

At left, a display of work by artists who teach at the school; at right, an exhibition of paintings by the Arizona Plein Air Painters.



The school's art library is home to hundreds of books about art and artists. The artwork on display here is from a student show known as "The Best and the Brightest."

“ONCE THE BUILDING WAS A SCHOOL AGAIN, ITS GUEST ARTISTS AND INSTRUCTORS COULD SET ABOUT ENLIGHTENING LOCALS ABOUT THE SECRET OF MAKING GOOD ART.”

Scottsdale Grammar School in 1928, the Spanish Colonial Revival structure—later renamed Loloma Elementary—was home to reading, writing and arithmetic until 1980, when the school closed its doors. Various other businesses resided there—including Scottsdale’s first-ever cable television provider—before Scottsdale Artists’ School relocated there in 1993.

First, though, the building—with its unique gabled-tile roof and glazed Saltillo floors—needed an overhaul. Phoenix architect Douglas Sydnor set about updating the original 16,000-square-foot structure.

“The budget was tight,” Sydnor recalls of the remodel, “but the cable company had helped us out by removing a lot of the hazardous materials that had been there. They’d also opened up the space by taking out nonstructural interior walls, so there were these open, loftlike spaces that were good for art studios.”

Sydnor created five such studios, then tackled areas that needed ADA compliance, as well as a tricky roof repair.

“I wanted to match the original clay tile roofs,” he recalls, “but no one was making that material anymore.”

Sydnor is still scratching his head over his good fortune 30 years later. “We stumbled on a couple of pallets of the same tiles at a bone-yard in south Phoenix,” he remembers. “And it turned out it had all been salvaged from the Good Shepherds Girls School, which had been built around the same time.”

Sydnor returned the building’s original paint colors, with one exception. “In 1928, the window frames were dark brown, and it just didn’t feel right,” he says. “I went with a dusty green to contrast the white walls and as a visual reference to the green landscape outside the windows.”