Preservation Lab - Treatment Report

**Database ID** 838 **Treatment ID** 143 **Item Record** i73419382 **Date received in Pres.** 5/6/2014 **Conservator** Ashleigh Schieszer

**Department** PLCH **Call Number** 709.04082 q8972 2012

**Title** Retablo for Herb [realia] / Virginia Burroughs.

**Author** Burroughs, Virginia.

**DESCRIPTION:**

**General Remarks**
This is an altered dictionary that has been sculpted into a memorial box. It contains various relics from the artist's late husband.

**Binding**
The original binding is a grained cloth that looks like leather. The upper cover is covered with various layers of colored felt that are adhered overall. The felt has been cut into shapes to resemble Day of the Dead skeletons. The lower board is covered overall with black felt.

**Textblock**
The textblock has been bracketed open to an upper page opening. The lower part of the textblock is carved out to form an empty rectangular void. Small photographs and objects have been placed inside the hollow textblock to make a memory box. The upper opening leaf margin is collaged with different images on paper. In between the first few leaves of the lower opening leaves, there is a clear film acting as a window in which to view the relics. To keep the binding open, two decorative ninety degree angle metal brackets are nailed into the textblock at the gutter. The edges of the textblock are colored red with a brown decorative pattern.

**Primary Support**
The paper leaves have been adhered together with a clear adhesive (possibly silicone?).

**Medium**
The printed book pages are covered entirely with collaged photographs on paper.

**Attachments | Inserts**
There is a small skeleton sculpture adhered near the lower fore edge of the upper opening leaf.

**Housing**
None.

**CONDITION:**

**Summary**
Overall, the retablo is in good condition; however the skeleton sculpture is in danger of becoming lost due to lack of adhesion. Also, the felt is beginning to delaminate on the upper cover. The static cling of the plastic film has attracted dust.

**Binding**
Covered in felt. The felt is delaminating on the upper cover. The binding is required to perpetually stay open in order to view the retablo inside the textblock.

**Textblock**
The altered memorial box appears to be in excellent condition. The clear plastic film is slightly dusty. All of the relics are firmly attached in place.

**Primary Support**
The clear adhesive in between the leaves is firmly attaching the leaves together. There is swelling and slight curling of the textblock that appears to have occurred during construction.

**Medium**
The collaged photographs are both faded and/or yellowed by the aging collage medium.

**Housing**
Housing Narrative
The object is currently un-housed and in need of protection during storage.

Attachments/Inserts
The adhered small sculpture is detaching from the upper leaf due to poor adhesion.

Previous Treatment
No previous treatment is apparent.

Materials Analysis

TREATMENT:

Proposal
1. Re-adhere felt to binding.
2. Surface clean with brushes or anti static cloths to reduce dust.
3. Secure skeleton sculpture to book to prevent it from becoming detached during handling.

Housing Need
Custom

Factors Influencing Treatment
The book is an unusual shape due to it’s perpetual opening. This shape will require a uniquely constructed enclosure that takes handling into account, as well as protection of all of it’s components.

Performed Treatment
1. Design of the enclosure was a collaborative effort between CV and AS. Research of boxes was conducted and a mock-up model was made by AS.
2. A corrugated box was constructed by CV using PVA. The box includes a pull out tray with a cloth pull tie that sits inside a box with a top hinged lid. The top hinged lid is secured with ties. The interior of the hinged lid contains a polyester film L-sleeve that houses the exhibition label. Two horizontal panels of Volara are attached to the inside of one wall to create a channel. This channel helps to protect the protruding foot of the skeleton sculpture when the book is slid out of the box, while also holding the book snug in the box.
3. The areas of delaminating felt were tacked backed down with PVA.
4. The book was surface cleaned with an anti-static cloth, especially over the plastic film window.
5. The skeleton sculpture was secured to the textblock with polyethylene strapping.

Housing Provided
Custom

Housing Narrative

Storage Recommendations and Handling notes
Do not tilt or turn the box upside down.

TOTAL Treatment Time
13 hrs