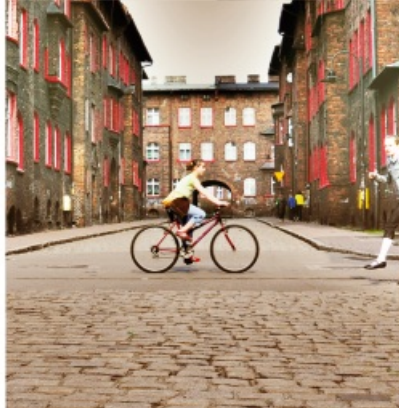
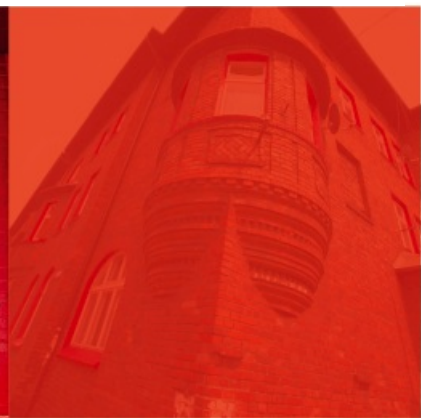




KATOWICE
for a change



NIKISZOWIEC
GISZOWIEC



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In 2011, thanks to the efforts of the Mayor of Katowice, the historic Nikiszowiec estate was included on the list of Historical Monuments. Such status is awarded to monuments of special historical value and of large significance to the cultural heritage of Poland. It is a unique distinction for there are only 48 such objects in the entire country. Two of them are in Katowice – Nikiszowiec and also the building of the Silesian Parliament.

Unique architecture for (un)usual people

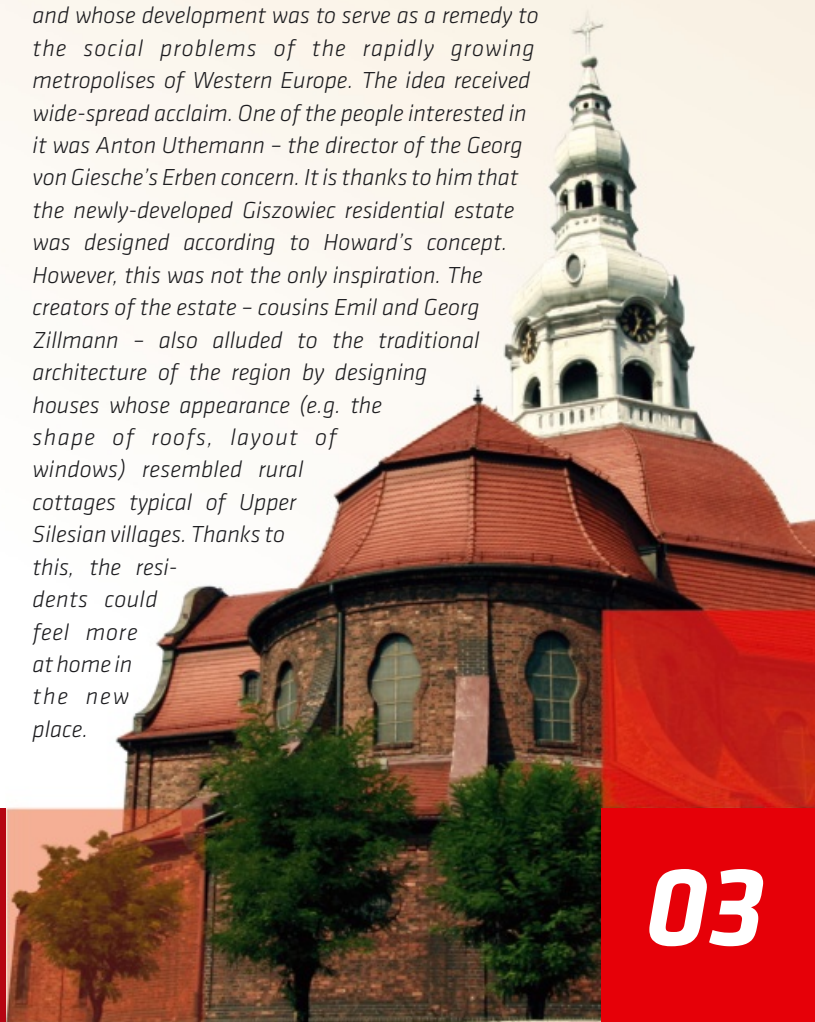
There are approximately two hundred patronage estates in the entire Silesian Province, developed by industrial plants for their employees. However, only a few of them represent such a high standard, refined architecture and scale of urban solutions as the Katowice district of Nikiszowiec. Its designers, Emil and Georg Zillmann, created an almost self-sufficient city which, apart from residential buildings, also comprised a church, hospital, preschool, schools, stores, an inn, and even an electric laundry and dry cleaner's and a photography studio. Inhabitants of comfortable, spacious apartments could enjoy all the civilizational achievements of those times such as electricity, running water or sewage systems, and some of the buildings even had central heating installed. Nikiszowiec was lucky to survive the turbulent 20th century without any larger damage, thanks to which nowadays we can admire its original development in an almost unchanged state.

