



*On how to paint
flowers.*



On how to paint flowers

Please note: This presentation is the fruit of preliminary research by Erma Hermens and others. Please seek out the extensive research on Willem Beurs that has been conducted since its creation.



Infrared reflectogram



Still Life with Flowers, Balthasar van der Ast, c. 1625 - c. 1630
oil on panel, h 59cm × w 43cm,
Rijksmuseum

A Case study



Andries Bosman (Flemish, 1621-c.1681)
Cartouche with Bust of Christ Surrounded
by a Garland of Flowers, 1659, Oil on
canvas, 96.5 x 73 cm . SMK, Copenhagen

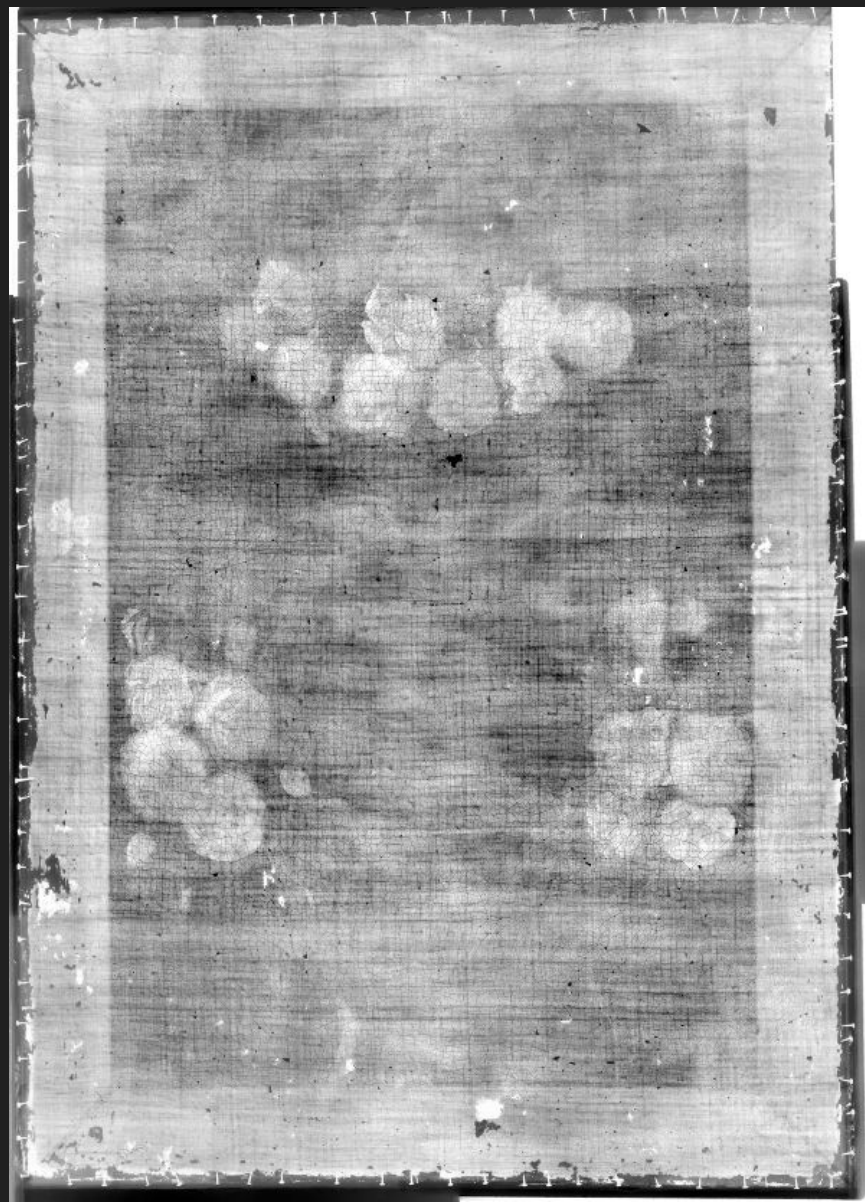
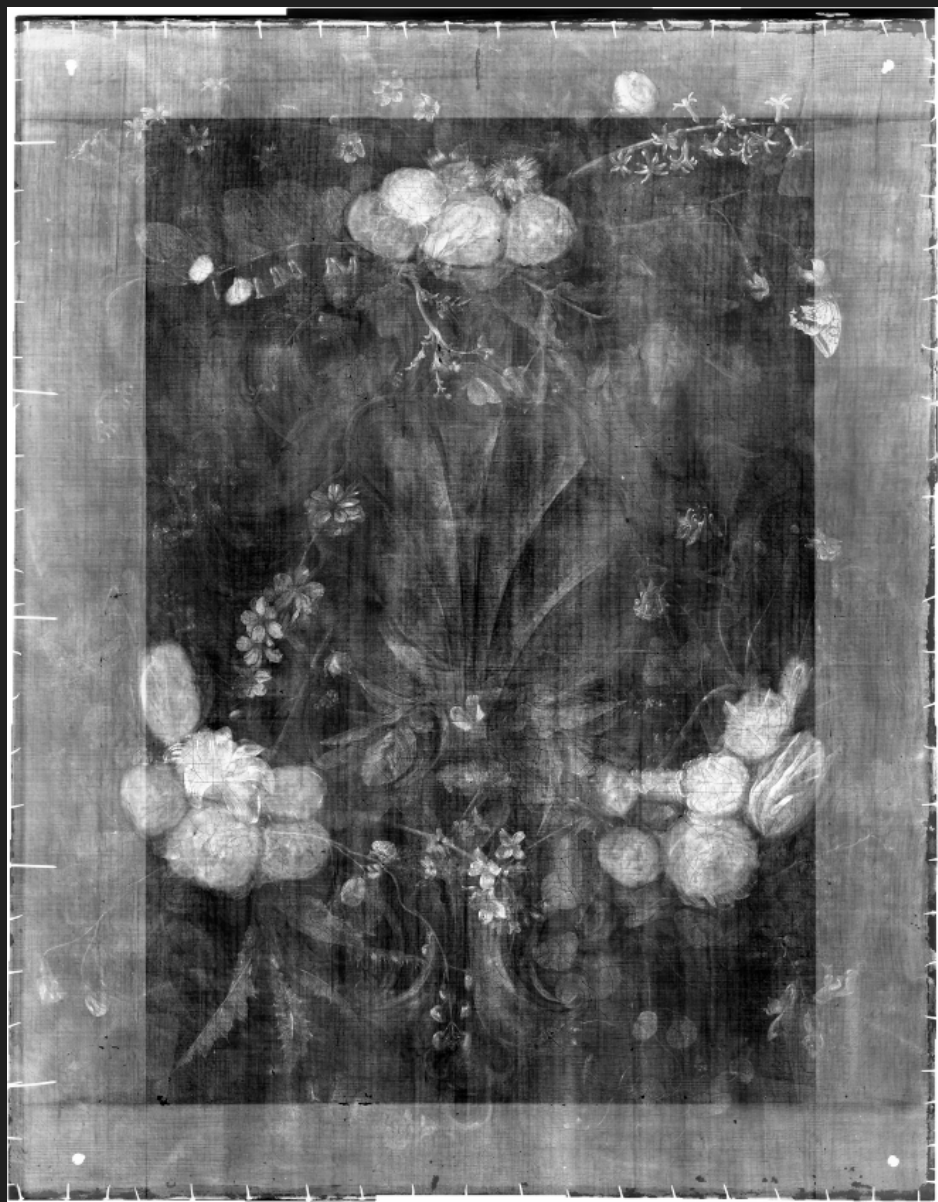


