

Miles Hoover  
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Vinea Mortis

In the idea and planning stage when creating Vinea Mortis, I studied examples of real bacteria and the different types of diseases they can cause. I studied and carefully examined spherical, rod-shaped, and spiral bacteria to better understand the biology behind them so I could later create a realistic but fictional virus of my own. I sketched these three different types of bacteria dozens of times until I felt confident with the many forms that they can take on to transfer them into something new. I played with different structures of combining all three bacteria into one until I was happy with the end result, thus producing what I call Vinea Mortis.

This was my very first attempt at painting and proved to be an excellent learning experience for me as an artist in training. I had many failures and successes when creating this piece but overall I am happy with what I produced. The biggest flaw in Vinea Mortis is overwhelmingly the lack of depth and convincing space within the different floating bacteria. Creating a sense of depth through shading within a painting is something I struggled with a lot while creating Vinea Mortis. One aspect I believe that I demonstrated well was using texture to emphasise sporadic movement. I want viewers to feel like they are being engulfed by the bacteria and their tendrils at a rapid pace and the texture and movement from the leaves helped drive this narrative.

Vinea Mortis is a horrific disease to humans but remedy when it comes to our struggling planet. When someone catches Vinea Mortis their skin will start to crack and take on earthy discoloration as the bacteria multiply and grow within the victim. After a short while the diseased will start to grow vines, leaves, and bark all around their body slowing them down until they can not walk another step and finally converting them into a solid tree stuck to the ground. Vinea Mortis is a fictional disease that personally is a metaphor regarding humanity mistreating the only planet we can inhabit, planet Earth. I took heavy inspiration for this piece from Keith Haring and his sporadic and overwhelming works like *The Last Rainforest (1989)* and many other of his famous projects. His simplistic use of line and color to create something non-simplistic and fantastic inspired my creative process and helped me create Vinea Mortis.

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