July 22, 2015

U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

Re: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to ask that you maintain a supportive environment for artists by leaving current copyright law intact.

I studied studio art and illustration at university and went on to earn certification as a natural science illustrator through the University of Washington. I am a newcomer to the business of illustration but have spent my lifetime developing skills as an artist. It is a pursuit that requires determination, time and considerable financial outlay. At present I work primarily as a fine artist specializing in detailed plant and animal subjects. I generate income through sales of both original work and prints.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my concerns regarding copyright law.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

Those with more experienced in the industry will be able to answer this question far more thoroughly than I am. From my relatively inexperienced point of view the lack of respect I see for the art of illustration is a significant challenge. It's time consuming work based on years of study, but potential clients seem to think it's easy, quick work that deserves little pay. They also don't seem to understand that every piece of artwork *and* its accompanying reproduction rights are a valuable part of the artist's business inventory.

2. What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

Every single time I place a piece of artwork or a photograph in the public sphere I think about copyright and copyright infringement and I worry. If anyone uses my artwork without my permission, whether digitally or printed, they are stealing from my business. The digital tools that allow me to watermark artwork and share it with the world through the internet also allow thieves to find my artwork and remove those watermarks. I was told by a lawyer who specializes in copyright and trademark cases that all illustrators will need to deal with infringement issues at some point in their careers and I believe him. It is difficult to create illustrations but extremely easy to steal them. I can do reverse image searches online looking for instances where my artwork is being used without my permission, but that is time-consuming and only covers those websites crawled by the search engine. I have no tools for finding my artwork used without my permission outside the internet.

3. What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

The cost of registration is the primary challenge that has prevented me from registering my work. I'm thankful that under present laws I'm granted some protection from copyright infringement without registering because the cost is too high. The time required to register is also a deterrent.

4. What are the most significant challenges or frustrations for those who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations?

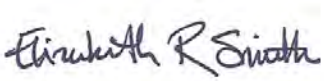
I'm not aware of any major issues with making legal use of others' artwork. If one wishes to use another's art they can contact that artist to seek permission. If they are unable to locate the artist they are welcome to choose other artwork instead.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

I see a lack of understanding about copyright in the general public. Those of us who think about it on a daily basis understand that it's illegal to download and use a photograph or image without permission from the creator, but a shocking number of people in other businesses think any image they find through Google is free to use. We need to educate the general public about fair use.

In a time when copyright infringement is a huge problem for artists I would like to see fewer hurdles for artists trying to protect their legal rights and more challenges put before those who seek to gain from others' work.

Thank you,



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