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## 150 Profiles: Samyuktha Punthambekar

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*As a way to mark the 150th anniversary of confederation, The Philanthropist [profiled Canadians](#) from across the non-profit sector and put a face to 150 individuals who work or volunteer in Canada's social sector. As 2017 drew to a close, we published our final profile of 2017 -- reaching our target of speaking with 150 people! The Philanthropist recognizes that Canada's history did not begin 150 years ago. And it will continue beyond 150 years. In this spirit, we will continue to profile people in the non-profit sector throughout 2018.*

**Name:** Samyuktha Punthambekar

**Current role in the sector:** Artist, arts educator, and arts administrator



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**Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector:** 20 years.

**What was your first job in the sector or a defining moment?**

One of the main defining moments that is still fresh in my memory is in 2003, when I first got to choreograph a dance piece for the ISKON Temple in Bangalore, India. My dance picture with my students was displayed on all the huge billboards in Bangalore. I felt an immense sense of pride and accomplishment!

**Describe your desk/workspace.**

I currently work from home as most of my projects involve client meetings online. I also conduct Bharathnatyam workshops at the Toronto District School Board, Peel District School Board and festivals in the GTA.

However, if I were to work in an office environment, my ideal workspace is an area where everyone respects each other for the skills and experience that they bring to the table. Management plays a very key role in ensuring that their team is inclusive and cohesive. A sense of togetherness is vital to achieving a goal and exceeding targets.

**What are you reading or following that has expanded your understanding of the non-profit sector?**

Currently, I am reading an excellent book *Leaders Eat Last* by Simon Sinek. The book reading is a component of an arts management shadowing process which was funded by the Ontario Arts Council. I actively follow arts workers, arts organizations and artists from Toronto, Canada and around the world on Twitter and Instagram. I am also interested in leadership books and cultural policy. CBC and the Government of Canada's website have been excellent sources of information on the ever changing dynamics in the non-profit arts sector. I also take certification courses for a stronger understanding.

**What do you think our sector needs to be thinking about?**

Diversity and Inclusive practice is the call of the hour. I firmly believe the sector needs to take this aspect into consideration when hiring. It is imperative to have inclusive practice at the leadership level and in all organizations. Leaders also need to actively engage in mentorship especially for people of colour and to harness Canadian diversity at leadership and board levels. This has to be a prominent cause and a mandate for any organization. During the hiring process, the sector needs to consider their expectations for an industry-ready candidate as opposed to training them on the job. Lastly, I feel the sector needs to lobby for more funding to support Indigenous arts and culture.

*Do you know someone we should profile as part of this series? Email us at [philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com](mailto:philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com)*