

COMMERCE

British designer Clare Waight Keller joins BFC board

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British designer Clare Waight Keller's tenure begins March 11, while Kate Varah, executive director and co-CEO of the National Theatre, was onboarded Jan. 21. Image credit: BFC

By ZACH JAMES FOR LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The British Fashion Council (BFC) is introducing new names to its executive leadership roster.

British designer Clare Waight Keller and Kate Varah, executive director and co-CEO of the National Theatre, are joining the organization. Ms. Varah began work on Jan. 21, while Ms. Keller is set to start on March 11.

"These appointments mark an important step in strengthening the BFC's leadership for the future," said David Pemsel, chairman of the [British Fashion Council](#), in a statement.

"Clare Waight Keller brings global creative authority and deep industry experience as a designer and brand builder, while Kate Varah offers proven expertise in cultural transformation, fundraising and public engagement," Mr. Pemsel said. "Together, they broaden the Board's perspective and reinforce our commitment to championing fashion as a vital part of the U.K.'s creative and cultural landscape.

"I'm delighted to welcome them both."

Moving forward

The two professionals combined hold more than 50 years of experience.

Ms. Keller, the first-ever creative director of Japanese fashion brand Uniqlo, has worked for many luxury apparel labels in the past, including Ralph Lauren, Gucci, Chlo and Givenchy, with the talent serving as the artistic lead of the latter two maisons.

Meanwhile, Ms. Varah has been involved in the country's performing arts scene for two decades, gradually moving up the chain of command of multiple institutions before taking the helm of the prestigious National Theatre in 2022.



The appointments are aimed at bolstering the council's "leadership at the intersection of creativity, culture and public impact." Image credit: BFC

"I'm proud that the BFC is welcoming Clare and Kate to the Board at a defining moment for the BFC and for British fashion," said Laura Weir, CEO of the British Fashion Council, in a statement.

"These appointments reflect our ambition to drive meaningful strategic connection between British fashion and the wider creative economy and to ensure that the lived experience of designers informs every part of our work," Ms. Weir said. "Their expertise will be invaluable as we deliver a renewed mission for the BFC and its community."

Overseas, the Council of Fashion Designers of America is also making moves to better support the apparel industry.

It recently launched two grant programs aimed at improving clothing manufacturing in New York. The projects are backed by the Ralph Lauren Corporation, the parent company of the U.S. fashion house ([see story](#)).

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