



Copyright Review Board
United States Copyright Office · 101 Independence Avenue SE · Washington, DC 20559-6000

June 5, 2026

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Re: Second Request for Reconsideration of Refusal to Register New Generation Historical Logo (SR # 1-11503939901; Correspondence ID: 1-5QA7BCS)

Dear Mr. Verdini:

The Review Board of the United States Copyright Office (“Board”) has considered World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.’s (“WWE”) second request for reconsideration of the Registration Program’s refusal to register a two-dimensional artwork claim in the work titled “New Generation Historical Logo” (“Work”). After reviewing the application, deposit copy, and relevant correspondence, along with the arguments in the second request for reconsideration, the Board affirms the Registration Program’s denial of registration.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

The Work consists of a blue square behind two stacked-and-rotated, stylized, yellow “Ws” with blue borders. The Work is as follows:



II. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

On July 14, 2022, WWE filed an application to register a copyright claim in the Work. In an August 8, 2022 letter, a Copyright Office registration specialist refused to register the claim, determining that it “lacks the authorship necessary to support a copyright claim.” Initial Letter Refusing Registration from U.S. Copyright Office to Christopher Verdini at 1 (Aug. 8, 2022).

On November 8, 2022, WWE requested that the Office reconsider its initial refusal to register the Work, arguing that the selection and combination of the elements embodied in the

Work demonstrate a sufficient degree of creativity required for copyright protection. Letter from Christopher Verdini to U.S. Copyright Office (Nov. 8, 2022) (“First Request”). After reviewing the Work in light of the points raised in the First Request, the Office reevaluated the claims and again concluded that the Work could not be registered. Refusal of First Request for Reconsideration from U.S. Copyright Office to Christopher Verdini (Apr. 19, 2023). The Office explained that neither the Work’s individual elements (two “Ws,” a square, and color scheme), nor its combination and arrangement of those elements were sufficiently creative to warrant registration. *Id.* at 3–4.

In a letter dated July 17, 2023, WWE requested that, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 202.5(c), the Office reconsider for a second time its refusal to register the Work. Letter from Christopher Verdini to U.S. Copyright Office (July 17, 2023) (“Second Request”). In that letter, WWE contended that the Office mischaracterized the Work as evidenced by its failure to explicitly reference the letter “F,” formed on the right side of the lettering. *Id.* at 2. WWE also argued that the Office misapplied the standard for creativity under *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Tel. Serv. Co.*, 499 U.S. 340 (1991), and that the combination of creative choices involved in the selection and arrangement of the Work’s “colors, shapes, dimension, scale, and graphic design” demonstrate the requisite degree of creativity required for registration. Second Request at 3.

III. DISCUSSION

After carefully examining the Work and considering the arguments made in the First and Second Requests, the Board finds that the Work does not contain the creativity necessary to sustain a copyright claim.

A work may be registered if it qualifies an “original work[] of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression.” 17 U.S.C. § 102(a). In this context, the term “original” consists of two components: independent creation and sufficient creativity. *See Feist*, 499 U.S. at 345. First, the work must have been independently created by the author, *i.e.*, not copied from another work. *Id.* Second, the work must possess sufficient creativity. *Id.* Only a modicum of creativity is necessary, but the Supreme Court has ruled that some works (such as the alphabetized telephone directory at issue in *Feist*) fail to meet even this low threshold. *Id.* The Court observed that “[a]s a constitutional matter, copyright protects only those constituent elements of a work that possess more than a *de minimis* quantum of creativity” and that “garden-variety,” “obvious,” or “practically inevitable” selection, coordination, and arrangement lack the necessary “creative spark required by the Copyright Act.” *Id.* at 362–64.

The Office’s regulations and publications implement the longstanding requirement of originality set forth in the Copyright Act. They explain that copyright does not protect common geometric shapes or familiar designs. 37 C.F.R. § 202.1(a) (prohibiting registration of “familiar symbols or designs”); U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE, COMPENDIUM OF U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE PRACTICES §§ 906.1, 906.2 (3d ed. 2021) (“COMPENDIUM (THIRD)”) (noting that common geometric shapes and familiar symbols and designs are not protectable). Copyright likewise does not protect “mere variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering or coloring” or “[t]ypeface as typeface.” 37 C.F.R. § 202.1(a), (e); *see* COMPENDIUM (THIRD) § 313.3(D).

At the same time, some combinations of common or standard design elements may contain sufficient creativity with respect to how they are juxtaposed or arranged to support a copyright claim. Nevertheless, not every combination or arrangement will be sufficient to meet this test. *See Feist*, 499 U.S. at 358 (finding the Copyright Act “implies that some ‘ways’ [of selecting, coordinating, or arranging uncopyrightable material] will trigger copyright, but that others will not”). A determination of copyrightability in the combination of standard design elements depends on whether the selection, coordination, and arrangement are sufficiently creative to result in copyrightable authorship. *Id.*; *see also Atari Games Corp. v. Oman*, 888 F.2d 878, 883 (D.C. Cir. 1989); *Coach, Inc. v. Peters*, 386 F. Supp. 2d 495, 498–99 (S.D.N.Y. 2005). As the Ninth Circuit has explained, “a combination of unprotectable elements is eligible for copyright protection only if those elements are numerous enough and their selection and arrangement original enough that their combination constitutes an original work of authorship.” *Satava v. Lowry*, 323 F.3d 805, 811 (9th Cir. 2003).

