July 16, 2015

To whom it may concern:

For the past twenty-five years, I have been a working artist as well as an art educator. My paintings and those of my hundreds of students have been awarded prizes in local, regional, and international competitions on a consistent basis. I have taught beginner, intermediate and advanced watercolor and silk painting courses both in the United States and Europe. In these courses, I have always stressed the concept that the work created must be the artist's concept from start to finish. We don't take other artists' work and copy it, we produce our own unique work. It is our property from start to finish.

The copyright laws have afforded us this protection to date. The fact that big business, in the form of internet companies in particular, now seeks to rob artists of our ownership rights to our own creative property by virtue of the proposed changes to the existing copyright laws to benefit themselves is absolutely unconscionable. There is no rationale other than greed that is driving these proposed changes. In the end, the artists will suffer through loss of control of their own creative properties, and the income derived from these works. Putting our own creative work up for grabs for anyone to take away from us, the rightful owners, should not even be a remote possibility.

Copyright law is meant to protect the creator's ownership of the artistic concept and end product, the art itself. This proposed legislation in so immensely inappropriate that I hope you can suppress it without further consideration. Ask yourself if you would be willing to have someone reach into your pocket and remove your paycheck for the time and effort your spent doing your job. I believe that the majority of working, voting citizens would not have a problem saying, "No, this is not a reasonable or acceptable act on anyone's part!"

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Collard, DWS, BWS, PVW
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