

# Bethlehem Zoning Board welcomes artist to the Armory

The Bethlehem Gadfly Armory, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues April 30, 2019

*“Emil Lukas has the alchemical gift of transforming common materials into objects that display a keen sense of the sublime.”*

[Squarecylinder.com](http://Squarecylinder.com)

“We welcome you. Living in Bethlehem is a real wise choice. It’s a great city.” So saying, Zoning Board Chairman William Fitzpatrick concluded last Wednesday’s meeting approving Stockertown artist Emil Lukas’s proposal to turn the 2nd Ave. Armory drill hall into a live/work space.

*Charles Malinchak, “In Bethlehem, artistry overtakes armory.” Morning Call, April 24, 2019. Slightly different and fuller version in the Friday print edition.*

- It will be home and studio
- “While the drill hall is about 10,000 square feet, Lukas told the board the studio would be about 2,000 square feet and the living area, for him and his wife, would be an estimated 1,000 square feet.”
- “The remaining 7,000 square feet would be minimally heated and cooled to maintain the integrity of the interior building materials, but for the most part



Morning Call photo

would go unused except if large materials for the artwork needs to be spread out, Lukas said.”

- “Lukas said he is a visual artist working with painting and sculpture, ceramics and wood blocks, but none of the materials he would use in the studio are solvent-based, eliminating concerns about strong odors.”
- “He said there would be no regular visitors coming to the studio or sales since his work is handled through galleries in New York City, San Francisco and Italy.”
- “Lukas said he has no plans to vacate the space and that moving to a residential neighborhood is something he and his wife have wanted.”
- “[The developer] said the interior renovation for the studio along with other development on the property should begin in late fall or early winter. The other developments include 64 apartments and six more units built in other armory structures.”
- “[The developer said] The other developments include 64 apartments and six more units built in other armory structures” (print edition)

Lukas testified at the meeting, and Gadfly followers can learn more about him and his work in the following video and audio clip (6 mins.):

**AUDIO RECORDINGS UNAVAILABLE IN THIS ARCHIVE**

[https://youtu.be/Eo1ZXj2\\_jDs](https://youtu.be/Eo1ZXj2_jDs)

- “visual artist mainly making paintings and sculpture”
- “limit to the plan is to the inside of the building, I have no responsibility for the outside”
- “return it to Spillman and Farmer’s originally 1930’s design”
- “work with paper, canvas, wood, water-based paints, thread”
- “I don’t use any paints that use fumes”
- “I don’t use anything with odor or solvents”
- “I have galleries that represent my work”
- “It’s a private workshop”
- “I have been in the Lehigh Valley for twenty-five years”
- “I’m the only artist that works there”
- “We have three children, but they are adults” (and not living there)



*Amber Galdamez photo*

For more about Lukas and his art:

his [web site](#)

images of his art at [Durham Press](#) and [Artnet](#)

“[Optic Wall](#),” showcased at SteelStacks

*Gadfly takes this opportunity to open a thread on the Armory. The Armory was “hot” at the time when Gadfly first began to haunt City meetings — long before he was Gadfly. There were significant issues between residents and the developer. At this April 24 meeting two residents raised issues, to which Gadfly will return. But first enjoy some familiarity with Lukas and his work, both of which seem well worth welcome to our town.*