July 23, 2015

To: The US Copyright Office regarding copyright issues for artwork: The Next Great Copyright Act: The Return of Orphan Works

BACKGROUND:I have been a professional artist as both a Textile Print Designer working for a Fortune 500 company and later as a freelance Textile Print Designer for multiple corporations, for more than 25 years, and a Fine Artist, also, juried into multiple exhibits. Education included a BFA from a major university, a Max Beckmann scholarship to a New York art school, Skowhegan, and scholarships to Oxbow, and The Provincetown Workshop. I also won a national painting competition sponsored by Conde Nast and juried by Betty Parsons, a Frank Webb award for Watercolor, and an Arts Festival award for drawing, and First Prize in Photography from The New York Botanical Garden.

PROBLEMS:Numerous problems have come forward. One company to whom I sold designs tried to insist not only that I sell all rights but also that I be responsible for any CHANGES THEY MIGHT MAKE TO MY DESIGN for which they might be sued!!! Surely a case of overreach! In addition, after another large company commissioned my artwork, they then licensed that same design to vendors of other multiple products without my receiving any additional remuneration! For the future I am considering submitting work to a licensing company and understand copyright infringement can be a big issue and I am wondering how to avoid this.

As I am concentrating on painting landscape watercolors in the park, people come by with their phone/cameras and snap photographs of the paintings without even asking permission and then quickly disappear, particularly foreigners! Who knows what commercial purpose the artwork might be used for? This has become a big problem!

It is important to my business as an artist that I remain able to determine voluntarily how and by whom my work can be used. In the digital era, ownership of works by the artist is more valuable than ever before!!!!