I am writing in today to express my concern regarding the Orphan Works and Mass Digitization act. The act would allow mass theft under the guise of "promoting the progress of science". The notion that scientific progress is being hampered by orphan works is absurd, as the act in, its own language, fails to cite a single case of this occuring, in a way that is relevant to the "progress of science" And if it cannot provide us with relevant examples, we must then assume they do not exist, or that the writers were to careless to spend sufficent time to produce them. Neither of these two options grants me much faith in the Act's ability as it has been proposed to do.

Equally concerning is the fact that it would have ruinous effect on visual artists. These “reforms” as they wish to call them, would allow the internet companies to stock their databases with our images, by either forcing the artist to hand over the work as ‘registered’ works or having unregistered work treated as orphans and copyrighting them as “derivative works”. For some reason, while acknowledging that this will cause special problems for visual artists, the Copyright Office has concluded that the artists should still be subject to orphan work laws.

This act would press for mass digitization of our intellectual property by corporate interests, and put the burden on the artists to prove that these companies did not appropriately search for them. Corporate attorneys and lobbyists have suggested in the past that one an artist has published a work, it has no further value to them and should be turned over to the public. This is little more than robbery. Artists depend on their collected works to live off of, and this act functionally waives the responsibility of companies to find and compensate artists.

Please consider the burden this will put on working artists

Sincerely,

Matthew Cowdery