



## *A hole in the air and everywhere*

### **Theatre. Magic. Objects**

recommended for children aged 4+

for 4-8 years old children in pre-school and primary school classes 1-4

### **This production is about**

Asking questions and researching as a way to get to know the world

Enjoying independent thinking

Sensitization of all the senses

Strengthening the imagination

Illusion, deception and reality

The production is without words. In this play, language is being felt via the interpretation of signs and symbols and becomes a shared experience beyond the barriers of spoken language.

Please watch the trailer: <https://vimeo.com/782274615>

### **Contact details:**

Melanie Florschütz

post@melaniefloerschuetz.de

[www.florschuetz-doehnert.de](http://www.florschuetz-doehnert.de)

### **Advertising the show**

„Have you ever sawed a hole? And then? Was it gone?“ florschütz & döhnert are researching the phenomenon of holes. They are making holes. The more holes they are making, the bigger the possibilities that are surprisingly opening up. This is because a hole is a door that leads elsewhere: a tiny hole is enough to make you an explorer. With a good sense of humour florschütz & döhnert start out on an expedition into the realm of imagination. A magic theatre play, mysteriously and exciting as a detective story, with lots of space for the important aspects of holes: you can't really grasp it.

"For many years now, florschütz & döhnert are creating wonderfully beautiful productions of object theatre for young audiences. In "A hole in the air and everywhere" the Berlin-based duo combines the art of clownesque performance with music and magic and makes us the present of a real hymn to phantasy."

*In : la plaquette de la Maison du Théâtre, Brest saison 15-16*

„This is object theatre filled with magic, comedy and absurdity that gives everyone's imagination wings.“

*In : la plaquette du festival Échappée Belle, 2016*



### Note of the company

The Magic of this production comes to live in the audience's heads. Through pointedly placed illusionist's tricks and sounds, the imagination becomes the actual actor.

The unexcited and fine play with things, in this case holes, leads the audience on a very special track: it sharpens the reception of the senses while at the same time playing with it and with the expectations. Once, the depth of a hole is tested, once it is closed to any kind of insight.

The unknown lures out phantasies behind every hole. Nobody knows what is going to happen next. Here, nothing is being explained, though everything is about the discovery of the secrets of holes. A world, seemingly without language but still full of signs that need to be decoded like in a comic book.

With a good sense of humour, sometimes absurdly funny, the two actors start out on an expedition into the realm of imagination, they go deeper and deeper into the world of holes. The audience is more and more openly allowed to take part in this, seeing how the magic of theatre is being produced which provides additional pleasure. Microphone and megaphone are being used as quite astonishing kinds of sound-machines.

Playing with dimensions or with the illusion of dimensions astonishes the audience and makes them doubt. What is real and what is not? What does the spectator think possible or impossible? Here, it is about a personal interpretation that goes beyond right or wrong

A play that brings us closer to the enigmatic dimension of holes with the intimacy of a chamber drama. Exciting like crime fiction, with lots of space for the important aspects of holes: you can't really grasp it. A hole is always somewhere between something and nothing.

*Melanie Florschütz*

### Credits:

Production: florschütz & döhnert

Coproduction: ROTONDES Luxembourg, Brotfabrik Bonn  
Funded by: Senatskanzlei Berlin, Kulturelle Angelegenheiten; Bezirksamt Pankow von Berlin and Fonds Darstellende Künste e.V.

Support: SCHAUBUDE BERLIN

Artistic collaboration and lightdesign: Joachim Fleischer  
Idea, scenography, objects, play: Melanie Florschütz and Michael Döhnert

Scene painter: Wolf Dieckmann

Costume designer: Adelheid Wieser

Advice of magic tricks: Andreas Meinhardt

Première: 12th september 2015 SCHAUBUDE BERLIN



### Vote:

„Are they scouts, clowns, people who know, who guess or who are simply curious? Florschütz & Döhnert explore the power and magic of black holes: The void as a big kind of fascination! The devotion and perseverance they show in dealing with it – that lets them discover absurd, funny and surprising things – is amazing. With very few means, in a simple peep-box, the two of them create a space full of possibilities and impossibilities. Do we get a glimpse into the universe, into the underworld, into our everyday life, into ourselves?

