July 20, 2015

U.S. Copyright
Orphan Works

Dear U.S. Copyright Office,

As an illustrator and animator who has recently entered the professional world, please hear me out.

I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the Univeristy of the Arts in Philadelphia, and recently I have published the illustrated book "Martians and Moguls".

Copyright is most crucial to artists like me who wish to claim their original work as their own.

For new artists it is difficult find professional work. The first place to start is building a portfolio and gaining credibility.

In order for potential clients to consider hiring me, I need to be able to post my work in the form of a portfolio or a web page. The work in question needs to be easily available to the public, or free of charge, but my work needs to be protected under copyright law nonetheless.

Just because the work is posted online for free, it doesn't mean it should be made easier for someone to copy it, erase my name, sign their own, and make a profit from it while I am still seeking employment.

Art pieces in a portfolio are expected to be original, and I should reserve the right to claim myself as the rightful creator when I post it on my website.

Suppose someone was to copy an image from my online portfolio. If it were made easier for the person stealing the art piece and to financially profit from it before I had the chance, it would severely damage my own credibility as an artist if an employer suspected me to be the plagiarist or associated with something inappropriate.

It would become harder still for me to find work as an artist, and it would be as though I was refused a job for a criminal act even though I had done nothing wrong.

No one wants to be left badly disadvantaged for a crime they did not commit.

Thank you very much for your time,

Victoria M. Heckman