

Behind the Scenes With: Natasha Kelly, Founder of Studio Wylder

Description



Natasha Kelly photographed by Kristin Perers

What is Studio Wylder? Tell us a little about how it all started.

Studio Wylder is a womenâ??s clothing brand built on strong ethical and sustainable foundations. We create small-batch collections of thoughtfully curated, effortless pieces designed to blend beautifully into your existing wardrobe. I started Studio Wylder at my kitchen table in 2020, after suddenly finding myself in a position where I could no longer support myself and my four children. It was a moment of real uncertaintyâ??but also a turning point. With a background in fashion design and technology, and a creatively rich early education that taught me how to sew, make, and problem-solve, I was able to build something from almost nothing. What began as a necessity has grown into a business Iâ??m deeply proud ofâ??rooted in craft, resilience, and purpose.



Sonia Ichti for Studio Wylder Photographed by Tor Harrison

How does it feel to be doing what you love?

Amazing! Exhausting! Exciting! Fun! Scary! Itâ??s also really fulfilling and rewarding when all the hard work pays off.

What are the hardest aspects of owning your own business?

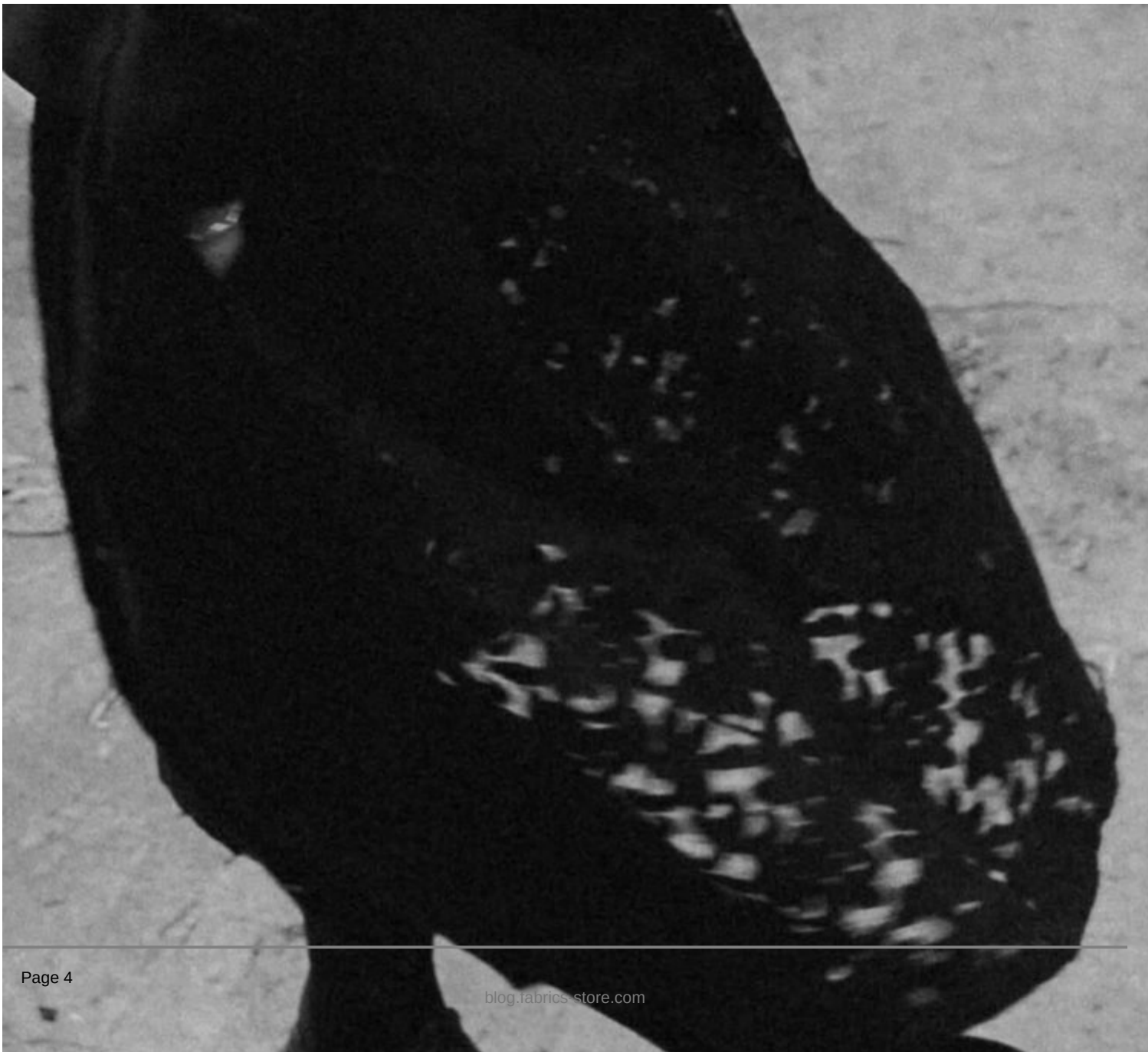
Holding your nerve through the risks required to grow is one of the hardest partsâ??each step forward often feels like a giant, though carefully considered, leap of faith. Speculating to accumulate isnâ??t What do you enjoy the most? for the faint-hearted.