These mysterious holes seem to be waiting everywhere to be seen, heard and played with. A very special production for young audiences, which shows how enriching and entertaining it is to dedicate oneself to a phenomenon with curiosity and to let the fantasy run free – even if the hole isn't always round. A fabulous hollowing out, drilling and re-drilling, which, depending on the capacities of the viewers' imagination, can move in quite unusual ways.“

*Statement of the Jury selecting the participants of Wildwechsel-Festival 2017*

### Press reviews

#### In the beginning there was the hole

Melanie Florschütz and Michael Döhnert explore the phenomena of absence in the Fitz

Recently, astronomers discovered a gigantic black hole. 12.8 million light-years away, it presents the scientists with mysteries that are not that easy to solve. What remains are speculations and the attraction caused by these kinds of phenomena.

How does that work? What happened? Are these really holes? These kinds of questions are also being asked by the little spectators in the Stuttgart Centre for puppet theatre (Fitz) on the week-end, where Melanie Florschütz

and Michael Döhnert are taking them on an expedition into the realms of imagination with their play “A hole in the air and everywhere“. It starts with round shadows moving over three white stage walls, caused by an electric lamp with a round surface.

Almost without words the two puppet masters magically produce holes in the floor and in the walls, let them disappear and come back again. They are poking with telescopic rods in imaginary holes, and they explore the phenomenon “hole“ accompanied by quiet music or beautiful sound collages. Through sounds that are acoustically amplified or changed through the effects of reverberation, like dripping water and shouts through a megaphone into an imaginary well, the transformation of two-dimensional objects into three-dimensional things is being simulated.

The huge hole at the end of a textile well in which Melanie Florschütz seems to disappear into the underground also seems magic. In the now darkened room, the imagination lets you see the picture of a dripstone cave, in which the actress is anxiously looking around. And then, suddenly, she has a hole in her arm and there is a breath coming from her mouth like air out of a balloon. A plaster helps and will also be of use in a bigger dimension for the hole in the floor.

The ensemble's claim that holes are mostly but not always round is being supported by holes in different geometric shapes. Like a sworn community, Florschütz and Döhnert whisper, they build a house, they have bells ring, speak into abstract phone receivers, construct one surprise after the other and deconstruct them again. It is the surprises that make their play exciting without many resources.

*Brigitte Jähnigen, Stuttgarter Nachrichten 19.10.2015*



### The phantastic development of three-dimensionality out of two-dimensionality

Have you ever sawed a hole? And then? Was it gone?

Imagine there were suddenly big and small, huge and black holes that could open up anywhere and disappear all of a sudden. With this occurrence Melanie Florschütz and Michael Döhnert, pioneers of theatre for the youngest spectators, entertained a captivated audience of pre-school children in the Theater an der Ruhr in Mülheim in December 2016.

In „A hole in the air and everywhere“ they put the focus on one element of their previous production: The development of three-dimensionality out of the two-dimensional. They succeed in doing that by deceiving the senses or more accurately through the phantasy of the audience, which enables them to interpret a deeply black, non-reflecting disk on the ground as a deep hole. Or four squares on the wall as a window in the night. You can look through these openings and you can look into these holes. Deeply. Dripping water makes you think of a sewer system or a canalisation, but suddenly you hear a hollow singing from afar and echoing voices, distant foot-steps and shadows appear...

And still, there, on the floor of the stage, there are only black disks. Out of those, even keys, buckets or a phone can be miraculously picked up. The telephone brings a rustle from the depth and is of course best secured at the shadow of a lamp – and the fact that something like that is possible on stage does indeed fascinate the children immensely. Fascination is also being caused by little tricks that let flat silhouettes become a real ball or a small three-dimensional house. At the moment when a long stick is being put into the hole, the illusion is perfect. And still this play is no theater of illusions. The audience many times witnesses, for example, how exactly sounds are being created on stage. The microphone is

