Laura Dicus, Artist
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US Copyright Office
Re: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress Copyright Protection
for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

Dear Ms. Pallante & U.S. Copyright Office Staff,

I am writing to express my opinion of the proposed Orphaned Works amendment to current US copyright protection.

I am an artist (since 1978), have been actively producing watercolor paintings and drawings for 16 years and have received notice and awards over the last 6 years. I not only have a formal art education but continue with my education even now, education that has cost quite a pretty penny and I have just been able to pay off my student loans this year, from a college education completed in 1992.

I produce work on a regular basis and all of this work is for sale. I pay quite a bit of money to have my finished artwork scanned for reproduction and pay for very high quality prints and cards. I use the highest quality materials for the work itself as well as for framing. As you can imagine this is quite costly. Aside from some income I receive from teaching art classes and workshops the sale of my artwork originals and prints I have no other source of income.

I have kept meticulous records of my works in progress for years to protect myself in the event that someone were to attempt to market my work as their own. This documentation takes about 10% of the time I spend producing my work. Marketing my work takes another 20%.

I do not make nearly enough to live on from these proceeds. Loss of any income would be a major blow. It is not right for anyone to be able to take my work and profit from it without due compensation through legal licensing. Being at a point in my career of almost being ready to sell licensing contracts I am even more vulnerable to the proposed legislation. Why would a reputable company pay for a license to reproduce my work if they can basically get if for free under the new laws?

Even though my work is shown in several brick and mortar venues it is also represented online, through my own efforts as well as my representatives'. Online publishing is a major and essential component of any art marketing in this day and age. Access to my work in digital format is essential for my customers and business contacts, as is the case for the majority of artists all over the world.

This being the case, it is very easy for unscrupulous people to abscond with works that do not belong to them and profit by it. It is very difficult to police these thefts, finding instances of unlawful use is a Herculean task. To be put into a position of not being able to prosecute someone I actually find stealing my intellectual property is just plain wrong.

I urge you to reject the Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report Docket No. 2015-01 proposal and leave us artists with at least the protections we deserve and are assured of by the Copyright Act of 1976. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura G. Dicus