

PRESS RELEASE

Back with Top Authors: The Blue Sofa Returns to the Leipzig Book Fair

- **Miriam Davoudvandi, Jochen Gutsch, Hannah Häffner, among others: Six authors present their latest books on the Blue Sofa**
- **Live program on Friday and Saturday of the book fair in the Glass Hall**
- **Additional event during the Leipzig Book Fair: presentation of the topic ‘Donau – Unter Strom und zwischen Welten’ (The Danube – Electrified and Between Worlds)**

Berlin, February 18, 2026 – Das Blaue Sofa (The Blue Sofa), one of the most prestigious literary formats in the German-speaking world, will once again be present at the Leipzig Book Fair in 2026. Following its realignment at the end of 2022, the format was featured during the spring fair only as part of “Leipzig liest.” It is now returning to one of the fair’s central venues: the stage of the Leipzig Book Prize in the Glass Hall.

Following the Leipzig Book Prize ceremony on March 19, 2026, the stage will be transformed overnight into an event venue exclusively reserved for The Blue Sofa over the following two days.

On Friday, March 20, 2026, three authors will take a seat on Das Blaue Sofa: Hannah Häffner, author of “Die Riesinnen” (The Giantesses) (Penguin), a novel that tells the story of three women spanning the period from the 1960s to the present day; Jochen Gutsch, who writes about a cat in his unforgettable story of a tender friendship, “Frankie” (Penguin); and Miriam Davoudvandi, whose nonfiction book “Das können wir uns nicht leisten” (We Can’t Afford This) (btb) explores the scale of poverty in Germany.

On Saturday, March 21, 2026, Lilli Tollkien (“Mit beiden Händen den Himmel stützen”) (Holding Up the Sky with Both Hands) (Aufbau) will talk about a childhood and adolescence lived under exceptional circumstances. Markus Orths (“Die Enthusiasten”) (The Enthusiasts) (Galiani Berlin) will discuss a book-obsessed family and the question of what art actually is. Esther Schüttpelz (“Grüne Welle”) (Green Wave) (Diogenes) will speak about a woman who, after going to see a movie, continues driving into the night instead of returning home.

The discussions will be moderated by Marie-Christine Knop.

Additional events as part of the Leipzig Book Fair

On March 5, 2026 The Blue Sofa will host an evening event in Berlin dedicated to the topic “Donau – Unter Strom und zwischen Welten” (The Danube – Electrified and Between Worlds). Guests include Swiss-Romanian author Dana Grigorcea (“Tanzende Frau, Blauer Hahn”) (Dancing Woman, Blue Rooster) (Penguin) and Croatian author Ena Katerina Haler (“Die Schuldlosen”) (The Guiltless) (Folio).

The evening will be moderated by Shelly Kupferberg.

On Thursday and Friday of the book fair (March 19 and 20, 2026), The Blue Sofa will once again present the KrimiClub at the Leipzig Regional Court as part of the “Leipzig liest” program. On Thursday, participating authors will include Marc Elsberg (“Eden”) (EDEN – The Dying Begins) (Blanvalet), Dora Heldt (“Zwischen Gut & Böse”) (Between Good and Evil) (dtv), Ann-Christin Kumm (“Ultramarin”) (Ultramarine) (Hanser Berlin), and Maximilian Cress Ferreira (“Am Ende der Wahrheit”) (At the End of the Truth) (Atrium). On Friday, Anne Stern (“Die weiße Nacht”) (The White Night) (Piper), Daniel Faßbender (“Heaven’s Gate”) (Diogenes), Anja Jonuleit (“Wo der Wind die Namen trägt”) (Where the Wind Carries the Names) (Penguin), and Alexander Rupflin (“Protokoll eines Verschwindens”) (Record of a Disappearance) (HarperCollins) will take part.

Both evenings will be hosted by Anouk Schollähn.

About The Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa is one of the longest-running and most successful literary formats in the German-speaking world. Founded in 2000, it has hosted more than 3,100 authors, who have presented their new books at major book fairs and beyond. In recent years, the format was jointly curated by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat. Since 2023, Bertelsmann has continued The Blue Sofa independently with a new concept. Past guests include 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.

www.das-blaue-sofa.de/en

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company with about 75,000 employees that operates in some 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 Group, Bertelsmann Marketing Services, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company generated revenues of €19 billion in the 2024 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination enables first-class media offerings and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

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