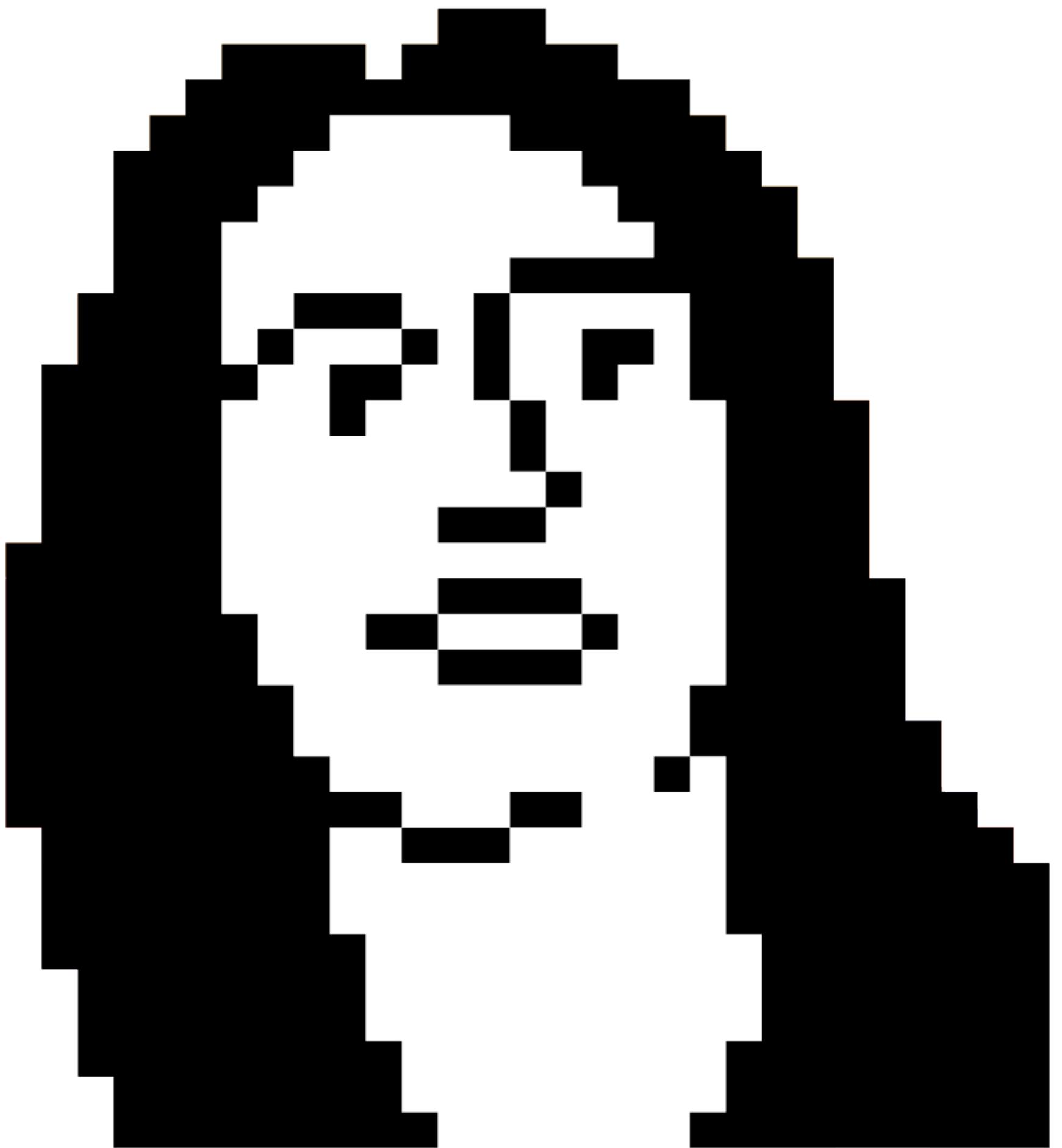
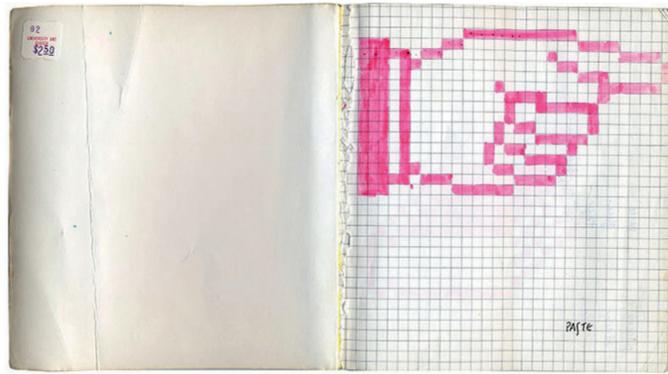


HOW TO B E C O M E S U C C E S S F U L

Learning from Susan Kare



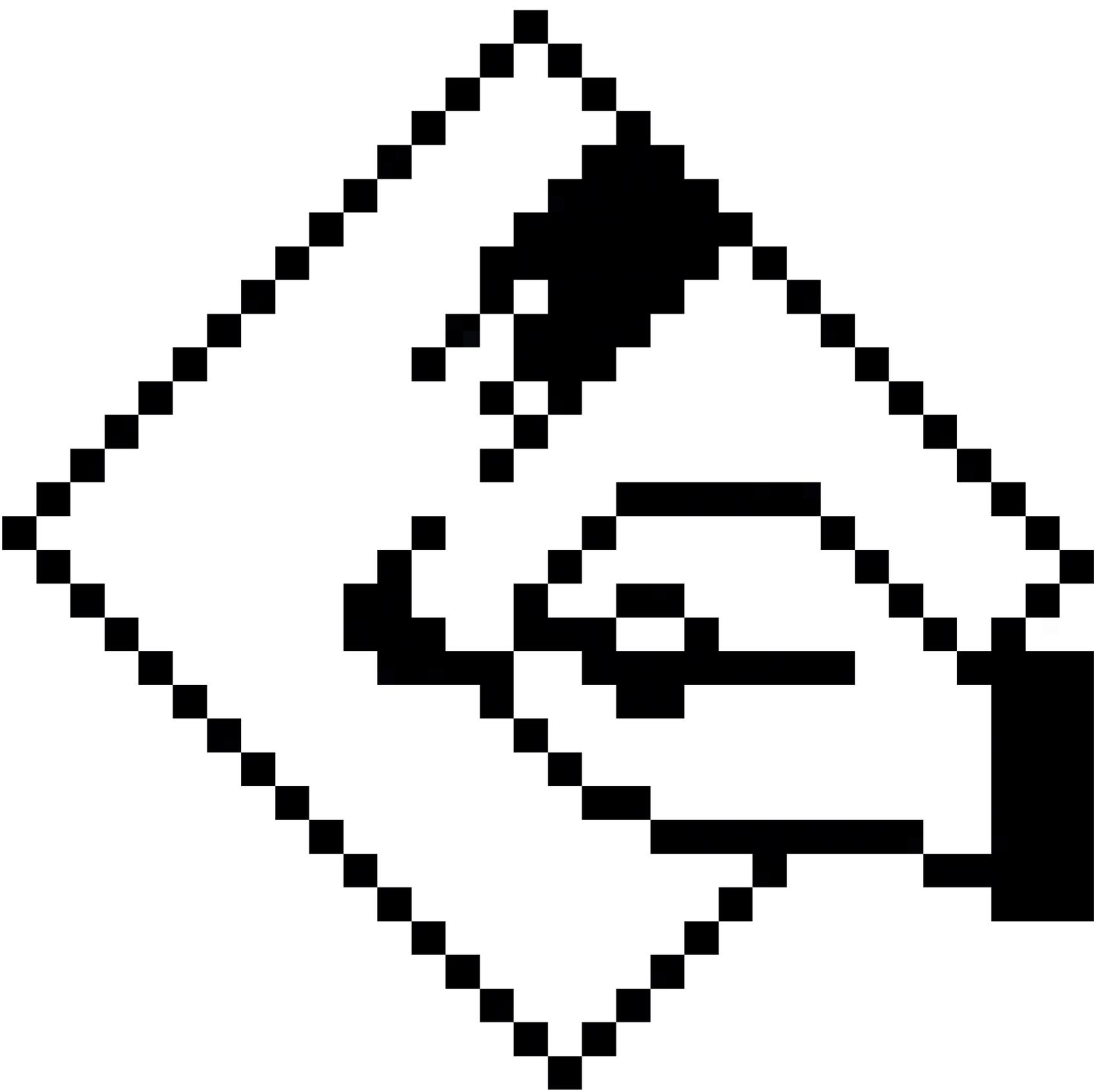
Becoming a world famous graphic designer in the male-dominated tech world



CONVINCING WITH A PINK MARKER

Sometimes, all you need is the right opportunity. For Susan Kare, it was an old high school friend who worked at Apple in the eighties. They were looking for someone to design icons for their newest Macintosh model, which was supposed to be much more user-friendly by eliminating the until-then standard of using code to navigate and control tasks. Having worked as a curator after finishing her art degree, she gladly took the opportunity to become an artistic creator herself. One of the requirements of her new job meant creating a new font, and although she had never designed a font herself, she was ready to take on the challenge. Before the job interview, she went to the library and got hold of every book about graphic design they had. She also did sketches of

different icons on a checkered notebook with a pink highlighter, imitating the pixels of the computer screen. At the day of the interview, she arrived with a lot of books and her sketches to give the impression that she knew what she was talking about when she really had no actual experience working as a graphic designer. The pink sketches payed out: just five minutes into the interview, she was hired. She went on to design some of the most iconic digital icons, some of which are still commonly used today. Her pink sketches were later bought by the Museum of Modern Art in New York as a part of the beginnings of pixel art.



