

When poetry and art travel together on a Metro ride

■ TUBA RAQSHAN

CHENNAI: Life in a metro is incomplete without the daily commute. Poets Karthika Nair and Sampurna Chattarji, whose latest editorial venture titled 'Metro Lands' which is inspired from this routine, will be reading their poems during a Metro ride between Ashok Nagar and Shenoy Nagar stations on Tuesday.

Speaking to *DTNext*, Karthika said, "These are poems that revolve around the Paris Metro and the Mumbai Suburban Railway. So, the possibility of performing in a similar space - even in another city - struck us as very exciting. And what better way to remind us of these invisible links between city dwellers than to perform the work in Chennai, which has a newly-minted Metro?" Metro Lands, which contains poems and illustrations by poets Karthika Nair and Sampurna Chattarji, and illustrators Joelle Jolivet and Roshni Vyam, will be



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ni Vyam, will be launched at the Alliance Francaise, as a part of French Embassy's Bonjour India celebrations and Poetry with Prakriti's monthly initiative.

On Tuesday, by 4 pm, the 20-minute ride starting at the Ashok Pillar station and ending at Shenoy Nagar, will have

poets read out verses. At Shenoy Nagar station, the reading and discussion will continue, while illustrators Joelle Jolivet and Roshni Vyam will create art, in real time.

Karthika added, "Since our everyday lives and our 'day jobs' are considerably different, we found a common ground. And the answer was immediate: we both lived in large cities that were, in many ways, knitted into one entity by their urban rail networks — these trains constitute a gigantic, often invisible arterial system that transforms the city into a living, breathing creature," said the poet.

Meera Krishnan, coordinator, Poetry with Prakriti initiative, said this novel initiative has received enthusiastic response. "The CMRL officials were excited since it was the first time that such a different experience is being created. We already have 70 registrations," she concluded.