July 22, 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:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed changes to Copyright Protection.

I am a Content Creator, Artist, Video Producer, and Designer. I have enjoyed the protection of copyright under the current copyright laws without the need to formally register any work of visual or written work of art. I have serious concerns about proposed changes as outined in Docket No. 2015-01. I am submitting my letter to address five questions presented by the Copyright Office in the Notice of Inquiry in Federal Register / Vol. 80, No. 79 / Friday, April 24, 2015 / Notices, pages 23054-23056.

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

For me, personally, the monetary cost (of any value) of registration of every piece of art I wish to protect, would be outlandishly excessive. We enjoy cost-free protection under the current law unless the work is infringed upon. A copyright privilege is a claim on the work we create. Requiring registration of that privilege would be time-prohibitive and monetarily excessive.

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

Having someone steal your work and claim it as their own, and having to go through a legal proceeding to establish ownership is a significant enforcement challenge. Monetarily excessive for most of us who just want to legally own our creative work, a right granted to us in the Constitution (Article 1, Section 8). The monetary and time consuming aspects of required registration far outweigh the simple fact that we have blanket protection under today's law.

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

Registration challenges: (1) needing to document and register every piece of work; what is not registered appears to no longer be protected (2) time constraints to register, (3) unknown monetary fees to register. Even a few cents per piece seems too excessive if you are a prolific artist. (4) no protection on unregistered work; would one need to register works-in-progress, sketchbooks, personal journals and diaries, letters? Art that is already Online or will be submitted Online? It is mind-boggling to think if these are not formally registered, they are open to being claimed by other entities. Current Copyright law protects that, though maybe not perfectly.

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?

Determining what is and is not fair use and or legal under copyright law. Copyright law is legalese to the common citizen. Even the proposed changes this notice refers to is really not clear to someone trying to understand the implications of the change. Required registration opens the door to mass registration of works not created by those who wish to make legal use of works they did not create. There has to be a better way that protects all of us.

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

As a citizen, I am concerned about the effect this will have, not only on creators of artworks today, but I am concerned about the perhaps long-range effects of such changes. Will it stagnate creativity? How will it affect and protect students in art school, students in any school who might have their creation claimed by someone else because the could not register it? How will it affect the millions of people who upload photographs, illustrations and artwork to the Internet? What about past artwork? Changes to this law have far-reaching implications beyond the work of the professional artists. That is of utmost concern to me, as an American citizen. I don't think these changes should be implemented as written.

Sincerely,

Meridel Abrams