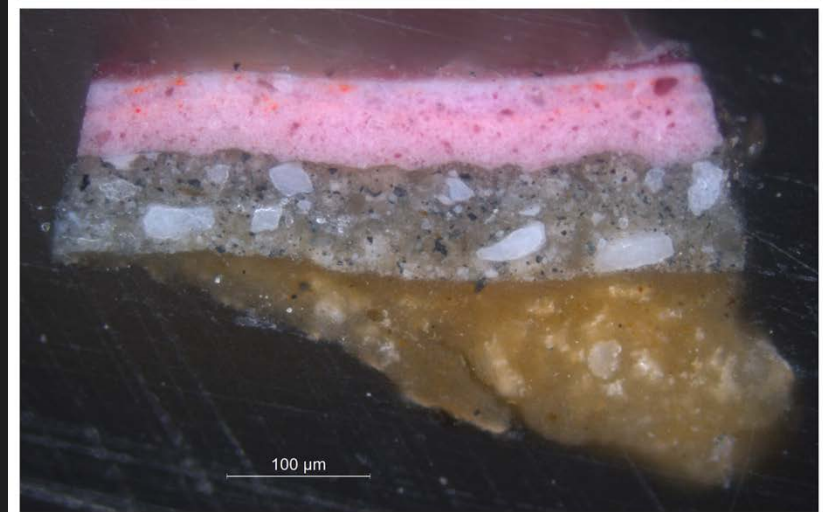
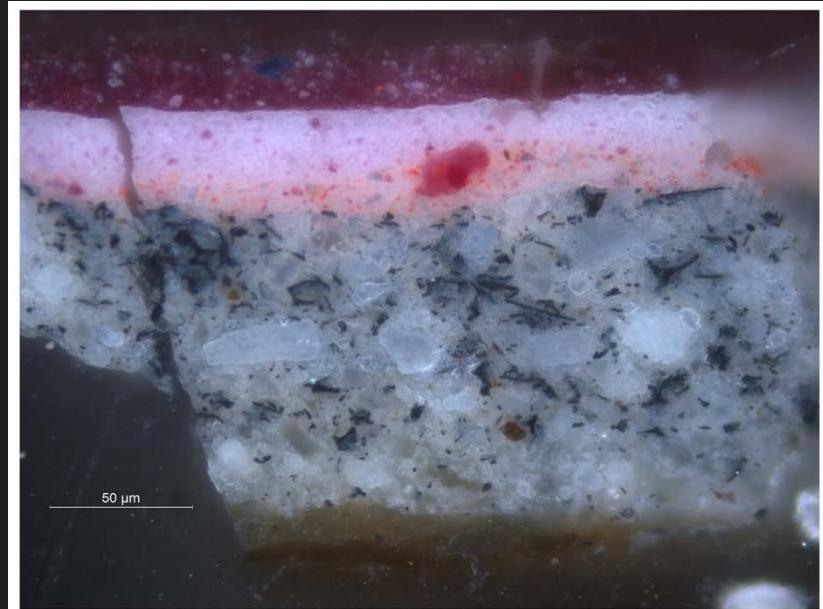
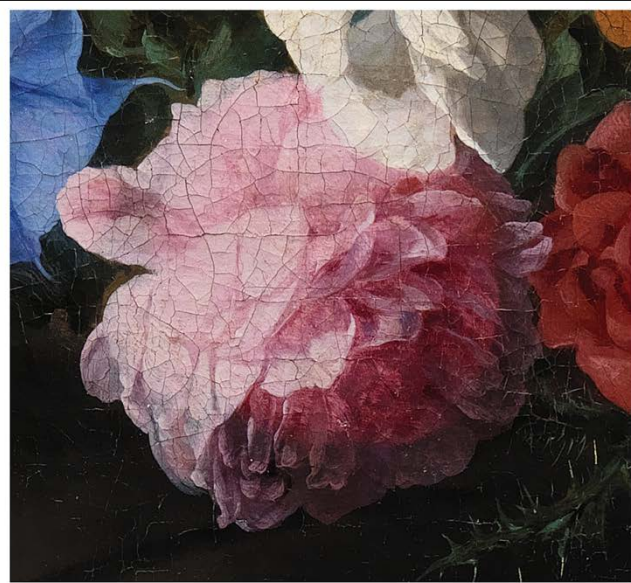
Daniël Seghers (Flemish, 1590-1661),
A Stone Cartouche with a Garland of Flowers,
c.1655.
Oil on canvas, 97.3 x 70.6 cm. SMK,
Copenhagen.

