

POLYFILLA

"The fragment is not a mere part, broken off from the whole; it is a configuration in itself, a plenitude within the lack."

Theodor Adorno's Aesthetic Theory, Adorno, T.W. (1997)

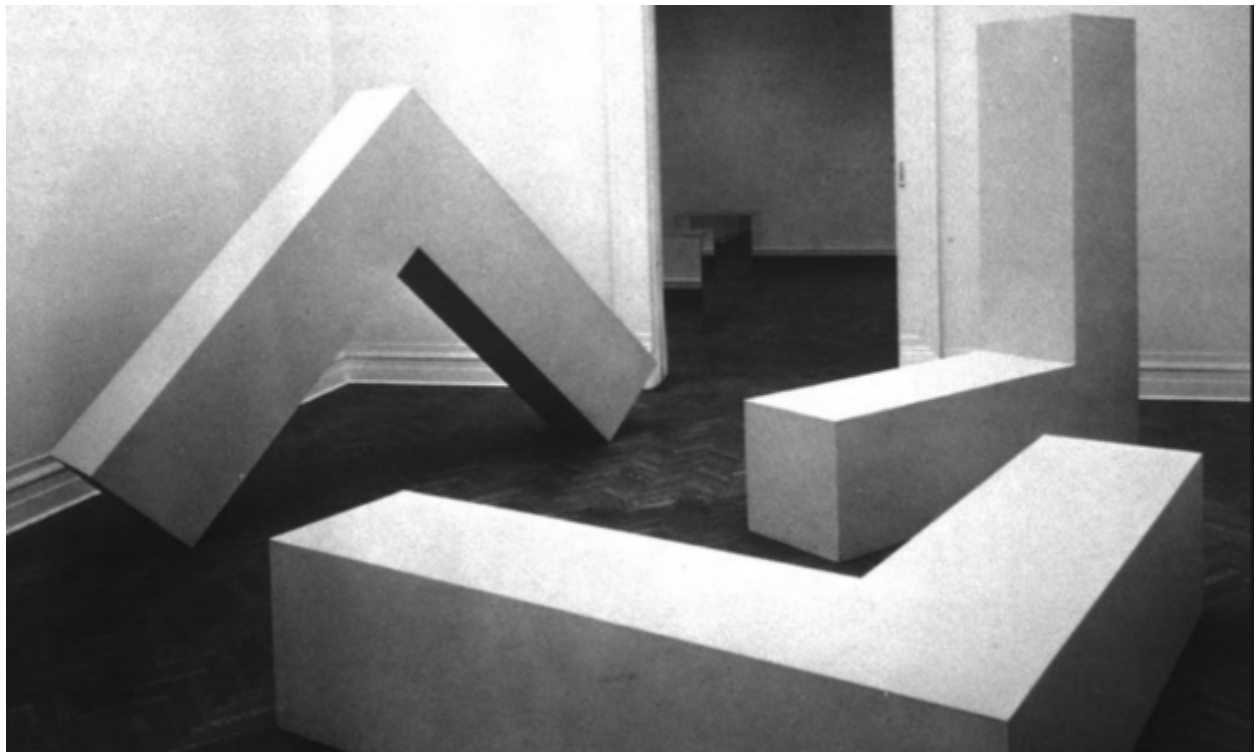
ISABELLA GREENWOOD

‘Polyfilla’, a ubiquitous brand of multipurpose filler, known for its role in construction and repair—filling cracks, smoothing surfaces, erasing imperfections—often marks the transitional moments of the architectural and galleristic space: between exhibitions, after the dismantling of installations, and the ritual erasure of what previously existed on the walls. In this exhibition, featuring multidisciplinary artists: Thomas Brewin, Jacob Sirkin, Tygar Miles Smith, Reinhard Agyekum, and Max Morey-Burrows, Polyfilla becomes a lens through which to interrogate the gallery space, the art object, and the tensions between preservation, rupture, and erasure.

Robert Morris' prolific fibreglass L-Beams (1965), were at first misperceived in their shapes and sizes, despite their identical dimensions. This perceptual dissonance directly challenged Modernism's emphasis on the internal syntax of the object—its self-contained, autonomous nature, where Morris foregrounded the external syntax: the theatricality of the object, its extension into its environment, and its relational existence within space. The works in *Polyfilla* similarly reject isolation, opting instead to negotiate their presence within the architecture of the gallery and the perception of the viewer.



These parallels underscore how the artists' practices navigate and complicate the boundaries between object, viewer, and space, revealing the inseparability of materiality and embodied experience. It suggests that every act of repair is inherently an act of transformation, not merely a restoration of what was but an evolution into something altered by the process.



Central to Polyfilla is an investigation of the archive: the archive of the artist's process, the archive of the gallery space, and the layered histories embedded within both. From Jacob Sirkin repurposing recycled materials from past works to create novel pieces merging old and new relics, to Max Morey-Burrows working with marks left organically on a canvas carried around in his bag, weathered by pens, aging, and a bottle of olive oil, to Thomas Brewin's sculptures, forged from reused materials taken from the walls of a past exhibition. Rather than covering over the fissures of the past, the works in this exhibition excavate them, exposing what lies within the walls, what came before them, and what resists erasure. Through this excavation, the exhibition rearranges the organs of the space, presenting them anew.

Does the gallery frame the artwork, or does the artwork transform the gallery? Polyfilla extends this enquiry to suggest a third possibility: a mutual infiltration, where walls and works become porous to one another. The show merges the architectural, the painterly, and the sculptural, exploring not where these disciplines intersect but where they become inseparable. Walls are no longer neutral backdrops but active participants in the artworks' narratives. In *Polyfilla*, the artists' study becomes inseparable from the artwork itself, from Tygar Miles Smith canvases containing traces of the original sketches, alongside Reinhard Agyekum, who contrasts his orderly, and intentional, striped paintings alongside the organic chaos of their adjoining colour palettes.





These interventions invite a reconsideration of the gallery as a “white cube”—a sterile container—and reframe it as a site of interaction where memory, and materiality, coexist, and the site of creative potential extends to before a show and has the potential to extend itself out.

Working with materials that resist smooth resolution: fragments of plaster, pigment, screws, staples, nails, timber, ply, and wire, works are forged from ephemeral residues, resisting the filler’s intended function of seamless repair. Instead, by repurposing rupture, they foreground the process of repair itself as an act of creation. The priority of *Polyfilla* is not merely presence, but absence: what has been intentionally excluded, and why. The viewer is left to question not what was removed, but what remains—an absence that operates not as a void,

but as a generative space of meaning. This act of negation destabilises the authority of the image, forging a new language of spatial contingency and negative materiality.





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Resisting the notion of completion, this exhibition suggests that every act of repair is also an act of transformation, and every surface, no matter how polished, retains the traces of its past. Polyfilla positions the gallery as a site of flux—a place where architectural, painterly, and sculptural forces converge, collide, and recombine. In doing so, it invites viewers to reconsider the thresholds between object and space, past and present, concealment and revelation.

