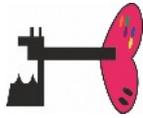


**Alberto Martinez**  
**On Her Majesty's Service**



## Alberto Martinez - On Her Majesty's Service



The similarly titled 1969 movie 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service' featured unknown actor George Lazenby as James Bond. A role he would go on to play only twice in his career. The film's title is perhaps better known than the actor himself, an idea which Alberto plays with in this painting as he celebrates 'the unsung heroes' of British Culture.



We are familiar with the black cab as a typically British method of transport, however here we see it is red, giving it more impact and alluding to a Ferrari-like presence! There is also a racing driver behind the wheel, The Stig, conveying that driving a taxi is more skilled than we often appreciate. The clipboard the driver is holding also gives a subtle nod to the way in which taxi drivers traditionally learned 'the knowledge', a notoriously difficult test they have to pass before obtaining their public licence. The wheels are however replaced with snails, making light of the fact that despite the often horrendous London traffic, 'you'll get there in the end'! Finally, a teapot sits comfortably in the front grill of the car, referencing its Britishness, directly above a number plate which has been transformed into a film clapper board which captures the date and artist's signature ('El Flaco' meaning 'the skinny one').



The geese the taxi is carrying are representative of the noisy crowds we associate with the capital, and the notion that during particularly busy times 'everybody is the same, but different'. Animals are also used elsewhere in the painting to embody the vast cultural diversity of our capital city, which is again symbolised in the patchwork pavement we can see in the foreground. The only exception to this theme is the presence of the emblematic English lion, which prowls proudly on the inside of the London Eye.

The rest of the painting is littered with symbols of both modern day London and British history: Lipsticks emerge in place of chimneys to represent the city as a fashion capital of the world, whilst a pound coin is symbolic of trade. A computer hard drive emerges in place of a skyscraper behind a trident missile which is between two transmitters. The stripes of a Navy Commander adorn the window frame of the taxi in acknowledgement of British Naval history, whilst a rugby ball replaces one of the capsules on the London Eye. The only red herrings are the Cuban cigars, which are often used by Alberto to pay homage to his home country.

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To conclude, who can ignore the typical James Bond ejector seat expelling a pig from the taxi, demonstrating in the words of Alberto 'if pigs can fly'!