

Copyright for artists – Top tips

1. Copyright is something that is automatically assigned to any piece of newly created art; it is an exclusive economic right granted to the creator of original work to permit or prevent other people from copying it.
2. Works are protected regardless of artistic merit, although they need to be original and display an artist's own intellectual creativity.
3. Copyright does not protect an idea, only the material expression of the idea.
4. Protecting your copyright is hugely important for any artist and this means that an understanding of contracts will help ensure that you retain your rights where appropriate and can set clear parameters for others whom you permit to reproduce your works. Copyright should not be assigned to another party without good reason and artists should have a strategy regarding how they use copyright to monetize their works.
5. A little-known aspect of copyright is **Moral Rights**. They relate to the artist's honour or reputation and give the artist:
 - The *right to be named as the artist of the work* (paternity right)
 - The *right to object to someone wrongly named the artist of his/her work* (false attribution right)
 - The *right to object to derogatory treatment of the work* (derogatory treatment right)

Moral rights can't be assigned to anyone else (unlike copyright), but they can be waived in UK law.

This resource has been adapted from blog post 'The importance of copyright to artists' by Patrick Ibbotson, November 2019.

Disclaimer: None of the information contained within this document should be construed as legal advice. Should specific legal advice be required, please consult the appropriate legal advisor.



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