

SPOTLIGHT STORIES

BLOG POST

ALICE HSIAO - FOUNDER OF VEIN STUDIO





"We want to create awareness about the importance of a circular economy in the jewelry industry and make beautiful, unique pieces that people cherish and pass down through generations."

Welcome to our spotlight series, where we delve into the remarkable journeys of our alumni from the Startup Visa programme. As part of our commitment to supporting entrepreneurs from all backgrounds, we provide guidance to help non-EU entrepreneurs grow their startups in the Netherlands.

In this episode, we are excited to feature Alice Hsiao, the talented entrepreneur behind Vein Studio. Read this interview with Laulinda Massunda (Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship) to discover Alice's inspiring story as she navigates the world of entrepreneurship with Vein Studio.

Laulinda Massunda: Please, tell me more about the story behind Vein Studio?

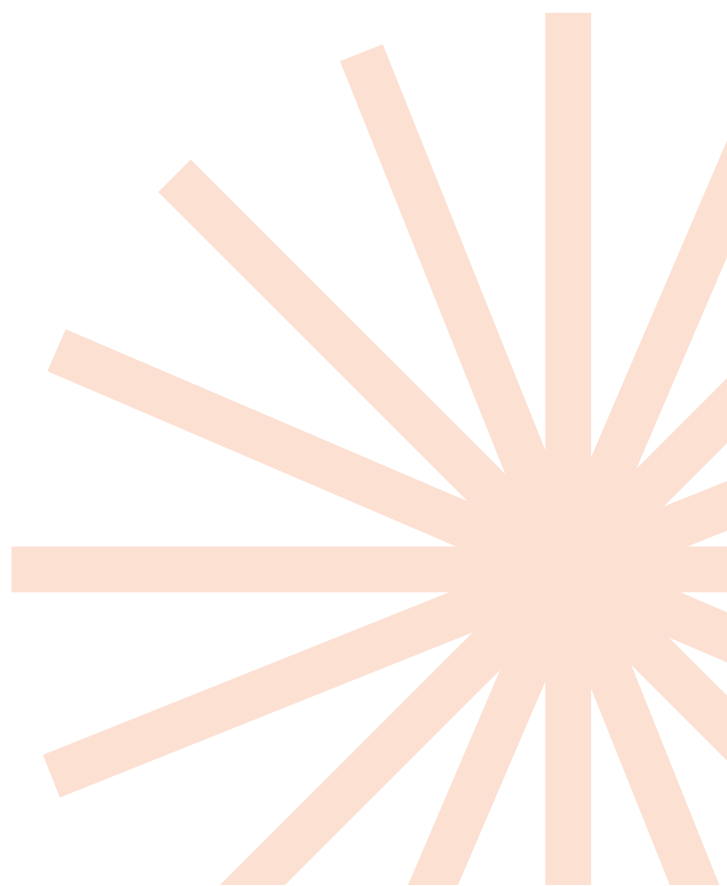
Alice Hsiao: Vein Studio is a multidisciplinary venture. We have Visual Design, Graphic Design, Jewellery Making, and Landscape Architecture, all coming together with the same values. Since 2019, we've been focusing on sustainability, lifestyle, and transforming discarded objects into treasures: Jewellery!

LM: Does that mean that you only focus on Jewellery?

AH: Nowadays, we want to have a different product line, and jewellery is one of them. We also do exhibitions and have community collaborations in Taiwan. So, it's not just jewellery; we are involved in various creative projects.

LM: How did it all start? Did it all start in Taiwan?

AH: Yes, the idea began in Taiwan back in 2018. I was on a small island in the south of Taiwan, and while cleaning the beach, I found small, colourful sparkling items that looked like sea glass.



That moment sparked the idea of using such materials for jewellery someday.

LM: That's truly inspiring! How did you eventually come across the Startup Visa programme?

AH: During the pandemic, I faced difficulties finding a job due to visa restrictions in the Netherlands. Then our lawyer recommended the Startup Visa programme at the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship as an alternative, and that's how I got here.

LM: It's incredible how opportunities arise even during challenging times. Now, you mentioned your focus on sustainability. Can you explain how Vein Studio's jewellery aligns with the principles of a circular economy?

AH: Of course! Our jewellery uses reusable materials like silver and glass, promoting the concept of a circular economy. We avoid materials that are hard to recycle, like gold, to ensure our pieces can be used and cherished for a longer time.

LM: But have you faced any challenges while educating customers about the value of sustainable jewellery?

AH: Yes, indeed. Some customers question why sustainable jewellery might be more expensive. To address this, we first focus on the beauty and uniqueness of our pieces in our marketing, and then we educate them about the sustainable aspects. This helps them appreciate the value even more.

