

● On **28 November 2012**, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins of the “Polish Painters of the 19th and 20th Centuries” series commemorating Piotr Michałowski, with the following face values:

**20 zł** struck in proof finish in silver (with pad printing),

**2 zł** struck in standard finish in Nordic Gold

## The National Bank of Poland

holds the exclusive right to issue the currency  
of the Republic of Poland.

In addition to **coins and notes for general circulation**,  
the NBP issues **collector coins and notes**.

Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate  
important historic figures and anniversaries, as well  
as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture,  
science and tradition.

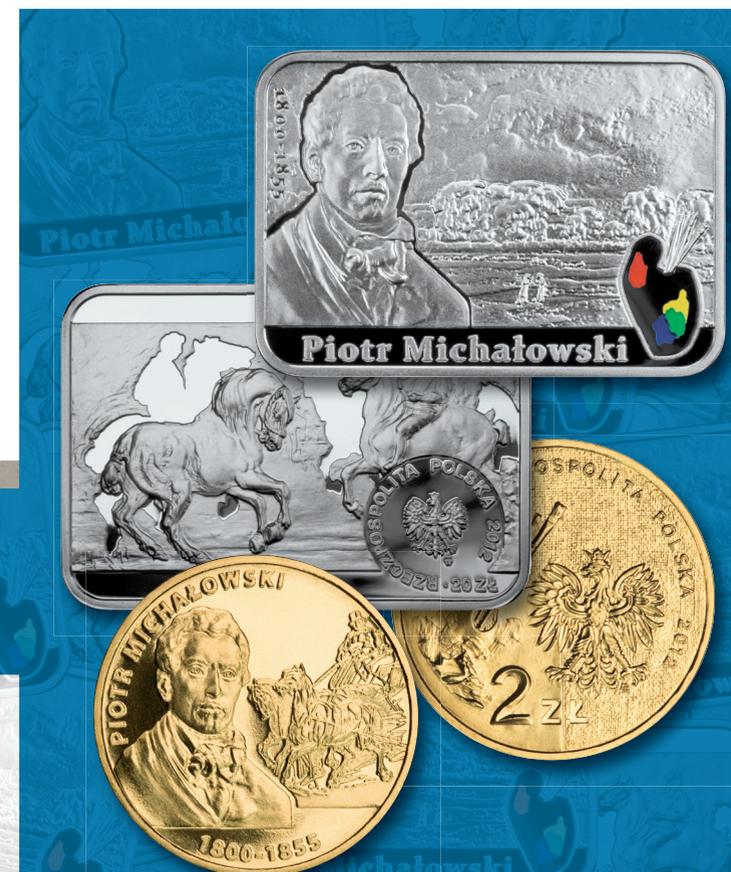
Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing **occasional 2 złoty**  
coins, struck in **Nordic Gold**, for general circulation.

All coins and notes issued  
by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

NBP

National Bank of Poland

c o i n s



COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012

On **12 December 2012**, the National Bank of Poland  
will be putting into circulation a coin of the  
“Polish Ships” series commemorating the “Piorun”  
[Thunderbolt] destroyer, with the face value of 2 zł.

Information on the issue schedule can be found at:  
[www.nbp.pl/money](http://www.nbp.pl/money)  
website.

Collector coins issued by the NBP  
are sold at the Internet auctions held  
in the Kolekcjoner service at the following website:  
[www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl](http://www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl)

 **KOLEKCJONER**

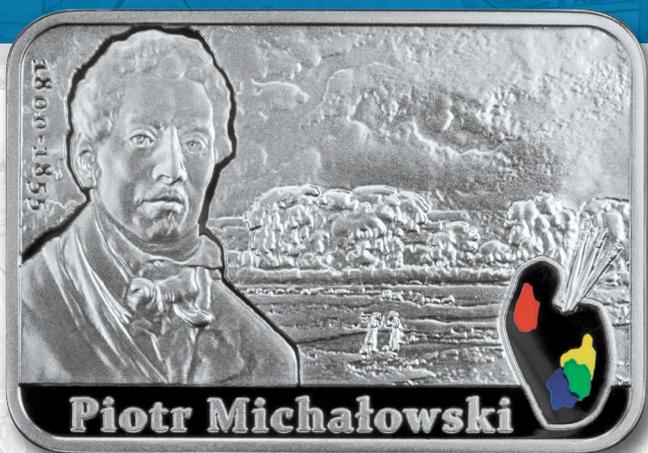
and at the Regional Branches of the NBP.

The coins were struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.

Edited and printed: NBP Printing Office

POLISH PAINTERS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

Piotr Michałowski  
(1800–1855)



# Polish Painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Piotr Michałowski (1800–1855)

● To his contemporaries, Piotr Michałowski (1800–1855) stood as a model of a wise citizen, good farmer and state official. His social activity, in particular his philanthropy, were especially admired. Obviously, everyone knew that he painted, and some even were able to appreciate his works, but nobody would treat this activity as anything other than a private passion, an amateur pastime practiced at home. Only in the late 19th century was the phenomenon of his art finally discovered, and Michałowski was recognised as the most eminent painter of Polish Romanticism, comparable even to the European artistic celebrities of the era.