being shoved back and forth over the floor in order to get the scratchy sound of the turning of a manhole cover. Or the singing and murmuring out of the underground can directly be traced to one of the players. Still, children let themselves be drawn into that stated world of the underground so that the big shadows and the upcoming darkness do seem somewhat eerie to them. Therefore, it is good that the role-playing of the actress and object-player Melanie Florschütz and the musician Michael Döhnert allows for so much comedy. It works a bit like the whiteface clown and the clumsy clown – and Melanie Florschütz does have big clownish potential. When she jumps across the stage with the cordless electric drill or more accurately when the drill jumps with her, and while she is drilling into the wall her whole body seems to dissolve in vibration the children are squealing with laughter. Fortunately, Döhnert does not show the overly didactic part of the whiteface. He simply is the quiet and calm figure that helps the more childish other that kids can identify with.

The visual means are wonderfully modest and carefully selected. Everything is influenced by a black-and-white aesthetics with shades of gray with the exception of only two red balls. The shapes are oriented around the basic principles of circle, square, globe and cylinder. There is no text but murmuring and sounds. And there is no teaching, only a common pleasure of discovery. Surprisingly simple, surprisingly sophisticated. The audience follows the action with enthusiasm and some unexpected commentaries. At the end the children were arguing whether there was a hole or a lid on the stage.

How was it again about the earth and the disk?

*Annette Dabs, Die aktuelle Kritik auf FIDENA-Das Portal/ Deutsches Forum für Figurentheater und Puppenspielkunst e.V., www.Fidena.de, 12.12.2016*



### **The Theatre company florschütz & döhnert**

is based in Berlin, Germany, and tours around the world. Artists Melanie Florschütz and Michael Döhnert have been working together since 1996, the company florschütz & döhnert was formed in 2004: Melanie studied the art of puppetry in Stuttgart, Germany; while Michael is a composer, guitarist and singer.

At the centre of florschütz' & döhnert's productions is the idea of the actor as author. In their numerous productions for children they always seek a synthesis of music, the various means of expression of puppet and object theatre and human acting. florschütz & döhnert is an award-winning, internationally acclaimed children's theatre company.

Plays for children of two years and up:

**Ssst!** (2012)

**Mr & Mrs Sommerflügel** (2010)

**Rawums (:)** (2007)

**Hare Hare Moon Hare Night** (2004)

Plays for children of four years up:

**A hole in the air and everywhere** (2015)

**Electric Shadows** (2018)

**BIG BOX & small orchestra** (2021)

„Florschütz & döhnert favor the quiet, poetic play with things: with figures and sounds they open bizarr dream worlds in which through the power of imagination the allegedly unthinkable becomes real.“

*SCHAUBUDE BERLIN*

„Companies such as florschütz & döhnert have much to teach about the imaginative possibilites of theatre.“

*Sunday Herald*

### **A hole in the air and everywhere** at internat. festivals **2019**

International Puppet Festival MATEŘINKA Liberec, Czech Republic

### **2018**

Festival Imaginale in Mannheim, Germany

Festival Prom` nons nous in Nivillac and Muzillac, France

Theaterfrühling in Winterthur, Switzerland

FIDENA in Bochum, Germany

### **2017**

Festival des Rêveurs Eveillés in Sevrans, France

Starke Stücke Festival Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Festival Wildwechsel in Dresden, Germany

