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July 19, 2015

I am a freelance artist based in the greater Los Angeles area. I have many concerns about the possible changes coming regarding my copyright to my images. I will address these concerns as I answer questions below:

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

As it is, as an artist that works for many large companies,(ie Disney) most of my art is sold on a buy out basis, in other words I am paid once, yet some of the art I have done is still being produced and sold many years later. The economy has made it very difficult to earn a decent living. I am a single woman in her 60's who still has family members that depend on me for support. The economy, plus my age has made it virtually impossible to obtain full time work in my field, though I have 35 years experience. I have turned to licensing my images as a source of income. That in itself is not the easiest way to earn, but it is the only way, as companies no longer want to pay for freelance. They know artists are hard pressed so they license the art instead. They don't even pay advances any more. If I cannot at least protect my copyright to my images, I am lost. As it is, I work two additional jobs with my freelance to make ends meet.

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

This is very difficult, as the convenience of online commerce is a double edge sword. It is a great way to get exposure, but you are leaving yourself open to theft. It is impossible to gauge how often it happens, and even if one does, someone in my position can ill afford an attorney, especially as we are most often dealing with perpetrators that are overseas.

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

The cost can be prohibitive, as to make a living, it is crucial to get many, many images out there. It helps that images can be registered in collections.

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?

I can't address that.

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

This is a livelihood for most of us, and we deserve protection under the law for what we create. I studied for many years and worked very hard to build up the skill set that I have. Businesses forget that without the artists and designers, the creators, they have nothing that makes their product stand out.
We are underpaid for the most part, now please protect our rights to our work at the very least!

Please, please takes our rights as artists and designers to heart!
Sincerely,
Fiona Stokes Gilbert