

PUNK ROCK, record unemployment, urban uprisings, Margaret Thatcher, the Troubles in Northern Ireland: profound changes shook British society and inspired a revolution in photography in the 1970s and 1980s. A generation of young photographers used their cameras to comment on the deep unrest of these pivotal decades. With a keen eye for social critique and a spirit of rebellion, they photographed a country redefining what it meant to be British and, ultimately, modern.

Photography during this period became a central form of creative expression, fueled by a rapidly expanding network of galleries, museum departments, artists' collectives, schools, and magazines dedicated to the medium. Immigrants and artists of color, reflecting the nation's growing multiculturalism, introduced new perspectives, as did the many women who entered the field.

Moving from largely black-and-white, documentary styles toward more conceptual projects in color, photographers adopted new strategies to examine national identity. In the face of severe economic dislocation, widespread civil disorder, and Prime Minister Thatcher's controversial policies, these artists declared: *This is Britain*.

The exhibition is organized by
the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

All photographs on view in the exhibition are in the
collection of the National Gallery of Art.