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For Artists, A Way To Stop Ripoffs?

By GRACE GLUECK

WHEN Harry Toretsky, a New York artist, painted a picture of a giant whale, he had no idea that he had copied a painting by the late artist, Marc Chagall. The two paintings are nearly identical, and the Chagall painting may be worth $1 million. Toretsky is one of many artists who have been accused of copying famous works of art.

Toretsky's painting was purchased by a private collector for $5,000. Later, it was sold to a gallery for $10,000, and then to a museum for $20,000. The original Chagall painting was sold for $50,000.

Artists are often accused of copying the work of others, and the issue of copyright infringement is a major concern in the art world. Many artists have been sued for copyright violations, and some have even been banned from exhibiting their work.

For example, in 2007, the artist Andy Warhol was sued for copyright infringement by the Estate of Diego Rivera. The Estate claimed that Warhol had copied one of Rivera's paintings without permission. The case was settled out of court, and Warhol agreed to pay a large sum of money to the Estate.

Copyright law is designed to protect the rights of artists, but it is often difficult to enforce. Many artists are not aware of their rights, and some are not able to afford the legal costs of defending themselves.

The problem of copyright infringement is a complex one, and there is no easy solution. However, there are steps that artists can take to protect their work. For example, they can register their copyrights with the United States Copyright Office, which provides them with legal protection.

In addition, artists can use watermarks or other means of identifying their work, and they can license their work to others. This helps to ensure that people are not able to copy their work without permission.

Despite these efforts, copyright infringement continues to be a major problem in the art world. Artists are often forced to sell their work for a fraction of the value of their original creations, and many are unable to make a living from their art.

The issue of copyright infringement is a complex one, and there is no easy solution. However, with the help of lawyers and other professionals, artists can take steps to protect their work and ensure that they are fairly compensated for their creativity.