

# British Artist Prints come from a variety of artistic traditions

## AGYU hosts diverse show

By HENRY SUM

What makes "British Artists' Prints 1972-77" (at the Art Gallery of York University until October 5) unique is its concern with the process and development of an image, a methodology particularly indigenous to this period of art. In a simple format, a squarish etching plate, for example, is treated with lines, rectangles or even letters and is taken through a sequence of changes. Each subsequent print evolves sometimes gradually, sometimes radically, in form, texture or color.

Looking at the very minimal, linear etchings of Kim Lim, gallery curator Michael Greenwood said, "It is almost impossible to create any form which is totally objective and impersonal. It's very difficult to separate a form from some kind of emotional or psychological re-interpretation by the individual, but the minimalists tried to do that. They tried to make an art that was a purely objective thing."

In Kim Lim's case, her etching may very well have succeeded. The detached rectangular shapes here are simply that. "They are not a

window. Not an aperture. They are nothing more than what they are," says Greenwood. "I think these are attempts to make these forms as neutral and non-associative as possible."

Despite this, Tom Phillips, in his "Birth of Art", follows the same progressive sequence



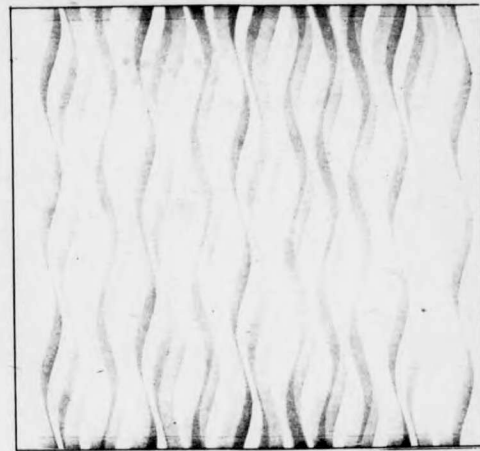
Picasso's *Meninas* 1973. Richard Hamilton. Etching and aquatint, 75x56.5 cm.

as Lim but the development is in a series of etching humorously depicting the gradual acidic erosion of the word ART.

This is not to say that the show is scant in pictorial content. Amid images of elevators, highways and a multitude of geometric lines there are examples of ingenious humor; as in the screenprint of Michael Rothenstein's entitled "Crumple." The artist employs the same developmental process in his print; a gradually crumpling cathedral. By crushing a reverse image of a very formidable church the artist has created "a structural paradox," reducing the quality of the image to something as "frail as a butterfly."

In a similar vein, Roy Grayson's "Painting-Picture" takes us on a sequential picture tour of an artist painting a black canvas. This entertaining series of photos not only reminds one of the black, nihilistic paintings of the late Ad Reinhardt (late '60s), but also amusingly suggests how an artist and even his art can paint itself into a corner. Look for the highlight on the artist's brush in the last frame.

Parody is largely missing from this show until you arrive at Richard Hamilton's lampoon of Diego Velasquez's "Las Meninas" (1656). Using the same composition from Velasquez's very enigmatic painting, Hamilton replaces all the courtly characters with surrogates from Pi-

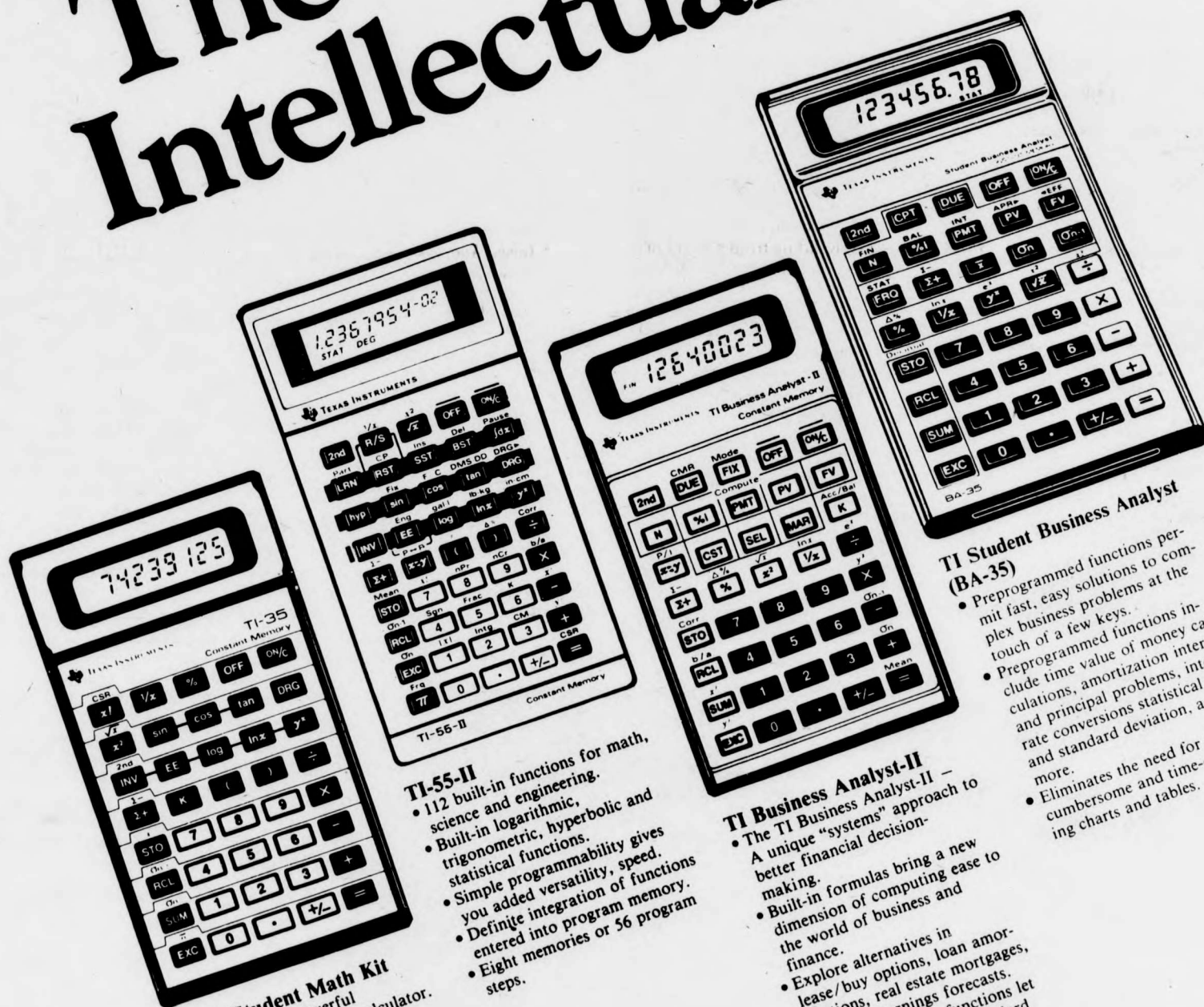


Coloured Greys 1 1972. Bridget Riley.

casso's stylistic periods (Rose, Cubist, Neo Classic, etc.). The artist has used them wittingly to depict the princess, maids, onlookers and dog, while Picasso himself is substituted for the original painter at the canvas.

There are also prints on display here with a less cerebral, matinee quality about them. Their images of shaded stone pathways, palm-leaved corridors and delicately decorated porcelain make for some pleasant afternoon viewing between classes.

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