



# Libraries through the lens

## Library of the Geneva School of Art and Design (HEAD)

**FOR the latest image in our Libraries through the lens series, Thomas Guignard has chosen the Library of the Geneva School of Art and Design.**

As with many of the libraries on these pages, the building began life serving another purpose, as Thomas explains.

“Crafty readers of *Information Professional* may be familiar with ‘Elna’ sewing machines,” says Thomas. “Now part of a Japanese manufacturing concern, the Elna brand was founded in 1934 by Tavaró SA, a manufacturer of precision

military equipment looking to diversify its activities. Elna machines pioneered several of the features of today’s sewing machines, such as the free arm, reverse feed and zig-zag stitches, making it a commercial success after the war.

“Bolstered by international success, the company commissioned architect Georges Addor to expand their manufacturing complex in Geneva’s Charmilles neighbourhood. Built between 1954 and 1956 for Tavaró’s administration and sales divisions, Addor’s building is a

textbook rendition of international-style mid-century Modernism, a sleek rectangular box on tapered concrete stilts.

“After production on the site ceased in the 1990s, the office building was used by a private bank before being acquired by the Geneva School of Art and Design in 2017. This superbly maintained symbol of Swiss industrial history was carefully transformed to welcome the school’s administration, research and representation services, as well as its library.”