



*Alberto Martinez*  
*We're All In This Together*



## Alberto Martinez - *We're All In This Together*

In 2010 David Cameron famously stated “We’re All In This Together”. This phrase was supposed to be reflective of the challenges faced by modern Britain, and the notion of coming together to create the “big society” the Conservative party wanted. Alberto’s painting is a parody of the common themes that emerge from this.

The tube platform that creates the subject of the painting is used as a setting which is representative of daily life for those who work in the capital, and should also be considered as a ‘launch platform’ for ideas in the context of Alberto’s narrative. From here we can see a distinct ‘divide’ between the animals waiting on the platform, and those swimming freely in the water that replaces the sky. This ‘glass ceiling’ that creates the separation and obvious ‘barrier’ between the two illustrates a ‘class divide’, and separation of the working class (animals) and elite (sharks). It embodies the idea that those above the glass can be seen but not touched, but those below it are constantly struggling to break through.

Continuing with this theme, the presence of farm animals in the painting pays reference to *Animal Farm*, and author George Orwell’s commentary on class tyranny. The novel has famously been construed to be reflective of the human tendency to maintain and re-establish class structures even in societies that allegedly stand for total equality. Whilst the species Alberto has used may not directly replicate those in the novel (for example there are no pigs), the more subtle presence of characters like the donkey, horse, and sheep hint at this connection. The presence of several surveillance cameras tie in 1984, another of Orwell’s famous works that also deals with the idea of an ‘undesirable dystopian society’. The elephant in the room is the panda, which represents China and the everyday presence Chinese exports have in our lives. Placing him amongst the other creatures is also a jovial reminder of the cultural diversity of Great Britain today.

The passing of time and how things can move on and change is demonstrated by the watch face, which also features the date when Alberto completed the painting. Alternatively, the keyboard that lines the platform edge and iPhone wall reference ever evolving technology. On closer inspection, the iPhone itself actually has the weather app open which forecasts a rather bleak outlook, and concludes with the statement ‘just go to Cuba’ which is Alberto’s home nation. The bee hummingbird which can be seen next to the iPhone is also a reference to Cuba where it is most commonly found. You could also consider there to be another link here between Orwell whose experience of Communism influenced his literary narrative, and the Communist governance of Cuba.

The Tardis from *Doctor Who* represents British culture, whilst the underside of a Lancaster Bomber positioned in the top left of the piece brings us back to a more historical commentary on how the Second World War changed Britain, and opened the doors for a different class structure. The bubbles however are present simply to lighten the mood and remind us that in Alberto’s words ‘it is all just a bit of fun’.

