

Portobello Road by Alberto Martinez



Portobello Road is a street in the Notting Hill district of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in West London.

On Saturdays it is home to Portobello Road Market, one of London's notable street markets, known for its second-hand clothes and antiques. In this evocative and radiant image, Alberto Martinez takes us on a journey. He not only transports us to a busy London street and the colourful characters you meet, but depicts a journey through life.

Alberto's story begins with Mother Duck taking her ducklings for a walk. They encounter toys, fluffy teddies, and squeaky crocodiles. Even the big red bus has a sense of childhood fun with its wind-up key. Childhood innocence and the brilliance of the bold colours speak to the inner child in all of us.

Martinez shows us childhood characters in a taxi. Instead of wheels, the taxi has snails. When you are young, life goes slowly. You want to grow up quickly. The time between birthdays seems to go at a snail's pace! You have dreams of becoming a superhero or having grand adventures like the characters you see on television.

In our teens we strive to be the best we can be. We are taught to achieve. The trophies we collect are a testament to that. We thrive on the success of others, such as our football team, in this case Martinez depicts a Liverpool FC fan. He shows us the mascot and takes us on a trip to Liverpool with the Liver Building in the background. Around this time we start saving for our first car!

We then leave the nest, shown by the clown fish floating away from the fish tank. We drink a lot of tea and coffee, then get our first job. Our focus switches to earning money, living life to the full and experiencing as much as possible.

We then find a partner and in the painting, we see our couple at the point of marriage proposal. Alberto cleverly adds a hanging squirrel with an apple, his own comical take on the serpent in Adam and Eve.

Life moves on and we have children of our own. We suddenly have a responsibility to support others. We have to provide fresh food, cook and make sure we have a roof over our heads. Life went slowly as a child but now the bike is fast approaching behind the taxi and life is flying by in the blink of an eye.

Martinez adds a lot of humour to his paintings with random characters like a red-cape wearing mountain goat! His Cuban influence is ever present with humming bird, the Toco bird and the game of marbles that Alberto played as a child. Martinez also gives a nod to Salvador Dali with his own version of The Burning Giraffe.

You can find a lot of interesting and unusual things on a market stall. One man's cast-offs is another man's treasure. Alberto Martinez invites us all to enjoy the sights and sounds of Portobello Road.



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