Copyright Office,

I realize that Copyright law needs to be re-examined periodically, especially in light of the digital revolution. However, as a working artist, I have to ask you to be very careful when dealing with the ownership of my images, and the images of anyone else who creates them -- for a living or otherwise.

It seems that the Copyright Office has been very diligent in protecting the rights of writers -- as has the Patent Office been diligent in protecting the rights of corporate creativity. There is no reason why those of us who create images, and make a living by them, deserve any less consideration.

As well as creating and selling original paintings, I sell prints and cards of those images. I have been working hard for 40 years now, and I sincerely believe that I am the one who deserves the moderate financial compensation I receive for my diligence. Is there really anyone presently working at the Copyright Office who sincerely believes that any person or entity who merely lifts my images from the internet should be entitled to own them?

There are no “orphan works”. Period. Are there “orphan books”? Are there “orphan pharmaceuticals”? Are there “orphan operas”? Is there “orphan software”? Images which are created by individuals who have devoted their lives to their craft need to be treated with the same respect in the marketplace. Creativity is where we have put our lives and our energies. To not respect that fact is to discourage creativity.

Obviously, there is money to be made from stealing the creativity of others. But the Copyright Office should be guarding against theft -- not promoting it.

Please stand up to the lobbyists -- and, instead, honor the artists.

Thank you,
Alan Sanborn
Arcata CA