



*Hollywood sign: Mette Rode Sundström with a prop from the US remake of the *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Lauritz.com has sold 500 props for the Swedish production company involved in the film*

Lot, stock and barrel

Before Lauritz.com auctions were closed worlds. Mette Rode Sundström won't rest until her auction houses are as ubiquitous as Ikea

Words by **Caroline Hainer**

Photographs by **Simon Bajada**



Mette Rode Sundström, 45, is the CEO of Denmark's groundbreaking web auction site Lauritz.com, Scandinavia's largest online auction house for art, design, antiques, and collectibles. You could say that her job has become her passion – especially since finding love with the company's founder Bengt Sundström. The couple plans to establish Lauritz.com in every country where there is an Ikea. Since starting out in 1999, Lauritz.com, whose business idea is to teach regular people to buy and sell at auction, has increased its turnover from €2.7 million to €97 million. Today it has 20 auction houses in Den-

mark, Sweden, Belgium and Germany, and 250 staff. Last year it sold 280,000 lots.

How many pieces have you bought at auction?

Thousands! Bengt and I are passionate collectors and have about 300 pieces of art at home. I love modern art – [Danish painter, sculptor, and performance artist] Eske Kath's work, for example – and appreciate the spectacular. I'll buy a lot on impulse if I see something I like, so you could say I fall in love with new art and new furniture every day.

Why is business going so well for Lauritz?

We were the world's first auction house to hold auctions online. We see that as democratizing the auction business and

opening it up to more people. These days, we have 100,000 daily visits to our site from more than 200 countries.

Can you appraise lots by e-mail?

Absolutely. If you send in a photograph our experts will give you a price estimate. If you then decide to bring the lot in, they will photograph and describe it.

Do you sell copies?

No, never. At least, never knowingly. If we say it's a Bruno Mathsson, then it's a Bruno Mathsson. We also provide a guarantee of authenticity, so a sale is revoked if we have made an incorrect assessment.

Are Scandinavians chiefly interested in design?

Certainly interior design. We focus a lot on the way we live because we spend so



Stocktaking: Sundström at the Lauritz.com auction house in Stockholm

AT A GLANCE

Name: **Mette Rode Sundström**
 Age: 45
 Profession: **CEO at Lauritz.com**
 Workplace: **Lauritz.com's HQ in Copenhagen**

much time inside when it's cold and dark outside.

What's selling right now?

Modern design classics by the likes of Mathsson, Charles Eames and Arne Jacobsen. But there's also a market for furniture from the early 20th century, particularly art deco.

What should we invest in?

Early 20th-century furniture doesn't have to be that expensive, especially if the designer isn't that well known. Art nouveau is also worth looking at, especially lamps and vases. ✦



Design safari Copenhagen

Mette Rode Sundström's top five art and design stops

BREDGADE

Bredgade is the big art street in Copenhagen. There are plenty of galleries, many of which have a good eye for young talent. I'm particularly fond of Galerie Mikael Andersen (www.mikaal-andersen.com), Gallerie Christoffer Egelund (www.christofferegelund.dk) and Martin Asbæk Gallery (www.martinasbaek.com).

GREEN SQUARE ANTIQUES

Scandinavia's biggest antique store has 10,000 square meters of showrooms and workshops. You will find qual-

ity pieces of all periods and styles, as well as things that are a bit different, such as antique Chinese daybeds. Walking around their showrooms is so stimulating. They always manage to show their antiques in completely new contexts. Strandlodsvej 11b. www.greensquare.com

DESIGNMUSEUM DANMARK

This forum for industrial design and applied arts is housed in a beautiful Rococo building. A must for anyone even remotely interested in Danish design. Admission: €10.

Bredgade 68. www.designmuseum.dk

CASASHOP

A truly international interior design store with exciting furniture, amusing lighting and beautiful accessories from, among others, Patricia Urquiola, Moooi and Knoll. Store Regnegade 2. Tel: +45 33 32 70 41. www.casashop.dk

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