

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann and the National Library of Luxembourg bring 'The Blue Sofa' to Luxembourg for the First Time

- Bertelsmann CEO Rabe: Decades of partnership with Luxembourg
- The literary format makes a guest appearance at the Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg starting 7 p.m. on June 13, 2022 with four award-winning authors
- Tickets available now

Gütersloh/Luxembourg, May 18, 2022 – The international media, services, and education company Bertelsmann and the Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg (BnL) are bringing the popular literary format "The Blue Sofa" to Luxembourg for the first time. Four award-winning authors from Luxembourg, Austria and Germany will be at the National Library for the event's premiere on June 13, 2022: Julia Holbe, Samuel Hamen, Daniel Wisser, and Jenny Erpenbeck. The conversations on the "Blue Sofa" will be held by Susanne Biedenkopf (ZDF), Michael Sahr (ZDF), and the Luxembourg literary critic Jérôme Jaminet (RTL).

Bertelsmann Chairman & CEO Thomas Rabe, who also heads RTL Group, emphasizes: "Bertelsmann and Luxembourg have enjoyed a long, trusting partnership. Not only is the Grand Duchy home to RTL Group, we also have other businesses based here, such as the customer experience company Majorel. By bringing the 'Blue Sofa' here, we want to emphasize that Luxembourg is more than just a business location for us. We see ourselves as part of the community and want to be culturally involved here as well."

In over two decades, the "Blue Sofa" has developed into one of the most successful literary formats in the German-speaking countries. In particular, the authors' forum jointly organized by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and 3sat has a firm association with the major book fairs in Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig. To date, more than 3,100 authors have taken a seat on the sofa to present their latest books.

Likewise, Julia Holbe, Samuel Hamen, Daniel Wisser, and Jenny Erpenbeck will present their latest works at Luxembourg's National Library (in German). In their novels and stories, they describe how people live in their respective countries, and what thoughts, longings, hopes, certainties, fears and mistakes occupy their minds.

In "*Boy meets Girl*," **Julia Holbe**, a bestselling author and successful editor from Luxembourg, describes small moments that change a whole life. She captures the magical moments when doubts and fears turn into hope and something new begins. **Samuel Hamen** portrays creatures that in his homeland are found only in zoos if at all: To him, jellyfish, the remarkable "lungs of the sea" that are the protagonists of his book "*Quallen*" are the most enigmatic and at the same time most beguiling creatures of the animal kingdom. **Daniel Wisser's** stories in "*Die erfundene Frau*" (The Invented Woman) are about the delights and frustration of love, of which sometimes nothing more remains than a dead dog in a Louis Vuitton bag. With wit and humanity, he describes how his characters fail again and again in their attempts not to fail. In "*Kairos*," **Jenny Erpenbeck**, "one of the most powerful voices in contemporary German-language literature" (NZZ) tells the story of an unlikely couple in the shadowlands between love and lies, happiness and violence, hatred and hope, all set against the backdrop of the declining German Democratic Republic in the year 1989.

For many years, Bertelsmann has been 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" literary format, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe's cultural heritage, as in the case of the Ricordi Archives in Milan, which houses original documents from 200 years of Italian opera history. As a company with a long history of its own in the film industry, Bertelsmann is also committed to the restoration, digitization, and screening of significant silent films.

About the authors:

Julia Holbe

Julia Holbe, born in 1969, is Luxembourgian. She lives in Frankfurt am Main and in Brittany. For twenty years, she worked as an editor for international literature at S. Fischer Verlag. "*Unsere glücklichen Tage*" (Our Happy Days) was her first novel. Literary critic and moderator Christine Westermann on her latest work "**Boy meets Girl**": "The old boy-meets-girl story, but told so much better. More surprising and light-hearted, easy and airy. ... You can feel the zest for life inherent in this novel."

