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

July 20, 2015

Dear Copyrights Office:

I am writing in response to the Notice of Inquiry on Visual Works.

I am only beginning this career in illustration, and I find the details of copyright law difficult to grasp. But from what I understand, the proposed “reforms” (including the Orphan Works program) in copyright laws will take away a visual artist’s automatic and exclusive rights to her own work.

The internet already makes stealing (or borrowing) images so easy. But as an artist, exposure is vital in self-promotion, which is vital in establishing a career in a very competitive field. So I populate the internet with my images, even though I know that it makes my work fair game for others to take and use for their own purposes. I am well aware that my art is already popping up on numerous websites, and I have almost never been asked for permission to have my work reproduced. At the moment, my images seem to be used only for editorial purposes. However, if there was blatant commercial usage of my works, I would be outraged that I would have no recourse, and worse yet, that the company profiting off my work would have the right to make slight alterations to my images, claim the copyright for themselves.

Registration of all this imagery at for-profit institutions is rather laughable. Artists create so much work, and the registration process as described is cumbersome and time-consuming, it would require hours of busywork, and the idea of having to pay a commercial enterprise to protect what should be an inalienable right to one’s own work is frustrating. Freelance artists, especially those who are at the very beginning of their careers like me, often do not have the funds to spare.

Ultimately, I am writing to ask that you and Congress make policy to protect visual artists and their exclusive rights, to support a sustainable environment for professional authorship, and please do not make it any easier for corporations to reap the benefits of work from individual artists without fairly compensating the creators.

Thank you.

Colleen Kong-Savage
http://kongsavage.com
kongsavage@me.com