

Art LoVers is a double Festschrift that honours the distinguished careers and academic accomplishment of art historians Elisabeth de Bièvre and John Onians, as well as their shared life as a married couple on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary. Their intellectual paths together and individually have led to unexplored territories extending their discipline and leaving a profound impact on those who have encountered them. We have chosen to felicitate Elisabeth and John together in a book that is personal, creative, and visually engaging. This book offers a platform for the many people who have accompanied them on their journeys, whether for brief moments or across decades and is honoured by contributors from diverse fields, including practising artists, fellow art historians and former students, colleagues from other professions, as well as friends. Since this is a volume for a married couple, some chapters are in pairs or jointly authored.



The first part of the book features artworks that resonate with their lives and work, including paintings, drawings, photography, poetry, fiction and travel writing. The second part presents personal and professional accounts of the roles of Elisabeth and John as teachers, colleagues, scholars, and friends. Some recall first encounters, others collaborations, memorable events, visits, travels and conversations. The third part compiles scholarly articles of traditional Festschrift fare. Here are saluted the theoretical approaches Elisabeth and John have innovated and their influence: the World Art Studies so closely connected to the University of East Anglia, Elisabeth's Green Art Studies and John's neuroarthistory.

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Horváth and Onians (eds)

Art LoVers

Art LoVers

Celebrating
Elisabeth de Bièvre
and John Onians
in Words and
Pictures



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Gyöngyvér Horváth
and Isabelle Onians





Figure 0.1. Graham Johnston, *Lost Picasso No. 1, Short-haired*, 2022. Acrylic on primed paper, 23x16cm. Norwich, private collection.



Figure 0.2. Graham Johnston, *Lost Picasso No. 2, Long-haired*, 2022. Acrylic on primed paper, 24x17cm. Norwich, private collection.



Figure 0.3. Ice Cream. Norwich, c. 1987. Photograph by Charles Onians.

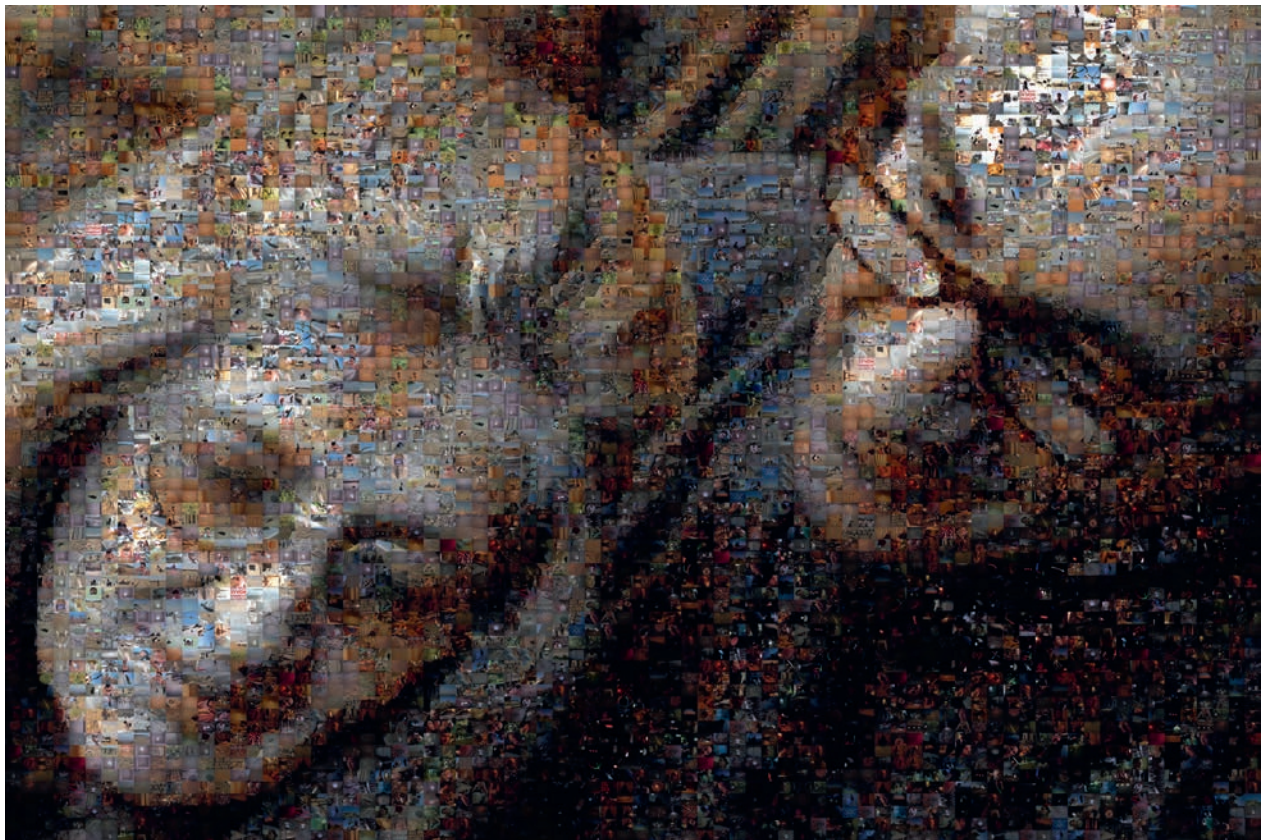


Figure 0.4. First of the East, Last of the West. Cyprus, Ethiopia, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Norwich, Sudan, Pakistan, Palestine, 2004–2007. Photograph by Charles Onians.

