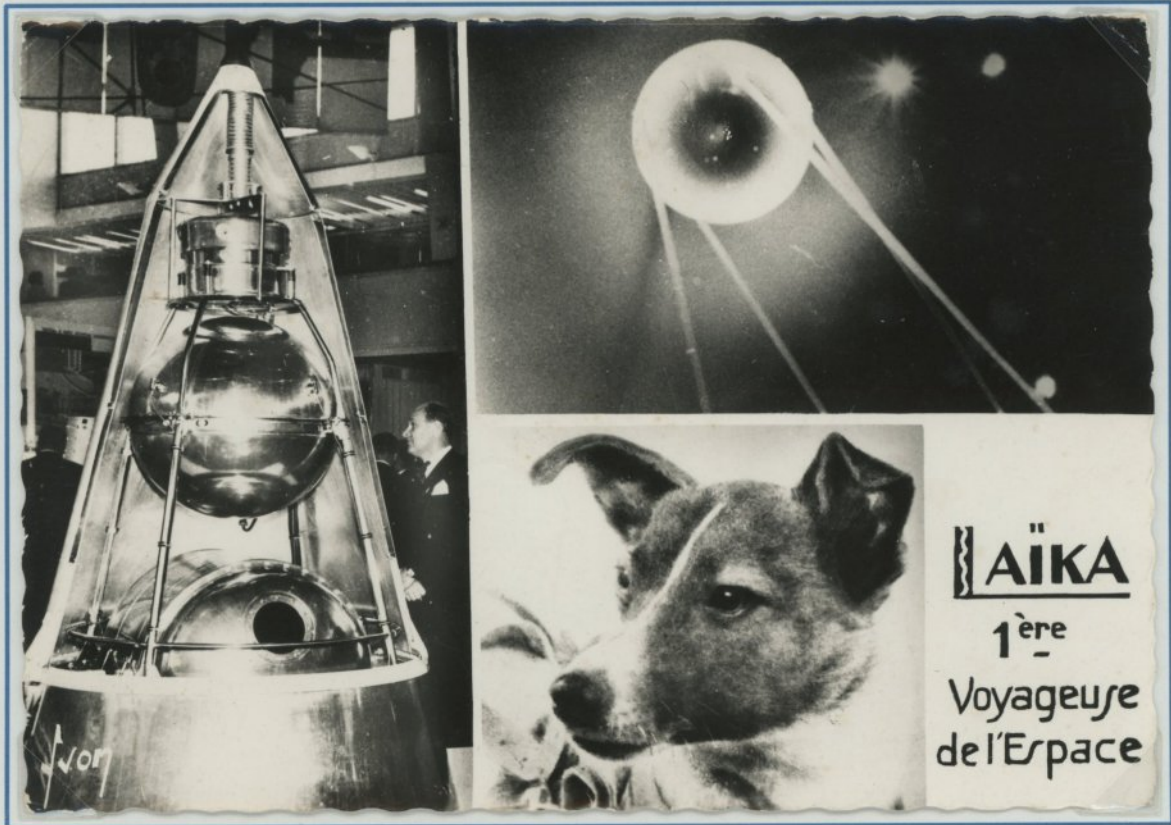


Space Dogs

The First Soviet Superstars



1. THE DAWN OF THE SPACE AGE

As part of the International Geophysical Year, on 4 October 1957, the Soviet Union launches the first artificial satellite. The second Sputnik follows only a month later. The race for space is on!

2. LAIKA : FIRST LIVING BEING IN ORBIT

After the first 'manned' orbital flight with Sputnik 2, a four-legged rocketeer experiences true fame: Laika becomes the most famous dog in history. Unfortunately, her fame comes posthumously.

3. BELKA AND STRELKA : THE FIRST SPACE POP STARS

Emblazoned on postcards Belka (Squirrel) and Strelka (Little Arrow) become cult figures in the Soviet Union of the 1960s, embodying the spirit of the country's pursuit of space exploration.

4. LESSER KNOWN SPACE DOG HEROES

After Perestroika, formerly unknown canine cosmonauts are shown to the world and their names revealed to the public.

5. HOW ABOUT THE FUTURE?

Does spaceflight now belong to mankind, or will space dogs accompany their human friends when they leave Earth?

BIBLIOGRAPHY :

- Soviet Space Dogs (Olesya Turkina)
- Animals in Space (Burgess and Dubbs)
- Soviet and Russian Philatelic Items Related to Dogs in Space (James Reichman)
- The Cold War, Sputnik and Soviet Space Dog Laika (George Bailey)

1. The International Geophysical Year (IGY)

1 July 1957 - 31 December 1958:
67 countries participate in the IGY:
an international scientific project
marking the end of a long period
during the Cold War when scientific
interchange between East and West
was improbable.



"USSR - 1958 - artist: E. Gundobin - text: International Geophysical Year"

For the IGY both
the Soviet Union and
the US launch their
first satellites. The
3 Russian Sputniks
start their flights
from Baikonur.



"USSR - 1958 - photomontage artist: V. Sveshnikov - text: Happy New Year"

1. During the IGY 3 Soviet Sputniks are launched



"USSR and DDR - series 1959-1962 - text: Happy New Year"

The word 'sputnik' means satellite or companion.



