July 23, 2015

Dear Ms. Pallante and the Copyright Office, Library of Congress,

I am writing to urge you, as strongly as I can. not to change or alter the copyright laws as they exist today. I was active in the last fight concerning the copyright laws for artists and had hoped that the dropping of that action to change these laws was over. Now it is rearing its ugly head again threatening the rights of creative people, especially visual artists, to control the rights to the work they creative and produce. Note I said create, because the only person who should gain money from any artist's artwork should be the artists themselves. Only I should be able to profit from my creations. Not some mega corporation, not some rip off manufacturing company from anywhere around the world, or somebody using my artwork to put on their products to sell on Etsy.

The internet has made the ability of other businesses to take my work and use it as they chose easy. They can make ugly products with it, change the color of the artwork, use in on products I do not think are appropriate and make money with it none of which I get , ALTHOUGH IT IS MY TALENT AND CREATIVE PROCESS THAT CREATED THE ARTWORK.

I have run my own illustration and licensing business for over 35 years. Making my artwork and then licensing it to manufacturers, design studios, advertising agencies as well as selling it to clients is how I have made my living since I graduated from college in 1974. The creative world has changed greatly since I started my business. What is critical now to my business, is using social media to promote myself and find work. I need to be able to put my work on the various sites like Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest and my personal blog to attract customers and work. I always attach my name and copyright to everything but it is so easy for someone to remove it and post the artwork without it. It is imperative now in this global marketplace, that every artist needs a website to showcase their work. And I also sell my artwork on Etsy which provides a stream of revenue for me. But all of these places present a risk to me as the artist, because by putting the artwork into the market, it gives others the chance to rip it off and use for their own profit. I am caught in a Catch 22 concerning my livelihood.

I make a living being an illustrator but I need to supplement my illustration income by teaching at a university. The cost to register every piece of artwork I do would be prohibitive. Not only do most artists I know not make a lot of money from their artwork but the time it would take to police the entire web, hunting down your artwork, getting people to cease and desist using that artwork could not be done, there are not enough hours in the day to do this.

I have already had at least 10 manufacturers take my artwork and put it on products I have not given them permission to use. Us artists use Facebook and other social media platforms to warn other artists when we find some manufacturer is using our copyrighted images. And this is happening when the copyright laws are strict. I cannot fantom the nightmare that will happen if this new copyright law takes effect.

Please do not take away the rights for us to own our own works. Every manufacturer, corporation, and business in this country is protected by copyrights concerning their products. Large corporations go after people every day that infringe on their copyrights but at least they have the financial backbone to be able to stop the copyright infringements.

I feel this change of this law is another instance where the smaller business person/ entrepreneur is having their rights and money making capabilities taken away so the larger 1% can make even more money. There is always talk in our country about building small businesses, being your own boss etc. but the odds are so stacked against us that we struggle most of the time. Artists and creatives are passionate about making their artwork in spite of the modest income they make from their work. Do not put them in further financial jeopardy by changing the copyright laws.

Sincerely,

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