



**ARTS FOR HEALTH**

# **BODY ART**



**BRIAN BROWN  
VIRGINIA KUULEI BERNDT**

# BODY ART

# ARTS FOR HEALTH

**Series Editor:** Paul Crawford, Professor of Health Humanities,  
University of Nottingham, UK

The *Arts for Health* series offers a ground-breaking set of books that guide the general public, carers and healthcare providers on how different arts can help people to stay healthy or improve their health and wellbeing.

Bringing together new information and resources underpinning the health humanities (that link health and social care disciplines with the arts and humanities), the books demonstrate the ways in which the arts offer people worldwide a kind of shadow health service – a non-clinical way to maintain or improve our health and wellbeing. The books are aimed at general readers along with interested arts practitioners seeking to explore the health benefits of their work, health and social care providers and clinicians wishing to learn about the application of the arts for health, educators in arts, health and social care and organisations, carers and individuals engaged in public health or generating healthier environments. These easy-to-read, engaging short books help readers to understand the evidence about the value of arts for health and offer guidelines, case studies and resources to make use of these non-clinical routes to a better life.

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# BODY ART

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*Virginia Kuulei Berndt dedicates this book to Daniel, Mom, Caroline, and Curtis. Thank you for always encouraging and inspiring me.*

*Brown would like to dedicate this volume to Xylia – an inspiration, support, source of gentle encouragement and constant companion on life’s journey these past eighteen years. Oh, and she’s the proud owner of some wicked tattoos too!*



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Brian Brown** is Professor of Health Communication in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at De Montfort University. His academic interests range across health care, philosophy, educational studies, gender studies and the health humanities. His recent projects include initiatives to use the arts to alleviate suffering and enable resilience in the face of mental health problems in both the UK and India. The core of his work has focused on the interpretation of human experience across a variety of different disciplines and settings including health and social care, education, philosophy and the arts in health, exploring how these may be understood with a view to improving practice and with regard to theoretical development in the social sciences. In particular, this concerns notions of governmentality and habitus from Foucauldian and Bourdieusian sociology, and how everyday experience reveals how systems of knowledge operate in society. He has also dabbled in community arts and been part of a group who took over derelict buildings and turned them into art galleries. Recently he has been using his spare time to plant trees in a rewilding project and hopes to live long enough to witness the forest canopy closing over his head.

**Virginia Kuulei Berndt** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Texas A&M International University in the USA. Much of Virginia's research and teaching centres on reproductive health as it relates to disasters, the environment, the body and embodiment, provider-patient interactions, and sociological theory. Virginia has presented this research in the USA, Sweden, and Canada and has published in academic journals including *Contraception*, *Culture*,

*Health & Sexuality, Health, International Sociology*, and more. In her spare time, she enjoys embroidery, browsing and obtaining tattoos, drinking coffee, and spending time with her loved ones, especially her spouse and two cats.

## FOREWORD: CREATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH

The *Arts for Health* series aims to provide key information on how different arts and humanities practices can support, or even transform, health and wellbeing. Each book introduces a particular creative activity or resource and outlines its place and value in society, the evidence for its use in advancing health and wellbeing, and cases of how this works. In addition, each book provides useful links and suggestions to readers for following-up on these quick reads. We can think of this series as a kind of shadow health service – encouraging the use of the arts and humanities alongside all the other resources on offer to keep us fit and well.

Creative practices in the arts and humanities offer a fantastic, non-medical, but medically relevant way to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. Intuitively, we know just how important creative activities are in maintaining or recovering our best possible lives. For example, imagine that we woke up tomorrow to find that all music, books or films had to be destroyed, learn that singing, dancing or theatre had been outlawed or that galleries, museums and theatres had to close permanently; or, indeed, that every street had posters warning citizens of severe punishment for taking photographs, drawing or writing. How would we feel? What would happen to our bodies and minds? How would we survive? Unfortunately, we have seen this kind of removal of creative activities from human society before and today many people remain terribly restricted in artistic expression and consumption.

I hope that this series adds a practical resource to the public. I hope people buy these little books as gifts for family and friends, or for hard-pressed healthcare professionals, to encourage them to revisit or to consider a creative path to living well. I hope that creative public health makes for a brighter future.

Professor Paul Crawford