The interesting architecture is matched by interesting people – it is the residents of the district that make for its unforgettable atmosphere! Until this day, Nikiszowiec has remained a place where you can hear the Silesian dialect spoken in the streets. Many people have been living here for generations, while work in the nearby mine still sets the pace of life for many families. A visit to the Niesporek's photo studio, which has been in

the family since 1919, is enough to hear an interesting anecdote or two about the colorful past of the estate. Nikiszowiec is the best place to learn about the atmosphere of the old Silesia.

From an Upper Silesian village to a garden city

In 1902, English urban planner Ebenezer Howard published a book titled "Garden Cities of Tomorrow", presenting the concept of suburban estates which were rationally designed, filled with greenery and resident-friendly and whose development was to serve as a remedy to the social problems of the rapidly growing metropolises of Western Europe. The idea received wide-spread acclaim. One of the people interested in it was Anton Uthemann – the director of the Georg von Giesche's Erben concern. It is thanks to him that the newly-developed Giszowiec residential estate was designed according to Howard's concept. However, this was not the only inspiration. The creators of the estate – cousins Emil and Georg Zillmann – also alluded to the traditional architecture of the region by designing houses whose appearance (e.g. the shape of roofs, layout of windows) resembled rural cottages typical of Upper Silesian villages. Thanks to this, the residents could feel more at home in the new place.



Beginnings

The area of today's Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec used to belong to the Janów municipality and was covered with vast forests. After the discovery of rich coal beds in the 19th century, the Georg von Giesche's Erben concern began to gradually buy out the mining fields located here, and started the process of extraction in subsequent shafts. The largest investment included deepening the Carmer shaft at the beginning of the 20th century. This necessitated attracting a large number of new employees and providing them with decent living conditions.

Giszowiec came first. Originally the plan involved the erection of several-storey buildings. However, this would entail applying considerably more expensive technologies for construction and especially for the extraction of coal, whose beds were located directly under the estate. For this reason, it was finally decided that low-rise buildings, mostly one or two storeys high, would be erected. A larger, municipal-type residential estate was built between the Nikisch and Carmer shafts. The first one gave its name to the entire estate.

Two young architects from Charlottenburg near Berlin were employed – Emil and Georg Zillmann. This was a rarity in itself. Generally, houses for the workers were erected based on a design prepared by the mine's construction office which was not signed by any

architect. The Zillmanns were presented with an ambitious task. The act of the Prussian parliament regulating issues regarding the construction of new housing estates was already binding at that time. It imposed certain construction, sanitary and social standards (e.g. the necessity to fit the estate with a sewage system) on investors. The assumptions of the Giesche concern largely exceeded the act requirements, which resulted in erecting developments characterized by architecture of unique quality, offering then a very high standard of living to their residents. This could be seen as a form of investment made by the concern in its staff, as well as a sign of very progressive approach to human resources.

"The Black Garden" (Czarny Ogród) by Małgorzata Szejnert is an impressive book which describes the history of the Giesche company, the complicated fates of Silesia and Silesians, and especially of Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec based on the example of a few selected families. From the book we learn that in 1923 "Giszowiec wins the Polish championship title in water polo. This is the result of the work on the part of the players but also of the Hungarian "szwimtrener" (swimming coach) Rajka, employed by the Giesche mine with a salary of one thousand zloty per month. The matches at Małgorzata Pond attract such crowds that one day the piers go under water with a splash. All the fans know how to swim, so nobody drowns." (M. Szejnert, Czarny Ogród, Kraków 2007, p. 205)

Giszowiec was built between 1906 – 1910. Houses for 600 worker families and 36 clerical families, as well as 5 night shelter houses for single workers were constructed. All the buildings were fitted with electrical installations and water was drawn from pumps

situated along the streets every 100 m. Miners had at their disposal quite large house gardens. Stores, 3 schools, an inn, a theater hall, as well as the forestry headquarters were placed around a centrally located Pod Lipami square.

