

Video Game Review: PlayStation Network’s ‘Flower’ Challenges Gaming Expectations

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 17, 2009 - 5:19pm

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CHICAGO – To play the mesmerizing, addictive “Flower,” the latest downloadable game available on the Playstation Network, gamers will have to leave their typical expectations on what constitutes a “typical game” behind. With wave after wave of FPS variations dominating the market, it’s refreshing to experience a title so creatively conceived and expertly designed.

A lot of the words that could be used to describe “Flower” - slow, short, simple - would be a part of a negative review for many other titles, and it’s certainly not an easy sell. No guns, no points, no lives, no control stick, and the use of only one face button.

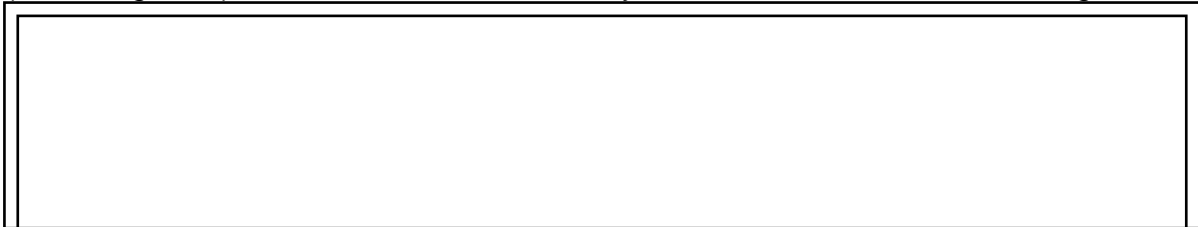
If you have an ADD kid of any age in the family, “Flower” may not be the game for them. It requires patience and appreciation of breathtaking visuals, daring concepts, and a unique view of what it means to be a game. For the right player, it will be a refreshing experience like none they’ve had with a controller in a long time.



Flower
Photo credit: Sony Computer Entertainment/thatgamingcompany

The developers responsible for the award-winning PlayStation Network title “fIOW,” thatgamingcompany, have returned with another unique title that tries to explore emotional chords instead of just the physical ones that games typically attempt to mine.

“Flower” is the dream of a plant. A nearly dead flower sits on a sill in a gray, dismal urban environment. In each level, the player travels through a vivid landscape, using the SIXAXIS wireless controller to sway a growing group of flower petals from stem to stem. Using any button (or analog stick) to increase the wind as they choose, the environment changes and usually grows as the game proceeds.





Flower

Photo credit: Sony Computer Entertainment/thatgamingcompany

The levels vary a bit, but their tempo is always up to the player and all involve those blowing petals and gentle interaction with the controller and the imagery. The music, the imagery, and the soothing sound design blend to make a (mostly) dream-like, relaxing experience.

"Flower" is more of an interactive environment than a game. In fact, even though there are only a few levels, I actually hoped for less of a "goal-oriented" experience. I wish there was more to just blowing my flower petals around the landscape and a little less typical game architecture. It is saying something that my initial concerns that the game's lack of structure would leave me bored was almost immediately replaced by a desire for less structure.

Of course, most young gamers won't see ANY traditional gaming, but, at its core, "Flower" is still a game where you have to fly your character - this time a petal - through a certain course to get to the next level. I wished for more freedom for my cute little petals.

It's what's on TOP of that core that makes "Flower" so remarkable. The blowing blades of grass, the changing environment that grows and blooms as you move through it, the mesmerizing score - "Flower" is one of the most relaxing games ever produced. With 90% of games involving competition and/or carnage, a "relaxing game" almost sounds like an oxymoron, but it's not hard to experience "Flower" as a stress-reducer, the gaming equivalent of a trip to the spa.

Like very few games before it, each gamer's experience with "Flower" will be a little different. Those who want to burn through the title like an action game can keep their finger down on the wind and race along the countryside. Players looking to relax can gently waft through the untimed levels.

"Flower" is the rare zen poem in a medium typically dominated by action movies. It's a title everyone should play at least once. Even players unable to truly appreciate the complete spectrum of gaming should know there's something like "Flower" out there. For only \$10 and available now on the PlayStation Network's download channel, "Flower" is a must-buy.

'Flower' was released by Sony Computer Entertainment and developed by thatgamecompany. It is rated E (Everyone). The title is available as a downloadable game on the PlayStation Network. It was released on February 12th, 2009.



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [10]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [9]

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