July 14, 2015

Seal Beach, California

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a professional artist, designer and educator for over 45 years; I worked hard for my reputation and education and have always tried my best to be a credit to my profession, peers and country.

I have designed dolls, collectibles, T-Shirts, Needlecraft and hobby Kits, numerous How-to articles for national magazines, 4 books on decorative painting and contributed to several others.

My flat or “fine” art is in the collections of many celebrities and art enthusiasts across the USA and Canada and has even found its way to Europe.

The wonderful thing about ART is that even as a “senior citizen” my art has continued to provide me an income (albeit supplemental) over the course of my life and now is critical to maintaining my independence.

Over the years I have been faced with companies and individuals lifting my line art for use in and on their own products without my permission-only the threat of strong copyright laws and litigation has forced people to back down and desist from using my art freely for their financial gains.

Very few artists can afford to fight either international copyright infringement or cases within our own country.

Now it seems there is proposed legislation that might endanger our rights and royalties and even force us to register every piece of our work to prevent them from being “orphaned”.

Another situation to build a bureaucracy and collect registration fees that we cannot afford.

Our copyright has always been our signature and so should it remain.

I do not create my work with a computer or electronic means, I draw and/or paint by hand each design I do; only then is it scanned into a digital form if needed.

Anything on the internet is subject to copyright violations and we must be constantly vigilant to catch problems before they are out of hand.

I implore you to consider carefully how many people will be negatively impacted by this new legislation, how any attempt at a copyright court will just further clog and complicate the judicial system and how offices of registration and similar complicated organizations will further stem the growth and freedom of the arts in the United States.

We need to make it more difficult not easier for opportunistic people to steal or create derivative work from our art and designs.

Part of my lifelong purpose has been to assist and educate people in making fine arts and design a viable career choice.

With the arts finding less and less funding in the USA we must do everything possible to see that there are new generations of talented individuals continuing our rich heritage of creativity in the USA.

Protecting their work for future generations is also a part of the legacy of freedom our country stands for.

Please see that copyright laws are not changed to the benefit of thieves, opportunists and corporations who seek to make money on the work of others.

Respectfully,

Rick St dennis MFA

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