To the Copyright Office re the Orphan Works Act:

I am a retired illustrator turned painter. I was a commercial artist and illustrator for over 30 years. I hold an A.A. degree in commercial art and a B.F.A. in illustration. I also taught illustration courses at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California for twenty years. As a commercial artist and illustrator, I have worked for companies and been an independent contract illustrator. I am now embarking on a new direction as a painter. I have sold some paintings and received several awards.

As an illustrator, my copyrights were the products I could license. I could also sell the original. This helped me a great deal toward earning an honest living. Each time someone did or would use my work without payment cost me my income.

Artists have always struggled with retaining the rights to their work. I am concerned about the Congress's third attempt to enact Orphan Works legislation.

This legislation, should it be passed and enacted could cause a great deal of harm to those of us in the visual arts field. This legislation would void my Constitutional right to the exclusive control of my own work. Anyone could use my work for their own purposes without acknowledging or paying me. It would force me to register my work with costly commercial registries or open me up to having my work be considered "orphaned". Anyone could use or alter my work. I would not welcome anyone using my art for their own profit without my knowledge and consent.

Now that I and other artists have websites, we are at even greater risk of having our work stolen. Please help to protect me from theft of my work.

Best Regards,
Diana Thewlis