

Smug silver oak meets jealous fig at park

Among the many hats worn by Janet Orlene, at her core she considers herself a story-teller.



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BENGALURU : Among the many hats worn by Janet Orlene, at her core she considers herself a story-teller. The brain behind Ink-Weaver, a platform for art, poetry, environment and storytelling, she is presently working on an audio-theater called the ‘Self-guided Tree Walk’ in Cubbon Park, at the Festival of Stories hosted by Art in Transit recently.

Having chosen a spot near the gazebo across the road from King Edward’s statue, she identified eight trees and plant species located within 50 meters of one another with the help of her botanist friend. She weaved them all into a playful script involving - the migrant Pink Tabebuia, a smug Silver Oak, intertwined lovers Mahogany and Plumeria, a jealous Wild Fig trying to make its mark in the shadow of the other Ficus trees, the Bauhinia, the towering and wise Araucaria and the Pride of India (Lagerstroemia speciosa), all voiced by friends and story enthusiasts.



Janet Orlene

“One of the reasons why I decided to do this project was to emotionally connect people to trees and to create curiosity about them. They are complicated like us, have their little squabbles and are beautifully flawed. The point was also to share information about trees but not in a boring factual way as has always been done.”

Audiences were also given an audio playlist and visual clues with numbers stuck on the trees with which they guided themselves through the changing monologues on the playlist and the tree characters in the park. People were given ample time to walk from one tree to another, to pause the audio and spend more time observing the trees, without any assistance. “Through this project, the intention was for people to have fun and learn.” An exercise of drawing a ring with rice flour awaited the listeners upon finishing the audio tour. “The ecology co-exists with trees” she says.

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