

A Photographer in Search of His Old Moscow

By [Anastasia Solovieva](#)

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A view of a Manezh Square that was once traffic- and shopping center-free. **Yury Borisov**

Photographer Yury Borisov's exhibit "In Moscow" at the FotoSoyuz Gallery is a short walk in time through a city that no longer exists.

Deserted streets meet cozy courtyards, heaps of snow lie piled up on embankments, and the Moscow River rolls by eternally.

The photos are part of a project that Borisov has been working on for years looking at Moscow — old, patriarchal, and sometimes new and modern.

"Moscow, as an ancient city, a historical town, a literary city of different epochs and architectural forms has attracted and enticed me with its special flavor," Borisov said in an interview with The Moscow Times. "This is the basis for finding the stories that I shoot."

Borisov studied chemistry at Moscow State University in the 1980s before going on to study

photography at the journalists' union as the Soviet Union began to fall apart.

Borisov has traveled all over Russia taking shots, and his web site is packed with series on Kolomna, Nizhny Novgorod and Mozhaisk, with themes including Russian estates and the perestroika era.

He still searches for his old Moscow in the modern one today. "Much has been lost, but much has survived — Pokrovka, Petrovka, the Boulevard Ring," he said, "Hunting for such spots is hard — much harder than 20 years, 30 years ago. But it is possible, so today I love to wander around town and look for something old, patriarchal — something that an ordinary passer-by may not notice."

Viewers can see in some of the photos taken by Borisov in the last two years that there still are pockets of old Moscow.

"Yury Borisov is not only an active photographer today," said Alexandra Ustinova, photo editor of FotoSoyuz and curator of the exhibition. "He works systematically and thoughtfully with his archive. Often it is the archival photographs of the 1980-90s that become the starting point of his new projects."

The idea for this exhibition came as he prepared for the exhibit "Changes" last year, where he showed a series of shots taken from one spot and then taken 20 years later.

"Looking at my old pictures and new ones, those that reflect the old Moscow certainly make me nostalgic about the deserted streets — the lack of cars, billboards and neon lights — the cozy town silence," Borisov said. "Going back is impossible, but keeping what's left is a sacred duty of every citizen who is not indifferent to Moscow, for its history, for memory and for future generations."

"In Moscow" runs until Oct. 30 at the FotoSoyuz Gallery, 5 Ulitsa Pokrovka. Metro Chistiye Prudy, Kitai-Gorod. Free admission. Tel. 621-5727, www.photounion.ru.

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