

Prof. Dr. Heino Falcke

Award-winning astrophysicist, international speaker & bestselling author



Heino Falcke, born in Cologne in 1966, is an internationally distinguished astrophysicist. In 2019, together with the Event Horizon Telescope Collaboration (EHTC), whose scientific advisory board he chaired, he achieved a world sensation: the publication of the first image of a black hole. It was in his doctoral thesis that he dreamed of making such an achievement possible. His dream was made reality through global collaboration "with the world's help, we had managed to

capture this image. When we shared it with the world, it embraced it, more wholeheartedly than I ever have thought possible."

Heino Falcke is a fascinating speaker and creative pioneer who is investigating the depths of the sky. He uses a network of telescopes spanning the entire planet to look for black holes and a lunar telescope to search for the Big Bang. To improve his research results, Heino Falcke hopes to build a [radio telescope in Namibia](#) and inspire school children there.

Falcke is blessed with a mix of Rhineland humour and Prussian stubbornness. He believes in divine reason and in a reasonable God. Often, 'silly' questions are his best answers. Falcke holds a professorship at the Radboud University in Nijmegen and is guest professor at the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy in Bonn and was chair of the board of the European-wide LOFAR radio telescope. His scientific achievements earned him knightly accolades from the Dutch King. He received the Spinoza Prize, the highest scientific award in the Netherlands, and the Academy Award of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. He also received the Einstein Medal of the Einstein Society in Bern, and the Henry Draper Medal of the American National Academy of Science. Furthermore, he is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and an ordained predicant of the Protestant Church; he performs marriages, baptisms, funerals and holds sermons. For a long time, the closest he got to heaven was in his microlight aircraft, until 6 April 2019, when the International Astronomical Union (IAU) named an asteroid after him: (12654) Heinofalcke. Ever since then, he's been cruising the solar system on a very eccentric trajectory.

His book *Light in the Darkness. Black holes, the Universe and Us* (with Jörg Römer, Klett-Cotta, Fall 2020) was in the top 10 of the German SPIEGEL bestseller list for weeks and has been sold in 12 countries.

Heino Falcke is a popular talk show guest. His work has been featured by BBC, Der Spiegel, Science Magazine, and Sky News, among others. Heino Falcke's inquisitive and

authentic personality makes him an internationally sought-after speaker, who is not exclusively limited to the science scene. In his impressive lectures, he demonstrates what it means to go to the frontiers of our knowledge, to believe in something bigger than humans can imagine - and that it takes global teamwork to make bold dreams come true. Heino Falcke tells gripping and vivid stories about the great mysteries of space and takes his audience on an inspiring journey to the limits of space and time. He lectures in German, English, and Dutch.



"Heino Falcke is doing groundbreaking research on the most mysterious phenomenon in the universe and on the boundaries of space and time."
(From the jury statement of the Spinoza Prize)

"Heino Falcke is my 2019 Man of the Year, and the photo he and his team took of the black hole in the M87 galaxy has long since become an iconic image. Yet Falcke is not only a fantastic scientist but also a gifted storyteller."
(Jim Jansen, Editor-in-Chief, New Scientist NL)

"Falcke has communication skills rarely encountered among highly specialised scientists: he can explain Einstein's Theory of Relativity so that school kids understand it. When he talks about black holes, how they come into existence when a star collapses and joins the ranks of the weirdest places in the universe, when he explains their stupendous gravity and describes how they swallow everything, even light – then his enthusiasm has the same effect on his audience as a black hole

attracting all attention. 'That's where physics goes bananas,' he says, and you think, 'Fascinating!'"
(Jörg Römer, Der Spiegel)

Personal website of [Heino Falcke](#)

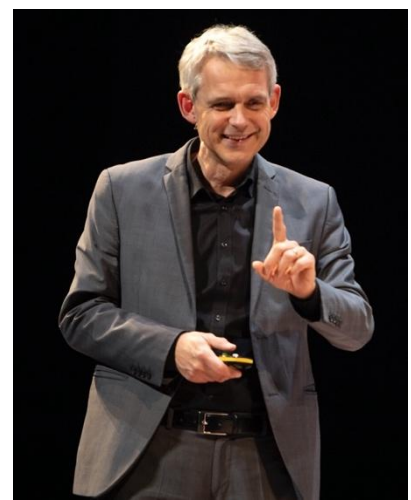
"Light in the Darkness"

[Press reviews & press photos](#) for "Light in the Darkness"

Keywords: astrophysics, astronomy, faith, innovation, inspiration, diversity, creativity, leadership, learning, management, motivation, sustainability, team, technology, space, science, future

Lecture titles (selection):

- Light in the dark. Black holes, the universe and us
- It takes the whole world to make the invisible visible. The first image of a black hole
- A journey to the end of space and time. From the great mysteries of the universe



Languages: German, English and Dutch

Types of presentations: keynotes, keynote speeches, dinner speeches / fireside chats, panel participation, workshops

Lectures (selection):

- European Press Conference 10.4.2019 announcing the image of the black hole (over 3 million views, Heino Falcke ca. 6:30 - 11:30):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dr20f19czeEs>
"I never believed that this black hole was as big as people said until we saw... that: This is the nucleus of the galaxy M87 and this is the first ever image of a black hole."
- Science & Cocktails Talk "How to see black holes" (55 Min, Dec 2018):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S_P3LUMuNw
"How do you see something that's a perfect nothingness? ... That's what we try to do in our science."
- TEDxRWTH Aachen Talk "How to make the invisible visible" (15 Min, Feb 2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHeBi4e9xoM>
"Let's imagine we're standing during a dark, clear night on a tall mountain and look at the Milky Way. You immediately will realize that looking at the stars it's not just about science, it's also a spiritual adventure. You start asking questions. And that was what happened to me when I was a kid. I was thinking about the universe and this universe was full of questions, fascination and hope and led me to do science and also to think about myself and who we are as human beings. What is out there in this heaven? Is there a god? Is this universe infinite? And if it's not, is there an end to this universe? And if there's an end what's behind that end? And if that has an end what's the end thereafter?"

TV appearances (selection):

- [NDR Talkshow](#) 30.10.2020
- [SRF Sternstunde Philosophy](#) 01.11.2020
- [ZDF Lanz](#) 11.11.2020

News (selection):

- [Observatories around the world](#) Sky News 27.04.2017 (including interview)
- [First ever black hole image released](#) BBC 10.04.2019 (including interview)
- [Expedition into the dark center of the galaxies\(preprint\)](#) DER SPIEGEL 22.10.2020
- [Astrophysicist Heino Falcke tells the story of an epochal image](#) NZZ 24.10.2020



Books international (selection):

- [Licht in de duisternis](#) (NL, Prometheus 30.10.2020)
- [La luz en la oscuridad](#) (Spanien, Debate 18.02.2021)
- [Light in the Darkness. Unveiling the secrets of black holes and the nature of the human spirit](#) (UK, Wildfire 04.05.2021)

- [Light in the Darkness. Black Holes, the Universe and Us](#) (USA, HarperOne 04.05.2021)
- More in preparation