Triclinic nematic colloidal crystals from competing elastic and electrostatic interactions

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Competing forces drive ordering

The power and beauty of liquid crystals come from their tendency to order loosely over long length scales. This ordering can be tweaked using external fields, or via tailored boundary conditions, or embedded objects. Mundoor *et al.* deposited luminescent nanorods into a liquid crystal solvent (see the Perspective by Blanc). This caused a competition between local electrostatic interactions and the elastic ordering of the liquid crystal. The nanorods ordered into a triclinic structure not otherwise attainable. The authors further adjusted the structure using external fields.

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