Samuel Hamen

Samuel Hamen, born in Luxembourg City in 1988, is a writer and literary critic for Deutschlandfunk and ZEIT Online, among others, and president of the Luxembourg writers' association A:LL. His debut novel, "*V wéi wreckt, wéi Vitess*," was published by Éditions Guy Binsfeld in 2018. Most recently, Hamen was awarded the Luxembourg Book Prize 2020 and a year-long scholarship from the Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg art foundation. His volume "**Quallen**" (Jellyfish) was published on May 12, 2022.

Daniel Wisser

Daniel Wisser, born in Klagenfurt in 1971, writes prose, poetry, and song lyrics. He now lives in Vienna. In 2018, Wisser was awarded the Austrian Book Prize and the Johann Beer Prize for his novel "*Königin der Berge*" (Queen of the Mountains). "*Wir bleiben noch*" (We're not leaving yet) is Daniel Wisser's fifth novel. Fellow author Monika Helfer writes about his latest work "**Die erfundene Frau**" (The Invented Woman): "*Die erfundene Frau* by Daniel Wisser is offbeat, crazy, and true in all its stuffiness. Daniel Wisser describes his couples in short sentences and with downright warmth. You don't forget them; sometimes they're in my bed with me."

Jenny Erpenbeck

Jenny Erpenbeck, born in East Berlin in 1967, made her debut in 1999 with the novella "*Geschichte vom alten Kind*" (Story of the Old Child). Numerous publications followed, including novels, short stories, and plays. Her novel "*Aller Tage Abend*" (The Evening of All Days) was acclaimed by audiences and critics alike and won numerous awards, including the Joseph Breitbach Prize and the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. Accolades for "*Gehen, ging, gegangen*" (Go, Went, Gone) included the Thomas Mann Prize. In 2017, Jenny Erpenbeck won the Premio Strega Europeo and was awarded the Federal Republic of Germany's Cross of Merit on Ribbon. Literary critic Denis Scheck says of Erpenbeck's latest book "*Kairos*": "A stirring novel about being completely exposed and vulnerable in love, and the right moment in life. (Lesenswert", ARD)

The Event at a Glance

The Blue Sofa Luxembourg

Monday, June 13, 2022 , 7:00 pm

Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg

37D, Avenue John F. Kennedy in L-1855 Luxembourg

Phone: +352 26559-226

Tickets available at:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/bnl/657911/>

Admission is free – registration is required

More information at:

<https://www.das-blaue-sofa.de/veranstaltungen/das-blaue-sofa-in-luxemburg> (in German)

https://bnl.public.lu/fr/agenda/2022/das_blaue_sofa.html

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services, and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, 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 145,000 employees and generated revenues of €18.7 billion in the 2021 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.

About the Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa is the authors' forum jointly hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat. In over two decades, it has become an institution at the book fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig. Since the Leipzig Book Fair in 2000, more than 3,100 author talks have taken place on the Blue Sofa – on site and livestreamed or broadcast on TV and radio. In 2005, the Blue Sofa celebrated its premiere in Berlin, and in 2011, Frankfurt's Open Books reading festival opened with a Blue Sofa authors' gala for the first time. Guests to date have included authors from across all genres with their latest books, including Nobel Prize laureates Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Olga Tokarczuk, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan.

About the National Library of Luxembourg

The National Library of Luxembourg (Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg, BnL) is the country's leading academic, research and cultural heritage library. It collects, catalogues and preserves all analogue and digital publications published in Luxembourg and any works published abroad that relate to the Grand Duchy. As an academic and research library, the BnL has the status of a special library: about three-quarters of its printed collections come from other countries and they cover different fields of knowledge. The BnL is far more than a place of learning and documentation. It also plays an important role in knowledge transfer by producing its own publications and by providing a venue for cultural encounters, such as conferences, exhibitions and events on a wide range of subjects.

Bertelsmann online



Enquiries:

Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA
Susanne Erdl
Communications Content Team
Phone: +49 5241 80-42629
susanne.erdl@bertelsmann.de
www.bertelsmann.com