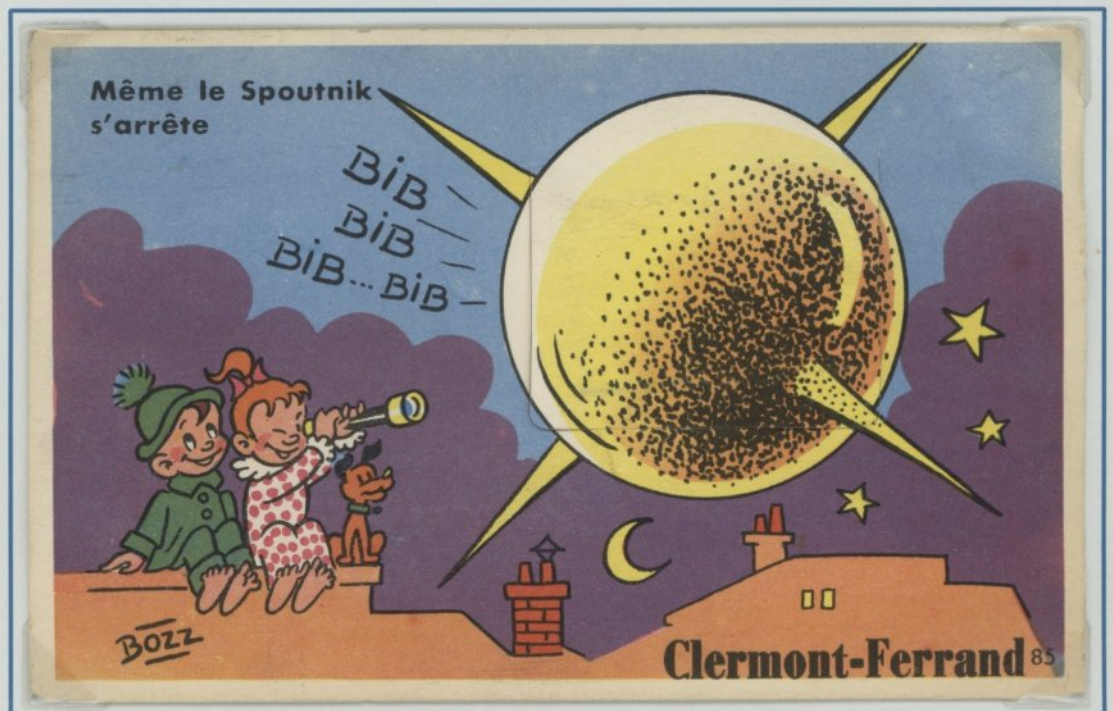
1. Sputnik 1 is a worldwide sensation

4 October 1957: The Soviet Union takes an early lead in the space race by launching the first artificial satellite.



"USSR - 1957 - artist: M. Kominarec - text: Happy New Year!"

People from all over the world follow Sputnik 1 and listen mesmerised to that odd, mysterious 'Beep-Beep-Beep'.



"France - CAP (Cie des Arts Photomécaniques) - artist: Robert Velter"

1. The people are intrigued by the first satellite



"Germany 'imported card' - 1958 - text: Happy New Year! Perhaps we will soon succeed in attaining a castle on the Moon - Vanguard, the USA satellite, launched 17/3/58, is still in orbit"



"The Netherlands - 1958 - text: If you plan to cleave through space aboard a self-built satellite, you would do well to make provisions for your next of kin first. Consult The Olveh (Life Insurance Company)"

During the International Geophysical Year, funny postcards appear, featuring the subject of 'Sputnik' as a parody.



"USA - 1958 - 'Drivers License for Sputnik' produced in Amarillo (Texas) by Ivan and Gregory"

1. Sputnik 2 is soon to follow

In Europe, people have mixed feelings: some celebrate that the Soviets are leading the space race, while others fear the destructive potential that military use of spacecraft may bring.



"USSR - 1957 - artist: M. Ejhman - text: Happy New Year!"

Launching a second artificial satellite so soon after the first is a remarkable feat - especially since, this time, the satellite carries a passenger.



"USSR - 1958 - artist: N. Shishlovskiy - propaganda card with launch dates of first 2 Soviet satellites"

1. The Sputniks capture the imagination



"USSR - 1957 - photomontage artist V. Sveshnikov with Sputniks 1 and 2 - text: Happy New Year.
Caption on the reverse reads: The Soviet flag seen from space"

Khrushchev orders the scientists to launch another satellite for the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution (celebrated on 7 November 1957). Sputnik 1 is followed by Sputnik 2 only one month later, on 3 November 1957.



"USSR - 1959 - the artist, I. M. Semeonov, links fact with fiction - text: Catch them if you can"

The Russian fairytale characters, all with rapid means of transportation, attempt (and fail) to match the superior speed of Sputniks 1 and 2: Baba Yaga (broomstick), Vakula, Baron Munchausen, Ivan and Prince Hussain.

2. Planning the first orbital flight of a canine cosmonaut



КТО НЕ СОБРАЛ ЖЕЛЕЗНЫЙ ЛОМ,
ТЕХ НА ЛУНУ НЕ БРАТЬ!

"USSR - 1960 - artist: A. Dudnikov - text: The one who did not collect old metal will not be taken to the moon!"

All workers are called back from vacation and Sputnik 2 is prepared in a frantic rush, the engineers sleeping at their place of work. The rocket is made up of bits and pieces, leftovers and remainders of former missiles.



"USSR - 1959 - artist: V. Suteev - card from a series of 12 : (what children do in) October"

Laika is described as a young mongrel, with thin legs, a short tail, and a naïve, dumbfounded face. She is photogenic, an important factor for a dog who is soon to appear on the front page of every newspaper around the world.

2. Choosing the first Soviet cosmonaut in orbit

От кого _____

Откуда _____

ЛАЙКА С ДУБЛЁРОМ (АЛЬБИНА)



Кому _____

Куда _____

Индекс места назначения

"USSR - 2018 - text: Laika (top) and her backup Albina (Whitey), October 1957 - in fact, it was the other way around"

Candidates for the first orbital flight are Albina (Whitey), the favourite of all scientists, and her back-up Kudryavka (Little Curley), selected for her calm, quiet demeanour when faced with simulated stresses. Kudryavka receives extensive training, but she has never flown. It is known from the start that the animal chosen will perish.



"USSR - 2019 - montage by S. Slavus, showing Albina and her puppies in front of 2 Earths(!) and Moon. Artwork from a photo of Albina is by Belgian artist Marit Emeis, to support a stray dogs project"

Albina is an experienced space traveler, she has flown on several occasions together with her best friend Kozyavka (Little Gnat) in 1956. The scientists note how well she copes with her journeys. But a sudden pregnancy saves her life.

2. Laika : A Space Oddity

On 3 November 1957 TASS reports on the successful launch of the second man-made Earth satellite. The fact that a dog has entered orbit causes a worldwide sensation.



A Space Oddity by David Bowie (1972)

The lyrics of Bowie's song fit Laika's experience in space remarkably well:

♪ *Commencing countdown, engines on. Check ignition and may God's love be with you..*
10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

