

Nikifor's Work at the Krynica Zdrój Museum as an Example of Twentieth-Century Lemko Naive Painting

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Nikifor's Work at the Krynica Zdrój Museum as an Example of Twentieth-Century Lemko Naive Painting
This article analyses the activities of the memorial museum of the self-taught artist Nikifor Krynica, whose real name is Epifaniusz Drowniak. The museum's uniqueness lies in its location in a historic wooden villa called Romanówka, which lends the museum an authentic atmosphere.

The importance of Nikifor's paintings lies not in the mastery of techniques or colour, but in their authenticity to the lands of his native Lemko region. On the other hand, his sketches and watercolours provide insight into everyday life and society at different times; they depict real architectural objects, some of which have not survived. In this case, the artist's paintings become an important cultural, historical, and restorative source of information.

Keywords: Nikifor Krynicki, Krynica Zdrój, Lemko culture, self-taught artist, naive painting.

Introduction

The twentieth century is associated with the multiplicity of styles in both architecture and art, in contrast to previous centuries. The twentieth century was a time of development and popularisation of folk art and so-called naive painting, which came to reach a wide audience. One of the outstanding artists of the naive painting style was Nikifor Krynicki.

Nikifor was a member of the Lemko ethnic group, who mainly inhabit an area across today's Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia. The research presented in this article aims to expand knowledge about the artist's work, analyse his creative approach, both in graphic art and watercolour; and

examine the foundations of the exhibition at the Nikifor Museum in Krynica Zdrój.

The research objectives included:

- analysing the influence of external factors and his living conditions on the formation and development of his artistic style;
- examining the various thematic directions of his work (landscapes of his native places, churches, buildings, self-portraits, scenes from life);
- analysing the techniques used to create his works; and
- examining the organisational foundations of the Nikifor Museum exhibition and its importance in expanding the Lemko folk art.

To meet these objectives, a list of sources was prepared according to the following directions: works concerned with the general question of art in general and naive art in particular;¹

works devoted to the study of Nikifor Krynicki's biography;²

3) publications dedicated to the study of Nikifor's work;³ and

4) publications about the Nikifor Museum.⁴

Materials and methods

The study applied methods of historical analysis, cultural analysis, art history analysis, comparative analysis and photo fixation, as well as interviews of specialists and researchers of Nikifor's work and field surveys.

Through this combination of methods, it was possible to identify specific aspects of the Nikifor Krynick's creative style, analyse his creative output over the years, and establish what exactly constituted the "Nikifor phenomenon" and his sudden recognition in the world.

¹ BIHALJI-MERIN, Oto. *Masters of Naive Art: A History and Worldwide Survey*. Russell M. Stockman, trans. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971; BIHALJI-MERIN, Oto. *Das naive Bild der Welt*. Cologne: M. DuMont, 1959, pp. 146–147; BIHALJI-MERIN, Oto, TOMASEVIC, Nebojsa-Bato. *World Encyclopedia of Naive Art: a hundred years of naive art*. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1984, pp. 453–454; GRYGLEWSKI, Piotr, IVASHKO, Yulia, CHERNYSHEV, Denis, CHANG, Peng, DMYTRENKO, Andrii. Art as a message realized through various means of artistic expression. In: *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les arts*, 2020, XXII, pp. 57–88; PETULLO, Anthony. *Self-taught and Outsider Art: The Anthony Petullo Collection*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

