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To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

Date: 03/20/2005

From: John R. Matthews

Comment:

I am a freelance fine artist against allowing orphaned copyrighted works to be made more easily available, for profit by others, without just compensation.

My storefront, or gallery, was my website (www.matthewsfineart.com) until late 2004. I had operated the website for about three years selling low-cost, quality, giclee open-edition prints I had created. Over that period of time I received comments regarding how easy it was to simply copy my artwork from the Internet and reprint it for personal consumption. I took that as a compliment, knowing the prints others created were inferior to my product. However, maintaining a website as a marketing tool was expensive, overall. I've since removed the website.

I continue to produce and copyright my material, but now consider the profits, and my legacy, will someday be realized by my children as part of their inheritance. I do not wish my property to be lost in the legal system due to the cost that may be imposed upon my heirs to show ownership or to see the copyrights are actively maintained, either because my name is vague or my children do not understand the "system."

Perpetuity of my artwork is my legal right whether I can be found, or not - dead or alive.