A letter regarding copyright.gov/policy/visualworks/

7/10/2015

Dear Copyright Office of the United States Government,

You have an important name with great responsibility to the creative citizens of the United States of America. I am concerned about some of your, our, legislation that will impact my life's work. Since you have the ultimate capability of determining the access others have to my work, I am addressing you.

Others who are considerable more powerful than myself who wish to use my creative efforts and images, without having to even contact me, let alone purchase my efforts, have solicited you to change the rules that govern my efforts. These efforts will then be free for the wealthy, powerful companies to scoop up and use without even so much as a, how are you! I will then be free from earning a living for my efforts, being paid for my intellectual insight, from my very nature of my creative being. You will allow them to steal anything they want from any artist at anytime day or night.

You know I saw a sad thing on the internet the other day. Some parents saw a huge photo of their child who was ill used as the image for a company to gain money for this company. The parents were outraged. The photo came from their personal Face book webpage on the internet. The image was scooped up, enlarged to illicit a reaction and labeled with their words.

No one had contacted the parents. No one had asked if this was okay, would offend the parents. Not one of the owners of the company gave this another thought. They just took and moved on. I wonder at this rather immoral, outrageous act. And I see some similarity to what the powerful lawyers for the wealthy corporate companies would have you do to the protections that I as an artist have to self determination in my own country. Money talks, in this world. I am sorry but most of we the artists do not have the money, the influence, to protect our creative images from the incredible hungry predators who see themselves as able to take what they want, when they want it. We never will be

millionaires and we don't expect it. We do expect better of our government towards us.

You know I graduated from my high school in 1964, received a scholarship to study fine art in Indianapolis. I worked hard to earn the good grades, had my ups and downs like most artists have. I worked as a nurses aid in undergraduate school to pay for my room and board. Summers saw me working in a steel factory to earn my way. I then worked teaching art until I could go back to college to earn my masters degree. There were times when I worked four jobs to make ends meet but it did not stop me. I earned my Masters of Fine Arts in a time when I could once again be challenged to make a living at my chosen career. I endured sexual discrimination from schools that questioned my taking care of a newborn child and teaching in public schools in California. I answered with "have you heard of daycare"? I did not teach again for many years. But I did try to earn for my family by showing in galleries. I tied large paintings to the top of my car, took care of my children myself and drove miles to deliver artwork to exhibits. I can recall a person who represented one of my states senators who came to one exhibit in Scottsdale. He asked if I would give a rather large oil painting to his boss the senator for his office. The work would be seen and appreciated by everyone. It would be a honor.

I have honored so many people and organizations, donated work for community auctions, given when asked for all sorts of artwork, donated my teaching expertise to schools and troubled youth. I have shown my artwork at career days, taught at elementary schools for free cause they needed someone to inspire their students. I was a Girl Scout leader who shared my love of nature and knowledge of the world of science. I am a mother of three gifted children, friend to my neighbors, wife to an aspiring artist and I am a very poor but well known professional artist. I send my work around the world, publish it on my webpage and still must donate it to the museums where it is shown. The work on my webpage is displayed all over the place without my permission, presumable for the honor of this. I need to figure out how to pay my bills with honor.

You have asked for opinion from artist. I only hope you are prepared to listen to those of us who are creative. It seems that our government is very angry at the theft of their intellectual property off the internet. Designs for important war machines, airplanes, computer programs, get lots of headlines. Our schools dump all art classes, writing classes and similar encouragement for creative thought. Then they wonder why they should even think about the protection the law should give to the very "things" that an artist creates.

Well now the law should wake up to what they are doing. Creative "things" are the engine that drives our country, that and the encouragement to think creatively. Channeling that way of working to the exclusion of the visual is a big, huge mistake. Visual images are the way a child learns, an adult confirms knowledge, an institution celebrates her history. Take it out of this hemisphere and you will remove our very evolution. It is primary, essential and progressive. Taking away the protection which it needs is primary, essential and regressive and we as a nation will regret this for always. Protect our copyrights and "Orphan images". Protect us, we are not the strong, wealthy ones and this is the right thing to do. Honor us and we will continue to honor you.

Thank you for reading this, Carol Lynn Kirchner

Visual Artist

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