² BANACH, Andrzej. *Nikifor*. Warszawa: Arkady, 1984; BANACH, Andrzej, BANACH, Ella. *Historia o Nikiforze*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004; LESYTCH, Wadym. *Nykyfor z Krynyci*. [Nikifor of Krynica]. München: Sučasnist, 1971. [In Ukrainian]; JACKOWSKI, Aleksandr. Notatki o Nikiforze. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1985, 3-4, pp. 227-236; BANACH, Andrzej. *Nikifor Mistrz z Krynicy*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957; BANACH, Andrzej. *Pamiętka z Krynicy*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1959; BANACH, Andrzej. *Nikifor*. Warszawa: Arkady, 1984; MAJKOWSKA-SZAJER, Dorota. *Legenda o Nikiforze, 2021*, <https://www.muzea.malopolska.pl/en/articles/1276>; MONROE, Gary. The Artist Formally Known as Nikifor. In: *Raw Vision*, 2008, 62, pp. 44–47; PLUTA, Władysław. *Nikifor*. Olszanica: Bosz Publishing House, 2008; SLABOSHPYTSKYI, Mykhailo. Nykyfor iz Krynyci [Nikifor of Krynica]. In: *Nauka i kultura*, 1990, 24, pp. 324–335. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZYRBUŁA, Maciej. Jeszcze o Nikiforze. Fakty, domysły o legendy. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1990, 1, pp. 37–48; WISŁOCKI, Seweryn (1985). Przyczynek do biografii Nikifora Drowniaka, nazwanego "Krynickim". In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1985, 3–4, pp. 219–226; WOLANIN, Zbigniew. *Nikifor*. Olszanica: Wydawnictwo BoSz, 2000.

³ *From the Salzman Collection – Nikifor*, <https://psymet.com/Salzman/SalzmanCollection/Nikifor/index.html>; MADEYSKI, Jerzy. *Nikifor Krynicki: 12 reprodukcji*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo artystyczno-graficzne, 1970; SYDOR, Oleh. Nykyfor-Epyfanii Drowniak: vidkryttia i vidkryvachi [Nikifor-Epiphany Drowniak: discoveries and discoverers]. In: *Pamiętka Ukrainy*, 1985, 110, pp. 159-161. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZEPANEK, Tadeusz. Z badań nad twórczością Nikifora. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1974, 4, pp. 221–242; WOLF, Jerzy. Malarze naiwnego realizmu w Polsce. Nikifor. In: *Arkady*, 1938, 3, pp. 24-30.

⁴ *Muzeum Nikifora*, <https://muzeum.sacz.pl/oddzialy/muzeum-nikifora>; Muzeum Ziemi Sądeckiej. *Przewodnik po Muzeum Nikifora w Krynicy*. Nowy Sącz: Muzeum Ziemi Sądeckiej, 2024.

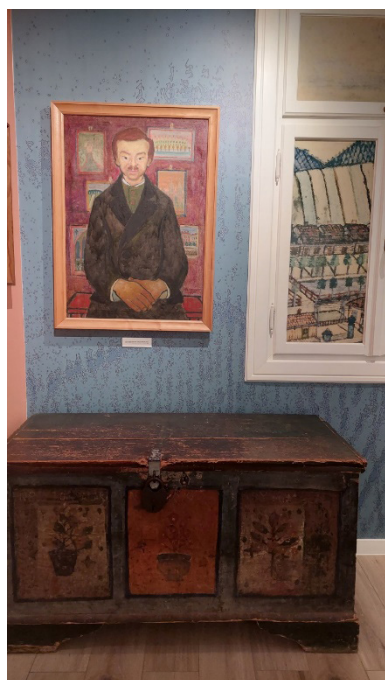


Fig. 1: *Portrait of Nikifor. Artist: Maria Damska, 1950. The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj.*
Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025.

Analysing the influence of external factors and the conditions of his life on the formation and development of Nikifor's authorial style

Nikifor's artistic style was shaped by his personal history⁵ and the circumstances of his life work.⁶ In conducting this study, we focused not only the artistic but also the psychological phenomenon of the self-taught artist. Born with hearing and speech impairments and suffering from poverty for most of his life, Nikifor created his idealised world in art. In this world, unlike the real world, Nikifor held a prominent place.

The artist was born as Epifanius Drowniak on 21 May 1895 in Krynica; he died on 10 October 1968 in Folsz.

