



# Libraries through the lens

## University of California Berkeley Law Library

**IN this month's Libraries through the lens, photographer and librarian Thomas Guignard shares a view from the inside of the University of California Berkeley Law Library.**

He explains how his photography has developed from “arranging my compositions in a purely aesthetic pursuit and my research to the name of the architect involved and the year of construction”.

He goes on to say: “When I started posting my images online and interacting with social media accounts that were sharing architectural photos, I often found myself frustrated with how little

detail was provided.

“Without any location information or any backstory, these images were entirely abstracting the building they were representing. This seemed at odds with the primary purpose of these structures, to provide shelter for a particular activity rather than as a visual backdrop. Thus, I began researching more thoroughly about the libraries I visited and distilling some details to be shared alongside my images.”

This more in-depth approach led to a drop-off in the number of images Thomas could share, but he says “it brought

me a lot of delightful information I would not otherwise have known.

“For example, when researching the history of the UC Berkeley Law Library represented here, I learned that this institution, founded in 1894, did not receive a dedicated facility until 1912. The first law library was instead put in place of a wine cellar conveniently located in the basement of the university library (19th Century California librarians had their priorities right). The reading room represented here is in the current home of the UC Berkeley school of law, completed in 1951 by Warren C. Perry.”