



### **THE MIDDLE ROAD TO TRUTH**

The name Ben Laloua is in itself an exotic addition to the Dutch design scene. Design critic Ineke Schwartz describes Ben Laloua's work – cosigned by Didier Pascal – as part of a conceptual strain deeply ingrained in the Dutch design tradition. As an example Schwartz cites Ben Laloua's posters for a series of debates on image culture for Zaal de Unie; breaking with the traditional rules of poster making, they are illegible from a distance and do not unveil their intent in a drive-by glance. But they do attract your attention and your curiosity. Schwartz points out, however, that Ben Laloua/Didier Pascals working method is decidedly unprotestant; rather than apply the customary analytical design solution they conceive and execute their ideas with refined intuition...

...The answer is the middle class's ability to assimilate both high and low culture into a carefully designed and rather neutral, accepting, and flat zone somewhere in between. Culture here is everywhere, and everything can become culture. Learning from Rotterdam just as much fun as learning from Las Vegas. To me the hybrid place that appears out of all this borrowing and subsequent disciplining is most clearly evident in the work of graphic designers as Goodwill, 75b, Mieke Gerritzen, Ben Laloua/Didier Pascal, and Jop van Bennekom. Each has a very different approach, but all have a common goal: to accept and riff the products of popular culture, and to use their considerable composition and typography skill to discipline or sharpen those impulses. What lets them get away with it is a combination of fascination with their subject and wry humor...

**Arron Betsky with Adam Eeuwens  
From 'False Flat'**