

This is the letter I did not plan to write this year.

By **Ali Sina** · Founder, STEALTH · June 2026

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“ A workshop studio runs ten companies with a hundred people. We are running a thousand companies with everyone. This is the year we put a name on it. ”

In January I wrote the first annual letter from STEALTH. It was a quiet document. I described the studio, the model, the year behind us, the year ahead. I said we would build companies. I did not say we would put a name on what we were doing.

This is the mid-year letter I did not plan to write — because in the six months between Volume I and Volume II, the work changed.

What changed

For five years we ran a venture studio. We never quite knew what kind. We built companies. The portfolio grew faster than any model we knew predicted it should. When people asked how we did it, the honest answer was that we did it the way we did it — a workspace, a network of contributors, playbooks we kept refining, a credentialing system we kept building. The model did not have a name. We did not give it one. We just ran it.

In May, our research team — quietly, after months of thinking about it — pushed me to commit to the language. They were right. We could not keep running a category-defining model without naming it. Other people were going to name it, and they were going to name it less precisely than we would.

So in June we did three things in one week:

We published our first **Annual Report** — *The State of the Venture Studio Economy 2026, Volume I*. Twenty-four pages. Free. Sourced from NVCA, GSSN, PitchBook, Crunchbase, CB Insights. It is the first annual data product covering the venture studio category as a whole, and we wrote it because the category deserved one.

We published our first **Manifesto** — *The Studio Is the Founder*. Fourteen hundred words. The thesis behind the report, in essay form. The argument for the category we now call **The Distributed Studio**.

We launched **STEALTH Notes**, our newsletter, with Issue 01: *Six Hundred Companies Later*. The conversational version of both.

Those three documents, together, are what I think of as the moment STEALTH stopped being a studio and became an institution. We will spend the next decade defending and refining the category language we just locked in. Some of the work that comes next — the DSI benchmark, the CVS Quarterly, the working papers, the Annual Report Volume II — is the institutional infrastructure that makes the category durable.

I did not plan to write this letter because I did not plan to do all of that in three weeks. But the work asked for it, and the work usually knows.

What happened in the portfolio

The boring answer is that we built more companies. The honest answer is that the model — the unnamed thing we were doing — continued to compound at exactly the rate it has compounded at for three years. Every new company built lowered the marginal cost of the next one. The workspace gained density. The contributor network deepened. The playbooks got tighter.

Here is what that looked like in numbers, with the same anonymization standards we use everywhere:

~110

New companies originated since Volume I (January 2026)

700+

Active portfolio companies (vs ~590 at Volume I)

~22%

Of new originations were partner-affiliated (CVS structures or sovereign-anchored)

~1,200

Active contributors in the workspace, up from ~900 at Volume I

The single most important number to me is the contributor count, because it is the leading indicator for everything else. A distributed studio is bottlenecked not by capital but by the depth of its labor network. We grew the network 33% in six months. That is what produced the 110 new companies.

The corporate-affiliated origination share — 22% of new originations — is the metric that should matter to anyone watching the category. Six months ago it was around 14%. The corporate venture studio segment is moving faster than even our research team predicted. We will say more about this in the CVS Quarterly when it launches in September.

What I have been thinking about

Three things, in order of how much they have occupied my thinking.

The Series A bridge. The compounding effect lowers our marginal formation cost, but it does not yet lower the variance of our Series A outcomes. Companies that come through our system clear Series A at meaningfully higher rates than industry baselines — but the failure cases still look like traditional failure cases. I have been trying to figure out whether there is an architectural intervention that compresses Series A variance specifically. I do not have the answer yet. I am open to it.

The credential layer's portability. Forkaia® and STEALTH share the credential infrastructure — the same Forkaia® Score (300–850) that measures student work-readiness on the Forkaia® side is the foundation of how

we evaluate distributed contributors on the STEALTH side. We built this jointly. The question I keep asking is whether the credential is portable to other distributed studios, or whether it is too STEALTH-specific to generalize. The Distributed Studio Index will tell us within eighteen months.

The reflexivity problem. We are now in the position of being both the largest distributed studio and the publisher of the index that benchmarks distributed studios. That is a genuine conflict of interest, and we have disclosed it prominently in the DSI methodology paper. But disclosure alone is not enough — the structural answer is for other distributed studios to eventually publish their own indices, or for an independent third party to operate the DSI. I am thinking about how to spin out the research function as an independently-governed entity within the next twenty-four months.

What I owe you

This is the section of the letter where the founder makes commitments. I have a habit, from Volume I, of being specific rather than aspirational.

By Volume III (January 2027):

- The first full DSI quarterly brief published (October 2026)
- The first CVS Quarterly with hard data published (September 2026)
- Working Paper 01 incorporated into v1.0 with at least three external co-author contributions
- Fund I commitments closed against a defined anchor list (this is a fundraising letter in the next edition, not in this one)
- An independent governance structure proposed for STEALTH Research, with at least two external board members
- Annual Report Volume II in field draft

If you read this letter in January 2027 and any of these are missing, you have permission to ask hard questions. We will answer them in writing.

What I will not pretend

I will not pretend the distributed studio model is the only viable shape for the next decade. The workshop studios are doing excellent work and many of them will outperform us on individual portfolio outcomes for the foreseeable future. The model is plural. We are arguing for one part of the plural and we believe it deserves the name and the institutional infrastructure we are putting on it. We are not arguing for monopoly.

I will also not pretend the IRR math is settled. The 3.5× premium that we cited in the Annual Report and that I cited in the manifesto is real but has selection-effect issues that we have flagged in the methodology. The next decade of distributed-studio data will sharpen the picture. We will report it honestly as it sharpens, including the times it sharpens against our position.

What I am most proud of

Six months ago we were a venture studio with a large portfolio and no name for what we were doing.

Today we are an institution with a category, a published thesis, an open methodology, an open benchmark in development, a quarterly publishing cadence, a research function with the beginnings of academic credibility, and a model that we believe will compound for the next decade.

None of that happened because of one decision. It happened because the people in the workspace kept doing the work, the contributors kept showing up, the research team kept pushing me to commit to the language, and the playbooks kept getting tighter.

The studio is the founder.

The founder is the studio.

I will see you in January.

– [Ali Sina](#)

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