tricky. In his curriculum writing Leonardclaus must alter his concept of challenging. Are you ready for an E-Z doer?

In his travels through our enchanted kingdom on the border
Leonardclaus spotted some documentation prepared to combat any sort of disorder.

“This Problem really has some zip-
Into my curriculum it will slip.”

If the Dean woulda known it coulda floored her!

Let's letter rip with the plagiarized problem: One of the largest zippers in the world measures 9,353 feet and has 2,562,722 teeth. How many teeth would a three-foot zipper have?

Don't answer yet. We'll fix it up Very realistic, isn't it? Don't you just love these real life applications? But it is zippy! Zipper/zippy what's the difference? Is the relationship between the length of all zippers and the number of teeth they possess always proportional? Don't give me a 7734, yeah because the answer is NO. Please continue.

With a couple of minor alterations Leonardclaus manages to give our proportional pal the realistic touch:

In addition to their regular classroom humdrum, the average teacher at WHS has the opportunity to serve on a committee or two. Your average committee is composed of 9,353 teachers and produces 2,562,722 pages of earth shaking data. You scoff at my assertion that the documentation is earth shaking? How about this tidbit from the exalted SBDM squad: "Teachers would like for someone to look into why the WHS staff has to pay more for items in the vending machines than people at other campuses or central office?" Would you care to volunteer? Back to the problem: At this rate, assuming that the relationship between committee members and pages of highly relevant documentation produced is proportional, even if the definition of produced is disproportionately elongated, how many pages of dynamite data would be produced if we'd adopt a "Three Amigos is the Way to Go" concept (talk about your paradigm shifts) and trim the number of teachers per committee to just three?

10) The correct answer is a sort of streamlined _____ pages of documentation.

Yes, self esteem considerations or not, Leonardclaus would prefer the correct answer. Despite being told that his curriculum would need some “serious realignment” and the fact that St. Favrelous threw a couple touchdown passes to the Bears when he doesn’t play for the Bears, Leonardclaus is finally starting to relax. Jarring him back to reality is a reminder that certain seasonal obligations have not yet been met. There’s supposed to be something under the tree, right? Got any ideas? Got any cash?

Shannon made her list last night, “Dad, I want a real live bunny!”

There’s what-four cats and two dogs in the Leonardclaus house: I don’t think that’s very funny.

“Rollerblades’ll go super fast-

You’ll pick it up easy and have a real blast!”

In the long run it will surely cost less money.

A lot less money is right. Just like you on this test, those little bunnies can multiply! If Leonardclaus would make another mistake and supply young Shannon with Mr. and Mrs. Bunny would we have some friends for Daphne, Halloween, Jenny, Oscar, and Snoopy. If the bunny population would double daily after their arrival on Christmas Day, how many pets would there be in the Leonardclaus house partyin’ away on New Years Eve?

11) _____ fuzzy little (some are kinda big and some are downright fat) pets.

If you type like I do you may quickly find our there’s little difference between pets and pest. This would more than adequately describe the situation. Rollerbaldes it is.

Eleven problems and eleven letters. With the exception of your mad scramble to unscramble, you're mission is complete. I do owe you another pair of limericks to wrap up your gift.

I heard a vague rumor but I dare not go near it-
 No Santa Claus means there's no Christmas spirit.
 No Santa Claus? He ain't really real?
 Oh, fiddlesticks, that's a heck of a deal.
 Leonardclaus, too? Man, I do NOT want to hear it!

These guys only exist in your imagination? If that's the case just where did these quixotic questions come from? Are you sure of your answers? No, but you are sure that there is a Limerick missing. Leonardclaus isn't a lying son of a.....Excuse me this isn't some tired bait and switch. Let's let him sign off with a few final words of Christmas cheer.

Drugs and sex and rock and roll, who needs an education?
 What's up with our president? What will become this great nation?
 What do you think? I'm asking you:
 Is there something we can do?
 You figure it out, I'm on Christmas Vacation!

The point of putting you the reader through this mathematical maze is this: In this Test O Fun format, be it delivered to students, teachers, friends or foes, are the same elements that exist in my artwork. There is, I believe, a willingness to give of myself guardedly, to engage a viewer/reader in play, and also a glimpse into the day to day dynamics of our family life on the edge (of the Estados Unidos). Present also are elements of my life that either purposely or not find their way into my art: the contradictions of humor and frustration, the seemingly random outcome from many of life's choices, the search for meaning or purpose within many of life's compartmentalized tasks and perhaps life itself on a larger plane, the swirling set of analytical and nonsensical problematic situations that confront each of us daily; packaged in such a format to bring the gut level reaction to the forefront from an artificially contrived delivery. These curiously juxtaposed pieces of verbiage go beyond alluding to the fact that I'd developed a sense of more than unease: as time passed, I viewed others around me as folks who's choices had provided philosophical and physical niches which allowed them to be part of a system that made sense. I saw little rhyme or reason within my station in life, and with the naiveté and expectation of a child at Christmas time, I was optimistically dreaming about a magical moment in time where the mysteries of the world would suddenly fall into place, where whichever and whatever problem type I would choose to approach, regardless as to whether or not the problem was solvable, the *effort* to move toward solution would be filled with purpose. By spending the past twenty-four months moving from paint to clay, from a starting idea through a visual explanation/exploration and physical finish, my effort has seemed to make sense. What now? What do these creations mean? Where will I take them and where will they take

me?

Where are the cats and why did I decide to use them? Two short years later the traditional Christmas Test O' Fun code key emanating from 202 Audrey Drive would unlock this phrase: There's a fat guy out on our lawn, he's been slaving away from dusk until dawn, but now that he pauses he thinks it's quite fun, to juggle our cats in the hot Texas sun! Perhaps it's therapeutic, perhaps it's bad taste, but I (Leonardclaus/Leonardski/Chris Leonard) am still having fun juggling cats in the hot Texas sun. Using humor, treading the line between folk and fine art, teasing or torturing, certain ethics as well as aesthetics must be considered. In our twenty first century, the politically correct corner isn't necessarily easy to find, if one follows human nature:

“For the moralist, given the importance of humor in the way we relate to others, we must hold humor to be fully answerable to ethical considerations. Humor is subject to the demands of justice: Joking must be just joking. To the anti-moralist, all this smacks of at best humorless priggishness, at worst a doctrine tantamount to thought control. Humor is essentially anarchic, it is the sphere of free imagination, unburdened by the restraints and repressions of everyday interactions, and in this lies its great values for our lives.”(Gaur, 51)

But I am a human being and being human is hard to do even if not attempting to stay politically correct. So I rely on humor. And I rely on art. And I try to follow the advice I delivered to my high school Art I students: Follow the principles of art by breaking the rules of society or break the rules of society while following said principles of art. Stretch the boundaries, don't shatter them.

THE LEONARDCLAUS VISUALS, EXPANDED

The humor inside my work bounces from one camp to another, just as I continue to tread the territory of high and low, the boundaries between art and craft.

This curious blend is most clearly illustrated with *Portrait of the Artist as a Pothead* (*Leonardclaus Really Doesn't Smoke Pot, He Just Sits on His Butt and Drinks Beer A Lot*) (Figure five) positioned directly adjacent to *Pair of Purple Panther Potheads*.

(Figure six) With the *Pair of Purple Panther Potheads* more than a pun was intended. In

Portrait of the Artist as a Pothead, the puzzle format established in previous Test O'

Funs is filtered Wheel of Fortune style through Francis Picabia's humor and teasing

Dadaist sarcasm. Intended to demonstrate the paradox of visual perception as does

Picabia's EDTAONSIL used in both *Clergyman* (1913) and *Catch as Catch Can* (1913)

one can follow the letters on the blue field, letters first on the left hand side and then on

the right to read: THROW POTS, then using the same system with letters placed on a red

background from the left to right, SMOKE A LOT. The words, just like the letters could

then be mixed: SMOKE POT is the most obnoxiously obvious, I'd prefer to THROW

SMOKE, everybody wants to be a pitcher, at least I do. Why smoke pot anyhow, if

drinking beer is legal? Both activities are areas that take you away from childhood,

modern day ritual and rites of passage, serving as a gateways to time and money long

gone. Smoke is spewing from the chimney of our once upon a time home (a home that doesn't leave my memory and keeps finding it's way into painting after painting).

Smoking (or drinking which will show up in another roof top setting, see *Stuck*, Figure

7): social relaxation or social problem, once again the implication is mixed.

The various and sundry creations presented in both paint and clay comprising *Claus/Claws: A Journey through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings* are designed to absolutely not present a decidedly ethnically or culturally based view point. No tradition of barrio icons, meso morphine, or folkloric festivals are present. Or are they? A culturally based point of view cannot be avoided, but perhaps a cause can. Within the images there is plenty of life on the border. A mystified multiculturalism proliferates. Using self portraiture with a returning image, that of a semi traditional Santa Claus, the first set of paintings including one three dimensional ceramic painting in the round (*Santa Looks a lot Like Daddy*, Figure 8). All began as a set of quasi-self portraits in the form of Leonardclaus, my alter ego. These paintings are an examination of my life, past, present, and future with assorted South Texas props. The works are filled with metaphysical meandering and somewhat lurid and leering surroundings. The motivation and driving force behind the production of these works is an attempt to sort out not just my life, purpose, and direction but also that of the folks near me that are more important to me than myself, my family. Any search for truth, goodness, beauty, unity, transcendence, and other attributes that could provide self actualization in many cases have been either postponed or sabotaged by pressing survival needs which took priority. The list of things that just had to be done kept getting larger: one could turn Monday into Tuesday and Tuesday into Wednesday checking items off the to do list. And all of a sudden it's Monday again. One of several instances of irony in my life is that just about the time I was able to function in a responsible adult manner (taking care of myself), at or about 1986 turning into 1987, I found myself with a new family, new job, and new physical

location.

It didn't snow, and time passed by faster and faster. God never spoke to me, He didn't reveal any spectacular plan but perhaps knowing that I view Him in a parental role we (He and I) jointly hold the belief that He would feel much more satisfied with a specific part of His creation (me again) if I figure "it" out myself in a responsible manner by following established guidelines for practical behavior. I taught school and returned to the homeland occasionally in the summer. Nothing seemed to change but everything seemed to change. I wanted to arrest time so I could get things done the way they could or should be done. I disappeared in many aspects from the life I'd known before, or the life I'd known disappeared from me. My grandparents passed away within a two-year span, my mother retired and siblings on both side of Kelly Houlihan's and my union began having kids of their own.

I began to record images, puzzles, letters, and Christmas cards in attempt to reconcile my past and connect it with future. But these were prepared to be given to an audience of my choosing and if they wanted to receive a complete message they had to put forth some effort. After sporadic involvement with the production of art, and little feedback on what or why I was making, I felt increasingly compelled to commit to the faith and belief of placing more energy and consistent effort into examining my feelings while translating them into a visual format. In my limited "correspondence school" (Ray Johnson on a much smaller less influential scale) linking art and writing, or within the paintings and imagery begun at this time and extending into the works presented in Claus/Claws, decoding or debriefing said visual elements would require the viewer to channel some energy into the viewing process and perhaps undertake multiple viewings for multiple

meanings.

Leonardclaus Junior (in Weslaco) (Figure nine) actually painted in Weslaco, was the starting point for the visual progression featuring the Leonardclaus icon. In this small watercolor which preceded my actual MFA studies but did coincide with the wonder of what could happen *if*, our son Aaron is placed in the improbable role of a skinny Santa. With a look of contentment on his face, Aaron is shown with the trappings of physical pleasure surrounding him: our swimming pool, a slice of pepperoni pizza. This is a comment on the innocence of not just any childhood, but our son's and the boundless horizon that a family can provide and a future can hold. His hair is much longer now, at this point in time there is a curious struggle in the way the image is read, is he young or old? Does the sparkly beard add age or wisdom? Are the sparkles snow that won't melt? This is the present circa 2000. But since it's now 2003, it is a segment of our past. Much has changed, and as a child moves from seventh through ninth grades physical change is only the tip of the iceberg and it is indeed is enormous. *Leonardclaus Junior (in Edinburg)* (Figure ten) another version, attempts to keep up with time, if it is possible, and depicts the same skinny Santa, this time in our new locale of Edinburg. The same favorite slice of pizza is present, though the sun is shining outside there is evidence of the blue glow of the computer monitor, his and our focus is his held within the interior. A possible view of the outside world is blocked by blinds, a pet staring at the viewer with vision again directed inward. Only the merest suggestion of outside possibility exists. One may not connect the two individuals as being the same at age twelve and fifteen but they represent some of the contradictions I continue to explore: An examination of the same person traveling through time and place, still our oldest child carrying our past to

his future. Change balanced by consistency.

