



compagnia T P O

F A R F A L L E



'Butterflies' is a show created by TPO, a theatre company based in Prato, Italy.

TPO was formed in 1981 as a visual theatre group and already in its early years it began to create original visual theatre works for children's audiences. Currently it is exploring the use of digital technologies for the animation of images and sounds within a theatrical context.

From TPO's research in this area, shows have been created, conceived as 'sensitive environments' where performers, or the audience itself, can interact through the use of specific technologies. Within these virtual sceneries, TPO's shows have been characterized by a strong visual impact and an original and refined style, based on a dramaturgy which privileges narration through images and choreography.

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B U T T E R F L I E S

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Butterfly: this word makes us think of colours, movements and the warmth of a sunny day, it gives us a sense of well-being and quiet, it makes us feel at peace with the world.

In Italian the sound of its name is elastic and pleasant, '**farfalla**', in Spanish it is very sweet, '**mariposa**'; mellow is the French pronunciation, '**papillon**', while the word in German, '**schmetterling**', sends us a lively vibration.

In English instead its sound goes back to ancient legends and recalls playful fairies entering houses by flying ('fly') to get butter from larders.

As moving coloured 'spots', butterflies have always fascinated and intrigued human beings, allured by the halo of mystery characterizing the lifecycle of these insects.

In the show **the stage** is 'curled up', with a white carpet and two big wings. Images are projected onto two different surfaces: the horizontal plane of the carpet and the vertical one of the slanted wings. Some stylized props decorate the stage.

The subject

of this show is a butterfly's lifecycle, presented in chronological order: the egg, the caterpillar, the cocoon, the pupa, the adult butterfly.

The subject is simple, but the show is rich with different languages: **dance, sounds, images, interactive animations.**

However, what makes the show special is that every scene has its own particular movement-sensitive environment; it is the dancers' movements which cause new animated images and sounds to appear; dancers, acting as painters and musicians, compose the visual and sound frames which allow us to play with forms and colours...the world of butterflies.

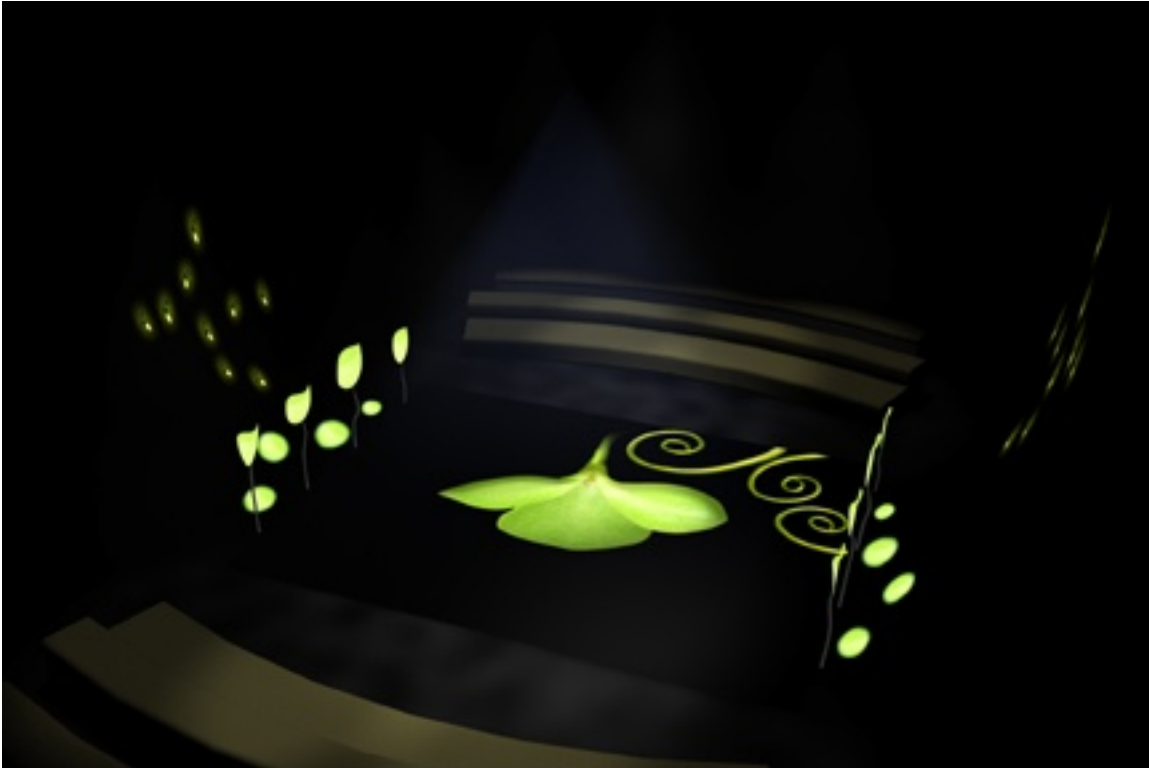
The show is divided into two moments which alternate with each other: one part where the audience, seated at the sides of the stage, observes the dancers' actions and another part where the audience, in small groups, is invited to enter the stage and participate.

'Butterflies' is suitable for audiences between the ages of 4 and 8 but it is also rich with suggestions for adults.

scene 1 NIGHT

It is night, a summer's night, we can hear the songs of crickets and other little animals. The two dancers living in this mysterious nocturnal environment play with fireflies, letting them dance in the air, letting their little curly pea branches ring, branches which will appear and disappear as the two dancers move by; they also meet and dance together in the wake of two big shiny leaves, rocking a little mysterious sphere.

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A BUTTERFLY'S POINT OF VIEW

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But how small are butterflies?



There are many species of butterflies all over the world...of different colours, shapes and sizes: the biggest reach 30 cm – as big as this sheet- the smallest are like a bread crumb.

B U I I E B E F I E S



Try to imagine being as little as a butterfly...

how would you see things around you?

small or **big** ?

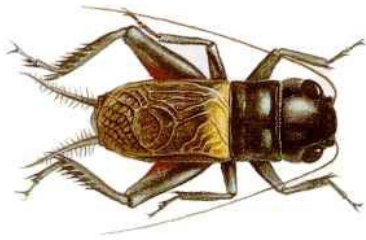
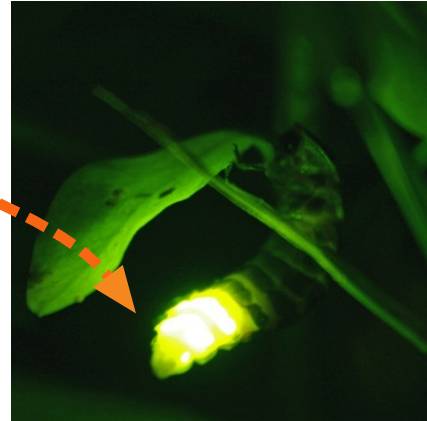


WHO IS AWAKE AT NIGHT?

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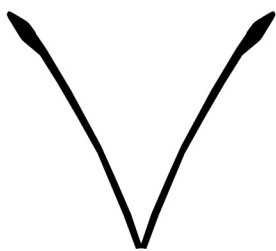
At night there are animals that stay awake, fireflies, for instance, or crickets, moths...

Fireflies are little luminescent insects, that is, they emit light. If we look at one carefully, we will see that this light comes from their abdomen, their belly, which shines as if it were transparent and had a little lamp inside. But the male fireflies can also fly, so on summer nights, we can see their little light flying and shining in the air...

