

Painting “Caricature of Jacek Malczewski” by Kazimierz Sichulski



- Author Kazimierz Sichulski
- Date of production 1916
- Place of creation Zakopane, Poland
- Dimensions height: 89 cm, width: 63 cm
- ID no. S/1789/MT
- Museum [The Dr. Tytus Chałubiński Tatra Museum in Zakopane](#)
- Subjects [painted](#), [entertainment](#), [famous people](#)
- Technique [watercolor](#), [pastel](#), [drawing with a crayon](#)
- Material [cardboard](#), [pastel](#)
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- Digitalisation RDW MIC, Małopolska's Virtual Museums project
- Tags [rysunek](#), [Jacek Malczewski](#), [Zakopane](#), [2D](#), [kabaret](#), [domena publiczna](#)

The truth and exaggeration stay in one house, or on caricature by Kazimierz Sichulski...

Zakopane, located at the foot of the Tatra Mountains, surrounded by a picturesque landscape, used to be a paradise for all kinds of artists. Besides inspirations they could come across at every turn, they could also experience true creative and intellectual freedom there. Tentacles of the invaders' censorship did not reach there so they could formulate and express their thoughts without major obstacles. Therefore, it is not surprising that when World War I began, this small village at the foot of the Giewont Mountain became a shelter for many of those who fled the ravages of war. One of them was Kazimierz Sichulski, a highly regarded painter and a well-known caricaturist. At that time, there was the Sport Hotel in Zakopane, which was owned by Stanisław Karpowicz. Sichulski stayed there. At the back of the hotel restaurant, evening and night meetings were held for artists, intellectuals and actors, both residents of Zakopane and visitors. During one such evening, an idea was offered (put forward by Ludwik Solski, an actor and director) to create in that restaurant a gallery of caricatures of Zakopane celebrities. Sichulski accepted the proposal; in return he received a guarantee of money and full board. In this way, the collection of satirical portraits expanded systematically from 1914 until 1917. Caricatures are typically small drawings made with a pen, pencil or charcoal. However, cartoons by Sichulski were large, colourful and made with diverse techniques. They were painted with pastels, watercolour and pencils. The presented caricature of Jacek Malczewski belongs to the collection mentioned above, coming from the no longer existing restaurant owned by Stanisław Karpowicz. The entire collection – consisting of fifty works – landed safely in the Tatra Museum, and in large part is presented to visitors in the Museum of the Zakopane Style at the Koliba Villa. "More than any other form of art, caricature requires that the audience's attention be focused on essential moments rather than be distracted by trifles. With a few lines, circles, dots and strokes, Sichulski is sometimes able to create a caricatured image that is quite similar to the original, thus achieving the ideal of simplification." A perfect example is a caricature of Jacek Malczewski. The portrayed artist is one of the most important and famous Polish painters of the late 19th and early 20th century. His paintings are filled with beautiful, shapely figures of men and women against the background of Polish landscapes. His art is referred to as symbolism. Malczewski also carried out educational activities. He worked at the School of Fine Arts in Kraków and ran painting courses for women. He was the painter who left behind the greatest number of self-portraits. He observed with pleasure changes that occurred not only in his external appearance but also inside himself. In the caricature, Kazimierz Sichulski presented Jacek Malczewski along with Michał Żymierski-Rola, an officer of the First Brigade of the Polish Legions. The artist, along with his companion, is presented in the ¾ rear view. They walk briskly ahead. Malczewski in a long cloak tied at the neck, with a palette in his left hand, is portrayed in the full dignity of artistic fame. The adopted haughty pose does not wane despite the necessity to cover numerous puddles. Żymierski is walking next to him. The composition of the caricature directly refers to one of the master's paintings – *Dwa pokolenia (Two generations)* which depicts Żymierski with Count Jerzy Mycielski. As already mentioned, Malczewski enjoyed portraying himself. He used a rich repertoire of poses and costumes. He sometimes was Ezekiel, Tobias, Saint Francis, and even Christ. In his paintings, he wore armour, prison coats and jesters' costumes. He adopted dignified and serious poses which were sometimes so theatrical in their expression that they were even funny. As if the artist was ironic towards himself and the different roles he enacted. He visited Zakopane, but he did not paint the mountains. The exceptions are backgrounds of portraits of Stanisław Witkiewicz. These are, however, quite loose interpretations of Tatra motifs. In his caricature, Sichulski comments in a creative way on both the great painter's bearing and his works. His characteristic looks combined with rich colours and extensive references to his art cause that this satirical portrait, despite the passage of time, has not lost its freshness and clarity.

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