

# Pierre Sabatier, the alchemist metal

*He dressed in cast iron, stainless steel or copper architecture of the postwar boom. Today, its monumental sets are attracting renewed interest.*

by Axelle Corty

1. **PIERRE SABATIER** in his Paris studio, boulevard Raspail, circa 1960.

2. **TOTEMS** stamped brass and oxidized to Jimmy'z in Monaco in 1998.

3. **SCULPTURE** Wall brass arched and oxidized to the barracks Versailles-Satory in 1979.



**M** unnoticed on the stand of the Magen H. Gallery in New York, looking copper as in the Parisnet Group. It was last June at the fair in Basel. At the opening, the beautiful people were photographed before this giant ingot fragment of a called decor *Golden Grotto*. Jimmy'z, Monaco's legendary night club, commanded in 1998 to Pierre Sabatier (1925-2002). To make it, the artist had implemented a technique of his own.

*"He dropped large rocks on the sheets"* says, smiling, his son Damien Sabatier. In his workshop Aurouër, bordering forest with Allier neighbor, Pierre Sabatier cultivated his titan techniques. In this vast area populated minerals and shells, man, mask on the face, got down to the metal plates he was cutting torch, working with acid or oxides, and adorned with precious metals. The assembly testing its giant decorations took place during the campaign with a dozen assistants before shipment trailer to their installation site. *"He always had a taste for the monumental. He admired Egyptian art and Assyrian. He preferred to design an environment rather qu'accrocher a painting on a wall, that's why he has learned the art of the fresco at the Fine Arts and Decorative Arts";* remembers his wife, Barbara Gaiser.

The establishment of the cultural 1% in 1951 offered him a passport to the monumental. This law states that 1% of the amount spent by the state to each public building must finance the construction of a work of art in situ. His career is booming →



## The creator

decisive in 1967, when the 1968 Winter Olympics is profiled slow in Grenoble. The city has big plans for its new town hall. Sabatier works with the architect Maurice Novarina and interior designer Joseph-André Motte. He creates sculptures and trellises perforated brass and tin for the wedding room and a wall panel oxidized brass, chased and carved to a reception room. Motte appreciate both his work that he commissioned him to decorate his own office. In defense, for the Aquitaine turn with architectes Luc and Xavier Arsène-Henry and interior designer Denis Voisin, he delivers a copper lobby hammered and oxidized Lava glows. In 1972 he won the competition of ephemeral facade launched for the release of perfume *boldness* Rochas. Its undulating structure, lit at night, which remains finally the years up Francis I Street.

The model is now in the collections of the Center Pompidou.



Photo courtesy Plaza (1).

**1. FRESCO tin wall on stainless steel** in the wedding room of the city hall of Grand-Quevilly in 1975.

**2. TABLE low**  
*San Andreas* in corroded and oxidized steel, 1990.

**3. FRONT PVC tubes**  
headquarters of Parfums Rochas in Paris in 1974.

**4. SCULPTURE wall cast aluminum**, in the lobby of the Hotel Department in Dijon in 1983.



If he also worked ceramics and shotcrete, metal remains of Pierre Sabatier favorite material, one that is best suited to its metamorphoses. Astronomy enthusiast, geology and volcanology, he turns it into moving matter in perpetual fermentation. His universe reminiscent of cartoonist Druillet, he admires the work. *“Peter embodies psychédélique pouring inner architecture war boom, ” Barbara Gaiser believes. This does not prevent seduce the most elegant aesthetes, Joseph-André Motte yesterday Shahan Minassian and Yves Gastou today. Norman Foster has bought its decor of Aquitaine tower for future tower Comcast in Philadelphia. At the end of his life, after his works spread from Canada to Iran, Pierre Sabatier has worked to transform the landscape surrounding his studio. He dug a pond overhung by a huge metal tube nest tinkling in the wind. To answer them, he planted on the banks of the silver poplars whose leaves rustle in the slightest breeze. Titan was also a poet.*

To read : *Pierre Sabatier, sculptor* by Domitilla D'Orgeval, Norma Publishing, 2011. 215 pages.