Nicole Holland
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Dear US Copyright Office:

You have requested commentary from visual artists whom might be affected by changes I the way our works are protected by the Copyright Office, and so I would like to leave you my thoughts.

My name is Nicole Holland, and I am a freelance visual artist running my own art studio as a small business out of my home. I don't have employees, everything I create and sell is done by myself alone. Nor do I have a lawyer on staff to help me protect my rights as an artist. It's simply me. And in the reading of been doing about the proposed changes for the way copyrights are protected in this country concerns me greatly.

I may be a small fish in a very large pond, but even I have had difficulties with my work being infringed upon for commercial use. It's hard enough to protect our work now, in this new digital millennium, without the possibility of your organization making it harder to protect our livelihoods. Registration fees and processes take up valuable time and resources that many small business artists simply do not have. Your proposed changes regarding the registration of works in various stages is, to be blunt, an unnecessary drain on time and finances for artists like me.

You see, we don't have staff to fill out the registration paperwork for every stage of a piece of artwork. We don't have the funds to pay a registration fee for every single stage. We live hand-to-mouth in many cases; the "starving artist" stereotype is quite true for many of us. While I consider myself successful, the truth is, I cannot support myself on my wages as an artist after paying my sales taxes, income taxes and fees associated with running a business already, and were I required to pay to protect my work in each of its various stages, I would make almost no profit from my work. The registration process alone would take away my time from actually creating said work. You see where I am going with this? The proposed changes would remove a small artist's ability to protect their works because they cannot afford it, and therefore open us up to any and all infringers to make money off a work that they should have no rights to and leaves the artist- who should be the one profiting off their own labors- high and dry with nothing to show for their efforts. Its ridiculous.

The current system, where copyrights are granted to an artist from the moment they create a work is a GOOD one- it helps us protect our own labors and gives us the rights to sell those works to make our living. You take that away from us, and it's basically the equivalent of telling any industry worker that they're basically going to work for free while the business down the street gets to use the fruits of their labors to make profit for themselves without having to lift a finger for it. You wouldn't do your jobs for free, now would you? And if someone tried to take away your rights to be paid for the jobs you do, you would protest, wouldn't you? Of course you would! But that's what the discussed

changes in copyright law would do- take away our abilities to profit off our labors and giver infringers a free pass to commercialize on our works without us ever seeing a dime in return.
It's extremely hard to be a visual artist in this age, where work is so easily stolen and commercialized. Please don't make it harder on small artists like me, who barely make a living as it is. Give us more tools to protect ourselves, not give away our rights to the public or businesses who only want to commercialize our work without compensation to we who made the work in the first place. The world has always relied on people who create to come up with new ideas, who change things or invent new ones. If you fair to protect us, the little fish in the big ponds, then what happens to us? We stop creating, stop sharing our works, and go into hiding for fear of our work being stolen. And if that happens, the works is a lot less colorful and inventive place. Please consider this when proposing your changes.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Nicole Holland
Freelance Artist