One of Paris’ most influential designers of the 20th century, Sonia Rykiel died Thursday at the age of 86. With her signature shock of frizzy red hair and magnetic personality, Rykiel thrived on her own terms. Reflecting on her career a few years ago, she told WWD: “Since I didn’t know anything, I did everything I wanted. I didn’t listen to anyone. I was so violent, so authoritarian, only listening to what I wanted and myself. People loved me or hated me. Those who loved me, loved me a lot. The others, I didn’t bother with them very much.” Here, the designer photographed by WWD in Paris in 1978.

For more, see pages 4, 5 and 6.
Richard Found on Design And Retail Projects

WWD sat down with the director to talk about his latest projects.

Launched in 2007, Richard Found's London-based architectural and design practice is headquartered in SoHo. Found's portfolio ranges from retail, commercial and residential and includes Alice Temperley, Anya Hindmarch, Deloitte Kain, Givenchy and Tiffany & Co. and notable clients include Harvey Nichols and Selfridges. His latest projects include building Saks Fifth Avenue in Blackfield Place, which launches on Sept. 9 and the redesign of photographer Mario Testino's London offices.

WWD: Can you tell us about the Saks Fifth Avenue project? Richard Found: As you know it was Saks downtown next to the 8th Avenue Mall and we've been working on it for probably around two years now. What was quite exciting was that obviously it was a very different concept to Saks Fifth Avenue as found on 8th Avenue. It's almost like a concept store baring in mind the location, it's a language. Throughout the floor we used a Terrazzo floor. You know all about the artist Barry McGee, who has painted this long mural which is 200 feet long. It was a very juicy process while working with Saks. We're working on another project with them in New Jersey so it's an ongoing relationship. They gave us total freedom to design the store. As you know, a lot of clients will say "This is what we've done before," but they trust us totally and opened it to a new approach.

WWD: What was your most memorable project and what have you worked on? Richard Found: If I could pick one it may well be Anya Hindmarch, as we've worked on quite a few stores for her in the past on Bond Street and Sloane Street. It was a very pleasurable experience and it was great to work with her — she's a great person and the outcome was extraordinary. It was a very good experience. Her attention to detail is very similar to mine. We're both almost OCD when it comes to certain details, so we're very well minded in that sense.

WWD: What was your most challenging project? Richard Found: I suppose the most challenging project was a house we designed in the Cotswolds about 10 miles outside of Oxford and unfortunately there was a very steep hill to get down to the site, so while we could get the house down the hill there was no way to get out. So the planners were quite strict on us when it comes to the location of the new building alongside the cottage that dates back to 1730. The planners insisted that the extension, which was like 5,000 square feet, had to be behind the cottage, which meant we had to excavate a tremendous amount of soil in order to start the build. So that was probably one of our most challenging projects on site. It wasn't too bad in the end — it was about 14 months on site.

WWD: What are your thoughts on the retail landscape now and how does that affect the design process for stores? Richard Found: The experience within a department store has to be far more exciting than it ever has been before because of online trade. So to speak, I think there has to be more of an interactive element within the stores. We're also coming up with the idea of having an app, with your mobile phone telling you what you like to travel at one possibility. But that said, some of my clients I do consider travel with work, usually I travel to New York probably every third week. My wife is in the art world so we go to a lot of galleries and museums together. Manolo just being involved in that world is a huge help! I think if I'm just looking at it at the moment there's something totally different, there's a kind of synergy there.