

Virginie Viard to succeed Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel

Chanel has named Virginie Viard, Karl Lagerfeld's closest collaborator for more than 30 years, as the company's new creative director, after Lagerfeld [passed away](#) in Paris this week.



Karl Lagerfeld and Virginie Viard walk the runway after the Chanel show as part of the Paris Fashion Week Womenswear Spring/Summer 2019.

The French fashion house said in a statement that Viard has been entrusted by Chanel CEO Alain Wertheimer with the creative work for the collections, "so that the legacy of Gabrielle Chanel and Karl Lagerfeld can live on".

According to [Business of Fashion](#), Viard joined Chanel as an intern in haute-couture embroidery in 1987, four years after Lagerfeld became creative director of the brand. After working together at Chanel, Viard joined Lagerfeld at Chloé in 1992 — where he was also the head designer — and worked there for five years before returning to Chanel and working her way up to become director of the company's fashion design studio.

AFP reports that Lagerfeld invited Viard on to the stage with him at the end of two Chanel shows last year to publicly acknowledge how much he relied on the woman he called "my right and left hand".



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Lauren Hartzenberg 19 Feb 2019

In the statement published to Chanel's website, Lagerfeld is described as an extraordinary creative individual who "reinvented the brand's codes created by Gabrielle Chanel: the Chanel jacket and suit, the little black dress, the precious tweeds, the two-tone shoes, the quilted handbags, the pearls and costume jewellery".

"A prolific creative mind with endless imagination, Karl Lagerfeld explored many artistic horizons, including photography and short films. The House of Chanel benefited from his talent for all the branding campaigns related to fashion since 1987. Finally, one cannot refer to Karl Lagerfeld without mentioning his innate sense of repartee and self-mockery," Chanel stated.

Alain Wertheimer, CEO of Chanel, commented: "Thanks to his creative genius, generosity and exceptional intuition, Karl Lagerfeld was ahead of his time, which widely contributed to the House of Chanel's success throughout the world. Today, I not only have lost a friend, but we have all lost an extraordinary creative mind to whom I gave carte blanche in the early 1980s."

to reinvent the brand.”

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