July 21, 2015

To Whom it May Concern,

I am once again deeply concerned about upcoming proposals to changes in the copyright act which would greatly harm my livelihood as an artist. For 12 years now I have been sole proprietor of my registered business, Lyric Art. I create visual works of art, publish them, use those works as visual aids when I teach, and also create products and merchandise using those images. Even when I sell an original work of art, I retain copyright to the imagery and am able to continue my revenue stream through the creation of greeting cards, further publications in written articles or other merchandise.

The proposed reforms that would “orphan” unregistered works and allow others to use those works without compensating me as their creator would cripple my income. I get licensing fees when a musician or publisher wants to use my imagery for a book or album cover. I get royalties when a work is published in a book or a magazine article. I use my published artwork as samples and examples when I teach my techniques. Allowing someone else to use and license my works for their own purposes feels like flat out theft of all I’ve worked for.

To state that once a work is published it is of no further monetary value to the artist is simply FALSE. In searching my careful bookkeeping, during the time my time in business an average of 85% of my income comes from my artwork AFTER it has been first published or sold. This past year my business brought in a comfortable $60k. For a one person operation I think I’ve done well. I’ve worked very hard to build my brand and reputation and do not take lightly the threats to everything I’ve worked for. Allowing others free reign to steal the products of my labor would devastate my income.

Please, do NOT allow extended collective licensing to replace voluntary business arrangements between myself and my clients. Please do NOT allow mass digitization of my intellectual property by corporate interests. This is no abstract issue. This is my business you are trying to strip away. In the digital era, my copyrighted work IS my business and my published inventory is more valuable to me as a visual artist than ever before.

Sincerely,
Lyric Montgomery Kinard

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