

## UB's Norton Union

# 'Video Environment,' Vasulkas Surround Viewer With 8 TV's

By TERRY DORAN

There is little opportunity to see the results of video experimentation even though it is one of the more exciting electronic fields invaded by artists.

About six hours of video tapes by Steina and Woody Vasulka are being shown daily through Saturday in UB's Norton Union, as part of the university's Spring Arts Festival.

The program is entitled "Video Environment," which overstates the case. The video portion is interesting, even mystifying as to what it means, but there is no environment to speak of outside the normal.

Eight black and white TV sets are arranged in a circle, facing inwards, which in view of the surrounding decor is a feeble presentation in terms of environment.

What is on the TV sets, though, stimulates the imagination. Many of tapes consist of embryonic forms whose appeal depends on one's tolerance for far-out abstraction.

Mine is fairly low and I was glad for the electronic music. The disconnected figures have a tendency in some eyes to eliminate depth, whereas accompanying music appears to suggest meaningfulness.

I began, anyway, to expect Rad Gadrin, space captain of Pluto, to pop on screen at any moment and demand unconditional surrender. The entire effect for me bordered on science fiction fantasy.

The Vasulka's, however, do not completely ignore the recognizable. And their sense of humor, undetected previously, plays a part in several tapes.

One, for example, pictures the maximum closeup of a mouth and incisors wrapping around the words of the Beatles' "Let It Be." It succeeds simultaneously in putting one off Beatles-type music and mouths.

It all looks like video notes for a larger project. Meanwhile, it provides a fairly clear idea of the state of video experimentation.

## Art Notes