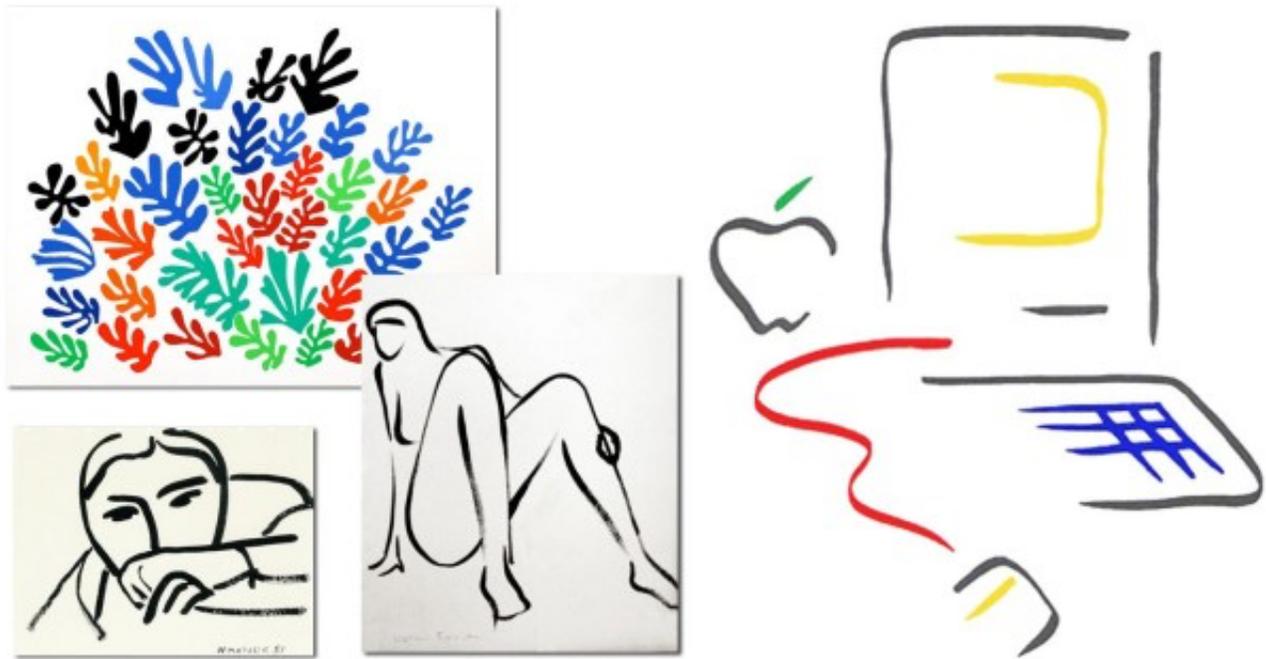# Macintosh "Picasso" Artwork Was Actually Inspired By Matisse, Artist Says

[Adam Rosen](#)   5:00 am, February 14, 2014

Artwork by Matisse (left) inspired the Mac Picasso graphics.

The famous Macintosh "Picasso" trademark logo was developed for the introduction of the original 128k Mac back in 1984. A minimalist line drawing reminiscent of the style of Pablo Picasso, this whimsical graphic implied the whole of a computer in a few simple strokes. It was an icon of what was inside the box, and became as famous as the computer it represented.

The logo was designed by Tom Hughes and [John Casado](#), art directors on the Macintosh development team. Originally the logo was to be a different concept by artist Jean-Michel Folon, but before launch it was replaced by the

colorful line drawing. It's been famous ever since, and the style has [endured across decades](#).

Casado recently attended the [30th Anniversary of the Mac](#) celebration, and emailed Cult of Mac to shed some light on the history of this famous graphic. It turns out Picasso was not the primary inspiration for this after all – rather, it was Henri Matisse!

Casado writes: "I thought I could shed some light on my inspiration for the trademark for the first Mac. I was given the assignment by Tom Hughes after it was determined that [Folon's version](#) wasn't going to work for business reasons. I met with Steve and Tom and spent some time interviewing and talking to all the players.

"After a few weeks, I came back to the group and made my presentation. In that presentation, I said that the inspiration for the drawing style was [Matisse](#), whom I so admired as an artist. The idea of the graphics being 'Picasso style' was, as I remember, a journalist's description at the time of the launch. I think since no one ever ask me or Tom where the influence came from, it became fact. I never stated it publicly, only when asked during design forums."

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The original Macintosh packaging used the Picasso style graphics.

Not only did Casado design the artwork, he had the luxury of complete support from Steve Jobs, who made no changes to his work. Not everyone who worked at or with Apple was so fortunate:

"At the time," he wrote, "the project schedule was very short since Folon had used up most of the development time. It also made it easier for me since Steve was out of his realm with these drawings. There were no Steve or Tom revisions to any of the drawings I did. It was a real fast track to the deadline. Then the flood gates opened and I was getting many more requests for drawings than I could handle […] Steve liked them all from the start which sort of surprised me since I knew his history."

Casado did not do all the Picasso (err, *Matisse*) style artwork for Apple. Other designers inside the company continued the technique over time. One

subsequent effort was the *Wheels for the Mind* program, an education initiative, using a stylized bicycle and rider drawn by Clement Mok:

"Clement in the beginning was under Tom Hughes in the graphics department and did the guy on the bicycle. Tom left Apple and went back to Boston to open his own design firm about the same time Jobs was forced to leave by Sculley (always two sides to every story). I believe Clement took over, then enter Tom Suitor, all of whom I dealt with on projects."

Apple's Wheels for the Mind artwork (photo: Clement Mok)

So there it is. Who knew? After three decades, the true inspiration behind these wonderful, whimsical graphics has been revealed. I don't know if I can stop calling it the *Picasso style*, it's been so long entrenched in Macintosh culture. But perhaps we should add an asterisk after the name: *inspired by Matisse*.

Casado's original drawings are archived at The Art Center College of Design

in Pasadena, CA, his alma mater. For more examples of this graphic style (both Apple and third party created designs), see [Enjoy the Timeless Appeal of Apple's Picasso Artwork](#).

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