July 21, 2015

Dear Ms. Pallante & U.S .Copyright Office Staff:

Regarding: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

I am a professional artist and workshop facilitator. I have worked in the art field as a working artist and teacher for over 25 years. I taught high school and Jr. High art for 10 years and have volunteered in my local elementary school in art literacy. I have earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting and have paid for numerous classes to hone my skill and develop my art. My artwork is my livelihood. Currently I teach art workshops online and in person. I also paint commission work and sell artwork, and have been featured in publications such as Somerset Studio and Art Journaling Magazines, and images in the Mosaic Holy Bible. I have a website and regularly write a blog about living a life of art and faith. I post images to accompany my blog each week.

Please do not reverse the "copyright exists upon creation" from the Copyright Act of 1976. As a professional artist, copyright infringement has become a bigger problem in recent years due to the Internet. I learned the hard way, finding a popular image of mine used on hundreds of sites without permission, or appropriate credit. I've even had the signature taken off or cropped and quotes added etc. and then used for someone else's business. It is stealing.

Recently, I have registered some of my images with copyright.gov, but it is not financially feasible for me to register all of my numerous images. About a year ago, out of necessity, I now have a copyright attorney. I cannot stress how important it is that my work does not lose its value and protection when it is published. In the digital age of the Internet, copyright protection is now even more important! Copyright law is foundational to my life work and the source of income for my business. As an artist, I need to determine how my art is used. Please keep our copyright law and images secure! Artists' livelihood depends on it!

Sincerely,

Valerie Sjodin
Artist & Workshop Facilitator

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