

HARMEN LIEMBURG



This fierce and versatile graphic designer, because this is the profession Liemburg is most attracted by, constructs a new world for the spectator. Old picture books, packagings, billboards and old scientific drawings of nature are thrown into a blender and are being reconstructed and placed in a new reality.

Liemburg is fascinated by the tangible world around him and encourages people to investigate their environment. As a matter of fact, Liemburg gets his inspiration from images and objects that can be found around you in large numbers. An old pizza-box, a cartoonish noodle-packaging and photographs of street-art are just examples of things that play a part in Liemburgs daily job.

Liemburg is a researcher and looking for relations between personal fascinations and commerce, and tries to transfer this to the open-minded audience in an autonomous way.

As a part-time journalist (writing for the design magazine *ITEMS*) and occasional lecturer (On Academies, Universities and Institutions in The Netherlands, The U.S. and Japan) Liemburg succeeds in transcribing this. Trained as a graphic designer at Gerrit Rietveld Academie (graduating in 1998), and having a background in Geography and Cartography, Liemburg developed his interest in different cultures he has kept since his childhood. In his prints and designs commerce is combined with nostalgia, and there is a noticeable influence of his affinity with culture (in particular Japan) and nature (in particular sea-life).

His work differs from side-specific assignments to more personal and experimental assignments, wether long-term or short-term. There are collective projects such as *Crispy Cloud Kombini* (for the SieboldHouse in Leiden), where the Dutch historical collection of the Sieboldhuis is connected to Japanese materialistic culture in a show containing many prints Liemburg designed. Or an recent interesting one involving a design for tiles in a public swimming pool. The combination of nostalgia, nature and Liemburgs researching way of filling this in is very evident in this design. In this case he teams up with a scientific illustrator of the natural history museum in Leiden.

When discussing the drawbacks in his job, Harmen Liemburg seems to make a distinction between good, self-absorbing stress, and bad, job-stress. *His place as an autodidact within his profession*, he says, gives you a certain self-absorbing way of dealing with stress which seems to be quite unique these days.

One of his pitiful shortcomings, he tells me, is the skill to draw. But with the often complex works, he makes, containing many different layers, he ironically appears to be the profound drawer of his own world in which we can all take a look. - Mels van der Mede

a peak into liemburgs work

Official website / Sieboldhouse project / Latest publication in ITEMS / Swimming Pool Design / 2-D and 3-D works