

No Longer Art
Narrative

NO LONGER ART

NARRATIVE

(with authentic inventory)

Second Printing

Revised Edition prepared by

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The first printing of *No Longer Art Narrative*
accompanied the No Longer Art Salvage Art Institute
exhibition at the Arthur Ross Gallery at Columbia
University, Nov. 2012 - Mar. 2013.

Salvage Art Institute

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NO LONGER ART

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PREFACE

VICISSITUDO (MUTATIO) ((NOVO))

A large, painted-steel sculpture versus its recovered parts transformed due to direct impact and fire, warehoused in an insurance company storage facility, New York City.

The following is a comparative list of qualities of the original against its recovered parts:

BEFORE THE IMPACT

AFTER THE IMPACT

COLOR

Custom red by Keeler & Long,
Uniformly distributed

Post-burn ash grey, pale
orange, rust brown, distrib-
uted in irregular patches

SURFACE

Smooth, flat, reflective, with minor
irregularities along the edges

Porous, with soft-bends, flaky,
dust-covered in parts, with
visible abrasions and gauges

MATERIAL

Carbon steel and Poly-Silicone
Enamel from P-Series (20% - 30%
co-polymerized silicone-alkyd)

Burned steel, oxidized
paint, ash and debris

DIMENSIONS

One solid: 45' by 15'
by 20'

3 fragments: 40' by 5' folded
over one another, fused in parts

OTHER DISTINGUISHING MARKS

Evenly distributed rivets along
outer edge, signature on the
inner edge

Holes and partial rivets,
no signature

INTRODUCTION

In 2012, Salvage Art Institute received from AXA Art Insurance Corporation a donation of “salvage,” that is, damaged artworks kept by the insurance company after their total-loss claims have been paid. Accompanying the donation were documents—emails, legal papers, loan forms—tracing the history of each artwork’s path toward total-loss, oftentimes in its entirety, from the first report of damage all the way through to the final declaration of total loss and the transfer of title.

As we reviewed the documents, we noticed that, even with significant differences in the medium and the type of damage, when submitted to the logic of insurance, each piece’s trajectory towards total loss resembled one another’s; on the journey toward a settled claim, the same legal steps had to be taken. When we looked closer, however, we discovered that there was more at play than actuarial logic. Despite attempts to retain the neutral tone of legalese, at times bursts of feeling and character broke through. The signs of this surfeit of emotion were subtle—scribbles and cross-outs, exclamation points, celebratory language, personal addresses—but could not be ignored. We decided it would be a mistake to view the events recorded in these documents as simply the emotionless unwinding of a legal mechanism; instead, given the extralegal feelings involved, they’d be best viewed through a dramatic lens. There was not just legal formality here, but narrative structure.

With this in mind, we reimagined the path an artwork takes from damage to total loss as a saga that would almost read like an epic poem, with its own dramatic personae and narrative beats: the property became our protagonist, the damage the inciting incident, the conservation report and valuation the trials and tribulations of the second act, and the resolution of the claim the catharsis bringing the story to its close. To compose this drama, we extracted each plot point from the individual documents and collaged them together to create a master narrative. This book, *The No Longer Art Narrative*, is the result of that collage process.