Nikiszowiec was developed some time later. Works commenced in 1908 and the majority of residential buildings were finished by 1915. Further works were temporarily stopped during World War I and the uprisings which followed. The second stage of construction took place between 1920 – 1924. Nikiszowiec was designed as a much larger estate comprising 9 quarters of a dense, mostly three-storey building development. All the apartments were electrified, with sewage systems, and had access to running water. Apart from the residential buildings, an inn, post office, bath house, laundry and dry-cleaner's with a mangle room, as well as administrative buildings were also constructed. Moreover, provisions were made for the youngest inhabitants of the district – a pre-school was opened, run by St. Hedwig Sisters, as well as two schools – for male and female students. The Sisters

also took care of the sick in the barracks for the contagiously ill, located just outside the dense development. A church was erected near the centrally located square, while stores were lined in its arcades running along the eastern frontages.

The grand church of St. Anne, with a capacity for 4 thousand members of congregation (almost the entire population of Nikiszowiec), was the last building erected according to the Zillmanns' design. It was consecrated in 1927. The Neo-Baroque structure with a dome roof crowning visible from afar prides itself on rich original interior. Its most precious objects include a 75-voice organ by Reiger from Karniów, stained glass windows from the atelier of Georg Schneider of Ratisbone and a beautiful chandelier with a diameter of 4.5 m.

Noteworthy investments from the interwar period include an impressive town hall – the Janów municipality office building located nearby the Nikisch shaft (renamed “Poniatowski” in independent Poland). This up-to-date building in modernist style was designed by Tadeusz Michejda, an eminent architect from Katowice. His other works in the city are also worth visiting – we recommend taking a walk along the recently created Modernism Trail (Szlak Moderny). ► moderna.katowice.eu

The details of a seemingly uniform brick estate impress and draw one's attention to the red face brick, as each of the entries to stairways and gates, the jutting and window framing has its unique design. The original character of this place is created also by the window cavities coated with red paint, which is the color of the mining state.



An express journey from Giszowiec to the Balkans

One of the conveniences for the inhabitants of both estates was a narrow-gauge railway connecting Giszowiec with Nikiszowiec and the nearby district of Szopienice. The train also stopped at the Carmer (later renamed Pułaski), Nikisch (Poniatowski) and Richtchofen (Wilson) shafts. Put into operation in 1914, the railway soon began to be humorously called the “Balkan Express”, in allusion to the luxury train connection between Berlin and Constantinople launched around that time. The railway provided free transportation for employees and their families 23 times a day on working days and 19 times per day on Sundays and holidays. The route was less than 4 km long. Unfortunately, in 1977 the railway stopped operating and a few years later, due to the construction of two new communication arteries crossing Balkan’s route, the rails were completely disassembled. Only a short fragment was left in front of the Pułaski shaft of the Wieczorek mine, where even today visitors can see two preserved cars.

Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec witnessed the hard and turbulent history of Upper Silesia in the first half of the 20th century. During both wars the whole industry became a cog in the machine of war and many miners were drafted into the army. Their place had to be filled by increasingly younger boys as well as war prisoners brought in especially for this purpose. During World War I German soldiers transported from the eastern front were hospitalized in Nikiszowiec, which led to an outbreak of a typhoid epidemic. The Silesian Uprisings and the plebiscite were difficult periods of time for the residents. During the 1st and 2nd uprising residents of both estates, predominantly Poles, took up arms fighting against paramilitary Freikorps organizations. They managed to succeed temporarily and for a few days Nikiszowiec was controlled by the insurgents. Ultimately, these areas were incorporated into Poland, which meant the outflow of a large percentage of German residents.



Miner’s Day – a unique opportunity to learn that mining traditions are still cultivated here – each year, early morning on December 4 residents of Nikiszowiec are awoken by the march of a mining orchestra. Other events include a ceremonial mass at St. Anne’s church and an evening beer feast – restricted, however, only to miners.

Fair in Nikisz – usually on the weekend following Miner’s Day; it combines celebrations of the miners’ holiday with a traditional Christmas fair.

St. Anne’s fair (July 26 or the Sunday closest to that date) – apart from a religious ceremony at the parish church, a fair is organized at the Wyzwolenia square, with performances by regional Silesian bands, stands with traditional products and Silesian delicacies, as well as with numerous attractions for children.



