

CITY



Architect Paul Kariouk's design features a forest of blue lights against a backdrop of hedge made from chain-link fencing astroturf.

SAW Gallery plans quirky courtyard renovation

'Something familiar becomes curious and strange,' in new design

BY MARIA COOK

The SAW Gallery at Arts Court, behind the Rideau Centre, is planning an eye catching and quirky courtyard renovation.

It has to be cheap, vandal proof, look good in winter and grab attention.

Paul Kariouk, a Carleton University architecture professor, has proposed a forest of blue lights against a backdrop hedge, resembling the topiary of classical gardens, but made from chain link fencing and Astroturf.

It will be illuminated at night.

"Suddenly something familiar becomes curious and strange," he says.

The design includes steel retaining walls arranged to create seating for outdoor shows by the gallery's sister organization SAW Video. Work is expected to start this fall and be finished next spring.

The two non-profit groups are located in Arts Court, the municipal arts centre located at Nicholas Street and Daly Avenue in the former Carleton County Courthouse.

"It's really fun and interesting, but it's nothing elaborate," says SAW Gallery board member Yvonne Potter. "He's doing a lot

with a little. It's pure landscape architecture."

The budget is 7,500, but the organizers plan to ask the city for an additional 7,500. The project is currently going through the city approvals process.

Mr. Kariouk, a New York architect who moved to Ottawa in 2001, has experience with interesting public landscapes and installations.

He and a group of colleagues are among five finalists in a competition to design a memorial for the African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan. They have proposed a constructed bronze "shroud."

Mr. Kariouk's 1998 architec

tural installation, called "a way station: The Architectural Space of Migration" was shown across the United States from November 2002 to January 2004.

Last year, it was featured at the Design Triennial at the Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum in New York.

Built with American architect Mabel Wilson, the installation consists of a series of spaces made of plywood, linoleum and wallpaper, containing personal belongings coated in resin.

They represent interim residences in which migrants, refugees and other displaced persons live between the memory of a previous home, and a new imagined home.