

Rudolf Zwirner:
Give Me the Now, An
Autobiography

By Rudolf Zwirner, written with Nicola Kuhn. Translated
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Foreword by Lucas Zwirner

David Zwirner Books

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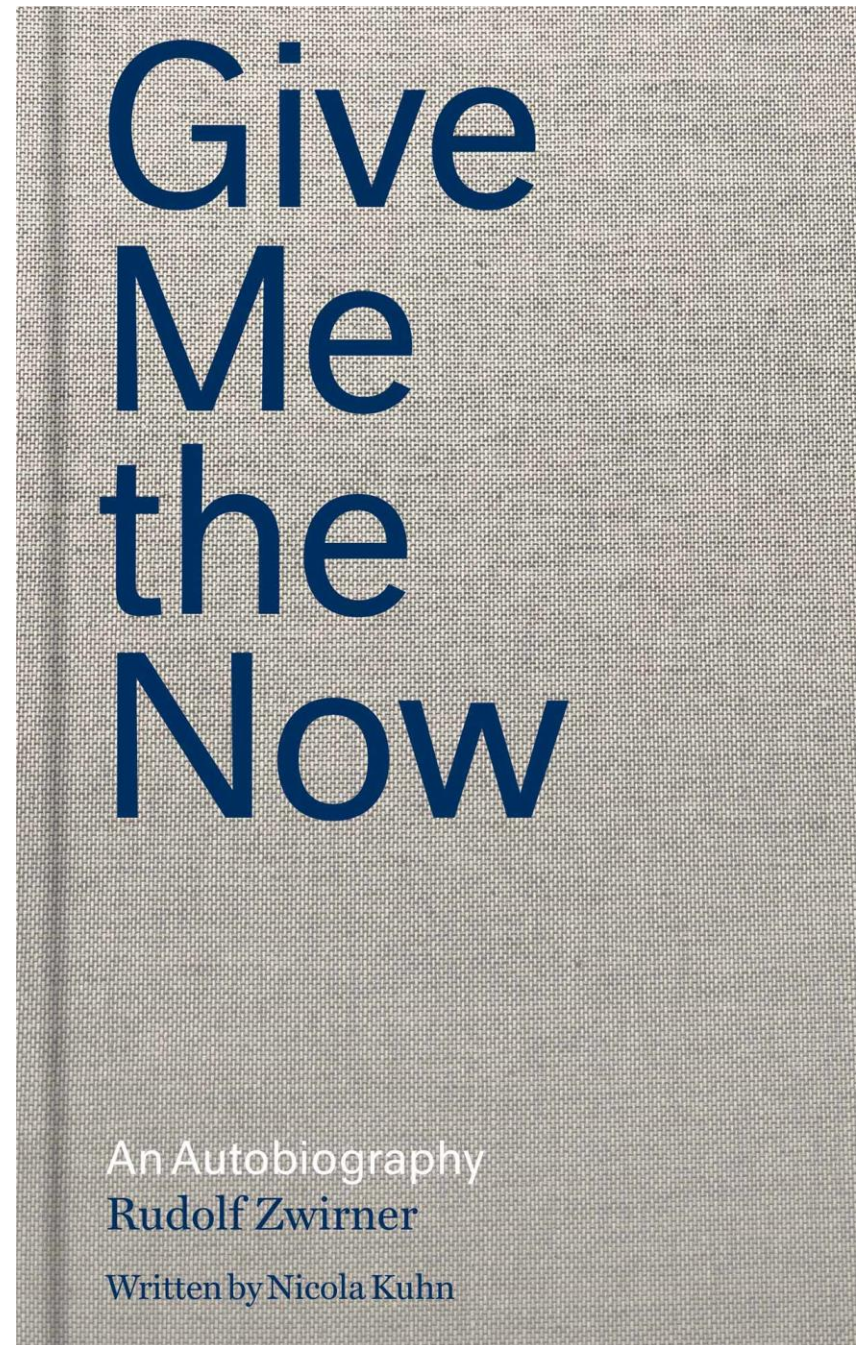
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Rudolf Zwirner

- Born 1933, Cologne, Germany
- Art dealer based in Cologne
- Founded Art Cologne, first contemporary art fair
- Started gallery in the 1960s and grew to show works by icons including Sigmar Polke, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and others
- Father of the gallerist David Zwirner



Keynote / Key Selling Points

Rudolf Zwirner, “the man who invented the art market,” as coined in *Der Spiegel*, reflects on more than sixty years in the art business in his authoritative autobiography.