...lay in the flowers flat, first the principal, each in its place, with a single colour... (de Lairese, 1707)



Detail of X-ray of flower group in Bosman's painting, showing simplified underpaint as described by de Lairese





Upper cross-section is taken from the pink rose in the painting by Seghers, and lower cross-section from the pink rose in the painting by Bosman

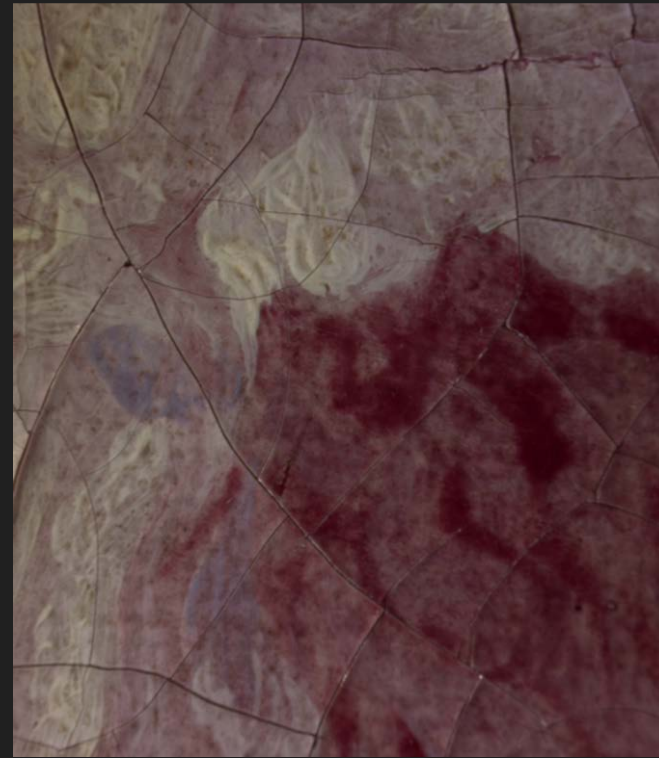
Historical Sources

Detail of *Tulipa gesneriana* in Bosman's painting



...a flower of purple coloure mingled with white strypes, shadowed with lack and topt with white in the middle there of both with in as without...

(Crispijn de Passe, in the chapter on Spring Flowers)



Detail of Bosman's *Rosa centifolia*, showing crimson glaze over paler pink build-up.

The Hollandes rose of 100 leaves is of a faire and goodly flesh coloure, and may be painted with lack and white, and shadowed with lack, and topt with white and a little lack...

(Crispijn de Passe, in the chapter on Summer Flowers)

Willem Beurs (1656-1700), recommends in his treatise: *De Groote Waereld in't Kleen Geschildert*, *The Large World Painted in Small*, from 1692,, to apply a red glaze to unify the various tones: 'Once they are painted and dry one puts a glaze on them or covers them a little with just Florentine lake, to weaken the force of the highlights and dark shadows.'



**Still life with flowers on a marble table,
Rachel Ruysch, 1716 , oil on canvas, 48.5cm
× 39.5cm, Rijksmuseum**





Abraham Mignon (1640-1679)
Still life with flowers and a watch c. 1664-1679
Oil on canvas, 75 x 60 cm
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, sk-a-268



Jan Davidsz. De Heem (1606-1683/4)
Still life with flowers in a glass vase and fruit c. 1665
Oil on panel, 53 x 41 cm
Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, Madrid

The yellow 'eglantier' rose



Detail of Seghers' painting showing the upper garland with discoloured *Rosa foetida*.



Rosa foetida



Beurs advises to paint a yellow *eglantier* rose, similar to the type we see in Seghers' painting, using orpiment (Kings yellow):

For the *geelen Eglantier* one just uses Kings yellow [mineral orpiment] in the sun light, for the shadow a little black and shit yellow [yellow lake for example from Buckthorn berries], for the reflection light shit yellow only and the middle tone needs King's yellow tempered after life.

Beurs 1692

Orpiment and yellow lake



Buckthorn (*Rhamnus Sylvaticus*) :
Buckthorn Berries,
also known as Persian
Berries



About Red and its stages in Flowers and cloths

[Red in Flowers] Red follows in the order that is powerful to our eyes as can be seen more or less in various flowers, which we will now discuss, putting in first place the *Ranunculen*, in second the red *Peonien* [Peonies]; after which the red Krullelyen or Martagons will follow, and the red Stokroozen will appear on stage, to be followed by the red Papaver [Poppy] and a procession of lesser quality, such as dark red Stokroozen, Auriculas and such, with which one should not be concerned, if one can paint the aforementioned ones well.

Red Peony

Martagon Lily

Red Poppy

[...]

The *Ranunculen* desire in the sunlight only vermilion, and in its middle tone a little lake added to it, in the shadow mainly lake with a little brown red, and last lake and a little vermilion to show the reflections. Once they are painted and dry one puts a glaze on them or covers them a little with just Florentine lake, to weaken the force of the highlights and dark shadows, and gloss the highlights with a little thin *schulpwit*.

[Red Peonies] One should paint the Red Peonies with vermilion in the sunlight, and mix in a little black to make the day or middle tone, similarly add black and brown for the shadow and a little more brown red if black is used for the reflection. When dry they desire the same glazing and glossing of the highlights as the *Ranunculen*.

[*Roode Krullelyen*] The *Roode Krullelyen* [Martagon Lilies] some painters finish with some shit yellow, but they can be shown, painted with the same paint as the *Ranunculen* and treated in a similar way.