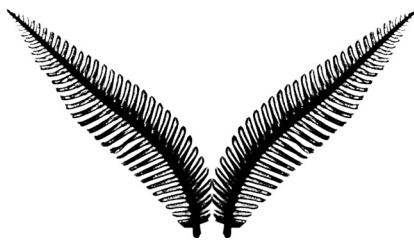


The country cricket also lives in meadows, in groves and in gardens where it digs long galleries, but at night it prefers to sing by rubbing its sheaths - that is, its front wings. It is a nuptial song to call the cricket's bride.

Moths are nocturnal butterflies; the colours of their wings are less conspicuous than the diurnal ones - and stay open even when they rest, or they shut them to form a kind of roof. Their antennae too are different; the diurnal butterflies have antennae ending in a club shape, while for moths they are antlered like a comb with a lot of hairs; these hairs are sensitive to movements and smells present in the environment, so they may feel what is happening around them.



antennae
diurnal butterfly



antennae nocturnal butterfly



B K I I E B E F I E S

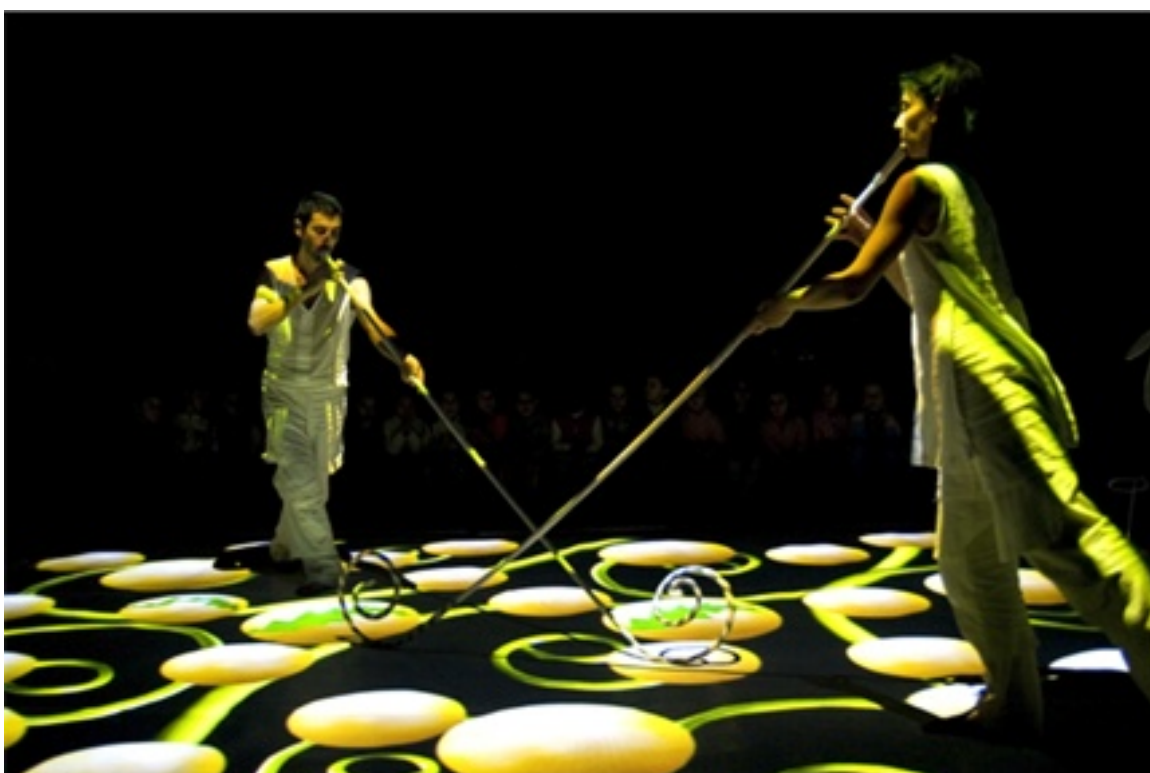
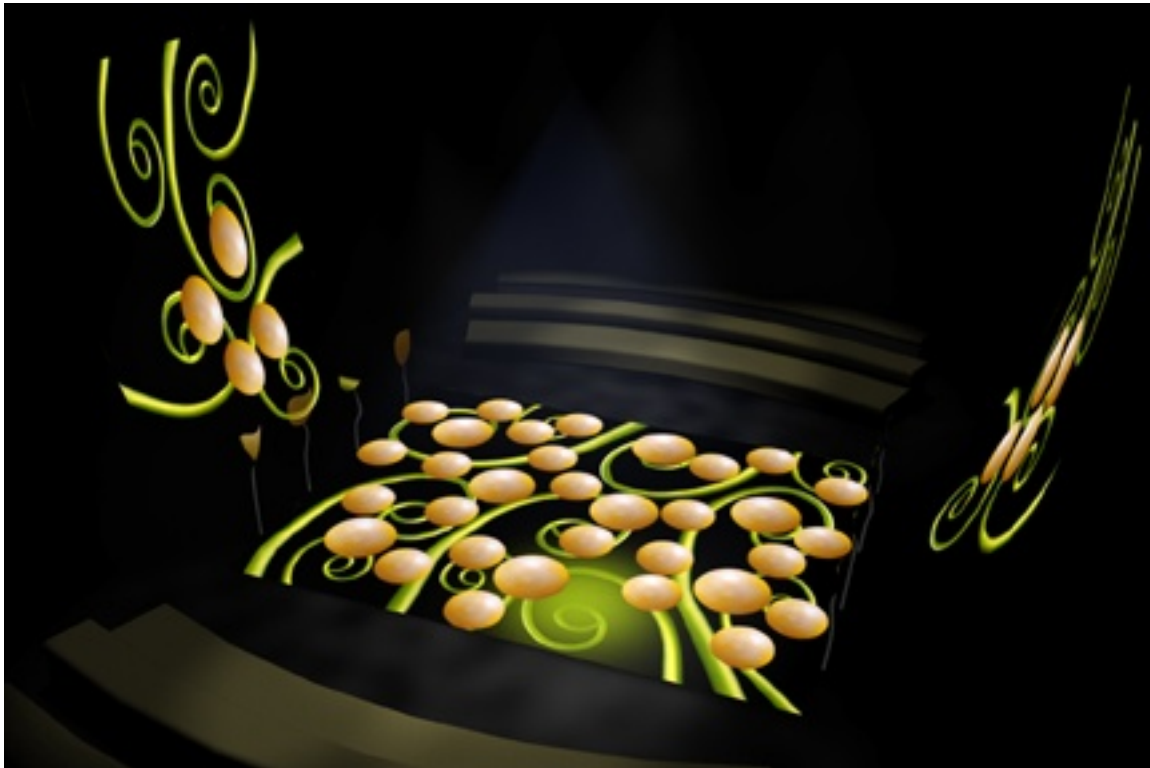
Have you ever been in a meadow to listen to the night sounds?

Which sounds did you hear?

scene 2 THE EGG

It is still night; is the sphere that the dancer carries with her an egg?

On the big smooth elastic curls which now cover the stage, little by little dancers let many butterfly eggs appear; rocked by dance and sounds, the eggs wait to open up. It will be the sound coming from the two long curly flutes played by the dancers in the night, to awaken the eggs, that will then hatch.