Sonia Ichti for Studio Wylder Photographed by Tor Harrison

What do you enjoy the most?

There are several parts of what I do that I love, but choosing fabrics is definitely one of my favourites. Thereâ??s something deeply satisfying about curating a palette of textures and tones that come together to form a cohesive, beautiful collection. I also find so much joy in seeing the pieces come to life during a photo shootâ??that moment when the vision becomes reality is always magical. But perhaps the most rewarding of all is spotting someone on the street wearing Studio Wylder. It never fails to make my heart sing.



Sonia Ichti for Studio Wylder Photographed by Tor Harrison

What is your proudest moment?

Opening the store was definitely a proud momentâ??it marked the culmination of so much hard work, dedication, and belief in the vision. But beyond that, watching the business grow month after month has been incredibly fulfilling. Equally rewarding has been building a small team of exceptionally talented and dedicated individuals who share the same passion and commitment to what we do. Seeing them thrive and contribute to the growth of the business is something Iâ??m incredibly proud of. An unforgettable â??pinch meâ?• moment? Seeing Lily Collins (aka Emily in Paris) in one of our pieces.

You are a mother of four! How do you stay present as a parent whilst running your business?

Itâ??s definitely not easy, thatâ??s for sure. Starting this business in my 50s has allowed me to involve my childrenâ??Tehya, Tallulah, Amelie, and Gabrielâ??every step of the way. They often travel with me for work, help out in the shop, run business errands, and even model for me from time to time, so itâ??s truly become a family affair. They have been surrounded by sewing machines and bolts of fabric for a few years now, and have seen the hard work (blood sweat and tears) thatâ??s gone into building the business. I think that experience has inspired them, as theyâ??re all very entrepreneurial now. There are certainly sacrifices made by everyone when growing a business (no clean laundry, less than great cooking, a lack of routine and no food in the fridge!), but I hope theyâ??ve gained far more than theyâ??ve given up. Itâ??s been a journey of growth for all of us!



