

Introduction

**An Alternative History of Photography:** Works from the Solander Collection,  
curated by Phillip Prodger

The history of photography is a vast collection of inter-connected stories, stretching from East Asia to West Africa, and from New Zealand to Uzbekistan. In recent decades, scholars have begun to broaden an understanding of the field to include practitioners working beyond the limits of Europe and North America, as well as works by neglected and lesser-known artists.

This exhibition integrates a range of work to suggest a fuller, richer and more dynamic version of photography's evolution. Challenging conventional histories, it reveals the medium to be a complex interplay of fine art, scientific, anthropological, documentary and amateur approaches.

Drawn from the Solander Collection named after the Solander box, the cloth-covered black box that museums use to store flat works, work by well-known photographers is presented alongside previously obscured practitioners.

The collection is not intended to be comprehensive of photography's histories. Ending around 1980, close viewers will notice many familiar names missing. Their absence does not mean we consider these figures unimportant. Instead, it has created a space for under-acknowledged practitioners to be experienced, studied and recognised.