Leonardclaus Overreacts or Do You Want a Pencil with that Honeybun? (Figure eleven) is a direct reaction to the state of affairs in my particular classroom. If the average tenure of a classroom teacher, a short five year stint, is any indication, perhaps the state of affairs in others as well. We are flesh and blood, we have free will but there are so many external factors that affect our behavior and our outlook on life. My outlook was a bit tarnished. The request, not necessarily a polite one of “Can I borrow a pencil?” Which I heard more times than I’d care for daily upon embarking on a teaching career in 1987 had in a decade become almost a demand: “I need a pencil.” Was this just a local epidemic? Everyone around me seemed to be operating on the principle of, “It’s not my problem if I can pass it off to you.” Where did this attitude come from? Because I don’t want any problems either. I keep absorbing problems not shedding them.

The specific depiction in *Leonardclaus Overreacts* is that of Leonardclaus (graciously?) offering a pencil while a section of class observes, with “Breakfast in the Classroom” honey buns in hand. Atop his head, instead of the traditional stocking cap for warmth there is a cap which could be read many different ways: Wizard or dunce, the line separating this duality is unclear but upon closer observation one finds that it is the pyramid lifted from a dollar bill. The eye of God is present above and also emphasized is a found object attachment with an actual dollar bill either being covered up or floating away. It was my feeling then and it is my feeling now that money and greed had corrupted a system to the point where it was difficult to the job I was assigned. It may well be that it was *impossible* to do the job I was assigned. Mixed messages (*Creating excellence!* must be hung above your chalkboard/Hand them a pencil, we’ve got the

funds!) from those that administered our school system had evolved to the point where I was having trouble sorting out the purpose behind my role as an educator. Warmth, personal touch, belief in the good of my fellow man: These are the reasons I chose a role in education. My teachers knew my name, they knew my brothers, they knew my family. The scale of possibility somehow had changed.

I know that people are frail and juveniles are both impressionable and at times unpredictable. That's being human. I didn't know that an institution charged with the responsibility of building character would actually demonstrate less and less of these very same qualities. Being governed by appearances and mission statements made little sense when responsibility for desired outcome was placed upon my shoulders but authority wasn't. Nor was authority placed anywhere else it would be acknowledged. The concept of responsibility was given only lip service, I was to single handedly inspire students to learn, to behave, to become productive members of society. If I wasn't effective and Santa missed it on his list, the Taas Test surely would tell. While I was charged to make learning in my classroom meaningful, powerful, and interactive; I found it depressing, not curious that if a student missed more than eight days a semester, (for *any* reason and they had plenty) they had the option of attending "Saturday School" in order to "makeup credit". Any correlation between attendance and grades was to be worked out on an informal basis between student and teacher. For fourteen and fifteen year old freshmen! I cared too much. I cared too little. I returned to school.

Honeybuns! Where did these Honeybuns come from? The school provided them because we had adopted a federally funded "Breakfast in the Classroom" to fight hunger in a high poverty area. A noble idea but it seemed that it was more important to provide

breakfast for as many people as necessary because the school would directly benefit financially. As a parent, I applauded both the adoption of possible breakfast and mandatory school uniforms. If either of our two school age children, in elementary and middle school were lacking nutrients there was opportunity at school. While we tried to provide for both nutrition and personal taste, the school days started before eight and time wasn't always on our side. Uniforms were another school wide-policy adopted from grades K-8. I viewed this somewhat restrictive dress not as a panacea for poor behavior and/or performance but as an opportunity. The uniform was economical in the areas of both money and time. Any loss of individual expression could be pursued after school and weekends. Church provided plenty of opportunity for ultra fancy dress. Maybe it was a case of legislating common sense but the freshman year proved transitional, no uniform but shirts were to be tucked in. How much common sense does the average fourteen or fifteen year old possess? And just how much time should be spent by teachers, principals, or the expanding force of security officers to repeat the mantra, "Tuck that shirt in."? It's not rocket science, once should be enough. A gentle reminder that both could and should be followed turned into a battle of wills. More time and energy was spent trying to come up with a "workable tardy policy" than is humanly imaginable. Why do our public schools even exist? Could it be to prepare youngsters to be productive members of society? Heavens no, schools exist for children.

Kids have responsibilities, or should, and they weren't taking care of them because they didn't have too. Implicitly it was implied that if I were "effective" I would be taking care of them. There are certain experiences that certainly make me appreciate my family. Managing, or attempting to manage people who had progressed from reluctant to defiant

learners certainly did just that. Who gives a flying *anything* about responsibility it's money that makes the world go round.

Greed: If the driving force behind all of our human activity was/is money, I wanted my share. Could one have a Merry Christmas without financial funding? Or a Merry little life? Wasn't money at the root of George Bailey's problems in *It's a Wonderful Life*? Say what you want about love, the loving people of Bedford Falls solved his problems with money. I'm aware that it was only a movie but *Leonardclaus Dreams Big in the All American City* (Figure 12) is only a painting and it depicts the liberating possibility of budget-less constraints. Physical gravity is no longer a concern either, at least momentarily, as Leonardclaus is part baseball, part Picassoesque harlequin with a hounds tooth body suit, bare feet, and a Christmas cowboy hat he's not holding onto because his focus is an infinite dollar bill. Flying as high as Marc Chagall in love above not so long but all forgotten Jody Ramsey Stadium is our protagonist, the expanding diploma mill known as the education building in the background along with former Sheriff Brig Marmalejo's (another local hero of sorts) in-town hacienda on Schunior street. I've seen a number of home runs in Jody Ramsey Stadium and I wish I had the opportunity to see more. The home run symbolizes the "I want it now!" mentality that is America in the twenty-first century. Patience is a virtue, and *I'm* willing to wait and be patient on some things but the clock is ticking, the grass is growing, the bills still show up in the mail box and time keeps turning into money. I'd jumped from one All American City to another, from one side of the teacher's desk to the other. The new set of dreams and radically altered possibility had my head swimming if not floating. I was poised on the verge of establishing a healthy bank account if not healthy psychological profile in

my established routine pre June 2001. Now dreams of cable TV and any aspect of good old fashioned American materialism may just as well have been dreams of the unlimited dollar bill. Do I spend enough time doing as well as thinking?

Switch from *Leonardclaus Dreams Big in the All American City.* to *Morning Musings* (See Figure thirteen), and Leonardclaus is now semi-Mexicanized by the inclusion of a large sombrero while a Venus de Milo/Tea Goddess pours a healthy dose of green tea in his (Is it handmade?) cup. Continually, the confusion or ambiguity of cultural fusion while leading family life on the border will create a feeling ones sensibilities are becoming mixed, not matched. While much of the art being produced in the region of South Texas and the University of Texas Pan American has elements of a regional splinter promoting the Hispanic/Chicano/Latino movement, I find myself in the roll of reverse minority in my present situation. I am a middle-aged white Midwesterner who migrated southward to this border region more than a decade ago to secure employment, begin a family, venture into a warmer climate and a romantically alluring culture. I would like to think that my work is thoroughly American with a far-flung array of influences. Leonardclaus continues to serve in the role of alter ego, a hero in semi-suburbia, which seems to be equal parts California and South Texas. Let it be noted that these are the very apartments we lived in at 201 Audrey Drive, Apartment C-2, seven years before the six hundred mile round trip journey and a residence at 202 Audrey. Our former pool still has water in it, the apartments has been economically (i.e. Why remove the decking?) filled in. Perhaps it is only my imagination of California a la Henri Rousseau's dreams of Mexico and Africa. Or David Hockney's swimming pools. I've been to San Diego for all of three days but most of my travels have been through my

imagination coupled with overdue library books. But I'd sure like to go there again.

CLAWS ACCOMPANIES CLAUS

With two cats in the yard, life used to be so hard

Now everything is easy because of you

-Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young

I think I'm going to Katmandu

That's really, really where I'm going to

Yeah, if I ever get out of here

I'm going to Katmandu

-Bob Seger

cat (kat) , n., v., **cat ted**, **cat ting**. ---n. **1.** a small domesticated carnivore, *Felis* *Domestica* or *F. catus*, bred in a number of varieties. **2.** any carnivore of the family *Felidae*, as the lion tiger, leopard, or jaguar, and including numerous small wild cats. **3.** slang a. a person esp. a man. B. A devotee of jazz. **4.** a woman given to spiteful or malicious gossip **5.** a cat o' nine tails. **6.** a catfish --v.t. **7.** to flog with a cat o' nine tails. -- **Idiom 8. let the cat out of the bag**, to divulge a secret.

pussycat (poose kat), n. **1.** a cat; pussy. **2.** Informal. An agreeable, nonthreatening

person.

dog (dog) n. v. **dogged, dog ging.** ---n. **1.** a domesticated canid, *canis familiaris*, bred in many varieties. **2.** any carnivore of the dog family Canide, characterized in the wild by a long muzzle, erect ears, and a long bushy tail; canid **3.** The male of such animal. **4.** a despicable man or youth **5.** A fellow in general: a lucky dog. **6. dogs, Slang.** feet. **7. Slang.** **a.** something worthless or of extremely poor quality. **b.** an utter failure; flop. **8. Slang.** An unattractive person. **9. a.** any of various mechanical devices, as for gripping or holding something. **b.** a projection on a moving part for moving steadily or for tripping another part with which it engages. ---v.t. **10.** to follow or track like a dog, esp. with hostile intent; hound. **11.** to drive or chase with a dog or dogs. ---**Idiom 12. dog it. Informal.** To do some thing perfunctorily or not at all **13. go to the dogs,** to deteriorate; degenerate. **14. lead a dog's life,** to have an unhappy existence. **15. let sleeping dogs lie,** to have an existing situation alone rather than risk provoking something worse. **16. put on the dog, Informal.** To assume an attitude of wealth or importance. ---**dog-like,** adj.

pet (pet) n., adj., v., **pet ted pet ting.** ---n. **1.** any domesticated animal kept as a companion. **2.** a person especially cherished or indulged: teacher's pet **3.** a thing particularly cherished. --- adj. **4.** kept or treated as a pet. **5.** cherished or indulged as a child. **6.** favorite, preferred: a pet theory **7.** showing fondness or affection: pet names. – v.t. **8.** to treat as a pet; indulge. **9.** to fondle or caress amorously. –v.t. **10.** to engage in amorous fondling and caressing. –**pet ta ble,** adj.

Just as Webster's American Dictionary provides a number of definitions for cat and dog with additional possibilities and permutations spiraling once a synonym is considered, I too have a multi-faceted rationale for incorporating the usage of cat-like creatures and references in the Claws Claus series. Once again, I wonder, does our dog think she's a cat? Do any of our pets feel as though they are particularly cherished? (See *Our cat Oscar*, figure fourteen, and *Our Dog Val*, figure fifteen, *Big Fat Oscar*, figure sixteen, and *Son of Val*, figure seventeen)

William T. Wiley has his alter ego Mr. Unnatural, a foil for Robert Crum's Mr. Natural. I've got Leonardclaus, serving as both alter ego and foil for myself. I'm not quite sure how Ankeny, Iowa disappeared. Cats appeared first as a toned down replacement for my adopted hometown Weslaco Panthers. In my opinion, any ferocity possessed by a Panther was de-clawed by a system that instilled external motivation at the expense of any internal sense of pride or more importantly, responsibility. These feline creatures then began evolving into indirect representations of my family and humanity. While my wife wanted children, I wanted creatures that would sidestep ethnic cliché. We ended up with an actual number of five spayed cats, and my imaginary feline creatures began to both multiply and mutate. Repeatedly their setting will be some variation of our home in Weslaco and the life we left behind.

