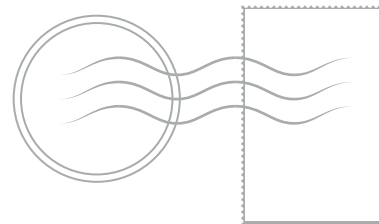


DESTINATIONS

ASIA | JAPAN

POSTCARD

Kyoto



Brighten up a cultural jaunt in Japan with the latest interactive art museum opening from teamLab, writes **Yolanda Zappaterra**

Love it or loathe it, digital art is a feature of our modern creative world. I'm generally in the latter camp for much of the stuff that looks like a screensaver, but done well, it can be a genuinely new form of art experience. And teamLab – the international art collective that originated in Tokyo 25 years ago – does these immersive art installations brilliantly. But would its latest outpost in Kyoto, which opened in October, be enough to win me over?

Fans of teamLab wax lyrical about its unique pieces, created collaboratively by multi-disciplinary groups of artists, engineers, architects and programmers. Whether it's a flutter of butterflies, a column of light that appears as solid as an iceberg, a forest of Murano glass lamps or flowers blooming inside a teacup, each piece is distinct, engaging visitors of all ages in visually and emotionally playful ways.

That's probably why teamLab Planets Tokyo recently won the World Travel Awards' prize for Asia's Leading Tourist Attraction – and it's hard to imagine the new Kyoto space won't soon be garnering its own accolades.

Part of the Kyoto Station Southeast Area redevelopment, teamLab Biovortex Kyoto features more than 50 artworks, including ones that have never been exhibited in Japan. I make a beeline for these, discovering an immense floating sculpture emerging from a sea of bubbles; an otherworldly amalgam of giant crystal-like formations that gently pulse; colours shifting and sailing through the air inspired by the movement of birds; and *Morphing Continuum*, a sculpture of silver balls that seems to hover in mid-air, even as I walk through it.

A big draw for families is the range of interactive pieces. These include one for which I don white wellies to wade through a swirling and mesmerising gold miasma; and the Athletics Forest, where I gleefully find my inner child as I bounce, clamber and step across interactive spheres, bars and colourful stones that wobble and change as I move.

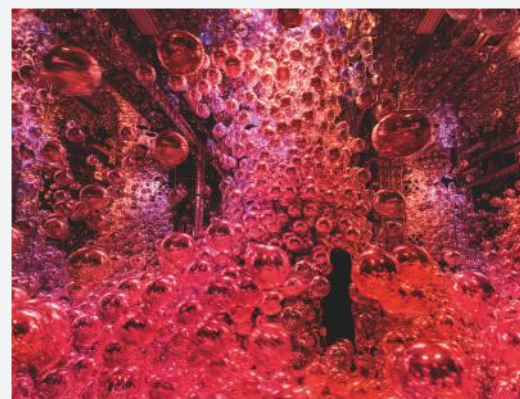
It all adds up to a digital playground that's lots of fun, but also informative, wondrous and educational. Am I won over? As a one-off, definitely – and with more than 10 million visitors to teamLab Planets Tokyo in just seven years, I'm clearly not alone. **TW**



BOOK IT

Tickets for teamLab Biovortex Kyoto start at about £18. InsideJapan Tours offers a 14-night self-guided tour, Best of Japan, from £2,670 per person based on two sharing, including Tokyo, Osaka, Miyajima, private guide in Kyoto, and tailor-made cultural experiences. International flights excluded. insidejapantours.com

PICTURE: Shutterstock/Mikhail Grachikov; teamLab/Pace Gallery



TOP: Rapidly Rotating Bouncing Spheres in The Caterpillar House **BOTTOM:** Morphing Continuum, at teamLab Biovortex Kyoto