July 20, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

Dear Copyright Office:

I am writing to you specifically on July 20th to ask that you not replace our existing copyright law with the revised legislation currently under consideration.

Art has been a part of my life since I was a child. I only just started making a living off of it. I was very excited to get my first commissions and am currently still working on them. I feel renewed whenever I get a commission and it's really a wonderful feeling to create for others. I have had to overcome many things but the support of my friends, sisters, and fans have been overwhelming and have kept me strong.

Now I am hearing about the Orphan Works Act. What it is telling me is that I cannot freely make a living off of my work and safely let the world view it without corporations or political groups getting greedy over them. That tells me, a budding new artist, that my dreams are going to stay dreams because I would rather not create if it means someone else owns and profits off of it. This infringement on my creativity tells me that I will lose exclusive control over my own projects.

I pour my soul into each piece and to hear that the public is going to be allowed to use it, or that I am forced to make it public, or that any piece I have created before will be available for commercial infringement by "good faith" infringers...all of this is a slap in the face to me. I wanted to bring people together through my work because of the things I create. Yet I am being told that I will not be safe doing so—that what I currently create, have created, and will create is no longer mine. This is terrifying for a new artist like myself and for those who dream of becoming an artist.

I support Congressman Jerrold Nadler's American Royalties Too (ART) Act of 2015. It may not be a perfect solution to the current black hole that is reprographic licensing in the US, but it contains a provision that would create an honest visual arts collecting society that would begin returning lost royalties to artists. This would at least start to bring transparency, accountability and justice to artists' secondary licensing rights, and I thank the Copyright Office for recommending this bill to Congress.

Thank you for your time,

Priscilla Vo, Freelance Illustrator