A large number of his self-portraits – where he portrays himself as an elegant artist, a soldier, an official, even a clergyman – played the role of a compensatory reaction to what he did not receive in real life. We emphasise this human, psychological aspect of his work because it is the only way to explain his desire to depict himself as an ideal person. It helps us understand why, in all his paintings, his figure is larger than that of others.

The curiosity surrounding Nikifor's work stems from the mysterious and unusual nature of his character (Fig. 1). For a long time, it was impossible to determine the artist's

real name. Later, it was discovered that his mother's birth name was Jewdokia Drowniak. To this day, however, the origins of the surname Nikifor remain unknown. It is also unclear why he sometimes signed his paintings as Nikifor-Matejko.

We know little about Nikifor's family. The father's identity is unknown, and only his mother's diminutive name, Odocha, is known. Nikifor's private photo album contains only one photo of his mother. It is known that she was a poor, homeless peasant woman from the Lemko village of Krynica, and that it is from her that he inherited his hearing and speech impediments.

⁵ BANACH, Andrzej. *Nikifor*. Warszawa: Arkady, 1984; BANACH, Andrzej, BANACH, Ella. *Historia o Nikiforze*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004; LESYTCH, Wadym. *Nykyfor z Krynyci*. [Nikifor of Krynica]. München: Sučasnist, 1971. [In Ukrainian]; JACKOWSKI, Aleksandr. Notatki o Nikiforze. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1985, 3-4, pp. 227-236; BANACH, Andrzej. *Nikifor Mistrz z Krynicy*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957; BANACH, Andrzej. *Pamiętka z Krynicy*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1959; BANACH, Andrzej. *Nikifor*. Warszawa: Arkady, 1984; SLABOSHYPYTSKYI, Mykhailo. Nykyfor iz Krynyci [Nikifor of Krynica]. In: *Nauka i kultura*, 1990, 24, pp. 324-335. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZYRBUŁA, Maciej. Jeszcze o Nikiforze. Fakty, domysły o legendy. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1990, 1, pp. 37-48; WISŁOCKI, Seweryn (1985). Przyczynek do biografii Nikifora Drowniaka, nazwanego "Krynickim". In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1985, 3-4, pp. 219-226; WOLANIN, Zbigniew. *Nikifor*. Olszanica: Wydawnictwo BoSz, 2000.

⁶ *From the Salzman Collection – Nikifor*, 2025, <https://psymet.com/Salzman/SalzmanCollection/Nikifor/index.html>; MADEYSKI, Jerzy. *Nikifor Krynicki: 12 reprodukcji*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo artystyczno-graficzne, 1970; SYDOR, Oleh. Nykyfor-Epyfani Drowniak: vidkryttia i vidkryvachi [Nikifor-Epiphany Drowniak: discoveries and discoverers]. In: *Pamiętka Ukrainy*, 1985, 110, pp. 159-161. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZEPANEK, Tadeusz. Z badań nad twórczością Nikifora. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1974, 4, pp. 221-242; WOLF, Jerzy. Malarze naiwnego realizmu w Polsce. Nikifor. In: *Arkady*, 1938, 3, pp. 24-30.

These disabilities contributed to his problems at school, as his writing was incomprehensible and riddled with errors. However, from a young age, he considered his artistic work a mission and considered himself a professional artist. Nikifor had strong ties to Krynica, where he painted most of his paintings. However, among his paintings, one can also see landscapes of other nearby places and drawings from his travels.

Traditionally, Nikifor would sit in front of the Old Spa House or near the entrance to the New Mineral Baths with his portable workshop that packed into a wooden suitcase. From there, he offered his paintings, drawings and watercolours for sale to guests at the spa. However, his drawings remained of little interest to the public until the 1930s (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: *Graphic sketches, 1920s. The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj.* Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025.

