

Exhibitions Will Honor Vasulkas' Video Craft

By ANTHONY BANNON

The Vasulkas don't make myths. While the circuits they use to make their electronic fragments are complex and hidden to most, their work is not.

The video of Woody and Steina Vasulka is a probe into the world of electrons and how they can be made to move to make pictures and sound.

Woody Vasulka teaches video at the State University of Buffalo's Media Study Center. Steina Vasulka teaches video at Media Study Inc., 3323 Bailey Ave. Before coming to Buffalo, they founded and directed the Video Kitchen in Mercer Arts Center, New York City.

They will show and discuss recent work this evening at 8 PM in the Media Study Center during the first of a 5-month Saturday series of video exhibitions. The showing is designed to honor them as "the only video artists of international reputation living in Buffalo."

IT'S DIFFICULT to find a common thread to describe their disparate work in a short space.

In "Noisefield" a circle flickers in vibrant video colors against a field of TV "snow," sometimes known as "noise." The tape has a relation to the experimental film flickers, which may utilize each of the 24 frames per second to present flashes of images in a manner more closely related to traditional musical concerns.

But "Noisefield" is remembered more for color, hues like nothing else seen from a palate or life, more than mere color, shimmering as if given a coat of chrome.

ANOTHER VASULKA tape, "C-Trend" is a shot out of a window toward a business street below. But it is transformed through a video synthesizer and given a lumpy, monochromatic covering as if all objects were moving beneath a mat of gauze or submerged in a vat of taffy.

But the piece has no cosmic significance beyond the manipulation of an image. Hiding or revealing through distortion seems significance enough.

One more tape I liked was "The Matter." It shows a rectangular grid and takes it through a series of changes on the synthesizer, twisting one shape into another — bending,

waving, separating — and always returning to the rectangle.

I liked it for its suggestions of the common source of all matter and for its tacit references to the pictorial artist Escher.