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July 23, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office

Dear Ms. Pallante and the Copyright Office Staff,

I am writing you about my concern regarding potential changes to the US Copyright Act.

I have been an artist for 30 years, and though my work is primarily a hobby, I do sell it from time to time and would not welcome someone else monetizing my work for their own profit without my knowledge or consent. Furthermore, it is important to me to determine how and by whom my work is used. Without copyright protections that exist today, I have no opportunity to develop my hobby into a business that would provide an ongoing income.

I feel strongly that I have a Constitutional right to the exclusive control of my work. As I understand, proposed changes to the US Copyright Act would do the following:

1. It would "privilege" the public's right to use my work without consideration to my rights of controlling where it appears, who uses, and how, as well as capturing any income due to me.
2. It would "pressure" me to register my work with commercial registries. With that comes potential costs and additional time spent registering my work.
3. It would "orphan" unregistered work. Essentially if I don't chose to work with a commercial registry, then my work would become available for anyone to use at will. And even if I do register my work with a commercial registry, there are potential gaps between creation and registration which could orphan my work as well.
4. It would make orphaned work available for commercial infringement by "good faith" infringers. I take this to mean theft of my work would become "legal."
5. It would allow others to alter my work and copyright these "derivative works" in their own names. Again,I feel this would be theft of my work.
6. It would affect all visual art: drawings, paintings, sketches, photos, etc.; past, present and future; published and unpublished; domestic and foreign.

Copyright law is not an abstract legal issue, but the basis on which many artists business rests. Artist's copyrights are the products we license and this means that infringing our work is like stealing our money. It's important to our businesses that we remain able to determine voluntarily how and by whom our work is used. Everything I and others artists create becomes part of our business inventory, and in the digital era, inventory is more valuable to artists than ever before.

I am writing not only on my behalf, but other artists as well because without community support none of us will succeed in creating and selling our work. Protection of our work protects our livelihood, and protects our rights.

Sincerely,

Karen Stopnicki