

For Immediate Release:

Banned on the Hill!

Artist stands up to Harper Government intimidation and brings her “banned” art to the streets of Ottawa

OTTAWA, November 2, 2011 – Canadian artist Franke James will open her crowd-funded, outdoor art show, *Banned on the Hill* in downtown Ottawa at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, November 2, 2011. Franke will give a walking tour showing the “banned art” which the Harper Government did not want exhibited in Europe.

Franke’s visual essays – about rising emissions, loafing leaders and her personal responses to our environmental challenges – have earned her a spot on the Harper Government’s blacklist. Earlier this year, Franke’s 20-city European art tour was cancelled after interference by the Harper Government.

In media interviews, the Harper Government has denied any interference saying, “funding was never withdrawn nor was it guaranteed.” However, internal government documents, released this week through the Access To Information Act, show that funding was approved and then withdrawn under orders from the Deputy Director of Climate Change at Foreign Affairs.

The tour’s Croatian producer, Nektarina Non Profit, said they “felt patronized and even intimidated”. Canadian Embassy officials warned Nektarina not to continue with the Franke James exhibitions, saying “Don’t you know this lady speaks against the Canadian government?”

Canadian officials pointed to Franke’s 2008 visual essay, *Dear Prime Minister* as an example of her unpatriotic nature. When Franke heard this, she was shocked. “I’m getting into trouble for writing a letter to my Prime Minister? Asking him to make polluters pay?? This doesn’t make any sense at all!”

When her European tour was finally called off, Franke was resolute, “I will not be cancelled by the Harper Government.” Franke decided to fight back using her creativity and social-media savvy. Franke spread the word on Twitter, and then launched Canada’s first crowd-funded media campaign at LoudSauce.com to bring her art to the Prime Minister’s doorstep.

Franke James’ outdoor art show, *Banned on the Hill*, will run on the streets of Ottawa for the month of November. (Unless it gets banned ... again!)

To view the interim release of the internal government documents that Franke James obtained through the Access to Information Act, please visit:

http://www.frankejames.com/ottawa/dfait_oct31.pdf

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For more information: <http://www.frankejames.com>. Twitter: <http://twitter.com/frankejames>

***Franke James** is an award-winning artist whose visual essays on environmental and social issues have been reviewed and showcased around the world. She is the author of the illustrated book, *Bothered by My Green Conscience*. Franke has presented her art workshops in Canada and the United States, inspiring students and educators, corporate leaders and NGOs, and even government ministries, to do “the hardest thing first” to save our planet. Franke has received awards and support from Telefilm Canada, the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Ontario Media Development Corporation, the Banff Centre, and others. She is a member of the Writers Union of Canada, PEN Canada and CARFAC. Franke has a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Victoria. She launched her artistic career in 1987 by conceiving and curating *Painting the Town*, the award-winning, national billboard art show sponsored by *Manufacturers Life*.*

Background Information

Timeline and Backgrounder: Franke James Blacklisted by the Harper Government

<http://www.frankejames.com/ottawa/FrankeJamesBlacklistingBackgrounder.pdf>

Franke's LoudSauce campaign to crowd-fund outdoor media in Ottawa

<http://loudsauce.com/campaigns/40>

Support for Franke James

*“Your Banned on the Hill campaign is very powerful. The fact that you’re getting people online to drive something to happen in a real space is profoundly different and potentially disruptive. It will be even more meaningful, than perhaps the show would have been in Europe, for the culture of Canada, for the conversation around what’s important, and for how we combat climate change. I’m super inspired. Hoping that we can really inspire others to rock in the same way, and change the world.” ~ **Colin Mutchler, Co-Founder, LoudSauce***

*“Franke James is among the tiny handful of really powerful and profound artists who have taken on climate change – the most important topic on the planet, but one so big and all-encompassing that it often defies artistic interpretation. Her work is incredibly important for many of us around the world.” ~ **Bill McKibben, founder, 350.org***

*“Franke James’ commitment to art, free expression and political commentary put her in the cross-hairs of the Harper Government. Come and see what the government didn’t want the world to see.” ~ **Elizabeth May, MP Saanich, Leader of the Green Party of Canada***