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Stop Touching Metro Sculptures for Luck, Moscow Metro Urges Riders

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The sculptures symbolize how Soviet society had changed in the 20-year period following the 1917 Revolution. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Touching the Soviet-era sculptures of people and animals in the Ploshchad Revolyutsii station near Red Square is a longstanding good-luck ritual for the millions of people who ride the Moscow metro every day.

But Moscow transport authorities are now calling on passengers to keep their hands to themselves — as all the years of touching and rubbing have finally taken a toll on the bronze figures.

"After many years of making your dreams a reality, the sculptures now need help themselves — many of them have been worn down and lost their authentic look," the Moscow Transport Department wrote on its official Telegram channel Sunday.

The tradition of rubbing statues at Ploshchad Revolyutsii originated back in 1938, when engineering students at Moscow's Bauman Technical University would rub their report cards

against the nose of Ingus, the border guard sculpture's dog, in hopes of nailing their exams. The practice caught on with Muscovites and tourists alike, and the dog's nose now shines from the constant touching.

An air of magic surrounds the station's other sculptures, as well. Touching a female student's bronze shoe is believed to bring luck in love and marriage, flags held by a naval lookout are the key to having a good day, and a Mauser pistol held by a secret police officer brings financial success.

The most mystical of the 76 bronze sculptures created by Matvey Manizer, however, is the hen keeper and her rooster. While some are convinced of the bird's magic ability to fatten paychecks, others believe him to be an embodiment of evil things to come.

Moscow authorities claim that, from now on, the sculptures would try their best to read passengers' thoughts — merely making a wish near a statue would be as effective as touching it and would also "preserve the magic for future generations."

"We promise that the statues will be grateful and all your wishes will come true," the Transport Department assured skeptical passengers.

Experienced statue-rubbers have not yet confirmed whether telepathic communication with the statues has proven to be as effective as a physical touch.

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