Regardless of the design studio level, I have tried to establish for each project a framework that includes questions and objectives related to making and thinking. This model works between the liberal arts, the building arts, and architecture. And in each case, reading, speaking, writing and crafting are neither backgrounded nor added a posteriori, but are instead integral to the process of design. I have also sought to develop this process in architectural practice and research.

My interest in the process of learning also extends to the synthesis of history and theory coursework with design studio – not only through coordination, but more deeply through an overall educational environment that supports each student’s development as a global citizen, one who is prepared as critic and poet, leader and facilitator. In history and theory courses, I ask students to discuss and frame their design studio work – how does constructing a scholarly argument parallel the logic of the design process? How does each studio project, with its inherent methodologies, materialities, and socio-political contexts, become a Janusian hinge between past and future and between concept and actualization?

And in design studio, I ask students not only to speculate about formal antecedents grained with technical and cultural influence but also to delve intensively into a precedent’s implications for their own understanding of the architect’s role, intentionality, and ethics. Here, I take a cue from Quatremère de Quincey’s idea that the architect does not simply look at what was produced, but studies deeply how things have been (and are being) made.

I believe that design practices – carried out by the architect, the architecture student, and the architectural educator – require active participation in the community. Whether defined through Donald Schön’s reflective practitioner or more generally as combined theory and practice through praxis, our architectural discipline provides a unique perspective of thought and action, which has today grown even more vital and indispensable.