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BEFORE BEING BUTTERFLIES BUTTERFLIES ...

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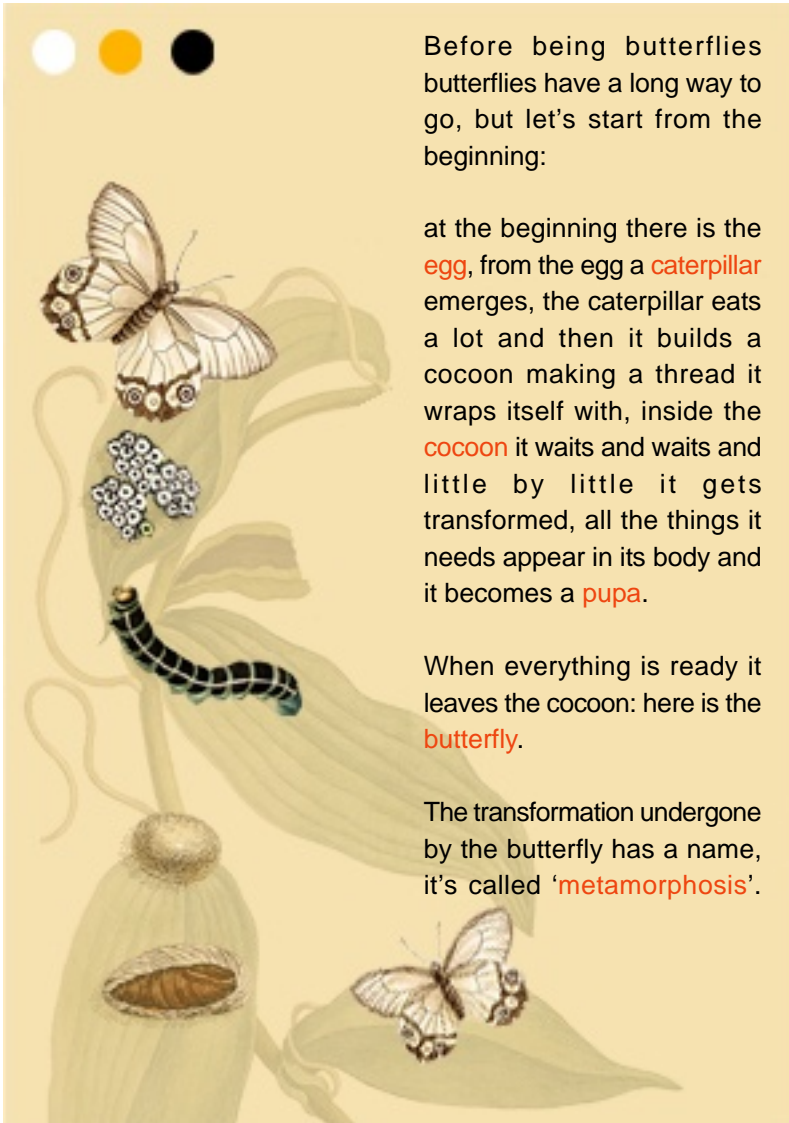
Butterflies' favourite drink is flowers' sweetest nectar. To sip it, the 'sweet toothed' ones, use their built-in straw, an extension of their mouth called '**spirotrumpet**', which they directly insert into the flower. Some moths even use it to pierce the beehive's cells and steal honey from bees! In the breaks between one sip and another the 'straw' - which in some species can be three times longer than the butterfly's body- gets rolled under the head, where it won't bother anyone.

Before being butterflies butterflies have a long way to go, but let's start from the beginning:

at the beginning there is the **egg**, from the egg a **caterpillar** emerges, the caterpillar eats a lot and then it builds a cocoon making a thread it wraps itself with, inside the **cocoon** it waits and waits and little by little it gets transformed, all the things it needs appear in its body and it becomes a **pupa**.

When everything is ready it leaves the cocoon: here is the **butterfly**.

The transformation undergone by the butterfly has a name, it's called '**metamorphosis**'.



B U T T E R F L I E S



Every female butterfly lays her **eggs** directly on the leaves of a plant. From the eggs caterpillars will be born, feeding on those leaves, after eating the remains of their own eggs.

MAKE UP THE STORY

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BEFORE



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cut

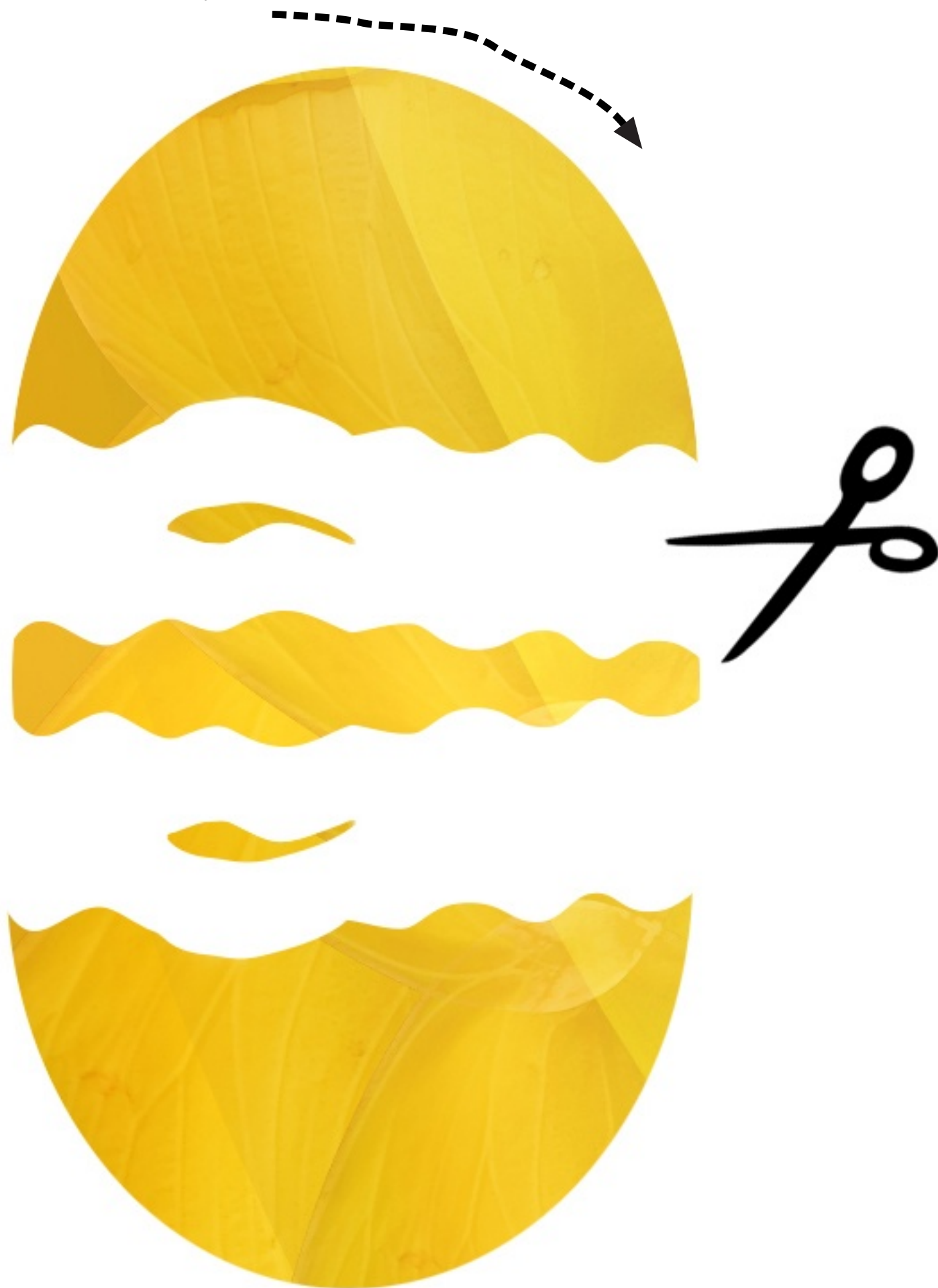
out the shapes you will find on
the following page

with the shapes you've cut you
can reconstruct the butterfly's
'metamorphosis'

like in the example at the side

or you can make up other
things, a mushroom, for
example, a funny chick... and
invent a story of your own.

