

The shutter on the side of the street is opened, a breeze scatters the red and yellow pigment on the windowsill.
If you are not accustomed to so many unknown smells, the impression can throw you off balance.
I am painting rocks with pigments made of rocks.
I mix paint with particles that come from living and breathing creatures.
Jars and urns are scattered here and there.
They contain purple dyes made of sea snails from the Mediterranean, azurite and green malachite.
While I'm in front of the panel, a few young men are working in my studio.
One of them, with blond curls, is pulverising material in a mortar and pestle.
He takes great care to ensure that not a grain of the precious material is wasted ...

Johannes likes assisting me in my studio whenever he can.
Pulverising lumps of paint in a mortar or fetching eggs to make egg tempera, he does all chores with pleasure.
I was a bit annoyed with Johannes after a recent discussion about the use of oil paint.
Oil paint is much too liquid and has to dry for much too long.
But my brother believes you just need to apply the right amount and not mix the paint too much.
He thinks he is able to shorten the drying time and thicken the paint by adding a soapy substance and a tiny amount of lead.
He is convinced that the different dyes require different amounts of oil.
But then you get a gradated image, with some parts of the painting glittering more than other parts. That's not what I want ...
All his theories are beyond me.
I continue to paint with egg tempera.
Johannes may certainly use my studio for his experiments.
I provide him with all the materials he needs.

Johannes may also experiment with the lenses and mirrors I work with.
I showed him how they can be used.
We had to darken part of the studio, light a big candle and set up a concave mirror.
He proposed to draw me on that occasion.
I put on my wine-red doublet and draped my head with a green turban. I assumed a pose and my face appeared upside down on the vellum stretched on a stand, ready for tracing.
Although the projected image was blurred, Johannes managed to draw a sharp picture by making the room as dark as possible.
Johannes congratulated me on this fantastic discovery.

I quickly returned to my drawing table to continue the work on my panels.