Applying these legal standards, the Board finds that the Work’s individual elements and the Work as a whole fail to demonstrate sufficient creativity for copyright protection. The two slightly rotated, stylized “Ws” are uncopyrightable letters. *See* 37 C.F.R. § 202.1(a), (e). Even granting that the stylized “Ws” combine to form an “F” does not change the Board’s conclusion. *See* COMPENDIUM (THIRD) § 313.3(D). In “some very limited cases[,]” graphical works largely comprising lettering may be copyrightable, such as when the typeface ornamentation is “separable from the typeface characters” as an “add-on to the beginning and/or ending of the characters.” *Id.* § 906.4 (noting that typeface ornamentation such as “flourishes, swirls, vector ornaments, scrollwork, borders and frames, wreaths” may be protectable). Here, however, the short strokes on the right of the “Ws” are not sufficiently creative when separated from the typeface. Moreover, the applicant’s contention that the “Ws” are actually “artistic elements” that “evoke the impression of letters” is unpersuasive as the yellow elements objectively appear to be two “Ws.” Second Request at 2; *see* COMPENDIUM (THIRD) § 310.3 (noting that “[t]he Office will use objective criteria” when determining copyrightability and “will focus only on the actual appearance or sound of the work that has been submitted for registration, but will not consider any meaning or significance that the work may evoke”). The blue and yellow colors and the square are also not copyrightable. *See* 37 C.F.R. § 202.1(a); COMPENDIUM (THIRD) §§ 906.1 (“The Copyright Act does not protect common geometric shapes,” including “squares.”), 906.3 (“Mere coloration or mere variations in coloring alone are not eligible for copyright protection.”). Therefore, none of the Work’s individual elements are protectable by copyright.

Viewed as a whole, the selection, coordination, and arrangement of the Work’s unprotectable elements are also insufficiently creative to warrant copyright protection. WWE argues that the Work should be registered given that “[a] series of creative choices [were made] in creating the Logo,” providing a list of the “unique combination of choices” made. Second Request at 3. Two stylized letters atop a geometric shape, however, is an obvious, garden-variety arrangement.¹ Even when considered together, other choices such as adding a border, “tilt[ing] part of the design at an angle,” and rendering the elements in “two contrasting colors,”

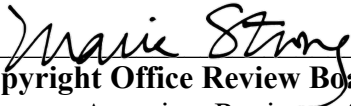
¹ *See, e.g., 100+ Logo Collection: Lettermark Logos That Simplify Branding*, LOGODESIGN.NET (Sept. 12, 2025), <https://www.logodesign.net/blog/100-lettermark-logos/>; Ali D. Haris, *29 most common square brand logos and their psychology*, FULLSTOP (Nov. 17, 2020), <https://fullstop360.com/blog/insights/branding/29-most-common-square-brand-logos-and-their-psychology>.

id. at 3, do not sufficiently elevate the Work’s creativity to satisfy the threshold for originality. *See Satava*, 323 F.3d at 811. Consequently, the Work when considered as a whole is uncopyrightable.

Finally, WWE cites previous Board and court decisions, asserting that the Work is at least as original as those works. *See* Second Request at 4–5. The Office does not, however, compare works; rather, it makes determinations of copyrightability on a “case-by-case basis” and “[a] decision to register a particular work has no precedential value.” COMPENDIUM (THIRD) § 309.3. The Board’s prior decisions that WWE cites therefore have no bearing on the Board’s determinations as to copyrightability of the Work. WWE also argues that the Office’s refusal to register the Work is “directly contrary to, and irreconcilable with” a district court decision where the court concluded that a logo consisting of the word “Aiwa” contained enough originality to merit copyright protection. Second Request at 3–4 (citing *Towada Audio Co. v. Aiwa Corp.*, 18-cv-4397, 2019 WL 1200748, at *6 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 14, 2019)). Again, the Office does not compare works and makes copyrightability determinations on a “case-by-case basis.” COMPENDIUM (THIRD) § 309.3. Still, the Board notes that the determination in *Towada* was for the purpose of surviving a motion to dismiss, in which all reasonable inferences were made in favor of the logo owner, and the court explicitly stated that the copyright “claim may *not* survive at another stage in the[] proceedings.” *See* 2019 WL 1200748, at *6 (emphasis added). It is inconclusive whether the court in *Towada* would have ultimately found the “Aiwa” logo to be copyrightable. The Board is therefore unpersuaded by this authority to alter our conclusion that the Work is insufficiently creative to warrant copyright registration.

IV. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated herein, the Board affirms the refusal to register the copyright claim in the Work. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 202.5(g), this decision constitutes final agency action in this matter.



U.S. Copyright Office Review Board
Maria Strong, Associate Register of Copyrights and
Director of Policy and International Affairs
John R. Riley, Acting Deputy General Counsel
Nicholas R. Bartelt, Assistant General Counsel