July 23, 2015

Dear Copyright Office:

I writing in regards to the changes the copyright law that are being considered. I believe it would be in the best interest of all artists that the copyright law remain unchanged.

I'll say it now that's I'm no linguistic genius, and I don't believe that I'm prepared to write a professional letter. Though I won't be able to fully defend my position from a legal stance, I still feel that I can give my reasoning for being against the law.

I'm a 17 year old art hobbyist who is just beginning to prepare to pursue freelancing as a side job. Just as I'm starting to plan out business operations, I hear about this law. Of course, it's alarming. From what I understand, this change in the copyright law will render my art available for public use, and if I want credit, I would have to register my art; Every sketch, every painting, every comic strip – otherwise, my art will be considered “un-owned” or “free for the taking”?

Though it would be in the public's interest for all works to be available, it's simply not the public's right to be able to take whatever they want from any artist. The rule should remain as, in order to have rights to use a work of art, you must obtain exclusive permission from the artist. It's not right to force artists to register with registries just so they can retain the rights to the work. Artists should remain able to choose whether they want their work available or not, and if they don't want their work available, that should be final. No one put in any creative effort but the artist, so the artist should be the one to choose what happens to their work. I feel that officials should really try to see this situation from the point of view of an artist; someone who's life revolves around creating. Imagine, suddenly, that what you do is no longer exclusively yours, and if you want the rights to what you yourself create, you must pay. Having to pay just to register works of art could take a serious toll on those who live off their art. Having to pay for every work of art would be taking a sizable chunk out of their yearly salaries, changing their lives.

Not only that, but I don't see any need for this law. The only ones this law would assist are those who wish to use certain works of art but were declined permission, or those who cannot contact the artist. In my opinion, things seem to be running pretty smoothly as it is.

Again, sorry for the brief, messy letter, but I can't just sit back and watch this happen. I feel better knowing that I'm at least giving my opinion.

Very respectfully,

Jahaira VanAlstyne
Art Hobbyist