- **ART MARKET TELL-ALL:** Insider’s story from modern art market founding father Rudolf Zwirner weaves the history of the 20th-century art market with opinions on the market today
- **FATHER OF MEGA-DEALER:** David Zwirner is one of the leading contemporary galleries in the world
- **BEHIND THE SCENES:** An unusual insight into the growth of a gallery in 1960s Germany
- **FOREWORD BY GRANDSON:** Zwirner’s grandchild Lucas—head of content for David Zwirner and editorial director of David Zwirner Books—writes an intimate and contemporary foreword

Contents

	Introduction	000
	Lucas Zwirner	
1	Childhood under National Socialism	000
2	Youth during the Postwar Years	000
3	Art Beckons	000
4	Berlin and Paris	000
5	Secretary General of the Second Documenta	000
6	A Rookie Gallerist in Essen	000
7	A Fresh Start as an Art Dealer in Cologne	000
8	Stations of a Gallery	000
9	The Birth of the First Contemporary Art Fair	000
10	The Kahnweiler of Pop Art	000
11	Peter Ludwig	000
12	The New York Connection	000
13	Richter, Polke, Baselitz, and Co.	000
14	From Art Dealer to Curator and Back	000
15	Finally Back Home in Berlin	000
	Acknowledgments	000
	List of Exhibitions	000
	List of Publications	000
	Index	000

3

Art Beckons

As soon as I finished high school in 1953—I didn't even wait for the graduation ceremony—I began hitchhiking: to Munich to the Pinakothek, to the museums in Hanover, Amsterdam, and Cologne, where, in 1955, the great Picasso exhibition took place in the Rheinisches Museum in Deutz—on the opposite side of the Rhine, directly across from the Cologne Cathedral—where Guernica was also on display. But my visit to the first Documenta exhibition in Kassel in 1955 was a life-altering experience. Kassel was on the way from Braunschweig to Freiburg, where I studied law, and so I took the opportunity to visit the exhibition. At the entrance to the Fridericianum, I came across a group of people waiting for a tour to begin, including a lady who immediately called out to me: “Rudolf, what are you doing here?” Surprised, I realized she was the Princess of Waldeck, a neighbor from Braunschweig and a good friend of my mother. She immediately invited me to take part in the guided tour that was about to begin for the Rotary Club of Northern Hesse conducted by the Secretary General of the Documenta, Herbert Baron of Buttlar. I joined the group.

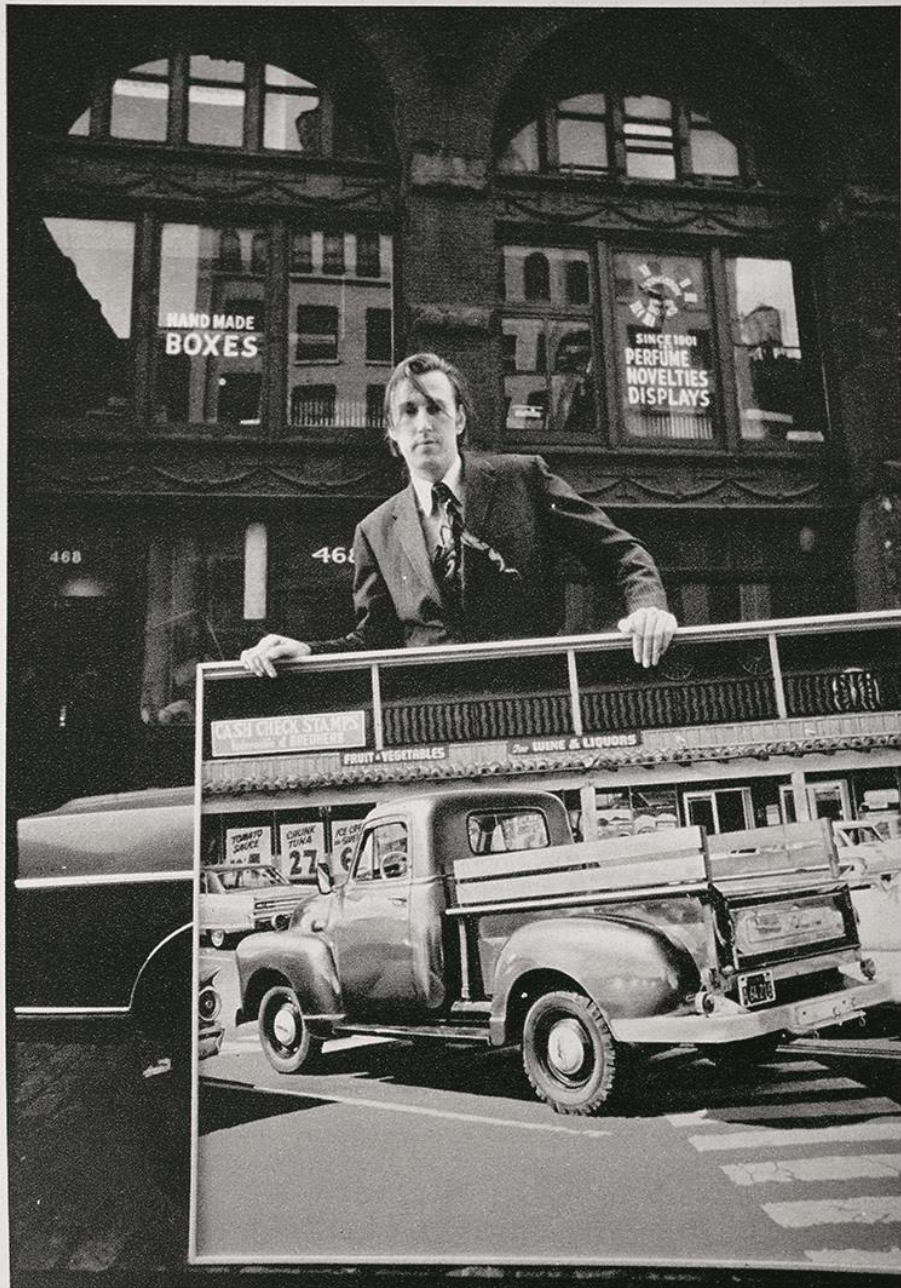
This visit marked a turning point in my life. Already on the way to Freiburg, I had decided to abandon my law studies. I had only studied halfheartedly anyway, because I felt that I would merely become a third-class lawyer. Attending a court

