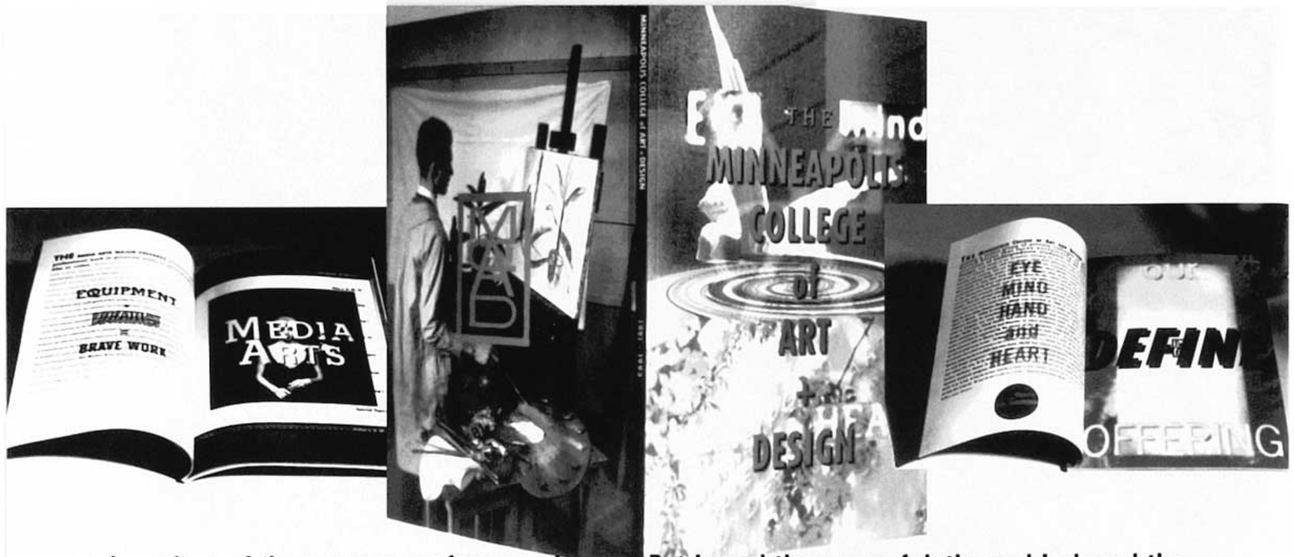

used portions of these now very famous pictures. But I used them very faintly, and I placed the word "death" over them, and then a Marinetti poem from Electrical War. The only image that is really recognizable is the one where you can see part of the map. I do feel that by taking these images from TV, I was able to communicate my idea without really infringing on anyone else's creativity. I do believe this piece borders on the successful and legal as far as the appropriated imagery is concerned. Emigre: What if, and this is highly unlikely, someone from that particular network recognized it and said, "Wait a minute, this has been appropriated in what we consider an inappropriate way. Let's sue this guy and teach him a lesson." What would your defense be? makela: **In my defense, I would ask the question: does a photographer who takes a picture of a street scene steal certain things when he includes in that shot specific, very nicely designed store signs? It is difficult to know what is right and what is wrong at the moment.** Emigre: I have stolen many images of all kinds myself and I am becoming more and more selfconscious about it, but in my gut, I often believe, particularly when it comes to TV images, that they should be in the public domain. TV is an incredibly loud, intrusive medium that cannot be ignored anymore. Especially in America, where you have an entire society that is centered around television, it is practically forced into our living rooms. It has become part of us and it relies on us, and since it is part of us, we should be entitled to reflect upon it and ... makela: **Yes, if we are allowed to dream about it, we should have a right to deconstruct it.** Emigre: In the *I.D.* article, you talk about the "dematerialization of design." What do you mean by that? makela: **This has much to do with the computer and the notion of working within the digital realm. One of the most important things for me is to get beyond the surface of the printed page. I don't know how to articulate this very well yet. I really enjoy TV images, and in particular the distance that seems to exist beyond the pixels. That is somehow more exciting than the light coming through a piece of paper for me.** Emigre: It sounds like you are working in the wrong media. makela: **Well, that's the thing! I often wonder what graphic design really entails. These surfaces that I spoke of earlier are really jumping around at the moment. But I am a graphic designer, although every year I grow steadily more unsure of exactly what I am doing. It's frightening sometimes; it feels as if you really don't have a handle on what's going on, but sometimes that is exactly the moment that you might be on to something.** Emigre: You have set up a different approach for yourself to solving graphic design problems. You are intentionally moving away from conventional hierarchies and arrangements. How convinced are you that this approach works, and that this is the way to effectively communicate messages? makela: **I still want to communicate effectively. I have simply grown tired of conventional arrangements. I am really interested in creating images that go beyond the edges of the page. Except for some of the pages in the MCAD book, I haven't worked with white space much lately. In the last four years I've had problems getting excited about it.** Emigre: What is it that you don't like about arrangements? makela: **Think of an arrangement in musical terms, which shouldn't be too difficult. A lot of the designs I see go: "diddelydit dat do diddely." It has almost a free form jazz feel to it. It's very nice and pleasant. But I also like: "wwwwwwrrrrrraaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa hhhhhh." It's a different kind of emotion that I see when I look at a printed page that is filled completely. For that reason, I have always enjoyed Ed Ruscha's work. There is a volume, and an intensity to the volume, and a constant to the volume in his work that I identified with. I know all the rules of space and balance and contrast and all the things that make a formal construction work, but I am after something else. I am after a certain effect. And there might be a hierarchy there, too, but it's very subtle.** Emigre: How then do you want me to read the MCAD cover? makela: **Well, the cover is more or less a pool of history and it features the aspects that the school wants to inflame in the students: the eye, mind, hand and heart. I think that the background, the images and the type don't really compete with each other; they simply lay in bed with each other.** OFF

(MCAD Book Photography by Hillary Bullock)

(advertisement)

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