

10200 – 10280 Azurite PB 30

Chemical composition : $2\text{CuCO}_3 \cdot \text{Cu}(\text{OH})_2$

Azurite, is a natural basic copper carbonate.

The mineral occurs in various parts of the world in secondary copper ore deposits where it is frequently associated with malachite, a green basic copper carbonate.

Azurite may have been employed as a pigment as early as the Fourth Dynasty in Egypt. Azurite was no doubt the most important blue pigment in European painting from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century and in paintings of that period it is found more frequently than ultramarine. In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European easel painting natural azurite was often used as an underpaint for ultramarine. Azurite was also widely used as a blue pigment in wall paintings in Central Asia and in paintings by the Ukiyo-e School in Japan. The invention of Prussian blue in the eighteenth century seems largely to have displaced azurite from the palette in Europe. Like other mineral pigments, it has been prepared from carefully selected material by grinding, washing, levigation and sieving. Azurite is crystalline and for use as a pigment is ground rather coarsely because fine grinding causes it to become pale and weak in tinting strength. Areas of dark, coarsely ground azurite on paintings can often be recognized by their sandy texture and by their thickness.

Traditionally it appears to have been mostly used in a tempera medium because in oil it would be dark and muddy and would not have the sparkle that it has in tempera.

We offer an azurite treated in a lavish process that was developed by a customer of ours - Michael P. In this prepared state, it can be used in an oil medium without darkening and turning green. The azurite is prepared by washing it in an egg yolk medium thus produces a selection of the particles according to their size while simultaneously coating them in a protein. Recent analysis of old paintings by the IRPA in Brussels have found almost all copper pigments to be coated with proteins.

This procedure of particle separation offers extremely beautiful and brilliant hues.

It is not uncommon to find scattered particles of malachite and cuprite, a red mineral (Cu_2O) because of the close association of these three minerals. The proportion of the impurities influences the color of an azurite paint film. Azurite is stable to light and normal atmosphere.

There is evidence that (Laurie) Hungary was the principle source in the sixteenth century until the middle of the seventeenth century when the country was invaded by the Turks and the supply was cut off.

Please call for further information and availability.

Excerpts from:

Artist's Pigments Vol.2 Ashok Roy (editor) and

Painting Materials Rutherford J. Gettens and George L. Stout