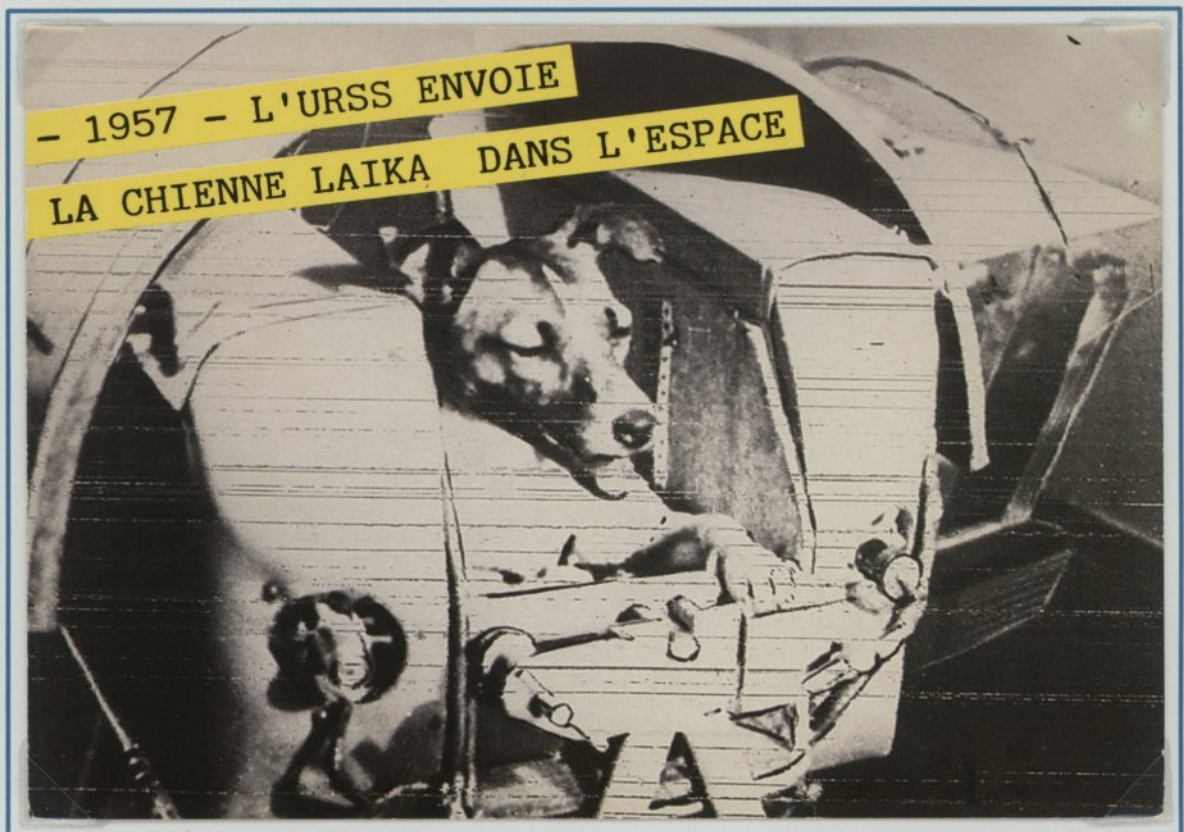


"USSR - 1982 - painting by: A. Sokolov - title: Start of Satellite (Sputnik)"

The Americans call her Muttnik, but her original name is Little Curly (Kudryavka).

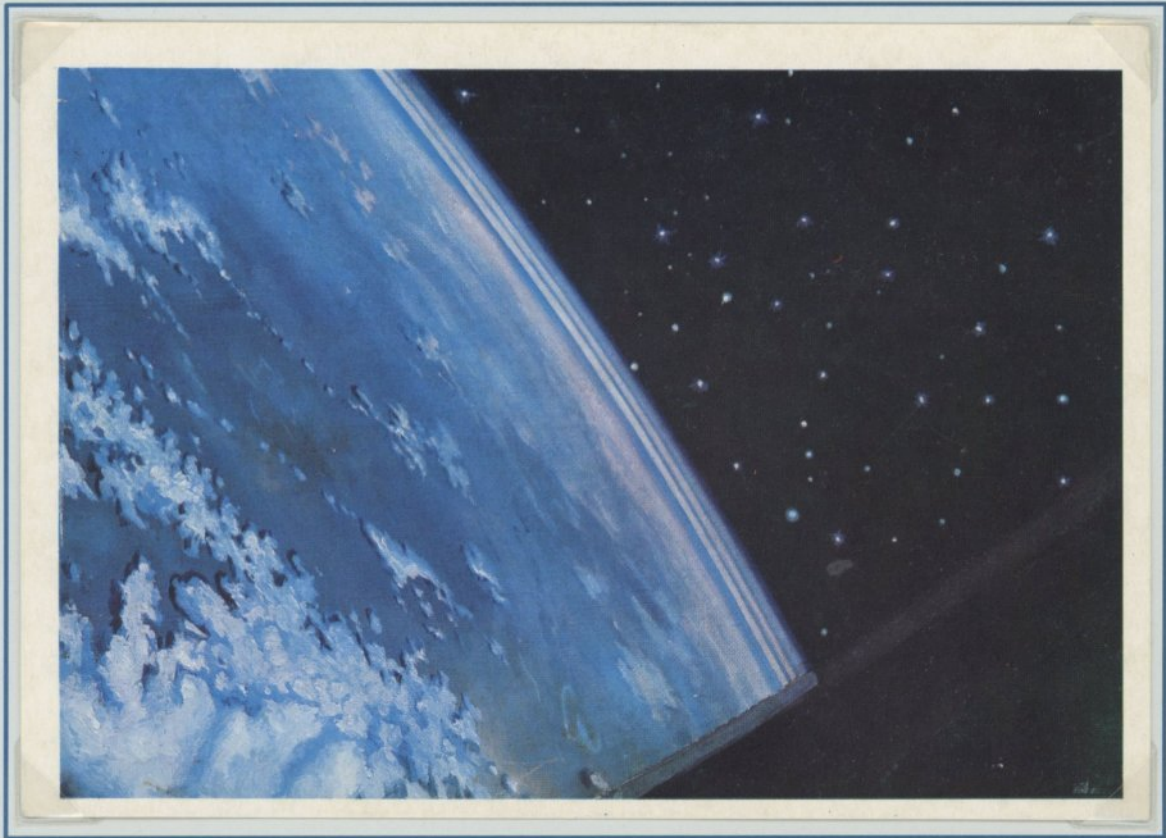
In the Soviet press she is renamed Laika, which means Barker.

♪ *And I'm floating in a most peculiar way, and the stars look very different today..*



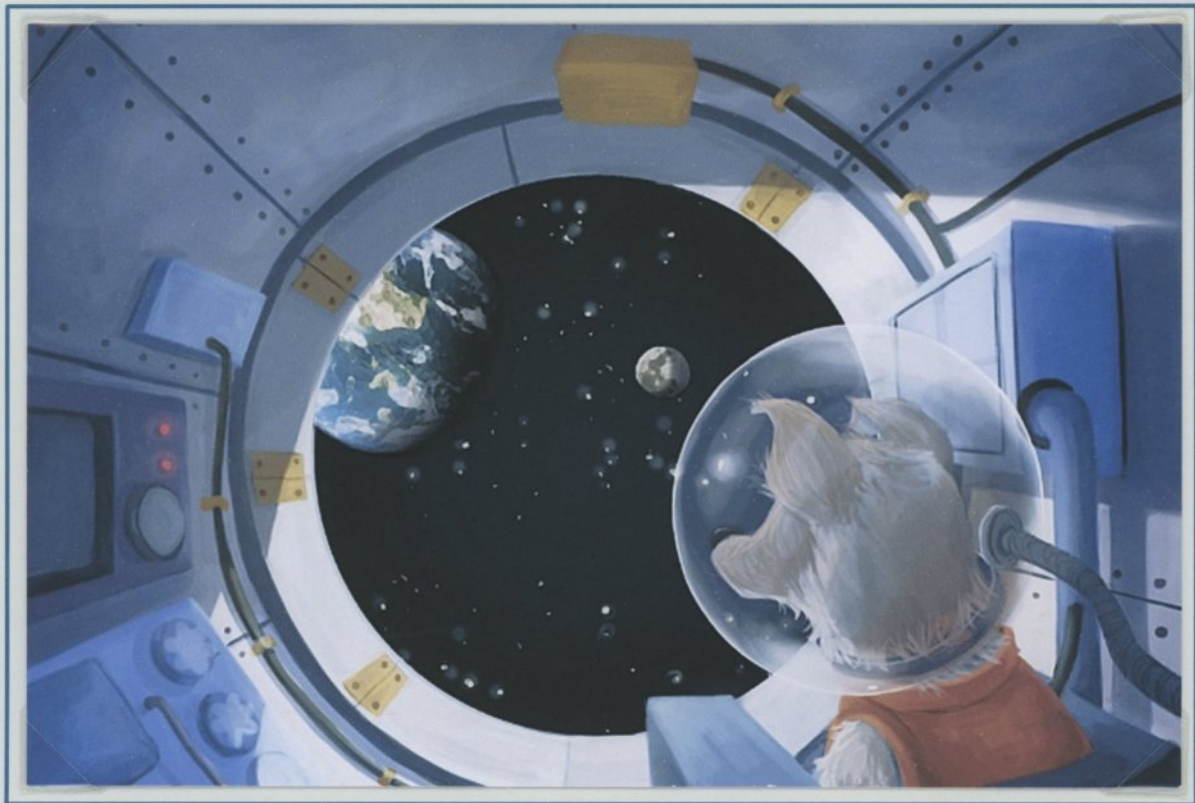
"France - from the series: Great Events - text: 1957 - The USSR sends the dog Laika in space"

