FRANCOIS ROBERT - CONTENTS

'When I was thirteen my mother caught me taking a few coins from her visiting friend's purse. "François," she said, "a woman's handbag is more private than her body."

And so began the **intrigue**. In the seventies, working as a photographer, I started to **document** what I found in people's bags and pockets. Was it an excuse to undress the individual I had selected that day?

Over the decades I photographed what was inside the purses and pockets of dozens of my friends, acquaintances, and friends of friends. I'd invite them to my studio for "a special portrait," not disclosing my intention so as to maintain **spontaneity** and keep people from **editing** their belongings. The real challenge was to present my subjects' possessions **nonjudgmentally**, much like an archaeologist might catalogue artefacts, freezing in time what a person was carrying on a particular day in a particular year.

The result of this exploration is "Contents," a series of photographs I have tried to make both **objective** and revealing.'