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m/s Rigi - Luzern's first floating Art Gallery

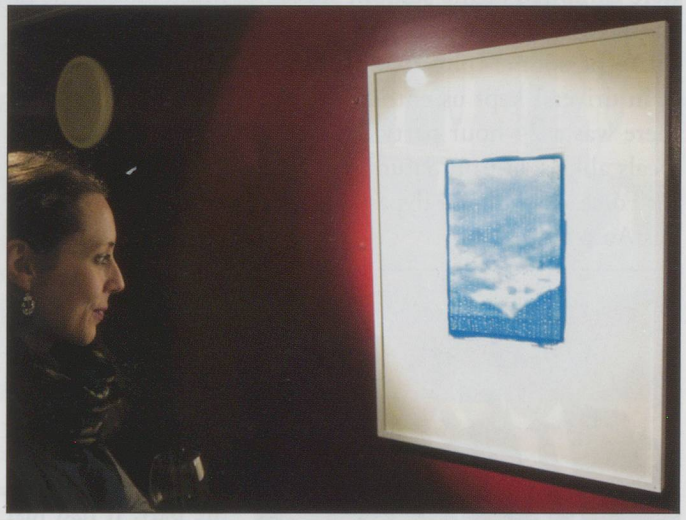
Mario Gavazzi

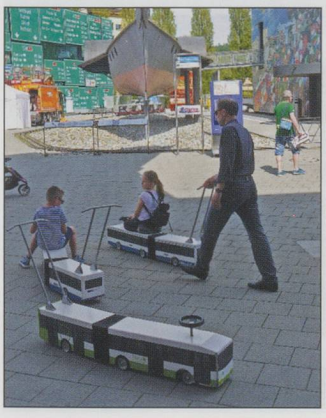
In Summer, the day for *'m/s Rigi'* begins early in the morning at Flüelen, where the oldtimer classic motorship stays every night.
All photos: **Mario Gavazzi**

The *'m/s Rigi'* was built at Luzern in 1955 by the DGV - now the SGV (Schifffahrtsgesellschaft) to replace the old steamer of the same name. It was the first diesel-powered ship to adopt the elegant form of structure that later became standard for large motor ships, and that we now associate with the 1950s. For 35 years she was in daily use during both summer and winter, carrying both passengers and post to communities around the Vierwaldstättersee. From 1991 her regular operations have been restricted to the summer timetable period, and although she sometimes sails in spring and autumn, during the winter she sees no regular service. However, since 2014 she has been chartered in this quiet period by Kunstaheu (www.kunstaheu.ch), a non-profit Luzern artists association that organises exhibitions, small concerts and literature presentations on-board the ship. The atmosphere on the *'Rigi'* is very responsive to this well supported programme of events that runs from January to March. Normally in this period the ship is moored at Luzern's Pier 5, adjacent to the KKL – the Kunst und Kongresszentrum Luzern. Now over 60-years-old the *'m/s Rigi'* is due to be replaced in 2017 by a big new motor ship currently under construction at the SGV's shipyard, so summer 2016 may be this hard working vessels last summer in normal circulation. Kunstaheu will again use the ship as a floating art gallery from January to March 2017, but this may be the last time that this innovative use takes place. I recommend that if you are interested either in sailing on the lake in this iconic veteran, or visiting it in its alternative role, you travel to Luzern in the forthcoming months.

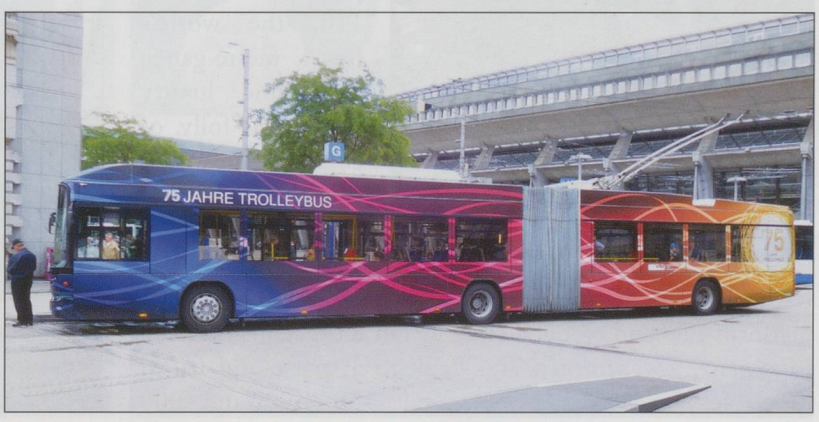
RIGHT: *'m/s Rigi'* at Lucerne during the culture programs of "Kunstaheu", with mountain Rigi in the background.

BELOW: Beautiful atmosphere on board *'m/s Rigi'* during the art exhibitions in winter.





LEFT: Young guests of the museum get the chance to do the first 'trial' to drive a trolleybus.
Photo: Mario Gavazzi



RIGHT: One of the trolley buses liveried for the anniversary outside the Luzern station.
Photo: Heidi Marriott