2. Planet Earth is blue



"USSR - 1973 - The Blue Earth by A. Leonov: 'This is what the Earth looked like from Voskhod-2'"

Gazenko secures a window for Laika's capsule. When the hood comes off, it is possible to look through the porthole. Laika is the first to view our planet from space. We can only guess about her thoughts. 🎵 *For here am I sitting in a tin can, far above the world, planet Earth is blue, and there's nothing I can do..* (Space Oddity - David Bowie)



"Russia - 2016 - artist: Macus Romero (Spain) - Blue Planet Tales, title: Laika the Little Astronaut Dog"

After a short while, the radio stops, and nobody really knows how long the unfortunate dog really survives. 🎵 *Though I'm past one hundred thousand miles, I'm feeling very still. And I think my spaceship knows which way to go.. Your circuit's dead, there's something wrong.. Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Can you hear me?..* (Space Oddity)

2. The space hero canonised

Laika perishes after a few hours in space, due to overheating.

This fact is obscured by the Russian space agency. During the 7 days that Laika is officially alive, newspapers keep reporting about her health.



"Romania - 1985 - text on the reverse: The first biological satellite 'Sputnik 2' and puppy Laika"



After denying Laika's death is no longer possible, the only option for Soviet ideology is to immortalise her. Empathy for this small, courageous, 'loneliest dog' lays the foundation for an overwhelming global admiration of Laika.

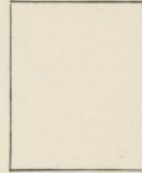
"CARD FLOWN IN SPACE - Russia - 2007 - artist: V. Grigorenko - this '50th Anniversary Sputnik 2' card has flown with Soyuz TMA-11 to the ISS with cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko, spending over 191 days in space"

2. The only cosmonaut ever sent into space to die



POST CARD

THE ADDRESS
TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



The Soviet authorities are surprised by the worldwide protest and the concern for the unlucky space dog's fate. Unfortunately the scientists have not yet developed a way to recover the passenger.

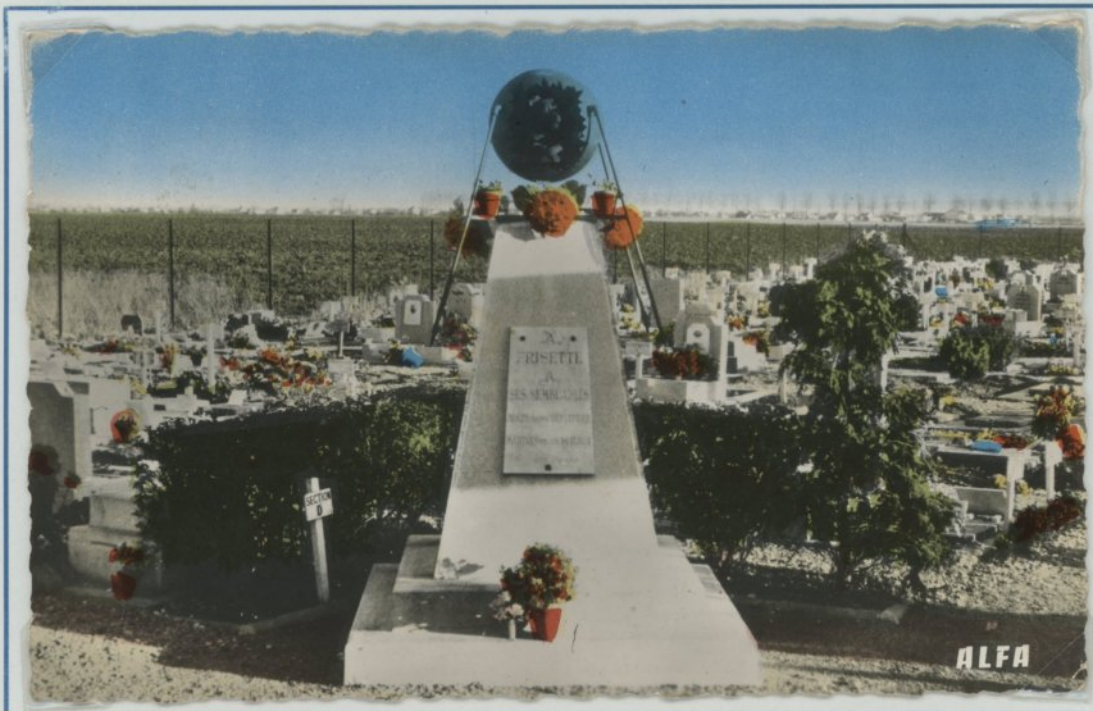
Laika, sacrificed in space
British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection
47, Whitehall, London, S.W.1.
Literature sent on request

"UK - 1957 - Pravda newspaper photo
- animal rights protest card"



This postcard from the GDR series 'Triumph of Socialism in outer space' depicts Laika and an artistic version of Sputnik 2.

"GDR - 1961 - photo: Machatscheck, Berlin - publisher: Society for German-Soviet Friendship"



The first memorial to Laika is built in a pet cemetery near Paris in 1958. The granite column is erected in front of the Paris Society for the Protection of Dogs.

"France - c. 1958 - Collection Mortali no. 506 : Villepinte (Laika in capsule of Sputnik 1)"

2. Tribute to Laika



"France - c. 1958 - text on the column reads: 'To Laika and her fellow beings, who died without burial, martyrs of science' "



MONUMENT à FRISETTE LAIKA érigé par « ANIMAUX SERVICE »
en son Cimetière Moderne des Animaux à VILLEPINTE (Seine-et-Oise)

"France - c. 1958 - This card clearly shows Laika in a Sputnik 1 sphere"

Starting in 1957, artist E. F. Da Costa dedicated a cement and glass mosaic monument in his garden to the memory of Laika.



