July 22, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to register my opposition to the proposed 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitation Act.

I am a professional fine artist, illustrator, and professor, holding degrees of a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art from **Oklahoma State University and Master of Fine Arts in Painting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. These degrees were earned under the G. I. Bill, after my term of service in the United States Army in 1972-75, during the Vietnam Era. I am a product of five generations of career military service, and am unabashedly proud to be a graduate of these fine institutions and a veteran of our nation's armed forces.**

I am currently Professor of Art at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, where I have taught since 1985; I previously taught at the University of Maine 1982-85 and University of Illinois 1980-82. I hold signature memberships in the National Watercolor Society and Watercolor USA Honor Society. My record of exhibitions include hundreds of competitive and invitational exhibitions, and four major one-person shows in Minneapolis since 1999.

A few career highlights include being one of 20 painters worldwide invited to exhibit in the critically acclaimed International Biennial Watercolor Invitational State of the Art 2001; one of 30 painters exhibited at the National Art Center in Tokyo, Japan in 2010 representing the state of watercolor in the United States; and image representation in the Digital Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution. My works are held in private collections in at least 30 U.S. states and14 other countries.

For me, copyright law is not an abstract legal issue but one of the bases upon which my business is built; often my copyrights are the products I license. However, provisions of the proposed 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Act would make it easier for individuals and organizations and businesses to basically steal images of my work and profit from them without recompense to me. It is vital to my business as a fine artist that I remain able to determine voluntarily how and by whom my work is used. Too, it is important to recognize that my work does not lose its value once it is published — instead, each of my creations becomes part of my business inventory. To be sure, in this digital era, inventory is more valuable to us artists than ever before.

Redefining orphan works, enabling mass digitization and providing for private registries would all create for many of us fine artists far more numerous difficulties and far less control than we, as citizens of the United States should ever be forced to bear.

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