

Tales from the past

Travel back in time with these visual takes on history

ONE of the many reasons why we find temple towns interesting is the wealth of ancient information about them that has been buried over a long period of time. Madhusudhan Kalichelvan's upcoming talk delves more into the subject. The city-based architect, historian and epigraphist will host a visual storytelling session called "Sacred Landscapes of Madras", where he will focus on four places in

Chennai —Thiruvottiyur, Thiruvallikeni, Thirumylai and Thiruvannamiyur. To add a poetic touch to the session, Carnatic vocalist Sunil Gargyan will also render *pasurams* (verses) composed by poets from the 6th-7th century. The programme is organised by Spirit of the Earth, an initiative of city-based NGO Aim For Seva.

"The main motive of this talk is to remind us that the history of our city goes beyond its commonly perceived age of 600-700 years," says the 33-year-old, adding, "Active human habi-

tation has existed in these areas for at least over 1,500 years, and along with it the poetry by communities like the Nayanmars has co-existed too." Speaking about the relevance of the poetry after so many centuries, Madhusudhan informs that the temples, despite having undergone significant change, still preserve information like rituals, inscriptions, songs or poetry composed in those times. "Even indigenous flora are still grown and maintained by the temple authorities, like the one in Mylapore," he says, adding that much of the information has been passed through generations orally. That said, he hopes that the process of preserving historical data gets diversified in the future into different media, such as visual and digital.

September 15. 6pm to 7.15pm. Details: 9500082142

— KP



Madhusudhan Kalichelvan

Thyagaraja Temple,
Tiruvottiyur