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## VOICES

# Chairish and Decaso Founder on the Future of the Online Design Market

Anna Brockway talks about augmented reality, following your gut, and the importance of writing things down

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Chairish and Decaso cofounder and CMO Anna Brockway.

Photo: Maria Del Rio

It's no secret that the retail landscape is changing. The dawn of e-commerce and the constantly changing habits of consumers have left many brands scrambling to readjust their strategies. And while many thought an innate desire to sit on a sofa or inspect a rare finish up close before buying would shield the interior design world from some of these changes, the opposite is true: online marketplaces for home decor, both new and vintage, have multiplied in the years since Michael Bruno offered a new kind of home shopping experience with 1stdibs. As the cofounder of Chairish, Anna Brockway has been at the forefront of this sea change. Last year, she complemented Chairish with Decaso, a second venture focusing on blue-chip vintage art and design. This spring, both brands released augmented reality capabilities, making further use of developing technology. As part of an ongoing series of questionnaires with executives in the design industry, *AD* caught up with Brockway about her businesses and the future of design in the e-commerce world.

### **What are the first three things you do when you wake up?**

1. Sleep walk into Soul Cycle at 6 a.m.
2. Eat two poached eggs with Maldon sea salt and red pepper flakes.
3. Hug my kids and make them avocado toast.

### **What news sources do you check daily?**

*The New York Times*, Recode, NPR News, Anderson Cooper on CNN, *Vogue Living*, and *The Daily Mail* (a guilty pleasure!). Now that I am listing this all out, I wonder how I actually get anything done!

### **What's the most used item at your desk?**

A dog-eared little red notebook full of to-dos, ideas, and drawings. I go through one notebook about every two weeks. What gets written down gets done.

**The strangest?**

Well, I guess it's not necessarily strange, but a big, teetering stack of Moda Operandi boxes. I just can't help myself.



Brockway shopping in Chicago.

Photo: Rus Anson

**Describe your work style in three words?**

Fast. Fun. Challenging.

**What was the first great advice you received?**

Stop talking so much.

**The biggest mistake you learned from?**

I regret every time I didn't follow my instincts.



A room setup from Chairish's website.

Photo: Courtesy of Chairish

## **What was the most challenging moment of your career?**

When I was leading marketing at Levi's, I oversaw big Super Bowl ads. One year, a *New York Times* advertising critic wrote a seriously scathing review of our commercial. The upside? The writer had misjudged the ad; the commercial sold a ton of jeans and I developed a healthy skepticism of professional critics.

## **The most rewarding?**

When I meet a chic gal and she tells me all about the fabulous piece she just scored on Chairish or Decaso. Bingo!

## **Whom do you most admire?**

Diane Von Furstenberg and my dinky, spunky Sicilian Nana. #bossladies



Brockway shopping at Texas's famous Round Top antiques fair with Emily Henderson.

Photo: Tessa Neustadt

## **What three things do you look for in an employee or a collaborator?**

1. Curiosity
2. Speed of execution
3. A measured, practical nature

## **What's something you'd wish you had thought of?**

Right about now, a way to unite our country seems like a really great invention.

## **What's one thing you couldn't live without?**

My family of course! And my work ethic.

## **What will be most different about your job or industry in five years?**

Augmented reality. It takes all the frustrating guesswork out of buying furniture and decor. Chairish and Decaso are the first brands to debut this technology in the vintage and one-of-a-kind space. It's a game changer.