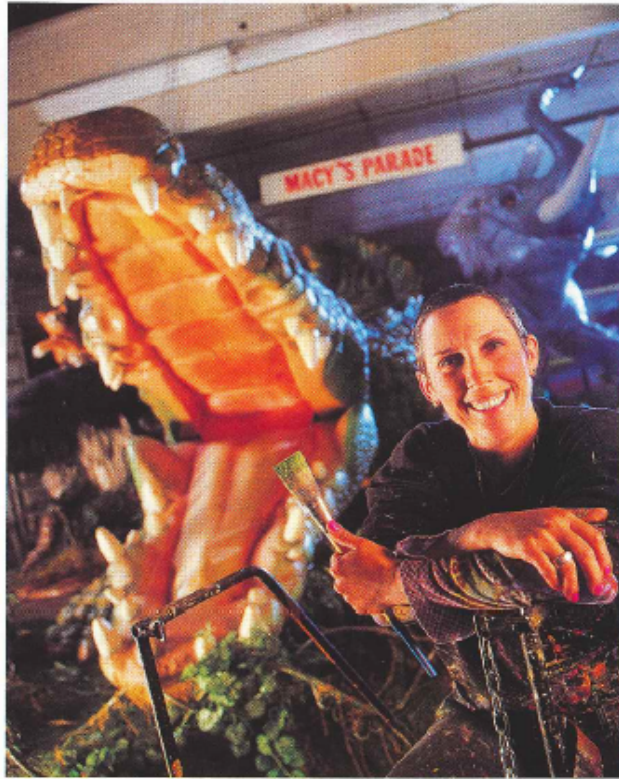


## Tall Orders

BETH LUCAS PUTS THE COLOR IN THE THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

● When Beth Lucas says she puts the icing on the cake, she's talking parade floats, not pastry. "A sketch turns into a model and then a float, and I put the finishing touches on it," says Lucas, the principal painter of the floats used in the world-famous Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Lucas, who joined Macy's after earning a master's degree in fine arts from the Mason Gross School of the Arts in 1984, is found on a ladder year-round, using wide brushes, circular strokes, and bright colors to paint about six new creations a year or redo one of the parade's 29 existing floats.

The floats, built in a large warehouse-like studio in Hoboken, are folded and moved in the dead of night through the Lincoln Tunnel; the enormous balloons that sit on top are inflated on Thanksgiving eve. Lucas is part of a 20-member team that includes designers, carpenters, and artists. "My daughters



When Lucas isn't working on floats, she's painting the marquee for Macy's Flower Show and the huge signs on the barges used for the company's Fourth of July fireworks.

get to brag about my job to their classmates," says Lucas, who lives in Jersey City, five minutes from her job. "The other perk is that they get

to sit in the parade's grandstand every year while mommy, rain or shine, runs around like a chicken with its head cut off."