[Stokroozen] The *Stokroozen* cannot be treated all in the same manner as some will be mixed from vermilion, lake and white, and some just need brown red and lake, as there are also others that need brown red, lake and white.

[*Roode Papavers*] And the paints for the *Stokroozen*, one can use to paint *Roode Papavers* [Red Poppies], if one has them in front, and thus we let the red flowers go, as this short explanation will be sufficient.



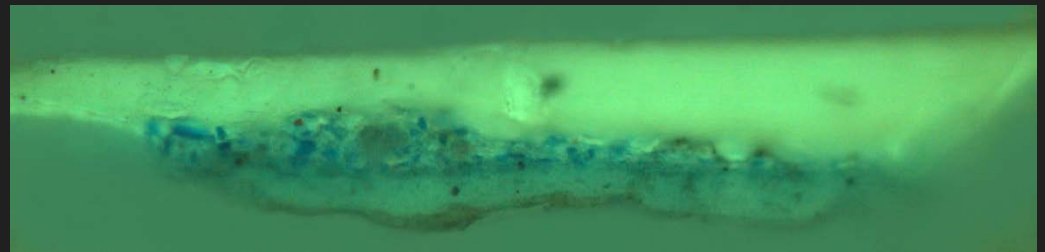
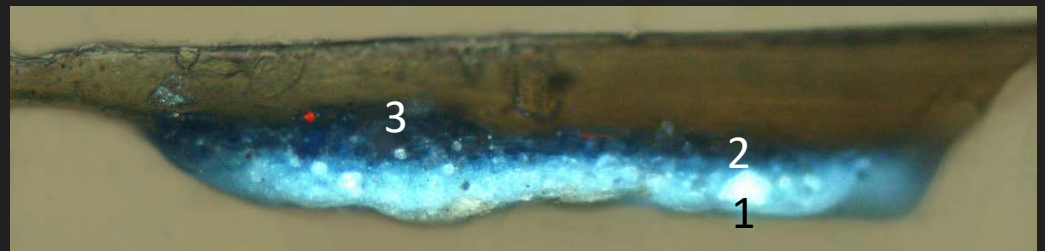


The *Convolvulen* should be painted first with indigo and white, and then they do not require anything else than a glaze, similarly the *Flos Principis* that have to be coloured in the same way. One does not need to speak about day and shadow in these flowers as it speaks for itself [...]

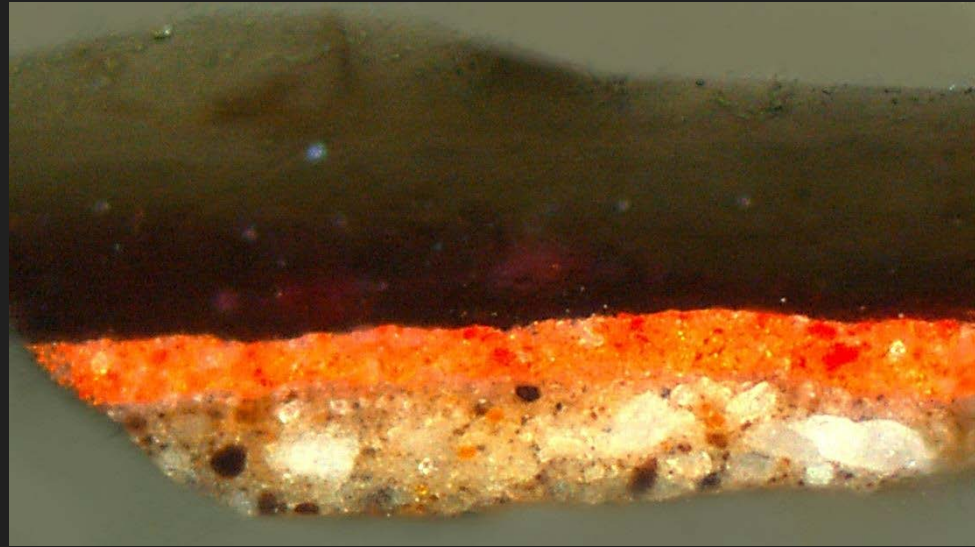


Blue convulvus
200x DF and UV

1. lead white + indigo underpaint
2. shades in indigo with less lead white
3. ultramarine in the upper paintlayer