His talent was spotted by Roman Turyn, a renowned Lviv artist who was the first to collect Nikifor's paintings and exhibited his work in Paris as early as 1932. The second phase of promoting Nikifor's work continued after the end of World War II, with exhibitions, press coverage, books and films, which led to him being a well-known artist in Poland by the 1950s. A 1959 exhibition in Paris was crucial for Nikifor's international fame. The most important exhibition of Nikifor's work in Poland took place in Warsaw in 1967. Nikifor died in 1968, and his fame began to spread shortly before his death. At that time, he became an honorary member of the Association of Polish Visual Artists. However, despite already being a famous man, he did not change his lifestyle until his death.

The thematic directions of Nikifor's work

The main thematic areas of Nikifor's work are self-portraits in various perspectives (Fig. 3), social and religious scenes from everyday life, real and fantastic landscapes, images of saints, churches (including Orthodox ones) and civil buildings.⁷

Nikifor's self-portraits offer insight into how the artist imagined himself. In a watercolour

⁷ MADEYSKI, Jerzy. *Nikifor Krynicki: 12 reprodukcji*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo artystyczno-graficzne, 1970; SYDOR, Oleh. Nykyfor-Epyfanii Drovniak: vidkryttia i vidkryvachi [Nikifor-Epiphany Drovniak: discoveries and discoverers]. In: *Pamiętki Ukrainy*, 1985, 110, pp. 159-161. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZEPANEK, Tadeusz. Z badań nad twórczością Nikifora. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1974, 4, pp. 221-242; WOLF, Jerzy. Malarze naiwnego realizmu w Polsce. Nikifor. In: *Arkady*, 1938, 3, pp. 24-30.

self-portrait (1930–35) (Fig. 3), we see an elegant young man – an artist with art materials, a top hat, a suit, a bow tie, and pince-nez. Another of his paintings from the 1930s and 1940s depicts a man in a suit with a bow tie in front of an easel with a self-portrait. One of his earlier self-portraits from 1925–30 depicts him under an umbrella. The artist’s self-portrait in front of an Easter table, which depicts various dishes he had never experienced in his life, dates back to the same years (Fig. 4). Another important self-portrait is *Under an Umbrella with a Flag*, which dates from the 1940s and reveals hidden traits of the artist’s personality at different stages of his life.



Fig. 3: *Self-portrait 1930–1935.* The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj. Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025.

Fig. 4: *Triple self-portrait 1920–1925.* The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj. Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025.



However, gradually, the artist paid more attention to the background behind him. From the 1930s onward, we see Nikifor’s attention drawn to depicting architectural objects and landscapes with architecture. He draws realistically churches and civil buildings in foreshortened perspective, sometimes adding fantastical details to the architecture.

A significant part of Nikifor’s artistic output is his pencil sketches of wooden Lemko churches from the Sącz region. These sketches date from the 1920s and depict churches in Krynica, Łabowa, Tylicz, Mochnaczka, Jastrzębnik, Żegiestów, Wojkowa, Powroźnik and Złockie.

The original sketches were drawn on two sides of paper. Only seven remain, and it is unknown how many there actually were. Among his artistic achievements are many watercolour works, and during his stays in hospitals and sanatoria, he drew with crayons.

Artistic techniques

Most of Nikifor's paintings are watercolours executed with inexpensive paints (Fig. 5).⁸



Fig. 5: Watercolours, from left to right: *City Architecture – A Town Hall, 1950–60s*; *Krynica Spa house, 1930–40s*; *The Circus, 1950s*. The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj. Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025,

Works from the 1920s and 1930s were drawn in pencil, while those from the 1960s were executed in crayon. Nikifor did not have the money to buy expensive drawing paper, so he drew on whatever paper or cardboard he could find. These could be old school notebooks, posters, wrapping paper or even cigarette boxes. Because paper was scarce, he sometimes drew on both sides – for example, pencil sketches.

