From: Jessica Bryant
Date: July 22, 2015
Attention: Copyright Office
Regarding: Notice of Inquiry for Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

I have been a professional artist for seven years. My work has appeared in several magazines and newspapers, at national exhibitions, in solo exhibitions, and at art fairs. I have won numerous awards and recognition for my paintings at both the local and national levels. I care very much about my work, it is my passion as well as my career. It is a struggle to bring home a living wage as a visual artist, particularly in this modern digital age where images saturate our daily lives and are too frequently viewed as something that belongs in the public domain.

I am a watercolor painter, working in great detail, often on large pieces. Since I easily spend 60-100 hours on a single painting, my original work is not inexpensive. The majority of my income comes from the sale of limited edition giclée prints. A tertiary income source is licensing use of my images for items such as posters and postcards. The value of my prints and image licenses depends on the scarcity of my images. If it were possible for a third party to reproduce my images without my consent or ownership, my ability to sell my prints and licenses at a price that affords me a liveable income would be compromised.

My income depends upon copyright law that protects digital images of my work as my property. My copyright is my product that I license. Infringing on my copyright is akin to robbing me of my income. No one should be allowed to monetize my work for their own profit without my knowledge or consent. It is essential that I remain able to determine, voluntarily, how and by whom images of my work are used. My work most certainly does not lose its value upon publication, instead when images of my work are published with proper credit, people contact me directly to purchase my prints, original paintings, and image licensing, and they know that these products are the only means of having access to my visual work. Everything I create becomes part of my business inventory, and this inventory is more valuable now than ever before. The digital era allows potential clients to view low-fi examples of my work online while copyright law requires that they contact me to purchase prints or the license to produce prints, posters, and other products.

Copyright is not an abstract legal issue for visual artists, it is the foundation upon which our business rests. Without copyright protection, we have no control of ownership of our product, no control over distribution, no claim to funds collected by third parties from sales of images, and therefore no means to survive as professional artists. Artists are a group that largely lacks the financial means to pursue legal action, and so we require the protection afforded by our image ownership and copyright.

Please, protect current copyright law for visual artists. Allow us artists to maintain our livelihood. Our visual creations are our intellectual property, please respect our work and don't create an environment that allows third parties to profit on our expertise and hard work. Thank you for your consideration.