

PHOTOGRAPHY

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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PHOTOGRAPHY

SUSAN HOGAN



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SERIES PREFACE: 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

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This book is part of a series of key texts called *Arts for Health* that explore how the arts and humanities can maintain or improve health and wellbeing. The series will guide the general public, carers and service providers as to how different arts can help people stay healthy and improve their health and wellbeing. The series poses the question, why see your doctor for issues that could be resolved without medical intervention through the arts and humanities? As a consequence, this book will explore therapeutic photography in its broadest sense, with respect to how photographic practice can aid health and wellbeing in society. As such it will be of interest to those who take photographs, or who work in the arts and health, or might be considering setting up an arts and health, or therapeutic arts service. It will also aid those who are interested in understanding photographic images more deeply, or those who are just curious to know more about photography in society. Professor Susan Hogan, cultural historian and arts in health specialist, makes links between many of the most important ideas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and photographic practices, from eugenics to evolution, as well as delving into the digital in our own century.

AIMS AND SCOPE

There is a need for engaging and practical short books on how particular arts can advance health and wellbeing. In this book, the social and political dimensions of photography will receive attention. Photography, unlike some other arts media, underpins our lives in immediate and complex ways. Photography supports our sense of self, reinforces social attitudes and behaviours, or can be used to subvert these. One of the consequences of modernity is a tremendously accelerated pace of change. As sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990) has pointed out, different areas of the globe are drawn into inter-connection with one another as waves of social change ‘crash across virtually the whole earth’s surface’ (p. 6). At the heart of these waves, imagery is communicating ideas, especially photographs. As well as being at the heart of global communication, ultimately photography also underpins different types of cultural affiliation and therefore forms a central part of representational systems that constitute human society itself. To fully understand photography, and explaining concepts along the way, this text will explore how photographs work in the modern world.

Photography should appeal to scholars, clinicians, carers and self-helpers from all over the world. This book will adopt a writing style that is accessible to the well-informed general reader, as well as appealing to and informing arts, health and social-care practitioners. Though subjects such as semiotics (the study of symbols and signs and how they are understood and used) will be explored to enrich the discussion, this will be done in a way that will not exclude the non-specialist reader. Rather than dumbing-down the subject, photography will be explored in a sophisticated yet comprehensible way, so that a full understanding of the potentialities of photographic practice can be understood. This book disseminates interesting and provocative ideas from the author, as well as presenting the work of the major theorists who have had significant things to say about photography and its practice since its inception.

WHY DISCUSS PHOTOGRAPHY?

Photography is ubiquitous. The visual image is a predominant form of communication. Arguably it is a very democratic medium, since billions of people all over the planet take photographs on their phones, and digital storage means that expensive printing is not necessary and therefore the practice is not prohibitive. Photography is important to political and social movements and connects people in emotionally meaningful relationships. This book will explore the myriad ways in which photographs can be used: to document events, places or things; to consolidate personal identity; to pose a challenge to an idea or regime; to animate the inanimate (in other words, to breathe life into objects); to capture the fleeting and transitory; to create stories; to reveal what may be taken for granted, including *seeing* social practices; to enhance our perception and allow us to notice previously unnoticed details; to consolidate relationships; to represent the overlooked or marginalised; to commemorate; to authenticate; to tantalise. All these modes of photography have different possibilities, different intentions and different effects. Gómez Cruz and Lehmuskallio (2016, p. 8) assert that ‘networked cameras and digital imagery play a role in how we dream, desire, think, act and connect’.

