July 19, 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)

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Audre Schutte and I am a freelance illustrator and concept artist. In the past three years I've made hundreds of illustrations. Many of them have been featured on popular site like The Mary Sue and MoviePilot. My work also appears in many video games and on popular daily tee shirt sites. My illustrations and concepts are how I make my living.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

As a freelance illustrator and concept artist, I need to keep the copyrights to my work immediately after creation in order to make a living. The resale of my images is my main way of doing business. My collection of work is a valuable resource that produces all my income. Attempting to replace our existing copyright laws with a system that would enable corporations to simply take my work if I'm unable to purchase a registration for each piece (or even if you simply decide to not allow it to be protected) means the end of my entire way of living. Reporting companies who use my work without my permission or financial compensation is already a massive problem in my life. Why would the government favor corporations like this instead of those of us who actually create new work? Do you not understand that this will spell the end of all creativity? No one will create new work if forced into this situation.

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

There's a very good reason why the Orphan Works bills have been resoundingly opposed by artists since they first appeared in 2006. 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 larger revenue stream for themselves. To make a living as an artist is already immensely difficult and thankless. We do it because it is our passion. To give way to greed by allowing corporations to acquire work for free would be the death of art. As it stands already, filing and enforcing DMCAs is an incredibly expensive endeavor that most of us aren't capable of funding. Please don't remove what little rights we have.

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

Forcing registration upon artists would become a massive financial burden for artists. Private corporations being in charge of our registrations would undoubtedly result in constance increasing rates and fees. Why in the world should an artist have to give money to other companies just so that they can still keep their art? At what point is the line drawn? Should grade school art teachers have to show their students how to register their new hand turkey drawings? As for the images we can't afford to register, or could not find the time or info on to register, they'd simply be offered up to be exploited by companies who can get by just fine without ripping off artists.

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?

It is rather easy these days to do a image source search these days. From there it's a simple email away to ask the artist for permission. I fail to see how that is particularly challenging or frustrating. In fact, most people who steal artwork seem to spend a great deal more time and effort trying to remove any info of the original artist.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

This act also opens the doors for organizations to exploit artists. Groups and artist organizations will inevitably form that receive financial benefits in return for forcing artists into situations where they have no choice but to go through these organizations in order to keep up with registrations.

Thanks,

Audre Schutte