CONVINCING WITH CREATIVITY

„We always try to have a range of solutions and see what looks right.“

Susan Kare designed the suite of icons that made the Macintosh revolutionary computer that you could communicate with.

Every fifteen minutes or so, as I wrote this story, I moved my cursor northward to click on the disk in the Microsoft Word toolbar that indicates “Save.” This is a superstitious move, as my computer automatically saves my work every ten minutes. But I learned to use a computer in the era before AutoSave, in the dark ages when remembering to save to a disk often stood between you and term-paper disaster. The persistence of that disk icon into the age of flash drives and cloud storage is a sign of its power. A disk means “Save.” Susan Kare designed a version of that disk, as part of the suite of icons that made the Macintosh revolutionary—a computer that you could communicate with in pictures.

Paola Antonelli, the senior curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art, was the first to physically show Kare’s original icon sketches, in the 2015 exhibit “This is for Everyone.” “If the Mac turned out to be such a revolutionary object—a pet instead of a home appliance, a spark for the imagination instead of a mere work tool—it is thanks to Susan’s fonts and icons, which gave it voice, personality, style, and even a sense of humor. Cherry bomb, anyone?” she joked, referring to the icon which greeted crashes in the original operating system.

After working for Apple, Kare designed icons for Microsoft, Facebook, and, now, Pinterest, where she is a creative director. The mainstream presence of Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, emoji, and gifs is a sign that the visual revolutionaries have won: online, we all communicate visually, piecing together sentences from tiny-icon languages.

Kare, who is sixty-four, will be honored for her work on April 20th, by her fellow designers, with the prestigious AIGA medal. In 1982, she was a sculptor and sometime curator when



her high-school friend Andy Hertzfeld asked her to create graphics for a new computer that he was working on in California. Kare brought a Grid notebook to her job interview at Apple Computer.

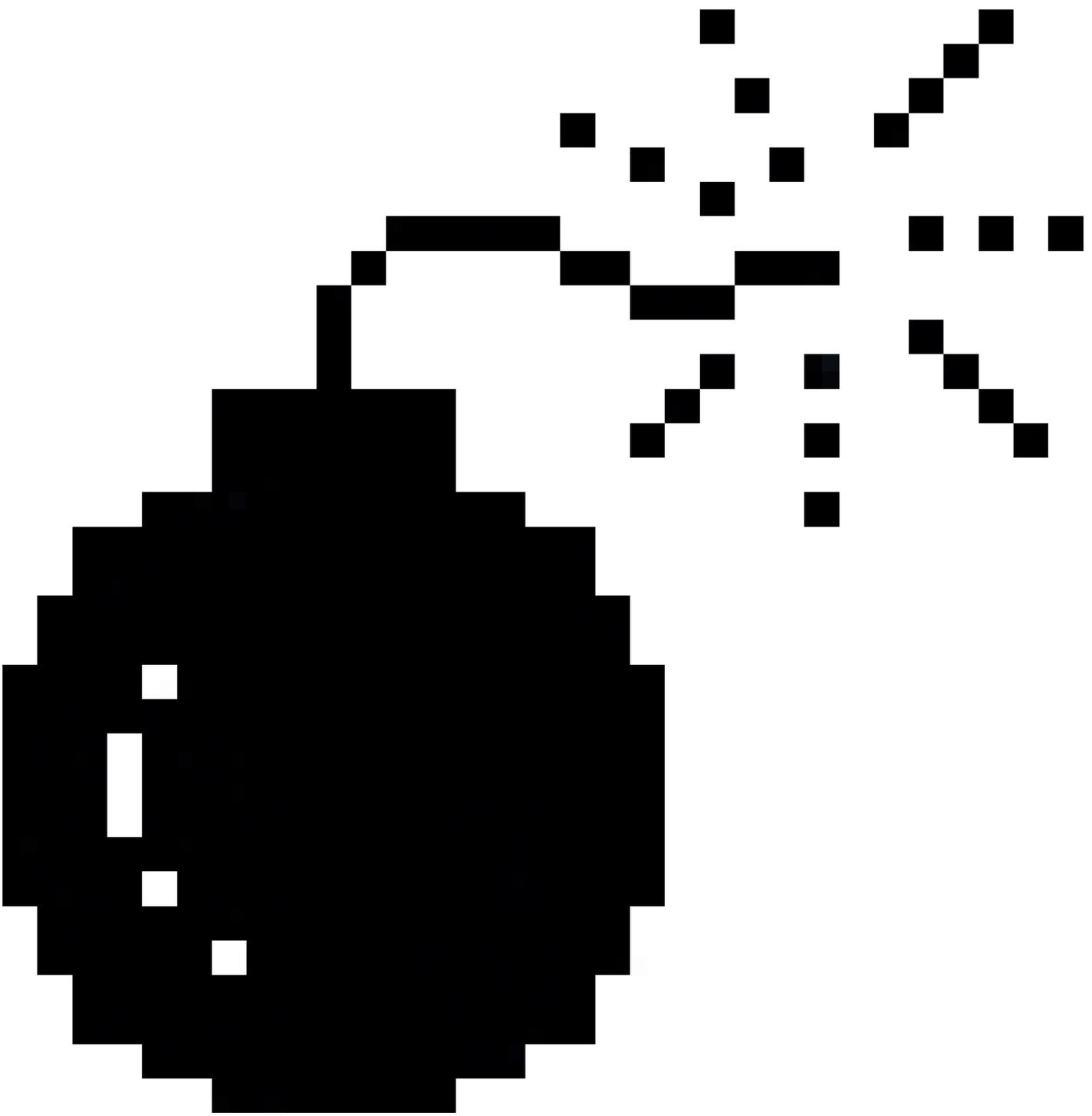
On its pages, she had sketched, in pink marker, a series of icons to represent the commands that Hertzfeld’s software would execute. Each square represented a pixel. A pointing finger meant “Paste.” A paintbrush symbolized “MacPaint.” Scissors said “Cut.” Kare told me about this origin moment: “As soon as I started work, Andy Hertzfeld wrote an icon editor and font editor so I could design images and letterforms using the Mac, not paper,” she said. “But I loved the puzzle-like nature of working in sixteen-by-sixteen and thirty-two-by-thirty-two pixel icon grids, and the marriage of craft and metaphor.” What Kare lacked in computer experience she made up for in visual knowledge. “Bitmap graphics are like mosaics and needlepoint and other pseudo-digital art forms, all of which I had practiced before going to Apple,” she told an interviewer, in 2000. The command icon, still right there to the left of your space bar, was based on a Swedish campground sign

meaning “interesting feature,” pulled from a book of historical symbols.

Kare looked to cross-stitch, to mosaics, to hobo signs for inspiration when she got stuck. “Some icons, like the piece of paper, are no problem; but others defy the visual, like ‘Undo.’”

At one point, there was to be an icon of a copy machine for making a copy of a file, and users would drag and drop a file onto it to copy it, but it was difficult to render a copier at that scale. Kare also tried a cat in a mirror, for copycat. Neither made the cut. She also designed a number of the original Mac fonts, including Geneva, Chicago, and the picture-heavy Cairo, using only a nine-by-seven grid.

