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HARPER PORTRAIT CONTEST LAUNCHED IN RESPONSE TO ARTS CUTS

Jury includes former Heritage Minister Shelia Copps

Saskatoon, SK, November 13 — Framing Harper: A National Portrait Contest is seeking portraits of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper that best embody his commitment, or lack thereof, to the arts. The winner will receive a minimum cash prize of \$1000, with other prizes for runners-up.

Organized by Art Threat, a web magazine about politics and the arts, the contest was launched in the wake of Harper's decision to cancel plans for the National Portrait Gallery, as well as recent Conservative government cuts to many arts and culture programs.

"Although Harper will appreciate that our portrait gallery won't use a single tax dollar, he probably won't enjoy the artwork, as artists are furious over his funding cuts to culture in Canada," said Art Threat editor Rob Maguire. "Stephen Harper may hate the arts, but will art love Stephen Harper?"

The contest will be judged by a high profile jury including former Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps and West Coast visual artist George Littlechild. "Culture deserves public debate, and this project will provide such a debate." said Copps. "This is why I have agreed to participate on this jury. The light needs to shine on Canadian culture."

Selected portraits will be featured on Art Threat's website (artthreat.net) and in gallery shows in Ottawa, Montreal, and possibly other Canadian cities.

There is no entry fee to participate, and portraits may be made using any type of media. The submission deadline is January 31, 2009, with winners being announced in February.

For more information visit <http://artthreat.net/framingharper> or contact Rob Maguire at 306.251.2969 or editor@artthreat.net.

Art Threat is a web magazine about politics and the arts. Launched in 2007, Art Threat covers political art of all genres, discusses policy as it pertains to culture, and showcases artists whose work inspires social change.

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