July 23, 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)

Dear Ms. Pallante,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry regarding copyright protection for visual artists. I was a staff artist for 10-plus years. Then I became a freelance artist/illustrator, working from home while raising my kids for about 14 years. Due to family challenges and responsibilities, I then took a break from freelancing for several years while continuing to improve my professional art skills through college courses, online courses and artist workshops. I am just about to enter the illustration, licensing and art market.

If a new copyright law is passed as currently proposed, I don't know how I will be able to succeed as an artist. It is horrifying to think that I would no longer automatically hold the copyrights to my own works that I create.

The Constitution has it right when it says that Congress grants exclusive rights to every artist for the work they create. As an artist, exclusive rights to my art are extremely necessary in order for me to be able to earn adequate income from the work I produce. In the current economy, when budgets are reduced repeatedly, it is extremely important that I can sell rights to my art work to multiple clients in order to eventually accumulate fair payment for my ideas, training, experience, and time. If other people can use my art for free, or worse, use my art to compete against me, it will be impossible for me to make a living.

It is immoral to give a business or person the right to monetize my art for their own profit without my knowledge or consent. That would be no different from plagiarizing an author.

Most artists do not have enough money to enforce the protection of their own copyright in court.

It needs to be easy for anyone to simply look up the image they would like to use and ask the artist for permission to use it.

It is challenging enough to create art, meet deadlines, and promote oneself. An artist should not have to register every single piece of art through a time consuming and expensive process. A simple visual record should be enough proof. The artist's copyright should be protected from the day they create the art. Fees for art are low. Fees for registration should be low. Artists are usually self-employed. Artists do not have the financial resources that a corporation would have to register a trademark or patent.

If the new copyright proposals become law, artists will no longer be able to make a living creating art. They will be robbed by the registries and infringers who will profit off their work, while the artist earns nothing after the first sale of licensing rights.

Sincerely,

Christi Patterson