

that Jarvis slipped by promising to purchase a painting from the Prince of Lichtenstein without having the official go-ahead, but this does not fly after Horrall's lengthy explanation. Jarvis became the victim of a political decision and change in government at a pivotal time when a long-negotiated art deal was coming to a head between the National Gallery and the Prince of Lichtenstein. The failure of this art deal forced his resignation and irreparably damaged his sense of self-worth. He was also too outspoken about trying to get Canada beyond its provincial habits in art appreciation and, in particular, about a symbolic relic of our colonial past—the Queen Mary's Carpet. The trustees of the Gallery knew that he did not possess a curatorial background and they justified this lack by using his vibrant personality and natural ability to speak freely in public. Significantly, such traits in a Gallery director did not sit well with the new majority government under John Diefenbaker. This is not the format for a detailed relay of Horrall's findings on the issue, but it is important to emphasize that politicians are perhaps the worst individuals to handle a major international art deal, which requires expert knowledge of the art market, swift action and payment, and necessary commissions. The Canadian government slipped on all of these necessary steps. Although Jarvis was blocked by the government from purchasing a Breughel painting from the Lichtenstein collection for \$400,000, he made an appeal and asked for permission to purchase the painting for \$350,000 with an added bonus of a Lorenzo Monaca painting for another \$95,000 from funds that the trustees felt had been set aside for Lichtenstein purchases. Government ministers approved this approach and authorized the said funds to be used. On these grounds, Jarvis contacted the London dealer who was arranging the deal to say that they would take the Monaca painting. Meanwhile, Minister Davie

Fulton discovered that a Lichtenstein fund was never officially created and surprised Jarvis with the orders to stop the purchase (p. 283). Jarvis had already given his word to the London dealer who went ahead and purchased the painting on the Gallery's behalf, which was normal practice. Although Jarvis tried to stop the purchase, the deal was already done. What followed was a storm of finger pointing in the media and on Parliament Hill, which finally resulted in Jarvis accepting the firm suggestion of Minister Ellen Fairclough to resign. The chapter that follows his resignation is peppered with descriptions of high-end cultural jobs, leadership positions and consulting roles that he accepted, but it is notably unfocused and dispassionate—much like the inner state of Jarvis from 1960 on.

What stands out most in the history of Jarvis is his departure from the National Gallery, which was so tragic that it inspired Robertson Davies to use him as the basis of an ill-fated character (Aylwin Ross) in his novel *What's Bred in the Bone* (1985). Perhaps it is appropriate that a work of fiction has stood to spark the greatest interest in Jarvis, since his actual life was, as Horrall paints it, made up of several masks. My hope is, however, that the non-fiction that Horrall presents will inspire an even greater interest in who Alan Jarvis really was.

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#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Douglas Ord, *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture* (Montreal & Kingston, 2003), 134–35.
- <sup>2</sup> Jean Sutherland Boggs, *The National Gallery of Canada* (Toronto, 1971), 46–54.

William Tronzo, ed., *The Fragment, An Incomplete History*. Getty Publications, 2009, 232 pp., 57 colour and 40 black-and-white illus., 3 line drawings, 5 tables, 1 map, hardcover \$50 U.S., ISBN 978-0-89236-926-3.

There is something playful in this collection of essays. That is not to say it is not a serious critical work, but the heterogeneity of its subjects—from the *Laokoon* to B-movie ectobrain—reflects a sense of scholarly brio that is, frankly, fun to read. Under the rubric of “the fragment,” William Tronzo has brought together eleven very different, but interconnected perspectives on the material, aesthetics, and phenomenology of the relationship between parts and their wholes (and holes within parts). The strength of the book lies not in the acuity of the individual chapters (readers will find some essays more congruent with

their interests than others) but in its intellectual expansiveness. This expansiveness is heralded by both the cover and the frontispiece. The first shows Cornelia Parker's *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991), a garden shed destroyed in a controlled explosion and displayed as suspended debris lit by a single, central bulb; the second shows Raymond Pettibon's *No Title (In A Universe)* (1992), a pen and ink drawing of a diminutive, shouting figure whose gaping, black mouth utters random letters denying the *logos* of the biblical Genesis. The energy and outward momentum of both works constitute a manifesto that denies the volume an overarching *logos* and demands that readers construct their own critical narrative as each chapter provides branching-off points for new reveries and connections. Of course, all edited collections require this from their readers, but rarely do they call us to join in the play of ideas. The explosive