Transformations accelerated as I actively searched for situations where these pets/pests could integrate into settings representing the now and the possibility of life to come. (See *Portrait of a Broken Hearted Pussy*, Figure eighteen, and *Leonardclaus/Leonardclaws: Cat/Man/Doodad, Real Estate Sales Person* Figure nineteen)

It is my belief that art, chosen as a practice for one's economic and spiritual survival

immediately puts one in the position of either rugged individual, in a minority camp, or both. And if I were to disguise myself and family within a feline fixation, the fact that I'm in the WASP majority (somewhere) would be de-emphasized. If one starts as a minority to begin with, does this help bolster resolve and determination to acquire the learned and experienced skills necessary to function sufficiently in the art realm? Faith Ringgold acknowledged the double disadvantage in being an African American woman and choosing art for a career (wouldn't this possibly be a triple disadvantage?) with the advice her parents gave her: "you have to be twice as good to go half as far." (Qtd. in Preble 228) But doesn't this disadvantage come with the benefit of realistic expectations and productive work ethic? Could that be the reason for my mysterious math experience? Is it to build up resistance? Is it to build up skills and patience that don't come naturally? Is it to appreciate what I've left behind? Because I certainly feel like I'm in the minority. I spent fourteen years teaching Algebra I, a subject I had to acquire a taste for. I learned a large number of Spanish words and phrases that I shouldn't know. I learned much more about algebra. This sector of my life seemed to require organization-which I'm short of; yet was also full of mysterious puzzles and contradictions which if viewed sequentially with a bit of guidance and insight actually make sense---"Remember, slope is changes in y's over changes in x's, we do it right because we live in Texas!" What could make more sense? In other areas of my life it appeared that little made sense, contradictions multiplied and convoluted; nonsense made sense and situations rendered in a stultifying serious light couldn't help but be funny. I wanted my life to make sense: I wanted a lot and while life and art almost always seemed to be excruciatingly frustrating, in art at least I could start over. Which by spending the past two years at UT Pan American and

studying clay, I in essence have.

My life isn't necessarily my own. Commitment and action are required whether or not it is either affordable or convenient. Presently, in addition to a fifteen year old son and an eleven-year-old daughter, the Leonard family is down to a single dog but we're holding steady with our own five cats. Every day before their schedule of napping inside/outside/then inside again these little creatures want to be fed. They've got free will, the cats do anyway, they could cruise over to Pan Am and hang out with the multitude of campus kitties but they seem to trust us. (If there is another campus that could best Pan American's feral feline population, I'd like to see it.) Our dog gets along handsomely with our cats, though not any others. They each have their own personality and niche but every living creature requires some maintenance. I'm not complaining: If there was no compromise to arrive at this well-stocked house we most likely would have a couple more dogs, and there is no telling how many additional cats to accompany a house full of temporarily nicer furniture which would be being trashed long before it would be paid for. I guess being human isn't always practical, consistent practicality remains an elusive objective of my artistic search.

By switching from humans in human form to the world of our and other feline creatures I'm directly or indirectly examining relationships. Pets don't have to be animals. I think about companion or possession, how a relationship between individuals can exist on different levels. It is my belief that Oscar, Snoopy, Daphne, Halloween, and Callie (the cats) and Valentine (the dog) have a lot of humanity in them. And they are so trusting and faithful and reliable. But there is always the issue of maintenance. And time. And care. For me personally they symbolize other things as well, a compromise-

perhaps an unfair one. Kelly Leonard is the one that really, really takes care of our pets. I suppose you could say she is the one who really, really takes care of all of us in the Leonard household. I was thinking along the lines of ONE cat and maybe a dog but have been out voted. Kelly comes from a fairly large family and would really like to have more kids. I would, too, but then I could certainly use more money, more time. We already have two great kids and are very lucky to have them. So we've surrounded ourselves with other lives. I could describe the family trees for our cats: Valentine (the dog) was spayed from the start. Kelly brought Halloween home from the track at Central Middle School in Weslaco. We've had litters of kittens keeping *just one*. More than once. Kelly likes pets, she likes kids, that's why she likes teaching kids a subject she loves and they don't necessarily. We're city folks but the connecting to life other than your own, to creatures you're sharing living quarters with, sharing the planet with, is very valuable.

For me the choice of subject matter also was a bit of a reaction to the local culturally driven art while actually incorporating elements from the same local culture as well. I like Roy DeForest, he does dogs. I like David Gilhooly, he does frogs. I like Esau Pena, here at UTPA he was doing coyotes, a subject infused with sinister symbolism. "How can he (Esau) do the same thing over and over?" I asked myself. So I started with a cat (again think *just one*) and they continue to multiply like bunnies. In fact I'm starting to include a few bunnies. If I weren't here (South Texas) I may not even think about it but I've got this very generically universal name for other parts of the US if not the Rio Grande Valley. The cats allow introspections through self examination differently than images directly portrayed in self-portraiture. There are no white people, brown people,

black people, green people, or polka-dotted people. My goal is for all people to look at the work and ideas start to flow out of their experience. Do viewers know if I'm a guy or a girl? Who cares? On the surface Chris Leonard is pretty one size fits all. Are viewers able to discern the fact that I'm a WASP from Des Moines or perhaps something else entirely? That is another reason I've adopted the pseudonym Leonardski, it makes me something else I'm not through the magic of imagination as well as being a historically accepted practice (Hello, Dr. Gladstone!) I can paint my family because they are made up of cats, and make 'em purple, pink, or green. Mix metaphors and symbolism and make people think. Because they have to take a look at themselves and reflect on the situation from their vantage point, which I think everybody can. I'm deadly serious about what I'm doing-but the work is chock full of juvenile humor because I think juvenile humor is chock full of life. Just like Navin R. Johnson in *The Jerk*, I've tried to see what/who Chris Leonard is out there, not in the phone book, but on the web, and there are about a zillion. And as I walked across campus at night and seen cats scurrying out of my way I've wondered how many there are, and it appears there are about a zillion.

When drifting from the multiple meanings of cat toward the more coarse possibilities of various interpretations of the synonym pussy or pussy cat another set of interpretive possibilities open up.

Informally used, either of these potentially innocent words *can* be used in place of cat. Exactly what I'm physically portraying. In vulgar slang, generally used by juveniles, it describes the vulva and as an offensive term it is used to represent a female. Widely used, pussy certainly isn't a high-class word. I spent a large portion of my life first being a juvenile and then teaching a vast number of fourteen and fifteen year old males in the

public schools, I'm well aware of its usage. This is especially in regard to the reference that goes beyond just female in a derogatory sense. Mastered by football coaches both in and out of the state of Texas (Leonard, you pussy, take a lap!), the term smacks of the ultimate in gutless, wimpy, and weak. Though quite simplistic and perhaps too direct, it does allow me to explore certain psychological dimensions, and my thoughts have been on commitment: Commitment to my art and my family (both two and four legged) are intertwined with finances, my scholarly adventures here at UTPA in preparing *Claus/Claws*, and a future like every one else which is to a great degree an uncertain mystery. *Pink and Green Pussies* (See Figure twenty) began as a painting with these thoughts in mind. Opposite colors, perhaps opposite sexes. In the three dimensional versions, *Pink and Green Pussies #1, 2, and 3*, (See Figures twenty-one, twenty-two, and twenty-three) the pussies again are cats, physical containers with spots on the outside in the form of fish. These little guys reminded me of the fishbowl that my dad won for my brother long ago at the Iowa State Fair. I must have been near four, perhaps five in age; in any event the goldfish was dead and floating at the top the next morning. The interesting thing to me is that the physical pairs can be separated. My mother and father divorced and my father was done in by a third and final heart attack before I was seven. But get this: In the painting, which is just an illusion, the images are linked forever.

My cat creatures provided a conduit to more personal symbolism as well. This symbolism shaped in the feline flesh serves in the function of escapism. In 1976, Bob Seger's Beautiful Loser LP had a hard charging bluesy escapist number, Katmandu. The chorus ended with, "If I ever get outta here, I'm goin' to Katmandu" I've listened to it over and over but had no real desire to go anywhere in particular. Two plus decades after

high school, possessing a Bob Seger CD to replace a worn out cassette, teaching in another high school fifteen hundred miles away, I produced the first three dimensional cats, christened *Cat/Man/DooDads* which extended into my graduate creations. The first served feline in the round served as a paper mache demo for the Weslaco East Art I classes and received it's name because I felt very much like heading off for Kathmandu or parts unknown. Not only did it I dream about going somewhere, anywhere but here, I also liked the multiple meanings the artwork, the title, and combination evoked. (see the as yet unfinished *The Original Cat/Man/DooDad*, Figure twenty-four)

This cat had human qualities so cat and man were blended. Including myself with the audience this piece was created for, we were all Weslaco Panthers, each and every one of us present blended human and feline. A doodad is catchall word for a thingamajig. This broad word can cover a lot of territory that may not include humans, but I am a dad. An added bonus is stretching the lines of acceptability once more, mixing high and low, folk art and fine art. While venturing into clay, UTPA Professor Charles Wissinger has told his classes repeatedly "You grads can't just sit around making trinkets and doodads. You've got to get beyond that." I would like to get beyond that while staying within the very confines from which I'm attempting release. (See *Pair of Cat/Man/DooDad* Cups, Figure twenty-five)

Folklores and myths can't be all wrong. What better way to include not so subtle symbolism of human qualities? In fact why not take a shot at the parody of the entire human race and human condition? If the being being shown is indeed a pet, a plethora of possibilities can once again occur when one considers what a pet possibly *could* be. A long time favorite artist of mine is Roy De Forest, widely known for the infusion of

personality that permeates his whimsical yet powerful imagery of dogs. Dogs are, in my opinion, far more inherently popular-why, they're man's best friends. It certainly would be a challenge to do the same thing with the more socially aloof feline. In Pre Columbian Mexico, the Olmecs believed that they originated from the most powerful cat on their block- the jaguar. After spending twelve years as a Weslaco Panther and being now financially funded by my wife Kelly, a Johnny G. Economedes Jaguar, I'm not so sure I evolved from a cat but I sure can't seem to escape them. As a Midwestern WASP named Leonard not a Latino from Laredo named Leonardo, this isn't anything I'd have thought twice about before living and teaching in South Texas. I appreciate the full freedom that the interjection of human qualities into the cat world entails. Freed from a) racial and/or b) ethnic reference I have the full freedom to create either a red cat with turquoise eyes or a yellow cat with pink polka dots while maintaining universal characteristics of human portraiture. As far as exploration of any central theme it apparently is the human condition: Curiosity killed the cat. Could curiosity be a euphemism for greed? (See *Panther Infection*, Figures twenty-six and twenty-seven)

ARTISTIC MOTIVATION: HISTORICAL PRECEDENT

I haven't tried to rip any one off or copy any particular image, trick or technique. My interest in art, as far as work that visually reaches out to grab me is quite broad. But what I reject or choose not to include is even broader. I feel I'm borrowing images/ideas as though I'm borrowing (and hopefully sharing) culture. If it works, use it. If this process needs adjustment to fit personal taste, so be it. Isn't art absolutely subjective? Start with truth, beauty, and universals but where does one end up?

My art inspirations are American. (For the most part.) I'm not xenophobic, just trying to exist in the here and now. While searching for images and information in print and on line in the world of clay I keep seeking out those who currently blend funk with function, folk with fine art: Allen Winkler, Richard Nickel, Ron Meyers, Andy Nassise, Rimas VisGirda, and Gerry Dinnen are artists I've discovered or rediscovered to lend inspiration and direction. But who couldn't be influenced by the first post modern master, Picasso? After first being turned on to the Expressionistic work of Edvard Munch I eventually gravitated to the sculptural solidity, the theatrical and religiously charged work of Max Beckman. I'd have to admit that at one point in time I found Dali intriguing. But he certainly wasn't *fun*. He certainly wasn't *funky*. With most of my artistic sources it is true that there is an emotive response. But I believe it isn't pure physicality or visual expression: it is the spirit of their work I'm attracted to. Picasso, Marc Chagall, and Beckman still stimulate potential energy and allow my own imagination to burn brightly.

From my closest core, I'd like to include family, church, and coworkers, which are true in part, but most definitely it was my family that provided the fuel required to commit full time to the serious study and production of art. While I am very serious about producing artwork, growing in technical expertise and knowledge, it is the inclusion of left-handed humor, satire, whimsy, and nonsense that intentionally play a large role. Influences in the expressionist/figuristic vein run from Max Beckman and Phillip Guston through the clean and contemporary Chicago imagists Jim Nutt, Phyllis Bramson, and Karl Wiersum. Any time I can see an instance where artists have included child like sensibilities (Paul Klee), reception of outside art (Andy Nasise), humor (David Gilhholy), juvenile humor (Clayton Bailey), or a mixture of each as well as mixed media (Red Grooms), I've attempted to humbly follow suit. All of these artists have facility and training but are firmly entrenched in the established artistic mainstream. Our unique geographical and cultural proximity to Mexico has further reinforced a folk art dimension. I love to paint and have tried to make myself a semi permanent fixture in our ceramics studio painting three dimensionally with clay as well.

