Press Release
21 April 2026

THE
MERCHANT
HOUSE
AMSTERDAM

Fragments / The Merchant House, Your House

The Merchant House presents a new summer exhibition featuring Pino Pinelli, Elsa Tomkowiak, Zhu Hong, Sylvie Bonnot, and André Stempfel

Exhibition period: 29 May – 10 September
Exhibition opening: Friday 29 May, 18:00-20:00
The Merchant House, Herengracht 254, 1016 BV Amsterdam
www.merchanthouse.nl

Left: Elsa Tomkowiak, *Zip*, 2021 (series of 6), acrylic on oversized zip bags. 150 x 90 cm, each. TMH installation view. Photo: Arjen Veldt. / Right: Elsa Tomkowiak, *Albedo 100*, 2017, pounded acrylic on found foam, 5 elements. 200 x 106 x 23 cm. TMH installation view. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij.

The Merchant House's (TMH) summer exhibition *Fragments* and the corresponding theme *The Merchant House / Your House* reflect on how artworks occupy spaces—from public to private, from gallery to home. Featuring works by TMH's artists—Pino Pinelli (IT, 1938–2024), Elsa Tomkowiak (FR, b. 1981), Zhu Hong (CN, b. 1975), Sylvie Bonnot (FR, b. 1982), and André Stempfel (FR, b. 1930)—it engages the architectural legacy of the Amsterdam canal house, suggestions of domestic decor, and TMH's programming history.

Pino Pinelli, *Pittura R*, 1999, mixed media, 2 elements. 51 x 54 cm.

The project takes its inspiration from artist **Pino Pinelli**'s signature series. Neither entirely painting nor sculpture, his works unfold across walls in small, color-saturated units. The walls—those rigid partitions, frameworks of "everyspace"—become an area of free play, inviting us, as Pinelli suggested, to touch the works and join him in his art.

Three French women artists—**Elsa Tomkowiak**, **Zhu Hong**, and **Sylvie Bonnot**—first joined TMH in our *Making Things Happen* cycle (2017–2019), which focused on the material history of the art object and experimentation among young artists. *Fragments* includes Tomkowiak's *Zip* (2021), a wall of painted color composed of six oversized zip bags—her take on an unexpected alternative to canvas, a household "commodity" in this case.

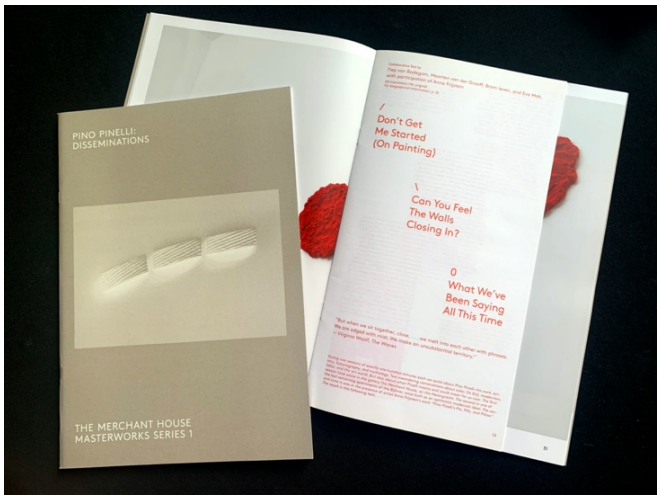
TMH installation view, featuring: Zhu Hong (left) and other TMH artists. Photo: Arjen Veldt.

Zhu Hong's exquisite rectangle of clear blue sky, *Nuage* (2021), becomes an enquiring visual accomplice to Pinelli's paintings-reliefs no less than to TMH's

Baroque ceiling scene, also acting as a counterpoint to Tomkowiak's painting on plastic. With Bonnot's series of spiders—using her proprietary photo-transfer method—medium and subject shift. Her images spread across the wall, capturing a tiny house invader at an ominous scale; attractive rather than repellent, nature moves from the dark corners of the house into the gallery.

The exhibition also includes works by **André Stempfel**, whose *miroir morceau choisi* (1984)—a literal cutout reflecting on itself—was part of his 2026 retrospective at TMH that introduced the theme *The Merchant House, Your House*. *Fragments* foregrounds this polyvalence, offering each artist a room of their own and inviting viewers to formulate a response, perhaps even a theory, across the fragments.

"The Merchant House originally presented these artists' first solo projects in Amsterdam. The group exhibition returns to Pino Pinelli's proposition for contemporary painting: 'As with my third eye, I would like to reach the atomic substance of form—an element of strength and constitution for a different kind of painting.'" —Marsha Plotnitsky and Pino Pinelli, also cited in TMH's art catalogue *Pino Pinelli: Disseminations* (2017)



TMH catalogue, *Pino Pinelli: Disseminations* (2017), which accompanied Pinelli's first show at TMH.

Accompanying event series:
On the Subject of Art—A Dinner Party, in an Art-Critical Mode
Thu 28 May and Thu 25 June, 19:30, at The Merchant House in Amsterdam
Created and hosted by Marsha Plotnitsky, TMH Founding Artistic Director

This spring and summer, our new series of dinner parties explores *Context, Concept, Coincidence, and Consequence* in relation to art—bringing together a small group of guests around a shared table. Tickets released on Eventbrite shortly before each event: www.merchanthouse.nl/events

Notes to Editors:

About The Merchant House
The Merchant House (TMH) presents contemporary art to discover, immerse oneself in, and collect. As an art platform in Amsterdam, we focus on research-based projects in collaboration with artists. Each project, curated by TMH's Founding Artistic Director **Marsha Plotnitsky**, brings together an extended exhibition, cultural and research events, and a dedicated catalogue/artist's book.

TMH has showcased international and Dutch innovators, such as the artists featured in *Fragments*, as well as John Coplans (US), André de Jong (NL), Beppie Gielkens (NL), Hilarius Hofstede (NL), Craigie Horsfield (UK), Mary Sue (FR), Kokou Ferdinand Makouvia (TG), Amanda Means (US), Ruth Meijer (NL), Dennis Oppenheim (US), Henk Peeters (NL), Judit Reigl (FR born HU), Carolee Schneemann (US), Jan Schoonhoven (NL), Leo Vroegindeweij (NL), Margret Wibmer (AT), and Mengzhi Zheng (FR born CN). Since TMH first opened its doors in a historical canal house in Amsterdam in 2013, it has become known as a modern take on the Dutch tradition of a merchant—a vibrant art space freely open to the public.

Browse through the gallery's upcoming events and exhibitions online here: www.merchanthouse.nl

For biographies of the artists, please visit: www.merchanthouse.nl/artists

For images of the works, please visit: www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/xctirggyixpfl0t2lou60/AJzf9hCT9QG7rrteBhGit_c?rlkey=wxjsocfxrlowc91xpjgd87t7t&st=hujusaj6&dl=0

The gallery is open on Fridays and Saturdays, 13:00-18:00, and by appointment via info@merchanthouse.nl

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