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By Rachael Thompson |
Home Tours

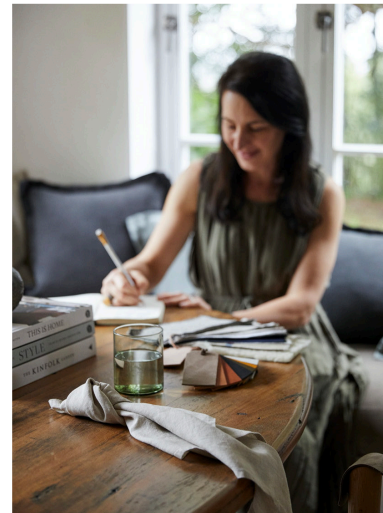
A Peaceful Studio Awash With Neutrals by Stylist Natalie Walton

This peaceful Byron Bay
hideaway is an exercise
in slow design.

Welcome to *The Makers*. Each week, we're celebrating innovators, artisans, and crafters of all types, taking you on a private tour of their creative spaces. For this instalment, we tour interior designer and author, [Natalie Walton's](#) wabi-sabi studio in northern NSW.

There's no better way to discover a designer's style than to explore the spaces which they have created for themselves. And for her peaceful guest house and studio, leading interior stylist [Natalie Walton](#) embraced a timeless aesthetic that utilises more sustainable and natural low-toxic materials. She took cues from her book *Still: The Slow Home* which explores the impact that house design has on the environment.

Natalie started her career as a journalist and worked for five years as the deputy editor of interior design magazine *Real Living*. Volunteering to style a photoshoot for the magazine plunged her into that area of the design world and led her to become a leading stylist for magazines and brands. She now focuses her attention on teaching what she's learnt from her experiences via her books, masterclasses, and podcast. "What we choose to have in our homes has a huge impact on how we feel and function every day," she shares with *Bed Threads Journal*. Natalie also works with a select group of clients on a range of interior projects.



Formerly a storage shed, Still Studio was transformed into a guest space, as well as a place for Natalie's growing team to work. It exudes wabi-sabi style with its exposed timber beams, ceramics, and use of linen. It's understated yet thoughtfully conceived with a dialled-down colour palette that sticks to natural tones like [Sage](#), [Oatmeal](#), and [Mineral](#).

As the studio is quite a small space, she didn't want to overwhelm it with too many decorative accents. "Instead, I chose to source functional elements, such as lighting, that could provide visual interest through their sculptural forms and texture," she explains. Each space features a statement light including a large Japanese-style linen pendant that hangs above the dining table.

Natalie designed all of the cabinetry within as well as several of the furniture pieces, including the dining nook table, bookshelf, and wardrobe.

We spoke to Natalie about her career as a designer, her styling process, and her upcoming projects.

[Shop Natalie Walton's Edit](#)



[Mineral Cushion Covers](#), [Charcoal Cushion Covers](#), and [Oatmeal Cushion Covers](#)

Hi Natalie! This series is called *The Makers*. What is it that you make?

I help simplify the process of creating beautiful authentic homes with a holistic approach to interior design and styling. I also curate and design products for my homewares brand [Imprint House](#). And I share the lessons I've learnt over the past 15 years through my books [This is Home: The Art of Simple Living](#), [Still: The Slow Home](#) and [Style: The Art of Creating a Beautiful Home](#), as well as on my podcast [Imprint](#), and in my online [courses](#).

How does the act of "making" relate to your personality and who you are?

I've come to learn that home is a safe space where we can test out ideas on who we are and how we want to live our lives. It's a place where we can dream, play, and engage in meaningful connections. It's a place where we can set the tempo, create meaningful connections, and be our true selves.

What we choose to have in our homes has a huge impact on how we feel and function every day. I remember when I was a teenager turning all of the labels on the tins in the pantry so they were front facing. Order was important because it felt good. It gave me a great sense of satisfaction to make my environment beautiful and harmonious. My bedroom was always a sanctuary – it still is. What we choose to have around us matters.



Tell us about your career journey to date. Did you always know you wanted to pursue this line of work?

It is only now that the threads of my journey make sense. For a long time, I couldn't see a clear path, but now I understand that visual storytelling is at the heart of all that I create. I started out as a journalist and was the deputy editor of *Real Living* magazine for five years. During that time there was a whisper within that was pushing me towards styling. Eventually, I took a deep breath and asked the editor if I could style a photo shoot. Perhaps more terrifying, she said, "Yes!" And so began my journey as a leading stylist for magazines and brands, which has had so many pinch-me moments, including styling Kelly Wearstler's home for *Harper's Bazaar*, and being approached by an Italian agent to represent me and feature my work in publications across the globe. Now I focus on teaching what I've learnt through my books and masterclasses. I also work with a select group of clients on a range of interior projects.

Talk us through your creative process. Where do you start?

Getting clarity on your vision is essential for any project – from decluttering to designing and styling your spaces. Otherwise, you're more likely to get distracted on which direction to take and decision fatigue will set in and slow down the whole process, which often ends up costing you time and money, as well as sapping your confidence. Also, get clear on your intention for the project. It's easy to grab a bunch of inspirational images from the internet or social media, but if you're not clear on your goals and if you don't filter what you want through the prism of what's most important to you, you'll end up with a home that doesn't feel right, and probably won't meet your functional needs, too.



