

Paradise

Artist Statement

Mary McKenzie

Behind all my landscape work is the question "**What is a landscape?**".

Paradise is an idealized concept of landscape but a survey of places in Toronto with paradise in their names showed that many of these locations failed to convey this notion. By using a grid format to present repeat placements of 4"x5" photographs, the images developed into patterns. This patterning, when viewed from a distance, created a sense of abstraction that idealized the often grungy pool halls and strip joints.

These grids, pinned to the wall with map pins, were juxtaposed with drawings derived from photographs of the gum spots on the sidewalks in front of the paradise locations. The gum photographs, through computer manipulation, lost any sense of sidewalk, while retaining the beautiful, organic forms of the blackened gum. These, now idealized shapes, were transferred to Japanese Kozo paper as India Ink drawings. This was done to idealize the gum landscapes and hopefully, along with the photograph grids, bring them closer to paradise.