July 23, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

RE: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

Dear Ms. Pallante and the Copyright Office Staff:

I am not a professional artist with an impressive career. At least, not yet. Next year, I will begin working for a cutting-edge degree in Interactive Design, which would qualify me to do not only traditional graphic design and illustration, but to tackle complex, interdisciplinary issues related to the 'accesss, distribution, and handling of information, knowledge, entertainment and interaction between people and systems'. I will learn to merge art with the newest technologies. But in order to do that, I, and all of my fellow aspiring artists, need to know that our work will be protected so that we can make a living off of it.

I am also not a U.S. citizen. A “good faith reasonably diligent search" would be much more likely to fail, and it would also be easier to have it purposefully fail to benefit the interests of a potential infringer. It's not clear how infringements on the rights of artists outside the U.S. would be handled. If, for example, these cases could only be settled in a Small Claims Court in the U.S., most infringement cases would go unpunished. There was a pointed lack of information and consideration for us. If I couldn't speak English, would my voice become unworthy of being heard?

As the IPA have said time and time again, artists' livelihoods depend on their ability to control what happens with their work. A good education in art is already expensive, it is already hard to break through in the industry, and it is already a difficult (and common) process to settle a copyright infringement case. The virtual loss of the ability to control my work if I even made it into the professional artistic world would drive me away from pursuing this career, and, once knowledge of the way things work under an Orphan Works regime becomes popular knowledge, I believe other aspiring artists would leave the field before they even enter it, too.

In the digital era, new generations of creators are crucial. Don't drive them away before they've even had the chance to contribute to the rapidly growing, exciting field that is art in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Veronica Turnbull
Aspiring Artist