July 21, 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)

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Christa Diehl. I am not a well known or famous artists. To be honest, I'm merely another person in this country just trying to make a living off of something they love doing. Thankfully, I have been able to make my living through resale of my illustrations and designs.

I am writing to address the issues and problems that visual artists, like myself, are facing in the new digital environment.

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

I am a freelance illustrator and designer. I need to keep a steady stream of income to maintain a living for my family. In the words of my 9 year old daughter, "We'd be broke and lose our house!" My collections of work are an invaluable resource that produces consistent income for my family and I. The resale of past images is included in these collections. By replacing the existing copyright laws with a system that would benefit internet companies that are already attempting to steal these images and make profit themselves, would severely cripple my ability to make a living. These companies are already digitizing my works without permission or any sort of financial compensation. I do not understand how the government could favor "businesses" like these instead of people like me, that actually are contributing to create new work and ideas.

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

The thought of someone, like myself, that is essentially a small business owner, attempting to compete with giant corporations that can lift artwork for free from artists and then turn around and sell the work in the same market as competition is mind boggling. I do not have the means to challenge these companies and their lawyers.
It is already difficult enough with companies altering my signature, watermarks and other defining characteristics off of my work to sell illegally. If this practice in a sense becomes legal it would be nearly impossible for me to win a claim in any court.

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

The financial burden alone for artists is daunting. These registries may start with “reasonable” fees and then will balloon out of control as they grow. They’ll gain more and more competitive advantages over freelance artists like myself. This WILL happen if this legislation passes. Artists are already financially strapped enough and to add these registration charges, we will be paying unnecessary fees simply to maintain our images while someone else profits. Many artists have so many works that it would be financial suicide to actually register them all. Not to mention the inability to find decade old metadata to register some of them and then fall into the noncompliance loophole. Then a lifetime of images that we have created, with great expense and effort would essentially be free profit for someone that simply knows how to edit an image.

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?

In my work I illustrate and design. Photographs and other visual artwork are used as reference, nothing is used directly or copied from them.

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

Artists are already losing profits from foreign reproduction companies. If congress passes this kind of system to our Copyright Office we are going to be suffering the same losses but in our own country.

It also seems like a conflict of interest. We want small business owners in this company to thrive and stimulate our economy. There are large artist groups that support this legislation so that they will receive some financial benefit from the creation of copyright registries or notice of use registries. These organizations should not be allowed to use this legislation to profit from the hard work of other artists.

6. What are the most significant challenges artists would face if these new copyright proposals become law?

The time lost attempting to catalogue, register and simply find all these works would cost artists more than just the time. That time IS money. They could be creating new work, sending out newsletters or promoting past work instead of grasping for dear life to keep the rights to works they've created. More time will be lost attempting to find offenders that have stolen the work, filing paperwork and then finding legal counsel. More money lost

Thank you for reading my letter and my story. I hope that it and many more may influence your decision to stop this legislation.

Respectfully,

Digitally signed by Christa Diehl
DN: cn=Christa Diehl, o=Christa D Designs, ou, email=administrator@christaddesigns.com, c=US
Date: 2015.07.21 15:46:30 -07'00'

Christa Diehl