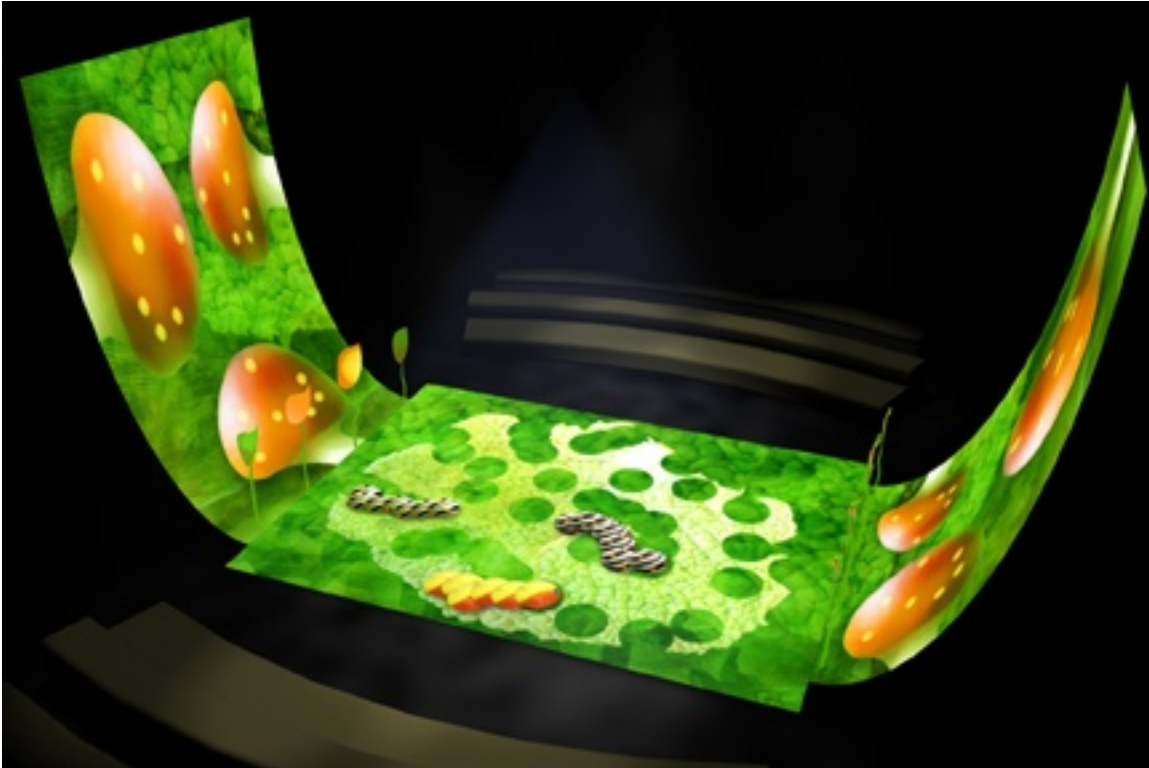
print this page, if possible on a thick sheet, and then let an adult help you cut out the shapes



scene 3 THE CATERPILLAR

The little caterpillars have broken out of the egg and are ready to play, to discover shapes, the round one, to discover all the colors, to move and roll, to go from one leaf to another, to eat, to discover the space surrounding them: mushrooms, grass, cobwebs.

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After a while the **eggs** hatch and a **larva** called a **caterpillar** is born, with no wings, so it cannot fly, but it has little legs under its belly so it can move. The caterpillar has a mouth with robust jaws, thanks to which it voraciously feeds on vegetable parts, especially leaves.

The caterpillar eats non-stop and grows a lot, but its cover, its skin, doesn't grow with it and so when this gets too tight, the caterpillar throws it off and makes a new one; this change of 'clothes' is called **moult**. After undergoing many moults and reaching its highest development, the caterpillar stops feeding and looks for a suitable place where it can make the **cocoon**, under a leaf, on a branch, or on the ground.



B U I I E B E F I E S

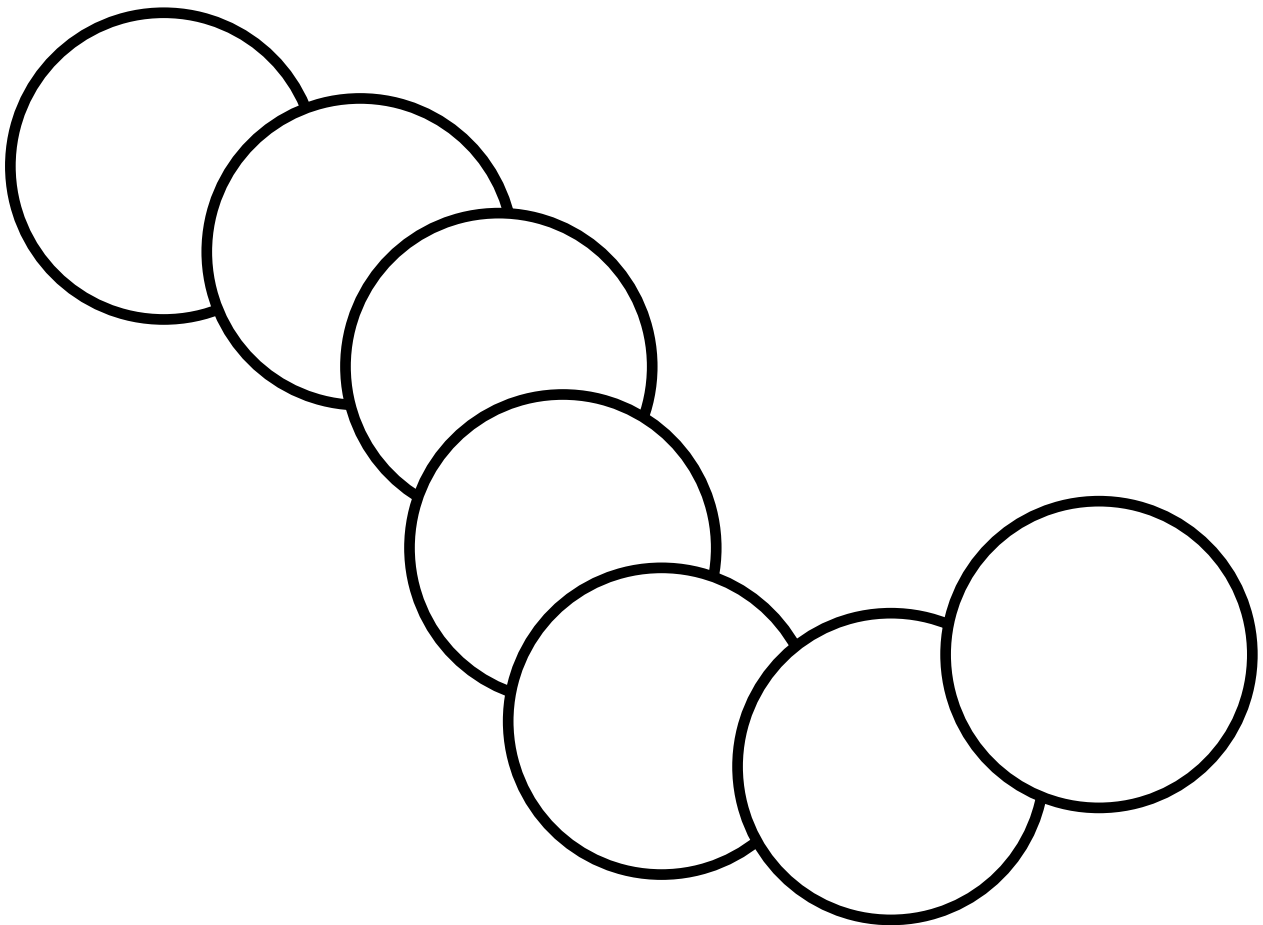
In the world there are many species of butterflies with different colours and shapes; even when they are little, we can see they are colour artists: look at these holes, what drawings, what colours they manage to create...

