

# VIDYA THIRUNARAYAN

## Qualifications

Post - graduate Diploma in Fine arts, Kalakshetra, India (1990)

BA Economics, University of Madras, India (1988)

MA Cultural Policy and Management, City University, London (2010)

Over the last 20 years, as a dance artist (Indian Classical Dance) I have been privileged to work within the various facets of the performing arts. It has been the artist's and artistic director's perspective that has largely informed my work. From this core, I have reached out to the cultural sector and organizations in diverse roles such as founder, choreographer, tutor, board member, entrepreneur and advisor. My eclectic but integrated experiences straddling arts, arts associations, arts research and education lead me to appreciate the 'bigger picture', the measure and parameters within which cultural organisations operate. In 2010 I completed an MA in Cultural Policy and Management and dove-tailed it with working for the Arts Council England in the area of Combined arts and Touring. I left ACE in 2014 to return to my creative practice.

I believe that my breadth of experience and interests spill beyond the world of dance, my specialism and includes arts education and the world of arts management. Above all, my work is underpinned by my passion for the arts and its fundamental value for humanity and civil society.

## Arts leadership and management (full-time roles)

- Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Sankalpam, an international touring dance company (1994-2006). Sankalpam was a Regularly Funded Organization of Arts Council South East during my leadership. Sankalpam's work combines respect for tradition with a desire to venture beyond current convention and build a new choreographic framework for Indian Classical Dance. Sankalpam has conceived and delivered over 10 original productions that toured nationally supported by extensive educational programmes and dance research programmes for professional dancers. I have lead teams of over 20 members for individual productions, some of whom have been based in other continents. Achievements include several internationally tours to include international platforms across India and Europe such as Dance Umbrella, Springloaded, The Other festival amongst others. Another highlight was the annual national platform organised at the South Bank to present and launch talented Bharatanatyam dancers into the professional world. I left this post to take up a fulltime apprenticeship in ceramics and pursue an MA. Sankalpam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJsUDSSfY3Q>
- Relationship Manager, Combined arts and Touring, Arts Council England (2010- March2014). This role involved holding an overview and developing the multi-art form venue infrastructure for the SE Area. I was involved in the national investment strategy (2010 and 2013/14) particularly from the dimension of Combined arts and Touring. Additionally, as the Touring lead for the SE Area I was involved in the shaping of the National Approach to Touring, the Strategic Touring Programme and was responsible for its successful roll out to the SE Area. I was an assessor for the Strategic touring programme, Exceptional awards, Grants for the arts (national activity) and Capital programme.

## Advisory roles (selected free-lance roles)

- Founding Board Member of Hextable Dance, Kent(2006)

- Board Member of Hampshire Dance, a dance agency (until 2010)
- involved in the Peer Assessment Pilot Scheme initiated by Arts Council England (2009)
- Volunteered as Partnerships Consultant for Art in Action, an annual international arts and craft fair in Oxfordshire. The focus of this role was partnership building with multi-artform organisations across Southern England ( until 2015)
- Board Member of Cultural Co-operation, London( May 2014- 2017)
- Board Member of The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton (2017 - 2019)
- Committee member of the Southern Ceramic Group (2015 - 2019)

### **Performance and Choreography (selected free-lance roles)**

- Performed with the Kalakshetra dance company and have toured India and Europe extensively as an independent artist (1988-93)
- Toured internationally with the Shobana Jeyasingh dance company and performed for the first ever Dance for the Camera series on BBC television (1991-93)
- Associate artist at Swindon Dance (1993-96)
- The first Artist-in- Residence at The Point Dance & Arts Centre in Eastleigh. This period involved animating the newly created dance venue through regular performance commissions, as well as the development of a programme of professional training, choreographic and education projects in the regions.
- Have acted in theatre productions and creatively worked with the Indian Theatre Company, Magic Lantern, in Chennai since 2000
- Worked with the Theatre Director Tim Supple and a team of multi-disciplinary artists over two years (2016-2017) on a research project that marries Bharatanatyam and clay with music, design and text. The ambition is to create and tour the production 'Lives of Clay' across India and the UK. The early stage of this experiment was supported by Art Asia, Farnham Maltings and ACE. <https://www.vidyathirunarayan.com/1-st-gallery>
- Currently working on a solo production, supported by live Carnatic music and film, 'Sites of belonging' which will tour the UK from Jan 2020. <https://www.vidyathirunarayan.com/sites-of-belonging>

### **Arts training (selected free-lance roles)**

- Qualified as a Mentor for South Asian Dance training in Schools at Middlesex University (1996) and have mentored several dance artistes working in schools.
- Have worked as a free-lance tutor & choreographer in the community/ FE / HE including organisations such as Greenwich Dance, Hampshire Dance, Swindon Dance, Universities of Surrey, Chichester and Winchester( since1994).In 2015 I worked on the prestigious Choreomundus programme( MA level) at Roehampton University.
- Member of the Syllabus Research Project which conceptualized the current Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance (ISTD) syllabus for Indian Classical dance and subsequently qualified as one of the first few Examiners in the country.
- Founded and ran 3 successful youth dance companies in Swindon, Southampton (ongoing) and Portsmouth (ongoing). Two of the companies were chosen to performance an original commission at a national platform at the Royal Festival Hall along with other noted gifted and talented groups across the country in 2010.The year 2015 featured students in the BBC's Young dancer of the Year award competition on national television.
- Since 2017, run regular weekly classes in Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music for children and adults in Chichester.
- Have made presentations at several national South Asian dance conferences including those organized by Sampad, Birmingham, Akademi, London (Negotiating Natya at ROH 2006) and Centre for Indian Classical Dance, Leicester (2006) where I have presented an artistic director and trainer's perspective.
- Created and disseminated a Body conditioning programme for Bharatanatyam (1999).The programme was created in collaboration with the Kottakal Ayurvedyashala and the Yoga Mandiram in India and dance physiotherapist Caroline Marsh in the UK.

- Completed accredited training lead by SouthEast dance, to mentor dancers working with young people at Risk(2005)
- Initiated Intensive research and tailor-made training programme with Ludus Dance addressing Classical Indian dance in Education(2004)
- Created the Education policy document for the New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth ( 2009)

### **General interest**

Ceramics- Having worked as a potter's apprentice I regularly exhibit and selling work. My creativity as a potter is informed by the dancer in me. I work out of my own studio, where dance and ceramics collaborate creatively with education.

Practical Philosophy- Over the last ten years I have been an enthusiastic student of Practical Philosophy offered by the School of Economic Science, London. Their intention is to expand the way we think and look at the world and ourselves, thereby enjoying greater happiness and freedom. I regularly contribute lecture - demonstrations exploring the relevance and value of arts and philosophy to contemporary life and society.

The Pub Project - I was able to market my idea of restoring a rundown Victorian pub, The India Arms to its prime whilst introducing an informal but sophisticated dining experience with Southern Indian cuisine. One of the country's biggest pub chains Enterprise Inns was very interested and indeed undertook to carry out the extensive renovation and redecoration to the precise specifications of my original vision, which was to evoke traditional Indian elements of craft, pattern, colour and texture whilst preserving the Englishness of the fabric of this historic pub. My canvas stretched to the creation of a large arts space upstairs for use by the wider community to display artworks gratis.