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Copyright Office Copyright.gov **Via Email**

RE: Notice of Inquiry of Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

Dear Madams and Sirs:

As an avid user of social media to share images and reference material with my colleagues, I am deeply concerned about copyright protection for visual artists.

Many of my colleagues are photographers; illustrators; animators, etc. These free-lance and studio-based visual artists post images online via social media and their own websites. While the constant refrain told to artists is 'The exposure is good for you"..it takes enforcement of copyright protections and collection of license fees to pay bills.

The voracious demand for visual content in the new digital marketplace is a wild west without rules. Where's the Sheriff ?? Art is NOT free! It has great value. Social media sites like Instagram and Facebook are empires built on the "free" images of others. Copyright agreements are being struck to make all this sharing possible. Where is the credit and compensation for the artists involved ??

I have never met an artist who has received a residual check for the "sharing" of their images on-line. Instead, I hear horror stories of unauthorized use of images – the classic tale being illustrations that show up on t-shirts offered for sale on line or even in major retail outlets. Even egregious cases of this are nearly impossible to prosecute.

Sharing images has become an essential online experience… but it's rare that the creators and copyright holders are acknowledged. In fact, there is a lot of incentive to remove ownership from on-line images. There is no streamlined registration system.. and trying to register each individual image an artist produces would only add to the unreasonable burdens placed on the actual copyright holders.

These are just a few examples of the significant challenges artists face trying to protect their copyright for works posted online. Meanwhile, publishers and other big companies are profiting from the online work of artists.

Artists … and those of us who enjoy sharing images online… face significant frustrations trying to properly credit that work.. and see that it is monetized in a way that is respectful of the artists as the copyright holders of their own work.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, *Amy Wagner*