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July 23, 2015

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

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

Visual arts have undergone tremendous changes in the past decade. Ways in which artists create their works has changed, and is changing daily. Billions of photographs are taken each year, and the rate is increasing. Protecting rights of works of art derived from said photographs is becoming more and more difficult.

In order to promote one's works, it is almost necessary to utilize the Internet and social media. Doing so, however, places images at risk of theft, relatively easy theft at that. One may purchase software to insert a watermark on posted photos; another may purchase software to remove those watermarks.

One may attempt to increase protecting of visual art works by officially registering the work at the Copyright Office, which requires payment of a fee. The inherent problem with this is that a single image may be used in multiple art pieces, as well as derivative products. I can crop and manipulate a photographic image and offer it for sale framed, on metal, on acrylic, on canvas. I can take the same image and create products such as blankets, t-shirts, ceramic tiles, posters, post cards, books...an almost limitless line of products. Were I to register each and every iteration of my original image, the fees would soon bankrupt me. There is no guarantee that a particular product will sell, and is a speculation. The public does not easily choose to purchase art; the artist must build a reputation over time, and actively market his or her works.

The Internet has provided a potential outlet for marketing art. Those who need to purchase art for advertising, illustration, etc. have a wide selection to choose from, with a range of costs from pennies to thousands of dollars. There are web sites where all of the art is available at no cost.

Protecting intellectual property created by various artists is of paramount importance. When I take a photograph, the work has just begun. Hours of my time goes into creating something that another person might buy. All-too-infrequently, I succeed in that endeavor. Any weakening of

my rights to my own works would be a disaster.

In the end, artists would cease to create art and the entire marketplace would suffer. Those who need to utilize images and art would find a declining pool of choices, unlike today where that pool is rapidly expanding.

Please take this into consideration. Your actions will affect the livelihood of many, many artists.

Sincerely,

Rick Lawler