15

From Art Dealer to Curator and Back Again

I have organized exhibitions all my life: over 300 as a gallerist between 1959 and 1992, and half a dozen as a curator at the invitation of public institutions. In retrospect, many of them were first presentations of artists who later, after being shown in my gallery, had their big breakthrough. Sure, several of them were forgotten again, but a large number of “my artists” now belong to the canon of recent art history. Although official recognition may be a long time coming for some of these artists, I have been friends with many of them for decades. When I look back on their individual developments, I can only marvel at how incalculable an artistic career ultimately is. But what seems even more important to me is the question as to how success or failure can be measured in the respective time. My admiration goes out to artists such as Astrid Klein and Gary Kuehn, who continue to work unwaveringly on their production, even when times were tough.

Two things shaped my approach to art, which also determined my work as a gallerist: on the one hand, the rejection of



Eine Zwirner-Entdeckung in New York: „Pick up Truck“ von Ralph Goings



GALERIE ZWIRNER





Recent Press (on German edition)

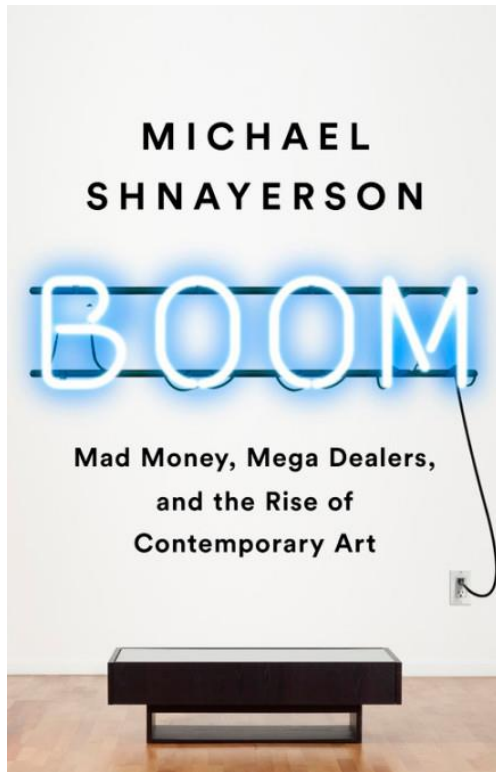
“At Zwirner, Joseph Beuys showed his first fat corner, René Magritte got the first show in Germany. Zwirner’s most important customer was Peter Ludwig, the super collector and chocolate manufacturer, to whom he sold not only Warhol and Lichtenstein, but also art from Gerhard Richter to Sigmar Polke - and thus created the basis for the Ludwig Museum.”

— Der Tagesspiegel

“The man who invented the art market.”

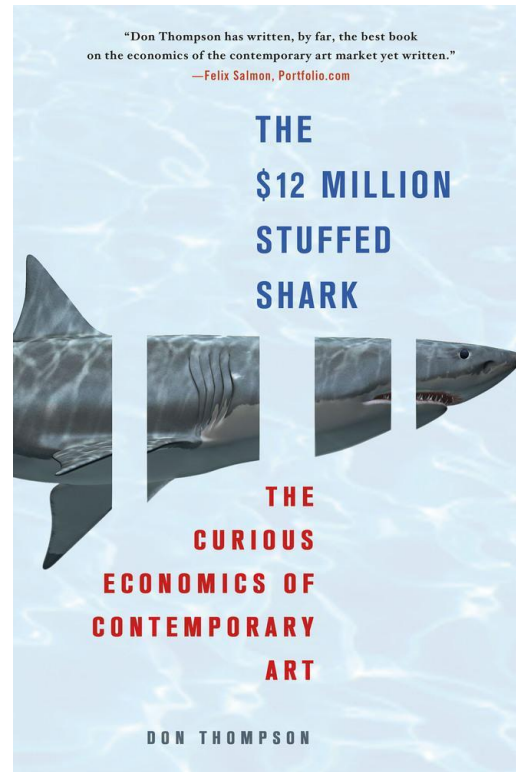
– Der Spiegel

Comp Titles



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