July 21, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
US 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)

To whom it may concern,

I have read the proposed changes to the existing copyright law and it troubles me. I am married with two kids, two part-time jobs, and a few meager late night hours which I labor in to make my dream of being an illustrator come true. However, if the Orphan Act does indeed become a bill, and frighteningly possibly a law, then I have to wonder if it will be worth my time to realize this dream.

Imagine that you spent hours and hours designing your dream house. You poured the foundation. You built and painted the walls, hung your name on the front door, proud of all your hard work and the beauty of your dream realized. Now imagine a stranger walks up, erases your name off the door, and hangs up his own. Then sticks a "For Sale" sign out front, and there's nothing you can do about it. In essence, I believe that's what will happen if these proposed changes come to pass.

Under existing copyright law, my existing and future creations belong to me and I get to choose who I sell rights or give permission to. I don't like the idea of a future where I am doing all the study, the how-to's of illustration, the late nights, the revised pieces just to have anyone with a basic understanding of Photoshop wipe my name off and profit from all the hard work I've spent the time and effort to do. Illustration is a highly competitive field, and unless you're currently making a decent living wage from the sale of your work litigation to prove ownership is likely out of most fledgling artists budget plans.

I'm already unhappy about the fact that my secondary publishing rights can be infringed upon, or currently legally withheld by companies and I won't ever see a dime. If someone records a song by any singer, past or present, they need permission and they have to pay for the right to do so if they want to make money off the sale of it. Why should artwork be any different?

Now I realize that at the moment I'm an art nobody. But I have every intention of being an art somebody one day. For all you or I know I could be the next Mary GrandPré. If I do ever achieve a lasting success in this field, I would like to know the US Copyright Office is protecting my business interests and not the interests of people and/ or companies who would rather steal my hard work from me than pay for it as they would expect to have to do in any other business dealing.

Thank you for your time,

Rebecca Hirsch