July 18, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 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 Jennifer Maggio and I am a young Boston-based visual artist, working in fine art, digital painting and graphic design. Having studied biology in college, I've only recently decided to pursue my true passion, which is art. While I'm inexperienced with the field, I've researched enough to understand the realities of the market that I've chosen to work in, and hearing about the proposed changes to the Copyright Law has shaken my faith in my ability to succeed in this career path.

Making a living as an artist is already difficult – there is a reason why the phrase "starving artist" exists. This is emblematic of the general attitude toward art that it is a romantic, foolish, pursuit best left to dreamers who are fine with merely scraping by. This attitude seeps into family dinner conversations across America, where parents simultaneously tell their children to follow their dreams, but to be realistic about what activities are going to get them into the best colleges, and later, careers. Seldom is "painter" the preferred answer they want to hear from their children when asked what they want to be in life. The parents' concern is warranted, since they know that few artists ever "make" it, and the proposed laws would lower those numbers even further.

These laws would keep artists struggling by stripping away potential revenue streams from licensing rights, and by costing them time and money to comply with documenting and registering each and every piece of work they create (an extremely impractical task) with some registry office (whose terms will likely grow more and more restrictive over time), and to fight legal battles over any copyright infringements, battles they would most likely lose and not recover from. Because of this, I'm writing to urge you to protect the copyrights of artists, ensuring that we are able to make a living from our craft.

Given that every single product or environment we encounter has been touched by an artist, whether it's the packaging of your favorite tea, or an ad billboard for a new car, or a birthday card, brand logo, painting or print, or web design…given the ubiquity of art and the importance it plays in our lives, for commercial use as well as for pure enjoyment and inspiration, we should appreciate it more and appreciate those who make it more and support them in their craft more. Period.

Thank you,

Jennifer Maggio