

The Art of Genes: How Organisms Make Themselves

Enrico Coen



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Over the past twenty years there has been a revolution in biology--for the first time scientists have been able to unravel the details of how organisms make themselves. The mechanisms by which a fertilized egg develops into an adult can now be grasped in a way that was unimaginable a few decades ago. *The Art of Genes* is the first account of these exciting new findings, and of their broader significance in how we view ourselves.

Through a highly original synthesis of sciece and art, Enrico Coen vividly describes this revolution in our understanding of how plants and animals develop. Drawing on a wide range of material--from flowers growing petals instead of sex organs, and flies that develop an extra pair of wings, to works of art by Leonardo and Magritte--he explains in lively accessible prose the meaning of genes. Coen draws parallels between the way genes respond to the developing pattern of an organism and the way an artist responds to a painting being created on canvas, a memorable analogy that shows how the organism develops through an interactive dialogue in which there is no separation between plan and execution.

There have been many attempts to resolve the paradox of how organisms make themselves. Lucid, authoritative, and entertaining, *The Art of Genes* offers fresh and exciting insights into the nature of evolution, development, and human creativity.

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