

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Donna Karan brands face boycotts after designer's controversial statements

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DKNY is one of the brands facing backlash over Harvey Weinstein allegations. Image credit: DKNY

By STAFF REPORTS

While Donna Karan stepped down as creative director of her eponymous labels, the designer's recent controversial statements may be damaging the brand she founded.

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Commenting on sexual harassment and assault claims made against her friend Harvey Weinstein, Ms. Karan was seen to be defending the movie mogul and blaming the alleged victims. While she later retracted her statement, her words have led for a call to boycott the Donna Karan and DKNY labels.

Boycott backlash

In the past week, reports in The New York Times and the New Yorker have published numerous allegations from women against Mr. Weinstein, the founder of film studio Miramax, with stories of sexual harassment and nonconsensual sex.

Since the investigative articles surfaced, more women have come forward with their experiences, including actresses Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie. Mr. Weinstein has denied the allegations.

On the red carpet at Cinmoi's CinFashion Film Awards on Oct. 9, when asked about the allegations against Mr. Weinstein Ms. Karan told the Daily Mail that women should consider whether they are "asking for it" with the way they dress or present themselves. She also called Mr. Weinstein and his wife, Marchesa designer Georgina Chapman, "wonderful people."

Actress Rose McGowan, who was reportedly paid a settlement in relation to sexual assault by Mr. Weinstein, took to Twitter following Ms. Karan's statement to call her "scum in a fancy dress."



Donna Karan. Image credit: Donna Karan

The following day, Ms. Karan issued a statement, saying, "Last night, I was honored at the Cinemai Fashion Film Awards in Hollywood and while answering a question on the red carpet I made a statement that unfortunately is not representative of how I feel or what I believe. I have spent my life championing women. My life has been dedicated to dressing and addressing the needs of women, empowering them and promoting equal rights.

"My statements were taken out of context and do not represent how I feel about the current situation concerning Harvey Weinstein. I believe that sexual harassment is not acceptable and this is an issue that must be addressed once and for all regardless of the individual."

Despite her attempts to backtrack, consumers continue to call for a boycott of her labels, now owned by G-III Apparel Group. [Women's Wear Daily](#) reported that G-III's stock fell about 4 percent on Oct. 10.

Ms. Chapman, who is the co-designer of Marchesa, is also seeing backlash over her connection to the film exec. The label, whose gowns are worn frequently by stars on the red carpet, is facing its own calls for a boycott.



Georgina Chapman, on right, co-designs Marchesa with Keren Craig. Image courtesy of St. Regis

The brand postponed its press preview of its spring/summer 2018 collection.

Helzberg Diamonds, which was set to debut a line of licensed Marchesa-branded engagement rings, also said that it would be cancelling the launch, according to [The Hollywood Reporter](#).

Ms. Chapman announced earlier this week that she was leaving her husband. The Marchesa label is believed to have benefited over the years from Mr. Weinstein's connections and influence in Hollywood, although he denies having

a hand in its success.

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