Happy Beetle Studio

July 23, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Avenue 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 Copyright Office Staff:

Thank you for inviting comment on your inquiry involving copyright protection for visual works. I am hopeful that your doing so indicates a willingness to continue to protect the copyrights of working artists and illustrators, small proprietors, creative entrepreneurs and innovators who rely on your office to work in good faith on their behalf.

I am a scientific illustrator who worked for several years in the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History, where my work was copyrighted through KU. I since have run my own business for over a decade, mostly doing work for hire with the publishers of the scientific articles and books holding the copyright to my work. I am exploring expanding my market to works I would copyright myself, so the changes that your office seems to be proposing are both confusing and would work to have a chilling effect on my desire to do so. Many of my colleagues already working in nonprofit and commercial fields are very concerned as well. The changes seem designed to put an onerous burden on artists to protect themselves while allowing others, particularly large corporations and design companies, to reap the benefits of art they "harvest" for free from online and other sources with little burden put on them to obtain actual permissions or licensing agreements from the original authors and copyright holders to the work. This runs directly counter to the very principles and values by which the copyright office was originally founded.

I have a very hard time understanding how the competitive market and innovative spirit that currently exists in the United States would be improved by such a damaging change that knocks out the protections to individual artists in favor of people who are not producing the original work. I know you are too savvy to believe that this is a matter of little value, for the private entities who are trying to tinker with the current system and are lobbying you for the changes know they can reap great gains at little or no cost to themselves. But make no mistake, small companies and individual artists would lose a great deal. The market should not be determined by the size of one's lobbying and legal department budget.

Please truly protect the copyrights of artists and do not employ the mass digitization proposal or any of the changes you appear to be currently considering. Thank you for listening to our individual petitions, and I hope you lend them the weight they deserve.

Sincerely,

Sara L. Taliaferro

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