

Art mirrors urban design in new exhibit

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Grover Mouton's work as director of the Tulane Regional Urban Design Center has involved him in projects for towns and cities from the Gulf Coast to China. In the process, he has produced artful drawings of street scenes, landscapes and historic landmarks that are now the focus of an exhibition at Octavia Art Gallery.



XiaoZhaZhen Retail Street, Shanghai is by Grover Mouton, artist and director of the Tulane Regional Urban Design Center. The drawing is included in an exhibit at Octavia Art Gallery. (Image from Grover Mouton)

Titled "Urban Visions," the exhibit will remain on view through Feb. 23 at the gallery, 4532 Magazine St. in New Orleans.

Although Mouton, a Tulane alumnus, has worked at the School of Architecture for 23 years as an adjunct associate professor, he also is a talented artist. He studied drawing at the American Academy in Rome after receiving the prestigious Rome Prize while he was a Tulane undergraduate.

His drawings now on exhibit were created as part of the master planning documents and presentations for urban design projects, demonstrating a humanized scale that allowed clients to understand broader design concepts.

“In contrast with rigid digital imagery, I found the use of hand drawing enabled clients to engage with designed qualities of the overall site rather than specific, small-scale details,” Mouton says. “My drawings were used to speak about density, walkability and scale in a way that also expressed a real sense of place.”

The [Tulane Regional Urban Design Center](#), which Mouton founded, conducts community outreach design initiatives for cities and towns throughout the Gulf South. The center has done conceptual designs for such sites as the Dew Drop Jazz & Social Hall in Mandeville, La., and the Forks of the Road Slave Market site in Natchez, Miss.

The center also collaborates with the American Planning Association on large-scale urban design projects throughout [China](#), including master planning work for the cities of Jintang and Nantong, China.

The exhibition was made possible with support from the Dean's Fund for Excellence at the architecture school.