

The Arnside Studios Artists Statement

As stated in the manifesto, this is an anti-dalinian* movement. We are not interested in personal or individual status; we find that to be a distraction from the value of the artwork itself.

What we are trying to propagate here is beauty for its own sake without anybody standing proudly in front of it (if that makes sense). If you take the Artist out of the picture then all you are left with is his work which, in the last analysis, is more important than the man (regardless of what biographers and art historians might tell you). The Artist is the servant of his work. Not the other way round.

So, the reason why I don't use my own name is because I cringe at the thought of "robbie-di-vito.com" as it would suggest that *I* am really important. I've no doubt that my work is important but I really don't see why I should be; I don't see why I as an individual person really need to be present there at all.

Of course I am the sole member of Arnside Studios, and I always will be, but it nonetheless remains a collective in spirit, and this is *not* the same as me simply operating under a pseudonym. No. The name of the collective adds a crucial distance not just between myself and my work but between *any identifiable individual* and my work. It gives the viewer the opportunity to engage with my work without having to encounter *me* so directly.

Even if the work is a self-portrait, it is still just a portrait done by one of our members. It is not being presented as a self-portrait or even as a portrait at all, it is simply being presented by an anonymous collective as a drawing or painting of no-one or nothing in particular which does not by any means need to be viewed in relation to the person from whose appearance it was drawn.

(Now if Arnside Studios were to do a self-portrait, that would be an entirely different thing and probably a very interesting experiment. An abstract entity creating a self-portrait...)

The other reason why it's 'Arnside Studios' and not 'Robbie di Vito' is because it is at least a little bit funny. It did after all begin as a kind of satire of my hopeless situation after I graduated from my BA and was working in my old bedroom at my parents' house on my own with absolutely no network around me and no obvious opportunities. Such is the spirit in which it was conceived, and so this is the spirit in which it continues today.

One of the first slogans I came up with for Arnside Studios was "Making Art Regardless". It's about the idea of being far from the ideal situation but nonetheless continuing the creative practice because it is just *that* important and it always will be.

We make art regardless of any lack of funding or resources, we persevere in all circumstances. We don't need to wait for any miracle to happen before we feel able to proceed, we can proceed from here, just as we are, and see where we end up...

* Doing the opposite of Salvador Dalí