WHICH CATERPILLAR ARE YOU?

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which caterpillar are you?

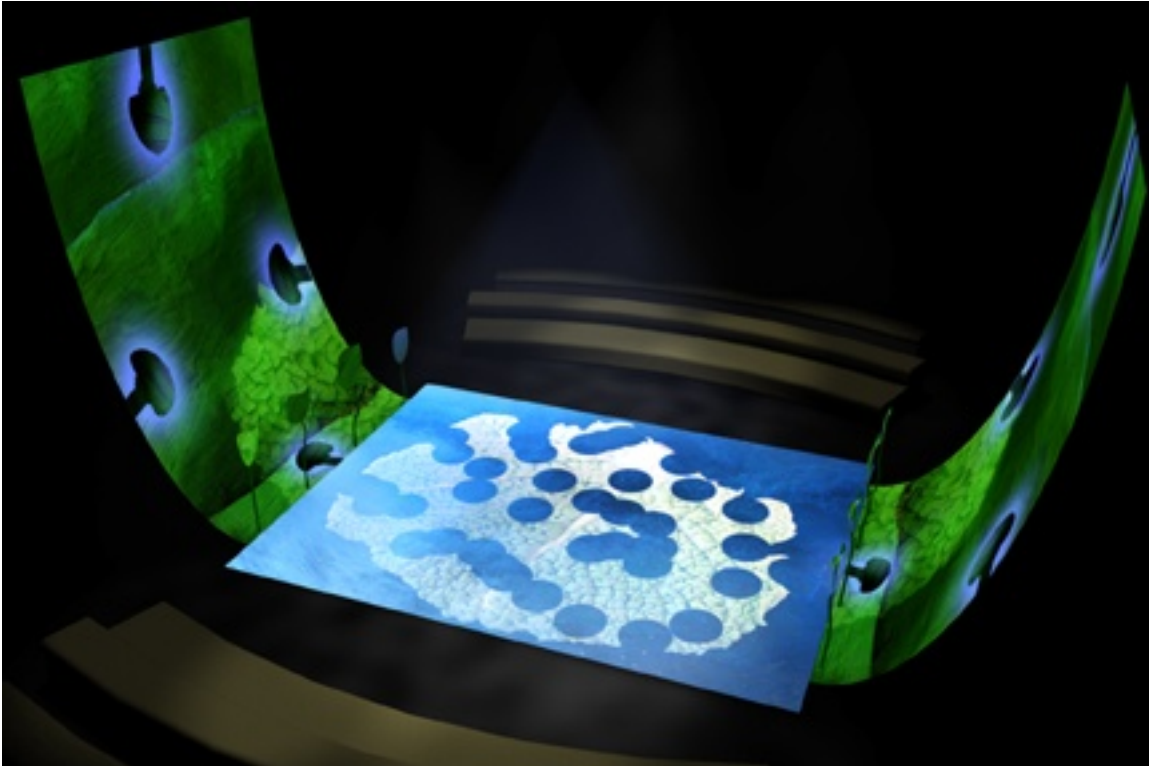
print the page and color the little caterpillar with the colours you like the most



scene 4 THE COCOON

It's night time again, perhaps it's time to finish playing games and start weaving a thread, a long thread to swing on for a while and then wrap all around like a blanket snugly rolled round the body.

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THE CATERPILLAR'S LISTENING POINT

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In the world there are many species of butterflies with different colours and shapes, so their **cocoons** can also have different shapes and colours. The cocoon is built by the caterpillar with a silk thread coming out of its mouth: it can be a simple thread that it hangs on to or, as you can see from the pictures at the side, it can cover itself all up with the thread, a lot of thread it wraps itself up with.

B U I I E B E F I E S

A GAME TO PLAY IN TEAMS

Let's imagine you are a caterpillar inside the cocoon; **what sounds will you hear coming from out there?**

Form two groups. One group will be the caterpillars; the other group will be the sounds.

The group of caterpillars finds a comfortable position, possibly crouching, blindfolded, or under some cloth, and with hands covering ears, so as to filter sounds.

In twos or threes, led by an adult, the other group will imitate the sounds of nature:

the water of a stream, flowing **slowly/ fast**
 the rain ticking down slowly / fast
 the wind blowing **softly/ loudly**
 crickets singing softly / loudly
 owls...

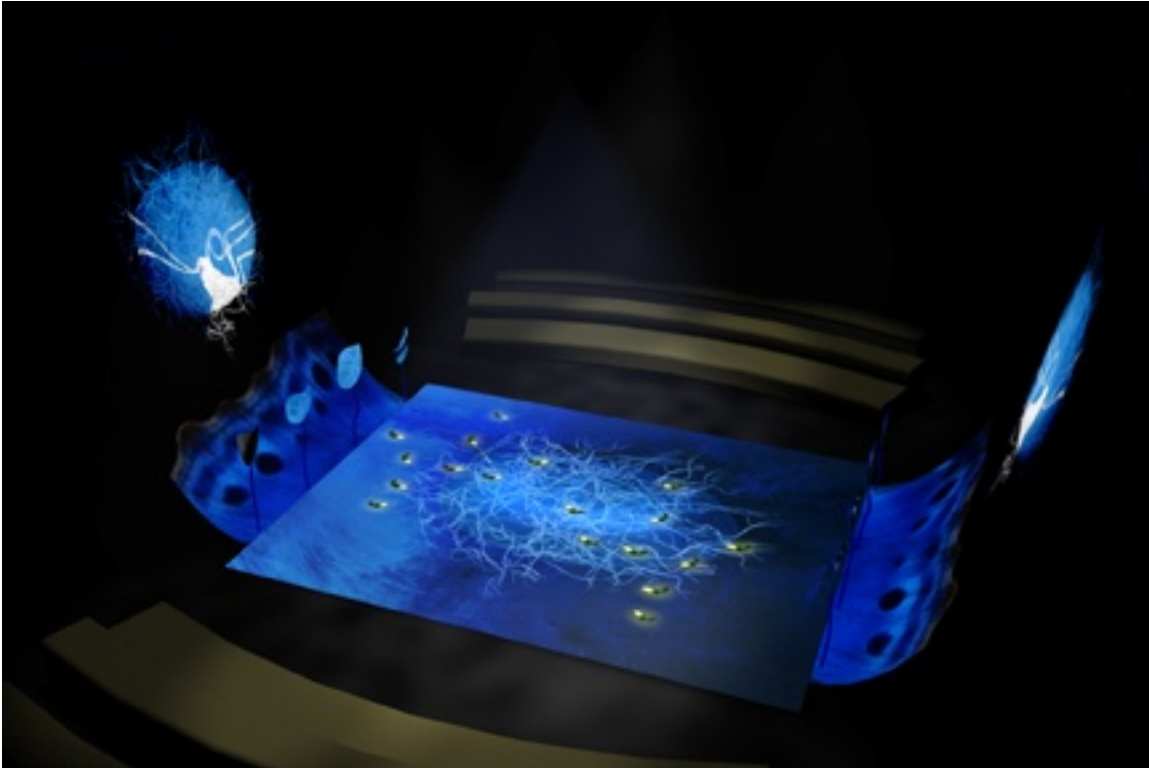
Next, roles are swapped, but, before that, when the caterpillars come out of the cocoon **they will be asked which sounds they've heard**, how they heard them, soft, loud, far away or close..