What's been the single most crucial tool or strategy you've used to further your career?

I never ever thought I'd say this, but it really has made all the difference: having the courage to believe that my ideas matter. I say this as someone who is usually the quietest person in the room, doesn't like attention, and could happily live hidden away in her home. But on the flip side of that is that I'm really passionate about how important our homes are to our wellbeing, and I want to share this message as much as possible. So I've had to take (another) deep breath, be brave, and step forward to share the lessons I've learnt in the hope that I can help others understand the importance of home in our lives.

What's been the best thing that's happened to you since you started your career?

Every year for as long as I could remember, I would make a wish when I blew out the candles on my birthday cake to have a book published. When that long-held dream finally came true four years ago, it was a sweet moment. While there have been many special moments along the way, some of them that my younger self wouldn't believe, that was extra special for so many reasons.

Do you have a single piece of advice you'd give to your younger self or someone looking to pursue a similar line of work?

Be brave – the more that you can tap into what makes you unique and your point of difference, the more you'll create spaces that are engaging, stand out, and create an impact.

Now, the home stuff. How long have you lived in your home?

We've lived here for four years. It's almost the longest we've ever lived in one place!

How did you initially know this was the space for you?

I've moved homes a lot over the years, and I'm always looking for spaces that have the right light (a northerly aspect). Also, we wanted a couple of acres, to be close to a village (Bangalow) and not too far from school (20 minutes). This place ticked all the boxes.



[Oatmeal Hand Towel](#)

Did you do any renovations or make any big changes after moving in?

We made some simple changes to the main house, but the Still Studio was a complete renovation. It used to be a storage shed, where the previous owner kept his lawn mower and tools, etc. We wanted to transform it into a guest space, as well as a place to work for our small but growing team. It's only a small studio – about 45 square metres – but everything has been carefully planned and designed to maximise space without compromising on character.

What was the thought process behind the way you've styled the interior?

The design process began after working on my book *Still: The Slow Home*, which was a huge education in terms of learning how the impact of creating homes affects the environment, i.e. all of the resources that are used. I wanted to create a space that embodied the philosophy of that book to show it was possible. It embodies timeless design, sustainable materials, and natural low-toxic materials. The guiding principle was to feel 'still' when you step in, and it really is my favourite place to be.



What are your favourite pieces in the home?

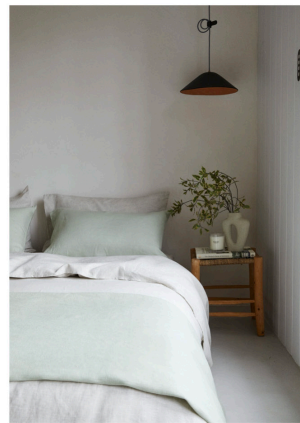
I designed all of the cabinetry in the studio as well as several of the furniture pieces, including the table, bookshelf, and wardrobe. The bed is one of my favourite pieces because it has a simple elegance. Also, I love the mattress which is organic latex – it's completely natural and toxin-free. Most mattresses are made with fire retardants and formaldehyde, which is used as an adhesive. These are toxins that you don't want to be breathing in all night. Learning about all of the chemicals that are present in our home was such an eye-opening education. And now I take steps to ensure that our home is as chemical-free as possible.

Do you have any special décor pieces you're looking to add?

The studio is quite a small space so I didn't want to overwhelm it with too many decorative accents. Instead, I chose to source functional elements, such as lighting, that could provide visual interest through their sculptural forms and texture. The large linen pendant above the dining table from Imprint House is one of the defining pieces of the studio.

Which is your favourite room in the house?

The dining table is where I spend most of my time and I really love it here. I decided to forgo a large living area and make the dining area as comfortable as possible. That's why I introduced the curved bench seat with lots of cushions. Again, I opted for natural latex and linen covers. I introduced windows into the space to make it a light-filled area, and frame the view of the nearby mango tree. The afternoon light here is magical. You never want to leave!



What are your top tips for a well-styled bedroom, and home generally?

As a busy working mum of four children, my bedroom is a sanctuary. And as I write in my book *This is Home*, the bedroom is the first place that you experience when you wake in the morning. It sets the tone for your day. You want to ensure that it's free of clutter and allows you to think clearly. The bedroom is also a restorative place. Ensure it allows you to relax, unwind and reconnect with what's most important in your life. For me, that's keeping the space simple: linen bedding, a simple bedside table, and a good book, always.



Recreate this look with our [Oatmeal Bedding Bundle](#).

Do you have any projects coming up you want to talk about?

Always! That's what I love about what I do – there's always something exciting in the works. Currently, I'm designing a concept store for [Imprint House](#) in Byron Bay. I'm also looking forward to opening enrolments for [The Styling Masterclass](#) soon! And I'm planning a book tour for [Style: The Art of Creating a Beautiful Home](#) as well as planning the launch of my fourth book [Home by the Sea: The Surf Shacks & Hinterland Hideaways of Byron Bay](#) – if you'd like a free local insider's guide to Byron Bay be sure to check it out!

For more from Natalie follow her Instagram [@nataliewalton](#)

Photography by [Lynden Foss](#). Styling by [Jackie Brown](#)