Somehow when my attention hit America it skipped from neighboring Chicago into California. Even if these folks started out in Wisconsin (Clayton Bailey) or across the Atlantic in England (David Hockney) they also seem to become Californian. And it is here that we find the Mecca of funk: Cal Davis. Roy DeForest, Robert Arneson, David Gilhooly, William T. Wiley, all at California Davis. Even my former studio mate Duane Slick ended up there.

I don't like to consider my work as surreal. It certainly skirts around this movement but I'm attempting to probe my conscious thought not subconscious psyche. While I

would very much like to convey the bright and shining spirit of Marc Chagall or the transgressive nonsense of Dada, searching for rich surfaces, painterly paintings, and an emotional gut reaction is an ongoing concern. One of the most interesting parallels I've discovered in the ambition or purpose for the creation of art is in the description of Philip Guston and his development of mystery:

“The word that best characterizes the achievement of *Martial Memory* (1941) and much of Guston's work in the forties is ambiguity. The roots of ambiguity as a pictorial goal can be found in the works of two of Guston's earliest artistic heroes, Giorgio de Chirico and the American surrealist Lorser Feitelson. In their works creating a lack of certainty for the viewers was one of the artist's goals. Guston's feelings for the indeterminacy of surrealism found its counterpart in his simultaneous attraction to the balance of the Italian Quattrocento, to the works of Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca in particular. His fascination with the orderly special compositions of the renaissance led Guston to place his figures in definable and often compact spatial situations and to provide a strong compositional structure. There coexisted within him, however, the urge to express mystery in the subject and mood of a painting. The quest for ambiguity in the forties, joining Surrealism and the Italian Renaissance, might be seen as anxiety in the fifties and self-doubt in later decades. The significance of *Martial Memory* resides in the fact that for the first time, Guston achieved a pictorial translation of his own ambivalent feelings.”(Shapiro 4,5)

A good deal of my work could be said to join fact, fiction, and farce in the attempt to make sense of unreal expectations imposed by self and society. Reading Octavio Paz's characterization of personality traits broken into categories derived from collective consciousness north and south of the border, pieces of life's puzzle either seem to fit everywhere or nowhere at all:

“The North Americans are credulous and we are believers; they love fairy tales and detective stories and we love myths and legends. The Mexican tells lies because he delights in fantasy, or he is desperate, or because he wants to rise above the sordid facts of his life; the North American does not tell lies, but he substitutes social truth for the real truth, which is always disagreeable. We get drunk in order to confess, they get drunk in order to forget. They are optimists and we are nihilists-except that our nihilism is not intellectual but instinctive, and therefore irrefutable. We are suspicious and they are trusting. We are sorrowful and sarcastic and they are full of jokes. North Americans want to comprehend and we want to contemplate. They are activists and we are quietists; we enjoy our wounds and they enjoy their inventions. They believe in hygiene, health, work, and contentment, but perhaps have never experienced true joy which is an intoxication, a whirlwind.” (Paz, 23-24)

Mystery is all around us; I am one North American who believes that they must be explored not necessarily solved. Taking hold of equal parts of the seemingly diametrically opposed philosophies on Paz's approach to life and viewing these outlooks as parameters for living, my love of mystery has deepened. In my art, a goal of inclusion

is the theatricality as well as the psychological disturbance created by the American Magic Realists of which Guston, who traveled, worked in, and was attracted to Mexico early in his career, was linked to. Paul Cadmus' Ash Can tradition, with his clearly delineated egg yolk temperas such as 1948's *Playground* springs to mind. But articulation in a much less precise, much more funky and fluid folksy form seems to be my strength. The raw strength of the early David Hockney, his use of pattern, suggestion of curtains, opulent landscapes and costumed performers provides a more tangible takeoff. As do Phyllis Bramson's same painterly treatment of stylized performers. Bramson, the Chicago Imagist provides focus for her work in a 1984 exhibition catalog which links a deep sense of the magic of mystery and performance:

"I want my work to project:

The morality of a mystic

The play of Burlesque

The backing of the Mob."

King (15)

If I could articulate with the clarity of New York's Cadmus or every Iowan's homegrown hero, Grant Wood, why not? But their meticulous adaptation of Northern Renaissance stylization and technique is beyond my grasp. Along with mystery I want more than implied texture. While I love to paint I wanted to confront some of the limitations of illusion with the reality of substance. I wanted to counter imagination with the possibility of function. I wanted a surface that went beyond the implication of a touch, a pinch, a

poke, I wanted a surface that was created from touch, pinches and pokes. Further kinship to Guston is felt with his own interest and technique, his study of Max Beckman, interest in underground comics, particularly Robert Crumb, and his inclusion of closed contours surrounding form and figures. (Hentschel, 53)

The transition from implied physical structural strength through use of closed contours when working on a flat surface to making the actual contours and textures in three dimensions when painting in the round with clay seemed natural. Arneson could produce pots with the best of them after a non-traditional trek through traditional training. His overall approach remained painterly and was fueled by artists who had bounced between the two and three dimensional worlds: Looking to Jaon Miro in particular, Arneson approached clay as a two dimensional surface to be painted. More important than any formal relationship to the work of the Spanish artist was “a surrealist edge” that Arneson’s sculpture began to acquire. “You would allow the clay to talk to you for a little. Instead of a Voulkos-just pure gut action, response to the clay, slap-bang, poke a hole, rip and tear-you also alluded to a subliminal type of imagery which crept through.” (Benezra, 20)

Guston seems to let his chosen material, thick, ropy, juicy paint do some talking on its own for him as well. He is also among my favorites as an artistic guide by being one of many artists choosing to alter their name, changing it from Goldberg to Guston. Karl Schmitt Rotloff added the name of his hometown to his given name, Emile Nolde actually adopted the name of his. Juan Gonzalez adopted the pseudonym Gris. The Duchamp brothers Gaston and Raymond adopted in whole or part the surname Villon as a tribute to the great French medieval poet Francois Villon. Did/does Leonardski

separate me from my past and from those who now surround me? Martin Hentschel's description of Guston's *Spleen* (1975) further links my *spirit* to his. "(Guston) points to a counterworld that normally remains invisible in his pictures: his longing for holistic beauty- a childhood dream. Present in the work is the awareness that this longing is a vane one."(Hentschel, 53)

Arneson was one of the first ceramic artists I began to investigate. I purchased a catalog at the 1986 Arneson Retrospective in Des Moines, I even got to shake his hand. Klown (1978) I was aware of, it was in the Art Center's permanent collection. Everything else in the show began to open doors to what one could do with clay. Large and small, Paintings come to life. I began to dig deeper into how he did the things he did, why he did them, tried to figure out the how and why he learned to do what he was doing with clay. His assimilation of the vast range of clay techniques serves as inspiration when realizing that heroes, characters possessing great physical skill and intellectual capacity, are also human. I sometimes have a hard time remembering that, this is why I've chosen artists that are more or less of recent vintage. People from the era of my parents or grandparents seem more believable; these are the people that directly charged me with experience and a sense of history. Everyone has to start somewhere. And perhaps continue somewhere else. I'm here at UTPA, I want to build, and I also want to throw. Maybe for the same reason I set off to make "things" in dad's basement workshop years before, if there are tools you've got to use them.

Since I began as a painter, my natural inclination is to just go. Working with a brush feels natural. Though the first formal training I received was in watercolor, which if you let it can get finicky and fussy. I prefer to go over and over and over a surface. Fat over

lean? At times. While clarity has been a goal during my Pan American experience, the luscious paint quality of later Guston or earlier Richard Diebenkorn fuel my quest. This struggle exists in clay as well. In discussing a balance between abstraction and figuration Diebenkorn explains:

“There are a number of problems in figure painting as opposed to abstract painting. They sound very elementary when discussed. The figure that takes over and rules the canvas. The problems of gravity in that you can’t float around in space like Chagall. Ordinarily one stands on a floor, and there is ordinarily a requirement to complete an object once you’ve begun or suggested it. You don’t leave only half an element painted. You have to finish it and maybe it doesn’t conform to your wishes that way.”(Nordland, 92)

I’m not sure why figures couldn’t possibly float. It might be more interesting if not illusionistically correct. Physical laws may be suspended in art. I myself have had some between what’s real and what’s invented, what’s raw and what’s refined. When approaching three-dimensional work more care must be taken to replace illusion with the believability of an actual physical presence. Even a thrown bowl has an inside and an outside: A lip, a foot, a top, a bottom. I think this is why it’s concave surface is a favorite of mine, for the inclusion of an image-a viewer just may have to make an effort to see into its distorted surface. You can still play hide and seek. (See *Sun Bowl*, figure twenty-eight)

I try not to get trapped into the mindset of....it MUST be this way. I like the sense of exploration. Diebenkorn’s following statement makes some sense to me....

“[A painting] came about by putting down what I felt in terms of some overall image at the moment today, and perhaps being terribly disappointed with it tomorrow, and trying to make it better and then despairing and destroying partially or wholly and getting back into it and just kind of frantically trying to pull something into this rectangle which made some sense to me...”(Nordland, 47)

There then could be terrible frustration involved if things don't go one's way or there could be a terrific sense of freedom as a sense of play is established, an occurrence of something unspoiled, magic, fresh. And it is here that one may encounter additional meanings even beyond my intention. Despite the Tex-Mex interpretation, fresh doesn't mean cool. Cool as in cold. Which may point toward my attraction to thrown pieces as well: They are recognizable and they are functional. Function presents a region where multiple meanings may be minimized. There is a retreat from gray areas. As I get older I want more organization and purpose. You can funky functional up a little bit: *Claws in a Bowl/Paws in a Bowl/ Claws in a Bowl/Ma's in a Bowl* (See Figure twenty-nine). Right now half of them could be used for eating cheerios. Give me some LUG Clear, I'll fire Ma and Pa one more time and then they'll all be able to do what it is a serviceable setting should. But that wasn't my total aim. I tried to find that sense of play and play with opposites, high/low, ma/pa, ha/ha, I did pull in the reins before Jaws in a Bowl showed up. I want to continue to press forward and progress with technical ability and throwing skills. Arneson could throw functional ware he chose not to. I, too, want to have the opportunity to make this choice.

Mixed up within the sense of funk is a hefty dose of obnoxious obliqueness. I would

like my work to be comfortably contemplative, not microwave ready in just minutes. One might even have to return for multiple viewings. This thought found its fruition with the two and a half dimensional compilation of nine one foot square panels comprising *Phillips Feeling #1-9*. (See Figures thirty through thirty-eight) Amidst cats and fish is a diagonal of dogs, Valentine to be exact. Valentine could win a Tic-Tac-Toe game this way, if she were an X or an O. The Phillips Feeling series was positioned directly next to *Cat's Game* (See Figure thirty-nine), which also could be interpreted as a battle of X's, and O's. Also presented on a nine-layer grid (albeit skewed), a grinning cat dominates the middle square, an apparent victor. But isn't there no winner if it's a cat's game?

Due in part to the fact Shannon never did have a pet bunny and I missed the past two family Easter egg dyeing parties I also began to venture into the world of this possible pet with eventually investigating potentially pleasing pastels that I could have chosen for Easter eggs themselves. *Dumb Bunny* along with a handful of stoneware *Little Red Rabbit Whistles* resulted. (See Figures forty and forty-one) In a semi-self portrait, I tried to soften the a sizable series *Andy, Chris, and Tim* with the same pastel hues Shannon may have been making use of at home. (See Figures forty-two, forty-three, and forty-four) I had been thinking of Ray Johnson. Gerrit Henry describes some of his particulars:

“This (his incorporation of ephemeral or evanescent qualities) does not mean, however, that Johnson's Xeroxed Correspondence School ephemera and his unique wall works are completely disparate types of art. No, the wit at least, is the same in both; it's a lot more cryptic in the more “serious” collages, but still recognizably Johnson's wit- full of visual and verbal puns, often loony and rather loud. Images have been shared---we

get a big bunny head in one of the latest collages of the show, the 1977 *Blood*. The water pail, a bit of mosaic reading “In love, les Hotel ALSO NUMB,” and a kind of crescent moon below the eye, the lighter side of the moon reading:

c/in/love/That

Also/number/very/con/wa

in typewritten letters.”

