

11800 & 11810 Gypseous spar, from Cyprus

Chemical composition: CaSO_4 , very pure

Synonym: Selenite

Selenite is the colorless and transparent variety that shows a pearl like luster and has been described as having a moon like glow. The word selenite comes from the greek for Moon and means moon rock.

The pearl like luster give wall paints an especially high reflection value. Selenite can be applied very well in lime paints without having the gypsum to effloresce.

Crystals of gypsum can be extremely colorless and transparent, making a strong contrast to the most common usage in drywall. The crystals can also be quite large. Gypsum is a natural insulator, feeling warm to the touch when compared to a more ordinary rock or quartz crystal. Sheets of clear crystals can be easily peeled from a larger specimen.

Gypsum is one of the more common minerals in sedimentary environments. It is a major rock forming mineral that produces massive beds, usually from precipitation out of highly saline waters. Since it forms easily from saline water, gypsum can have many inclusions of other minerals and even trapped bubbles of air and water.