Her notebooks are part of the permanent collections of the New York and San Francisco modern-art museums, and one was included in the recent London Design Museum exhibit “California: Designing Freedom.” Justin McGuirk, the co-curator of that exhibition, said, “The Xerox Star initiated the metaphor of the ‘desktop’ as an icon-based method of interacting with computers, but it was the Apple Mac that popularized it.”



CONVINCING WITH BOLDNESS

„A lot of women are very good digital designers. And have been for a very long time.“

While the Macintosh once made you wait with a tiny watch designed by Kare, Pinterest offers you a spinning button when you refresh, also designed by Kare. Last fall, the small home-design brand Areaware debuted Kare-designed placemats, coasters, and napkins with bitmap raindrops, waves, and diagonals; I bought them for the whole family for Christmas. „It’s fun to read that, before there was social media, countless people spent hours with Microsoft Windows Solitaire using the cards I designed,” she said.

In 2008, Kare created virtual “gifts” for Facebook that you could buy and send to a friend, with new offerings daily, based on a sixty-four-by-sixty-four-pixel grid. The best-sellers played to the crowd: hearts, penguins, and kisses, like a digital box of chocolates. A sixty-four-pixel palette would seem like a big step up, but Kare doesn’t think detail necessarily makes better icons. “Simple images can be more inclusive,” she said.

Look at traffic signs: “There’s a reason the silhouettes of kids in a school crossing sign don’t have plaid lunchboxes and superhero backpacks, even though it’s not because of technology limitations,” she said. “Those would be extraneous details.” Kare’s personal style is distinctly unfussy.

She was bemused last year when her son and colleagues at Pinterest alerted her that a 1984 portrait of her by Norman Seeff, taken for Rolling Stone, had turned up on Reddit in the subreddit of “old school cool.” In the photo, Kare lounges horizontally in her ergonomic chair, wearing jeans and a gray sweatshirt, with one gray-and-burgundy New Balance shoe propped on her desk. “Just a regular 1984 work outfit—nothing special—but seems ‘pre-normcore’ in retrospect,” she said. “I lived in New Balance and Reebok ankle-high workout shoes. Colleagues brought me toy robot souvenirs from work trips to Japan, and I see postcards of favorite images from the Metropolitan Museum.” The toys, the art, and the sneakers embody the rigor and the humor that Kare has always brought to the task of making icons, which resonate across the decades.

A reddit user helpfully identified the robots—Monster from Macross (1983), MR-11 Bulldozer Robo/Dozer (1982), and, on Twitter, Daniel Mallory Ortberg made a proposal: „building a time machine for the express purpose of going to 1985 and marrying the woman who invented the trash icon for macs because OH MY GOD“In a 2000 interview with Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, now a researcher at Institute for

the Future, Kare brings the history of American graphic design full circle. It was she who brought the legendary Paul Rand (the AIGA Medal winner in 1966 and a designer of I.B.M.) to the attention of Steve Jobs when the latter founded NeXT, in 1985, and needed a logo as iconic as the Apple.

I asked Kare if there were other AIGA medalists, besides Rand, whom she saw as influences, and she lists a series of pre-digital greats whose work is known for broad appeal, infectious warmth, and a sometimes cartoony hand: Charles and Ray Eames (1977), Milton Glaser (1972), and the New Yorker contributor and cartoonist Saul Steinberg (1963). Through their work, and now hers, one can see a legacy of personal touch that one hopes will continue into our digital future on a deeper level than fingerprint readers. She gave the Mac a smile—where’s the smile now? In the early 1980s, Apple asked a young artist named Susan Kare to design some graphics for its forthcoming personal computer, the Macintosh. Kare had never worked in the tech industry and didn’t have any experience with computers. But she had a background in a variety of art forms, from mosaics to needlepoint, and a PhD from New York University, having written her dissertation on the use of caricature in sculpture. As it turned out, this diversity of experience was exactly what Apple needed.

Kare’s artistic background made her well-equipped to aid in Steve Jobs’ ambition to create the world’s first friendly computer. She was accustomed to finding inspiration in everything from hieroglyphs to street signs, and by bringing a diverse range of influences to the Mac.





Japanese Woodcut for Apple

HEY, SUSAN...

Were you working on-site, at the Apple headquarters in Cupertino?

Kare: Yes. I definitely learned on the job. As when I went to Macintosh, there wasn't really an icon editor, but there was a way to turn pixels on and off. I did some work on paper, but obviously it was much better to see it on the screen, so there was a rudimentary icon editor. First they showed me how I could take the art and figure out the hex equivalent so it could be keyboarded in. Then Andy made a much better icon editor that automatically generated the hex under the icons. That was how I did the first ones. I think I did the fonts that way, going letter by letter, before we had a font editor.

Were you working on a Lisa computer, one of the first personal computers by Apple?

Kare: No, on a Mac. Always on a Mac. Though my first Mac still had the Twiggy floppy disk drive. The Finder displayed a floppy, and had draggable titles and files.

I didn't really have much computer experience, but even then I found that rudimentary Mac more appealing to me than the Apple II. I was a typical customer that they were trying to attract, someone for whom the graphical side of it would have been attractive.

Did Andy and others have a clear sense of what kinds of icons they needed-- a trash can, files-- or was the design more uncertain?

Kare: I recall that things were pretty much open. The cursor existed. There was a paper with a folded corner. I think when I started there existed a trash can. I didn't invent that, Lisa had one, though I refined it to make it our trash can. Since Lisa used pixels that weren't square, even if one had wanted to use the exact same thing in Mac we would have had to adjust it.

Now it seems so ancient, thinking about this. Usually they tell me what concepts they needed, and I

would try to come up with a selection of things that might work. We would try them out, and the final design would evolve from there.

The documents icon existed-- the paper with the folded corner-- and I thought it was good that documents look like documents; but I thought that applications needed to look more active. That's when I came up with the icon that has a hand holding a pencil against a diamond. With that, you could easily distinguish between documents and applications. I worked on the earliest MacPaint icon, which was a brush that was painting, where the document icon included an image that would associate it with an application. We never imagined how many, many icons there would eventually be. There were 256 number sets available for fonts, and that just seemed cavernous-- we used only a few, and assumed that number would accommodate third-party font development.

I know some of the metaphors for the interface changed over time: with Lisa, for example, the scroll bar is called the „elevator“ for a while. I imagine that if you call something an elevator rather than a scroll bar, or the name trash can changes over time, that you would design different icons; or that if you designed a really cool icon, the name of a feature might change.

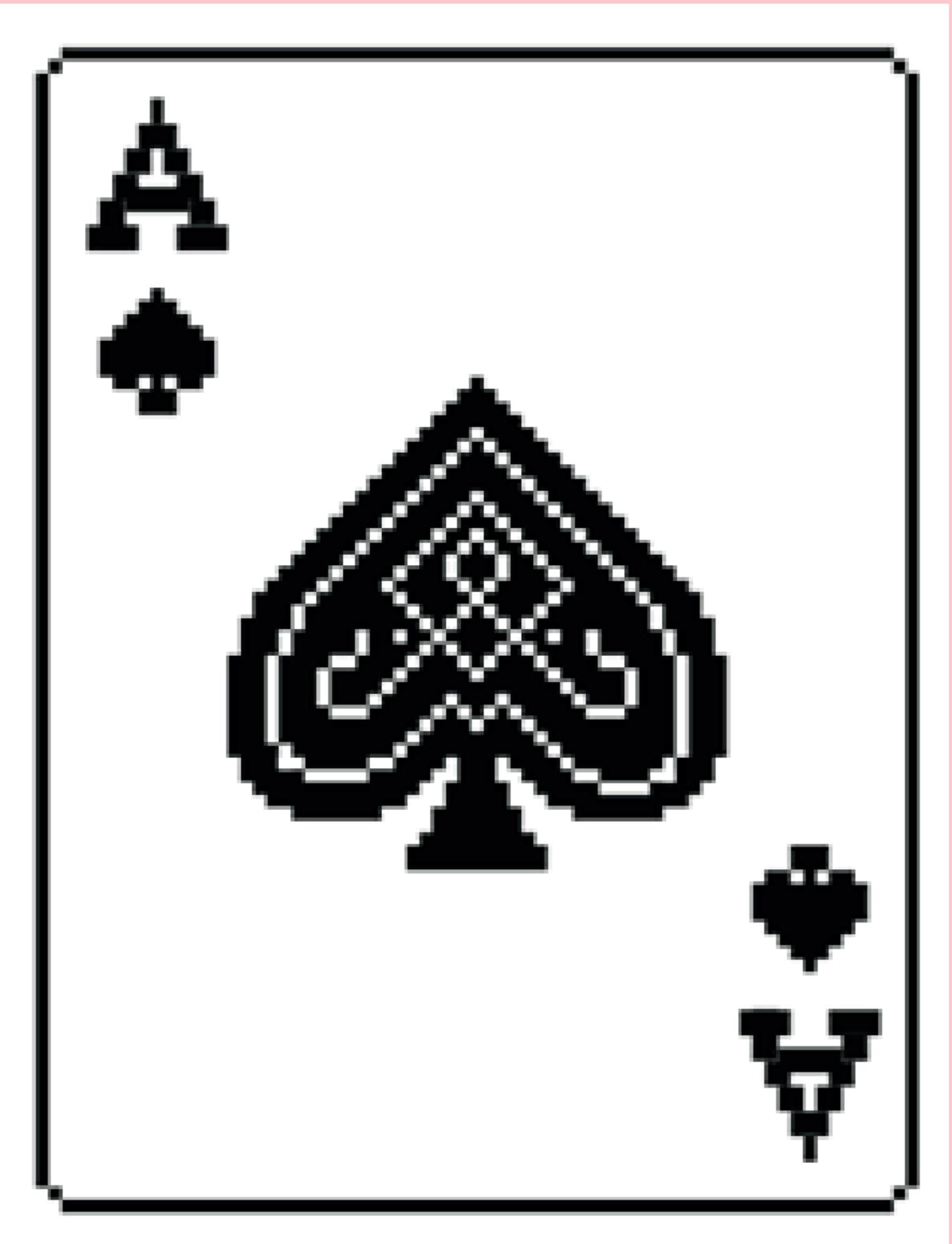
Kare: When I came, the title bar was always called the title bar, and I spent a LOT of time working on different designs for it. Should it have stripes, should it have little architectural details on the side? We were trying to figure out what you do to highlight that name. I think the first font that I did was very much like Chicago-- we called it „Elefont“ at first, that was the placeholder name.