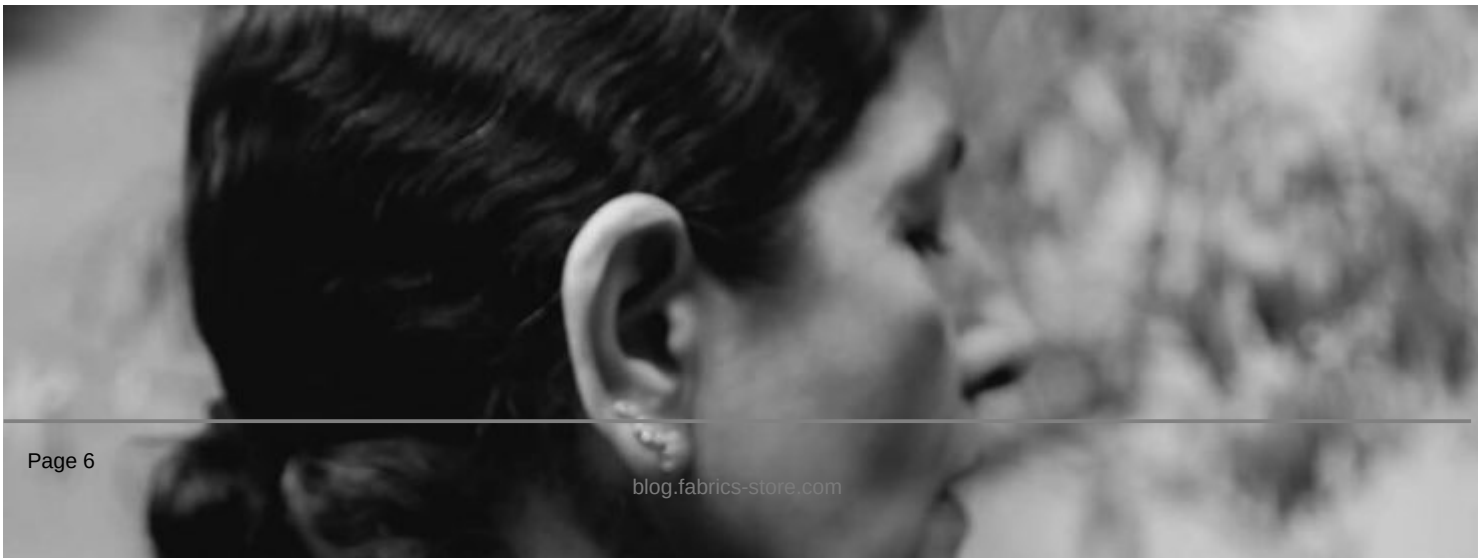
Sonia Ichti for Studio Wylder Photographed by Tor Harrison

Do you have a mentor who guides you?

I donâ??t currently have a mentor, but during my corporate career, I was fortunate to have oneâ?? Sadie. Her unwavering belief in me and her guidance played a pivotal role in shaping the path that brought me to where I am today. Iâ??ll always be deeply grateful for the confidence she placed in me back then. Itâ??s something I strive to pay forward whenever I have the opportunity.

Sustainability, honouring nature is at the centre of your work and life, tell us about this.

I was incredibly fortunate to be raised by a mother who deeply understood the importance of respecting the natural world and working in harmony with it, not against it. I still remember her impassioned talks about the destruction of the ozone layerâ??this was over 40 years agoâ??while I pleaded for the same aerosol deodorants my friends used, instead of the roll-on natural version in our house â?? and lets not even discuss the natural toothpaste! Until I was six, we lived on the Yorkshire Moors in a self-sufficient community that grew all its own food and raised livestock organically. It had its own bakery, grocery shop, pottery, glassmaking, weaving workshops, and more. Most of our clothes were homemade. I canâ??t say I appreciated that at the timeâ??but in hindsight, it almost certainly planted the seeds for what I do today. In todayâ??s world, building a brand without a foundation of sustainable practices and ethical production just doesnâ??t make sense. For me, itâ??s the only way forward.



Sonia Ichti for Studio Wylder Photographed by Tor Harrison

**Location is essential for a brick and mortar store. Why did you choose to open on
Columbia Road?**

I was very intentional about choosing the location. Having held senior roles in retail and retail operations over the last 35 years, including Directing the opening of 80 European stores for one brand and running retail stores for another, this experience has been invaluable in the growth of this business. I also ran a series of test pop-ups to make sure it was the right fit for our first permanent store. I was looking for a high street that felt like a pleasant, engaging shopping destinationâ?? somewhere with a strong local community that would genuinely connect with our brandâ??s ethos.