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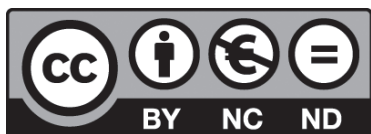
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Editors' introduction

This double Festschrift honours the distinguished careers and academic accomplishment of art historians Elisabeth de Bièvre and John Onians, as well as their shared life as a married couple on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary. Their intellectual paths together and individually have led to unexplored territories extending their discipline and leaving a profound impact on those who have encountered them. As editors we embody the professional and private aspects of this celebration, one of us the last former doctoral student of John and the other the child of them both.

Following the authoritative album amicorum which Elisabeth abetted Lauren Golden in conjuring up for John more than 20 years ago, *Raising the Eyebrow: John Onians and World Art Studies* (2001), we have chosen to felicitate Elisabeth and John together in a book that is more personal, creative, and visually engaging. This book offers a platform for the many people who have accompanied them on their journeys, whether for brief moments or across decades. Their impact is honoured here by contributors from diverse fields, including practising artists, fellow art historians and former students, colleagues from other professions, as well as friends. We have welcomed both learned and less formal pieces, and since this is a volume for a married couple, some chapters are in pairs or jointly authored.



Fig 0.5. Lauren Golden, *An Architecture of Love*, 2024. Ink and gouache, 21x29.7cm. Private collection.



Figure 0.6. Elisabeth de Bièvre and John Onians on their wedding day, 27 July 1968. Oud-Wassenaar Kasteel, The Hague.

The book is organized into three sections, based on the type of contributions:

Part I features artworks – verbal or visual – that resonate with the lives and work of Elisabeth and John. These include paintings, drawings, photography, poetry, fiction and travel writing.

Part II presents personal and professional accounts of the roles of Elisabeth and John as teachers, colleagues, scholars, and friends. Some recall first encounters, others collaborations, memorable events, visits, travels and conversations. Several explore Elisabeth and John’s unique relationship, their hospitality, and the warmth of their home.

Part III compiles scholarly articles of traditional Festschrift fare. Here are saluted the theoretical approaches Elisabeth and John have innovated and applied in their scholarly writing and teaching, and their influence: their World Art Studies so closely connected to the University of East Anglia, Elisabeth’s geography of art and Green Art Studies, and John’s neuroarthistory. While some chapters are tributes, others bear witness to their scholarly activities from further afar.

The book’s pair of cover pictures are by two contemporary artists. Gyöngyvér came across the image for John by accident and the evocation of the young man whom neither editor could have known, was immediate (see cover). The classical face peers into the past that is no longer available directly, only through many frames; the painting reflects his introspective nature. The second image, for Elisabeth, a drawing entitled *Omphale*, engages the viewer directly (see back cover). As a queen, adorned with the Nemean lionskin, she embodies pride and strength, and possesses the strongest of the heroes as her lover.

Among the featured artworks, Graham Johnston’s playful pair of portraits of Elisabeth and John are presented in the front inner cover (Figure 0.1 and Figure 0.2), while two photographic works by Charles Onians, the son of Elisabeth and John, also grace the book as the back inner cover (Figure 0.3 and Figure 0.4).

Finally, we publish Lauren Golden’s visual celebration of our honorees’ wedding anniversary (Figure 0.5). Her stated aspiration was to tell the art history love story of John Onians and Elisabeth de Bièvre through the marvellous architectures of their life together, emphasising their union of Italian and Netherlandish Renaissance environment and expertise. The central wedding portrait, after the 1968 photo (Figure 0.6) follows the traditional papal portraits surrounded by images of their architectural patronage, especially that of the *Portrait of Sixtus V* of 1589 by the Flemish engraver Nicolaus van Aelst, a resident in Rome. The lefthand corners are for John and

the right for Elisabeth, representing their youths before they met. John was a child in Chalfont St Giles where he jumped for joy ringing the bells of the church, while Trinity College, Cambridge was his university. Elisabeth's schooling was in The Hague before she went on to the University of Utrecht. The two centre top images show where they met in 1966 at the American Academy, Rome and then where they married in 1968 at the Raadhuis De Paauw, Wassenaar. Their wedding reception was held at the Oud-Wassenaar Kasteel, the architecture of the central portrait. Whilst both travelling as academics to all parts of the world throughout their lives, their home in Norwich, the location for so many enlightening dinners for students and colleagues, is depicted in the centre of the lower register, beside their fantastically modern workplace, the Sainsbury Centre of UEA. The centre right image depicts the steps to their medieval home in the Italian hilltop town of Bomarzo, chosen by them for Vicino Orsini's mysterious Renaissance garden, the Sacro Bosco created as a love homage to his wife, Giulia Farnese. Centre left is the Chiostro del Bramante in Rome, a quintessential architecture of Renaissance thought and meanings as brought together in John's work.

Instead of looking into the past, Elisabeth and John themselves announce the call to action constituted by a Festschrift at least as much as ours is a treasury of sweet souvenirs: 'This collection illustrates the diverse understanding of art manifested through the lives of two people. It offers a possible beginning for a subsequent volume.'

We express our gratitude to everyone involved.

The Editors
Gyöngyvér Horváth and Isabelle Onians
31 August 2024