The American episode

When all Polish plants of the former Giesche concern were purchased by the Silesian – American Corporation in 1926, new residents started arriving in Giszowiec – this time from across the ocean. A small clerical settlement, the so called “American colony”, was erected especially for them in the southern part of the residential estate (near the current Górniczego Stanu street). It consisted of impressive modernist villas with historicizing elements, very clearly alluding to Anglo-Saxon architecture. A vast golf course was created close to the settlement – the first one in Upper Silesia. The oldest residents of Giszowiec still recall how they used to earn extra pocket money retrieving balls for the players when they were children.

Apart from the above-mentioned difficulties, World War II left Nikiszowiec's residents with the memory of the confiscation of four out of the five church bells from St. Anne's Church for the needs of the Wehrmacht. On the other hand, Giszowiec inhabitants were granted the dubious privilege of having Fritz Bracht, Gauleiter and High President of Upper Silesia as their neighbor. Bracht took up residence in the villa of Anton Uthemann – former director of the Giesche concern.

The postwar years brought about further transformations. The pigpens and piekarniki (bread stoves) in Nikiszowiec, which were once located in the center of every quarter of the residential estate, were torn down. They were no longer needed because the residents were able to purchase all food products in stores. Vast, green courtyards with playgrounds for children were built in their place.





Izba Śląska (Silesian Chamber)
and "Gawlikówka" gallery,
operating at the branch of
Miejski Dom Kultury (the Municipal
Cultural Center) in Giszowiec
pl. Pod Lipami 1
phone: +48 32/ 206 46 42
e-mail: mdkgiszowiec@o2.pl

Opening hours:
Tuesday 3 pm – 5 pm,
Wednesday 1 pm – 5 pm,
Thursday 12 pm – 2 pm,
Friday 10 am – 12 pm

Artistic phenomenon

The unique charm of the place, the specific genius loci affects not only the tourists visiting Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec, but it also inspires the residents themselves. It is here that we experienced one of the more interesting artistic phenomena of the second half of the 20th century in Upper Silesia. A group of non-professional painters active since the 1940s, presently referred to as the Janowska Group, created extraordinary paintings in which the everyday reality of mining estates smoothly intertwines with elements of fantasy and esotericism.

Since 2001, Nikiszowiec has been home to the biggest private art gallery in Poland called Wilson Shaft (comprising almost 2,500 m² of exhibition space). It is located in the historic interiors of the old Wilson shaft of the Wieczorek mine (formerly Giesche).

The gallery has been presenting mostly modern art and its main aim is to promote young artists who are not yet known to a wider audience. Moreover, it organizes numerous concerts, spectacles and other artistic events.

The Janowska Group comprised painters-amateurs (Ewald Gawlik, Teofil Ociepka, Gerhard Urbanek, Paweł Stolarz, Erwin Sówka, and Paweł Wróbel) whose works are appreciated by connoisseurs and collectors of paintings all over the world. A reminder of those people and times today is the Art Naif Festival. Each summer starting from mid-June to mid-August, non-professional artists gather in Nikiszowiec in order to present their art. The center stage for all the events is the Wilson Shaft Gallery. An interesting collection of the most representative paintings by the Janowska Group may be seen every day at the Katowice History Museum (Muzeum Historii Katowic), whose Ethnology Division is located in the former laundry and mangle building revitalized on the initiative of city authorities.

Van Gogh at the barber's

While in Giszowiec, one must definitely visit Iwona Pleszka's barber's shop located at Pod Kasztanami Street, where one can admire paintings by Ewald Gawlik, an artist referred to as the "Van Gogh from Giszowiec". He was the only painter from the Janowska Group who studied art for a while and thus came across the high culture artistic trends of the time. In his works, one may notice that he drew inspiration from the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh. The former owner of the shop, Ludwik Lubowiecki, was a friend of Gawlik and purchased his paintings to support him financially.

An interesting collection of Gawlik's paintings is also presented in the Gawlikówka gallery.



