Re: New US Copyright Act 2015:

If I get out of my car and accidentally left a book of photos on the roof, would it be acceptable for someone to simply take it because it is outside of my car? The proposal to allow orphaned visual works to simply become part of the public domain brings this question to mind: what is property? This question is particularly significant in today's world where camera phones generate literally millions-if not billions-of pictures. Since most of these photos will probably never be registered, are they orphans? Is it all right for someone to simply lift a picture of my family waterskiing, camping, celebrating a 90-year olds birthday and use it in their brochure or call it their own? Should I have the "privilege" of using someone's else's creative output simply because it is there or should I ask permission? I think the only privilege that exists is to ask permission of the individual.

My understanding of the copyright law changes under consideration prompted me to turn to merriam-webster.com and look up some definitions. Plagiarism was one word I wanted to get a handle on; "orphan" and "accountability" are two others requiring more specific review. Why these words? The information I have received states that the new copyright law "would allow others to alter your work and copyright those "derivative works" in their own names." (http://www.drawger.com/holland/) So the "others" are not under any pressure to credit their source or accept the fact that someone created something that, for whatever reason, they could not. The "others" are allowed to remain delusional about their creative endeavor without being at all accountable and admitting the truth that the work is in fact not theirs. This sounds like plagiarism to me. What does the definition say? "..(1) to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : (2) use (another's production) without crediting the source : to commit literary theft : present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. Why would the United States government want to promote this fundamental change of values? Who is benefiting from this? The artists? The creators? No, the people or companies who cannot or will not hire the photograper to create their own product. So, according to the dictionary, your proposed changes would be allowing and encouraging people or companies to lie. Is this a value you hope will grow stronger?

For the last fifteen-years plus, I have noticed the tendency for politicians and others in our society to avoid taking responsibility: to rewrite a story so they come out looking good, and not bad. What is accountability according to merriam-webster: "the quality or state of being accountable; especially : an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. While a push to have more original works copyrighted is the standard to work for, it does not serve anyone to have works copyrighted by people who did not shoot the scenes themselves.

Which leads to the final definition, that of "orphan". Turning to merriam-webster for the last time, we see that an orphan is "....a child deprived by death of one or usually both parents".
Is the original artist necessarily dead?

Currently, I am moving more deeply into the field of photography from architecture. Since I am just starting out, I would probably be considered a hobbyist although my goal is sell my work. If someone else sells my work, they are taking a profit that doesn't actually belong to them. Most importantly, like a book, a play or a song, my work will gain value through publication and this value should reflect back to me. My work has been installed in various galleries throughout Northern NJ for the last 3 years.

We protect the written word. Why can't we protect the visual artists and their 3-dimensional expression?