

RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology (CDB)
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Beauty in Embryology

February 4, 2004 – The CDB hosted a special two-day meeting, Beauty in Embryology, on February 3 and 4, marking the opening of the Center's new 153-seat lecture theatre. The meeting, which was planned and hosted by Yoshiko Takahashi (Laboratory for Body Patterning), featured a distinguished panel of developmental biologists from around the world, including a number of pioneers in the field of neural crest research, including Nicole Le Douarin (CNRS, France), Jim Weston (University of Oregon, USA) and Tokindo Okada (University of Kyoto, Japan). Click [here](#) to view the Beauty in Embryology poster, which shows the full meeting program.



Speakers at the Beauty in Embryology meeting.

Talks were given in five sessions, and covered many aspects of embryonic development, from somitogenesis (the process in which the embryo develops segments corresponding to vertebrae in the adult) to regulatory gene expression networks to the evolution of the vertebrate body plan. One common theme in many of the presentations was the aesthetic aspects of the form, organization and behavior of structures and patterns in the vertebrate embryo.

The neural crest is an early embryonic domain whose cells give rise to a range of important tissue and organ systems, including peripheral and sympathetic neurons, the craniofacial skeleton, pigment cells and the adrenal medulla. Its existence was first demonstrated over 100 years ago by Julia Platt, but it failed to gain widespread acceptance by the scientific community at the time. Dr Platt's discovery was acknowledged by both Nicole Le Douarin and Jim Weston in their reviews of the history of neural crest research.

The Beauty in Embryology meeting represents the latest in an ongoing series of open scientific gatherings hosted at the CDB for the purpose of fostering the free exchange and discussion of research at the highest level. All such meetings are conducted in English and encourage participation by scientists from around the world. The CDB will be hosting its second annual symposium: [Developmental Remodeling](#) on March 29 – 31.