MacPaint was first called MacSketch, but I don't think that had much effect on the icons. Later, doing MacWrite and MacProject, I think the ideas for those always pretty clear. We definitely talked about naming things in menus,

and Bill Atkinson would come in sometimes with features for MacPaint and ask, "What do you think we should call this?" Now the lasso, I think maybe Bill did call it a „lasso," and had the form with the little slip knot, to make it like a lasso. I refined his image to the „final“ lasso. For while there was going to be a copy machine for making a copy of a file, and you would drag and drop a file onto it to copy it. That was visual for a while, but then it went away. It turned out was hard to figure out what you could draw that people would see as a copier. I drew a cat in a mirror, like „copy cat“ [Pang laughs]-- I tried a few ideas that were not practical.

We took a very common sense approach. People would ask for something, and I would do what I thought would work. I do remember always trying-- and I still do to this day-- to provide a rich selection of choices, and see what works. People would have different suggestions.

I don't even remember that much about it. I remember being in a couple photo shoots, and that was interesting. The Rolling Stone photographer was very good, and because I'm in graphics it was interesting for me to see how people like that work. Mostly what I remember was being in my cube [Pang laughs], and trying to get done what needed to be done.



Solitaire Card for Microsoft

How long would it take to design a selection of possibilities for a copier or trash can?

Kare: Sometimes hours, sometimes days.

Can you explain how the Icon Editor worked? Was it like a piece of graph paper, and you clicked on the squares to draw an image?

Kare: That's pretty much it. I don't even remember very much about it now, but it was a grid with squares that toggled from black to white. After a while, I started using MacPaint to make the icons, and it had all the classic MacPaint features of being able to see the image enlarged and actual size at the same time, and being able to draw circles and lines and erase. I think with the first icon editor you could only toggle pixels, so it was great to use MacPaint.

So what was it that would define a really successful icon? Did you have some sense going into the project of what you thought a good icon would look like?

Kare: It's not usually my way to say, „This is it.“ As I said, I tried to make a selection and get people's opinions.

I like to think that good icons are instantly recognizable - even if someone's never seen it, you can ask them what it does, and they get it - or it's so easy to remember that if someone tells you what it is once, it's easy to remember when you look at it. I think that's a lot to ask of a symbol, that if you tested it everyone would all have the same one-word response as its function. But I think I had then, and still have, more of a common sense than a scientific approach to that kind of thing.

Some people were big advocates of user testing. With the icons, did you just show them to people, or did you try to get a more systematic sample

from them?

Kare: Oh, definitely - I think it's great to test things, I just think of it more as - when I said „not scientific,“ really what I meant was informal user testing, showing a lot of people and just asking them what they thought. When choosing an icon for the fill function in MacPaint, I tried paint rollers and other concepts, but I guess the pouring paint can made the most sense to people. Then there are constraints with a few things that are cursors that have one hot pixel: we tried different things to see what functioned well, and was easy to aim with. And some details came from the programmers: I didn't design the coupon-looking square marquee, whoever designed that functionality came up with that, and I tweaked it. Another time, Andy wanted to do a number puzzle, so I did the graphics for that.

I remember that from my very first Macintosh.

Kare: The puzzle, and the note pad, and some of the other things in the control panel, I worked on those with Andy. I still have on my business card the rabbit (for my fax number) and telephone from the original control panel.

What did the rabbit stand for?

Kare: There was a rabbit and tortoise, and they signified „fast“ and „slow“ time between mouse clicks, I think - something to do with speed.

So who did you informally show your work to?

Kare: I'd say most of the people in the software group, and other people in the Mac group who might wander in. Steve Jobs would wander in-- Lots of people from the group would wander in.

At what point, or who was it who said, „Let's definitely go with this one, rather than these?“

Kare: I suppose Steve had some say in that, but also - and this is my hazy memory - it was somewhat of a consensus. I don't remember any big fights about any of that, or any big meetings to decide what the icons were going to be. It more or less evolved, thanks to lots of people's help.

I was re-reading Steven Levy's Insanely Great last night, and it sounded from his account as if Steve Jobs would look at the icons and say, „Yes this one, not this one.“

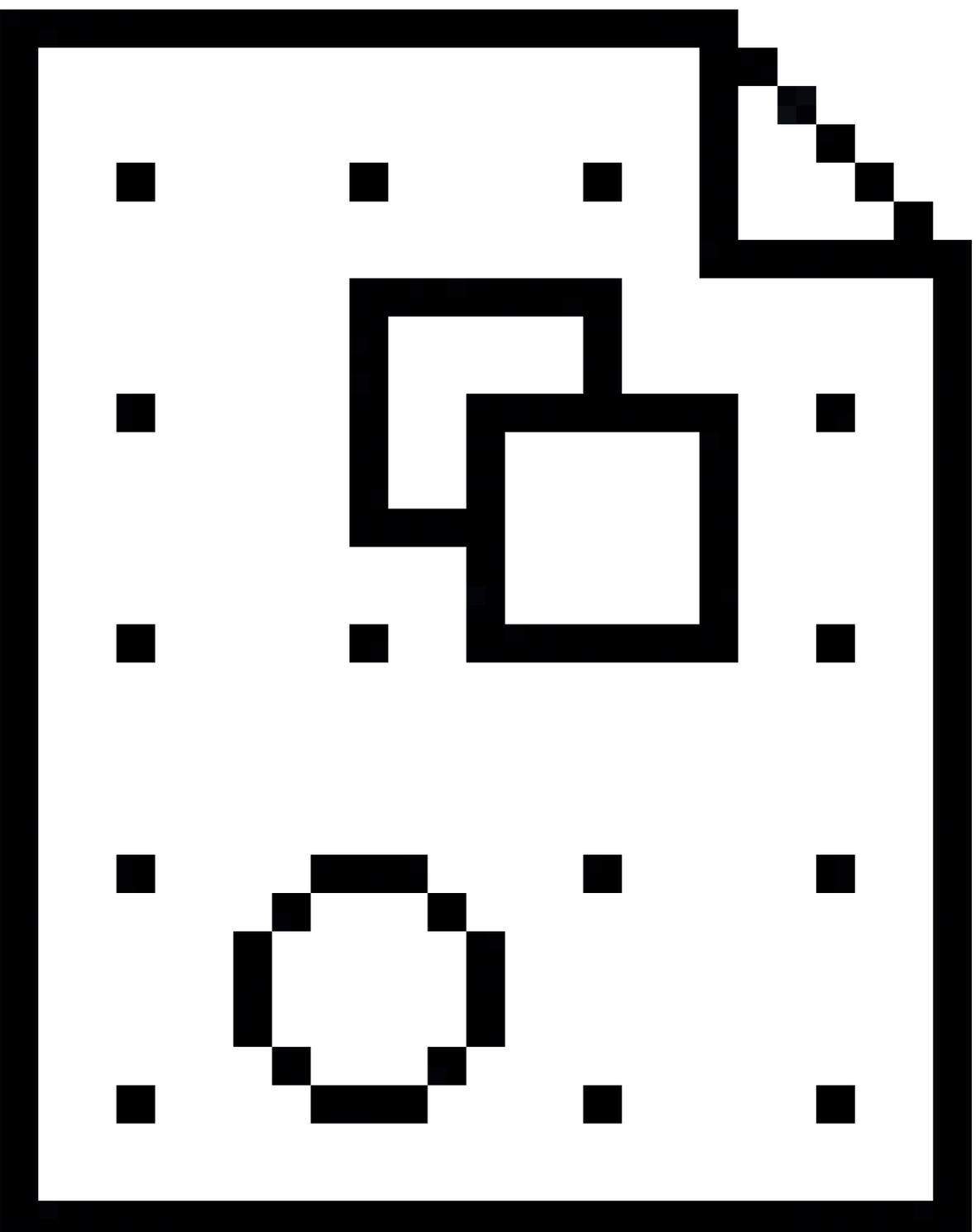
Kare: I think he did, because he usually came in at the end of every day. He'd always want to know what was new, and he's always had good taste and a good sense for visual details. But I don't remember any formal meetings. He had ideas, but I was happy to mock up good ideas from anyone.

