

Backgrounder: Franke James Blacklisted by the Harper Government

Questions and answers about the blacklisting

How did the Harper Government "blacklist" you?

Canadian officials, under direction from Ottawa, contacted the producers for my 2011-2012 European Art Tour and advised them to cancel my show.

What effect did the blacklisting have?

My 2011-2012 European Art Tour, organized by Nektarina Nonprofit, and scheduled to travel to 20 European cities, was cancelled.

Where is the evidence that this cancellation was caused by Canadian Government interference?

Nektarina Nonprofit, the producer of the tour, contacted officials at the Canadian Embassy in Zagreb, Croatia. Initially Canadian officials were supportive. However, on May 2, 2011, the Canadian embassy changed its position and decided not to support the show. Documents released through an Access to Information request confirm that the Climate Change office at Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa made the decision to withdraw Canadian support on this date. But they did more than simply withdraw support. They advised Nektarina to cancel the show completely, saying *"Don't you know this lady speaks against the Canadian government?"* Over the next two and half months the Canadian Government continued its behind-the-scenes interference by contacting the show's sponsors and venues. On July 22, 2011, Nektarina released an official statement, *"In the past few months we have encountered many difficulties in organizing the exhibitions, usually connected to interventions of the Canadian Government... at times we felt patronized and even intimidated"*.

What does the Harper Government say about this?

In media interviews, the Harper Government has denied any involvement or interference.

Event Timeline:

- March 21, 2011: Franke James signs Letter of Understanding with Nektarina for the 2011 European Art Tour [Details...](#)
- March 24, 2011: Nektarina contacts the Canadian Embassy in Zagreb, Croatia about the upcoming Franke James European Art Tour. [Details...](#)
- April 29, 2011: Planning, Advocacy and Innovation (GLB) at Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs sends email with approval to Canadian Embassy in Croatia. [Details...](#)
- May 2, 2011: Canada's Climate Office cancels Canadian support. ([Details](#)) Canadian officials advise Nektarina to cancel the Franke James show. (Details: [See Sandra Antonovic's statement in Toronto Star interview.](#))
- May 19, 2011: Nektarina and Franke James seek support to fight against blacklisting. [Details...](#)
- June 1, 2011: Croatian Environmental Agency and Ministry of Culture support show. [Details...](#)
- July 8, 2011: Ontario Trade Commissioner sends email naming the tour's corporate sponsor, and calling Franke an "environmental crusader" to seven European embassies. [Details...](#)
- July 11, 2011: The tour's corporate sponsor withdraws support. [Details...](#)

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- July 22, 2011: Nektarina publishes official statement stating that they have been "intimidated" by the Canadian Government. [Details...](#)
- August 2, 2011: Franke James and Nektarina decide to cancel the European tour. [Details...](#)
- August 3, 2011: Franke James launches campaign for crowd-funded billboard art in Ottawa. [Details...](#)
- October 31, 2011: In response to an Access to Information request the government issues an interim release of internal government documents (165 pages) related to the Franke James European Art Tour. The files show that, in contradiction to its public statements, the government did give and then withdraw support for the show. [Details...](#)
- November 2, 2011: Franke James Art Show, "Banned on the Hill", opens in Ottawa [Details...](#)

How are you responding to the Harper blacklisting?

When my European Tour was cancelled, I decided to fight back and get the message out. My crowd-funded, outdoor art show is opening in Ottawa on November 2, 2011.

Why is this blacklisting issue important for Canadians?

My blacklisting is part of a larger pattern – an organized effort by the Harper Government to silence environmental artists and scientists. The Harper government has recently silenced Environment Canada, Air Quality Research scientist [David Tarasick](#) and Department of Fisheries and Oceans scientist [Kristina Miller](#). They also cancelled funding for the [Canadian Environmental Network](#). Not only does this censorship go against the democratic right of free expression, it also puts our future well-being and the economy at risk, because our citizens are not well informed.

Who is supporting your fight against the blacklisting?

- Sierra Club Canada
- International Association of Art Critics (AICA)
- The Council of Canadians
- The Writer's Union of Canada
- LoudSauce Crowd-funders (82 supporters)
- Friends of the Earth Canada
- Bill McKibben, Founder, 350.org
- Richard Littlemore, co-author of *Climate Cover-up: The Crusade to Deny Global Warming*
- Jess Leber, Environment Editor, Change.org
- Tzeporah Berman, Co-director Climate and Energy, Greenpeace International
- Toby A. A. Heaps, Editor-in-Chief, Corporate Knights Magazine

What's happening in Ottawa on November 1st and 2nd?

- November 1, 2011: **Sierra Club Canada:** Franke James will give a *Green Conscience Art Workshop*. Hosted by Sierra Club Canada at 1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1502, in Ottawa.
- November 1, 2011: **7:00 pm, University of Ottawa:** Franke James will present her new visual essay, *Banned on the Hill*. Hosted by *Gaia, Geography and Environmental Studies Student Association* at the *University of Ottawa*.
- November 2, 2011: **12:00 noon, Bank Street at Wellington:** Official opening of the crowd-funded, outdoor art exhibition, *Franke James: Banned on the Hill*. Franke will give a

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walking tour showing the "banned art" which the Harper Government did not want exhibited.

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