scene 5 WAITING

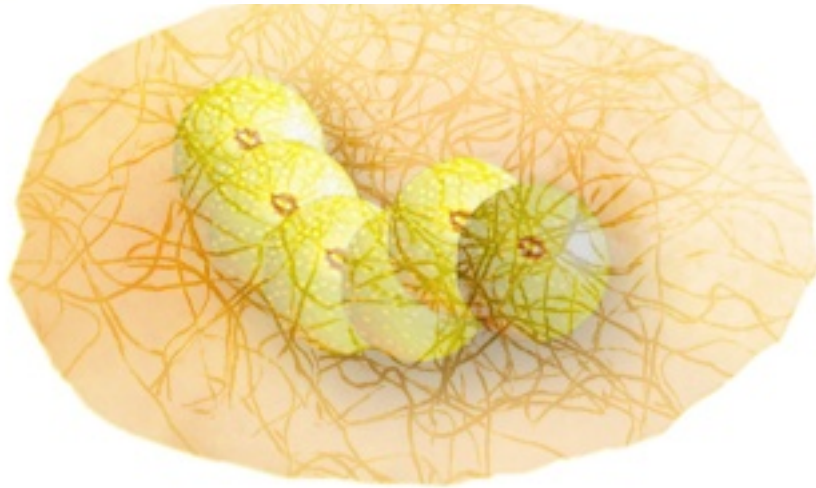
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While waiting, the caterpillar inside the comfortable cocoon, falls asleep, rocked by the wind and while it sleeps, it grows and gets transformed; after that it dreams, it dreams of being a butterfly with colourful wings.

While waiting, time passes, clouds pass and the rain ticks...it knocks on the cocoon; will it be time to open up?



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When the caterpillar is inside the cocoon, it stays still, it rests, but it also gets transformed, wings appear, its mouth turns into that straw which is called 'spirotrumpet', and many other things change turning it into a **pupa**.

B U I I E B E F I E S

As we wait for the caterpillar to transform,
we may sing it a lullaby; can you
remember or invent one?

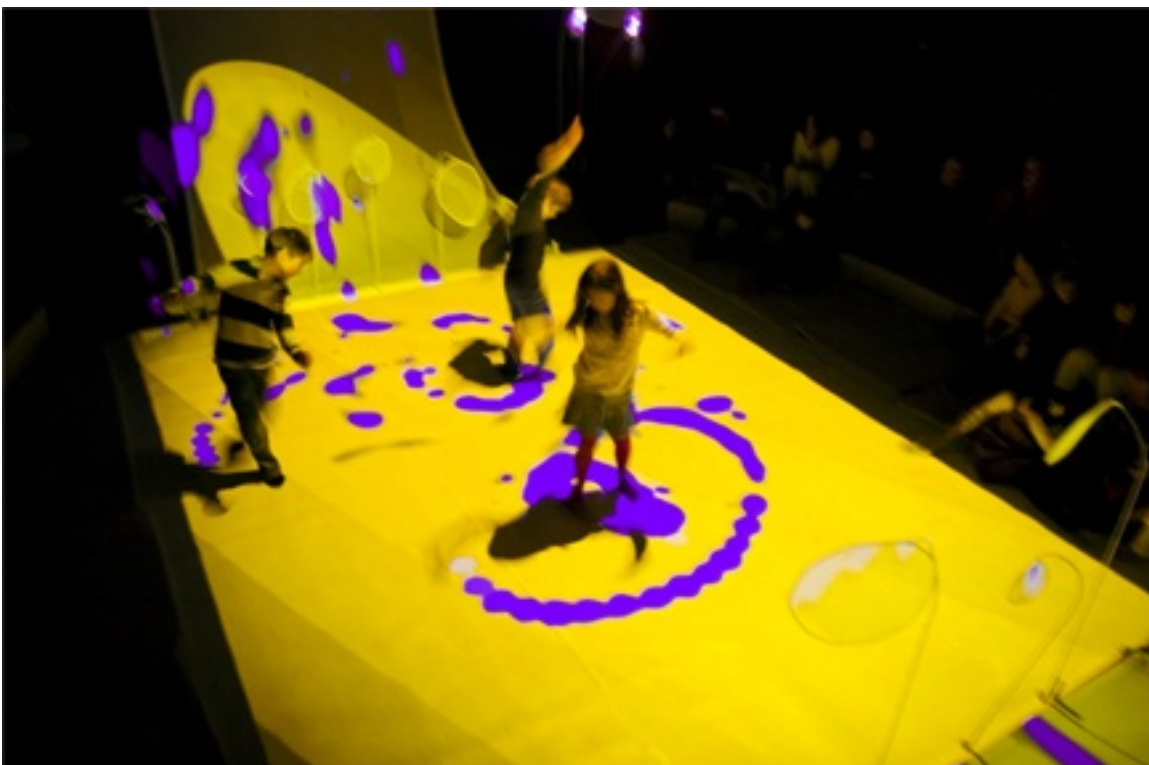
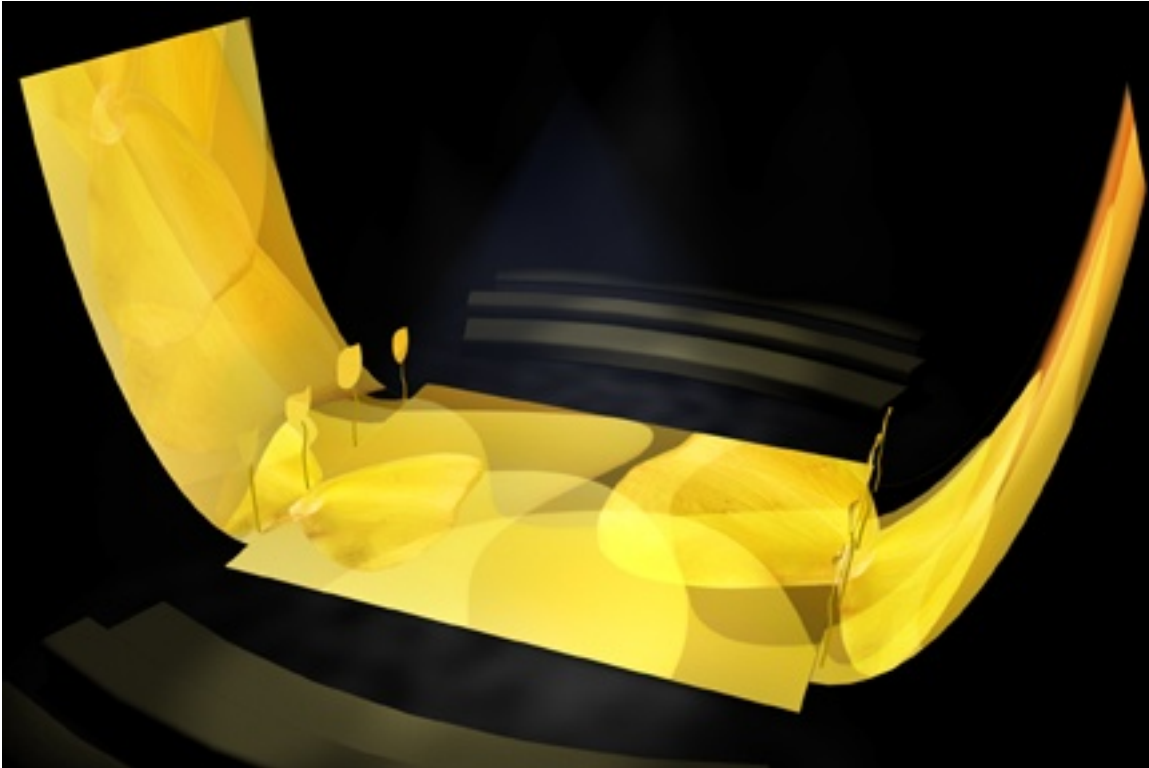


