Class '80 officers accept free rings

By William Cinino and Steve Kirsch

Three members of the Class of '80 Ring Committee have told The Tech they intend to accept free rings offered by Rowan & Rowan, independent jewelers representing the L. G. Birding Company which holds the $300,000 ring contract for MIT this year. The other three members have not yet declared the offer their final evaluation that they will accept.

Sahalee Free, Bob Mattoo and Charles Luiz said they intend to accept the free rings. Ann Conway, Debbe Utko, and Rassell Steinekoff have not decided whether they will pay for the rings which are scheduled to be delivered in mid-April. They would not commit on whether or not they will pay a deposit.

Bill Wrenn, manager of Balfour for the Northeast, confirmed that free rings for ring committees in return for the time required to choose and design a ring are a common practice at the Institute, as well as at many colleges throughout the nation. However, all ring committees have accepted the offer which, for the past 40 years, has been a standard contract provision.

The Ring Committee of the Class of '88 was one of the few to have refused the offer. Dave Deboe, the chairman of his ring committee, told The Tech that, "We all agreed to release the rings because we felt that it would be fairer to the sophomore class."

Donors have provided possible additional cost and ethical reasons for the committee's decision.

The next year, after many weeks of debate, all of the members of the Class of '79 Ring Committee decided to accept the free rings. All members of the Class of '79 Ring Committee except Conway also accepted free rings. Lee said he felt it "was not right to accept the rings although the committee had voted to do so."

Before constructing the model, Smith visited the Institute and consulted with the architects on the design and physical constraints of Lobby 10. As proposed, the work would be suspended from the ceiling of Lobby 10, above the level of the first floor, yet in view from both the first and second floors. Smith proposes that the work be oriented toward Killian Court, drawing observers to swing around the work as they pass through the Lobby on the first floor or through the corridor on the second.

An exhibition of Smith's work is currently at the Hayden Gallery. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday through Friday, through April 19. Using a unique style of painted canvas, works of art are evocative of the old red and pink panels, suspended in alternating perpendicular slants. Observed from an unobstructed view, the piece appears as a Roman numeral X, representing Smith's concept of Lobby 10.

After last year's student dissatisfaction with Transparent Horizon, the committee decided it was important to evaluate student response before making any commitments.

Commissioning the piece would add to the MIT Permanent Collection, and thereby enhance the physical and aesthetic surroundings of the Institute.

However, some people may find the piece unattractive or inappropriate for the memorial to the alumni of MIT who gave their lives in World War II. In that light, the committee can request that Smith create another piece or perhaps relocate the artwork.

Good artwork is almost always expensive, and this purchase will probably not be an exception. The committee has budgeted $40,000 to cover the cost of the project.

However, since 1968, MIT has had a policy whereby one percent of the money donated by the Alumni Fund toward commissioning or refurbishing buildings would be earmarked for the Committee on the Visual Arts as the basic funding source of the MIT Permanent Collection. Because this policy, an art allocation of $10,000 was created by the construction of the new Alumni center and the refurbishing of Huntington Hall (1929). Some of the $10,000 would be used to cover the cost of the project.

Since the committee will be acutely interested in what the members of the MIT community have to say about the work, and she encourages those interested to visit the model and comment.