23 July 2015

United States Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. SE
Washington DC 20559

To whom it may concern,

I am a visual artist in the field of printmaking and mixed media, and am writing to give you my comments pertaining to US copyright laws and the protection of an artist's right to control the use of their creations and be fairly compensated. I am not a lawyer and I do not pretend to understand the finer nuances embedded in the wording of federal legislation, but as an artist I have a clear understanding of the importance of protecting the rights of visual artists, especially in a digitized world.

I have been working as a professional artist for over 40 years, and derive some income from the sales of original pieces. Ownership of copyrights to all my work by default is essential to my livelihood, and any erosion of those copyrights will jeopardize that livelihood.

Artists have a lot on their plate - in addition to creating the work itself, most of us are also solely responsible for promoting, marketing, selling, documenting, archiving, and generally looking after our art. In the course of doing this work, I have recognized the complexity of copyright issues and the vigilance that artists must maintain in this regard in the digital age. It is overwhelming and time consuming.

As I said, I am not a lawyer and do not have specific proposals or comments about specific elements of the copyright law. However, I strongly urge you to ensure that, in any iteration of the copyright law, the artist has 100% control over the use of their creations in any media and context, and that this right be the default, i.e. that it be conferred without any action on the part of the artist beyond the creation of the piece of art itself.

The vast majority of visual artists do not have the resources to hire attorneys to look out for their interests on a continual basis the way that large corporations do. Please make sure that the law protects the rights of artists above all, and when necessary, over the rights of corporations - otherwise, we do not have a fighting chance.

Sincerely,

Katherine Venturelli