

Susan Kare

By KATE MURPHY

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[Susan Kare](#) is an independent digital designer whose ubiquitous on-screen icons are clicked by countless users every day. Known for her minimalist, intuitive and often witty designs, she started her career at Apple when Steve Jobs selected her to create the graphics and fonts for the original Macintosh computer.

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Jim Wilson/The New York Times

READING I recently read "[Designing with Succulents](#)," by Debra Lee Baldwin, because I was designing and planting a garden with cacti and succulents. I have a pretty wide variety of types. Some I don't even know the name of, because I started with cuttings from friends. I have some classic cartoon-looking, Mickey-Mouse-ear cacti.

[Paul Rand](#) is a graphic design hero of mine and so I pull out his "[Designer's Art](#)" over and over to look at his type and palette choices. He's very focused on simplicity and meaning. He designed the original U.P.S. logo with the package and the logos for ABC and I.B.M.; a lot of really timeless symbols.

WATCHING In stolen moments while I'm working, or waiting, I catch up on my phone with a lot of TV series that I missed the first time around. I loved "[The Wire](#)." There's a great speech by the character Omar, who robs drug dealers, in a courtroom engaging in repartee with a lawyer: "[I got the shotgun and you got the briefcase](#)."

LISTENING I never tire of [Al Green](#). I guess I just love the emotion in the songs. One of my favorite songs is "[Love and Happiness](#)." And I enjoy musicians my sons introduce me to, like [Haim](#), which is a band made up of three gifted sisters. It's thoughtful rock. I love their song "[Falling](#)."

FOLLOWING I like Reddit's "[Ask Me Anything](#)" feature. All kinds of people with all kinds of expertise and experiences sign up for a time slot and people can ask them anything. I also like [Cute Overload](#). From all over the world it has these pictures of maybe tiny hamsters or rabbits that sit in a spoon. It's presented in a striking way

COMMISSIONING I recently commissioned a hand-tooled cowboy belt from Bill Briggs at [Lone Tree Leatherworks](#) in Montana. The workmanship is really wonderful.

SEWING I bought some blankets in Mexico and brought them back and like to use them to make other things like dog beds, seat covers and bags. I dream of designing some blanket patterns and having them made. The weaving is kind of analogous to pixels.

Kate Murphy is a journalist in Houston who writes frequently for The New York Times.