

## WEEK 4

Erich Bödeker (1904–1971)  
Gerrit Frohne-Brinkmann (\*1990)  
Wolf Vostell (1932–1998)

In week four of the collection presentation of Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Nico Anklam and Pauline Ganns present three positions at TICK TACK that address the relationship between humans and animals in very different ways.

Erich Bödeker is considered a central figure in the non-academic art scene of Germany, a movement that refers to itself as “Die Naive” in German. Some of the artists from this movement, including Bödeker, were coal miners who created art after their shifts. Bödeker, one of the most well-known among them, often gives animals a central role in his works. His sculptures sometimes consist of dozens of figures—such as the friendly “Dog” (n.d., acquired 2016), which is on display here in Antwerp. Typically made of concrete, his works combine the heaviness of industrial materials with a surprising liveliness. Non-academically trained artists like Bödeker often manage to create “animated” forms from the simplest materials. The term “animated” is derived from the Latin “animus,” the life force that seemingly resides in the sculptures—and from which the English word “animal” is also derived.

A generation later, Wolf Vostell, through the Fluxus movement, addresses not the animation of animals but rather the fear of their destruction. Vostell was one of the most influential figures of the Fluxus movement and is widely known for his happenings. The object displayed here, “Neue Fahne der BRD” (1972, acquired 1976), reflects Vostell’s critique of post-war society, which he saw as ensnared in consumerism and an accelerated way of life. Notably, a year after this work was created, the first car-free Sundays were introduced in response to the oil crisis.

In Gerrit Frohne-Brinkmann’s work “Earmouse (in seashell IX)” (2022, acquired 2023), many of the aforementioned aspects converge, reflecting current developments. Frohne-Brinkmann succeeds, like few others of his generation, in combining the animistic with a critical perspective in a poetic and simultaneously humorous way. He is particularly interested in those moments when humans create machines or automatons that mimic nature. In the work presented here, he combines a worm-like ceramic with a mouse that alludes to genetically modified organisms bred as organ farms for humans. A popular example of this is the mouse with a human ear on its back. Frohne-Brinkmann brings this back to the animistic in a surprising and ingenious manner: the object itself produces a sound reminiscent of ocean waves. The human dream of hearing the sound of the sea in a shell is both absurdly challenged and preserved here—like a haunting, nightmarish echo.

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The collection of Kunsthalle Recklinghausen in Antwerp  
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