LM: When you started your business, Corona was still there, right? What kind of challenges did you face?

AH: In the beginning, we used to participate in open markets and conduct workshops with people. We worked with river and sea glass and used Kintsugi technology, which allowed participants to make jewellery themselves. However, during the pandemic, we couldn't continue these activities. Instead, we developed a kit so people could make jewellery at home by themselves.

LM: You filled a kit with materials and sent it to your participants, allowing them to create jewellery at home?

AH: Yes, exactly. They could create jewellery on their own.



LM: That sounds fun! What is your relationship with jewellery?

AH: I have around 7 years of work experience in the jewellery industry, and I wear jewellery every day, even when I am working from home.

LM: Jewellery can make a difference in how we feel and look, indeed. It adds a sparkle to our day and allows us to change our style effortlessly.

AH: Yes, exactly. Jewellery makes me confident, and I love seeing others wear it too.

LM: Let's talk about Vein Studio and its focus on sustainability. Can you explain what circular economy means in the context of the jewellery industry?

AH: In the traditional jewellery industry, there are issues with mining for materials like diamonds and precious gems, which can be harmful to the environment. Also, some jewellery is made from materials like gold used in fast fashion, which are difficult to recycle and often end up discarded after a short period of use. At Vein Studio, we use materials like silver and glass, which are fully recyclable. By promoting circularity, we aim to create jewellery that can last and be passed down from one generation to another. Additionally, we explore other recyclable materials like chandelier pieces to create unique and sustainable jewellery.

LM: Many people may not be aware of the impact the jewellery industry has on the environment. How can consumers become more conscious when buying jewellery?

AH: When purchasing jewellery, consumers can ask about the materials used in the pieces. They can visit artists and inquire about the materials, explore vintage stores, or even look into their own family's jewellery boxes for heirloom pieces.

LM: That's a great approach to encourage conscious choices. Can you tell us what kinds of jewellery you create at Vein Studio?

AH: At Vein Studio, we create a variety of jewellery, including earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and rings. I would love to explore making jewellery that wraps around the belly, arms, or head, as well as pieces for men and non-binary individuals.

LM: Cool! You also mentioned that each piece at Vein Studio is unique and handmade. How long does it usually take to create a piece of jewellery, like a pair of earrings made from glass?

AH: The time taken to create each piece varies, as some designs may take around a month or even more, while others can be completed within 20 minutes. It depends on the complexity of the design and the materials used.

LM: Do you ship your jewellery only within the Netherlands, or do you also offer worldwide shipping?

AH: We offer worldwide shipping, so customers from other countries can purchase our jewellery too.

LM: Alright, nice! Who is generally interested in your jewellery?

AH: Initially, our jewellery was popular among Taiwanese and Italian customers.



We noticed that people in Taiwan appreciated delicate and minimalistic designs, while in the Netherlands, larger pieces, especially necklaces, were more popular. This has inspired us to explore new product lines to cater to the preferences of European customers. Our target group is more female-oriented, but we hope to diversify our offerings to include products that appeal to men and non-binary individuals as well.

LM: I would love to get my hands on some of your earrings (both laugh). Could you tell us more about your vision for Vein Studio and your mission to promote sustainability?

AH: Our vision is to become a leading sustainable jewellery brand in Europe. We want to create awareness about the importance of a circular economy in the jewellery industry and make beautiful, unique pieces that people cherish and pass down through generations. We aim to be a role model for other businesses and inspire them to adopt sustainable practices. We also plan to open a small Vein Studio store in Rotterdam. And we're excited about developing a product line for men and non-binary individuals.

LM: Those sound like exciting plans! As a female entrepreneur, what kind of leader would you like to be?

AH: I want to be a leader who cares deeply about the environment and nature, someone genuine and true to the concept of sustainability. My aim is to inspire others to adopt sustainable practices and create a positive impact.

"Don't be afraid to pursue your dreams and work towards creating a positive change through your business."

LM: Your vision is truly inspiring! Finally, what advice would you like to give to aspiring entrepreneurs?

AH: My advice would be that anyone can be an entrepreneur if they are passionate about it. Don't be afraid to pursue your dreams and work towards creating a positive change through your business. Trust yourself and communicate openly with your team; teamwork is essential.

LM: Thank you so much, Alice, for sharing your inspiring journey and valuable insights with us today. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours with Vein Studio!

AH: Thank you for having me. It was a pleasure sharing my story with you all. I hope it encourages others to pursue their dreams and contribute to a more sustainable world.



Photo: Laulinda Massunda (Junior Project Coordinator Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship), Alice Hsiao, Founder of Vein Studio