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Attn.: United States Copyright Office

Dear officials of the U.S. Copyright office,
I have been a freelance illustrator for over 30 years, since 1982. I have a BFA degree in illustration from Parsons School of Design, NYC. I have won numerous awards. Most of my work has been editorial: clients have been national newspapers and magazines, such as New York Times, Boston Globe. I have also done promotional art for companies, such as for Herman Miller or Neiman Marcus. Illustration is financial survival for me. I was trained as an illustrator, drawing and painting is my only life skill.

In all cases, I earn my income and maintain control over my work by selling not the art, but the specific rights to reproduce the art. Pricing is always a reflection of the type and extent of the usage.
Once a piece has been published, it becomes a part of my business inventory. I am able to sell the image again, either for more usage from same client, or usage from a different source, thus generating more income. I have NEVER, signed a contract or made an agreement to allow others to use my work endlessly without being compensated; I have turned away work where the contract insisted on keeping the copyrights (such as Boston Globe, and others, after 1999).

Although I have kept very clear records of all jobs that I have done in 33 years, I have never registered my work with your office, there is simply too much of it.
I am concerned that art can very easily be lifted off of the internet or even from a printed page without my knowledge and then re-purposed without my name on it, and I may never know. In terms of finding and pursuing these cases legally, it would be difficult, and most likely the financial burden would only be worth it in a case with a very high profile or highly funded company. I have always hoped I could rely on the U.S. Copyright Office for laws that would back me up if there were a serious infringement.

I have produced and released into the world thousands of images. One concern I have is that if there were an "Orphan Works" law passed, allowing any image whose author supposedly could not be named and/or found, to be re-used by anyone who pleases, then I would be destroyed as a creative content-producer. I have way too many images to put into any kind of public filing system, and I produce more every day, it would be an exhaustive project. Plus, if there were ANY fees involved , it would be a huge financial burden.

Seeing the art that you created from your own hand and personal experience being used without permission feels like having one's child kidnapped. It is a truly sickening feeling. I have only had this experience on three occasions, but I believe if your current Orphan Works laws are enacted, it would happen all the time.

I am writing to ask you to please consider the rights of artists, who are already rarely paid well for the work that they do. We need to be protected from others who would unfairly harvest our copyrights, thus stealing our identities and our

incomes. In a society where artists are discouraged from creating and sharing, there will be little cultural inspiration, and no hope.
Anyone wishing to use art can perfectly well pay an artist to create something new, as ethical companies do; they are not in any way abused by not being allowed to take something of someone else's for free.

Sincerely,
Blair Thornley