http://copyright.gov/policy/visualworks/comment-form/

July 13, 2015

US Office of Copyright

Dear US Office of Copyright,

With regard to the inquiry into possible changes to current copyright law, I am writing to register my perspective on how it would affect me as an artist and illustrator.

Since the early 90's I have been working as a freelance illustrator. During this time I have seen much change as the digital age began to revolutionize our world. This has brought obvious benefits and drawbacks.

The online availability and easy transfer of images has created an internet culture of grabbing and taking imagery for any reason or use, with the belief that it is free for the taking and there is no responsibility to honor, acknowledge or least of all, compensate the creator of the image.

I make illustrations for my livelihood. Mostly, I am paid for the use of these images as opposed to outright purchase of the work. Sometimes an image is never used, while another is used multiple times. Some images become more valuable the more they are used. I keep stock image library for reuse/resale.

I make the images and feel I have the right to decide when and where they should be used and by whom. If I want to give an image away, I do so at my discretion. I do not give my permission for others to profit from my art without my consent. If a gift is not freely given, then it is taken. That is theft.

If the right to be paid for the use of my work is taken away, so is my livelihood. If it becomes the law that others may take with out paying for what they take, it diminishes the value of what I do. If that is the case, I might as well close up shop.

Artists (of all types) are already at a considerable disadvantage by choosing this profession. Often sensitive types, open to subtle inspiration, we take considerable risk delving into the

unconscious to problem solve, retrieving creative gems to share with others.

Unfortunately, we live in a society where art is not valued. While many artists possess great facility to produce visual imagery, they may not be as skilled with the business side of things, including protection from predators. We have come to rely on the copyright laws for this protection.

If the governing laws do not protect our artists it sends a chilling message that they are not valued and are fair game for being used and further stepped upon. The only outcome from this is a withdrawal, not sharing their vision and creative ideas with society. A society that has no artists is a society without vision or beauty, doomed to mediocrity.

Sincerely,

Catherine Rose Crowther
BFA Fine Arts
Freelance Illustrator (watercolor, ink)