



Rhode Island School of Design

VIEWS

summer 2003

When one of Providence's 19th-century mills went on sale in 2000, a team of enterprising artists decided to preserve a piece of history and lay the foundation for a new arts district in an industrial area of town. Just across the street a former mill complex had been demolished to make room for large chain retailers, and Monohasset Mill was threatened with a similar fate — being razed for a parking lot. But, with the support of local artists, preservationists, media and government officials, **Erik Bright '91 CR**, **David Stem '90 ID**, **Joel Taplin '99 ID** and Brown student **Clay Rockefeller** won the battle to convert the mill to artists' live/work lofts. The first phase of the rehabilitation effort will be completed this fall, when several owners take occupancy.

Designed in 1866 by prolific New England architect **James Bucklin** (who also designed Providence's Arcade, the first indoor shopping mall in the US), Monohasset Mill had been home to **Armington and Sims Engine Company**, a brewery and, like many other local mills, wool and textiles operations. But Bright and company recognized that buildings like this "can adapt over time," especially with the right approach. With a renovation design by **Peter Case MAR '07** and construction work by **Stem Contracting and Design**, the building incorporates materials salvaged from mills that have been torn down over the years. In a sort of organ donor relationship, the transplanted parts — railings, copper doors, wood flooring, sinks — help to preserve the spirit of the lost mills. "The project has also become a kind of museum," Bright says — "a record of preservation."

The three-phase renovation calls for 37 live/work units; roughly half of these are designated 'affordable' and are subsidized by city funds for low- to moderate-income homebuyers. As in many cities, Bright points out, artists in Providence are being displaced by gentrification and a booming real estate market. There's already talk of further residential/studio renovation in this west side neighborhood — one that **Clay Rockefeller** calls the "backbone of the urban aesthetic of Providence." By instilling new purpose in an abandoned industrial site, the **Monohasset Mill project** could become the cornerstone of a new creative community.

For more project history, floor plans and photos, go to www.millproject.org.

Anna Cousins



Turquoise Bottle (2002, blown glass, 13 x 7.5") was among the hand-blown glass work by **Carrie Gustafson '94 PR** (Arlington, MA) featured in several recent exhibitions and publications: *Textural Glass* in winter 2003 at The Chappell Gallery, Boston; the *Smithsonian Craft Show* in spring 2003; *Young Americans* in summer 2003 at The Chappell Gallery, NYC; and in the winter 2003 issue of *This Side Up* and the summer 2003 issue of *New Glass Review*. Carrie uses a Swedish overlay technique that allows color to be on the outer surface of the piece: once a vessel is blown and cooled she applies hand-cut stencils and sandblasts back to the core color. She's represented by Gallery Materia in Scottsdale, AZ.

'94

Jules Sherman ID, an independent product designer for clients such as Cambridge Silver Smiths, Robinson Knife, Forms — Surfaces, Libra Pacific and BOSCA Leather, plans to move from Ohio to San Francisco this summer to continue developing her product design business.

'95

Misha Beletsky IL works as the art director at Abbeville Press and is living in NYC with his new wife (see p. 21). He recently contributed an article on Hebrew typography to a book on international type design called *Language Culture Type* edited by John Berry and co-published by Graphis and Atyp.

Anita (Richard) Thompson IL, who teaches Upper School art at Lincoln School in Providence, has been awarded the Jeffrey R. Paolino Fellowship for 2002–03. The fellowship is given each year to a faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in teaching. Anita also received a fellowship from Skidmore College to participate in the Skidmore Summer Six Art Fellowship Program.

'96

Ronda Rhoads TX recently moved to New York to take a new job with Richloom Fabrics, following more than six years at Milliken + Company in Grand Rapids, MI.