"France (Dives-sur-Mer) - card sold to help pay for the restoration of 'La Maison Bleue' (The Blue House)"

2. Sputnik 2 capsule proudly shown to the public



The VDNKh, a museum complex in Moscow, is the showcase of the Soviet Union, where the successes of Socialism are displayed to citizens and foreign visitors alike.

Since 1960, a significant part of the VDNKh has been continuously set up to exhibit achievements in space travel.

"USSR - 1960 - photographer: D. Sholomovich - VDNKh: exhibition in the hall with the famous Earth satellites"

EXPO 58 was the World's Fair held in Brussels, the Belgian capital (April 17 - October 19, 1958). The Expo attracted over 42 million visitors.

The Expo left a deep impression on all visitors: the atmosphere was optimistic. It seemed the dawn of a new age of peace and prosperity had arrived. The world was finally united.

"BELGIUM - 1958 - EXPO 1958: all 3 Sputniks are present in the 'Pavillion of the USSR'"



2. Sputnik mania



In 1958, the name Sputnik and the image of Laika are shown everywhere: hotels, cinemas, technical devices, restaurants and festivals suddenly bear the name 'Sputnik'.

"West-Germany - 1958 - published by A. Lengaur - text: Greetings from Oktoberfest!"

Laika in Sputnik



"West-Germany - 1958 - photographer: Pips Plenik"

Laika's picture appears at the Oktoberfest beer festival at the Wiesn, Munich (held from 20/9/58 to 5/10/58). The space dog's name and achievements are by then widely known; Laika has become the first Soviet superstar.

3. A fairytale with a happy ending



"USSR - 1960 - photomontage artist: V. Sveshnikov - text on flags: Happy New Year, text on the wings of the rocket: USSR, inside the cockpits: Strelka - Belka"

The images of Belka (Squirrel) and Strelka (Little Arrow) evoke smiles and a deserved sense of pride: they are the first cosmonauts who went into orbit and returned safely, living incarnations of the achievements of Soviet technology.



"USSR (printed in Gorki, near Moscow) - 1960 - artist: L. P. Nikiforov - text: Happy New Year"

Their rocket launched on 19 August 1960, the dogs remain in flight for over 24 hours and they complete 18 orbits. The Soviet authorities are feeling so confident that they show the dogs live on TV: the first transmission from space.

3. A proud moment

While the State Committee deliberates over what is permissible to report about the successful space experiment, Gazenko - acting at his own risk - presents the dogs at an international TASS press conference accompanied by Lyudmila Radkevich of the Institute of Aviation Medicine.



"GDR - 1961 - photo: Machatscheck - from the series Triumph of Socialism in outer space - Lyudmila Radkevich and dogs"



"Russia - 2017 - publisher: Chel-cards - Gazenko raises Strelka and Belka in a gesture of triumph"

Oleg Gazenko holds the space dogs aloft. In his memoirs, he refers to this as 'the proudest moment of his life'.

3. Safely returned from orbit



"USSR - 1961 - photo from the press conference, showing the cage with space mice (right)"

A day after their triumphant landing, the space celebrities are taken to Moscow's Shabolovka broadcasting centre for a specially organised international press conference. The complete spectrum of the press is interested in their story.



БЕЛКА И СТРЕЛКА



БЕЛКА И СТРЕЛКА

"USSR - 1960 - postcards featuring photographs taken at the first press conference in Moscow - Text: Belka and Strelka"

3. The heroes are shown to the world



"USSR - 1960 - another card from the series of 5 photos taken at the press conference"

The photographs taken at this TASS press conference will soon appear in newspapers and magazines from all over the world. Belka and Strelka become instant celebrities, who endear themselves to everyone with their cute faces.



"USSR - 1960 - on these 2 photo cards: the background has been cleared for a better effect"

"Belka is the leader in the team, the most active and sociable. In training she shows the best results. Strelka - a mongrel of a light colour with brown spots - is timid and slightly reserved, but, nevertheless, friendly."

Mitrofan I. Nedelin, Chief of the Strategic Missile Forces

3. Belka and Strelka : darlings of the nation



"USSR - 1960 - this Belka and Strelka series is immensely popular and reprinted many times over"

In contrast to Laika, space dogs Belka and Strelka attain fame during their lifetime. This science fantasy with a happy ending is extremely successful propaganda for promoting the Soviet achievements in space exploration.



"USSR - 1962 - painting by: I. Skorobogatov - name (in wrong order): Strelka and Belka (1960)"

The dogs melt everyone's heart with their friendly appearance. Writers and artists are inspired by their story.

3. The Red Star is rising

Belka and Strelka have proven beyond any doubt to the scientists that space flight is possible. Chief-engineer Korolev can now start dreaming about sending a man into the cosmos.

These dogs are a living symbol of victory in the conquest of Outer Space, and it looks like the Soviets are winning the Space Race.

We know now that Yuri Gagarin's first manned space flight is less than a year away.



"USSR - 1960 - artist: A. Zavyalov - text: Belka and Strelka"



"USSR - 2018 - photomontage artist: V. Vetoshkin - text: Belka and Strelka - a New Year's card for 2019"

Almost 60 years later young space enthusiasts still make personal cards with the image of the beloved space dogs.

3. The merchandising starts



The variety of space dog ephemera and the speed with which they are produced is amazing.

While Laika souvenirs have a certain dignity to them, the Belka and Strelka ones are of a more playful and cartoonish nature.

"USSR - 1961 - artist: M. Abramov - Belka holds a sign that reads: We're going to land, Strelka and Belka; Strelka holds a ribbon with: Greetings from space; text on the Earth: Triumph of Soviet Science"

