

## “Shooting Through” with a Telephoto Lens

If you're tired of using the same old macro lens for close-up photography, try using a telephoto lens to break the monotony. Telephoto lenses of 100 mm or longer work best for this technique. By carefully positioning your camera right in front of colorful flowers or other foliage in the foreground and focusing the lens on your subject in the background, you can create a beautiful wash of color in your image. I use this technique

of “shooting through” quite often with varying results, depending on just how close the foreground element is to the camera lens. As a general rule, place foreground objects between 2-12” away from the end of your lens. Be careful not to cover too much area within the frame. You want to be able to still see and focus on your main subject in the background. **(See Images 5-3 thru 5-7.)**

Image 5-3



### Telephoto Lens:

**Images 5-3 and 5-4:** This set-up illustrates the technique of “shooting through” flowers. By positioning my camera in front of the flower-pot and maintaining a low camera angle, I was able to use the pink flowers in the foreground to create a soft color vignette around the orange tulips. Manually focusing on the tulips at a distance and shooting at a wide aperture allowed me to create a pleasing color wash. Resulting image shown at right.

- Nikon 70-200mm lens 200mm focal length, f/2.8.

Image 5-4

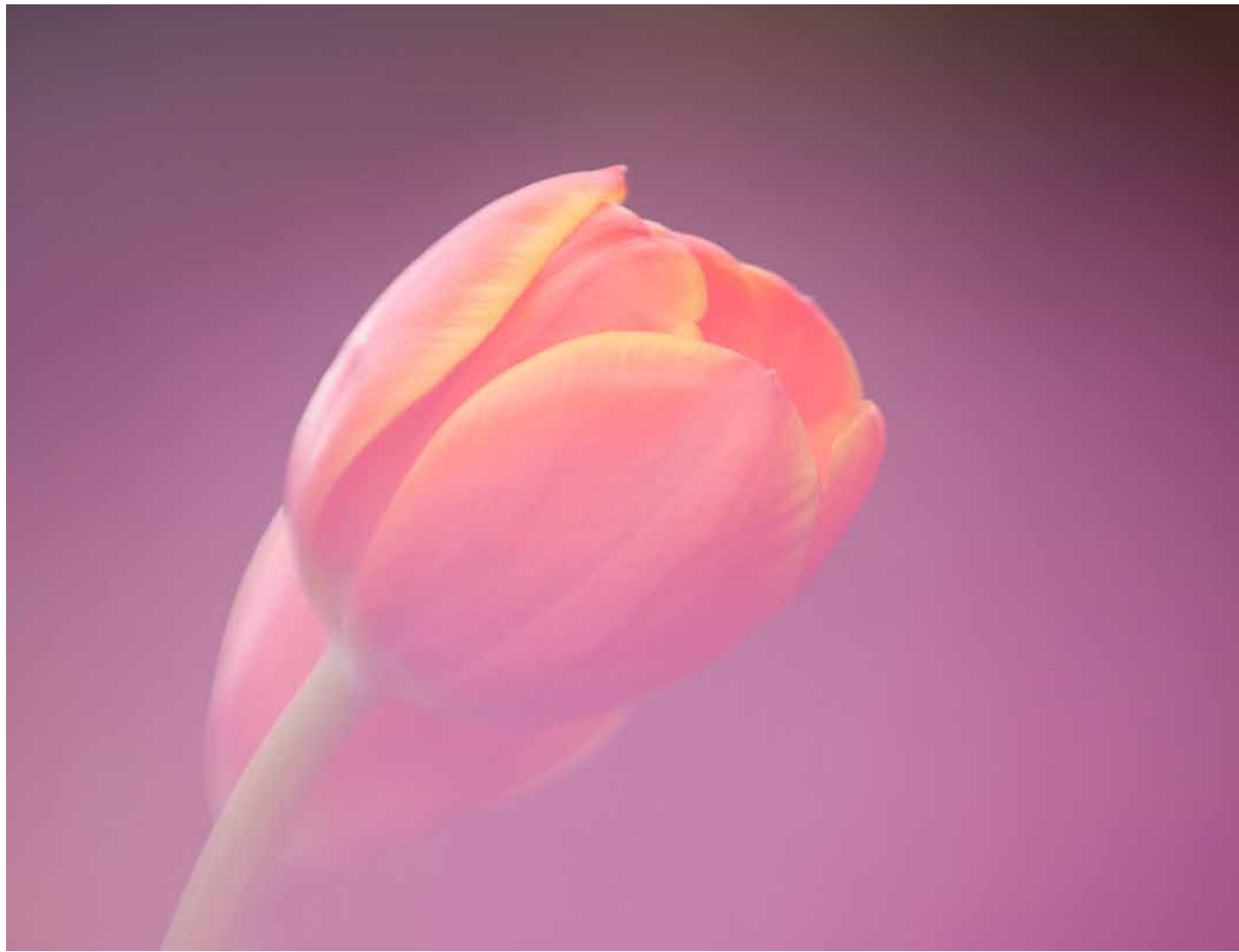


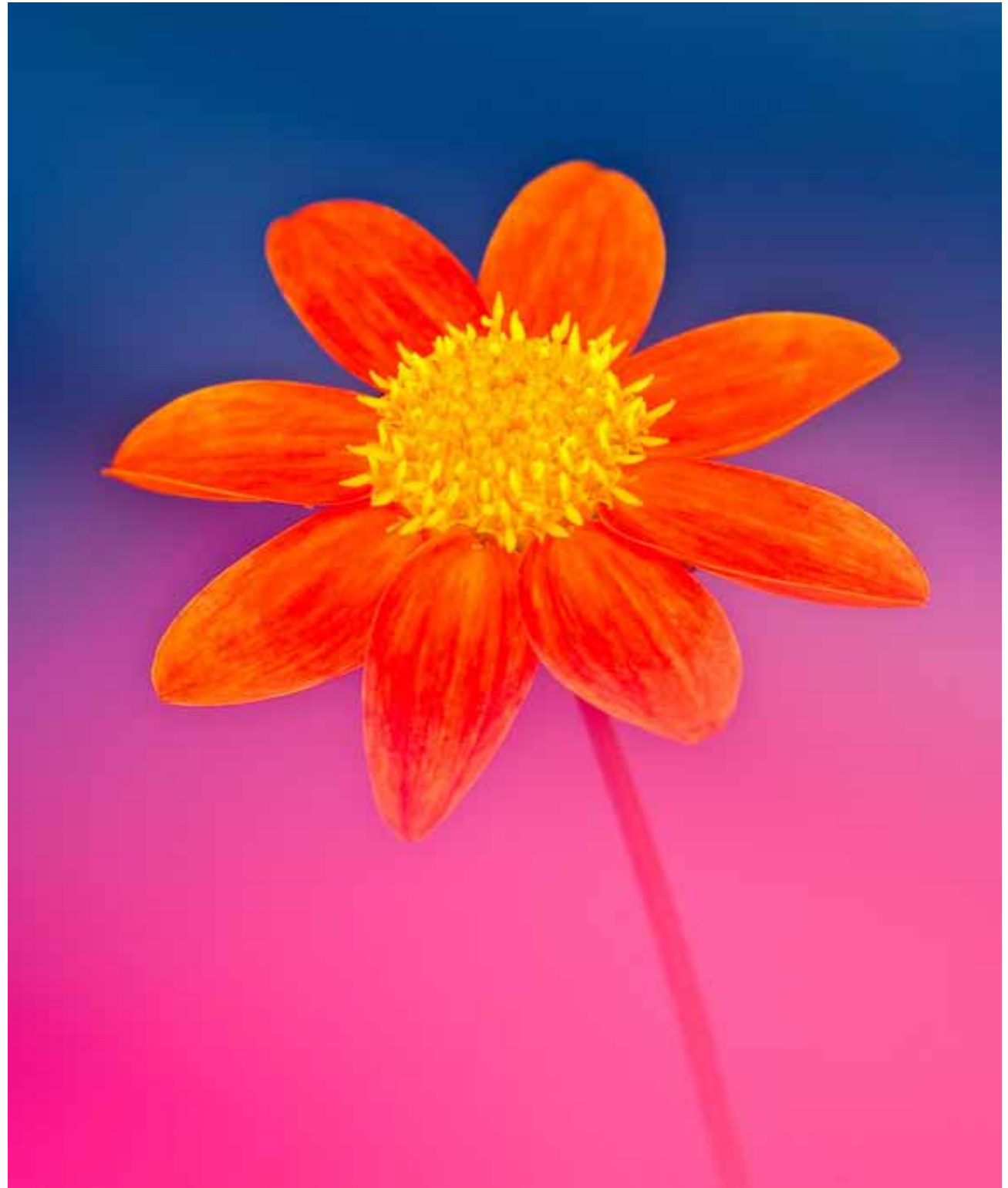


Image 5-5

**Images 5-5 and 5-6:** This time, using a **Plamp** ([learn more](#) | [to order](#)) attached to my tripod leg, I positioned a pink flower a couple of inches from my 200mm macro lens and “shot through” with the lens wide open and focusing on the orange flower in the distance. I was careful to position the flower low enough so that the vignetting effect appears only across the lower portion of the frame. This technique is especially effective when you want to soften or minimize the visual impact of certain elements in the picture, such as the flower stem in this case. Instead of using a Plamp, you can also hand-hold a flower petal, as illustrated in the image below. Be careful not to cover the entire lens with the petal, however.



Image 5-7



