Egg Tempera
Katie McKinney

This painting on the left was made using pigment colors and egg yolks. It is egg tempera, but this can also be done using egg whites or milk instead of the yolks. The actual process is quite simple. Take your egg yolk, mix it with your pigment, if it is too thick add a little water, and then paint. In this style of painting, the yolk serves as a binder, and when it dries it creates a polymeric film encasing the pigment, creating a protective layer for the painting.

This style of painting originated sometime in the tenth to twelfth century and has been developed ever since. Even now, with all of the synthetic binders and paints some painters choose to use a blast from the past. The painting depicted below is by Alex Garcia, and not only did he manage to paint amazing detail and liveliness, but he used egg tempera. It is not hard tell the amateur from the professional on this page.

But working with the egg tempera was surprisingly satisfying. It felt almost like watercolor, and when it was diluted enough it acted as such, but even when it wasn't very dilute the paint dried fairly quickly. That might be good or bad, depending on preference of paint, but it was not as frustrating as working with watercolor and not as thick as acrylic. Every paint has its own spot in the world, and every painter has his or her paint.

I found a lovely picture on a website titled Art History Kings[1], and it definitely shows how technique can blossom in certain styles. Little Linda, by Alex Garcia is a breathtaking portrayal of a little girl. The little Hispanic girl is looking off to the right of the painting. At what the viewer doesn't know, but the detail and precision on this child's face makes her look so lively, and warm that I feel like the child is about to look towards me and start telling me about what she is seeing.

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[1] http://arthistorykings.wordpress.com/2010/10/02/egg-tempera-painting/

and http://www.alexgarciafineart.com/egg-tempera-paintings/little-linda/