To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter to address the Orphan Works Act that is being proposed by the US Copyright Office. Let me start by pleading with you not to support the passage of this Act. For anyone involved in the drafting of this legislation who may not understand or have ever been informed of what it's like to be a working artist and the struggles that accompany this career path, let me say that this Act would effectively cripple us in every way imaginable. Already we struggle every single day with the complex, personal and psychological challenge of creating artwork that can reflect our individuality yet also be worthy of monetary compensation by other entities. Every day we cope with severe self-doubt, depression and anxiety related to this challenge. We are underpaid, undervalued, and most of us are barely getting by. Then there comes the challenge of finding clients. This industry is extremely harsh to beginning artists and as such it takes many artists more than 6 years to be able to support themselves with their work, and that is after countless years invested in finding a style of work that companies or individuals will hire you for. Once we have found a client, our next struggle is ensuring this client is trustworthy. Countless artists have fallen prey to cruel schemes and unethical practices that take advantage of the vulnerability present within the process of commissioning work. This Act would make it easy and legal for our work and our ideas to be stolen, manipulated, circulated beyond our knowledge for the monetary gain of others and it's shocking that this is even being considered. This is our only livelihood, many of us have gone through years of intense study and have loans to pay back. When our work is taken from us, it's not only the financial gains from that work that we lose. We are robbed of the precious ideas that we ourselves gave birth to and come to us so rarely and with so much difficulty. This act would only serve to make every aspect of our lives and careers unimaginably more difficult. The current Copyright Law which grants rights to creators automatically upon creation is a godsend in this industry. It is the one thing not working against us among a mountain of challenges. To require us to register every single piece we have ever and will ever make is impossible. It's an insane amount of work to require of us. To have to come up with an idea worthy of a client's needs, the execute that idea to perfection, to deliver that piece within already near impossible deadlines and also to have to worry about then registering that work on top of everything else is insane. I am a graduate from the illustration program at Calstate Long Beach, I am a freelancer illustrator, I am 24, and I have been a working artist for less than 5 years. Already I have volumes of sketches, paintings, finished pieces and more. I cannot even fathom the amount of time it would take me to register all this work and I am one person. I can't even fathom how one of the "commercial registries" would even be able to organize and handle the influx of works to be registered under this awful Act. And then to grant the public "privileges" to any unregistered work is essentially forcing us all to go through this harrowing process that seems impossible to begin with. In addition this Act proposes to allow copycats to remake our work with slight alterations and claim it as their own. This is DESPICABLE. This is legalized theft of intellectual property and I do not want to live in a world where this is seen as okay. If you grant organizations the right to steal our ideas we have nothing. We cannot survive. We as independent workers cannot afford to charge the low rates some copycat business would be able to charge for the stolen and modified work. This is taking away our source of work, our source of income and what makes us who we are. The

“reform” proposed in this new Act is the brainchild of large internet firms who seek an opportunity to profit off the work of hard working individuals by legally stealing from them and this CANNOT be allowed to pass. Copyright law is not some abstract, distant legal issue, copyright law directly impacts my livelihood, and the thought of this law passing would effectively ruin the career path that I have dreamt of as long as I can remember. Please give me a chance to be able to do what I love. Please allow us to maintain control of what we create, it is the only way we can survive. Our work does not lose value upon publication, and for many of us who have not yet reached a level of success, most of our work remains unpublished. To give people the right to use “orphaned” works like this is robbing us before we are ever able to profit off of it. Everything I have ever created contributes towards my identity as an artist and helps build a working identity that I can support myself off of. Do not give businesses a right to take any of this away from me. My work is mine and should remain so, whether it has been published or not, registered or not. They are my ideas, my lifetime of pursuit of this career, countless hours spent, and in an instant this can all be taken from me by some faceless organization who has done nothing to contribute to the creation of the work. There is no possible way to call this Act fair. Again, please think of the hundreds of thousands of individuals you would be negatively impacting by passing this law, but don’t think of them as a faceless statistic or number, think of the mother who has supported herself for years by doing this and who would be derailed by this act. Think of the college graduate who has barely begun her life and who now faces a devastating blow to the career she has loved and wanted all her life. Think of them as real people with hard lives who are just trying to get by doing the only thing they know. Please think of us and don’t let this Act pass.

Sincerely,

Elisa Ang

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