July 20, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
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)

Dear Ms. Pallante and the Copyright Office Staff:

My name is Alexandra Rena Feehery. As an artist and business owner, I believe I can shed light on the struggle of those in the visual arts career path, and how these changes to U.S. Copyright law would negatively affect us.

I am writing to address the problems with the proposed new US Copyright Act.

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

   My images are my brand and my livelihood. They are the face of my company and my products, and I rely on these copyrights which I own for income. This is backed up by Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees each creator the exclusive right to his or her own work. If the existing copyright laws are replaced by this new system, it would greatly endanger my ability to make a living, as well as the abilities of other visual artists to make their livings. It would enable major corporations and other infringers to easier access and use our images without any compensation coming our way. This would eliminate the secondary income of royalties, as well as potential future income from clients that would see our names and contact us directly. Many visual artists are already experiencing the problem of stolen images and copyright infringement, and that is only an indication that copyright law needs to be **strengthened** in favor of the visual artists and authors, not weakened. We need to be protected by our government.

2. *What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?*
   The high cost of legal fees is a huge challenge. Currently, in the event of copyright infringement, most visual artists are only able to afford suing an infringer if they find a contingency fee lawyer. The current law makes it possible to find a contingency fee lawyer. If under this new system, lawyers would be even less likely to take on such a case because simply having created the image would no longer be enough of an argument if the image is unregistered. This would give large companies even more reason to take advantage of the visual artists—they know that we would be powerless.

3. *What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?*
   The most significant registration challenges would be the financial burden of unpaid work hours spent registering images, as well as the financial burden of paying per registered image. Visual artists create hundreds of images, sometimes hundreds per year. In some cases, images created per year can number in the thousands. Based on these numbers, registering these images would take up weeks if not years of unpaid work hours and large sums of money that the individual small business owner cannot afford. As most visual artists work for themselves and cannot afford employees, they would have wasted valuable time and money that could have been spent on paid work, marketing, or any other aspect of business.
   In the event that not all of the images are registered, it would leave these unregistered images – that were created with lots of time, skill and expertise--free to the abuses of infringers.

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?*
   As with most artists, I sometimes use photographs or other works of art as inspiration or reference for small bits of pieces I create. However, I rely on my own skills, creativity, and imagination to create my pieces. I do not incorporate the images of others into my work.
   If an individual or company seeks to use an image of mine, they may contact me directly, and we can move forward with a discussion and transaction of image usage. It is not difficult for individuals or companies to **legally** use images under the current Copyright laws.

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

   The proposed new U.S. Copyright act would only serve to hurt visual artists, and will bring about the destruction of our entire workforce. It will financially cripple the entire industry of visual artists, thus crippling the country's economy.

Thank you for reading my letter, and I ask that you consider the words of visual artists, and recommend their protection, instead of their destruction, when proposing the new copyright act.

Best regards,

Alexandra Rena Feehery