

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Carolina Herrera, Oscar de la Renta settle case before court date

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*Carolina Herrera's resort 2017 collection*

By STAFF REPORTS

New York-based fashion houses Carolina Herrera and Oscar de la Renta have ended their dispute over one employee's non-compete agreement discreetly.

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The terms, which were not disclosed, have allowed Laura Kim, a former employee of Carolina Herrera, to resume work on Oscar de la Renta's fall/winter 2017 collection, her first as co-creative director of the label. With this settlement wrapped up before their court date of Jan. 10, both companies have avoided arguing their cases in public.

### Reaching an agreement

According to a statement given to [The New York Times](#) by both Oscar de la Renta and Carolina Herrera, the terms of the agreement "are confidential, except that Laura Kim has returned to Oscar de la Renta, LLC, subject to the conditions agreed upon by the parties."

The lawsuit filed in December by Carolina Herrera alleged that Oscar de la Renta's hire of Ms. Kim violated its non-compete agreement in the designer's contract, which Carolina Herrera said was due to lift in April.

According to the lawsuit, 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 ([see story](#)).

After deciding to turn down the Carolina Herrera position, Ms. Kim was offered and accepted the co-creative director role at Oscar de la Renta alongside her partner Fernando Garcia. This is a homecoming for both designers, who combined have an approximate 15-year history with the house, having worked under Mr. de la Renta before leaving to start their own label.



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

While the suit was settled out of court, documents filed shed light on both the competitive tension between the brands, with Oscar de la Renta pointing a finger at the plaintiff for poaching employees from its staff.

Carolina Herrera also admitted that its resort 2016 collection that Ms. Kim worked on was its most commercially successful line during its 35 years in business. The company's plans to transition the 77-year-old Ms. Herrera out of her design role also surfaced in filings.

With this legal battle behind it, Oscar de la Renta's February show debuting Ms. Kim and Mr. Garcia can go forward as planned.

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