Festival 2 turven Hoog in Almere and Amsterdam,

Festival DeBetovering in Den Haag, Netherlands

Kindertheater des Monats in NRW November 2017, Germany

### **2016**

Rotondes, Luxemburg

Festival Meli` Môme, Reims, France

Schlachthaus theater Bern, Switzerland

Pessac en Scène, France

Festival Échappée Belle, Le Carré Les Colonnes à Saint-

Médard-en-Jalles/Blanquefort, France

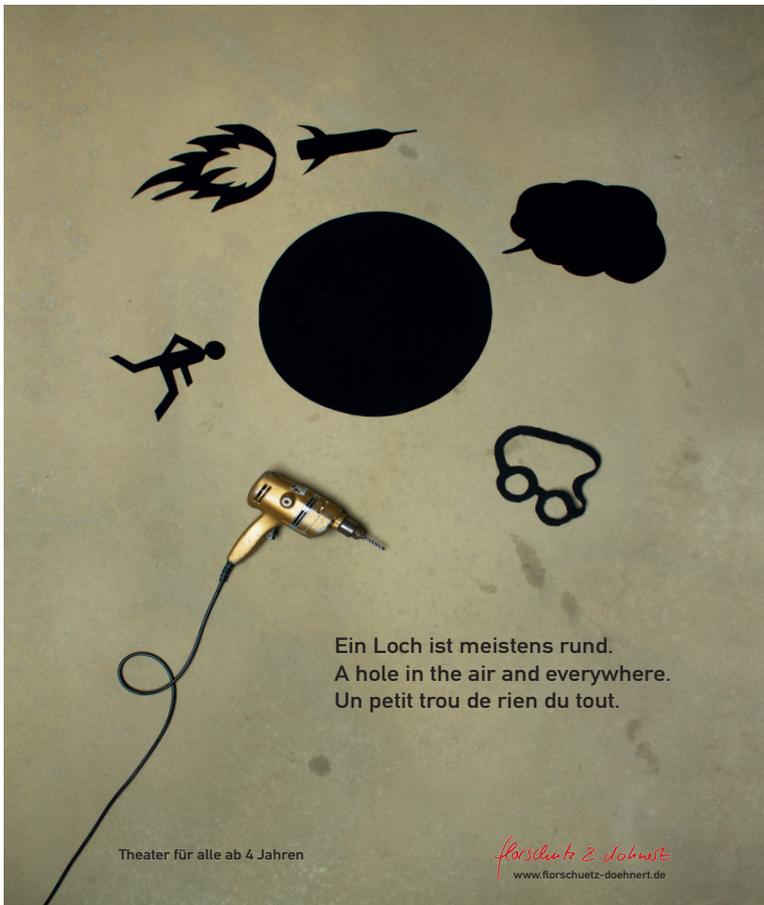
Festival Luago Losna, Nenzing, Austria

Festival Tout Petit, Nantes Umgebung, France

Festival Marmaille, Rennes, France

### **2015**

Festival Théâtre à Tout Âge, Bretagne, France



### Preparing for going to the theater

Before, it is mainly about coming to the theater with pleasure and curiosity.

The play „A hole in the air and everywhere“ works without words through a language of imagery. It provides the audience with room for their own associations. Spontaneous commentaries of the children during the show that serve the play are welcome!

The theater is a utopian, visionary space: here we find real facts on the same level with imagined things or ideas. The show makes you want to talk about what you saw and heard and about what you thought and felt while watching. It is about the joy of speculation and not about right or wrong.

### Thoughts and ideas for afterwards

Afterwards it is worth to give your own phantasies and guesses some space and to continue the experience or the imagination for example on a piece of paper:

*Where did the holes lead to in your imagination? How do you imagine the space or the world that is behind or beneath them? Who owns the key and what could it open?*

Children could draw that, tell it as a short story or even write it down:

*Imagine there are uncountable subterranean tunnels. What*

*would you like to connect? Where would you like to go in and where would you like to come out?*

### The characteristics of holes

What is a hole? It doesn't weigh anything and has no name. But there is always one, somewhere. Just like that, without a reason. You find it in your socks, in cheese and even in the air. If you want to touch it you are grasping the void. You can make it bigger or smaller, cover it or plug it. But you can never hold on to it. Holes are secretive. A tiny hole is enough to make you an explorer.

Let's think about:

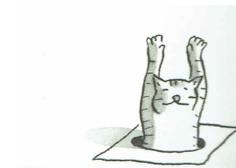
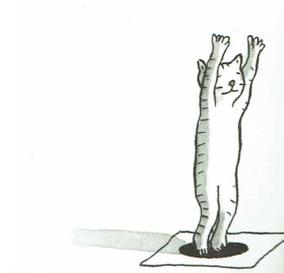
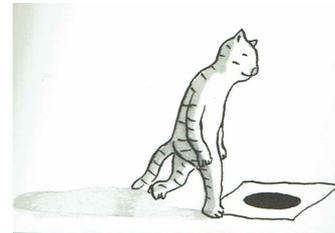
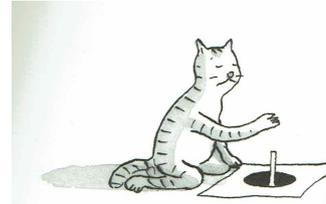
- What is the meaning of "...a hole is always between something and nothing"
- Where can you find holes?
- In what can holes be made?
- How to make holes?