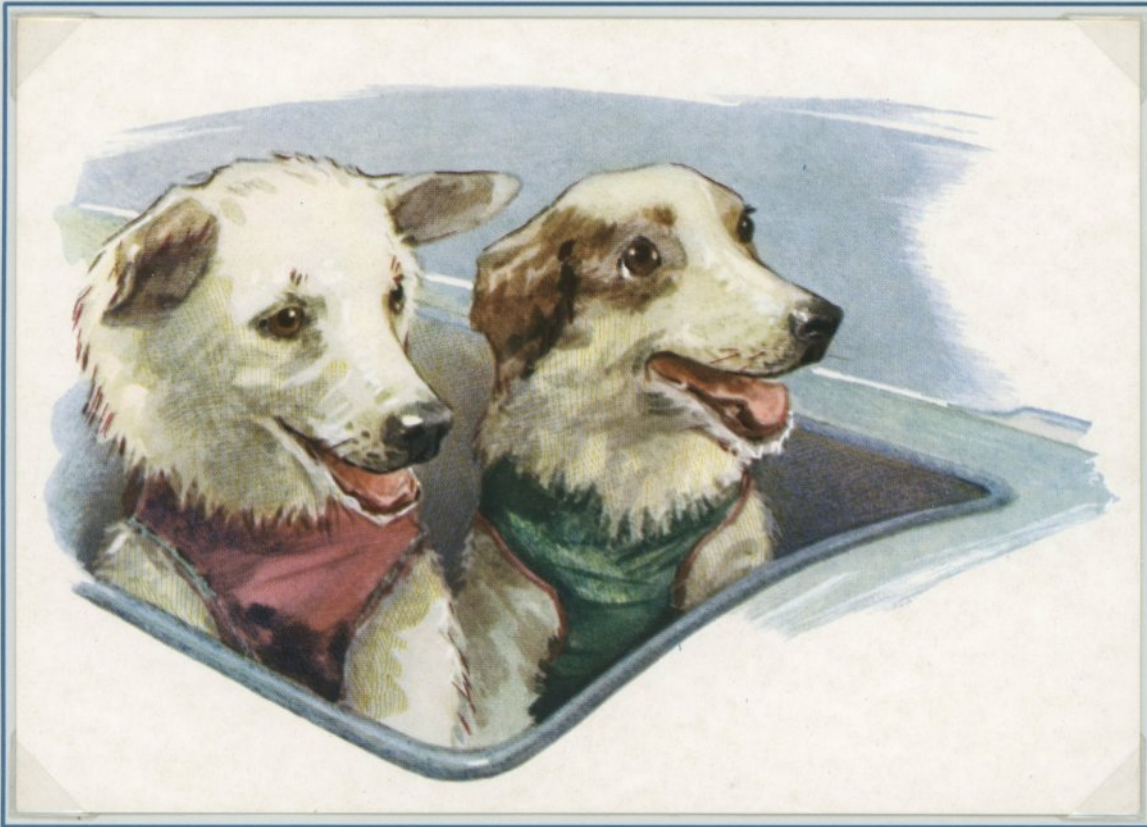
Belka and Strelka appear on cards, pins, clocks, vases, toys, and myriad other items.

With these vast amounts of merchandise, memorabilia, books and films produced in their honour, the cult of the space dog is born.

"USSR - 1962 - edited by Moscow Toy Research Institute - artist: L. Zinovieva - text on reverse side: Soviet Spacecraft Passengers"



3. The first Soviet Superstars



The space dogs prove that a cosmonaut can safely return to Earth.

The recognition for this success, owed to the scientists and engineers of the space program, is bestowed almost entirely on the dogs.

"USSR - 1972 - artist: L. Aristov, showing the dogs in the rocket 'cockpit', from the series Friends of Man"

Until now, there has been no pop culture in the USSR. Now there is a universal wave of adoration for the four-legged cosmonauts.

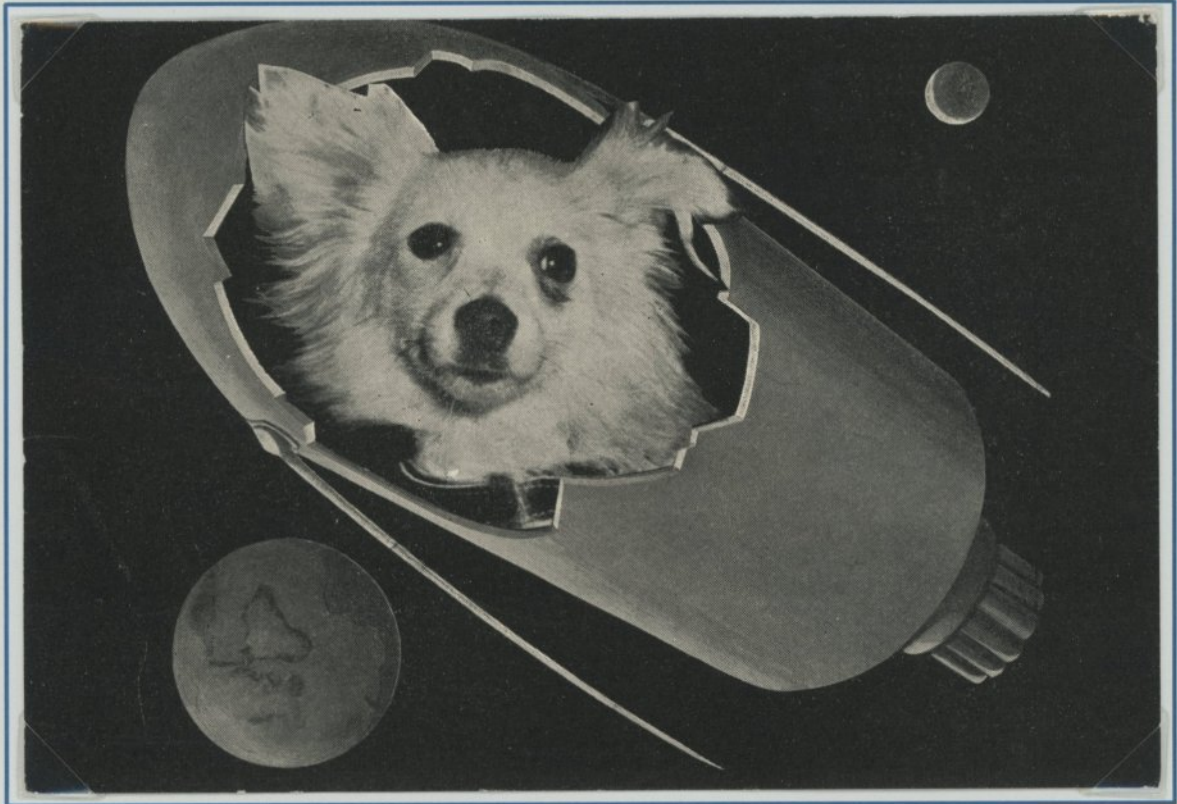
Merchandise is emblazoned with their image, they are all across the media, and every Soviet citizen feels an overwhelming desire to meet the space dogs in person.

All these elements together make Belka and Strelka the first real Soviet pop stars.

"CARD FLOWN IN SPACE - USSR - 1962 - artist: V. Victorov - card was taken to the ISS by Soyuz TMA-6 commander S. Krikalev on 14 April 2005 and flown back to Earth by Soyuz TMA-5 commander S. Shapirov on 24 April 2005"



4. Lesser known dogs: Kozyavka (Little Shrimp) and Zhemchuzhnaya (Pearly)



"Italy - c. 1957 - artist unknown - published by the Organisation for the Protection of Animals, Venice section - on the reverse, a caption mistakenly reads: 'Laika' The pioneer of space 1957"

In 1956, Little Shrimp flies 3 times up to 100 km - the boundaries of space, where one experiences weightlessness - together with her best friend Albina (Whitey). Her last flight takes place two years later, on 19 September 1958.



"USSR - 1959 - photo studio Izogiza - Otvazhnaya (Brave One) and Zhemchuzhnaya (Pearly), photographed after their flight of 10 July 1959 - caption on the reverse reads: They went up in a ballistic rocket to the upper layers of the atmosphere. It is the 4th flight for Otvazhnaya"

Brave One and Pearly (later renamed Snowflake) are experienced and successful space dogs. They are always lucky to be recovered safely and after completing their tasks, like most space dogs, they are adopted and enjoy retirement.