Analysing works from his early to later years, it can be seen how his approach to drawing in foreshortened perspective developed. His earlier works tended more towards a flat surface, gradually moving towards three-dimensionality. This is most evident in his drawings of architectural objects.

It can be seen that foreshortening gradually became one of the most important features of Nikifor's work in scenes from life and paintings of buildings.

Another characteristic of his work is his polychrome. Most of his paintings are dominated by a cool colour palette, with a focus on blue and ultramarine, with red or orange a rarity. Often, the coloured spots are emphasised with thick lines. The paintings are mostly dark in colour, the exceptions being his later works, created in crayon in the 1960s, which include portraits of saints and a few portraits of his friends.

The Nikifor Museum exhibition and its importance for the Lemko folk art school

The Nikifor Memorial Museum was established as a branch of the Nowy Sącz museum in 1995.⁹ It is located in the historic villa Romanówka, which was built in 1850 and served as a guesthouse. After World War II, it housed apartments and an artist's studio. However, from the

⁸ SYDOR, Oleh. Nykyfor-Epyfanii Drovniak: vidkryttia i vidkryvachi [Nikifor-Epiphany Drovniak: discoveries and discoverers]. In: *Pamiatky Ukrainy*, 1985, 110, pp. 159-161. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZEPANEK, Tadeusz. Z badań nad twórczością Nikifora. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1974, 4, pp. 221–242; WOLF, Jerzy. Malarze naiwnego realizmu w Polsce. Nikifor. In: *Arkady*, 1938, 3, pp. 24–30.

⁹ *Muzeum Nikifora*, <https://muzeum.sacz.pl/oddzialy/muzeum-nikifora>; Muzeum Ziemi Sądeckiej. *Przewodnik po Muzeum Nikifora w Krynicy*. Nowy Sącz: Muzeum Ziemi Sądeckiej, 2024.

late 1980s until 1992, the house stood empty. Over two years, Romanówka was dismantled and its components underwent conservation. After the conservation work, it was rebuilt on the site of the former Litwinka villa on Dietla Boulevard.

From the beginning, the museum was organised as a memorial, showcasing not only Nikifor's artwork, photographs, and art promotion section, but also his personal belongings (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6: *Nikifor's clothes. Room I at The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj.* Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025.

The idea of organising a museum for the artist emerged during his lifetime, in the 1960s, during his lifetime, with the idea to purchase a home him (he had not owned such a thing in his life) and to establish a studio and gallery there. The idea of a museum dedicated to the artist was raised again after he died in 1968

After Nikifor's death, the Nowy Sącz Museum took charge of organising such a museum. Since he had no family or heirs, many of the artist's works and personal belongings were transferred to the museum by court order. However, the creation of a Nikifor Memorial Museum took much longer due to a lack of funding. Romanówka villa, one of the oldest guesthouses in Krynica, was chosen. The original plan was to move it to the Nowy Sącz open-air museum. The land for the villa was donated by the Krynica Commune Office. The villa itself had belonged to the Nowy Sącz Museum since 1990. Establishing the Nikifor Museum in a historic villa was offered both a showcase for the artist's work and life in an authentic setting and a way to give the historic villa a second life.

The exhibition was organised in four rooms.

Room I. A presentation of selected posters, portraits, and the artist's personal belongings.

Room II. The exhibition's documentary section.

Room III. A room displaying drawings in pencil and crayon, as well as two works of artistic documentary nature: Nikifor's Sketchbook and Prayer Book.

Room IV. Paintings.

Room V. Changing exhibitions.

Room I includes posters for Nikifor's exhibitions, including those from Warsaw (1949 and 1967) and Paris (1959). Portraits of Nikifor by other artists are also on display. A unique aspect of this museum is the exhibition of the artist's few personal belongings, including his coat and hat (Fig. 6), and an old Lemko folk chest with floral ornamentation in which he stored his paintings – and sometimes slept when he was homeless.