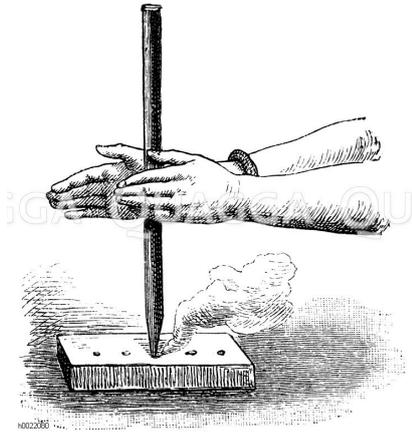
a whole hole.  
un point  
c'est tout.



**Un point c'est tout.**

*flip-books, livres animés,  
poèmes en mouvement, dits du bout des doigts*  
Jean-Vincent Sénac 2002  
[www.jeanvincentsenac.com](http://www.jeanvincentsenac.com)





Fire drill



Fist wedge

### Making holes

Piercing the material. How?

To drill, punch materials, children choose tools. Initially, the children are asked to make a cardboard label. They test tools for punching cardboard, compare their efficiency, choose the best performing ones and keep track of the choice made. They learn to adapt their gestures to the tools in order to use them as effectively as possible. Other situations are then proposed: piercing: piercing beads to make necklaces, piercing cardboard to assemble a puppet.

To get children to make a relevant choice to drill and punch different materials.

Equipment: perforators, staplers, twist, hammer, pliers, nails, needles, screwdrivers, electric drill (used by adults), crankshaft. cardboard, modelling paste, wood, wire, nuts, garlands, wire, Siporex blocks. . .

It is also possible to offer the students catalogues of tools or gardening and ask them to cut out a variety of objects that make it possible to make holes.



