Clipper ship exhibit to open

Thirty-two oil paintings of famous American clipper ships will be exhibited in the Hayden Gallery at MIT from November 14 to December 2. They have been gathered for this showing from nautical museums, historical societies, and private collections, and include some being shown publicly for the very first time.

The exhibit will include lines and sail plans of several clippers and a model of the famed Flying Cloud, which made the 3,200-mile passage from New York around Cape Horn to San Francisco in 89 days and 11 hours, the average passage for a clipper was 130 days.

One painting being shown for the first time is the "Great Republic," on loan from the Boston Marine Society. The greatest of the clippers, this ship was launched in East Boston in 1853 and had a registered length of 335 feet, 11 feet longer than the Flying Cloud, a clipper of average size. Not for another century did wooden vessels even approach the length of the Great Republic.

Painted for owners. Most of the paintings were done for a highly critical audience—the men who commanded or owned the vessels. Painted from life, they generally depict the ships from a full broadside to show them at their best.

The exhibit will open at 4 p.m. Monday, November 14, and remain open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays for the remainder of the exhibition. There will be a reception at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, November 15, and 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 19.

The exhibit will close on December 2. They have been exhibited at the Boston Marine Society; Mariners Museum, Newport News, Va.; Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.; Marine Research Society, Bath, Me.; Marine Historical Association, Inc., Mystic, Conn.; and the Fransco R. Hart Nautical Museum at MIT.

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