



Astrophysicist at Radboud University

Heino Falcke is one of the world's leading astrophysicists. In 2019, he and the Event Horizon Telescope Collaboration (EHTC), whose scientific advisory board he chairs, achieved a global breakthrough: the publication of the first-ever image of a black hole.

After studying physics at the Universities of Cologne and Bonn, he earned his PhD summa cum laude from the University of Bonn in 1994. He worked as a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy (MPIfR) and as a postdoc at the University of Maryland before becoming an assistant professor at Radboud University Nijmegen in 2002, where he has been a full professor since 2007. Falcke is also a guest scientist at MPIfR, a longtime chairman of the LOFAR radio telescope, and a key figure behind groundbreaking telescope projects, including a space telescope to search for black holes and a moon-based telescope to study the Big Bang. In 2022, his team received a prestigious European Research Council (ERC) grant to build the African Millimeter-Wave Radio Telescope (AMT) in Namibia, a project designed not only to capture stunning images of the black hole at the center of our galaxy but also to inspire young minds in Africa.

For his pioneering research, Heino Falcke has received numerous honors. He is a recipient of the Spinoza Prize, a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion. Together with the EHT, he was awarded the Albert Einstein Medal in 2020, the Henry Draper Medal of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences in 2021, and the Herschel Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society in 2023. His book "Light in the Darkness: Black Holes, the Universe, and Us" became a bestseller, spending weeks in the Top 10 of the SPIEGEL bestseller list.

Beyond science, Heino Falcke is also an ordained lay preacher in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland. For years, he felt closest to the skies in his ultralight aircraft—until the International Astronomical Union (IAU) honored him in 2019 by naming an asteroid after him: (12654) Heinofalcke.

With his curious and engaging personality, Heino Falcke is a sought-after public speaker, captivating audiences with inspiring stories about the mysteries of the cosmos. He blends scientific depth with compelling storytelling, offering profound insights into the universe—and humanity's place within it.

Topics (Selection):

- Light in the dark. Black holes, the universe and us
- Making the invisible visible. The first image of a black hole
- A journey to the end of space and time. About the great secrets of outer space
- Competitive Collaboration: How can we, as Europeans and democrats, hold our own in global competition and still work together?
- Leadership: How can diverse leadership styles and ideas be aligned towards a common global goal?