## Examples of artistic use of holes



*Lucio Fontana,  
Concetto Spaziale, La fine di Dio, 1964*

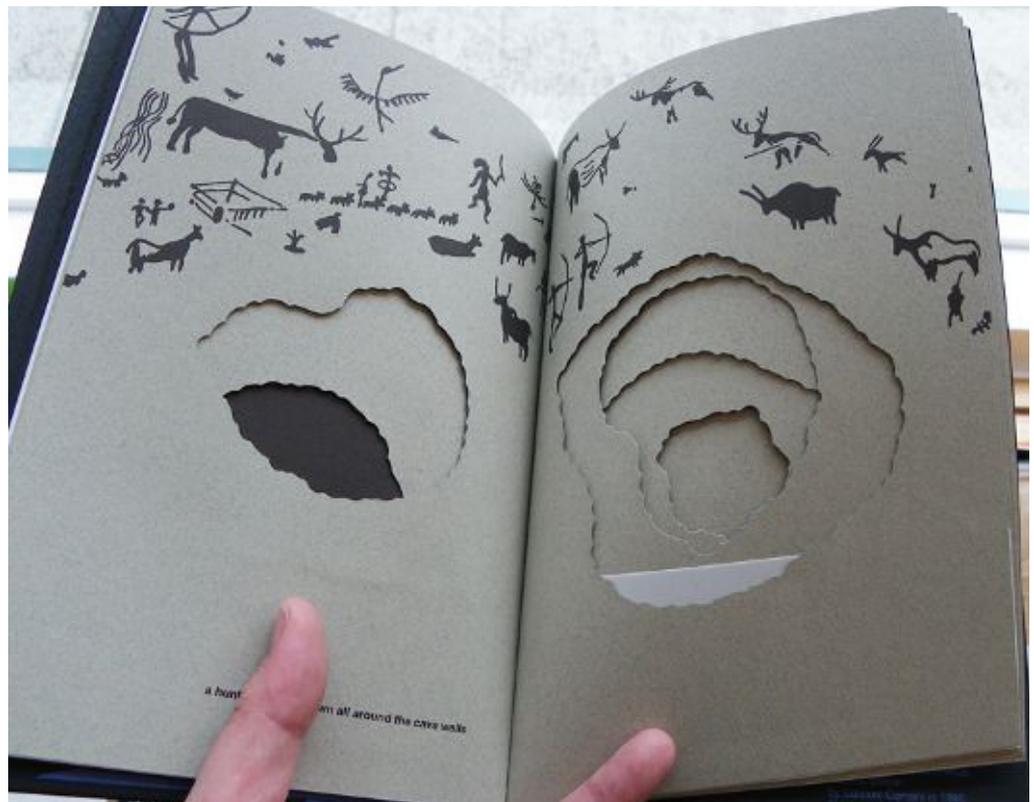
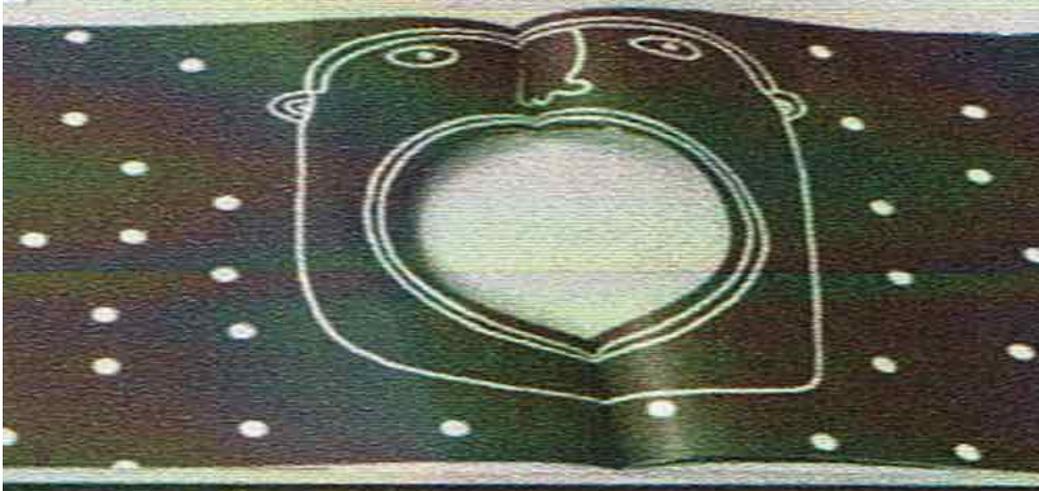


*Lucio Fontana, Concetto Spaziale, 1951*



*Christina Kehrer, Alientation, 2010*

Let yourself also be inspired by Bruno Munari and his book objects. Make a hole in a piece of paper and draw an environment around it. Your illustration will tell you what kind of hole it is: e. g. a water hole with wild animals, a lock hole, eyes (pupils are holes) or an open mouth in a face, etc.



*Alberto Munari, „Gatti, capelli, elefanti e sorprese“, livres jeunesse de Bruno Munari, Edizione corrente*



Have you ever seen the construction work on the left ear hole of a violin by Lila Germini?

Let the children discover holes that can be found in their everyday environment: in objects, in the wall of the classroom, in the open air in the school yard. Ask the children to bring from their homes small characters, dolls, animals, cars - as small as possible - to let the relationship grow to the size of holes. Imagine a small scenography around holes and take pictures.

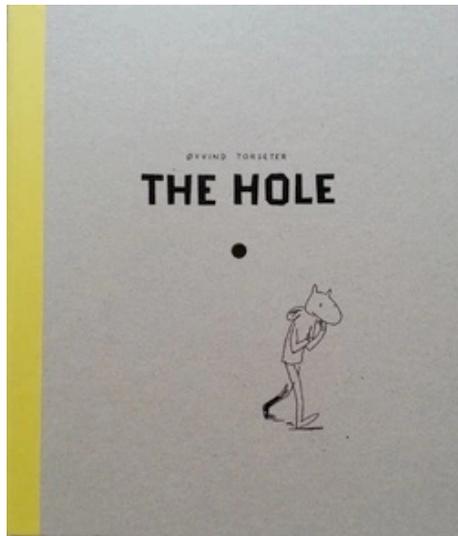
And why not cut holes in black paper and remove objects from it:

- In this exercise, the important thing is that the objects are easily recognizable and that they are represented by symbols. In our daily lives, we often encounter these signs, just think of all these signboards and pictograms for emergency exits, toilets, arrows, bike paths, telephone, animals. . .