Room II presents photographs related to Nikifor's life and exhibition posters (Fig. 7). Most of the photographs from earlier years were taken by photographers from Krynica. Nikifor is often photographed at work in his painting studio. This room contains the only photograph of his mother. It presents not only the artist himself but also photographs of him in conversation

with other prominent artists, curators and representatives of Lemko culture. Nikifor's portable art studio is also on display, with his box of school watercolours and crayons, pencils and brushes, paint cassettes and scraps of paper, as well as his watches, glasses and the stamps



Fig. 7: Photos of Nikifor from different years and a film about the artist. Room II at The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj. Photo by Y. Ivashko, 2025.

he used to mark his works. A significant element of the exhibition in Room II is his reproductions of sketches by Roman Turyn from the 1930s.

Room III presents Nikifor's early graphic works, as well as works in pencil and crayon. It is worth noting that before painting with watercolours, he made all his drawings in pencil and then painted them. There are also fourteen sketches on seven double-sided sheets of paper which for some reason were not painted with watercolour. It is believed that it was the artist's intention to leave them in this form. One theory for this is that he could not paint while travelling through the Lemko region by train. These sketches were originally made on small pieces of paper and spread over two pages. To display them in the exhibition, copies of each page were made and enlarged. These crayon works date from the artist's final years, when he was undergoing treatment in hospitals and sanatoria.

A prominent feature of the exhibition in Room III is Nikifor's devotional prayer book. This small booklet has 86 pages with pencil drawings related to biblical themes drawn by the young artist in the 1920s. The contents of this prayer book are presented to visitors on interactive screens placed beneath the book itself. Room III also includes a corridor, the walls of which are

decorated with enlarged photographs depicting Nikifor in the 1950s and 1960s and showing him with prominent figures.

Room IV presents Nikifor's colourful works in watercolour and crayon. It is thought that he may have painted and drawn tens of thousands of paintings during his lifetime. However, it is unknown how many of his drawings were destroyed during the period when his work was underappreciated. As already noted, Nikifor's artistic achievements can be organised into several artistic cycles. However, a problem arises with the period of creation of many of the works, as drawings from a single thematic cycle could have been drawn anywhere between 1920 and 1930.

We want to emphasise the importance of these drawings not only as appreciated works of naive art but also as a source of information for sociological, ethnographic and architectural research.¹⁰ Nikifor's drawings depict military scenes, scenes of worship, scenes of everyday life, and landscapes with buildings that he visited at various times. One aspect of the significance of Nikifor's works for ethnographic research is the meticulous detail included of military, civilian, and clergy outfits of the period.

His images also form an important source for conservators, as he depicts the facades and interiors of important buildings, providing, to some extent, a basis for restoration to their original appearance. His drawings depicting Krynica's former historic villas. In such cases, archival photographs and drawings of the villas that were destroyed by fire may be the only source of information about them.

Another significant part of Nikifor's oeuvre is his sketches and watercolours of former Lemko Orthodox churches, detailing their distinctive features. His drawings and watercolours of wooden churches represent a source of information about their original appearance and the changes and reconstructions made to these structures. This is especially important since wooden churches often burned down in fires and were replaced by new ones. Thanks to Nikifor's drawings, art historians and conservators can analyse the specific features of Christian wooden architecture from the turn of the twentieth century.

Room IV also features Nikifor's remarkable Triple Self-Portrait (Fig. 3), as well as his photographs of it. Painted in the 1920s, it is his largest self-portrait. As noted earlier, Nikifor enjoyed imagining himself as both realistic and fantastical figures. To this day, the identity of the two other smaller figures standing at Nikifor's sides remains unknown – they may be friends of his or they may be self-portraits.

Because Nikifor lacked the financial means to purchase materials, he used cheap paints. As a result, a special lighting system is used in Room IV to protect the pigments. A few of the artist's personal belongings – such as a wooden box, a paint case, a highlander's walking stick, flat caps and other hats – add to the authenticity of this room.

