



BIG IS BEAUTIFUL



Swedish ceramicist Agneta Livijn admits that she is no expert in how to use the tool of her trade, the potter's wheel. She has no formal education in working with clay – she studied advertising and painting at university – and got into ceramics by chance.

But today she is a celebrated international craftswoman whose oversized, clumsy-but-endearing and very exclusive crockery and kitchenware is available at, for example, Saks 5th Avenue. And she is about to sign a contract with a major international retailer that will see her pieces reaching a massive worldwide market.

“I used to paint, but this was hard to focus on with young children,” she says. “It was much more convenient to use clay, as a painting can go on forever and you never know when it's finished. But with clay you know when you're done.”

It all started in 1994 with a fish dish which was seen by someone from a chain of Swedish coffee shops, who asked if she did mugs too. Her first attempt was a bit clumsy, she admits, but she liked it that way. “It's more cozy to hold a big cup of coffee,” she says. “I tried to make things smaller, but I couldn't as I am not so good with the potter's wheel. But I think this has been part of my success.” Soon Sweden's most fashionable stores were clamoring for her robust cups, plates, bowls and teapots.

The effervescent and outgoing Livijn entered the US market this year and she is relishing the success. She's had to modify her collection slightly for American tastes, as she says US buyers demand something a bit more colorful than the blue and white which has been so successful in Europe. She will be showing her collection at 225 5th Avenue, New York, in October. “There's no philosophy behind the designs – I just want them to be of the highest quality and to be useful,” she says. “I think art is great when it's useful.”

For more info, see: www.livijn.com

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