Was it a big change working in this kind of collaborative environment with software people, compared to the stuff you'd been doing before? It sounded like in some of your earlier graphic work, you worked pretty independently.

Kare: There's was noting to get adjusted to. Lots of long hours, but I don't remember anything particularly difficult in adjusting to the job.

I was thinking as much about different as opposed to difficult.

Kare: I'd had lots of other jobs working with groups of people.



CONVINCING WITH ORIGINALITY

„If you ever study art history, you know nothing is ever really new.“

She made the brave new digital world feel decidedly familiar. The fact that the Mac had a graphical user interface at all was exciting in its own right. But Kare's joyful icons made the computer look truly unique. Whereas the IBM PC, released in 1981, was, as PC World's Benj Edwards put it, designed to look like a "serious computer for serious business," the Mac—thanks to Kare—made using a computer look downright fun.

You're probably familiar with Kare's work, even if you don't know it. Her suite of icons for the original Macintosh in 1984 helped people learn to navigate an unfamiliar technology—the personal computer—with help from intuitive symbols. A tiny stopwatch urged users to have patience while an application loaded, while Kare's "Happy Mac" greeted users with a reassuring smile as they booted up their computers. "One of the stated goals for the Macintosh project was that the computer should be friendly and appeal to non-technical users," Kare said in an email. "Because it took a bit of time for the software to launch, I was asked to design an icon so people would know something was happening. A smile just seemed like a good way to infuse a positive spin on the icon of the computer." Kare's overall aesthetic was playful and reassuring. Even the horror of encountering a system failure was somewhat mediated by her icon of choice, a plucky cherry bomb with a lit fuse. In the years since the Mac's debut, Kare has brought her warm, clever style to a number of other tech giants, designing everything from the playing cards for Microsoft's famously addictive game of Solitaire to Facebook's virtual gifts, which the platform offered from 2007 to 2010.

Today, she works as Pinterest's creative designer, where she's made her mark by designing, among other things, the brand's signature red pushpin. Before landing the job at Apple, Kare had dreamed of designing greeting cards for Hallmark. It's a real stroke of luck that she turned out working in tech instead. Without her influ-



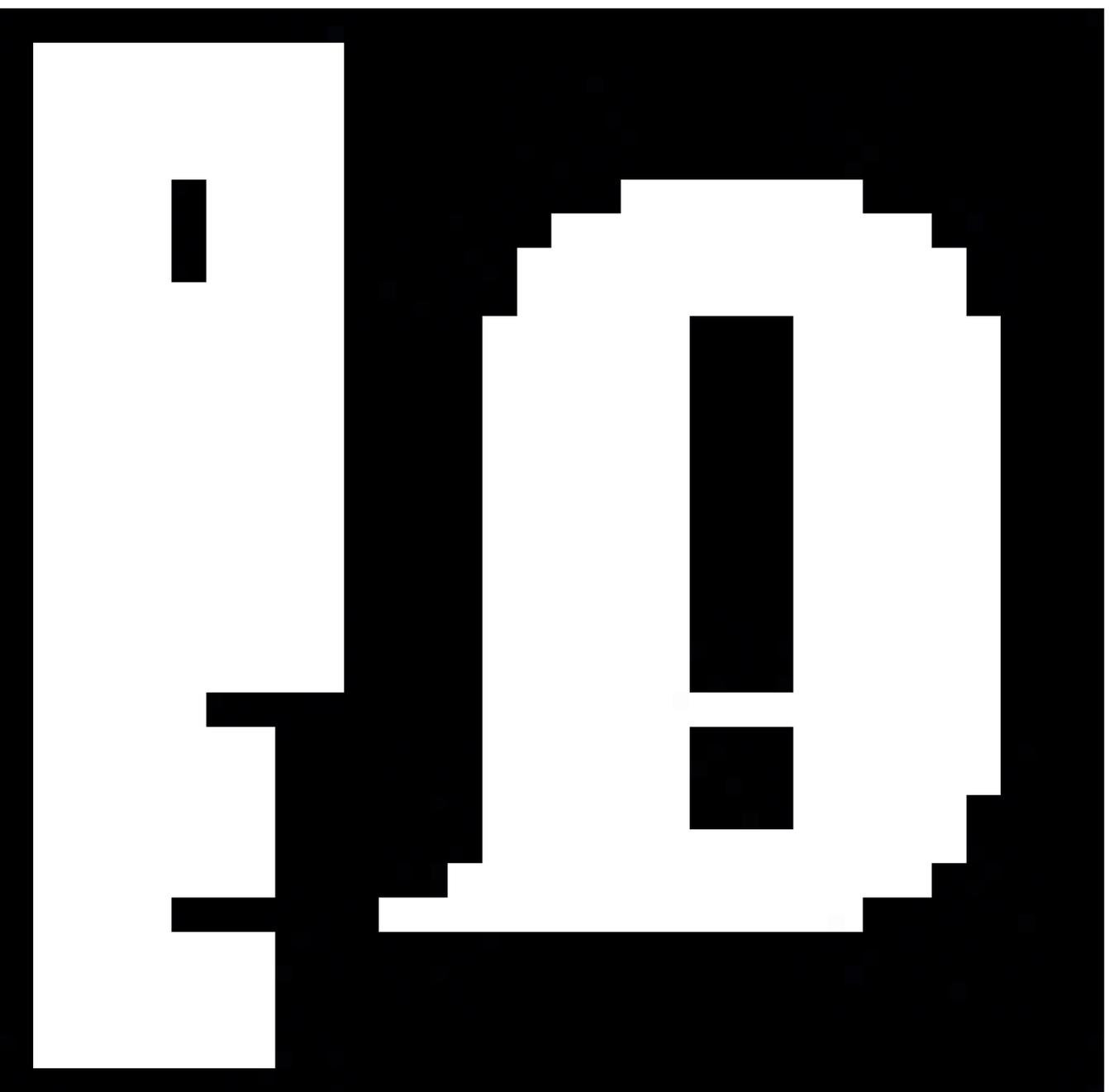
ence and open-minded, exploratory approach to design, our digital world might be a lot less friendly.

When Apple and Kare found each other in 1982, she was living in Palo Alto and in the midst of "welding a life-sized razorback hog" as a statue for a museum in Arkansas. Her friend from high school, Andy Hertzfeld, was working on Apple's Macintosh team, and he got in touch to see if she might want to create some graphics for their new project.

Duly intrigued, she bought some graph paper from the art supply store and began sketching, filling in the tiny squares with a pink marker in order to imitate Apple's pixelated displays. Soon she graduated to creating her designs on an icon editor in Apple's Cupertino headquarters. Kare remembers the period as a time in which she was surrounded by smart, creative people who were happy to be working together on something new and exciting, but unaware of how big the Mac would become. "You can set out to make a painting, but you can't set out to make a great painting," she told Steve Silberman in the introduction to the book *Susan Kare Icons*, which was excerpted in *Fast Company*. "If

you look at that blank canvas and say, 'Now I'm going to create a masterpiece'—that's just foolhardy." "You can set out to make a painting, but you can't set out to make a great painting." Among Kare's enduring legacies is the way her icons have integrated a wide range of cultures into our everyday computer culture. Kare based the Macintosh "command" symbol (⌘), for example, on a sign used on Swedish campgrounds to denote interesting locations. "It lent itself to being digital without being jagged," she said in a 2000 interview with Alex Pang for Stanford University.

