Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101Independence 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 and the Copyright Office Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to give my input into the copyright discussion. I'm a professional artist and have been one for several decades and have worked hard to keep my head above water. I have a valuable real-life perspective on how copyright law actually works in the business world, as opposed to how some legal scholars seem to think it works or how corporate lawyers and lobbyists would like it to work for the benefit of their clients.

The most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations are:

a) Maintaining a revenue stream in order to make a living for my family. The resale of my past images is part of my day to day way of doing business. Any attempt to replace our existing copyright laws with a system that would benefit internet companies would endanger my ability to make a living. Certain companies have already begun digitizing work without permission or financial compensation.

Why would the government favor corporations like this instead of those of us who actually create new work?

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

a) The very proposals the Copyright Office has made to Congress concern me. It is essentially a revised Orphan Works (OW) bill, but would be even worse. Orphan Works bills have been resoundingly opposed by artists since they first appeared a decade ago. A copyright law built on the foundation of orphan works law would allow internet companies to syphon off revenue from artists with the hopes of creating an even better revenue stream for themselves. There can be no bigger challenge for those of us who make our living creating new works than to have to compete with giant corporations that can get artwork free from artists and compete with us for our own markets.

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

a) The proposal to reintroduce registration would become another financial burden for artists. No matter how little registries might charge in the beginning, like banks, they would soon begin to introduce charges and fees that would grow as they gain a greater and greater competitive advantage over freelance artists such as myself. Anyone who says this won't happen is not living

in the real world. In the end, if the government succeeds in passing this legislation, the end result will be that artists like myself will find ourselves paying through the nose to maintain our images in somebody else's for profit registries. As for the images we can't afford to register, or those we can't find the time to register, or those we can't find decades old metadata to register will all fall into noncompliance and a lifetime of images created at great expense and effort will be free to be exploited by others.

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? Fair use of photographs and other graphic artworks for reference but that is about all.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act? The kind of system the Copyright Office has proposed to Congress seems all too familiar to me. Artists have already seen their foreign reprographics royalties diverted away from them for at least 20 years. I fear this is exactly what is going to happen with the proposals the Copyright Office has made to Congress.

To prevent this unjust conflict of interest, it is imperative that no artists group that supports this legislation be allowed to receive any financial benefit from the creation of copyright registries or notice of use registries. These artists organizations have failed artists and should not be allowed to use this legislation to profit even further off the artists they were created to help.

I thank you for reading my letter and I ask you to recommend that visual art be excluded from any orphan works provisions Congress writes into the new copyright act.

Thanks,

Carlene Dingman Atwater