If the sense of this would seem to baffle even an ace cryptographer, well, Johnson has been teasingly oblique in meaning. The Surrealists were, too, and Johnson stands in that cryptic tradition. But his meanings can be ferreted out at times, especially if you’re up on art world intrigue” (139)

I’m attempting to force the viewer to ferret out meaning as well. Even if the meaning is not in the arena of art world intrigue. The Test O’ Fun may have specific answers, again in *Phillips Feeling #1-9*, the panels are positioned into a tic tac toe grid. If one misses the fact that Valentine, our Chihuahua mix, forms the DeForest-like diagonal amidst a mix of cat and fish counterparts, there *are* clues which may invite closer inspection. When one reads the titles, even if one hasn’t caught a glimpse of Dr. Phillips hoofing it onto campus, I believe I’ve provided enough of a mix of visual and verbal information to allow reflection within one’s own family of human and non human beings. These, though, are generated from my life experience in general and the experience of Pan American pandemonium in particular over these past two years.

If there is a beacon for the source of artistic humor I'd wish to consistently convey, other than Arneson whom I've discussed, or my old next door neighbor Todd Hartley who has to be one of the funniest people on the face of earth, it would be Arneson's longtime pupil David Gilhooly and the former Hodag hoax perpetrator (see Rhinelander, Wisconsin), Clayton Bailey. If Arneson established his skills to be in a position of potential traditionalist within the American ceramic institution of function at mid century, before turning against the entrenched practice and value of control over self-expression, trading in patience for spontaneity, feeling that the functional tradition was in fact far too repressive, Gilhooly literally attempted to shatter any established tradition:

“Stoneware was like blowing glass: very limited it what it was willing to let you do with it. White clay is the opposite. You can do anything with it. Potters hate white clay because it is ugly compared to stoneware, easy to work with and garish when used with commercial hobbyist glazes. We were the first people to make or desire to make an object-especially an irreverent one-out of clay. Not pots. We broke the pots of anyone that tried. This was always rumored by the students as to why I came in early in the morning-so I could break their pots.”(Baker, Williams, Natsoulas, and Tafoya, 19)

Gilhooly gravitated toward low fire showmanship, best known for featuring frogs as the center of his ceramic universe.

“Clayton Bailey could do burping bowls, smoke ring machines, fake kilns, and other inventive things, but this (frogs) was my one clever thing. I also made frogs committing suicide, blowing their own heads off with pistols,

or in one case smoking an exploding cigar. I still like to demonstrate how to make a frog ashtray.” (Baker, Williams, Natsoulas, and Tafoya, 31)

DeForest has dogs, Gilhooly frogs, in addition to cats and bunnies I myself have included a few hogs. (See *Piggy Bank*, Figure forty-five, and *Dog, Log, Hog*, Figure forty-six, to illustrate a pair of several swine selections)

Showmanship. This is an area of interest and future exploration for me. Bailey is another role model here, and his creations are so widely varied with evident quality throughout that it is mind boggling to evaluate either his intelligence or inspiration. A one time instructor of both big-time boxing brothers Michael and Leon Spinks while teaching all ages at the People’s Art Center in St. Louis in the early sixties; Bailey would migrate from Wisconsin through South Dakota and on to California by 1970. Here he would become Dr. Gladstone, one of Roy DeForest’s Nut Artists. Commenting on the aspirations of being a doctor and making ones way in clay, Bailey said, “As a child I felt I might become a doctor of some sort, and now I found that I could actually practice medicine with mud.” (De Paoli and Dr. Gladstone, 38) It appears his liberating orientation toward life: an optimistic blending science with art is to allow for a vast arena of phenomenal discovery and growth:

“I learned that too much knowledge is limiting. It can create fear or prejudice. The amateur is free to explore art, science, and education without inhibitions or academic limitations. The expert has fear of destroying his professional reputation whereas the amateur is free and fearless since he has no professional reputation to worry about. Incredible scientific ideas are made plausible by using a careful blend of fact and

fiction.” (De Paoli and Dr. Gladstone, 38)

Am I acquiring too much knowledge? It might be nice to *have* a reputation to destroy. To enhance my efficiency must I, an artist, find a way to operate blissfully unaware? As Arneson stated, “Of course in ceramics you’re not an artist so you’re really innocent.” (Benezra, 9) My educational trek is coming to a rapid conclusion and it is certainly my intention to be technically proficient but retain the exploratory attitude that will enable this body in motion to stay in motion.

WRINKLES IN THE ARTISTIC PROCESS

There are no really unique techniques, special tricks, or patented processes involved in my production. I've been a bit all over the place: painting in both acrylic and oil, working with both low and high fire clay.

If there is a concern with my technique it is a fixation on the surface. I wouldn't consider myself in the toolish category, the more tools I have the more tools get lost. I'm more concerned with the image, with the possibility of message than I am with technique. With acrylic paint I like to include plenty of gloss/matte mediums mixed so the feeling is oozy-goozy. If things appear too plastic, the switch to oil for me is enhanced by using large quantities of Liquin. It dries, it shines. Permagel has been used here for the same search for the elusively effective oozy-goozy feeling but it takes forever and a half to dry so I move back to clay for more than just surface suggestion. I like to paint. Give me canvas or paper, surfaces large or small and I will get to work; a brush or two and some thick juicy paint that has a bit of resistance to it. *Catnap*, 22" X 28", acrylic and crayon on paper, and *Stuck*, 60" x 48", oil on canvas provide illustration of these differences. (See Figures forty-seven, and seven) A spirit of adventure inspired in part by my former high school students as well as the proliferation of graffiti available for viewing in many Valley locations may have led to my foray into both collage and spray paint in *Phillips Feelings #1-9*. (Again see Figures thirty through thirty-eight) In using aerosol enamel, I would certainly recommend more ventilation than what the UTPA Wal-Mart Studios provide.

Moving from paint to clay in the low fire arena, I've made extensive use of store-bought Aamaco Velvet Underglazes. They work and feel very similar to acrylic paint. They can be layered and used in washes that are built up thinly or areas may be altered, areas may be entirely blocked out with full color saturation. With me the adjustment is similar to taking a painting through successive stages or proofing a print and continuing with alterations over successive firings. I have for the most part left the surface with the matte, chalk-like appearance produced without any clear glaze used as a topcoat. But what I have found that is working well to add a bit of break, a bit of sheen, a little extra zest to the surface quality is to use our UTPA Ceramic Studio Sculptural White Glaze somewhat thinly in between layers of Aamaco Velvets and/or used as a top coat. Again moving through a multi fire process with an experimental outlook has produced *Cat With a Bat*, *Poolside*, and *Circler* via multiple trips through glaze firing. (See Figures forty-eight, forty-nine, and fifty) An attempt at quantification would be broken down as follows:

Predictability---Add plenty of Aamaco Underglazes to sculptural white, in layers.

Unpredictability---Reverse, Add plenty of sculptural white to Aamaco underglazes, in layers.

The most effective manipulation of the clay's surface has been decidedly low tech. Each flying figure composing *Catfish in A Dog Fight* (See Figure fifty-one) was made this way, beginning as pinch pots, embellished, then finished with the usage of the Aamaco Velvets. Each of the six and one half inch tall *Catcatfishes* (See figure fifty-

two) were crafted in the same manner, these creatures received special attention; one of the very few instances where the multifired Aamaco Velvets were given a commercial clear topcoat.

An additional effective surface treatment has been the use of scgraffito through a waxed surface to establish line, then wiping either a dark body stain or black Aamaco Velvet (I much prefer Velour Black to Jet Black) into the resulting drawing while the clay is still leather hard. This technique really brings back memories of printmaking and combines block printing with painting on a three dimensional surface. I generally use this technique as a departure point and again build up color over successive firings. Each of the *Gato Borrocho Bottles* (See Figure fifty-three) as well as the *Santa is a Male Chauvinist Pig Bottles* (See Figure fifty-four) featured in *Claus/Claws* were made using this technique.

Most of the work I've done has been predicated upon the opportunity for change or alteration. With clay timing is everything and the material at times seems to have a mind of its own. Entering the high fire arena one's opportunity for alterations are minimal. The technique I'm most fond of here is using oxide stain brushwork over our UTPA Ceramic Studio Satin White glaze. I've used quick watercolor-like brushwork with the stain, and like watercolor, consistent prowess proves elusive. The *Satin White Selection*, (See Figures fifty-five and fifty-six) a series of thrown plates and bowls was fired using this glazing technique.

CONCLUSION

“One of the most beautiful things about art is that it is one of the last strongholds of magic. It is one of the few areas of human activity in which it is possible to do something for which you might be otherwise locked up or incarcerated, especially if you were a politician and you did what you can do in painting.”

-Roy DeForest (Failing, 56)

My methodology and approach to producing art, clay or paint is not very economical in regard to time, and at times, money. To be working within both fields requires more organization and multi tasking skills than I possess. I keep straining to reach a point where I'm not juggling. So it takes time. And it takes effort. And at times it takes more money than I have as well. Space is now becoming a major concern. Life is not always sensible. Practicality and the art of being human do not necessarily go hand in hand. Exploring the contradiction of the human condition and mystery of the human condition, trying to reconnect myself fully with the domain that could be art at the age of thirty-nine, I felt pulled to the human quality of clay and the adaptability of my feline friends. Nobody walks anywhere anymore (here in Edinburg, Dr. Phillips is a notable exception hiking in the hot sun up Sugar Road to UTPA daily). Nobody I know has a garden or really spends time cooking. We spend our time with multiple television sets, worthless without cable. Computers save time while taking away even more. I respect the technological advances that have made our modern world what it is, but I resent them

even more. There certainly is evidence of humanity here within our border region, but because one needs an ever-expanding set of technical skills as well as money to be an active member of today's society, the humanness is evidenced as more of a struggle. As it most likely is in the art I produce. We don't have time for ourselves; we don't have time for each other. It seems that the ones we love the most, that need our time and attention do not get the maintenance that healthy relationships require. In the rush of day-to-day living it seems as though they'll always be there. And then things shift, things change, and the faster we ran to get ahead, the farther behind we are. Who is my family? Do they know me better than I know myself? *Claus/Claws: A Journey Through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings* is the result. What you can't fix, you've gotta stand. It helps if you learn to laugh.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baker, Kenneth; Williams, Tony; Natsoulas, John; and Tafoya, Terry Ann. *David Gilhooly* Davis, California: John Natsoulas Press, 1992.
- Benezra, Neal *Robert Arneson: A Retrospective*, Des Moines: Des Moines Art Center, 1985.
- DePaoli, G. Joan and Dr. Gladstone. *Clayton Bailey, Happenings in the Circus of Life*. Davis, California John Natsoulas Press, 2000.
- Failing, Patricia. "Roy DeForest's Dog Poetry" in *Art News*, Volume 83, Number 4, (April 1984) 56-63.
- Gaur, Berys. "Just Joking the Ethics and Aesthetics of Humor" in *Philosophy and Literature*, Volume 22, Number 1, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, 51-68. Project Muse Online Database. Retrieved June 30, 2002.
- Henry, Gerrit. "Ray Johnson: Collage Jester" in *Art in America*, Volume 27, Number 11 (December 1984) 138-42.
- Hentschel, Martin. "From the Abstract to the Figurative: Philip Guston's Stony Path" in *Phillip Guston*. Kunstmuseum, Bonn, 2000.
- King, Elaine A. *Phyllis Bramson, Paintings and Drawings 1982-84*. Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie Mellon University, 1985.
- Lucie-Smith, Edward. *American Art Now*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985.
- Nordland, Gerald. *Richard Diebenkorn* New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1987.
- Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude, Life and Thought in Mexico*. New York: Grove Press, 1961
- Preble, Duane and Sarah with revision by Frank, Patrick. *Artforms Revised Seventh Edition*. Upper Saddle River New Jersey: Prentice Hall International, 2002, 2004

Shapiro, Michael E. *Phillip Guston Working Through the Forties*. Iowa City: The University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1997.