Using a [depth-of-field preview button](#) on your camera allows you to see the effect at various apertures. If you don't have a preview button, use the LCD on the back of your camera to determine just how much "unsharpness" you want. Typically, I'll start out by shooting at the widest aperture first, and then shoot several frames, each stopped down in 1-stop increments. (Be sure to decrease shutter speed accordingly as you stop down the lens.) And, of course, you'll want to place your camera on a tripod for sure.

Remember to be creative with what you use in the foreground to "shoot through." Besides flowers and other foliage, I've experimented with everything from a colorful table placemat with holes in it to sheer fabrics and other articles of clothing. In essence, you're creating your own soft-focus filter. Have fun and use various semi-transparent objects from around the house! **(See Images 5-8 and 5-9 below.)**

**Images 5-8 and 5-9:**

In addition to flowers, I have experimented with holding various colorful objects in front of the lens to achieve a vignetting effect. Here, I am holding my arm close to the top portion of my macro lens to create a bluish soft-focus effect from my blue sweatshirt. A green place-mat with holes in it from the [Dollar Store](#) also does the trick, as shown in **Image 5-9**.

Feel free to let your imagination go wild.

Remember to use the widest possible aperture on your lens and look through the camera to check for exact positioning to achieve the desired effect.

**Image 5-8**



**Image 5-9**



**Image 5-11**

**Images 5-10 and 5-11:**

Here are two more examples of how you can “shoot through” other flowers to achieve soft-focus. In both of these cases, however, I used my 70-200mm lens, rather than my macro lens, which still resulted in pleasing effects. With the Daffodil image, I crouched down low and literally stuck my lens into some fairly dense foliage (a shrub with purple flowers), changed the focus on my lens to about 20 feet, and focused on the Daffodils in the distance at the widest aperture, f/2.8.



**Image 5-10**

