21 July 2015

To: Catherine Rowland
Senior Advisor to the Register of Copyrights
U.S copyright Office
crowland@loc.gov

Re: Notice of inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress.

Copyright Protection For Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

Dear Ms Catherine Rowland,

Thank you for taking the time to read my email regarding the proposed changes to the US copyright laws. (I have also attached a PDF version for your convenience)

It is my understanding that some of the proposed changes the the US copyright laws for certain visual work may impact on the ability of non-US citizens to protect their work, even though they are not directly affected by these laws. I would like to take this opportunity to express my very great concern regarding these proposed changes.

Although I currently work as a designer of (digital) soft toy patterns, I am also working on creating a new branch of my business to include 'Visual Art'.
As a designer/artist, especially one whose work is almost exclusively with digital media, I face many challenges even under current legislation when it comes to protecting the copyright of my designs. It is very easy for someone to gain a copy of an image I have uploaded somewhere to the internet, remove any watermarks I have to identify the image as my property and then claim it as orphaned or their own work.

As someone who works with laws on a daily basis I'm sure you understand the reality that laws are by nature complex, even to those whose job it is to understand them - imagine how hard it is for the rest of us.

Art is a vital element in any society. Take a moment to look around your current surroundings - every single thing you can see involved an artist at some point of it's creation and marketing. Your clothes were designed and illustrated by artists. The vehicle you use to get to work in, was first drawn up by an artist in great detail before becoming a reality. Every book, newspaper, magazine chair and table, first began it's life in the hands of an artist.

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Unfortunately, art is very often an unappreciated element. As a result, many artists find themselves in the position of struggling financially to support themselves and their families.

Perhaps your thought to this might be that these 'struggling artist' could or should get 'real' job -- and many do out of necessity, but, unless you are creative yourself or have a someone in your life who is creative, here is something you may not be aware of concerning those who create -- they ***have*** to do it. That may sound strange, it may even sound like an excuse to not get that 'real' job. But as a creative person, I can testify to the driving force to create. It's not something you can't just turn off or ignore - it will literally drive you crazy it you try.

The proposed changes to your laws will make the job of being a professional artist significantly more difficult, and for many - impossible.
The need to register every piece of work, including past work (which would be time and cost prohibitive for many), with a private - *profit driven* - organization would become a financially crushing necessary evil that would become just one more death blow to many artist who have neither the time or money to be filling in countless forms and paying ever increasing fees. And the fees would go up - no matter what price they might start at, and not just to cover any increases in living.
In Australia, all of our utilities have been privatize, as a result we now have some of the most expensive power, water, phone and internet cost in the world. We are rapidly becoming a country where even the basic necessities of life are drifting out of the reach of many.

In closing - to spend many hours pouring your heart into your creation, just to have someone *take* it and use it for their own purposes without compensation to you (the creator) or acknowledgment to you as the artist is heart breaking and demoralizing - especially if that someone is a major corporation who has a generous turnover and profits and can well afford financially to pay for the rights to use your work.
My father had this happen to him. As a pilot and inventor, he created a device that has significantly improved air travel safety for us all. A major aeroplane builder bought just one unite via a third party and reverse engineered it. Now many of the jumbo jets in the air have one fitted - my father received no payment from this company, no permission was given to use his invention in their aeroplanes and no acknowledgement to his many years of hard work was given.

The creators of art need to be protected … please help them by not giving their rights away to corporations.

Best regards
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