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For this exhibition I was asked to reflect upon my process as a scholar over the last fifteen years. Coincidentally, exactly fifteen years ago, I entered the College of William and Mary as an undergraduate, only recently finishing my Ph.D. in 2011. My experience then very much reflects the transition from student to scholar, a journey many of you may take upon leaving Agnes Scott. My statement is not only about producing scholarship, but also about the process of mastering my field.

Over the last decade, my studies and research have focused on the architecture of Rome and, specifically, the work of Carlo Rainaldi, one of the most significant baroque architects. Essential to my training was the time I spent (nearly two years) in the Eternal City. With hundreds of baroque churches and palaces, Rome is a veritable classroom for the history of architecture, and I passed many hours wandering the streets with the tools of my trade: the best scholarly guidebooks of the city, photocopies of early modern maps of Rome, a camera, binoculars (to see architectural details), and a sketchbook. This last tool was perhaps the most important. Sketching is, in fact, an essential tool for the architectural historian. Drawing focuses the eyes and mind, forcing us to look closely and thoughtfully at the details of architecture, while creating a more vivid memory of buildings and spaces. Some of my most interesting observations and ideas have come while I was sketching. In this exhibition, I've included a few drawings from my time in Rome. These drawings, and the knowledge I gained by sketching, remain invaluable to my research, and I still refer to my notes and drawings from years ago.

My research involves not just close looking at architecture but time in the Roman archives. Italians in the early modern period kept copious records, a circumstance that is both a blessing and a curse for modern scholars! The process of digging through these records can be a tedious one, to say nothing of the challenge of deciphering and transcribing seventeenth-century writing.

Documents are rarely carefully inventoried, and I've spent a great deal of time flipping through large volumes of material in the remote chance I would find something of interest. Ultimately, the rewards of patient study are well worth it. Documents have enabled me to bring to life the personality of Carlo Rainaldi, his intellectual interests, and the struggles of particular commissions. Moreover, it is always a thrill to hold documents and drawings that are hundreds of years old.

The processes of looking, researching, thinking, and writing are interwoven for me as an art historian, but writing always seems to be the trickiest part. I don't have many rituals or habits to help me through the process, but I've found that I'm most productive in the early morning. The world is quiet before sunrise, and even my dogs, Lego and Fisher, are too sleepy to come pester me for treats or playtime. I roll out of bed and sit at my dining room table, which is littered with books, notebooks, scraps of paper, and half empty glasses of water. Then I write. Like most people, I find a blank page absolutely daunting, and when I first start a project, I just put anything on the page, no matter how simple or inchoate my thoughts are. The writing accumulates, and eventually I have a draft to work

with. Editing, my favorite part of the process, is where all the magic happens. There is an art to shaping and refining the raw material of writing, and at a certain point, it no longer feels like work—until I get stuck.

How do I get past writer's block? Strategy one: a walk. For short-term writer's block or fatigue, movement seems to reinvigorate my thoughts, and ten or fifteen

Wilde and Jeanette Winterson. Their often-cerebral writings touch upon aesthetics, truth, and artifice, and I'm rewarded with a new perspective on my own work when I read them.

As a young art historian, I'm convinced

are you thinking what i'm thinking? No, I'm thinking what I'm thinking are you thinking what i'm thinking? No, I'm thinking what

photographs, or if I'm lucky enough to be in Italy, I'll visit a church or two. The more time I spend looking, the keener my observations. This back-and-forth approach to looking and writing seems to be productive for me. Strategy three: reading. When I'm facing a serious challenge in writing or thinking, I have to step away from the problem and focus on something else. I tend to read fiction for creative inspiration. There are a few authors I keep close by, especially Oscar

the academic calendar, and to the opportunities and challenges presented by life itself. In the uncertainty of this shifting terrain, process provides direction and lends a sense of stability and even confidence. With every new challenge and every new project, I'm grateful to rely on my past experiences and the approaches and tricks I've picked up along the way. Without them, it would be like encountering Rome for the first time—without a map.