

MY FAVORITE ROOM

My Favorite Room: We Are Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made On

By Wolf Schneider

Sep 6, 2026

As Prospero famously observes in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the relationship between dreams and reality can be fleeting yet profound. So too for artist/gallery co-owner Matthew Chase-Daniel, who considers the bedroom he shares with his wife, Julie Chase-Daniel, to be the home's most meaningful room, a space he particularly prizes for sleep's psychological reset.

Here, he can sleep, dream and wipe reality's slate clean.



Artist and co-founder of the Axle Contemporary Art truck, Matthew Chase Daniel sees his bedroom as a kind of decompression chamber where he can dream and ponder.

Jim Weber/The New Mexican

"I love to sleep. I go to sleep early, around 9 p.m. When I go to sleep, all those things that have built up during the day slowly clear out of my consciousness and when I wake up, my thinking is clearer and my creativity is more attuned and problem-solving is more possible. I love that reset. It has to do with dreams and with not actively thinking about things," he says. "There are so many different ways of thinking about where dreams come from. I sort of believe all of it, including that it's day remnants and weird electrical impulses, and that it's really meaningful. When I wake up, I'm

primed for creative thought. It's not necessarily making fine art, although it might be that. It could also be writing an essay or figuring out bookkeeping. Sometimes I'm trying to figure out a problem that seems a bit intractable and I can't puzzle it out. But then I wake up and the solution will be evident."

This protective, familiar room is a minimalist refuge with the bed, unpainted oak and pine dressers and various artworks. An Eliza Naranjo Morse representation of an elk, created on butcher paper, stands out. The ambiance is simple and straightforward.

The walls are a neutral white; the flooring, red brick; the ceiling, of Douglas fir beams with a ceiling laid on top. No window coverings because the Chase-Daniels own 6 acres here in Arroyo Hondo and, "There is no one walking by on the street in front of the windows. So we don't need it for privacy." Plus, "Getting up with the sun is important to me, to us. Sometimes we're up before the sun. Having that sense of the light coming in as the day is beginning once again, feels special every day," he says.

At 12 feet by 15 feet, it's a small bedroom, with eastern and northern views. The flat-roofed, framed stucco house, which they purchased in 2001, is set amid piñons, junipers, blue grama grass and a patch of blue corn. Also populating the property are jays, ravens, owls, bobcats, crickets, coyotes and mourning doves.



Some of the artworks and collectibles that Chase-Daniel and his wife Julie Chase-Daniel have in their Arroyo Hondo bedroom.

Jim Weber/The New Mexican

"The sound of the desert," is how Chase-Daniel characterizes it. Inside the bedroom, "It's bright and full of life, but in a calm sort of way. Not frenetic life, just sort of gentle clarity of energy."

Chase-Daniel was born in Cambridge, Mass. He lived in New York City for his first five years, then grew up in Salisbury, Conn., near the Berkshire Mountains, where he made pets of tadpoles, minnows and a raccoon, fell off horses, and sought out morels, wild violets and rainbow trout. After high school, he hitchhiked around, analyzed spiritual beliefs at the Ojai Foundation, earned a bachelor's degree from Sarah Lawrence College and studied cultural anthropology and photography in Paris for three years at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and the Sorbonne.

He and Julie—who works for an Los Angeles-based global nonprofit—moved to New Mexico in 1989 to care for her aging grandmother. They spent a year in Corrales, then settled in Santa Fe. “I love that it’s part of the United States, but it’s got a very different history and character and population than most places do. It’s not a coastal big city. It’s a blend of what you get in a coastal big city, culturally, and what you get in more rural parts of the country. The strong traditions of the Indigenous population, and the old Spanish population that have lived here for centuries, was very appealing, still is, and makes this a special place, as well as it’s the main center for exhibition, promotion and support for contemporary Indigenous art in North America,” he says.



Michael Falasco, a photography director from Brooklyn who lives in Taos, photographs Axle Contemporary's mobile art space project E Pluribus Unum in front of the Shake Foundation back in 2018. Photos by Gabriela Campos/The New Mexican

A photographer and sculptor, Chase-Daniel co-founded the Axle Contemporary mobile art van with Jerry Wellman in 2010. He points out, “It’s very adaptable. It doesn’t have huge overhead expenses. It doesn’t have rent or electricity or internet, or all those things that plague commercial galleries.”

A nonprofit for art shows, the van travels throughout New Mexico and into the Navajo Nation, Arizona and Utah.

Now 60, Chase-Daniel is also a radio/podcast host for the Coffee and Culture interview show on KTRC 1260/103.7 radio, mentioning such guests as poet Arthur Sze and activist Jack Loeffler as high points.

When dining out, Chase-Daniel is a regular at Mariscos La Playa on Cordova Road, where he's partial to the fish tacos with wedge potatoes, avocado, rice and pico de gallo. An enigmatic Scorpio, "I'm not a big enthusiast for astrology, but I know a lot of people who are. Yeah, I think it fits pretty well for me," he says. "I am too secretive to wanna say that," he wisecracks, adding, "Sex, feeling, secrecy, embrace of the dark as well as the light, yeah, sure."

Which brings us back to the bedroom. "Rarely are any guests invited to visit this room. It is a place where only my wife and I spend time together. It is a cocoon, protected from the swirling influences of the wide world," he describes. After a night's rest with that mental reset, "I wake in the morning (no alarm), and lay in bed, with a more clear and free state of mind, as my conscious mind kicks in. After a few seconds, or minutes, an idea takes hold that I am motivated to work with. Motivated by this (and the promise of coffee), I rise and move into the world."

Wolf Schneider, former editor of the *Santa Fean* and *American Film*, has written for many other publications--from *New Mexico* magazine and *Southwest Art* to *Mademoiselle*. You can find her at: wolfschneiderusa.com