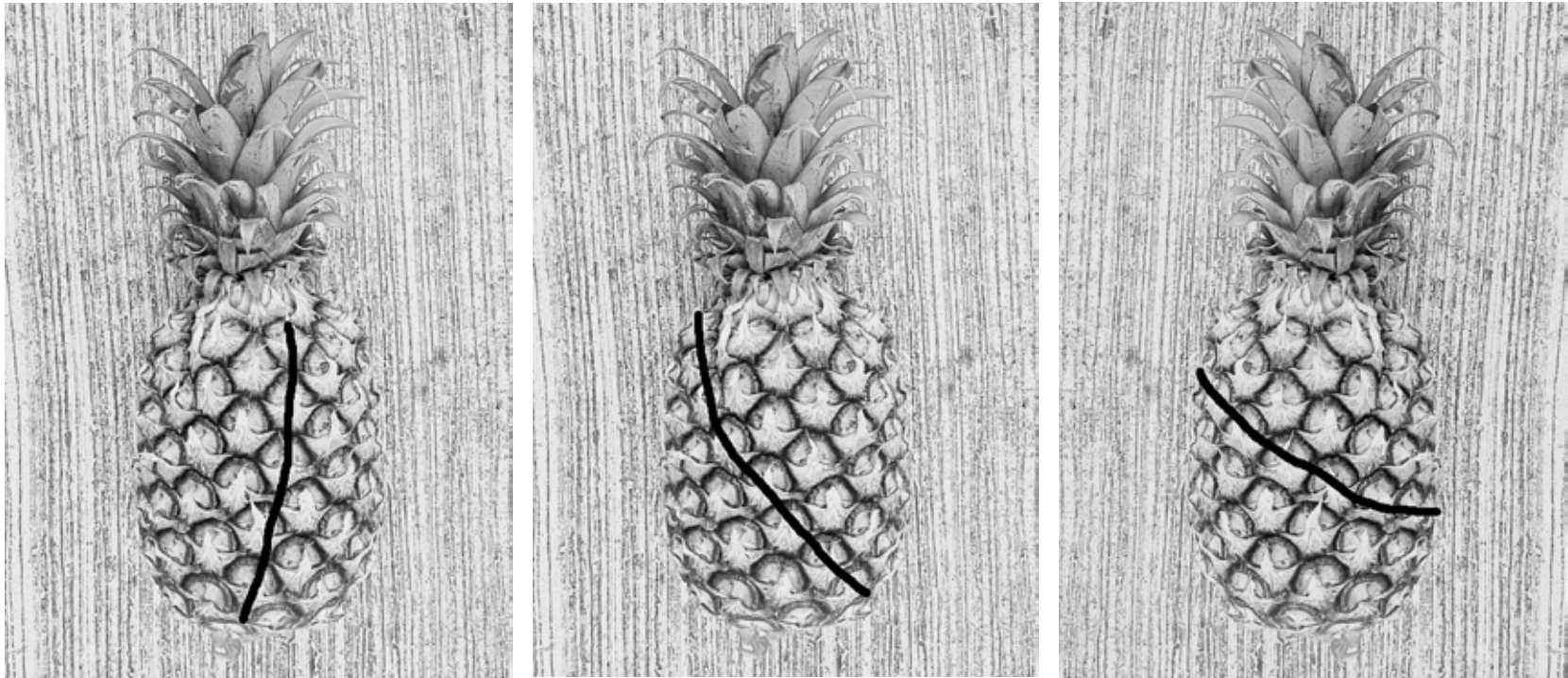


Floral Fusion à la Fibonacci

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Pineapple, a strange name given to a curious plant European explorer first discovered in the Americas in 1664. More appropriate is the Tupi Indian 'anana' meaning 'superior fruit' from which the Malay nenas and German "Ananas" may originate. This fruit conforms only in part with the way fruits usually develop. Here the whole inflorescence plus the central plant axis form a fleshy multiple pseudocarp or coenocarpium.

The hard inner part of a pineapple is the central axis of the plant. Once the fruit parts have formed, this axis continues to grow in what we know as the tuft of leathery leaves on top of a pineapple; when removed and planted, this can form an independent new plant. The approximately 200 individual flowers in each pineapple are spirally arranged around the central axis in a Fibonacci sequence, with each long, gently sloping spiral composed of eight flowers (later 'eyes' on the fruit), each steep slope of 13, and 21 for a vertical or very steep slope. More rarely the sequence is 5, 8 and 13 instead, another Fibonacci sequence. Try counting the 'eyes' on a few pineapples in each of the directions.....true or not?

