



- **The Blue Sofa returns live to Hall 3.1 for the Frankfurt Book Fair**
- **Famous authors: Peace Prize winner Tsitsi Dangarembga, Elke Heidenreich, Roland Kaiser, Carolin Kebekus, Sven Regener, Sasha Marianna Salzmann, Edgar Selge, Alvaro Soler, Sönke Wortmann and many more**

Frankfurt am Main, October 8, 2021. After the past three book fairs had to be moved from Leipzig and Frankfurt to the Internet due to the pandemic, the motto of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2021 is “Re:connect – Welcome back to Frankfurt”. A varied program and elaborate hygiene concepts are designed to make literature a live experience again.

Big topics, big names and novelties on the Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat also returns to its usual location in exhibition hall 3.1. H + J 23 with an extensive live program. With a line-up of 61 writers, the authors' forum offers a wide range of events for every listening and reading taste. Those staying home can watch all the talks as live streams from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily during the five days of the fair (Wednesday, Oct. 20, through Sunday, Oct. 24, 2021).

Literary figures such as **Julia Franck, Daniela Krien, Gert Loschütz, Eva Menasse, Fridolin Schley, Daniel Schreiber, Emine Sevgi Özdamar** and **Sasha Marianna Salzmann** meet popular nonfiction authors such as **Peter Wohlleben, Per Leo, Steffen Mau, Armin Nassehi** and **Uwe Wittstock**. Well-known comedians including **Carolin Kebekus, Florian Schroeder**, and **Bülent Ceylan** and celebrity authors such as **Elke Heidenreich, Sönke Wortmann, Edgar Selge, Sven Regener, Roland Kaiser, Alvaro Soler, Annabelle Mandeng** and the German extreme sailor **Boris Herrmann** will also be taking a seat on the well-known literary couch.

Likewise, a number of award winners will sit on the Blue Sofa again at this year's fair: the current Peace Prize winner **Tsitsi Dangarembga**, the winner of the German Book Prize, and the finalists of the Swiss Book Prize. The **aspekte Literature Prize** will be awarded live on the Blue Sofa at 11 a.m. on Thursday, October 21.

Current topics are discussed daily in the talk format “Die Blaue Stunde” (The Blue Hour): On Wednesday, **Daniela Schwarzer, Martin Klingst**, and **Joachim Scholtyseck** explain how transatlantic relations are changing. On Thursday, **Beate Küpper**, professor of social work, **Klaus Zierer**, professor of scholastic education, and historian **Malte Thießen** talk about their view of the society in times of coronavirus. On Friday, **Ursula Weidenfeld, Ralph Bollmann**, and **Stephan Lamby** discuss “Germany after Merkel.” And on Saturday, **Mona Ameziane, Annabelle**

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Mandeng, and **Dilek Güngör** answer the question “How do you write about identity?” Afterwards, **Tanja Weber**, **Eberhard Michaely** and **Till Raether** talk about murder and other crimes in the time-honored “Krimi-SpeedDating” (crime speed dating) event. In the Talks on Sunday, international authors will focus on literature: representing the motto of the host country Canada “Singular Plurality – Singulier Pluriel”, the indigenous author and journalist **Paul Seesequasis**, the Francophone writer **Catherine Mavrikakis** and the Anglophone poet **Michael Crummey** will talk about their latest works that have been translated into German. Afterwards, Swiss Book Prize finalists **Veronika Sutter**, **Thomas Duarte** and **Michael Hugentobler** will make an appearance on the Blue Sofa.

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What does the Blue Sofa mean and what do books sound like?

In the run-up to the Frankfurt Book Fair, Bertelsmann interviewed around 80 renowned authors and newcomers about their current works, their favorite books, the significance of the Blue Sofa, and the “sound” they most associate with their latest works.

While for **Tsitsi Dangarembga**, a seat on the Blue Sofa is a “welcome recognition of my work,” for **Klaus Pohl** it is “a place in heaven.” **Mikael Krogerus** and **Roman Tschäppeler** declare it the only place “where you can get ahead by sitting down.” **Elke Heidenreich**, a literary expert, considers a sofa “ultimately always the best place to read.” **Steffen Mau** likes “talking about books in order to read books,” and for **Sasha Marianna Salzmann**, it’s a call to: “Wear your best hoodie!” **Jan Feddersen** characterizes the iconic couch as “the place to be” because “it will again be the smartest place to be at the book fair.” Only to **Sönke Wortmann**, who has yet to make his debut on the Blue Sofa, does it mean “nothing yet – but that may change soon ...”.

Literature and music grow together in newsletters and podcasts: Authors talk and write about their favorite music, and musicians recommend books. So looking ahead to the Frankfurt Book Fair, the question was: What does the soundtrack to this book autumn sound like? Bertelsmann asked some 80 authors what song they have in mind when they think of their latest books. The respondents cited a wide range of music, from Richard Wagner to Benny Goodman, which the Blue Sofa team has compiled into a six-and-a-half-hour playlist. To hear what “Das Blaue Sofa | Sound zur #FBM21” sounds like, interested parties can access the playlist on Spotify at <https://www.das-blaue-sofa.de/spotify> and on YouTube Music at <https://www.das-blaue-sofa.de/youtube-music>.

The answers of all the interviewed authors are well worth reading and can be found on the Instagram channel [das blaue sofa](https://www.instagram.com/das_blaue_sofa) and on the author pages of [das-blaue-sofa.de](https://www.das-blaue-sofa.de).



The Blue Sofa live at Open Books in Frankfurt

For ten years now, the traditional opening of the Open Books reading festival has taken place on the eve of the fair with a literature gala on the Blue Sofa – including the first public appearance of the winner of the German Book Prize. In addition, **Gert Loschütz**, **Sasha Marianna Salzmann**, and **Per Leo** are expected at the Open Books event on the iconic sofa. (October 19, 2021 | German National Library | from 8:00 p.m.)

The Blue Sofa on TV, radio, and online

- Book lovers and readers can participate in the livestream at das-blaue-sofa.de.
- Daily on Deutschlandfunk Kultur (radio) and online at: das-blaue-sofa.de, dasblauesofa.zdf.de, deutschlandfunkkultur.de and 3sat.de/buchmesse.
- On Deutschlandfunk Kultur, listen to a wide selection of “Das Blaue Sofa” conversations on Sunday, October 24, from 0:00 to 7:00 a.m.
- On Sunday, October 24 starting at 11:30 a.m., 3sat will broadcast a 90-minute summary of the talks at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2021, under the title “Das Blaue Sofa.”
- ZDF will air “The Long Night of the Blue Sofa” for three hours on Sunday, October 24, starting at 12:35 a.m. (past midnight)

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the broadcaster RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the magazine publisher Gruner + Jahr, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has around 130,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.3 billion in the 2020 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. In 2021, Bertelsmann commemorates the 100th birthday of Reinhard Mohn, the Group's late post-war founder and longtime Chairman and CEO.

About the Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa is the authors' forum jointly hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat. It has become an institution at the book fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig. The Blue Sofa Berlin celebrated its premiere in 2005. In 2011, Frankfurt's Open Books reading festival opened with a Blue Sofa authors' gala for the first time. Since the Leipzig Book Fair in 2000, the Blue Sofa has provided the setting for more than 3,000 conversations with authors including Nobel Prize laureates Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Olga Tokarczuk, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan..

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