Room V presents changing exhibitions by contemporary artists in the fields of folk and naive art. In this way, the museum fulfils Nikifor's dream of creating a gallery.

Conclusions

The Nikifor Memorial Museum is a major tourist attraction in Krynica, showcasing not only the work of this outstanding artist but also recreating the atmosphere of this prominent artist's life through his clothes, watercolours, photos of his friends and old photos of Krynica.¹¹ The museum is unique due to the ideosyncratic and enigmatic nature of Nikifor himself. The exhibitions are designed to showcase the diverse aspects of the self-taught artist's life. These include not only drawings and watercolors from different periods, but also various

¹⁰ MADEYSKI, Jerzy. *Nikifor Krynicki: 12 reprodukcji*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo artystyczno-graficzne, 1970; SYDOR, Oleh. Nykyfor-Epyfani Drovniak: vidkryttia i vidkryvachi [Nikifor-Epiphany Drovniak: discoveries and discoverers]. In: *Pamięty Ukrainy*, 1985, 110, pp. 159-161. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZEPANEK, Tadeusz. Z badań nad twórczością Nikifora. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1974, 4, pp. 221-242; WOLF, Jerzy. Malarze naiwnego realizmu w Polsce. Nikifor. In: *Arkady*, 1938, 3, pp. 24-30.

¹¹ MADEYSKI, Jerzy. *Nikifor Krynicki: 12 reprodukcji*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo artystyczno-graficzne, 1970; SYDOR, Oleh. Nykyfor-Epyfani Drovniak: vidkryttia i vidkryvachi [Nikifor-Epiphany Drovniak: discoveries and discoverers]. In: *Pamięty Ukrainy*, 1985, 110, pp. 159-161. [In Ukrainian]; SZCZEPANEK, Tadeusz. Z badań nad twórczością Nikifora. In: *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, 1974, 4, pp. 221-242; WOLF, Jerzy. Malarze naiwnego realizmu w Polsce. Nikifor. In: *Arkady*, 1938, 3, pp. 24-30.

accompanying photographs, posters, and a documentary film about Nikifor, all of which create an authentic atmosphere.

Nikifor (Fig. 8) was a self-taught artist who was unknown for half of his life until fame found him. The twentieth century was a period of many experiments with creative styles, among which naive painting occupied an important place.

The importance of Nikifor's paintings lies not in the mastery of techniques, not in the use of colour, but in their authenticity to the lands of his native Lemko region. His sketches and watercolors provide an insight into everyday life and society at different times. They depict



Fig. 8: *Photograph of Nikifor. The Nikifor Memorial Museum in Krynica Zdroj.*

real architectural objects, some of which have not survived, making his works an important source of cultural and historical information, and an invaluable resource for architectural restoration.

In this sense, his drawings can be compared to the handwritten illustrated albums of De la Flisé, who depicted the everyday life of the inhabitants of the Kyiv province and the landscapes of cities and villages.

Nikifor's work should be considered in the context of Polish naive painting as a whole. Other representatives of naive painting include Teofil Ociepka (an important representative of Silesian primitivism), Grupa Janowska, Władysław Rybkowski, Julian Bajkiewicz, Bazyli Albiczuk, Maria Korsak and Władysław Walczak-Baniecki. Large collections of works by Silesian primitivists can be found in Muzeum Śląskie in Katowice.

Nikifor lived in the same period as Teofil Ociepka (1891–1978), but the two artists chose different approaches to creativity. Nikifor's approach was exclusively individual, while Teofil

Ociepka combined individual creativity with collaboration within the artistic Grupa Janowska in Silesia. Despite the fact that both artists – Nikifor Krynicky and Teofil Ociepka – are excellent representatives of naive painting, they demonstrate fundamentally different authorial styles: Nikifor shows the world through the author's perception, while Teofil Ociepka's paintings are profoundly connected with Polish folklore and have a fabulous, mythological character.

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