

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Carolina Herrera may block Laura Kim's Oscar de la Renta collection debut

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*Carolina Herrera, resort 2016*

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By STAFF REPORTS

Carolina Herrera is suing fellow U.S. fashion label Oscar de la Renta over design talent.

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The lawsuit states that designer Laura Kim, who left Carolina Herrera to return to Oscar de la Renta as co-creative director, is in breach of her contract's non-compete clause. Talent retention has become a looming issue at many fashion houses as many designers have played musical chairs over the course of the last year.

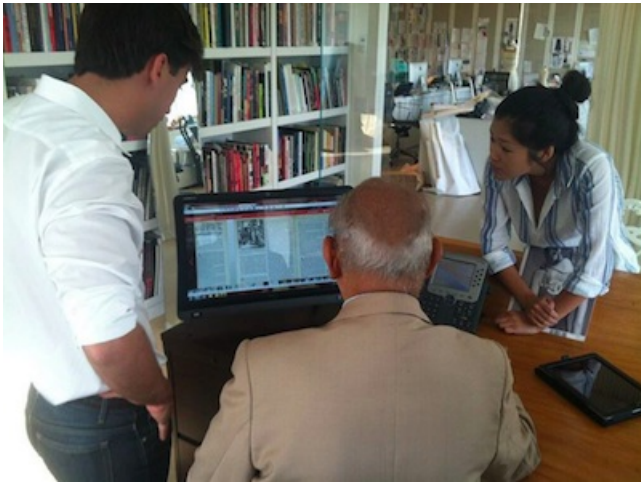
### Designer dilemma

After Mr. de la Renta passed away, Peter Copping was named his successor. After less than two years with the label, Mr. Copping stepped down citing personal reasons.

In September it was announced that Ms. Kim had been named creative director at Oscar de la Renta together with Fernando Garcia. Ms. Kim and Mr. Garcia were former designer team members at Oscar de la Renta before establishing their own cult label, Monse ([see story](#)).

Aside from designing collections for Monse, Ms. Kim and Mr. Garcia worked for Carolina Herrera as consultants.

According to the lawsuit filed by Carolina Herrera, Ms. Kim breached a six-month non-compete clause in her contract when she returned to Oscar de la Renta.



*Fernando Garcia and Laura Kim with Oscar de la Renta*

While this sounds straightforward enough, the lawsuit explains that Ms. Kim was a vice president at Carolina Herrera when Francois Kress, CEO of the label, offered her the creative director position. Ms. Kim declined the role because she would not have complete creative control as Ms. Herrera is very much involved in designing for the brand.

After the Carolina Herrera offer was declined Ms. Kim was offered the Oscar de la Renta position, which she accepted.

Carolina Herrera is taking the alleged non-compete violation seriously as it stated in the lawsuit that Ms. Kim is "a unique employee" who is "very adept at creating designs that are what commercial clients are interested in stocking in their stores." The brand also shared that Ms. Kim's 2016 resort collection was Carolina Herrera's "most commercially successful ever in its 35-year history."

If the lawsuit goes forward, Ms. Kim will be unable to begin at Oscar de la Renta until April. Ms. Kim and Mr. Garcia are expected to debut their first collection, fall/winter 2017, for the brand in February.

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