Art reaction

Professor Wayne Andersen and his Committee on Visual Arts deserves much credit for having made up its mind what art is. We were, according to this committee and campus for having re- acted, though the reaction was restrained, to help construct the pieces the pieces were poor. We must, however, condemn the students who took upon themselves to remove the sculpture.

Both a whole sculpture by Mark DiSavore worth about $9,000 and not yet set up, and one of the parts from the sculpture moved to Professor Andersen's office were taken. There is no rationale for stealing something one does not like. If we do not understand the sculpture we may find out more about it, we may even acquire an interest in it, or lobby for student representation on the committee, or we may even pick it. But we may not just take it away. This is the reaction of a child.

The action in this case represents much more than an expression of decr. Other pieces are now being put up for fear of similar repercussions. The sculptures will be re- tracted to a much smaller area on campus where fewer students will be automatically exposed to them. Before further exhibitions of any nature are brought here, people will think twice. Our reputation as a school of intel- ligent, open-minded students has been irrevocably harmed.

Part of our education is to become better rounded and more rational people. The theft of the art shows signs of irrationality as well as cut down on the possibilities of further opportunities to meet new experiences. KHW

Letters to The Tech

Ready for education?

To the editor:

I take it as a challenge to your 'junk is junk' editorial. Once again you take credit for journalistic coverage of the Park Place Group exhibition. It is true that we mentioned some of the actions of the abo-vigilante committee and tried to present the un assembled sculptures as seen, at least, as ex- tremistic or possibly even illegitimate. The theft of parts of the same pieces (as yet not fully recovered by others) would be a guardian of public space is far from simple and naive. Yet you appose the former; what have you to say to the latter?

There is a nastiness which seems to be current on this campus: I don't understand it, therefore it's junk, therefore it's junk, therefore we don't want to understand it. Circular reasoning, but hardly educational.

This is not to put down the idea that students should be actively concerned with the political and economic environment, or that they have the right to demand that it be changed. But if the abo-committee- tite spent their energies on a petition to the Committee on Visual Arts or even made some contact with the organizers about it to the people in charge, they would have had results without alienating the artists. As it stands, the exhibition sculpture has been removed to the area around Hayden because 'it just isn't safe' in front of Kresge. Hardly a shining example of the nature of the MIT student.

The Tech has shown a good opportunity to exercise its editorials on the reporting of the exhibition. There has hardly been an attempt to present or critically review the work involved, instead a diary is given on your stuff qualified to do so.

And I other students have been hired by the Committee on Abolition to con- struct the exhibit. I consider the exhibit offering, very

existing arctically. It is indeed a different art. It deserves at least an honest response, not dismissal. The point of opposition you should be asking are: why is it existing, how is it existing, what constitutes the piece as art?

The sculptures originally placed in front of Kresge because it would be work's best chance to be seen from them, because it would be more accessible there to the student body, as by its presence, make the students ask questions. It would seem this campus isn't ready for it. It would seem this campus isn't ready for it, therefore it's junk, therefore it's junk.

Joe Canning '80

Judging Art

To the Editor:

It is not necessary to agree on a definition of art or even to pass judgement on a particular work or realize that the decision by a small group of artists to use the tools of their own hands and remove such work a deplorable.

Professor Andersen repre- sents a considerably more com- petent judge of what constitutes an 'art' than any small group from the MIT student body and his de- cision to go against the 'museum-traditional' exhibit should be respected as a professional judgement within his field of competences. As an educational institution MIT has a respon- sibility to expose its students to a variety of ideas and even expose them to criticism. But if we should judge for ourselves but also have the intellectual capacity to realize that in any field (especially the art field) there will be disagreement and that our own is not the only one.

For many people an appreciation of classical music comes only with time, a degree of training and above all an open mind; in this case I wish they would try the 'arts' as well. There is more to art than the 'got' reactions of 'I like it' or I don't like it' I look forward with interest to the future comments of The Tech's editor (I'm sure he's not junk is junk) and I hope that his future reviews will be eq- ually penetrating and considered.

A regular art column would be a welcome addition to these pages and should include re- views of the many gallery shows in town.

Applying the actions of the 'Abolito Committee on Student Environments only seems an appropriate or res- ponseable practice.

Ben Woll '80

Visaible experiments

To the editor:

As organizers of the "abor- tion" in the basement of Blg. 7, we feel the need to reply to your editorial in May 6th. We regret that individuals with editorial responsibility chose to vent their frustrations in a public medium, without first subjecting them to scrutiny and just what has taken place. The project was done not to make statements but to show that members of the MIT community and in fact all people are able to be able to make constructive change in their personal environment.

What does concern us however, is the lack of editors' interest in the manipulation of images or even a public place, with their own environment. Signe A. Dayhoff has stated (letters to The Tech, May 6th) that "experiments have their place and this is not one of them." We strongly disagree with this statement in that we feel the experiments in the MIT environment are of little value unless they occur in places where all members of the community may respond to them, as opposed to "museum- path." So far as the quality of the work is concerned, obviously some aspects leave much to be desired, while others are very reasonable. Indeed, alterations are in order as time and energy permit.

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In light of this, it seems strange to us that those who have responded in The Tech have taken it upon themselves to act as art critics, rather than as members of a com- munity, in which some people are actually attempting to show that the physical environ- ment can become responsive to, and expressive of, the needs of its inhabitants. We feel that your participation and criticism in all future projects.

Steve Left '86

Anton Siers '86

John Terry '86

Institute houses

After one admires the carved antique English chests, Mount oriel, art and craft courses, country kitchens, and other luxuries in McCormick Hall, the discrepancies in the qualities of the physical plants in the living groups becomes quite apparent. The Institute Houses for men on the campus does not come up to McCormick Hall. The difference is in all the apparent.

As one sees the differences in residence halls one also notices the emphasis that MIT is lately putting upon the acquisition of art and sculpture. Large quanti- ties of money, time, and effort are being put into making MIT a place for metal sculpture. The Institute's policy as of this moment is not to allocate