She also drew inspiration from pirates, ancient hieroglyphs, books on craft and folklore, and from the *Symbol Sourcebook*, a 1972 guide to graphic symbols that includes everything from astrological signs to the markings that hobos left behind on buildings to help guide one another on their travels.



CONVINCING WITH EMPATHY

„When you have a lot of detail, it looks like somebody else. But when it's more cartooney, anyone can see themselves in that image.“



The diversity of her sources helped her find imaginative ways to communicate abstract ideas. “‘Undo’ remains an unsolved problem (claw hammer pulling out a nail?) along with a number of other perennially tough verbs to symbolize: sort, save, inspire,” Kare explained.

An additional challenge was remembering to accommodate international users with icons that didn't rely on the English language. Kare briefly experimented with using an icon of a cat in a mirror (“copycat”) as the icon for “copy,” but quickly relinquished the idea; puns didn't translate as well as one thought. “Technical constraints don't necessarily hamper creativity.” All of these considerations meant that Kare had to approach her work as if solving a puzzle. “I find it really interesting to solve that problem of, how do you make a concept in 16-by-16 black and white dots?” she told Pang. While she's not necessarily a fan of limitations, she understands how to work within them. “Technical constraints (such as working in black and white, or limited screen real estate) don't necessarily hamper creativity,” she told Quartz. “It's just good to un-

derstand what's possible, and work from there. That's true in most design projects, not just digital. I still believe that just because you can use millions of colors and hundreds of fonts, you don't need to use them all in every project.” Kare was also charged with designing original fonts for the Mac. “The chance to create a set of bitmap (pixel) fonts for the Macintosh was a terrific opportunity because the new path-breaking technology enabled proportionally spaced characters—an “i” and an “m” could have different widths,” Kare told Quartz. “Most earlier computer fonts were monospaced.” In contrast to the smooshed-together fonts that prevailed at the time, Kare's fonts “allowed text to breathe as naturally on the Mac's white screen as it does in the pages of a book,” Steve Silberman writes in the Fast Company excerpt.

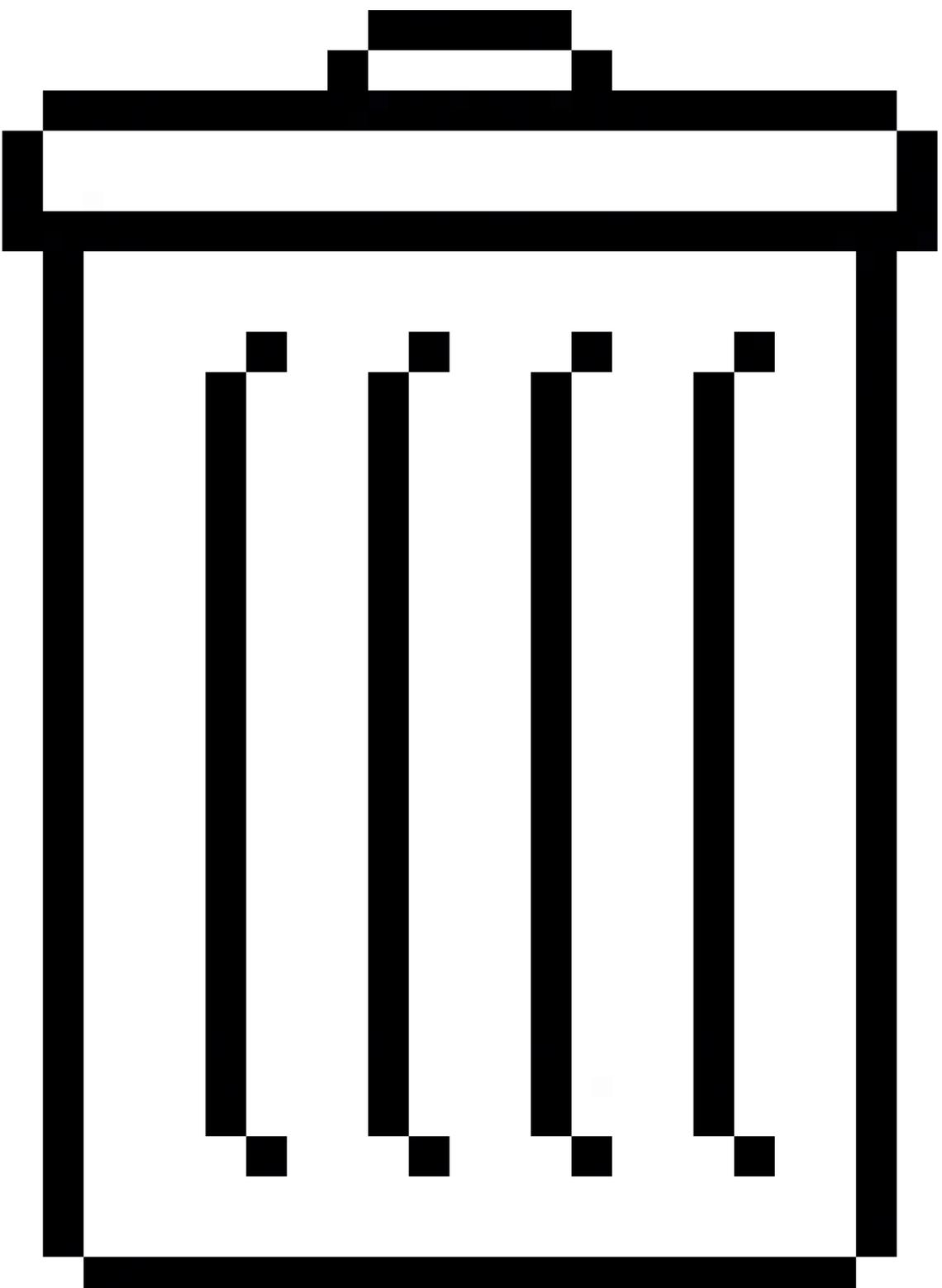
Her fonts for the Mac included Chicago (the Mac's default sans-serif typeface through system 7.6 in 1997, as well as on early versions of iPods), New York, Monaco, the wacky San Francisco (originally named Ransom, because its collage of letters looked like a ransom note), and Cairo—a dingbat

font that was particularly useful in the pre-emoji era, which allowed people to insert images of palm trees, mittens, and treble clefs with a stroke of the keyboard.

The most famous dingbat in Cairo was the dogcow, a sweet and spotted critter who gained celebrity status starting in the late 1980s, when Apple's software used him to illustrate the orientation of the page, in either landscape or portrait mode, that users had selected to print.)

Today, Kare continues to draw inspiration both from books—a tome on Kanji pictograms is another favorite—and from the sights she encounters in her travels, online and off. “I often find myself taking photos, for example, of images stenciled on the sidewalk, handmade signs, interesting packaging, or warning labels on trucks,” Kare told Quartz. “And of course, on my daily trip around the internet I save random images and often get graphic inspiration from Pinterest.”

Her more contemporary digital designs, like her early work for the Mac, are a testament to Kare's continued ingenuity. Though her images live on our screens, her attention to detail gives them movement and life. Consider the virtual gifts she designed for Facebook: a nut brownie looks more delectable because it's surrounded by a scattering of crumbs, while a lime-green popsicle gains credibility because it's slightly melted in the imaginary heat. More recently, Pinterest opened a cafe at its San Francisco headquarters in 2018 selling Kare-designed mugs, stickers, and enamel pins. One pin shows a pair of bunny ears, meant to signify the joy of getting sucked into an internet rabbit hole. Another shows Pinterest's signature pushpin—made more lovable, naturally, with the addition of a smiley face.



CONVINCING WITH HUMOR

„Make it so simple your mom could use it.“

No great technological revolution can succeed without an artistic sleight of hand. Susan Kare, known as the “woman who gave the Macintosh a smile,” has spent her three-decade career at the apex of human-machine interaction. Through her intuitive, whimsical iconography, she made the graphic user interface accessible to the masses, and ushered in a new generation of pixel art. In the early 1980s, Kare—then a sculptor and tech-world outsider—pivoted to a graphic designer role at Apple. There, she created some of the most recognizable icons, typefaces, and graphic elements in personal computing: the command symbol (⌘), the system-failure bomb, the paint brush, and, of course, “Clarus the Dogcow.” With little more than a few dots on a screen, Kare created a canvas of approachable visual metaphors that are instantly recognizable decades later.

