

Pics: T Mallikarjun



A string puppet show

Pulling strings to show who pulls them

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Pretty women wonder; where my secret lies.

I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size.

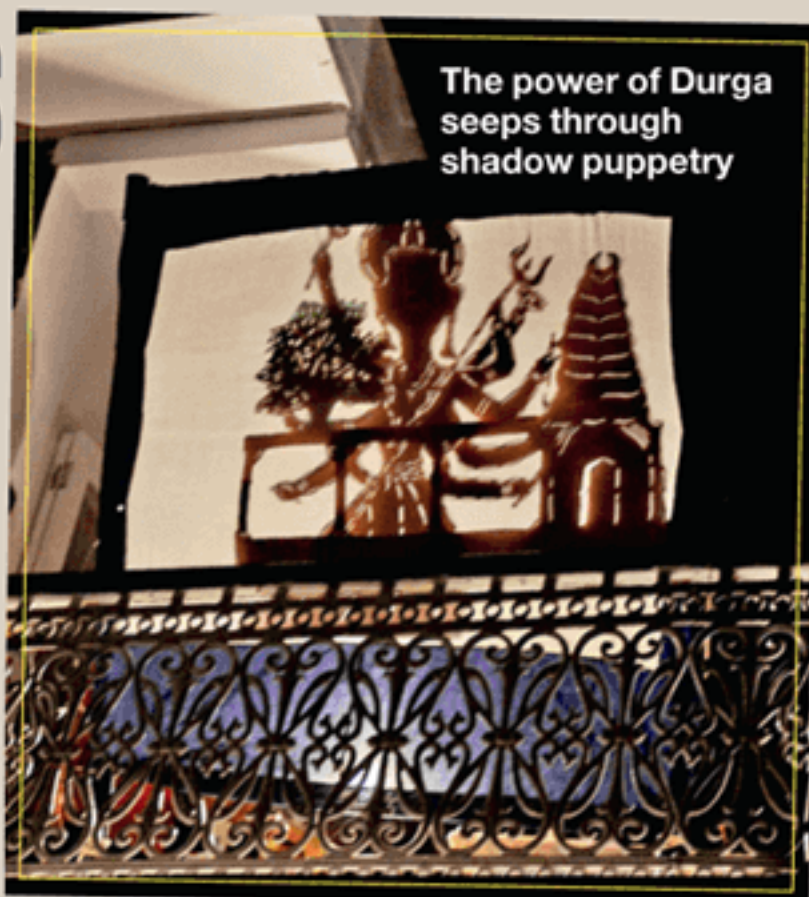
When I start to tell them, they think I'm telling lies

It's in the reach of my arms, the span of my hips...

The lines from Maya Angelou's *Phenomenal Woman* echoed across Lamakaan on Woman's Day. After Aishwarya, Vidya and Sriparna finished reading poetry, the highlight of the evening — 'No Fear', the puppetry show — began. On a grey, gloomy day with cloudy skies the mood was anything but somber as the venue buzzed with activities to celebrate International Women's Day.

The play began with a woman getting married and delivering a girl child. Then the child's battle with the big, bad society begins at a young age. Next, the silhouette of a woman walking by unawares, came on the screen. And suddenly, three hands grab her from behind and pull her into the darkness; after this was a show about acid attack. All three had components of string puppetry as well as, very fittingly, shadow puppetry, and touched upon those topics in under 20 minutes. "This was a very different kind of a show, where we didn't use words to express our thoughts. We tried to convey the messages through music and silence," explained Padmini Rangarajan, whose organisation conducted the show.

After another round of poetry reading, there was a contemporary dance performance. As the ladies moved in tune with the music, showcasing the trials, tribulations as well as celebrating being a woman, it struck a chord with all those present at the venue.



The power of Durga seeps through shadow puppetry



For the piece on acid attacks, the attendees were asked to move to another room, where a long, white cloth was tied, end-to-end. As Sheila ki Jawaani blared from one of the loudspeakers, Phoebe Oakenfold, a shadow puppetry artiste from the UK, who was behind the curtain, flipped on a torch and took us through the journey of a woman who's attacked by a man whose love she had not reciprocated.