



Stone Creek Textiles

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Your Work

Copyright allows creative people such as artists, photographers, musicians and writers to control the copying and use on-line of their work. Most uses of copyright works require permission from the copyright holder apart from some possible exceptional uses such as private study, teaching in schools or non-commercial research.

I don't think I could do any better than suggest that you consult the www.intellectual-property.gov.uk web site. They have a wealth of information on copyright, written clearly, explaining that copyright protection is automatic as soon as there is a record in any form of what has been created (there is no official registration). However, you may need to prove that you had the work at a particular time and there are ways that you can provide evidence of this. For example, you could deposit a copy with a bank or solicitor. Alternatively, you could send yourself a copy by special delivery post (which gives a clear date stamp on the envelope), leaving the envelope unopened on its return.

It is important to note, that this does not prove that a work is original or created by you. But it may be useful to be able to show that the work was in your possession at a particular date, for example where someone claims that you have copied something of theirs that was only created at a later date.

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With current technology it is very easy to copy an image; you just point a digital camera at it, put it on your scanner or download it from the Internet. However you need to consider whether it is legal or ethical to do so. If you take your own original photograph or produce your own artwork then you can use it in any way you wish as you will hold the copyright. So, if you have one, why not keep a camera with you and photograph anything that interests you. You can store your photographs on your computer or a CD/DVD which will

then give you a 'stash' to dip into whenever you want to incorporate an image into your work.

There is a wide selection of copyright free imagery available in books and on the Internet. Some images are completely free to use, some you can only use for non commercial purposes or for a restricted number of times. Don't assume that because something is downloadable that you have permission to copy it. Copying images for private study is usually acceptable (this is an exception granted for educational purposes), so collecting images for inspiration is ok but copying one slavishly is not.

Unless it is stated otherwise assume that books and magazines are copyright and you would, therefore, have to get written permission to use something from them. If you want to use any copyright material you can write to the copyright owner explaining what you want to use and how you want to use it. You can then work out with the owner any terms and conditions and possible payment of a fee or royalty.

Copyright is there to protect your work and other people's. At its basic level it is a 'do as you would be done by' situation. If you wouldn't want anyone else to copy your work without permission, don't do the same to anyone else.

The above is only a very brief summary, to the best of my understanding, of a complex subject – if you are in any doubt about your use of a particular image I would strongly recommend that you seek and obtain specific written permission or take informed legal advice.

For artists working outside the UK you will have to check the rules for your particular area. For somewhere to start have a look at <http://www.wipo.int/directory/en/> - this page gives a list of many countries with their respective copyright offices. In the USA have a look at www.copyright.gov. If you want to search further on the Internet for information on copyright you may find it under 'Intellectual Property'.

Another web site you might like to have a look at is:
www.lr.mdx.ac.uk/copyright/index.htm