CONTENT

This book will discuss the background and development of photographic practice. A short monograph cannot be definitive and as this text is part of the *Arts for Health Series*, the focus is on the broadly *healthful and socially beneficial* uses of photography. Chapter 2, ‘A Brief Summary of the History and Development of Photography’, provides an overview, but alas only a snapshot of this vast and fascinating subject. It is necessarily impressionistic. It touches on documentary photography; photojournalism; photographs of the natural world; architectural and landscape photography; photography in anthropology; photography as art; photographic portraiture, in short introductory sections. It

concludes with a brief investigation of digital imaging technology and its repercussions. The chapter begins to develop themes that are expanded further, about ways of seeing and the fundamental truth of photographs. These topics run as on-going philosophical conundrums throughout the manuscript. Ideas surrounding the production of photographs are privileged over detailed exploration of the works of individual photographers, or personal biographies. Chapter 2, with necessity, must overlook some genres: fashion photography is an unfortunate casualty and pornography eschewed because of the book's length and overall emphasis on the beneficial social uses of photography, of which there is already too much to discuss – however, the erotic is not overlooked, but picked-up in the discussion of arts practice.

The book moves on to explore what is distinctive about photography, including a discussion of how images work in semi-otic terms. Chapter 3, 'How Are Photographs Distinctive?', introduces photographic theory and explores the contribution of the major photographic theorists. It explains how photographs make meanings.

The text then moves on to talk about photography and health practices, including photography for pleasure. Chapter 4, 'Photographic Practice for Health and Wellbeing', discusses portraiture and self-portraiture, photography in health promotion and social care, photography to empower communities and photography in activism and as art.

Photography is a social science tool which can explore subjects that improve health and wellbeing. The value of this is articulated in Chapter 5, 'Photography in Research (Summary of Photographic Research Methods: Photo-documentation, Photo-elicitation, Semi-otic Analysis and Content Analysis)'. This chapter also includes a useful overview of how images can be used in research. The chapter expands some of the theoretical discussion introduced in Chapter 3.

Explicitly therapeutic ways of using photography then receive detailed attention in the final chapters. Chapter 6, 'An Introduction to Re-enactment Phototherapy', explores a technique that uses role-play, dramatic enactment and reformulation of personal stories

via photographic sequences. This penultimate section explores the background and development of re-enactment phototherapy and then elucidates the techniques used in detail.

Chapter 7, 'Therapeutic Photography', investigates different elements of therapeutic photography in practice. It explores key dimensions: photographs in a psychotherapeutic model; therapeutic self-portraiture; metaphor in therapeutic photography and finishes off by exploring the use of family albums in personal and family therapy. The book ends with suggestions for further reading.

Some of the photographs mentioned, but not reproduced, are easy to find on the Internet, so if you have a laptop, ipad or other device handy, please do look at the images mentioned as you read this text to enrich your overall experience of the book. Concepts build throughout the text, so the reader may find it fruitful to read it sequentially.

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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY

From mistaken attempts at recording physiognomy (the recognition of character from facial characteristics) to Eadward Muybridge's illuminating high-speed photographic sequences in the late nineteenth century, which showed animal and human movement in an unprecedented way, photography has shown an interest in exploring the human condition and culture. This chapter will give a brief outline sketch of the main ways photography has been used for human benefit. It will develop themes that are explored in more depth later. Each section is a very brief snapshot of a particular topic, arranged chronologically.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE NATURAL WORLD

Photographs have been used to explore the *natural world*. A botanist, Anna Atkins, employed the first photographic illustrations in a book in 1843. She used a blueprinting method to reproduce plant specimens. She is often also cited as the first female photographer (1839–1871).



Fig. 1. Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions. Anna Atkins. c. 1850.

Human specimens were also important. This section will introduce important concepts that underpinned how humans were *seen* in popular culture, in psychiatric discourse and evolutionary theory. It will also touch upon how

photographs published in the medical and, to some extent, the popular press helped readers to interpret expressions and gestures as signs of emotional states, morbid conditions and physiological and psychological processes. (Pichel, 2019, p. 52)



Fig. 2. Leonine Specimens: Illustration in Giambattista Della Porta's *De Humana Physiognomia* (Naples, 1602). The Getty Research Institute, 2934-552.