

Between originality and functionality.

Conservation challenges of two photographic albums from the

Saturnino Herrán Foundation

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This poster presents the decision-making process regarding the conservation treatments of two photo albums from the Saturnino Herrán Foundation's (SHF) Archive.

The SHF is a small foundation that aims to disseminate the work and life of the Mexican painter: Saturnino Herrán (SH) and is directed by Saturnino Herrán's grandson, Saturnino Herrán Gudiño (SHG). SHG gathered the family documents related to SH and created the archive with the aim to allow researchers and people

interested in SH's artwork and life to study these documents. During the examination many elements of the albums suggested that they were bound by SH. Nevertheless, the original bookbinding did not allow the safe handling of the albums, so the transformation of their structure was required. Through a video call with SHG during the spring of 2020 we assessed together the original elements that suggested the SH's intervention and determined which ones would be transformed through the conservation treatment.

DECISION MAKING

original binding issues

During the examination the conservator observed that while the binding structure was thought to be original it was no longer functional.

original features

These were emphasized by SHG as relevant evidence of Saturnino Herrán's craftsmanship.

BLUE ALBUM ISSUE
rigid structure

RED ALBUM ISSUE
weak structure



Stapled spine

Photograph attached by SH that reveals his love for bullfightings



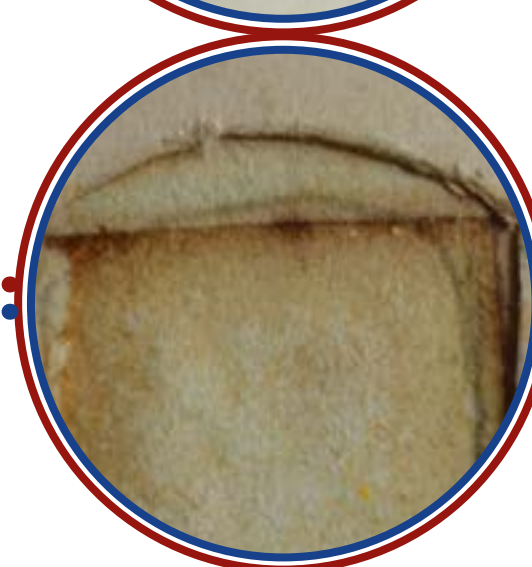
Thick leaves

Use of recycled materials



Adhesive spots attaching the leaves together

Guide drawing and irregular trimming of window mat

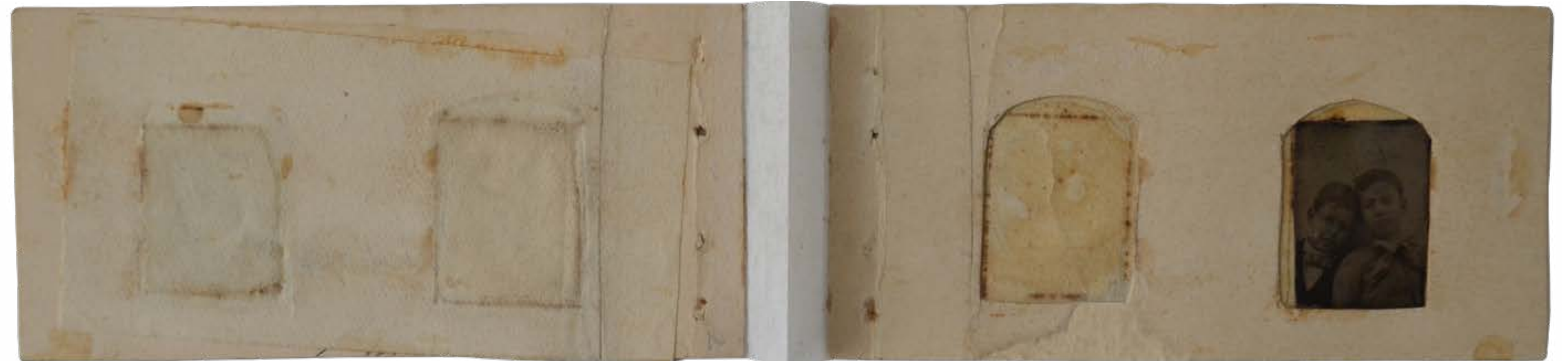


Leaves partially detached

RESOLUTION

As result of the discussion with SHG, we determined that the priority of the treatment was to provide a new structure: flexible and strong for both albums, even though the original binding was constructed by SH. The other original features made by SH were preserved in the new binding structure because they were in good condition.

CONSERVATION TREATMENT



Decision 1. Thin Japanese paper hinges joined the leaves together in order to avoid increasing the width of the albums.



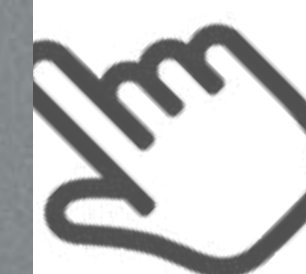
Decision 2. A French link stitch provided strength and enabled the book to open widely



Decision 3. A Japanese paper hollow tube released the tension in the spine



Click here to take a look inside the albums after treatment



CONCLUSIONS

This project demonstrates that conservation in private practice can be an opportunity to collaborate with stakeholders. Sharing concerns, expectations, and different ways to see and understand these objects was very important to determine and execute an appropriate conservation treatment.

The author recognizes that the COVID 19 pandemic adds extra challenges to collaborating with stakeholders.

In this case, new strategies and digital resources had to be implemented to replace the physical interaction with the albums.