

Exhibit honors celebrated architect, Tulane alumnus

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The entry wall of the A. Hays Town exhibition includes a view of the home/studio garden toward which he positioned his drawing table in the last years of his life. (Photo from the Hilliard University Art Museum, University of Louisiana Lafayette)

A new exhibit, curated by Tulane School of Architecture professor Carol McMichael Reese, honors the legacy of Louisiana architect and Tulane architecture alumnus A. Hays Town.

“[A. Hays Town and the Architectural Image of Louisiana](#),” opened in June at [Hilliard University Art Museum](#) in Lafayette, Louisiana. The opening coincides with the 50th anniversary of the museum's original building, which was designed by Town. The exhibit focuses on the architect’s well-known residential architecture, the evolution of his work over 70 years of practice and his close relationships with clients.

The exhibition introduces visitors to Town’s design process and career through drawings, furnishings, photographs, architectural models and archival records. It also features a documentary film that draws on reminiscences from Town’s family members, original clients, second-generation homeowners and architects who have been inspired by his work.

Tulane University

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Carol McMichael Reese, professor of architecture

Students from three universities, Tulane University, Louisiana State University and the University of Louisiana, Lafayette, contributed to the project. Architecture students from LSU and Tulane produced the models of Town’s houses included in the exhibition, interior design students from ULL collaborated on the exhibition design, and students in Tulane’s City, Culture, and Community Ph.D. program conducted extensive archival research and designed the interviews for the documentary film.

“Architects practicing today who know the full arc of Town’s practice most often admire his early work for its simplicity of lines, geometric clarity, and absence of architectural ornament; those design characteristics speak forcefully to contemporary professional design aesthetics,” said Reese. “However, Town’s popular—and perhaps abiding—legacy is as a regionalist who sought to create an indelible image of home in Louisiana and to implant his clear vision in its native soil that he so cherished. This is the A. Hays Town legacy that the Hilliard Museum’s exhibition shares with the public.”

The Tulane School of Architecture Dean’s Fund for Excellence contributed financial support for Reese’s work. The exhibit is on display at the Hilliard Museum through Dec. 29, 2018.