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Flower Power at Moscow's Muzeon Park

By Valerie Kipnis

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Some of the garden exhibits are decidedly hands on and feet in. **Valerie Kipnis**

July 1 marks the start of this year's annual Moscow International Flower Show. Located in the Muzeon Park of Arts — across the street from Gorky Park – it is the perfect way to spend a summer afternoon.

The festival features over 30 beautiful and unique gardens, each with a different theme and concept designed by landscape artists from all over the world. Moving from one garden to the next feels like stepping from one magical world into another. French gardens, Italian gardens, selfie-baroque gardens, fantastical from-the-future gardens, and even an ice-rink garden are all on display.

Some gardens are certainly more interesting to look at and observe from afar, while others are more interactive. The festival also displays quite a few gardens that take a more pragmatic approach intended to inspire even the most amateur of gardeners. Others are more avant-garde.

Probably the most striking feature of the show, as a whole, is just how different each and every garden truly is, not only in design, but also in each artist's inspiration and concept.

Half-way through the show, you realize that you might have come to see plants, but you you've really come to an art exhibit.

First-time festival participant Ilya Machalov made a baroque garden involving not only the typical flowers, wood, and greenery but also technology. Guests are invited to take pictures of themselves that then appear inside baroque-style frames scattered within the garden. Machalov's aim was to "recreate the baroque concept of the park as a place for socialization, except this time to adapt it to the 21st century."

If you want to cool off and feel like it's New Years and you're on an ice-rink, make sure to check out Those Very Christmas Trees, where you can even rent ice-skates. If you want to see a fantasy come to life, don't miss the Garden at the Edge of the Universe. And for a dose of fantasy, go see Olga Tikhomirova's wonderful spin on "Alice in Wonderland" that has a maze leading to Alice's Magic Garden. And be sure to look at the flower arrangements created by young gardeners, which are located to left of the main exhibits.

Muzeon Park. Ulitsa Krimsky Val, Bldg. 2. Metro Oktyabrskaya. flowershowmoscow.ru. Tickets range from 250 rubles. The exhibition runs until July 10.

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