

## PRESS RELEASE

### The Blue Sofa Presents Renowned Authors at Berlin's international literature festival (ilb)

- **First collaboration between Bertelsmann's literary forum and the ilb**
- **A full day devoted to literature from around the world at Bertelsmann Unter den Linden 1 in Berlin**
- **Featured guests: Sabaa Tahir and Laurie Halse Anderson from the USA, Cheon Myeong-kwan from South Korea, and Sunjeev Sahota from Great Britain**

Berlin, August 16, 2023 – On September 7, Bertelsmann Unter den Linden 1 in Berlin will for the first time be part of the international literature festival berlin (ilb), which runs from September 6 to 16 this year.

Four international authors are expected at the Blue Sofa, Bertelsmann's literary forum, where they will present their latest books in moderated discussions. In the morning, the award-winning authors Sabaa Tahir and Laurie Halse Anderson from the USA will be guests as part of the children's and youth program. The evening program features South Korean author Cheon Myeong-kwan and British writer Sunjeev Sahota with their critically acclaimed novels. The audience can look forward to a venue dedicated to cultural exchange and literary delights.

With this collaboration between its Das Blaue Sofa author's forum and the ilb, Bertelsmann underscores the importance of literary events as well as its commitment to promoting creative and diverse exchange on literature and culture.

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#### The program on September 7, 2023 at Bertelsmann Unter den Linden 1 in Berlin:

**+++ 9:30 am – Das Blaue Sofa featuring Sabaa Tahir (“All My Rage“ – German title: “So viel Zorn und so viel Liebe“) +++**

*About “So viel Zorn und so viel Liebe” (cbj; original title “All My Rage” published by Razorbill)*

Salahudin, nicknamed Sal, and Noor share more than a deep friendship: both are Pakistani migrants growing up together in a small town in the California desert. They understand each other like no one else. But an argument last summer destroyed everything. Now Sal struggles alone to keep the family motel running while his ailing mother Misbah gets sicker and sicker and his father drowns his sorrows in alcohol. Noor, meanwhile, works in her strict uncle's liquor store while trying to secretly apply for college so she can say goodbye to her uncle and this place forever. As Sal's attempts to save the motel spiral out of control, he and Noor must ask themselves what friendship is worth and what it will take to defeat the monsters of the past – and those in their midst.

The novel won the Printz Award and the National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

**+++ 11:30 am – Das Blaue Sofa featuring Laurie Halse Anderson (“Shout” – German title: “Schrei!”) +++**

*About “Schrei!” (dtv; original title “Shout” published by Viking)*

In 1999, Laurie Halse Anderson’s groundbreaking, globally successful novel “Speak” was published, in which she wrote unsparingly about the aftermath of rape. Now, in “Shout,” she recounts her father’s mental illness, domestic and sexual violence, her career as an award-winning author, and accounts of abuse she heard while visiting schools. Written in free verse full of power and poetry, the stunning book is a key work of the #MeToo movement.

Laurie Halse Anderson is the recipient of honors including the 2023 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

**+++ 6:00 pm – Das Blaue Sofa featuring Cheon Myeong-kwan (“Whale” – German title: “Der Wal”) +++**

*About “Der Wal” (Weissbooks; original “Whale” published by Munhakdongne)*

“Whale” tells the adventurous story of two women: Geumbok is an extremely ambitious country girl, who advances to become a successful entrepreneur, factory owner, and cinema operator, and drives men out of their minds with her mysterious fragrance. Geumbok’s daughter Chunhui, a gentle giant who cannot speak, unintentionally becomes the cause of a devastating fire that brings about the downfall of an entire town.

“Whale” is a rich fantastical tale that paints drastic pictures, with an array of outlandish protagonists, full of wicked humor and surprising twists and turns that keep the suspense level high.

The novel was nominated for the 2023 International Booker Prize.

**+++ 7:30 pm – Das Blaue Sofa featuring Sunjeev Sahota (“China Room” – German title: “Das Porzellanzimmer”) +++**

*About “Das Porzellanzimmer” (hanserblau; original “China Room” published by Harvill Secker)*

Rural Punjab, 1929: In a ceremony, Mehar and two other very young women are married to three brothers. At night, each of them meets her husband in complete darkness, hoping to conceive a son. During the day, the women perform their domestic duties, locked in the china room where their mother-in-law Mai’s trousseau is stored. When Mehar falls in love with one of the brothers, a dangerous passion is ignited that endangers more than one life. Seventy years later, Mehar’s great-grandson travels from England to an abandoned Indian farm. There he finds the barricaded china room, where he will confront his inner demons – and his hidden family history.

The novel was longlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize.

For more information on Das Blaue Sofa as part of the ilb, please visit [www.das-blaue-sofa.de/programm/das-blaue-sofa-ilb](http://www.das-blaue-sofa.de/programm/das-blaue-sofa-ilb).

If you are interested in interviewing the featured authors, we will be happy to put you in touch with the respective publishers.

Media representatives are cordially invited to attend the events of Das Blaue Sofa as part of the international literature festival berlin (ilb). You can apply for accreditation by sending an e-mail to [culture@bertelsmann.de](mailto:culture@bertelsmann.de).

### **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 165,000 employees worldwide and generated revenues of €20.2 billion in the 2022 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 (Das Blaue Sofa)**

The Blue Sofa (Das Blaue Sofa) is one of the longest-lived and most successful literary formats in the German-speaking world. Since its debut in 2000, more than 3,100 authors have taken a seat on the famous piece of furniture to present their new books at and beyond the big book fairs. In the past, the format has been jointly organized by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat, since 2023, Bertelsmann has continued to steer Das Blaue Sofa with a new concept under its sole responsibility. The Blue Sofa's most prominent guests to date have included Nobel 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.

### **Bertelsmann online**



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