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U.S. Copyright
Orphan Works

Dear U.S. Copyright Office,

Time is precious so I will try to be as brief as possible. I am a proud Illustration BFA graduate from the California State University of California Long Beach and freelance illustrator for over 20 years. Much like many other professions, time is money to an artist, yet rarely equally compensated.

Trying to make a living as an artist is a time consuming task made all the more difficult by explaining to non-artists how much time and effort is placed into creating something. Years of training towards a practice is often neglected when a client approaches an illustrator for work, let alone the amount of preparation and research time an artist has to do in order to harness the correct visual language the client is looking for.

The income I rely upon does not cease at work only published, but whole heartedly through the digital networking I spend valuable time and resources towards. One of the few places artists are able to regain some of these losses is through copyright protection on the inventory of art we create; a protection that we rely upon since we must showcase our inventory publicly in order to attract new clients while ensuring that the products we collaborate on will be protected. When you restrict that right from the artist through this act, you limit our rights on who and how our inventory is used.

I spend a majority of my time as an illustrator, creating concept art for a catalogue of work for future clients to view publicly so copyright protection is at the basis of my business model. The Orphan Works Act means I must now allocate more time towards protecting my work against those who would seek to obtain my labor for free rather than spending time making creating more art for existing and future paying clients.

Please do not add more challenges to the life of a starving artist by moving forward on the Orphan Works Act.

Sincerely,

Michael Clute