4. Otvazhnaya (Brave One), Snezhinka (Snowflake) and space rabbit Marfusa



"USSR, printed in Tambov - 1959 - text: Happy New Year"



"USSR - 1959 - artist: V. Sveshnikov - text: They were in space, dog names on ribbons: Otvazhnaya - Snezhinka, on rocket: USSR"

Snowflake is adopted by doctor and space scientist Oleg Gazenko. Space dog Kusachka (Biter) had a bad reputation, but her trainers never gave up on her. On 2 July 1959, after her 3rd successful flight, she is renamed Brave One.



"USSR - 1959 - photographed by N. Rahmanov, showing Otvazhnaya (Brave One) and Marfusa"

4. Great times for Soviet space propaganda



"USSR - 1959 - artist: Photosnimok - text: Happy New Year"

Pionerskaya Pravda - the famous newspaper of the Soviet Pioneer Movement, with biweekly editions for children aged 9 to 14 - asked its subscribers to send in drawings. Those who did so received this postcard as a reward.

"USSR, edited by Pionerskaya Pravda - 1959(?) - artist: D. Tsinovsky - text on front: Let every department be a Sputnik (satellite)! The Seven-Year Plan (of Khrushchev) calls the departments to go out! - text on the reverse: Be prepared to fight for the Communist Party!"

At the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, the theme of space travel is very popular for postcards, especially to mark the New Year.

No opportunity remains unused for conducting propaganda, even in a children's newspaper!



4. Spaceflight now belongs to mankind: 12 April 1961



Первый в мире космонавт
Гражданин Советского Союза
майор Юрий Алексеевич
ГАГАРИН

"USSR - 1961 - photomontage: V. Sveshnikova - text: The world's first cosmonaut, citizen of the Soviet Union, Major Y. A. Gagarin"



"USSR - 1961 - photomontage: Gaivoronskiy - text: Glory to the first conqueror of space!"

Space dogs proved that living beings can return to Earth alive and well. Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human cosmonaut.



"USSR - 1961 - artists: V. Arbekov and G. Renkov - Gagarin on Sputnik 2 rocket - text: Happy New Year"

5. And how about the future?



L'avenir est à nous !

"Belgium - series from 1958 -
artist: Lois Varhez - text: The
future is ours!"

Will dogs follow human
cosmonauts when they
leave Earth to explore
exciting, unknown places?
Tsiolkovsky did not think
so. But then, he could be
wrong.



Nous irons aussi tous dans la lune,

"Belgium - artist: Lois Varhez -
text: We will also all go to the
Moon"

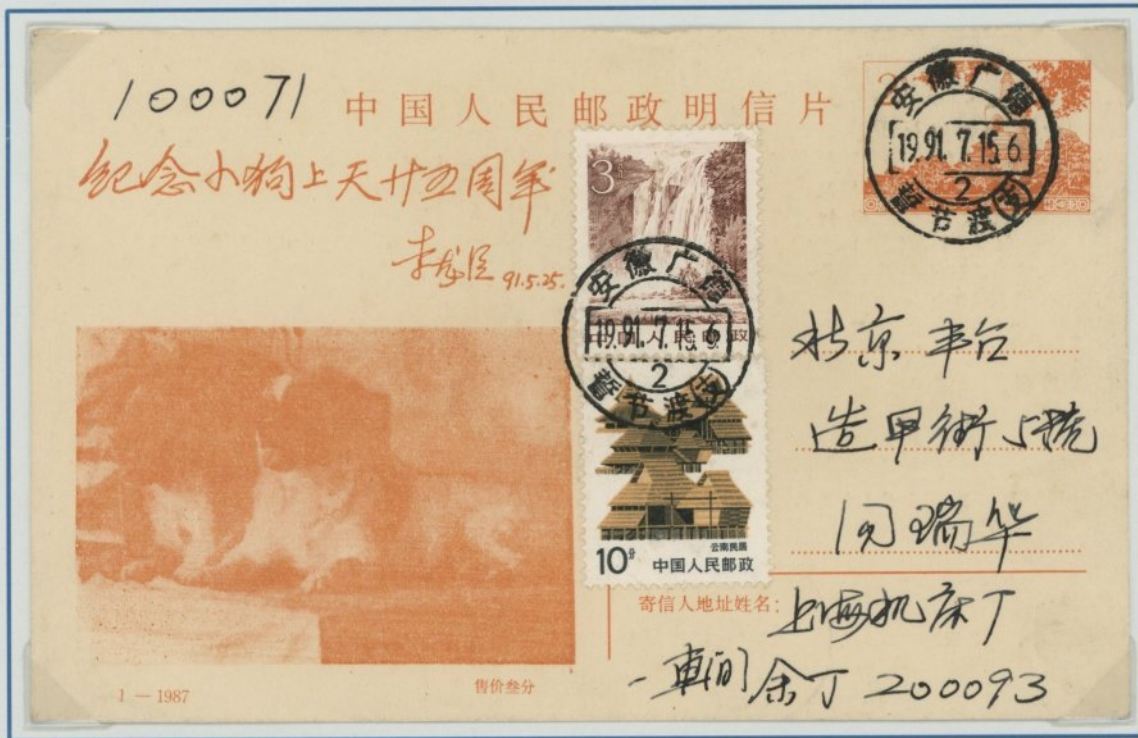


*Ne le dites à personne...
J'ai un peu le trac !*

Animal lovers know that
a dog's place is at their
master's side, wherever
they go. It has always
been that way.

"Belgium - artist: Lois Varhez
(Spanish artist) - text:
Do not tell anyone...
I have a bit of stage fright"

5. Will space pets follow their friends to explore strange new worlds?



"15/7/1991 Cancel: Nanjing (Jiangsu province), Guangde (city) - 'China Post Postcard', 'Commemorating the (25 year) Anniversary of the Dog's Ascent to Heaven' - pictured: Shan Shan and Xiao Bao"

