



## Video Art Show Opens in Baldy Friday

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**M**any people fear computers. Some encounter them at work, program them, or pay phone bills generated by them. Then there are those few people who. Then there are artists among this minority, who use electronic media to produce unique art, will converge on the first floor of Baldy Hall Friday and Saturday, as part of "Post-Currents: a Gallery of Electronic Art."

The event will feature videotapes, performances, and "installations."

"An installation involves several pieces: display equipment, monitors, speakers," said Neil Zusman, curator of the event. "Instead of watching a single screen, more than one image is being displayed at one time."

"Installations may also involve interaction with the audience or among the artists themselves," he added. "So it is continuous, unlike a videotape that is shown once."

For example, audio artist and designer Ed Tomney will feature an installation in the Kiva (101 Baldy) that will take advantage of chance broadcasts on AM and FM radio, shortwave, wiretaps, and surveillance sounds. The installment is called "Whispering Elms."

An installation by Ron Kivila involves rhythmic electrical sparks that accelerate and decelerate in a darkened gallery. It is a striking experience, according to Zusman.

On Saturday, Nicholas Collins will offer a concert of his audio works composed and played with homemade instruments. He is known for his innovative use of microcomputers in live performance.

"The title 'Post-Currents' is a play on 'postmodern,'" said Zusman, a UB graduate student who organized the event as a thesis project. "Buffalo was in some ways the birthplace of a postmodern movement, with the foundation of Hallwalls in 1973."

"The corporations that were polluting the environment were the same ones that were purchasing and supporting art. Postmodernism strove to 'de-objectify' art — to avoid letting corporations decide what is seen — to leave it to the individual," Zusman added.

When arranging the exhibit, Zusman avoided pieces that involved expensive equipment, preferring what he has called "the small vanguard of artists (who have) created bold new forms with low-cost analog and digital systems."

"The significance of computer art is that it empowers people," Zusman remarked. "The cost is going down but the capability is going up, it is no longer necessary to have access to television equipment or a big studio."

Now, individual electronic artists have more direct control over their work, allowing greater flexibility and creativity, according to Zusman. "Many of the works were done on personal-type computers. The artist is no longer at the mercy of a big institution."

The exhibit, which is free, is supported by the New York State Council on the Arts, the UB Department of Media Study, and Collaborative Projects, Inc., in New York City.

Several of the participants are connected with UB. Videotapes by Peter Weibel and Tony Conrad, both associate professors of media study, will be shown. Former UB media study professors Ernest Gusella and Woody Vasulka will also have their videotapes exhibited.

This is the fifth season of Zusman's show and the first time he has brought it here from New York City. "There is interest in (the show), but it needs more support. Such a gallery (of electronic art) serves the students and the Department of Media Study by giving them access to works not seen in class."

On Friday, the opening night, all of the artists with installations in the show will be present, and six will present lectures.

This is a good chance to explore a relatively new frontier of modern art. Perhaps some people may even overcome their "computerphobia."

Check the Reporter calendar for more details. □