To the United States Copyright Office,

My name is Matthew McEntire. I am a freelance illustrator living in South Carolina and I am writing today to voice my opposition to the Orphan Works Act. The career of an artist, freelance especially, relies on being able to maintain a copyright on their own work. By having a copyright on the artwork an artist creates, they gain the ability to sell a variety of usage rights to their clients in order to ensure that the artist is generating enough income to live off. For example: An artist can sell an image to a client with the allowance of it being printed for book covers. If the client would then want to sell things like posters of the image, they would then have to re-negotiate the right to do so with the artist. This results in an added income for the artist and increased protection of their work, meaning they do not have to worry quite so much about their work being exploited by the client.

Were the Orphan Works Act to be put into practice, however, an artist would not own any of their artwork that is not registered. This would mean before any freelance artist could even begin negotiations for the use of their image, they would have to register it in order to prevent it being stolen by their client or having it stolen from them AND their client by another party. This act is a prime example of corruption in legislation as it would not effect companies in the slightest save for giving them a way to profit off somebody else's work. They would be able to take any image off the internet and use it for their own gain without the artist ever even knowing. This happens already and is a huge problem in the artistic community, but the Orphan Works Act would make it legal unless it is registered.

Being a professional artist is very difficult to begin with but the Orphan Works Act would make it nearly impossible as there would be no protection granted to an artist's work without registration and companies would be able to profit extensively off of work they do not own. If a blacksmith forges a knife, taking it, claiming to own it and selling it is theft. An artist's work should be no different.

Thank you for your time,

Matthew McEntire