scene 6 THE BUTTERFLY

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When it leaves the cocoon, it is different, it flies away, the air is light like wind, gliding and running; things, grass and flowers go fast; they seem to be flying.

But especially colours...being inside them and being a colour and, as a colour, painting everything up, down, here, there....



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BUTTERFLIES' COLOURS

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When the pupa leaves the cocoon at last, it is a butterfly and, once it unfolds its wings, it starts flying...

But how can butterflies have all these colours on their wings?

Butterflies' wings are covered with minuscule scales (as you can see in the photo); in the scales there are tiny crystals which capture light and, according to the way they are inclined, they show one colour or another – for example blue or brown.



B U I I E B E T I E S

Why do butterflies have all these colours and shapes on their wings? In most cases the colours and the patterns of butterflies' wings represent a protection, allowing them to blend into the environment- leaves, flowers, stones- to deceive or not be seen by other animals, predators, which would like to eat them.

Blending in with the surrounding environment is called '**camouflage**'.



Do you feel observed? No problem, this is not a real eye, but one of the two round spots, called '**ocelli**', decorating the wings of the 'owl butterfly', widespread in South America. For some scholars these spots are to frighten lizards and little birds, greedy for this butterfly.

HIDING OR SHOWING ONESELF?

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Seen with its face upside down, this butterfly forms a figure with its wings, recalling the face of a fearful owl.



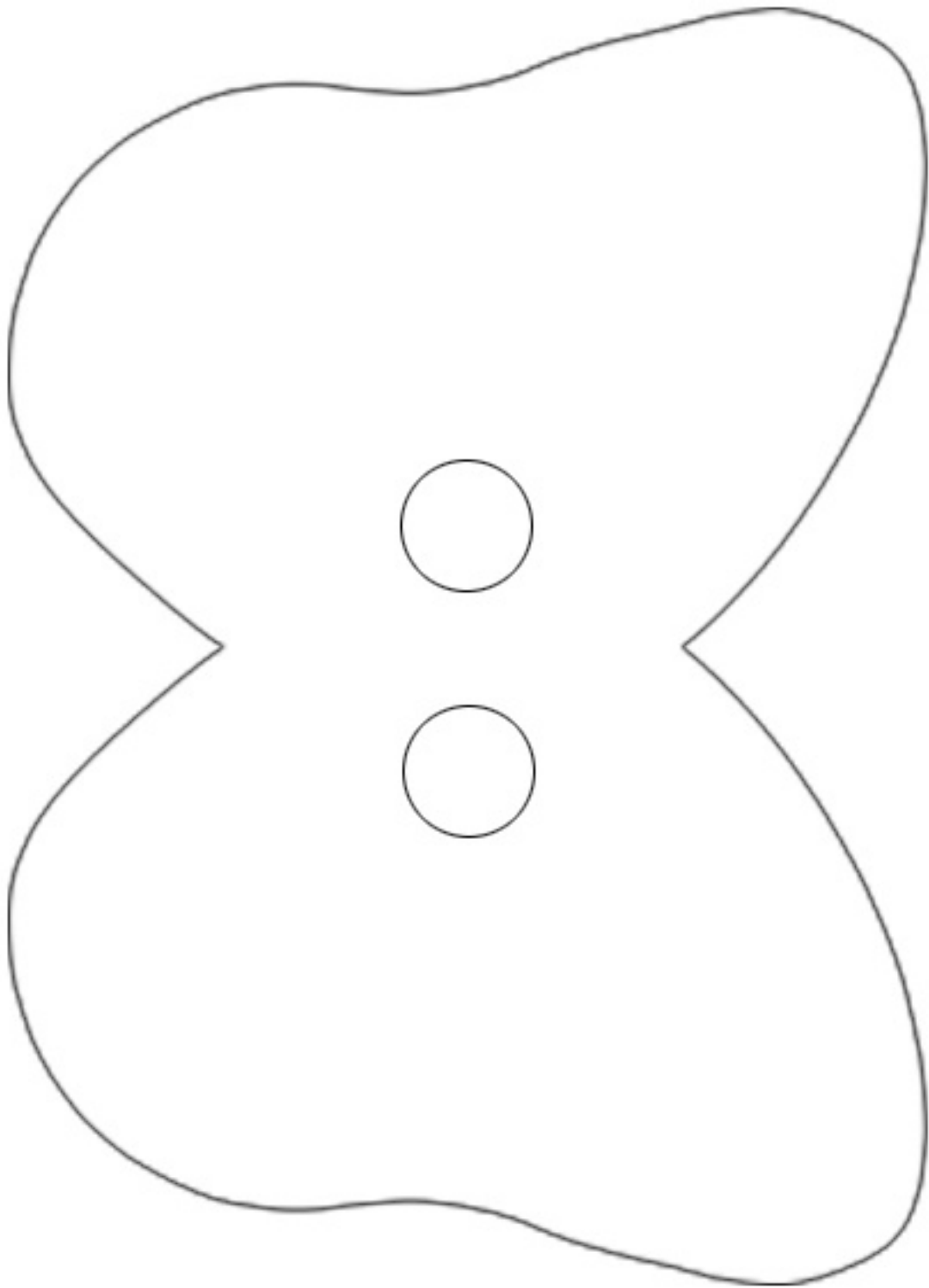
But when the butterfly imitates the owl, it doesn't do this as it really is, especially it makes us imagine it, and this is even more fearful. Some insect scholars call 'ocelli' a form of 'theatrical make up', like that of a beautiful and scary show...

