

# ASPEN HOME

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For Charles Andrade, right, painting is a conscious endeavor that combines light and color to reflect the psyche.

# The Incredible Lightness of Painting

LAZURE ARTIST CHARLES ANDRADE WILL ANIMATE YOUR LIFELESS WALLS

BY ALLISON JOHNSON  
PHOTOS BY DANIEL BAYER

“Color is soul,” says Basalt artist Charles Andrade, a nationally recognized expert in Lazure, a European wall-glazing technique that can bring a room radiantly to life. “So the colors that you put in

your house reflect your soul.”

Sit down for a chat with Andrade, and you’ll never look at painting your walls the same way again. A practitioner of the Lazure technique for 25 years





“With Lazure, the walls come alive.”  
—Charles Andrade

(and one of only a handful in the U.S.), he views interior painting as a conscious, spiritual endeavor combining light and color with human psychology.

The word Lazure derives from the German *lasur*, meaning glaze, and the technique dates back to the 1800s, when it was first used in Rudolf Steiner’s Waldorf schools. Andrade learned the process in England while studying anthroposophic art therapy (anthroposophy is a philosophy developed by Steiner that, in part, aims to bridge the gap between science and spirituality) and Goethean color theory, which considers color to arise from the interaction between darkness and light. Darkness signifies a more corporeal state, while Lazure is more emblematic of the ethereal. Their interaction plays out on Andrade’s walls, between the layers of wash and across the surface of a room.

What makes Andrade’s work stand out from an average paint job actually starts at a molecular level. Traditional, thick paint is flat and opaque (think of the public speaker who talks in a monotone voice). In Lazure paint, the pigment molecules are more loosely bound together, causing the light to bounce back through translucent layers and seemingly illuminate the walls from within. With the right blend of color’s four qualities—hue, value, intensity, and temperature—a wall can be transformed into a seamless conversation between light and dark.

“We decorate flat walls with objects,” says Andrade, “but with Lazure, the walls come alive. You get the experience of the walls breathing, and they are

much more sensitive to ambient light. Lazure is not textural. It’s atmospheric.”

He always starts out on a pure white wall. Andrade then adds three or more thin washes of analogous shades, each derived by mixing what he calls “a homeopathic dose of color” with water. The result is a luminous glaze that, Andrade says, “teases our sense of visual perception in the same way as a sunset.”

Finding the right mix of colors for clients is an art unto itself, as is the full-body, physically taxing application of the different washes. Andrade must briskly whisk each dripping wash evenly across the surface with a large brush; the process, he says, “integrates thinking, feeling, and willing.”

His clients range from private residences to Waldorf schools to hospitals and dance studios, and he also teaches Lazure workshops across the country. In addition to Lazure, Andrade is skilled at more traditional decorative finishes, large-scale murals, and abstract fine-art paintings.

The effect his work has can be transformative. Carbondale resident Valery Kelly originally asked Andrade to paint only the remodeled portion of her new house, but when she saw the results, she hired him to paint the rest as well.

“He completely changed the feel of the house,” she says. “I love the way light plays across the walls. It’s more esoteric and spiritual. What you get is a completely different feel that’s so far beyond a typical wall. Lazure creates a beautiful, pure color and light, and Charles is a true master.” ■



Charles Andrade charges by the square foot for his work, with prices starting at \$6. He uses latex/acrylic or completely organic products, depending on client preference. For more information, contact Andrade at 970-948-8056 or go to [www.lazure.com](http://www.lazure.com).