

THE ROMA COAT

The most impressive element in a shanty or not shanty gypsy house is the pile of colourful blankets which is always in the centre of the room.

This pile stands like a supple sculpture. The suppleness is reinforced by the fact that the gypsy blanket is the girls' dowry. This is what a mother gives her daughter and it is a symbol of the family continuity.

During the day this sculpture stands motionless and at night it becomes the mattress on which they lie and the blanket that covers their bodies. It is an autonomous unit, a cell and a shell.

These blankets are the first object they take with them when they leave. Whether rich or poor they insist on sleeping on them.

This precious unit when transformed into a coat becomes the dwelling of the body. It changes identity from "extremely private" to "overtly public".

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