

Viral Visions and Floral Fusions

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The art piece depicts a 3D tulip that has been infected with the tulip breaking virus from the family of potyviruses. The intricate filamentous structure of the virus crawls up the outside of the tulip, entwining itself with the stem and petals in a visually stunning yet sinister manner. The art piece is symbolic, representing the virus and the plant as one, blurring the lines between beauty and destruction. Despite its destructive nature, there is a certain allure to the breaking phenotype, with its unique color patterns and intricate lines. The art piece draws inspiration from a brief discussion in MCB C114 (Introduction to Comparative Virology) about tulipomania, a time in history when the beauty of tulips with a breaking pattern led to irrational speculation and financial ruin. The tulip breaking virus played a significant role in this period, causing tulip bulbs to fetch exorbitant prices. The art piece serves as a reminder of the potential beauty that can emerge from destruction and the power of nature to create something awe-inspiring even in the face of adversity.

