July 17, 2015

Re: Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

To Whom It May Concern:

Although my undergraduate degree is in fine art, I'm not a professional artist. But I am an author, and I have many friends who are illustrators. And one day I might choose to illustrate a book of my own.

It's critical that we're able to determine how and by whom our creative work is used, whether that work takes the form of words or imagery. Working in a creative field is hard. It takes discipline and skill, but more than that, perseverance. When one is finally able to make a living, it would be unthinkable for that living to be threatened by someone using one's creations without permission and compensation. Creative work is a product that we license, so infringing upon that work is like stealing. Work doesn't lose value upon publication, rather it remains part of our inventory, and in this digital age, this is even more important than before. In fact, I recently learned that one of my books that was published years ago was just licensed for use in an educational curriculum. Copyright law absolutely impacts our business, and sends a strong message about how we value art and creativity in this country. Many countries have public lending programs where visual artists and authors are paid for their already-published work to be used in public libraries where all citizens have access to it. While we don't have such a program in the U.S. (that I know of), we can at least protect the rights of individual creators to their own work.

Thanks so much for your time and consideration of this important issue,

Jessica Young