Galeria Szyb Wilson
(Wilson Shaft Gallery)
ul. Oswobodzenia 1
phone: +48 32/ 730 32 20
e-mail: galeria@szybwilson.org
www.szybwilson.org.pl

Open every day:
9 am – 7 pm
free admission





Muzeum Historii Katowic
(Katowice History Museum)
Ethnology Division
ul. Rymarska 4
phone: +48 32/ 353 95 59,
e-mail: etnologia@mhk.katowice.pl
www.mhk.katowice.pl

Opening hours:
Tue – Fri 10 am – 6 pm
Sat – Sun 11 am – 3 pm
free admission on Saturdays

The Beads of One Rosary

Giszowiec has also some sad moments in its history. One of them is undeniably the period of the 1970s when the process of tearing down the old developments began in order to make room for a large slab block housing estate. This was met with protests on the part of architects, historians and district residents. These actions culminated in entering the remaining buildings into the register of historic monuments in 1978. Unfortunately, by that time only approximately 30% of the original historical development survived. Some time later Kazimierz Kutz made a very moving film titled "Paciorki jednego różańca" (The Beads of One Rosary) which tells the story of a retired miner battling to save his house which is designated for demolition.

Film location

Many tourists visiting Nikiszowiec for the first time feel they have been here before. We owe this specific déjà vu to the fact that a lot of movies set in Upper Silesia have been shot on location in Nikiszowiec. The best known productions include "Perła w koronie" (The Pearl in the Crown) and "Sól ziemi czarnej" (The Salt of the Black Earth) directed by Kazimierz Kutz, the once-famous "Kolejność Uczuć" (The Order of Feelings) starring Daniel Olbrychski and Maria Seweryn or Angelus by Lech Majewski. This last movie tells the story of the painters from the Janowska Group. Moreover, Nikiszowiec constituted the background for many musical productions.



GASTRONOMY NIKISZOWIEC:

- **SITG Restaurant**, ul. Krawczyka 1, Katowice Nikiszowiec,
phone: +48 32/707 59 19
- **Cafe Byfj**, ul. Krawczyka 5, Katowice – Nikiszowiec,
phone: +48 32/ 255 70 15

GASTRONOMY GISZOWIEC:

- **Pod Lipami Residence**,
pl. Pod Lipami 1, phone: +48 32/793 95 51, 504 75 86 75
- **Pod Kasztanami Restaurant**, ul. Radosna 35, phone: +48 32/ 757 11 22
- **„Spółdzielnia Socjalna Rybka”**,
ul. Radosna 35A, phone: 508 277 887

ACCOMMODATION:

- **Nikiszowiec Luxury Suites**, plac Wyzwolenia 7, phone: +48 513 152 208,
www.katowice-nikiszowiec.pl
- **Jantor Hotel**, ul. Zofii Nałkowskiej 10, phone: +48 32/ 255 71 41,
www.jantor.ehost.pl
- **Eurohotel**, ul. Zofii Nałkowskiej 10, phone: +48 32/ 255 46 82,
www.eurohotelkatowice.pl

Technical monuments

The year 2006 saw the creation of the Industrial Monuments Route (zabytkitechniki.pl) which includes many interesting industrial objects such as mines, breweries, engineering facilities or museums of an engineering and technical profile. Among them are historical places as well as still operational plants where people can see production processes first hand. Katowice has as many as three facilities along the Route – these include the historic districts of Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec, as well as the Wilson Shaft Art Gallery. All three are among the most frequently visited places in Katowice. Since 2010 the Route has been included in the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) as the only area from Central and Eastern Europe.

Making an effort to meet the demands of an increasing number of tourists as well as the residents themselves, city authorities have implemented several infrastructure investments over the last years: the Jantor ice rink and the museum were renovated, the surface of roads was replaced, and central heating was installed in all of Nikiszowiec buildings which considerably increased the quality of air in the district.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

Tourist Information Point in Nikiszowiec
ul. Rymarska 4, building of Muzeum
Historii Katowic (the Katowice
History Museum) division
phone: +48 32/ 255 14 80
e-mail: nikisz@katowice.eu

Museum opening hours:
Tuesday - Friday 10.00-17.30
Saturdays and Sundays 11.00-14.30

Here you can obtain information about Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec, as well as about other tourist attractions in Katowice and the region. You can also learn about current cultural events, hire a guide and purchase souvenirs or publications on the past and present of the district and the city.

COMMUTE FROM THE CITY CENTER:

- bus no. **30** and **920** from the **Aleja Korfantego** bus stop
- bus no. **674** from **Katowice Dworzec** bus stop.





KATOWICE

for a change

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40-098 Katowice

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Center of Tourist Information
ul. Rynek 13
40-003 Katowice

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Saturday 9.00-16.00

tel. (+48 32) 259 38 08
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www.katowice.eu
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