Appendix I

Leonardski's Favorite Low Fire Super Special Surface Treatment Glaze and Stains

Dark Body Stain ---Cone 06-04

Gerstley Borate or some other Colemanite sub----	2
Red and/or Black Iron Oxide-----	2
Magnesium Carbonate-----	2
Chrome Oxide-----	1

Sculptural White---Cone 06-04

Magnesium Carbonate-----	500
Borax-----	500
Gerstley Borate or some other Colemanite sub----	200
Flint-----	100
Superpax-----	100

Crunchy Black---Cone 06-04

Gerstley Borate or some other Colemanite sub----	200
Bone Ash-----	200
Cornwall Stone-----	100
Copper Carbonate-----	400
Nickle Oxide (Black)-----	100

APPENDIX II

ILLUSTRATIONS OF WORKS

List of figures

- 1) Passionate Purple Pan American Piranha
- 2) Leonardclaus Tunes Out
- 3) Leonardclaws Tunes In
- 4) Christmas Card Code Key
- 5) Portrait of the Artist as a Pothead; Leonardclaus really doesn't smoke pot, he just sits on his butt and drinks beer a lot.
- 6) Pair of Purple Panther Potheads
- 7) Stuck
- 8) Santa Looks a lot Like Daddy
- 9) Leonardclaus Junior (in Weslaco)
- 10) Leonardclaus Junior (in Edinburg)
- 11) Leonardclaus Overreacts or Would you like a pencil with that honeybun?
- 12) Leonardclaus Dreams Big in the All American City
- 13) Morning Musings
- 14) Our Cat Oscar
- 15) Our Dog Val
- 16) Big Fat Oscar
- 17) Son of Val

- 18) Portrait of a Broken Hearted Pussy
- 19) Leonardclaus/Leonardclaws: Cat/Man/Doodad Real Estate Sales Person
- 20) Pink and Green Pussies
- 21) Pink and Green Pussies #1
- 22) Pink and Green Pussies #2
- 23) Pink and Green Pussies #3
- 24) The Original Cat/Man/Doodad
- 25) Pair of Cat/Man/Doodad Cups
- 26) Panther Infection
- 27) Panther Infection
- 28) Sun Bowl
- 29) Claus in a Bowl/Pa's in a Bowl/Claws in a Bowl/Ma's in a Bowl
- 30) Phillips Feeling #1 Portrait of Valentine as a Little Los Angeles
Leprechaun
- 31) Phillips Feeling #2 Gato Got to Go to Guadalajara
- 32) Phillips Feeling #3 New Shirt + New Hat = Cool Cat
- 33) Phillips Feeling #4 Green Around the Gills
- 34) Phillips Feeling #5 Portrait of Valentine as a Saltimbanque
- 35) Phillips Feeling #6 The Ghost of Jody Ramsey
- 36) Phillips Feeling #7 The Cat's Meow
- 37) Phillips Feeling #8 The Cat's Pajamas
- 38) Phillips Feeling #9 Valentine Takes Off
- 39) Cat's Game

- 40) Dumb Bunny
- 41) Little Red Rabbit Whistles
- 42) Andy
- 43) Chris
- 44) Tim
- 45) Piggy Bank
- 46) Dog, Log, Hog
- 47) Catnap
- 48) Cat With a Bat
- 49) Poolside
- 50) Circlet
- 51) Catfish in a Dogfight (Detail)
- 52) Catcatfish Pair—Largemouth and Smallmouth
- 53) Gato Borracho Bottle
- 54) Santa is a Male Chauvinist Pig Bottle
- 55) Satin White Selection, Bowl
- 56) Satin White Selection, Plate

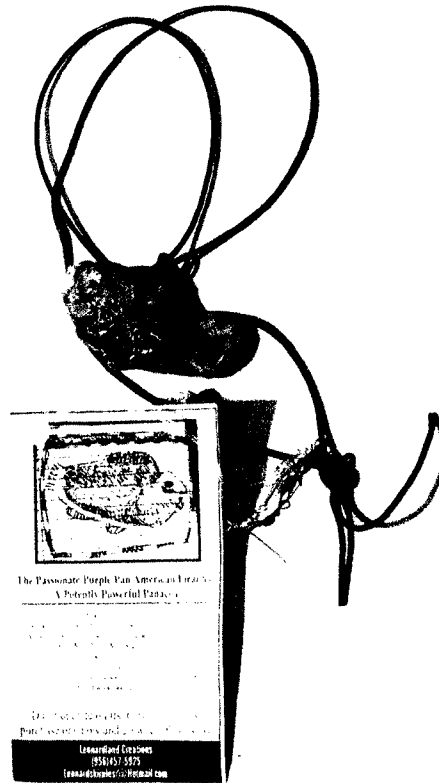


Figure One: Passionate Purple Pan American Piranha
Raku fired ceramic and mixed media. 2 ½" in length.

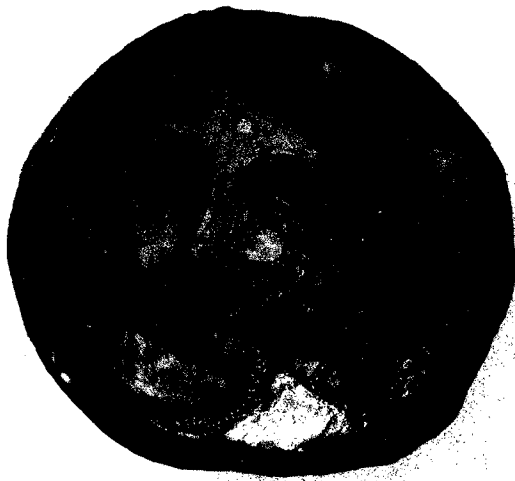


Figure Two: Leonardclaus Tunes Out
Low fire ceramic. 15" in diameter.

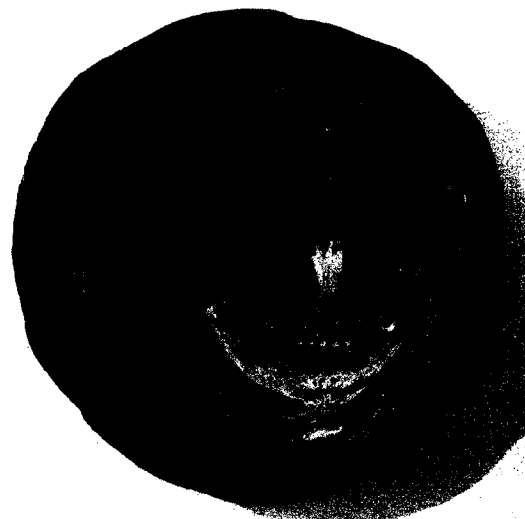


Figure Three: Leonardclaus Tunes In
Low fire ceramic. 15" in diameter.

Figure Four: Christmas Card Code Key
Xerox copy on paper. 8 ½" X 11", folded into quarters.



Figure Five: Portrait of the Artist as a Pothead;
Leonardclaus really doesn't smoke pot, he just sits on his butt and drinks beer a lot.
Oil on canvas. 52" X 40 1/2".

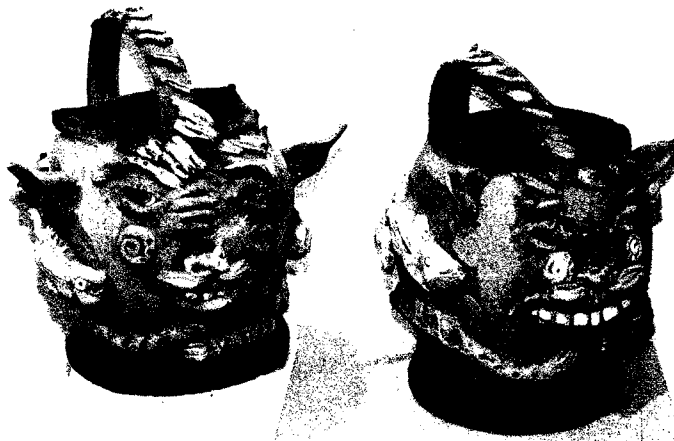


Figure Six: Pair of Purple Panther Potheads
Low fire ceramic. 9" X 6" X 6".

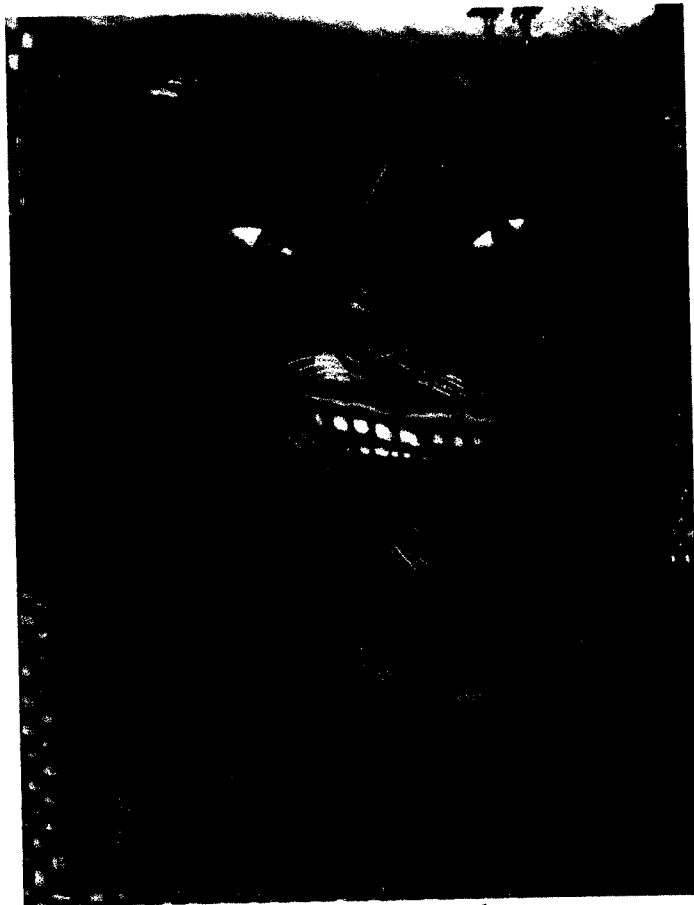


Figure Seven: Stuck
Oil on canvas. 60" X 48".



Figure Eight: Santa Looks a lot Like Daddy
Low fire ceramic. 25 ½" in height.



Figure Nine:
Leonardclaus Junior (in Weslaco)
Graphite and watercolor on paper.
11" X 14".



Figure Ten:
Leonardclaus Junior (in Edinburg)
Graphite and watercolor on paper.
11" X 14".



Figure Eleven: Leonardclaus Overreacts or Would you like a pencil with that honeybun?
Acrylic on canvas. 44" X 36"



Figure Twelve: Leonardclaus Dreams Big in the All American City
Acrylic on canvas. 48" X 35 1/2"

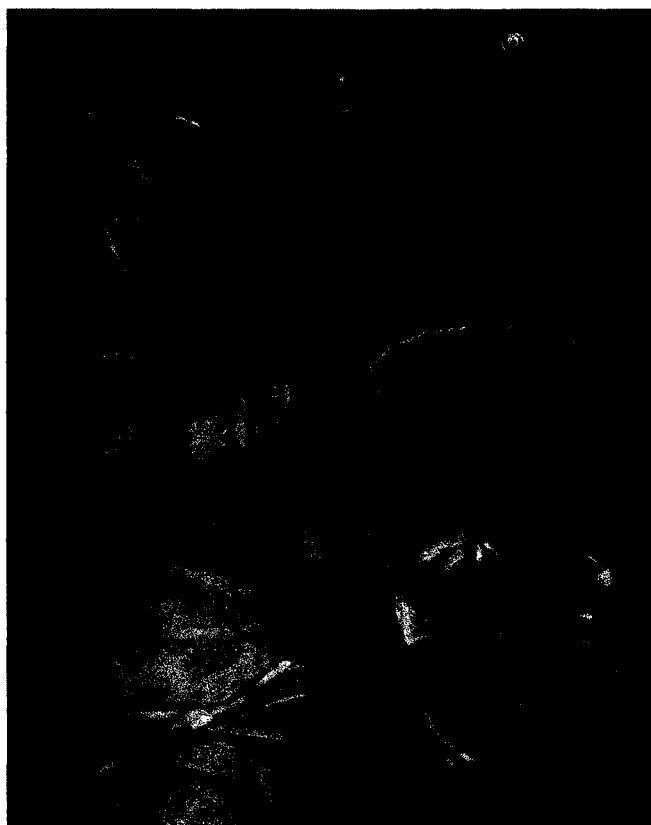


Figure Thirteen: Morning Musings
Acrylic on canvas. 56" X 47"

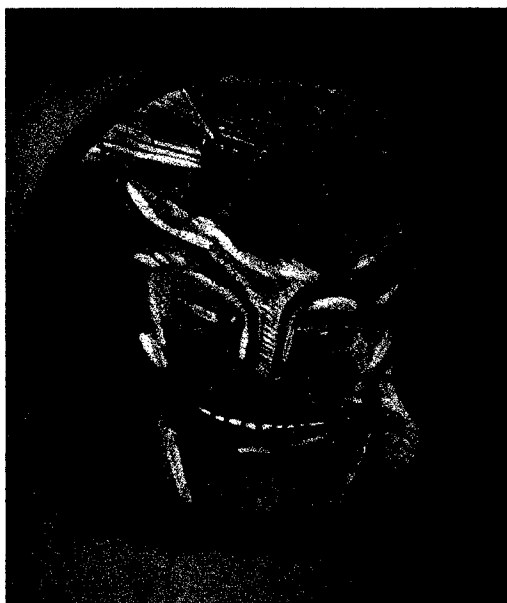


Figure Fourteen: Our Cat Oscar
Low fire ceramic. 11" in diameter.



