

Evo-Devo

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TEL: 617-300-3893 FAX: 617-779-7900 jtkoch@pbs.org pbsinternational.org To celebrate the great naturalist Charles Darwin's 2009 bicentennial, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of "On the Origin of Species," NOVA is producing a two-hour special that will take viewers to the frontiers of evolutionary science. The program will lead viewers on an exploration of the living world Darwin knew and a world he could only have dreamed of: the genetic inner workings of natural selection. Over the last decade, an exciting field of biology has emerged to help explain how a small number of genes could be responsible for the vast variety of life we see in nature. This emerging field of evolutionary developmental biology, or "Evo-Devo," uses genetic methods to combine the study of evolution and biological development of single organisms and whole species. Using these methods, it appears that the same genes sculpt the bodies of everything from sea squirts to people, and that these ancient, seemingly immortal genes—as well as what controls them—may hold the secret of how evolution builds new species out of old ones. NOVA travels from the Galapagos Islands to Antarctica, from the Cambrian explosion of animal forms half a billion years ago, to the research labs of today, where scientists are finding themselves able to explain at the genetic level the processes responsible for the complex development and vast diversity of life.

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