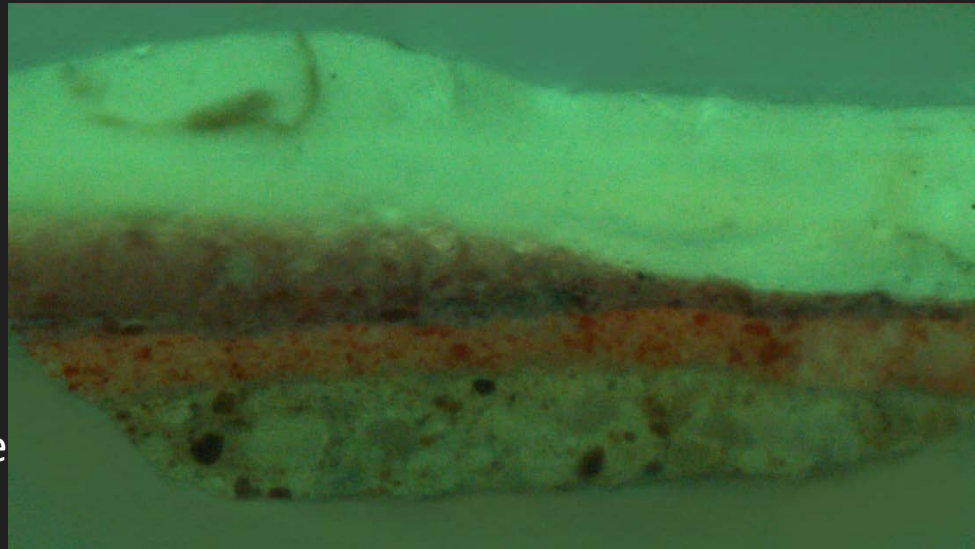




Tulip

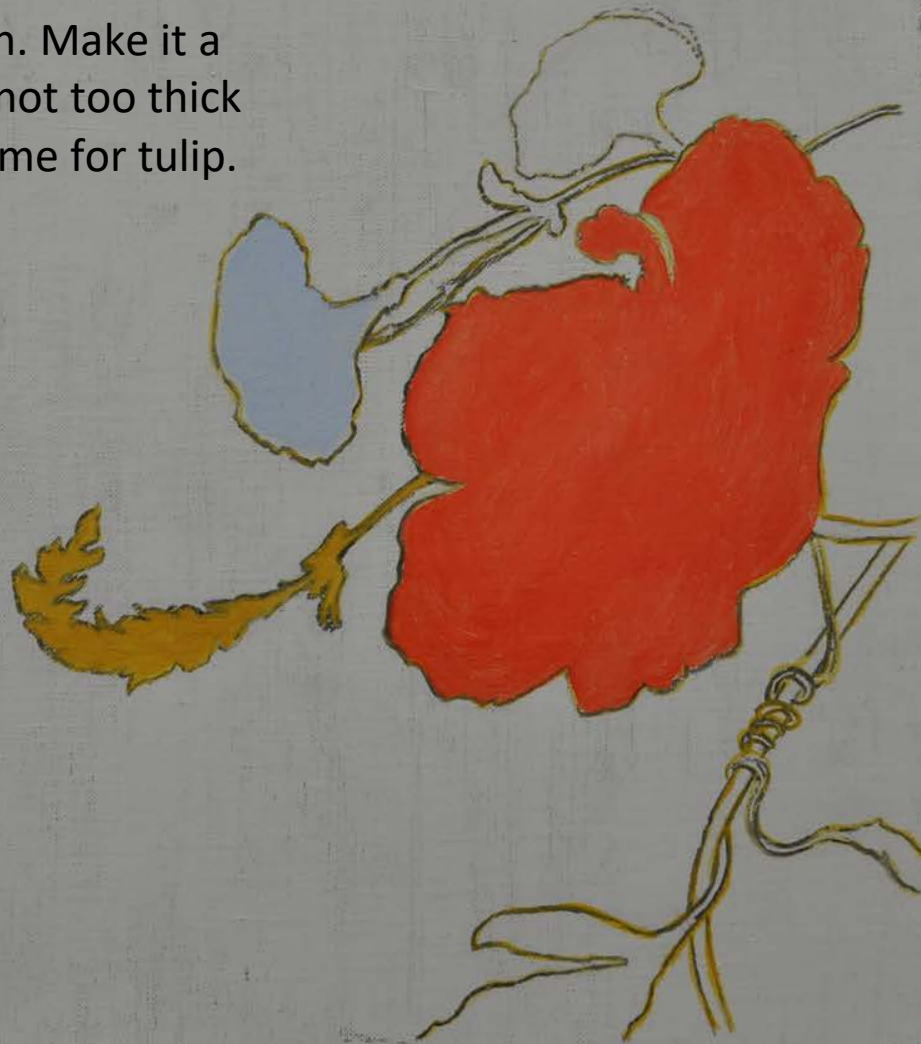
- grey imprimatura
- vermillion and a little lead white underpaint
- red glaze shades and details

The yellow detail is made using yellow ochre
the white is lead white.