● The painter came from a wealthy noble family. He had received versatile education, having studied exact and natural science, mathematics, classical and oriental philology as well as law. He travelled frequently, both around Poland and Europe, extending his knowledge and carefully studying the arts in the museums visited. During the November Uprising, he was in charge of the manufacture of munitions for the fighting Poles and following the fall of the Uprising he emigrated to Paris. There he turned to painting, the basics of which he had mastered already as an adolescent by taking classes with a number of Krakow-based painters. In Paris, he attended the classes of battle scene painters and maintained contacts with the artists from the circle of Théodore Géricault. He also conducted independent studies, visiting the Louvre and local slaughter houses, to learn the anatomy of horses. Initially, he mainly

Painted watercolours, presenting horse-drawn carriages. With time he made his first sculpting attempts and also started to use in his painting the oil technique more frequently. After his return to Krakow in 1835, he continued to create the works of art until the end of his life, while simultaneously managing the model land estates of Krzyżtoporzycze and Bolestraszyce, and travelling around Europe. In the last years of his life he held important administrative posts.

● It is difficult to put the creative output of Piotr Michałowski in chronological order: he did not put dates on his works and re-visited many ideas and themes repeatedly. Also, he would often paint new works over previous studies, whose fragments can sometimes be discerned under layers of paint. Among the scarce thematic plots undertaken by the artist, the Napoleonic period remains the major one, exceeding in number references to the November Uprising and scenes from distant history. Michałowski painted the Battle of Samosierra in a variety of aspects from the 1830s till the end of his life, presenting groups of horsemen both in horizontal and vertical layouts. He created a number of equestrian portraits of Napoleon, with the monumental *Napoleon on a Grey Horse* crowning the collection. In the years 1845–1848, his greatest physiognomy studies were created – *Peasant*, *Seriko*, *Cardinal*, as well as portraits of Jews and numerous presentations of knights, Lisowczyk soldiers and hetmans (military commanders). Towards the end of his life, despite numerous duties and poor health, Michałowski reached the heights

of synthetic form of painting and mastery in the use of colours, an example of which are the equestrian portraits of his children: *Blue Boy* and *Amazon*.

● Michałowski practically never exhibited his works in public. His art was shaped by the works of great masters, which he remembered in great detail from the museums and later copied from drawings. He owed the most to the inspiration provided by the painting of Velázquez, which was manifested in the dominant role of colour over other means of artistic expression. By giving up on the contour, he constructed the form suggestively with the sole use of patches – a concrete and material form, finding its equivalent in nature. The movement of a horse or the dust agitated by a cavalcade of horsemen, the shape of a human silhouette or the look in the eyes of a person being painted reflect the insight gained by close observation. Light hues, vibrating or muted, applied with bold but infallible brush strokes, allow shapes to emerge from darkness, making them visible as if in a sudden gleam of light. This adds internal dynamics of sorts to even fully static compositions. That is why, in encountering Michałowski's paintings, one sees something that is eternally vivid and alive, a vision that appears to be created in front of our very own eyes.

Urszula Makowska  
Institute of Art  
of the Polish Academy of Sciences

COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012



FACE VALUE 20 ZŁ

metal Ag 925/1000 and red, yellow, green and blue paints  
finish proof ■ length 40.0 mm ■ width 28.0 mm  
weight 28.28 g ■ mintage up to 30,000 pcs

**OBVERSE:** Stylised image of watercolour by Michałowski "Stablemen with horses and a dog". At the bottom, on the right, an image of the Eagle, established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. Around the Eagle, from bottom and right to left, an inscription: 20 ZŁ, and, following a separating dot an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland) and the notation of the year of issue: 2012. The Mint mark, M/W, below the Eagle, on the right.

**REVERSE:** Along the left rim of the coin, in its top part, an inscription: 1800-1855. On the left-hand side of the coin, a stylised image of the artist's bust against the background of a landscape from Sieniawa, based on a watercolour by Piotr Michałowski. Along the bottom rim of the coin, an inscription: Piotr Michałowski, against the background of a separate surface. On the right, at the bottom, a stylised image of a palette and three paintbrushes. On the palette, red, yellow, green and blue paint.

Coin designer: DOBROCHNA SURAJEWSKA

FACE VALUE 2 ZŁ

metal CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy ■ finish standard ■ diameter 27.00 mm  
weight 8.15 g ■ mintage up to 800,000 pcs

**OBVERSE:** On the right an image of the Eagle, established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the left, a stylised image of a palette and two paintbrushes. At the bottom, an inscription: 2 ZŁ, at the top following the rim, an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland) and the notation of the year of issue: 2012. The Mint mark, M/W, below the Eagle, on the right.

**REVERSE:** At the top, on the left, a semicircular inscription: PIOTR MICHAŁOWSKI. Under the inscription, a stylised image of the bust of Piotr Michałowski. On the right, a stylised fragment of a pencil sketch of "Four-horse hitch". At the bottom, centrally, a semicircular inscription: 1800-1855.

**ON THE EDGE:** The inscription NBP repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated by stars.

Obverse designer: EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA  
Reverse designer: DOBROCHNA SURAJEWSKA