Figure Fifteen: Our Dog Val
Low fire ceramic. 10 ½" in diameter.



Figure Sixteen: Big Fat Oscar
Low fire ceramic. 21" X 7" X 21".

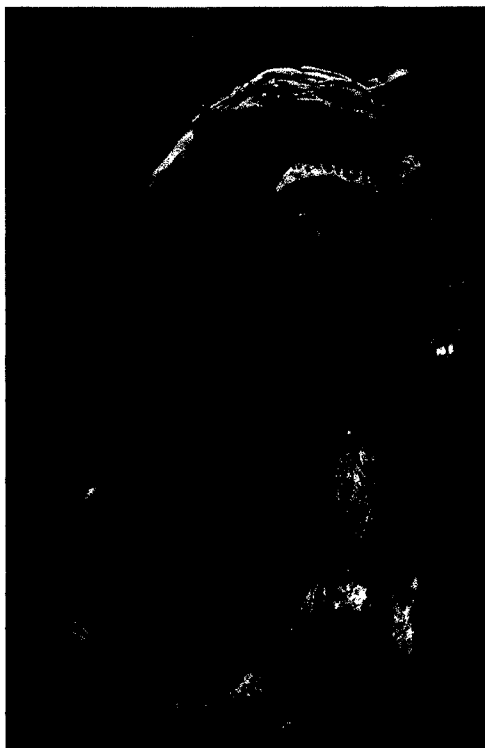


Figure Seventeen: Son of Val
Low fire ceramic. 17" X 8" X 10".



Figure Eighteen: Portrait of a Broken Hearted Pussy
Acrylic on paper. 30" X 22".



Figure Nineteen: Leonardclaus/Leonardclaws: CatManDooDad/Real Estate Sales Person
Acrylic on canvas. 43 ½" X 42 ½".



Figure Twenty: Pink and green Pussies
Acrylic on canvas. 40" X 52"



Figure Twenty-one: Pink and green Pussies #1
Low fire ceramic. 10" X 5" X 5".



Figure Twenty-two: Pink and green Pussies #2
Low fire ceramic. 10" X 5" X 5".

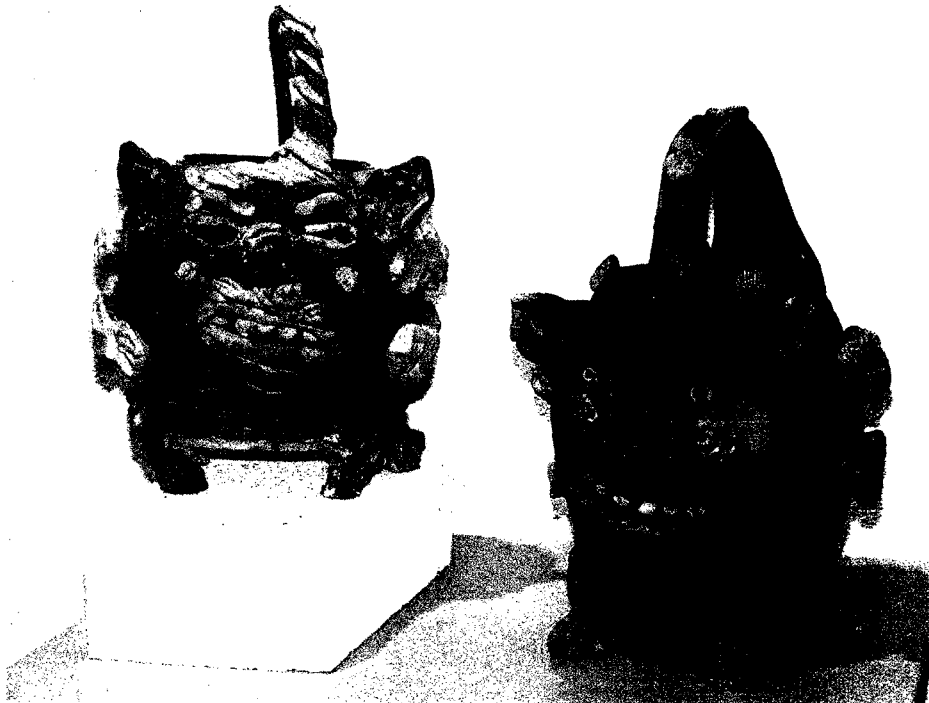


Figure Twenty-three: Pink and green Pussies #3
Low fire ceramic. 10" X 5" X 5".



Figure Twenty-four: The Original Cat/Man/Doodad
Paper mache. 16" in height.



Figure Twenty-five: Pair of Cat/Man/Doodad Cups
High fire ceramic. High Fire. Approximately 4" in height.



Figure Twenty-six: Panther Infection
Graphite and watercolor on paper. 11" X 14".



Figure Twenty-seven: Panther Infection
Oil on canvas. 60" X 48".

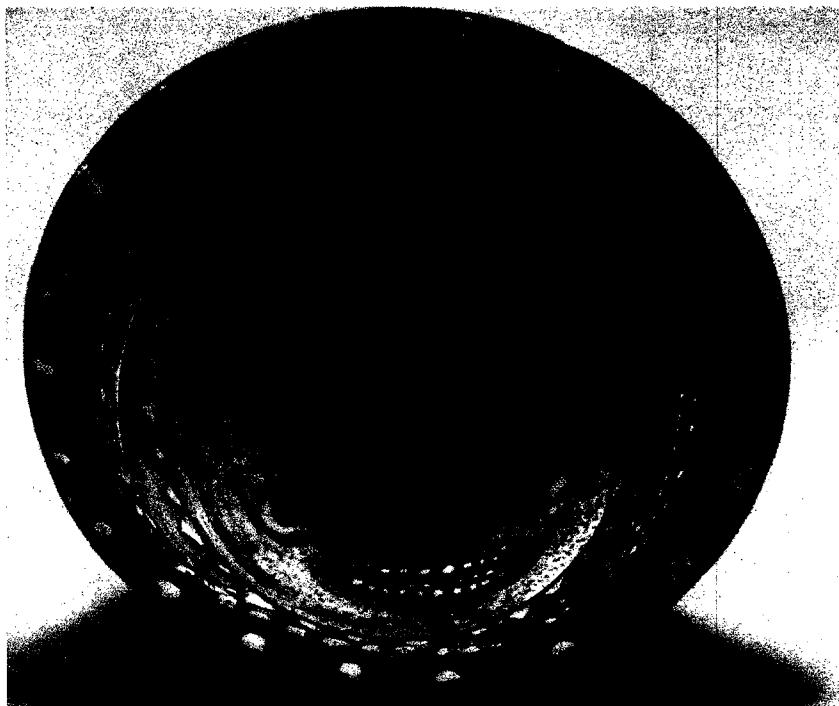
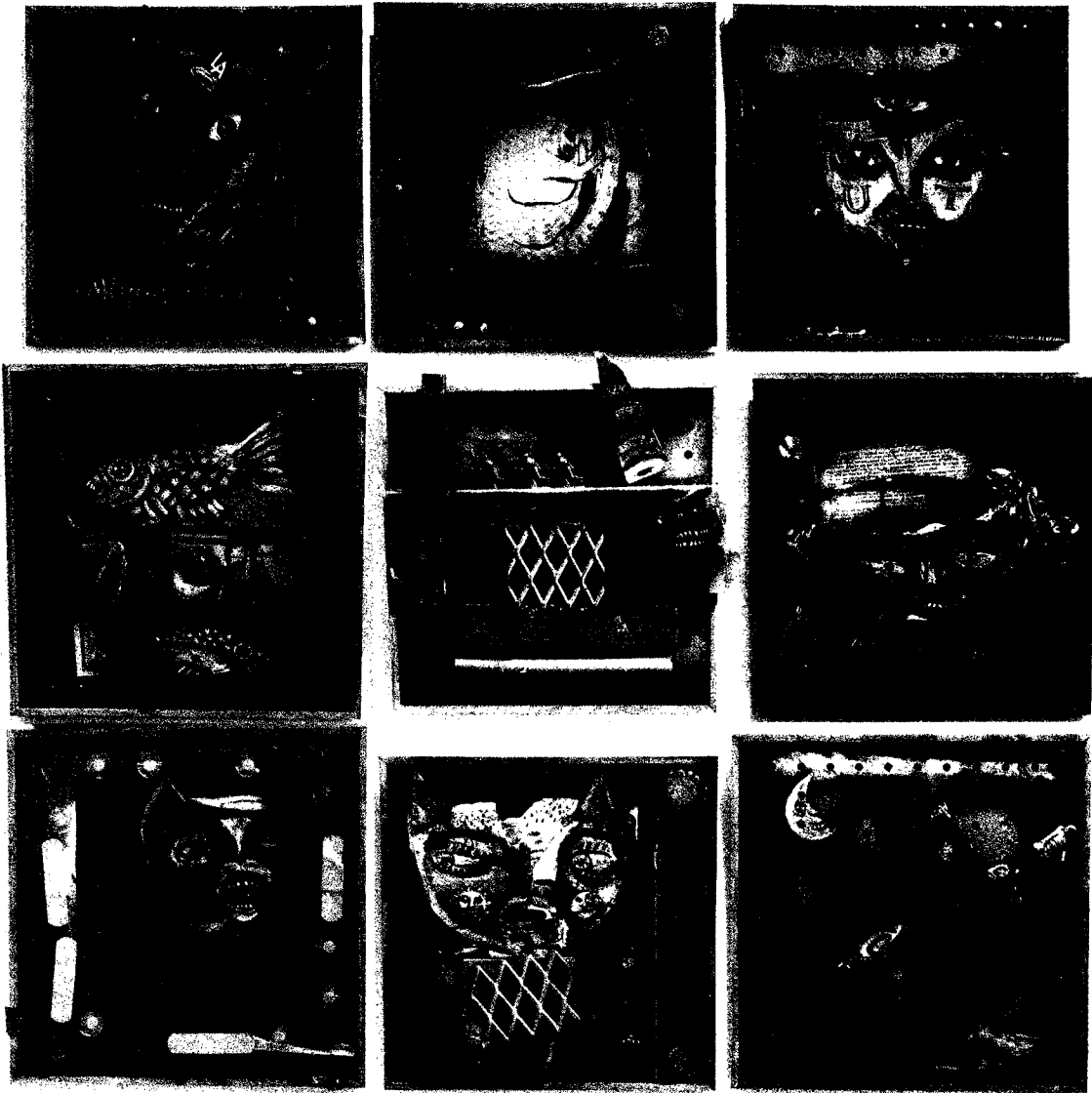


Figure Twenty-eight: Sun Bowl
Low fire ceramic. 10 ½" in diameter.



Figure Twenty-nine: Claus in a Bowl/Pa's in a Bowl/Claws in a Bowl/Ma's in a Bowl
Low fire/high fire ceramic. 9"- 10" in diameter.



