

COPYRIGHT

It was brought to our attention some time ago that one or two paintings may have contravened copyright law. Since this has become an issue for many art societies, we felt it appropriate to offer some information about copyright.

Copyright exists for the protection of the artist. The moment an original picture is painted or drawn or a photograph taken copyright is established on behalf of the artist or photographer. Copyright protection for artists is laid out in the copyright act 1956. It is a complicated act but the general rule is that the copyright of portraits in any media or photograph belongs to whoever commissioned them, where as copyright on all other art is owned by the artist regardless of whether the work is commissioned or not. Therefore even if you sell a painting the copyright remains with you and no one can legally reproduce it in any form without your permission.

If you are painting or drawing for your own pleasure and **Do Not** intend to sell the work then it is acceptable to copy or use any photographs or paintings or parts of them. You will often see students in art galleries sketching or painting copies of old masters for experience and practice. It is only when a copied work of art is offered for sale for financial gain that copyright law can be contravened.

As a general rule:

1. * If you copy another artists painting (For example "The Haywain" by John Constable) then you must sign the work with your own name and also give credit to the original artist by stating "after" Constable in the title. **(Not acceptable for Ringwood exhibition)**
2. * If you produce a painting that is in the style of another artist but your own idea and work it is usual to state in the title that it is in the style of that artist. **(Not acceptable for Ringwood exhibition)**
3. You must on no account copy all or part of any photograph or work of art that is not your own for the purposes of financial gain.
4. Downloading a photograph from the world wide web is also not allowed if you are going to copy it for commercial purposes. Many sites will allow you personal use such as the BBC. However you must read the terms and conditions carefully, as they usually prevent anyone from copying for personal gain. Similarly TV and DVD images are also copyrighted

Photographs

It is possible to purchase the right to use a photograph as an aid to produce a work of art. Some photographers are prepared to sell you that right but they may also sell that right to other artists as well! When purchasing the right to use a photo make sure you are purchasing the sole copyright to avoid duplication by another artist.

***However** the rules of the Ringwood Art Society remain the same in that all work entered for exhibitions **MUST BE ORIGINAL** (ie no copies) and produced from your **own sketches or photographs. Paintings produced from photographs purchased as sole copyright are acceptable.** We ask all members to be responsible for ensuring their exhibition paintings do not infringe copyright.

If there is doubt you may be asked to show evidence of the source of your work and if necessary the painting will be removed from the exhibition.

For those interested, more information on copyright can be found on www.wickpolia.com or from your local library.

Thank you to Janet & Colin Courtice, Lionel Foreman & Alan Gibson for their help in putting this article together

Ann Squire, Exhibition Secretary