

Book review — *Owning It: a Creative's guide to Copyright, Contracts and the Law*

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Owning It: a Creative's guide to Copyright, Contracts and the Law

By Sharon Givoni

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Sharon Givoni's goal in writing *Owning It* was to produce a succinct, user-friendly guide for creatives to help them navigate their way around the law. And the result is exactly that. *Owning It* has all the content of a weighty legal tome, without the impenetrable complexity. This book is a must for the bookcases of anyone in the creative industries who wants to understand their legal rights and better protect their creative efforts.

While very user-friendly, at over 500 pages long Givoni's book is no pamphlet. Copyright, ownership, trade marks, moral rights, misleading and deceptive conduct, passing off, contract — Givoni tackles all the law that matters for those working in the creative industries. The book is broken down into five separate colour-coded parts:

- The Basics;
- Creating Your Work;
- The Law for Creatives;
- Your Creative Business; and
- Prevention and Cure.

Each part is rich with accurate, accessible and well-written legal information, including “takeaway tips” at the end of each chapter to summarise exactly what it all means.

Owning It is a wellspring of relevant and critical legal information, written for the non-lawyer. Each chapter clearly sets out the law and provides real-world examples of how that law can play out in practice. There is little doubt that every legal question that passes through a creative mind will find an answer in this book. Who owns my work if I am a contractor? How can I protect my design? What rights do I have if my work is being used without my permission? What is the difference between an assignment and a licence? How do I register a trade mark? What is a patent? There is information on filming in public places, censorship, the internet and social media, parody or satire and royalty rights. The book even addresses the very delicate, and often vexed, issue of “working with lawyers”.

Whether you are a photographer, designer, painter, sculptor, writer, blogger, tattoo artist, jeweller, architect, or just wish you were, this book is a must. And importantly, this is not only a book for creatives — there is great information and advice for anyone interested in the intersection between creativity and the business of creativity, including tips on contracts, model releases, trade promotions and competitions and insurance. I would hazard a guess there would even be a few entertainment lawyers furtively flicking through its instructive pages.

And all this in a great package. The hardcover book is wrapped in stylish black with each page replete with useful tables, illustrations and photographs. This is a book fit to adorn the Noguchi coffee table of every design studio, advertising agency, gallery and art studio in Australia.

As a former filmmaker myself, it is clear that this is an incredibly valuable resource for anyone involved in the creative process. It is often the case that the creative mind is not overly concerned with the mundanity of contracts, legal structures, ownership and rights. But it is always the case that they should be. *Owning It* not only provides a great overview of these things, but allows the reader to delve deeper into how the intangibility of

creative thought can be protected, creative pursuits rightly compensated and how the law can work to foster and drive the creative process.

I mean, in short, how could anyone really go past a book that includes a section called “parody or satire in trade marks”?

Owning It: a Creative’s guide to Copyright, Contracts and the Law is available online and in selected

Australian bookstores and retail outlets — see www.owningit.com.au for more information.



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