July 23rd, 2015

Hello,

I am a designer and I own my own small company, beve, which produces party and lifestyle products. My designs, or art, is used on many of these products. I am also intending to pursue licensing some of my designs for various non-competitive products in the near future. The updated copyright proposal is very concerning to me as I make my living off of my creations. As a small owner-operated company, I cannot afford to copyright each of my designs and products. However, each design is something I created - taking time, effort and ability. These designs should not be able to be stolen from me and possibly monetized by my much larger competitors because they do not have to worry about any financial repercussions. There are so many entrepreneurial small businesses like mine who either producing their own products or licensing their art/designs who will lose their income if this admissive legislature is passed. Our art is our product - our income. In Cherish Flieder's words, "infringing on our work is no different than stealing our money."

I was at a business conference recently and it was discussed that our industry is currently is a good place where instead of larger companies stealing from 'the little guys,' they are partnering with us and we are mutually benefitting. Please don't give a financial incentive for this symbiotic relationship to stop.

Please also recognize that the internet has made it easier than ever to gain access to artists' creations. Please do not make it even easier for our work to be stolen from us.

Perhaps you do not realize how much of the world around you is created by artists. The greeting card you sent your niece for graduation was almost definitely created by a licensed artist. The photobook you ordered on Shutterfly was created by a licensed artist. The website you just went to was created by a designer. Your new shower curtain. All of the various fabrics used in your granddaughter's baby quilt. The box of tissues beside you. All of these items and so many more are made by artists and designers and taking away their inherent copyright of their creations takes away their income. Does a web designer not filing a copyright for a client's website make it any less his or her creation? Does that make it right for someone to copy its format exactly? Should I have to pay thousands and thousands of dollars to copyright the forty new washi tape designs I produced this year in order to have the right to claim ownership over the designs? I do not think it makes it right. We created the plethora of art and designs that make the world around us a happier, more beautiful place. We should benefit from this work.

Thank you for your time and for your thoughtful consideration,

Lauren Boggs Meslar

Owner & Designer

beve!