Early on, Kare found a sanctum in fine art. After earning a Ph.D. from New York University, she went westward to take a curatorial job at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. She soon migrated down to Palo Alto—the birthplace of Apple and other Silicon Valley giants. In 1982, Kare received a call from Andy Hertzfeld, a high school friend whom she’s known since age 14. Hertzfeld, then one of the early members of the Macintosh team at Apple, was looking for a designer and had Kare in mind.

An artist at heart, she was working on a welded sculpture of a life-size razor-back hog as a commission for a museum in Hot Springs, Arkansas at the time. “My ideal life would be to make art full-time. I had the chance to do that with this commission,” Kare said in an interview with Stanford University in 2000. “I really enjoyed making this sculpture; but it was kind of solitary, so it was interesting for me to segue from that to working at Apple.” Once at Apple, Kare was entrusted with a daunting task: to use iconographies to make the Macintosh feel less like a machine and more like an easy-to-

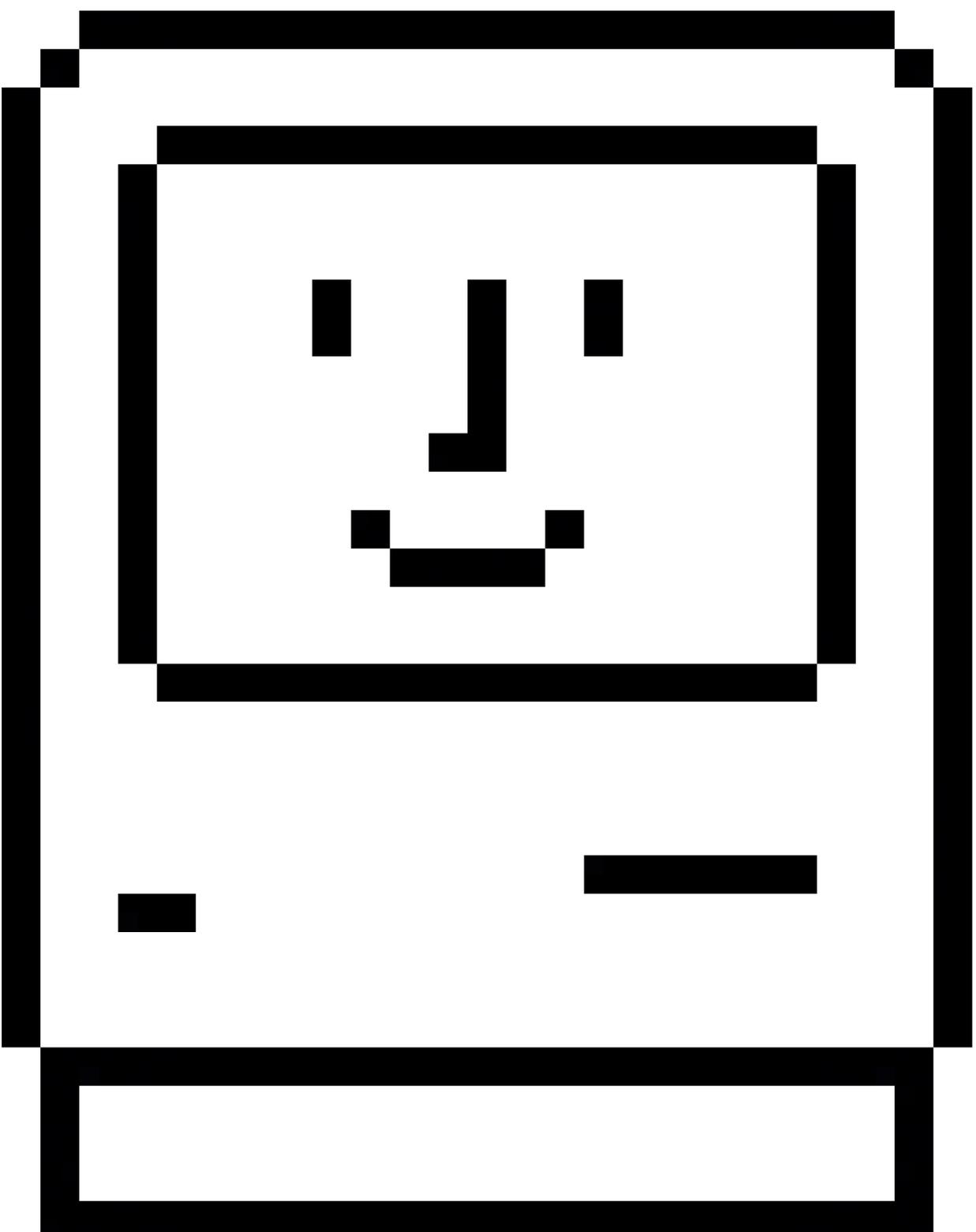
use, relatable workstation. As the first low-cost personal computer for non-technical consumers, it was imperative that the Macintosh icons be universally inviting and intuitive. Since Kare had scant experience designing in the digital realm, she drew from her experience with mosaics, needlepoint, and pointillism. After procuring “the smallest graph paper” she could find in an art supply store, Kare drew out a 32-by-32 grid. Each of the 1,024 squares represented a pixel, mimicking the bit-mapped display of the early Apple interface. She proceeded to hand-sketch many of the early Apple icons, pixel by pixel.

Each sketch began with a computer function, like “boot” or “debug.” Utilizing an eclectic pool of sources ranging from pirate lore to ancient hieroglyphics, Kare then conceptualized the jargon into a digestible visual metaphor. The command symbol, for instance, was conceived when Kare

pored through old symbology books for hours and saw the Saint Hannes cross, an ancient symbol also used by Scandinavians in the 1960s to mark locations of cultural interest.

Kare also pioneered the first proportionally spaced digital font family. Operating under the constraint of only 9-by-7 dots per letter, Kare was able to avoid the jagged, pixelated look of monospaced computer typefaces by enlisting only horizontal, vertical, or 45-degree lines. One resulting typeface, Chicago, was used on the Macintosh and iPod for more than two decades. Through all of her challenges, Kare always operated with a whimsical charm and an independent streak. She once festooned Apple’s office with a pirate flag, complete with a signature rainbow-colored eye patch, an ode to the team’s infamous motivational quote: “It’s better to be a pirate than join the navy.”





CONVINCING WITH CONFIDENCE

„I felt as if I could do my job, and that was not any kind of problem or issue.“

No colleague - not even Steve Jobs himself - was safe from being rendered in pixel art form. And then there was "Clarus the Dogcow," an ambiguous-looking animal icon Kare designed as a part of Apple's Cairo font. Clarus gained such a cult following that Kare still produces prints of the icon for its many fans.

In 1988, Kare launched her own firm, Susan Kare Design, which she maintains today. In the ensuing decades, she has successfully adapted to the ever-shifting tides of technology. Between 2006 and 2010, she designed hundreds of virtual gifts for Facebook—a brilliant, full-color suite of cupcakes, penguins, and rubber duckies that departed from the two-dimensional pixel art she'd designed at Apple. Today, Kare continues to sell her prints on kareprints.com, and works as a creative director at Pinterest, where she focuses on adding meaning and clarity to the platform's

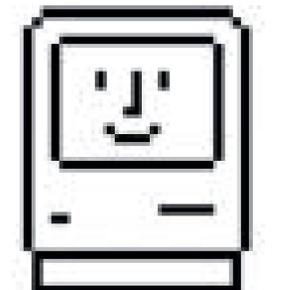
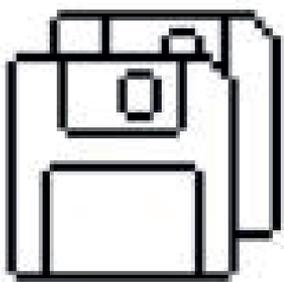
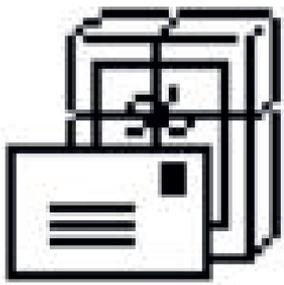
feed. Her iconography has been featured at the National Museum of American History, MoMA, SFMOMA, and the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science in Albuquerque. She's done design work for more than 50 major clients, including Microsoft, Intel, IBM, Motorola, and Sony Pictures. But throughout the years, Kare has strictly adhered to a design philosophy that rests on the tenets of simplicity, clarity, and beauty. And though she's upgraded her tools from graph paper to design software, Kare continues to place a premium on context and metaphor. On the streets of San Francisco, she intrepidly hunts for catchy symbols and shapes; once inspiration strikes, she works within a grid-like template in Adobe Illustrator—a tool to help her visualize the constraints of the device on which her user will view her icons.

