

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Chlo to name new creative director after Clare Waight Keller opts out of contract renewal

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*Chlo spring/summer 2017*

By STAFF REPORTS

Fashion's game of musical chairs continues into 2017 with sources stating that French apparel and accessories label Chlo has appointed Natacha Ramsay-Levi as its new creative director.

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Ms. Ramsay-Levi is currently the second-in-command at Louis Vuitton, under the brand's creative director Nicolas Ghesquire. Rumors began swirling that Chlo was in the market for a new creative director in December after news broke that Ms. Ramsay-Levi was in talks with the brand.

Switchero

Despite talks with Ms. Ramsay-Levi, news that Clare Waight Keller had selected not to renew her contract was not shared publicly. Ms. Waight Keller's contract expires in March.

Ms. Waight Keller has been creative director of Chlo since May 2011, replacing Hannah MacGibbon.

It is likely that Ms. Waight Keller is looking to spend more time at home with her three young children. Also, since June, when her family moved back to London, she has been commuting back and forth to Paris.

If Ms. Ramsay-Levi has been selected as Ms. Waight Keller's replacement at the French house, her design aesthetic is much different than the current feel of the brand.

Ms. Ramsay-Levi's designs are more modern and often involve leather. Chlo is known for its bohemian-inspired and romantic looks.



*Chlo spring/summer 2017*

Although the differing aesthetics of the two designers should be considered, if the artistic transition is well-planned it should not cause much disruption. Already, the success of Hedi Slimane while at Yves Saint Laurent and Demna Gvasalia's work at Balenciaga have been cited as favorable examples.

Owned by Richemont, Chlo is the luxury conglomerate's most profitable fashion label. Sales estimates for the brand reach around 400 million euros, or \$417 million at current exchange rates.

During her time as Louis Vuitton's design director, Ms. Ramsay-Levi acted as the liaison between Mr. Ghesquire and the brand's lower designers and assistants.

Ms. Ramsay-Levi has had a working relationship with Mr. Ghesquire for more than 10 years, and worked with the designer at Balenciaga before moving to Louis Vuitton. Given their longstanding interactions, Ms. Ramsay-Levi holds a deep understanding of Mr. Ghesquire's creative visions.



*Chlo's handbag offerings have been profitable for the brand*

Over at Louis Vuitton, it has been suggested by industry sources that Mr. Ghesquire does not intend to stay for the remainder of his contract. Mr. Ghesquire's contract will be up for renewal in 2018.

But, there has also been talk that LVMH is considering the removal of Mr. Ghesquire as the creative director of Louis Vuitton, a position he has held since November 2013 when Marc Jacobs stepped down from the brand.

If Mr. Ghesquire does leave, Jonathan Anderson, now the designer of LVMH-owned Spanish leather goods house Loewe, is said to be under consideration for the Louis Vuitton position.

The luxury fashion industry has been plagued with creative upheaval across brands that have appeared to be creatively stable, but the transmission of talent screams otherwise ([see story](#)).

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