July 23, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101Independence 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:

My name is Josephine Ruff-Sloan. I am a freelance artist and illustrator. As a soon to be graduate of Georgia Perimeter College, I have published serval works in the school's Creative License Magazine and versus other publications. My work has also been well received in serval local competitions to the state of Georgia.

I am writing to address the problems visual artists face in the new digital environment.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

As a freelance illustrator, I need to maintain revenue streams to make a living. This includes resale of my past images and the creation of new images to maintain my day to day business. It is already extremely challenging to police the digital environment to enforce my rights over my work. Any attempt to replace our existing copyright laws with a system that would benefit internet companies would endanger my market value and destroy my ability create a new substantial market for myself.

2. What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

The very proposals the Copyright Office has made to Congress concern me. It is essentially a revised Orphan Works (OW) bill. Orphan Works bills have been resoundingly opposed by artists since they first appearance over a decade ago. A copyright law built on the foundation of orphan works law would allow internet companies to syphon off revenue from artists with the hopes of creating an even better revenue stream for themselves. This would taking away what little market there is for individual entrepreneurs who are artist. There can be no bigger challenge than having to compete with giant corporations with the ability to can get artwork free from artists and compete with us for our own markets.

3. What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

The proposal to reintroduce registration would become another financial burden for artists. No matter how little registries might charge in the beginning, like banks, they would soon begin to introduce charges and fees that would grow as they gain a greater and greater competitive advantage over freelance artists such as myself. If the government succeeds in passing this legislation, the result will place a heave burden on the entrepreneur artist to maintain our images in somebody else's for profit registries. As for the images we can't afford to or have time to register will all fall into noncompliance and a lifetime of images created at great expense will be free to be exploited by others.

4. What are the most significant challenges or frustrations for those who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations?

In my work I make fair use of photographs and other graphic artworks for reference but that is about all. I have no intention of reselling others works for profit.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

Artists have already seen their royalties diverted away from them for at least 20 years. I fear the proposals the Copyright Office has made to Congress will cause a market collapse and further limit the freedoms entrepreneur artist have over their work. To prevent this unjust conflict of interest, it is imperative that no artists group that supports this legislation be allowed to receive any financial benefit from the creation of copyright registries or notice of use registries. These artists organizations have failed artists and should not be allowed to use this legislation to profit from creations they have no right to.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter. I sincerely hope you reconsider passing this law and see the negative effects it will have on the over all market. In the future I recommend visual art be excluded from any orphan works provisions Congress writes into the new copyright act.

Sincerely yours,

Josephine Ruff-Sloan