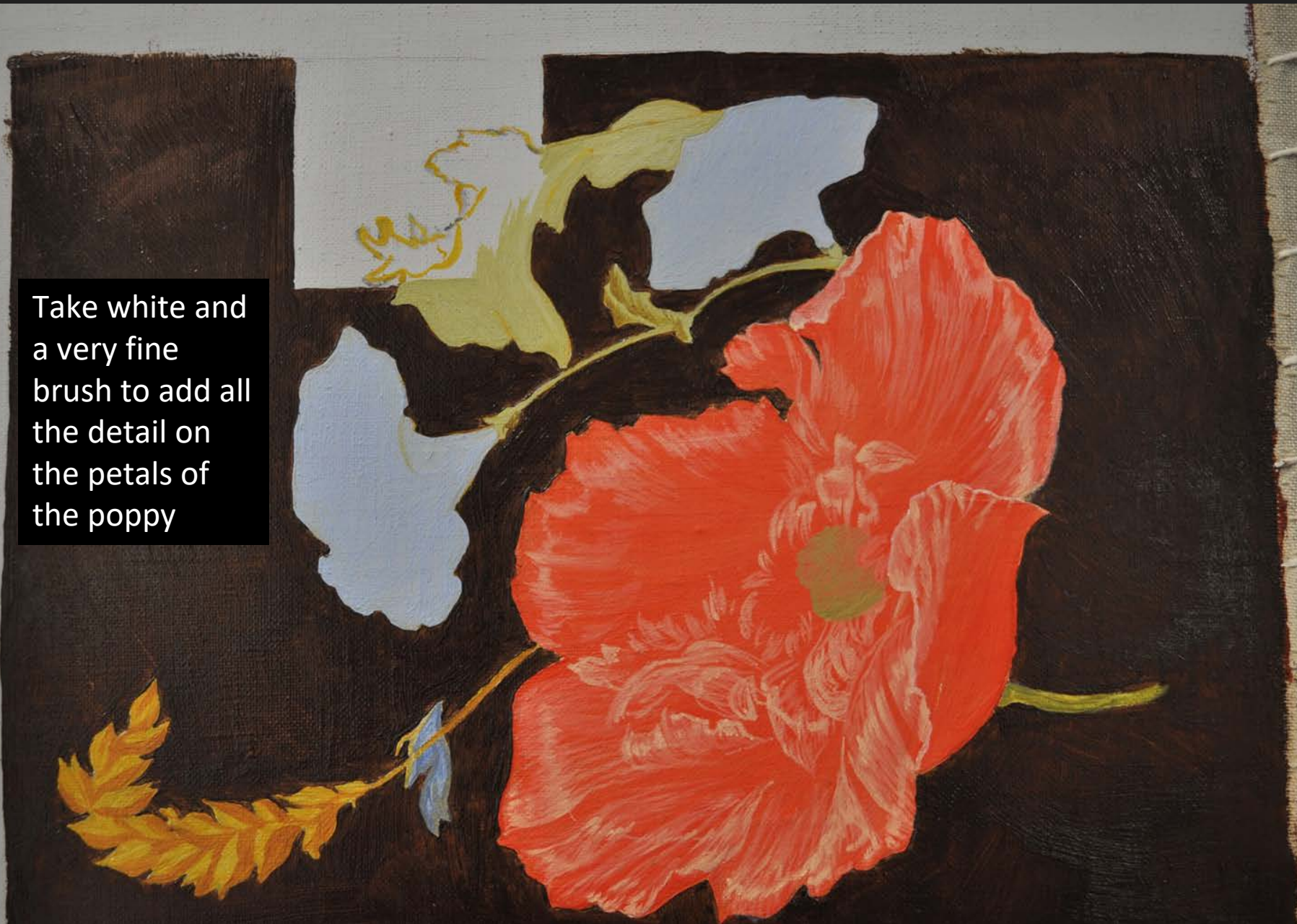




Dead paint stage: block in the whole area with vermilion. Make it a smooth not too thick layer. Same for tulip.



