LAURA ROY
Illustration & Animation
for Science & Medicine
ROY

July 20, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

RE: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

Dear Ms. Maria Pallante and the Copyright Office,

I am studying to become a medical illustrator at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, in the department of Art as Applied to Medicine, where I am a second-year M.A. candidate in Medical & Biological Illustration. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

I have become aware of the potential impending changes to the copyright law, and I am writing to express my concerns that they will be detrimental to myself, to artists in general, and to the advancement of scientific and medical progress.

I understand that as times change, so must the legislature, and that with technological advances and changes such as internet image search, artists' rights and the best ways to promote innovation must be reconsidered. I grew up with Google image searching and I appreciate that such resources are useful tools for innovation and research--but I do not consider it appropriate to use as the foundation of artistic work. Naturally, the law must accommodate a change in the way that artists make art and make a living. However I do not think that the proposed changes, nor introducing the concept of orphan works, is the answer.

Among my concerns, I recognize that if textbook companies and other educational companies are permitted to use orphan works, they may be less likely to create new visual content and more likely to reuse outdated images or cobble together other images in order to stay competitive. This may not matter greatly in some cases, but often, the visuals need to be updated to clearly explain the current science. This will make it harder for students to learn, and more likely that they will learn inaccurately--overall harming the integrity of our science-based economy. Allowing non-profit organizations greater usage rights of existing works can be harmful in the same way.

I also realize that the considered legislature would harm professional relationships and brand integrity by eroding the ability for a company to protect promotional imagery and design work. We as artists provide this imagery and design work, and by allowing for orphan works to become a possibility it places both the client company's reputation and the artist's reputation in jeopardy.

The proposed changes would make it more difficult to protect against and pursue infringement. The creation of small claims copyright courts would devalue the nature of the crime and make it much more difficult to pursue justice. Artists would be required to apply for copyright protection in multiple places rather than just one, and even then would be more vulnerable than they are now.

Beyond the concerns for our society as a whole, I have concerns regarding my personal future. Between my undergrad and graduate studies, have invested a large amount of money to advance my education as a professional artist. I have already developed a body of work which is copyrighted to me, including work that has been published in journals and textbooks. If this legislation passes, it will devalue my current and future work, and require me to charge more for my services. I, like many other artists, am in the unique position to contribute to society in a way that should be offered the legal protection championed by our forefathers and promised to other artists throughout the history of our nation.

I want to thank you for posting the notice of inquiry, and I genuinely hope that you will consider my comments.

Sincerely,

Laura Roy
M.A. Candidate, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Art as Applied to Medicine

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