

# NINO MIER GALLERY

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## STEFAN RINCK

*Early Birds and Late Night Lizards*

Nino Mier Gallery | New York

November 4 – December 16, 2023

Nino Mier Gallery, New York is thrilled to announce *Early Birds and Late Night Lizards*, our second solo exhibition by the Berlin-based sculptor Stefan Rinck. Known for his playful and mischievous sculptures of animals and chimeras, Rinck expands his repertoire of large- and small-scale creatures chiseled with diabase, sandstone, marble, quartzite, and limestone in a series of new works on view from November 4 – December 16, 2023.

Rinck's new suite of sculptures experiment with our gaps in knowledge of dinosaurs. Drawn to the expansive imagination and play required in reconstructing what dinosaurs might have looked like, Rinck cites what little evidence we have of their forms and habits as his point of departure. The resulting cast of new reptilian and avian creatures bear varying degrees of resemblance to more commonplace illustrations of dinosaurs found in television and film but retain a pop cultural emphasis on archetypes and amusement.

Rather than present his dinosaurs as slobbering, ravenous predators, Rinck infuses them with human affects such as bemusement, indifference, and disapprobation. Some heavy-lidded figures seem bored to tears, while others grip their waists with sass. Yet others are entirely contemporary, bearing accessories like headphones. For over three centuries, we have speculated about the lives of the dinosaurs, attempting time and again to imagine their circumstances of life. For Rinck, the dinosaur is an avatar – the endeavor to understand it tells us as much about the extinct species as it tells us about our own.

As Rinck writes:

*Only bones remain of the dinosaurs. Nevertheless, man has created a living image of them. How much knowledge is certain and how much is speculation? The distance between us and them leaves space for our imagination. Paleontology, which emerged in the late 18th century, doesn't just inquire about the lives of dinosaurs—it also inquires about our own species. The founder of paleontology, Georges Cuvier, believed that humans came into existence only long after the last Ice Age and the mass extinction of dinosaurs.*

*Much poetry lies in the distant view of lost time—one could read of it not only in the work of French writer Marcel Proust, but also in the books of the paleontologists. Josef Augusta, a Czechoslovakian paleontologist, writes in episodes about the lives of the dinosaurs in his novelistic books *Blown Away* and *Petrified World*. His texts are accompanied by illustrations of dinosaurs standing in psychedelic landscapes, painted by his student Zdenek. Within Zdenek's images, the dinosaurs appear passive and lost, but Augusta's text underscore their intentionality and autonomy. He relates, for instance, how an aged, gigantic *Iguanodon* knows where it must go at the end of its life: to the *Iguanodon* cemetery, where all *Iguanodons* go to die.*

*Attempts to quantify the number of dinosaur species and detail their appearance seem scientifically sound but are speculative. Thus, they open a window for art, to question appearances and activate the viewer's imagination. Augusta's narration is poetic and melancholic, reminiscent of Joseph von*

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*Eichendorff. You can smell the trees in these masterpieces of paleontology. They illustrate how human imagination can resurrect a forgotten world with just a few clues.*

In *Early Birds and Late Night Lizards*, Stefan Rinck adds to the world fund of dinosaur interpretation a new version of figures, at once prehistoric and utterly contemporary. His stone sculptures will stimulate the imagination of future species proceeding our own.

*Stefan Rinck (b. 1973, Homburg/Saar, DE; lives and works in Berlin, DE) studied Art History and Philosophy at the Universität des Saarlandes in Saarbrücken and Sculpture at the Academy of Arts in Karlsruhe. Rinck exhibited internationally, including at Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US; Skarstedt Gallery, New York, NY, US; de Hallen, Haarlem, NE; Sorry We're Closed, Brussels, BE; Vilma Gold, London, UK, Semiose, Paris, France; among many others. He participated in the Busan Biennale in South Korea and at the Vent des Fôret in France, where he installed permanent public sculptures. His works are in public collections worldwide, including CBK Rotterdam, NE; Musée de la Loterie Belge, BE; Sammlung Krohne, DE; and FRAC Corse, FR, among others.*