Take white and a very fine brush to add all the detail on the petals of the poppy





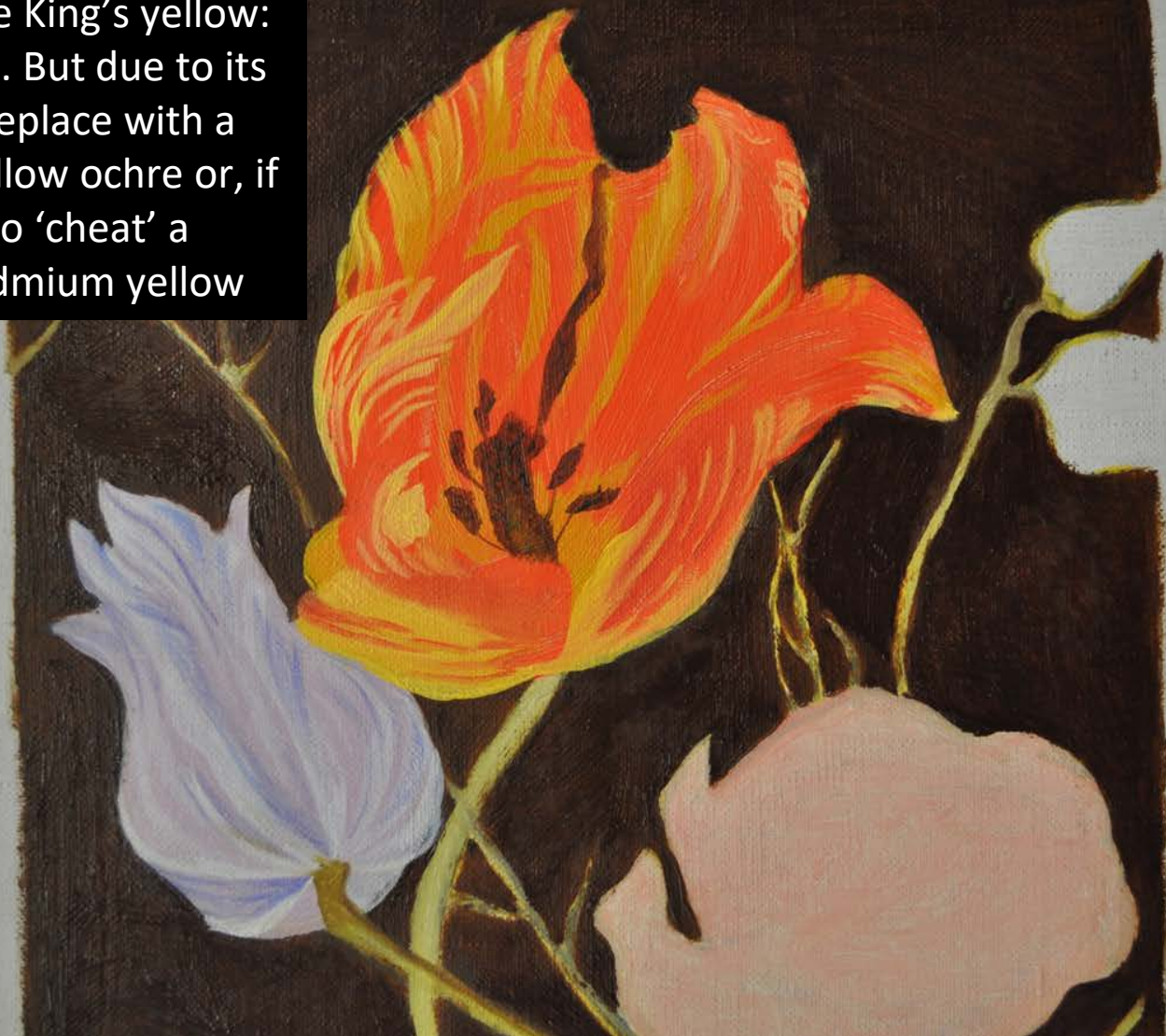


Add the red lake in the shadow areas using a fine brush.

Last add the yellow touches in the heart of the poppy .

The water drops can be made using white and red lake.

Yellow detail on the tuiip
Should be King's yellow:
orpiment. But due to its
toxicity replace with a
bright yellow ochre or,
if allowed to 'cheat' a
warm cadmium yellow







Red lake on tulip