

STREET TALK

The man who paints the bus

Deep in the innards of the nine-acre Metro Bus garage, hidden inside the painting booth is a bus that needs a facelift. Under pink and white fluorescent lights, the diesel fuel smell is quickly replaced by that of turpentine as one approaches the booth and local illustrator David Taylor.

Brush in hand, palette just steps away, he stands back, looks at the woman missing a tooth and plays dentist-painter, re-perfecting her 1940s Coca-Cola smile.

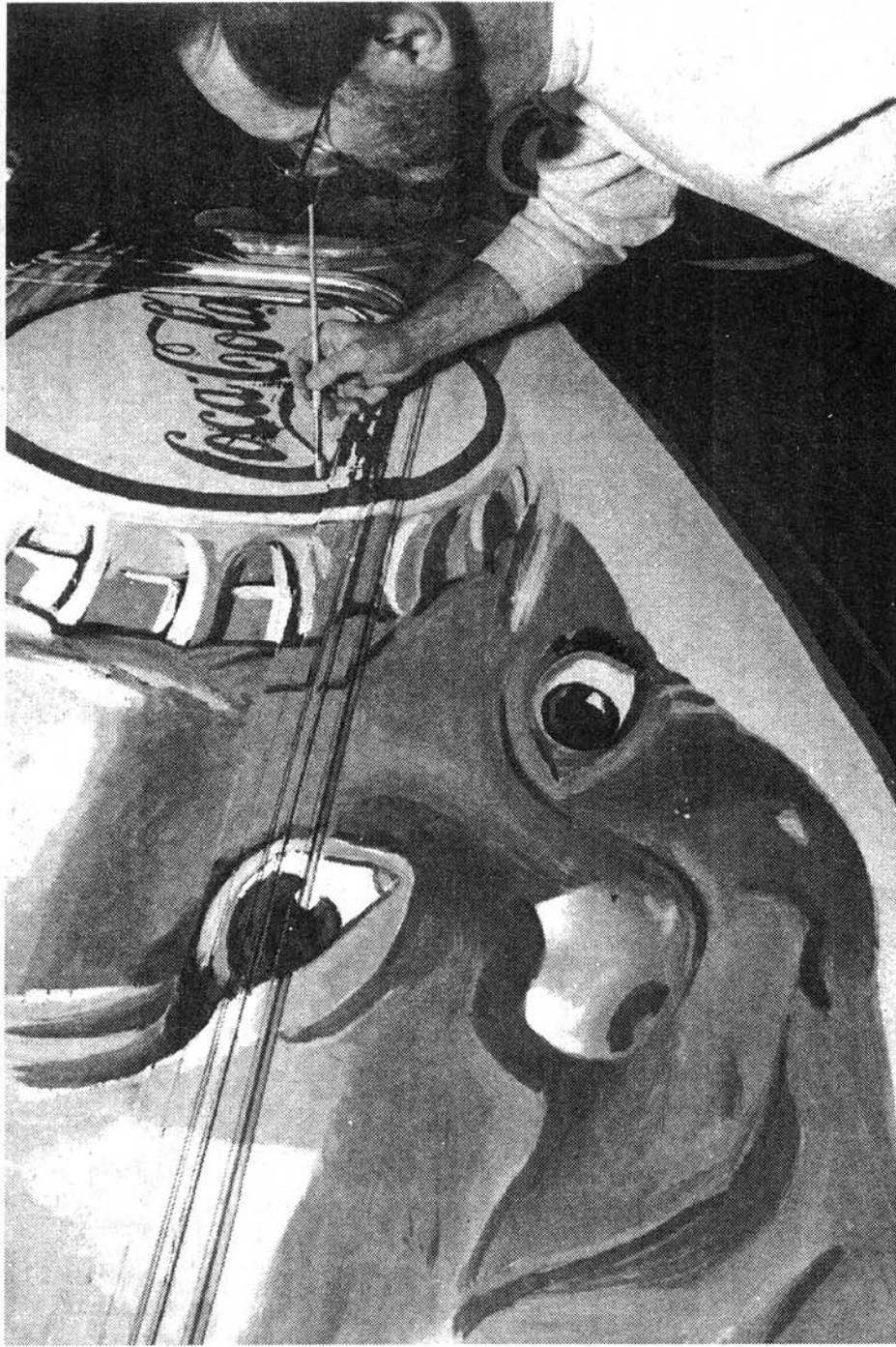
You've seen this bus, among others, zooming around town. The most unforgettable has to be the "Pink Cadillac." How can you get mad when a big pink bus crosses in front of you on Delaware during rush hour?

David painted those buses. All 25 of them. By hand, with small paintbrushes (OK, he uses an airbrush for the really big areas) and oil paints mixed with enamel. Look close, sketch marks, real brushstrokes. No vinyl decals here, No-Sir-ee, Bob.

Metro Bus-painting tends to be a family project — wife, Nancy, and kids, Bryan and Julie, lend their brush skills as each bus can take up to 150 hours to complete. And, of course, the advertisers want them on the street yesterday.

Kind of puts the "fun" in fun-ctional, don't you think? But we still haven't figured out how he managed to get that 25-foot bottle on the top of the Coca-Cola bus.

— KATHY PETRERÉ



Illustrator David Taylor does his work on a Metro bus.

KATHY PETRERÉ PHOTO