

Atlantis by Alberto Martinez



Atlantis is the lost island subcontinent that has captivated dreamers for generations. It is often idealized as an advanced utopian society holding wisdom that could bring world peace. People have lost fortunes, and in some cases even their lives, looking for Atlantis.

In this new depiction, Alberto Martinez takes a quirky, fun-filled look at this mystical Island mixed with 21st Century quixotic everyday life.

At first glance we see a snapshot of central London, a budding metropolis, densely packed with colour, culture and chaos. Iconic buildings are replaced with Alberto's eccentric imagery.

The Gherkin is replaced with a B61 Nuclear warhead, The Leadenhall Building (aka The Cheese Grater) is a block of cheese and a shoe takes the place of 'The Walkie-Talkie'.

Alberto questions us: do we need all this gubbins or are we building towards our own doom? Looking closer we see the city is submerged under water. Global warming has had such an effect that the city has been lost to the sea.

On many levels this is a dystopian image but at the same time, Martinez's bold and colourful images poke fun at this and we see all the characters thriving in their new environment. An egg illustrates the continual circle of life. (Alberto said he could not paint a chicken, so he painted the egg!)

Colourful books reference our highly cultured society; we see a nod to the fashion and beauty industries with the shoe and the lipstick. Our ever increasing dependence on technology is challenged with the floating USB.

There is also a strong environmental aspect to the painting. In our world, we fish and put fish in tins. In Alberto's depiction, the tin opens and the fish swim away, continuing the circle of life.

Several disposable items are depicted which illustrates large corporations who are blinkered by money and cannot see the bigger picture or environmental implications.

Floating on top of this whole scene is a dollar bill, folded into a boat. Alberto believes that currency talks. If the world as we know it was flooded, the rich would have the resources to survive and the common people would try to run, like the people in the bottom of the picture. Martinez questions: where are they running to?

Alberto's heritage shines through with his signature Cuban cigar, the Cuba Libra drink bubbling in the background and his native Cuban frog which shows that life will adapt. Even in the face of adversity, life will find its way to survive.



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