

PRESS RELEASE

Bestselling Author Dörte Hansen discusses ‘Mittagsstunde’ on the Blue Sofa in Gütersloh

- Bertelsmann to host the literature format in Gütersloh for the fifth time
- Tickets for the event on May 14, 2019 now available

Gütersloh, April 9, 2019 – The international media company Bertelsmann is bringing Dörte Hansen, one of Germany’s most prominent and popular authors, to “The Blue Sofa Gütersloh” on May 14, 2019. Hansen will discuss her novel “Mittagsstunde” with ZDF journalist Michael Sahr and read from it. The author’s second novel after her sensational debut “Altes Land” was published by the Bertelsmann-owned Penguin imprint in October 2018 and has since won high accolades from readers and critics alike. Bertelsmann is hosting “The Blue Sofa Gütersloh” for the fifth time. Previously, the bestselling authors Wladimir Kaminer and Hanns-Josef Ortheil, the WDR journalist Christine Westermann, and the actor Dominique Horwitz had visited the city on the river Dalke for readings. Tickets for the evening with Dörte Hansen are now available.

Expectations for Dörte Hansen’s new novel were high after her powerful debut “Altes Land” climbed to the top of the “SPIEGEL” Annual Bestseller List in 2015 and subsequently reached more than half a million readers. A movie adaptation is in the works. Six months ago, her second novel “Mittagsstunde” was published – about the hidden life of a fictitious village in northern Germany, a story that the author says she has always carried within her. This novel, too, was an immediate hit and has been a fixture in the Top Ten of the “SPIEGEL” bestseller lists. More than 300,000 copies have already been sold in the months since its publication.

Karin Schlautmann, Head of Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann, said: “Dörte Hansen was recently named Author of the Year 2018 by independent booksellers, and her book ‘Mittagsstunde’ was named Novel of the Year 2018. We are delighted to be able to present such an outstanding storyteller to the audience in Gütersloh. With ‘The Blue Sofa Gütersloh,’ initiatives such as ‘Lesestadt Gütersloh’ (Gütersloh City of Reading), our ‘BELESEN’ events, and numerous campaigns to promote reading among children, Bertelsmann makes an important contribution to promoting literary diversity and the joy of reading in the region.”

Bertelsmann supports “The Blue Sofa Gütersloh” as part of its cultural sponsorship program in the city. The event is organized by the Theater in Gütersloh e.V. (Association of Friends of the Gütersloh Theater). Thorsten Wagner, Chairman of the association, said: “By introducing author readings and talks, the friends association has added a new format for the theater. Among these events, the Blue Sofa with its top lineup stands for literary excellence.”

Bertelsmann is engaged in a variety of cultural initiatives both in Germany and internationally. The Group's "Culture@Bertelsmann" activities comprise exhibitions, readings and concerts, the "Blue Sofa" literature format created jointly with partners, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe's cultural heritage. For instance, Bertelsmann owns the Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan, a music archive that contains a wealth of unique testimonies to Italian opera history. Bertelsmann is indexing the archival holdings to meet the latest standards and making the cultural treasures accessible for a wide audience. As a company with a long history in filmmaking, Bertelsmann also supports and sponsors the restoration, digitization and screening of major silent films.

Dörte Hansen, born in Husum in 1964, worked as a radio and print editor and author for NDR after completing her linguistics degree. She lives in North Frisia with her family to this day.

"Mittagsstunde" (Midday Hour) is set near Husum in Schleswig-Holstein, where the author grew up and where people speak Low German (Plattdeutsch). The clouds lie low over the geest as Ingwer Feddersen, 47, returns to his home village Brinkebüll. There is something he has to make amends for. Grandmother Ella is in the process of losing her mind; Grandfather Sönke steadfastly stands his ground in his village pub. Like the village itself, it has seen better days. When did this decline begin? In the 1970s, when first the hedges and then the birds disappeared after the land reform? When the large farms grew and the small ones died off? When Ingwer went to study archaeology in the big city of Kiel, abandoning the old man and his tavern? Dörte Hansen has written a warm-hearted story about loss, partings and a new beginning, of the disappearance of a rural world, and of the midday hour.

The eagerly awaited novel was very well received by readers and the press. As Jörg Magenau writes in the "*Süddeutsche Zeitung*": "Anyone who liked 'Altes Land' will love 'Mittagsstunde' – and far beyond North Frisia." And Andreas Platthaus of the "*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*" raves that the book delivers the "description of a general social and esthetic change" – "larger topics, that is, which are not unique to North Frisia."

The Event at a Glance

The Blue Sofa Gütersloh featuring Dörte Hansen
The author will read from her latest novel, "*Mittagsstunde*"

Tuesday, May 14th, 2019, 7:30 PM
Theater Gütersloh, Skylobby
Barkeystraße 15, 33330 Gütersloh
Tel.: +49 5241 864 244

Tickets are available from April 9 at www.theater-gt.de
and from Gütersloh Marketing GmbH
Berliner Straße 63, 33330 Gütersloh, Germany
Phone: +49 5241 211360
Admission: 14 € (for Friends of the Theater association members: 12 €)

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 117,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.7 billion in the 2018 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.

About the Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa is the author forum jointly hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and 3sat. It has become a fixture 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 author's gala for the first time. Since the 2000 Leipzig Book Fair, 2,752 discussions with 1,687 authors have taken place on the Blue Sofa, including with Nobel Prize laureates Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan. Blue Sofa events have also taken place in Gütersloh since 2017

About the Theater in Gütersloh e.V. (Society of Friends of the Gütersloh Theater)

The Theater in Gütersloh e.V. played a major role in the construction of the new Gütersloh Theater. Since the theater opened, the association and its 400 members have been very active in supporting the Gütersloh Theater and its program, and getting a wide public excited about this architectural outlier in the German theater landscape. Civic engagement has a direct impact on the program through the Theater in Gütersloh e.V.

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For further questions, please contact:

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