July 19, 2015

Erika Oki

Fine Arts student, Freelance Artist

Re: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress

I am writing to you in regards to the Great Copyright Movement being set up. I am a student at Washington State University and I do not have a job. My only source of income is currently through commission work, where people pay me for my art. For many artists, their main source of income is what art they make, which is a struggle enough.

Even though the use of digital artwork without consent is currently going on, this movement that was announced will only make that worse. It will take any hard work any freelance artist has ever made into nothing but a commoner's personal profit, for which they did nothing but download the image and print it for sale. Right now, artists are able to copyright their work the moment they post it. However, without that copyright, lots of art will get stolen and it will harm the artists' profits and make their hard work feel like nothing anymore. I watermark my pieces to ensure that they don't get stolen or so I can identify the piece to report who has stolen it.

It is extremely concerning to me what this new copyright act would do to artists. Art is our primary source for most artists and takes a lot of our time to make things that we can sell. Sculptors, photographers, digital artists, painters, all sorts of artists work very hard to earn what they get. Those who are commissioned need to set up their own prices and find the right crowds to entice. Being able to download any and all works posted online by someone who maybe spent at least sixteen hours on a piece and then print it in the highest quality they can and sell it is stripping the artist of their work and they likely will not get any percentage of the profits.

Any challenges I face in being able to monetize my work involves my following and what I make. Fan made artwork for a series, a show, or the media is not likely legal to sell due to a copyright infringement and lawsuit against me for selling pieces that involve copyrighted material. Any original or personal material does not get as much attention because it is not as well-known as a series is and is not likely to get that much traffic.

As stated in the previous paragraph, copyright laws prevent me from selling any fan made product unless I hold a license and permissions from the company in question, which I don't. This form of enforcement limits me on what pieces I can sell. However if this new movement comes into play, any of my work can be sold by others without my consent and that is not okay in the slightest. I work hard for what I'm paid, even if it is very little. I don't like the idea of people coming in and taking my work for their own profit. It is essentially taking hours upon hours of work, days even, and throwing it in a trash bin if others can simply download, print, and sell it without the consent of the illustrator.

Thank you for your time,

-Erika Oki