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Explore This 1930s Boat-Turned-Art Gallery On The Hudson River: Gothamist

3 minutes



fullscreen

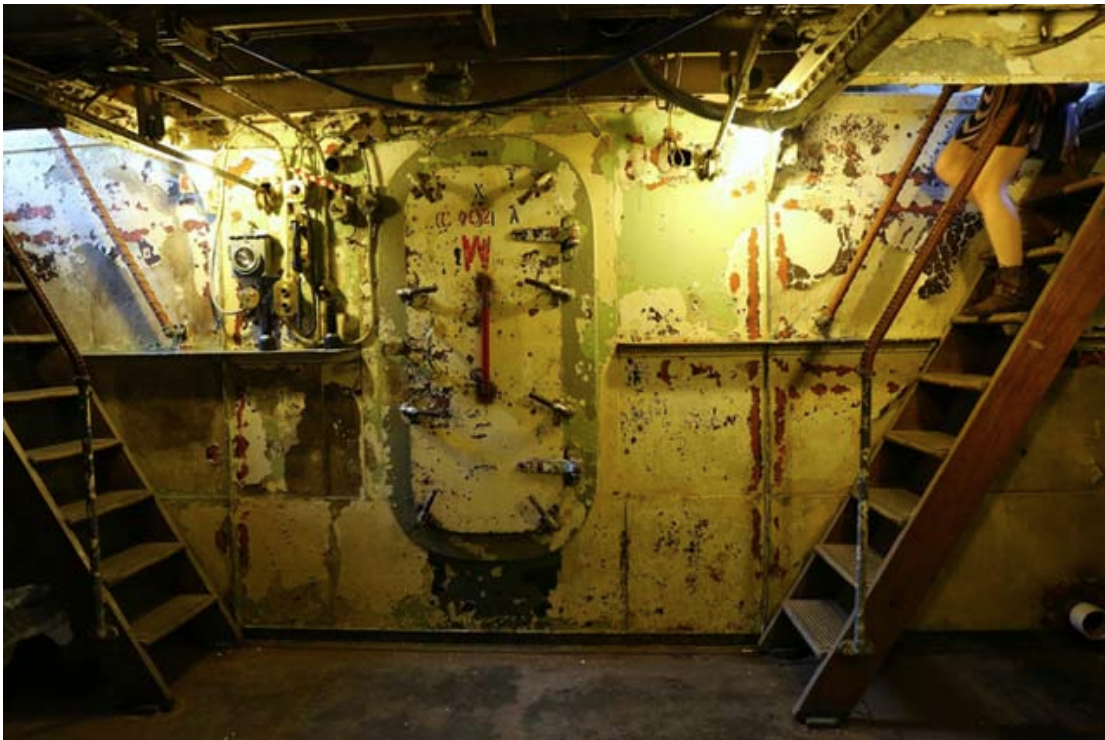
Aaron Schraeter

(*Scott Lynch / Gothamist*)

The last remaining steam-powered lighthouse tender in the country is currently berthed (and slowly being restored) at Pier

25 in Tribeca. [Her name is Lilac](#), she was built in 1933, and you can clamber around her steampunky chambers as much as you want, all summer long.

There's art, too! For the second straight season the Lilac functions as a gallery as well, with more than a dozen site-specific pieces throughout the vessel, from the deck to the galleys to the dank depths of her rusty heart. And this isn't the first time the Lilac was used for cultural purposes; last year [it was a floating library](#), and in 2009 [the phenomenal site-specific play](#) *The Confidence Man* was performed throughout the vessel.



(Scott Lynch/Gothamist)

The art's pretty cool—Jackie Mock's cleverly humorous conceptual stuff, Rhys Hecox's video down in the hold, and Lavinia Roberts's Mad Max-esque masks were the standouts

for me—but the real attraction here is Lilac herself.

A lighthouse tender was responsible for resupplying and repairing lighthouses and buoys, and Lilac did her job in these waters for nearly 40 years before being decommissioned in 1972. That was also the last time her steam engines were fired up, and by none other than

[Pratt Institute's Chief Engineer Conrad Milster](#), who knows a thing or two about steam power. As does the Lilac's amiable engine-room docent Gerry Weinstein, who will be happy to give you a tour of the area when you visit.



(Scott Lynch/Gothamist)

And visit you should! Boarding the Lilac, poking around, checking out the art, relaxing on the deck... it's all completely free, though donations are graciously accepted for the long-term restoration of the vessel.

The Lilac is berthed at Pier 25 in Hudson River Park, across West Street from North Moore Street. The Liliac is open starting May 23 and running through October on Thursdays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., and on Saturdays and Sunday from 2:00 until 7:00, weather permitting.