

S-Fest Brings the Best of Snow and City Sports to Moscow

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November 16, 2017



One of the spectacular images at the Museum of Moscow that makes you want to grab a board and hit the waves. **Tim Mckenna**

Skate, Surf and Snowboard: S-Fest brings all you need to know about these extreme sports to Moscow for the first time. Through the weekend the Museum of Moscow is hosting the International Moscow Action Sports Photo and Film Festival. The event is focused on the cultures of snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding through different formats: photos, film, art and workshops.

“We always felt that Moscow really lacked such an event. Now that skateboarding and surfing have become Olympic sports, people know more about them, but the majority thinks of them as a sport, not as a culture,” Tatyana Chekhova, one of the exhibition curators, told The Moscow Times.

Bumpy History

In the late 1970s skateboards started to appear in the Soviet Union, and today, despite the uninterrupted demolition of old buildings and street renovation, Moscow's landscape is still filled with Soviet-era buildings. Some skateboarders climb up to skate on concave roofs. Others skate through metro tunnels at night, and others still take to the streets just to find freedom in busy city life. According to Chekhova, skateboarding in Moscow and other Russian cities is still a different experience than in the rest of the world, "although the Russian government has become more skate-friendly and there are no skate stoppers."

The festival is a chance to get closer to a culture that is sometimes still hidden to Muscovites. By the entrance, old skateboards coming from the Minsk Skate Museum of the Soviet Union give an idea of how the classic board has changed through the years.

Celebrating Sports

At the exhibit visitors can see photos taken by Russian and foreign photographers who spend most of their time in the mountains, in the oceans or skateboarding around the planet.

Among the photos are works by surfing photographer Tim McKenna, snowboarding experimenter Jérôme Tanon, and skate photographer Fred Mortagne's, along with collages by Brooklyn-based Cole Barash.

The art of contemporary artists fits perfectly in the museum's open hall: the skater and artist Pasha Kuznetsov recreates the atmosphere of his home squat on Milyutinsky Pereulok, Vitya Semayev's installation shows his sketches and drawings, and artist Sasha Takloo's works recreate the mountains of Krasnaya Polyana in miniature form.

For a deeper look, see the new Chris Burkard documentary about the story of ice surfing in Iceland, "Under an Arctic Sky," or take in some lectures over the weekend.

The curators would like S-Fest to become an annual event. "We want to show that these are not just sports, but also strong cultures with amazing beauty, traditions and absolute craziness," Chekhova said. "We'd like people to get inspired, grab a board or buy a ticket to the mountains or to the seashore to take their first steps in surfing or snowboarding. Or just go outside and skate to feel the freedom of motion that we all can share."

The festival runs through Sunday. For more information on events, see their [site](#).

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/11/16/s-fest-brings-the-best-of-snow-and-city-sports-to-moscow-a59591>