Would it be possible to communicate with this kind of sign language?

- Cut shapes out of black (or white) paper to create a reserve of signs where everyone can then draw. Meet the two of you and start a conversation by playing with these symbols. Use a question mark to show that you have not understood something and try to tell a short story. It works a bit like the bubbles in a comic book that you have to interpret or like guessing the thought of the other.





## The hole

Øyvind Torseter

Hardcover, 64 pages

Published August 27th 2013 by Enchanted Lion Books

Book Review: The Hole by Øyvind Torseter

By Daphne Lee, first published on 1st December, 2013 in The Star

A HOLE is whole with something missing, and not just the letter “w”. When my best friend leaves after a long, food-filled visit, she leaves a Jenny-shaped hole in my life. When I left my desk-bound job I felt, acutely, a desk-shaped hole in my life, the desk-shape representing a regular routine, a steady job, financial security.

We see holes as empty spaces needing to be filled. Our initial reaction to them tends to be negative. Better to be whole than to have a hole, right? Who wants to be empty, to be missing something or someone, a purpose or a plan?

There is a hole in Øyvind Torseter’s book. Literally. It’s die-cut right through, from the front cover to the back. You can peep through it and, no matter how sophisticated you think you are, you will find it hard to resist playing peek-a-boo.

In the story, the hole first appears in the wall of a flat. Someone is moving in. He struggles with boxes of books and kitchen things. He cooks a meal. He sits down to eat and ... that’s when he notices the hole! As it turns out, this is no ordinary hole. It has a life of its own. It is a slippery, playful thing that darts about, and teases and hides. The actual hole in the book is of course fixed, in the middle of the page, but Torseter’s illustrations accommodate it and, with chan-

ges in perspective, the hole appears to be on the move, or perhaps, on the run. What do you do with a hole like that? You trap it in a box and turn it in to the authorities of course.

I didn’t expect a box to hold the hole. I thought it might create its own escape route, but this hole appears to be whole. It is something – solid at least in concept if not in actuality.

Once the hole is contained in its box, the die-cut hole in the book is free to take on other roles. Then we see its versatility as the illustrator incorporates it in his street scenes – as a whistling mouth, a traffic light, an eye, the letter o, a balloon, a headlamp, a nostril, a camera lens, the moon, and so on.

And what of the wily, lively hole? It is taken, in its box, to a lab, examined and tested. There are no conclusive results. The hole is shut away in a drawer and the flat-owner returns to his apartment, hole-less, and so, presumably, whole. The final pages see him settling into his new home, enjoying the moonlit evening with a cup of tea, going to bed. Pay attention ... the hole reappears ... but what of it?

What is a hole? Is it a void? Is it emptiness? Or is it a window? A nest?

A hole can be deep and dark. You may fall in it and be swallowed whole by uncertainty, you may drown in the unknown.

But a hole can also be space. It can be room to grow. It can be a familiar cubby hole. It can let in the light. A hole may help us be whole.

**...and last but not least...**

is there a final solution to the secret of holes? There are a lot of secrets in our world without final scientific answers, for example the mysterious black holes in space.

“Among the questions we ask about the world there are those we can answer: “Heinz von Foerster, how old are you?” We can answer that. Or we can ask questions that cannot be answered, like for example: “Heinz von Foerster, how did the universe come to being?” There, I can pronounce one of the 35 different theories. There are indeed many interesting hypotheses on how the universe started to exist. There are so many hypotheses because this question just cannot be answered. Here, the only thing that counts is how interesting the story is that a person makes up about how the universe came into being.”

*Karl-Heinz von Foerster, Cyber-Ethics*

“Imagination is more important than knowledge it is an important factor in the process of gaining scientific insights.”

*Albert Einstein*

