July 20, 2015

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

Re: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office
Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for certain visual works

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity for artists to voice their opinion in hoping to improve copyright laws for the better. To create a policy to protect visual author's rights and support a sustainable environment for the professional arts.

I am a freelance artist that relies heavily on my copyright material and the ability to license out my works. I fear that many of the changes now being proposed by orphan work lobbyists would not only make things more difficult but in the long run destroy the art field.

1. One of the problems with licensing is that every company you work for wants the sole rights to your work. After completing a project, they continue to make money off that one project while you are left being paid once and searching for more work. Existing copyright laws leaves this to be common practice.

Another problem with licensing is international use of works without artist's permission. Existing copyright laws make it not financially viable for artists like myself to pursue legal compensation from infringers.

2. The major challenges to copyright enforcement is the high cost of legal fees in an infringement lawsuit. The ideas proposed by the orphan work lobbyist would take pursuing infringers from financially difficult to financially impossible.

3. What it comes down to is simple. Cost and time. Most, if not all artists, do not get the benefits of other jobs, i.e. health benefits, paid vacations, insurance, sick time; all of this is paid out of our own pockets. This does not even include the cost of living. Companies may have the ability to do this without any problem but for those who work for themselves it is huge financial burden.

Time is another factor. Deadlines and the time to complete work leaves no time to have to register every single piece of work accomplished. Employers would simply find someone else to do the work while spending time to complete a project and registering it through the proper channels. This does not include last minute edits by the employer.

4. Simply there shouldn't be any frustrations finding the original owners or the people to contact for legal use. With the tools that the Internet provides i.e. Google's reverse image search, there should be no excuse in finding the original owner. Those who say they cannot find the original owners are simply not putting in the time and effort to find them. After contacting the owner it would be simple negotiations.

5. Personally these are the issues I have experienced as a freelance illustrator. I rely on the sale of my license / copyright work to make a living. My work is a valuable resource that produces income for me. Replacing our existing copyright laws with recent proposed changes would endanger my ability to make a living. It would also ultimately damage or destroy the art field. I suggest that you speak to professionals in each art field instead of those who claim to represent them. The outcome would be beneficial to everyone.

Cordially,

Steven Lisefski
SL/ljc