At the same time, I needed an area that attracted high-spending tourist traffic to help support the business through the traditionally quieter retail months. Iâ??ve had a personal connection to this neighbourhood for yearsâ??I lived here in my early twenties, and later returned when my children went to school on Columbia Road. That sense of belonging really matters to me, and being part of the local community is central to how we operate. Our team is made up entirely of local residents, and many of the makers and producers we work with are based just around the corner from the shop.



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Tell us about your process, from idea to product.

I tend to work backwards from fabric to garment, which is a bit different from traditional fashion design. Since much of our fabric sourcing comes from dead-stock materials, the fabric itself often inspires the garment. In many cases, I find that the textures, colors, and patterns of the fabric dictate the design. We also have a core range of best-selling designs that we revisit with each new collection, and I often select fabrics specifically with these in mind. That said, if I come across a fabric I absolutely love, it can spark a completely new design. I strive to work with just one size whenever possible, as this shapes the foundation of the garment. Itâ??s a discipline thatâ??s essential when working with dead-stock fabrics, which by nature are in limited supply. It forces me to be more creative with how I approach design and production. Additionally, many of our sheepskin pieces are one-of-a-kind because we primarily use skins that have been rejected by luxury fashion houses. These skins are often discarded due to slight inconsistencies, but we see them as an opportunity to create something truly unique.



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Who is your customer and how do they find you?

We have a very diverse customer base, though the majority are women. What they tend to have in common is a conscious approach to consumption. Our customers are people whoâ??ve come to realise that every purchasing decision is, in effect, a political actâ??with real socio-economic impact on both communities and the planet. Theyâ??re thoughtful, informed, and values-driven. Many of them are shifting away from fast fashion and disposable consumer culture. They prefer to invest in fewer, better thingsâ??pieces with integrity, quality, and story. They take care of what they own, often seeing it as an extension of their personal ethics as much as their style. Our products resonate because theyâ??re made to last, designed to be loved, and produced responsibly. Our physical store plays a big role too; it creates a space for genuine connection and conversation. Online, weâ??re steadily growing through thoughtful content, storytelling, and social mediaâ??not through pushy marketing, but by simply being transparent and consistent in our values.



Sonia Ichti for Studio Wylder Photographed by Tor Harrison

What are your plans for this year? Are you intuitive with where you are heading, or are you a rigid planner?

Iâ??m an intuitive person by nature. I have a strong sense of where the business is headed next, but I give ideas the space to breathe before acting on them. Iâ??ve learned to sit with concepts, reflect, and observe how they evolveâ??because when something is right, the clarity comes, and from there a plan forms quite naturally. After more than 12 years as an entrepreneur, Iâ??ve come to trust my instincts, but Iâ??ve also learned the value of patience. I used to move faster, but with experience Iâ??ve become more consideredâ??and yes, more risk-averse. I now prefer a slower, more sustainable pace that allows me to grow the business in a way that feels aligned with both my values and the needs of our community. This year, Iâ??m focused on deepening what weâ??ve already builtâ??strengthening our relationships with our makers, expanding our product storytelling, and refining the in-store experience. Growth, for me, isnâ??t always about scaling up. Sometimes itâ??s about going deeper, not wider. That saidâ?¦ soon we will be looking at opening a second store!



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Natasha Kelly photographed by Kristin Perers

What does success mean to you?

For me, success is about alignmentâ??building a business that reflects my values and offers a platform to raise awareness about the issues I believe matter most, from fundamental human rightsâ??which feel increasingly under threatâ??to sustainability and ethical production. Itâ??s about using what Iâ??ve created to contribute to something larger than myself. But success is also personal. Itâ??s the freedom to travel with my children, to explore the world together, meet inspiring people, and experience different cultures. Those shared moments and memories are a huge part of what makes this journey meaningful. And honestly, being able to pay my rent without stress, to support my family doing something I loveâ??thatâ??s success, too. Itâ??s not about chasing status or scale; itâ??s about building a life that feels rich in purpose, creativity, and connection.

CATEGORY

1. COMMUNITY
2. FASHION DESIGN
3. INTERVIEWS
4. SUSTAINABILITY

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