Each icon, she contends, must not only be easy to understand, but easy

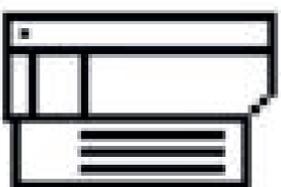
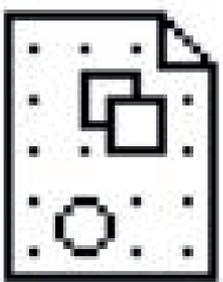
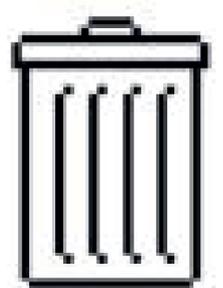
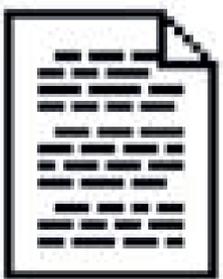
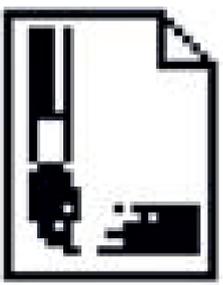
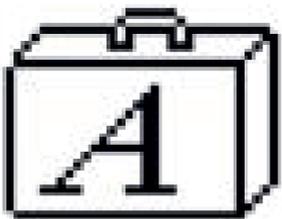
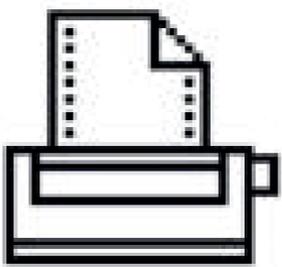
to remember. In the digital era, where visual pollution clogs the Web, her simplicity-driven philosophy enjoys a heightened relevance. Now an icon in her own right, Kare does too. Susan Kare designed the suite of icons that made the Macintosh revolutionary a computer that you could communicate with. Every fifteen minutes or so, as I wrote this story, I moved my cursor northward to click on the disk in the Microsoft Word toolbar that indicates "Save." This is a superstitious move, as my computer automatically saves my work every ten minutes. But I learned to use a computer in the era before AutoSave, in the dark ages when remembering to save to a disk often stood between you and term-paper disaster. The persistence of that disk icon into the age of flash drives and cloud storage is a sign of its power. A disk means "Save." Susan Kare designed a version of that disk, as part of the suite of icons that made the Macintosh revolutionary—a computer that you could communicate with in pictures. Paola Antonelli, the senior curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art, was the first to physically show Kare's original icon sketches, in the 2015 exhibit "This is for Everyone."

"If the Mac turned out to be such a revolutionary object—a pet instead of a home appliance, a spark for the imagination instead of a mere work tool—it is thanks to Susan's fonts and icons, which gave it voice, personality, style, and even a sense of humor. Cherry bomb, anyone?" she joked, referring to the icon which greeted crashes in the original operating system. After working for Apple, Kare designed icons for Microsoft, Facebook, and, now, Pinterest, where she is a creative director. The mainstream presence of Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, emoji, and gifs is a sign that the visual revolutionaries have won: online, we all communicate visually, piecing together sentences from tiny-icon languages.

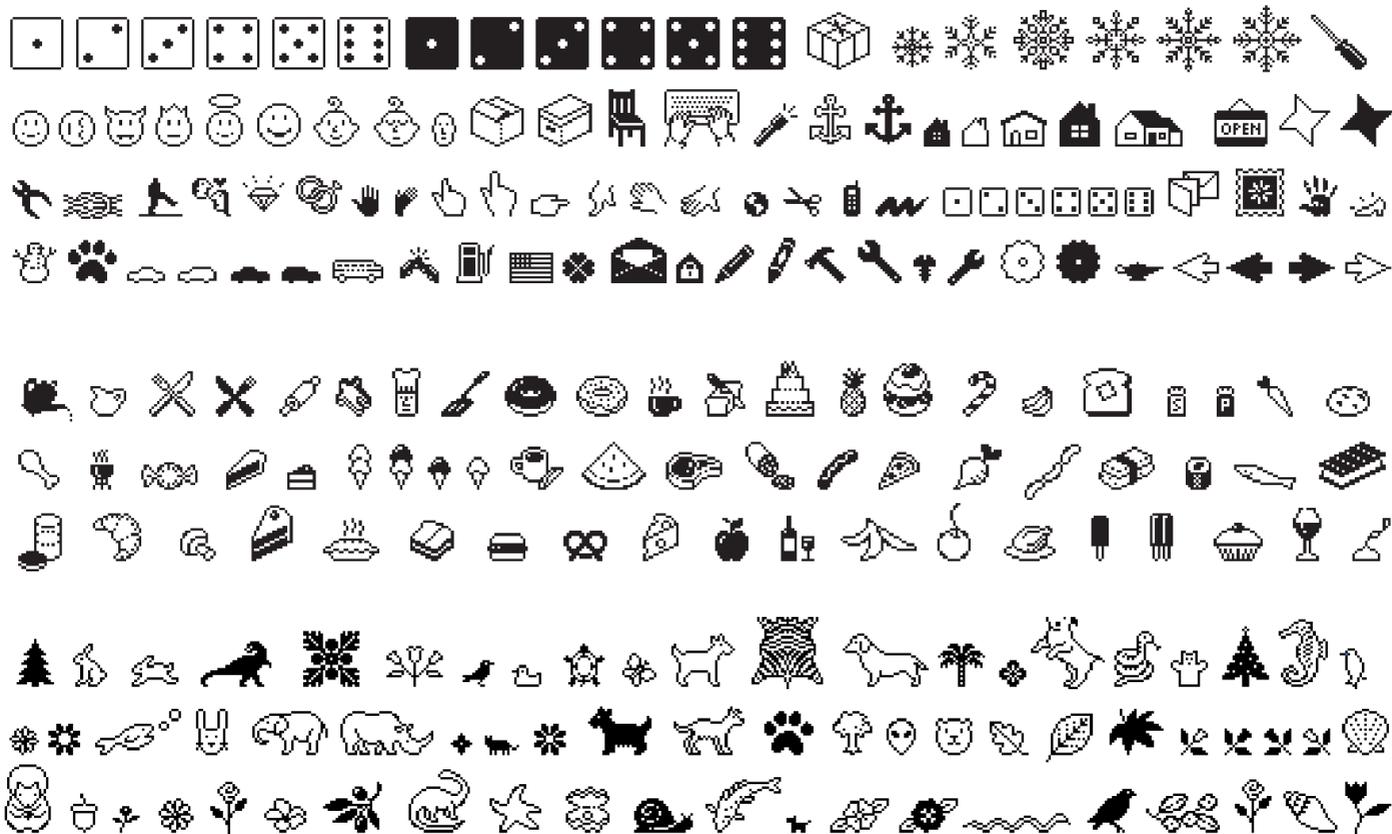




Icons for Apple



CONVINCING WITH PIXELS



Kare Dingbats Fonts for Apple

In her career, Susan Kare worked for many companies, including Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and Pinterest. She received the AIGA medal in 2018 for her inventive designs.

„How To Become Successful. Learning From Susan Kare“, concept and design: Theresa Günther. This work was created as part of the workshop „Bringing into Light - Portraits of strong Women“ at the Muthesius University of Fine Arts and Design. Supervision: Prof. Silke Juchter, subject area of concept and drafting, in cooperation with Margitta Dunkel, communication coach. In February 2020. The situation: The proportion of women studying communication design at the MKH is 84%. Getting started in the creative sector goes well. But: There are only 8% female CDs, just 3%

female agency owners. Why? How about female artists? This is about encouraging women to become interested in leading positions and breaking down social roles. The success stories of strong women show it is possible to get to the top. The task: Hey ladies*: find your heroines, shed light on their achievements, show their potentials. With big formats, in folders of 50 x 35 cm. <https://konzept-und-entwurf.muthesius-kunsthochschule.de/arbeiten/?type=stud>

* and boys

„Don't try to be original, just try to be good.“