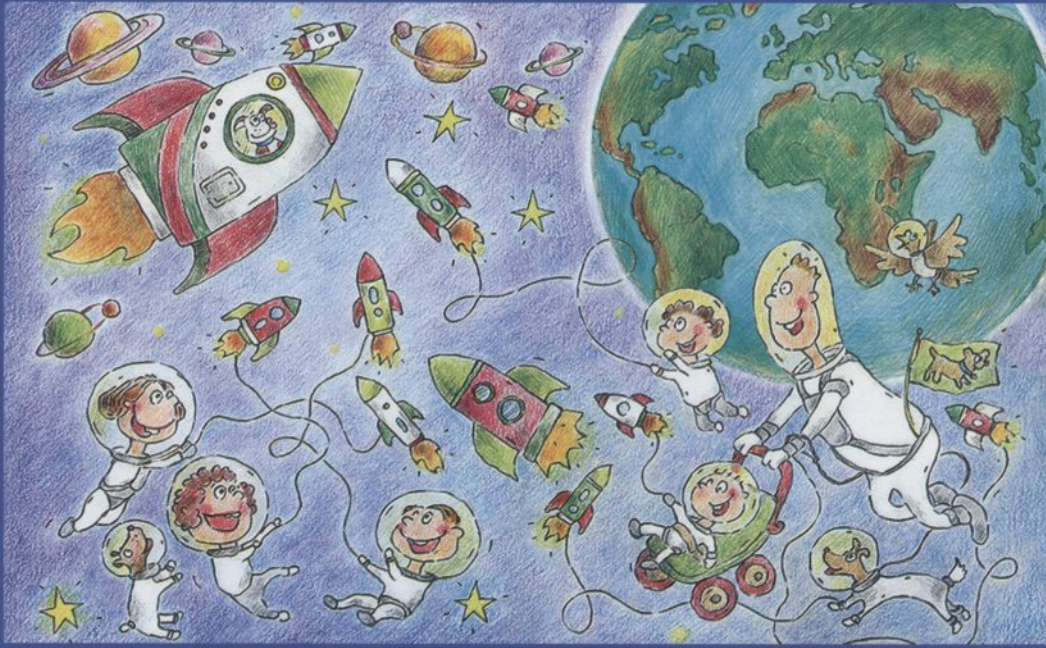
On 15/7/1966 a 2-year-old male dog, named Xiao Bao (Little Leopard), was launched from a secret military base in Anhui province as part of China's early animal testing for spaceflight. Shan Shan (Coral), a 3-year-old female, followed 2 weeks later. Chosen from a group of circus performers, both dogs were safely recovered. Although the animal-taikonaut programme was shrouded in secrecy, Xiao Bao and Shan Shan enjoyed significant popularity.



"Shanghai (People's Republic of China) - 1950's - artist: Yang Fu Zhu - name: Flight to the Stars - edited to celebrate the agreement of friendship between the USSR and China, signed in 1950"

5. Will they seek out new live forms and new civilisations?

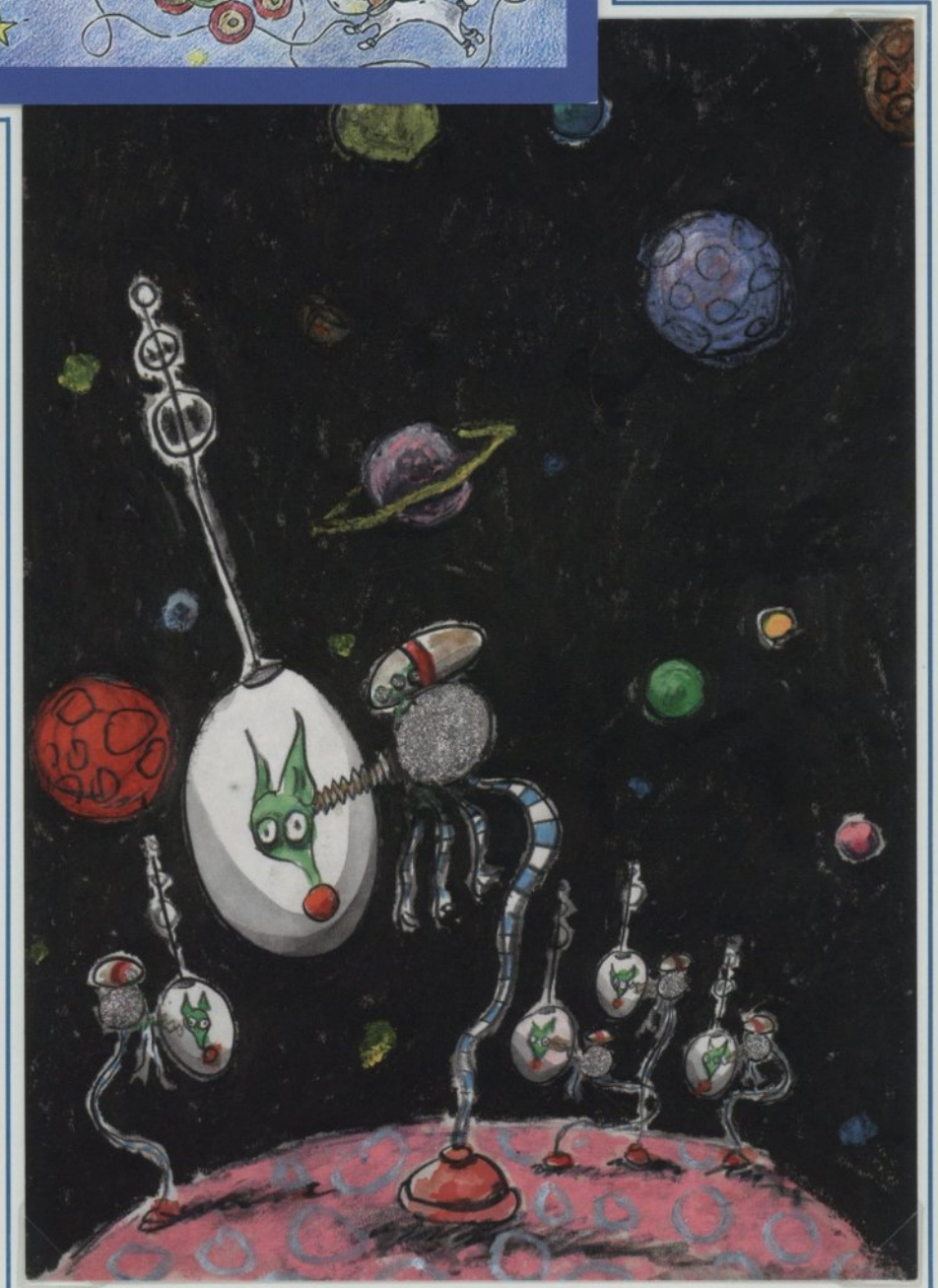
С ДНЁМ КОСМОНАВТИКИ!



"Russia - 2019 - artist: A. Kulikova - released on the occasion of Cosmonautics Day (12th of April) - text: Happy Cosmonautics Day!"

"One path is we stay on Earth forever, and then there will be some eventual extinction event... The alternative is to become a space-faring civilization and a multiplanet species, which I hope you agree is the right way to go." Elon Musk International Astronautical Congress 27 September 2016

"UK - 1998 - artist: Tim Burton (famous American film producer, known for his dark humour and Gothic style) - name: 'Dogs in space' - card was sold on the occasion of Burton's exhibition in London"



5. Will they boldly go where no one has gone before?

It could well be that in the future, pets will once again leave Earth - this time, together with their human cosmonaut friends...



"Russia - 2014 - artist: Diliara Golubjatnikova - name: Cosmonauts"



"Finland - c. 2017 - artist unknown - name: Space Pets"

...because, after all, they have already proven themselves to be experienced space travellers!