Figures Thirty through thirty-eight, in order from top left.
All are mixed media on pegboard. 12" X 12"

Figure Thirty: Phillips Feeling #1 Portrait of Valentine as a Little Los Angeles
Leprechaun

Figure Thirty-one: Phillips Feeling #2 Gato Got to Go to Guadalajara

Figure Thirty-two: Phillips Feeling #3 New Shirt + New Hat = Cool Cat

Figure Thirty-three: Phillips Feeling #4 Green Around the Gills

Figure Thirty-four: Phillips Feeling #5 Portrait of Valentine as a Saltimbanque

Figure Thirty-five: Phillips Feeling #6 The Ghost of Jody Ramsey

Figure Thirty-six: Phillips Feeling #7 The Cat's Meow

Figure Thirty-seven: Phillips Feeling #8 The Cat's Pajamas

Figure Thirty-eight: Phillips Feeling #9 Valentine Takes Off



Figure Thirty-nine: Cat's game
Oil on canvas. 48" X 54".



Figure Forty: Dumb Bunny
Low fire ceramic. 14 ½" in diameter.



Figure Forty-one: Five Little Red Rabbit Whistles
High fire ceramic. Each 5" X 3" X 3".



Figure Forty-two: Andy
Low fire ceramic. Each 24" X 17" X 17".



Figure Forty-three: Chris
Low fire ceramic. 22" X 17" X 17".



Figure Forty-four: Tim
Low fire ceramic. 21" X 17" X 17".



Figure Forty-five: Piggy Bank
Low fire ceramic. 17" X 17" X 17".



Figure Forty-six: Dog/Log/Hog
Sagger fired ceramic. 13" in diameter.



Figure Forty-seven: Catnap
Acrylic and crayon on paper. 30" X 22".



Figure Forty-eight: Cat With a Bat
Low fire ceramic. 15" in diameter.



Figure Forty-nine: Poolside
Low fire ceramic. 15" in diameter.



Figure Fifty: Circler
Low fire ceramic. 15" in diameter.



Figure Fifty-one: Catfish in a Dogfight (Edinburg Bobcatfish detail)
Low fire ceramic. 5" X 8" X 11".



Figure Fifty-two: Catcatfish pair, Largemouth and Smallmouth
Low fire ceramic. Approximately 6" in height.



Figure Fifty-three: Gato Borrocho Bottle
Low fire ceramic. 9" in height.



Figure Fifty-four: Santa is a Male Chauvenist Pig Bottle
Low fire ceramic. 8" in height.



Figure Fifty-five: Satin White Selection, Bowl
High fire ceramic. 12" in diameter.

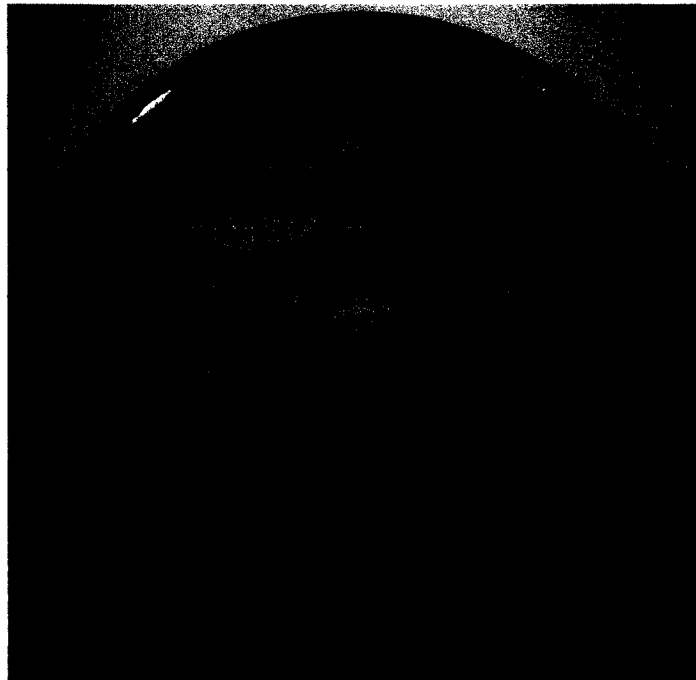


Figure Fifty-six: Satin White Selection, Plate
High fire ceramic. 12" in diameter.

Chris Leonard
1711 Charles Circle
Edinburg, Texas 78541
(956) 457-5925
Leonardskirules@hotmail.com

Education:

- MFA. University of Texas Pan American, 1201 W. University Drive, Edinburg, Texas 78539-2999. 2001-2003. Three dimensional studio art major, emphasis in ceramics.
- Grandview College: 1986-87, Des Moines, Iowa 50316-1599. Cross Enrollment while attending Des Moines Area Community College. Completed requirements for the State of Iowa Department of Public Education educational endorsement 058, Mathematics. Sixteen hours of mathematics and computer science were completed.
- Des Moines Area Community College, 1986-87 Ankeny, Iowa 50021. Diploma in Telephony.
- Drake University, 1986, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Completion of coursework required by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction for educational endorsement 55, Coaching K-12. In addition, three hours of graduate level drawing completed.
- BFA. University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. 1980-85: A broad major in fine arts with an emphasis in painting. NCATE approved educational sequence completed and State of Iowa Teacher's Certificate Obtained.

Professional Teaching Experience:

1987-90,1992-2001.

- Mathematics and Art Teacher, Weslaco High School (1987-90,92-2000) and Weslaco East High School (2000-2001) Weslaco ISD, PO Box 266, Weslaco, TX 78596. Teaching Assignments include Math Modeling, Algebra I and II as well as Art I, which serves as a full year art elective. Ratings for both Texas Teacher Appraisal System and Texas Professional Development Appraisal System evaluation: "Exceeds Expectations".

1996-2001.

- Assistant High School Swim Coach. Assisted with coed swim program throughout August-February season. In addition, assisted with Weslaco ISD "Learn to Swim Program" during summer months 1996-2000. Red Cross Certified: Lifeguard, Community First Aid and CPR, and Water Safety Instructor.

1991-92.

- Mathematics Teacher, Edcouch Elsa Junior High, Edcouch Elsa ISD, PO Box 127, Edcouch, Texas 78538. Teaching Assignments include seventh and eighth grade math.

1990-91.

- Mathematics Teacher, West Campus High School, South San Antonio ISD, 2515 Sioux Street, San Antonio, Texas 78224. Teaching Assignments included Fundamentals of Math, Consumer Math, and Pre Algebra.

Additional Experience:

- Spring Semester 1986. Ceramic Department Monitor, Des Moines Art Center. Assisted Artist in Residence David Dahlquist with clay body mixing, preparation, and storage.

Solo Exhibitions:

- Claus/Claws III: Leonardland Revisited, University Gallery, CAS Building, The University of Texas Pan American, Edinburg, Texas 2003
- Claus/Claws: A Journey Through Leonardland's Multivalent Meanings, The University of Texas Pan American MFA Exhibition of Chris Leonardski-Leonard, Progreso Art Gallery, Nuevo Progreso, Tamps., Mexico, 2003
- Claus/Claws: Chris Leonard's Christmas at the Blue Onion, McAllen, Texas, 2002
- Solo exhibition for grand opening of UTPA Visitor Center in conjunction with the 75th Anniversary of The University of Texas Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, 2002

International Exhibitions:

- Uno/First Anniversary Exhibit, Progreso Art Gallery, Nuevo Progreso, Tamps., Mexico, 2003
- Los Dos Lados del Rio, Centro Cultural Mexicano, McAllen Texas and Casa de la Cultura de Reynosa, A.C., Reynosa, Tamps., Mexico, 2002
- Mezcla, a Collection of Border Artists and an Inception of a Gallery, Progreso Art Gallery, Nuevo Progreso, Tamps., Mexico, 2002

Group Exhibitions:

- The Green Period at the Blue Onion, McAllen, Texas 2003
- Pan American Passions at the Blue Onion, McAllen, Texas 2003
- Examinations and Experimentations: UTPA Graduate Show, UTPA Clark Gallery, Edinburg, Texas, 2003
- Chris Leonard and Benjamin Varela at the Blue Onion, McAllen, Texas, 2002
- UTPA Clay Visits STCC, South Texas Community College Art Gallery, McAllen, Texas, 2002
- Beyond the Borders, Cinesol Art Exhibit at the Rio Grande Valley Museum, Harlingen, Texas, 2002
- Colores De La Region at Sala Arte Gallery, McAllen, Texas, 2002
- Two States of Ceramics- The University of Texas Pan American and Arizona State University, UTPA Clark Gallery, Edinburg, Texas, 2002
- Corazones Distintos II, III at Sala Arte Gallery, McAllen, Texas, 2002, 2003
- Explorations-UTPA Graduate Show, UTPA Clark Gallery, Edinburg, Texas, 2002
- Holiday Exhibition at Sala Arte Gallery, McAllen, Texas, 2001, 2002
- Dia de los Muertes, University Gallery, Edinburg, Texas, 2001, 2002
- Normah Knight Invitational Art Show and Sale, Harlingen, Texas, 2001, 2002

Juried Exhibitions:

- Art on the Move Juried Exhibition-International Museum of Art and Science, McAllen, Texas 2002
- Iowa State Fair Juried Exhibit, Cultural Center on the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines, Iowa, 1985,1986,1987
- Northeast Iowa Competitive Art Show, Metropolitan Gallery in the Cedar Falls Recreation and Arts Center, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 1985
- Iowa College Salon, The Brunnier Gallery and Museum, Iowa State Center, Ames, Iowa, 1985
- University of Northern Iowa Annual Juried Exhibition, Communication Arts Building Gallery, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls Iowa, 1983, 1984, 1985

Reviews of Exhibitions:

- Hinojosa, Noe, "Cat Class and Cat Style" Mesquite Review, August/September 2003, p 25. (Includes photos)
- Cuellar, Dulcinea, "Alternative Offerings" McAllen Monitor, Friday December 20, 2002, p. 19 and 24F. (Includes two photos)

Reviews of Exhibitions, continued:

- Pardin, Jorge and Rodriguez, Leonardo, “Maestros y estudiantes de dos universidades comparten un mismo escenario” El Manana, Matamoros Tamps., Mexico, Tuesday March 12, 2002, p8H. (Includes photo)
- Robledo, David, “Corazones Distinos exhibit is all heart” McAllen Monitor, Friday February 22, 2002, p17F.

Awards and Recognition:

- International Women’s Board Scholarship, Graduate Practicum Study in Guadalajara, Mexico, Summer 2003
- International Education Fee Scholarship, Graduate Practicum Study in Guadalajara, Mexico, Summer 2003
- University of Texas Pan American Jesse and Mary Jones Endowed Scholarship, 2002-2003 Academic School Year
- Merit Award, “Double Pizza Emergency”, 1987 Iowa State Fair Juried Exhibit, Cultural Center on the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines, Iowa
- Merit Award, “It Occurred in Mr. Wigg’s Driveway”, 1985 Northeast Iowa Competitive Art Show, Metropolitan Gallery in the Cedar Falls Recreation and Arts Center, Cedar Falls, Iowa
- Cover Selection, “An Improvement Over Sheboygan” for Inner Weather, University of Northern Iowa’s Magazine of the Arts, 1984

Professional Associations:

- National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts
- College Art Association

Conferences/Workshops/Symposia

- UTPA/Personal Art Directions at the University of Texas A&M Kingsville—Slides and Demonstration, 2003
- Borders in Flux, NCECA 37th Annual Conference, Graduate Student Slide Forum Presenter, San Diego, California, 2003
- Riffs Rhythm Regeneration, NCECA 36th Annual Conference, Kansas City Missouri, 2002

Community Service

- Donation, McAllen First Presbyterian Church Montreat West Youth Group Fundraiser, 2003
- Donation, Cup Submission for Regina Brown Undergraduate Fellowship Fund Benefit, Borders in Flux, NCECA 37th Annual Conference, San Diego, California, 2003
- Juror, El Tule Boys and Girls Club of Edinburg (Texas) Art Competition, 2003
- Curator, El Tule Boys and Girls Club of Edinburg (Texas) “Celebration of Color” at the Blue Onion, McAllen, Texas, 2003
- Donation, Por Los Ninos, IDEA Academy Third Annual Art Exhibition and Silent Auction, McAllen, Texas 2002
- Volunteer Instructor, IDEA Academy (Donna, Texas) after school enrichment, with ceramics instructor/UTPA Grad Student Jeremy Schmidt, 2001

International Study/Travel

- Studies in Mexican Art: Orozco’s Guadalajara. May 18-June 1, 2003. Graduate Practicum credit earned through the University of Texas Pan American.
- Studies in European Art: The Art Treasures of Amsterdam, Paris, and London. December 26, 1984-January 13, 1985. Two hours of art history earned through the University of Northern Iowa.