B H I I E B E F I E S



But will this colouring of many shapes only be a **camouflage** or also 'the art of becoming wonderful'? Like when we put on a mask, in a sense we hide because our face can't be seen behind a mask, but in another sense we also draw attention to ourselves...

Let's play a game, let's print the following page, use a thicker sheet if you can, like a Bristol board, and then let an adult help you cut out the shape of a butterfly to make a mask with; you'll then have to cut out the holes for the eyes too. To fix the string or the elastic you need to wrap it around your head, you can use the stapler or some cellotape.



look around, if you wanted to camouflage yourself, which colours and shapes would you paint on your mask?



Look at a butterfly closely; you will see that the left wing and the right are exactly the same, this is a remarkable example of symmetry in nature.

But what does symmetry mean?

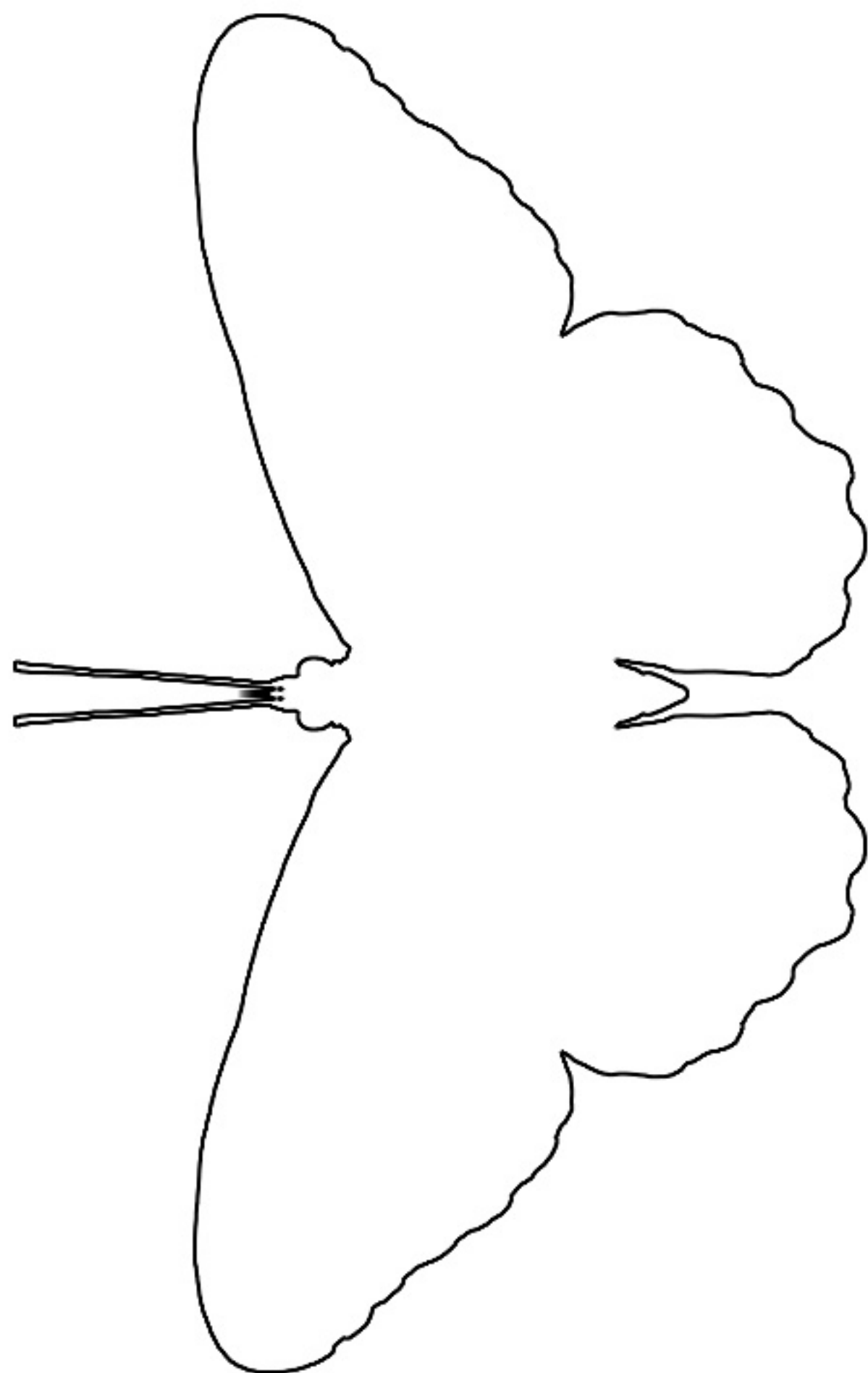
The word symmetry is used to say that a shape or an object can be split into two parts which are the same.

For example if you draw a line in the middle of a butterfly, the part on one side is exactly the same as the part on the other side (and, if you fold them in two, you can juxtapose them). The line separating the object into two equal parts is called the line of symmetry.

B U I I E B E T I E S

We can do an experiment to understand symmetry, and to make a beautiful artistic butterfly..

- 1 The first time you do this experiment, print the following sheet with the shape of a butterfly; then once you understand the game, you can do it on white sheet, and you will need finger paints or tempera tubes.
- 2 Fold the sheet into two, dividing it vertical-wise on the longer side (that is, divide the butterfly along the symmetry line).
- 3 Unfold the sheet and lay it on a surface.
- 4 Put some colour at the centre of the sheet, vertical-wise; this will be the body.
- 5 Put the colours you like on one wing only, you don't have to colour it all; it is enough to put some colours here and there inside the border.
- 6 Close the sheet, press the two halves against the other, open it again and here there are the two symmetrical wings of the butterfly; admire the colour combination you have obtained.
- 7 Let everything dry. Here is your butterfly.
- 8 Now that you have understood the game, you will be able to do it yourself as often as you like; you may need more than one try to obtain the butterfly you most wish for.





In the world there are many butterflies – more than 165,000 species – with many different colours, shapes and sizes, for every child in the world...

In the TPO company there are many people who work to do the shows that you see at the theatre.

ELSA made the **images** and thought of how they would be in space and how they would move.

SPARTACO made the **sounds** and **music**.

LORETTA created and sewed the dancers' **costumes**.

ANNA and PIERO invented the **dances** and the **movements**.

GREGORY, VALERIO and LIVIA built the **scenery** and the **props** which dancers use in the show.

ROSSANO and MARTIN programmed the **computers** so that images, sounds and music move together with the dancers and the audience's movements.

STEFANIA **wrote** the words you hear in the show.

VALENTINA, VALERIA, FRANCESCA and LINA, organized the timetables, dates and money from their office, they spoke with many people on the phone so that everything could work well.

CATERINA recorded her **voice** to enable the eggs, caterpillars and butterflies speak during the show.

FRANCESCO e DAVIDE **directed** all the people so that the show would be really nice.

TO MAKE THE SHOW 'BUTTERFLIES'





Let an adult help you to print the page and cut things out...

Cut out the butterflies and in the space at the centre of the butterfly draw your face or that of a friend...or cut out a photo of yours, and stick it into the space at the centre of the butterfly.

IN GROUPS: on a large cardboard you can draw an environment, a meadow, or your class and stick all the butterflies you have created onto it ...



'have fun!'