I am a single parent from Texas and writing to ask that considerations be made to allow photographers, artists and designers to be allowed to maintain control of their work in order to survive. My life meant dealing with a negligent spouse who has failed to pay any support for 13 years and having a child with special needs which made it vital that I be able to work and care for child at home. Our means were so limited, that had nothing but a pen and paper. With it, I was able to create designs for several great companies and to build relationships that were primarily our sole means of support for many years and which I was hoping to be the case for years to come .

These relationships were hard won and relied upon a very high level of trust and honesty. Contracts were sometimes complicated and required long, negotiations for specific terms that fit my customer's specific needs and wants. Current buzz about Orphan Works puts all that contract negotiation at risk and therefore my business relationships as well.

The constant "lessening" of measures to prevent the theft of visual IP is making it so difficult to protect artwork and photos, that are making it nearly impossible for creators to create in our attempt to let non-creatives monetize other people's work. Anything that winds up online Is at risk because the major players that want to be able to take whatever they find and use it keep telling the general public (and particularly college students) that anything on the internet.

Is just "fair game" and free for the taking. I don't think I know a single artist or designer or photographer that is not having to deal with incidents of unauthorized use. Some is truly accidental and not intentional, but an increasing amount is outright theft for profit. Artists are NOT a particularly wealthy group and the further costs of registries and formal copyright is a discouraging factor that we all deal with and which will prevent the public from getting to enjoy so many wonderful works.

This continual threat also means that measures to protect IP that in the past are constantly be circumvented – stripping of metadata and the constant "crawling" of private websites and now the pitfalls of social media are all taking it's toll. The wonderful imagery on the internet is becoming tiny, watermarked, thumbnails and people are starting to find ways to lock down and password protect their sites in an effort to stop the theft. The idea that now everything you create needs to be copyrighted, then paid to be placed in a registry without any owner controls is just wrong.

I post less and less work online and am sharing less and less and it is effecting my business and client relations, but it seems to be the only recourse when faced with the current environment.

Please, please help protect our wonderful artistic community and help it to thrive. If we continue to cater to the huge companies and the greedy opportunists seeking to monetize "orphans", we loose so much culturally. The arts are a source of enjoyment and enrichment for so many – don't let us all loose out to the greed and avarice of those who are, in the end, ultimately proving the immeasurable value of the arts in the USA.

Kind Regards,

Val Wilson

Texas

.